



**2015
ANNUAL**



**IRISH
CRUISING
CLUB**

IRISH CRUISING CLUB

2015 ANNUAL

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Front and Back Covers: *Ainmara* in Strangford Narrows, with the Mourne Mountains behind. Photo: Pete Adams

Frontispiece: *Coire Uisge* in Blind Harbour, Co. Waterford. Photo: Norman Kean.

Submissions for the 2016 Annual

To reach the Honorary Editor, Ed Wheeler, Hilltop Farm, 31 Ballyhay Rd., Donaghadee, Co Down, BT21 0LU.

Email: annual@irishcruisingclub.com. Tel. 00 44 28 91 884098, Mob. 00 44 7896733942, by Fri 21st October 2016. Logs received after that date will not be included nor considered for an award.

Notes for Contributors

Logs

Length: may be typically 1,000-5,000 words, major cruises 6,000-10,000.

Format: logs should be submitted by email or on disc or data stick in MS Word or Text format only.

Log titles must include the name of the author and the name of the area cruised.

Track charts are always useful and will be standardised from sketch maps submitted in paper or electronic format.

Summaries (including such items as dates and durations of passages, etc) are optional but desirable.

Photographs: send about 1 photo per 800 words. Photos should be .jpg or similar format. Photographs may be emailed.

Please ensure that captions are provided for all photographs. Photographs which illustrate the places visited in a manner useful to other members are appreciated. Pictures of members and their crews are welcome, but be sure to indicate the names in the caption (in the sequence shown on the photograph). Upright (portrait format) photos will be particularly welcomed as well as landscape format.

All logs will be entered for Awards, unless requested otherwise. Selected photographs will be shortlisted for the photographic prize.

Please note: there is no need for hard (paper) copy of logs, Dunns Ditties or photographs. All material, where at all possible, should be submitted in digital format only.

Dunn's Ditties

May be 200-1,000 words; anecdotal or illustrative of cruise highlights (or lowlights) or a cruise summary.

Editorial preferences

Please adhere to these in-house conventions:

Layout and fonts: Use standard fonts. Do not insert line breaks or extra paragraph breaks. Do not insert extra spaces. Do NOT embed graphics or photographs in logs.

Spelling: please ensure the accuracy in spelling of place-names: use the spelling given on your charts, and be careful of accents etc in names in languages other than English (for example .ä, ü, ø, optional i or y in Greek, vowel-free Croatian etc.) Do not use italics or capitals for place names.

Use *Italics* for yacht and ship names. Please do not use parenthesis for yacht names, nor capital letters.

The Editor may limit the material to be published, and may consult the Editorial Subcommittee

Our thanks go to John Clementson for making the track charts and for proof reading, to Stanton Adair for organising the Annual's distribution and to Ann Woulfe-Flanagan for overseeing the inscribing and presentation of the Club Trophies, and ensuring their subsequent return.

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Irish Cruising Club Annual 2015



Coire Uisce in Blind Harbour, Co. Waterford. Photo: Norman Kean. Not a haven for the faint-hearted.

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Annual Dinner Weekend, Killarney

For the Annual Dinner in March, Killarney put on its best display. Fine weather, brilliant sunshine and perfect conditions for walking in the National Park, boating on the lakes and golf were set off by a good attendance, fine wining and dining and excellent company.



The Commodore addresses the Dinner



Diners just starting to have a lovely time.....



Rogues' Gallery: Your Committee



By Killarney's Lakes and Fells ...

Honorary Secretary's Report 2015

Once again the New Year began with the Election Committee Meeting in early January and twenty three new members were elected for the year 2015.

The Annual General Meeting took place at the Royal Irish Yacht Club with 127 members attending. There was one change among Flag Officers, with Peter Fernie succeeding Tom Foote as Rear Commodore West. There were three retirements from the Committee, Alan McGettigan, Stuart Musgrave and Cliff Hilliard. Five new Committee members were elected Peter Mullan (N), Robert Michael (E), Lonan Lardner (S), David Beattie (W), and Alan Markey as Hon. Secretary.

Amendments to Rule 6 extending the closing date for submission of Membership Nominations and Rule 11 increasing the number of Committee members to 15, were approved.

At the meeting the Commodore summarised the findings of a sub-committee, subsequently endorsed by the Committee, regarding the appropriate level of Financial Reserves to be held by the ICC and the use of any surplus funds.

Following approval at the AGM, a donation of €25,000 was given to the RNLI and bursaries totalling €6,500 were granted to three projects for disadvantaged or disabled young sailors. The first bursary allocation was for four places on the *Maybe* voyage. This was a twelve day passage from the Belfast Tall Ships Festival to Ålesund in Norway. Josh Barr (18) who was a recipient of one of the four places was awarded the prestigious "Torbay Cup" for outstanding individual achievement and personal effort. This was a huge achievement, as only one trainee is awarded this each year across the whole of the Tall Ships races. A second bursary funded two young visually impaired people on the *Morgenster*, who participated in the same race from Belfast to Norway. There were trainees from seven different EU countries on board the *Morgenster* making it a very international experience for the young Irish sailors. The third bursary was used to fund four trainees spread across two 5 day voyages on the South Coast of Ireland on the *Spirit of Oysterhaven*.

Overall, the bursary scheme was a huge success in its inaugural year and we received a lot of very positive feedback from recipients,

The annual dinner organised by Dan Cross and his team in the Southern Region was held in Killarney on the 21st-22nd March. Killarney provided great weather and facilities for outdoor events on the Saturday, although many guests watched a fascinating day of Rugby to end the 6 Nations Championships. The dinner was extremely well attended with two hundred and twenty nine guests for dinner on Saturday evening.

The regions ran a very busy programme of events. The North and East region held a joint Rally in Newry over the June Bank Holiday weekend. Unfortunately, foul weather did not allow the Western boats to leave harbour and sail to Inishbofin and on to Wespport as planned. End of season rallies were held at Strangford, Greystones and Cork.

The informal lunch programmes continues to grow and has proven to be a very popular way of introducing prospective members to the Club.

The main event of the year was the Waterway Rally on Lough Ree over the weekend of the 9th - 11th October. The event, which was organised by John O'Donnell and supported by David Beattie and John Banim, proved to be a great success with twenty boats participating and 95 people attending dinner on the Saturday evening in Lough Ree Yacht Club.

While the weather in the summer of 2015 was not the kindest, it did not deter many ICC members continuing to enjoy their cruising in home waters and further afield. We look forward to another great year in 2016.

Alan Markey
Honorary Secretary

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED JANUARY 2015

David Bagnall (E)
Phillip Cowman (E)
Andrew Crosbie (S)
Ronnie Crosbie (N)
John Derham (E)
Roberti Dix (E)
Stephen Harris (E)
Rob Henshall (N)
Mike Hodder (S)
John Leahy (E)
Tony Linehan (E)
James Lyons (S)

Anne Madsen (E)
Michael Madsen (E)
Paul Maguire (E)
Rose Michael (E)
Darragh Nagle (Canada)
Trish Nixon (E)
Dermot O'Morchoe (E)
Tom O'Reilly (E)
Drewry Pearson (N)
Robin Ruddock (N)
Des Thorpe (E)

DECEASED MEMBERS IN 2015

Douglas Mellon, Richard (Bud) Bryce, John Currie

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 2014-2015

Commodore:	Peter Killen (East)	Year 2
Vice Commodore:	Dan Cross (South)	Year 2
Rear Commodore:	Stanton Adair (North)	Year 2
Rear Commodore:	Peter Fernie (West)	Year 1
Hon. Treasurer:	Robert Barker	Year 3
Hon. Secretary:	Alan Markey	Year 1

North

Graham Chambers yr 5
Lynn Johnston yr 3
Tony Weston yr 4
Peter Mullan yr 1

South

Richard Cudmore yr 4
Tom Kirby yr 3
Philip McAuliffe yr 3
Lonan Lardner yr 1

East

Tom Fitzpatrick yr 3
Robert Fowler yr 7
Robert Michael yr 1
Richard Lovegrove yr 5

West

David Beattie yr 1
John O'Donnell yr 3

Ex Officio: Ed Wheeler, Chairman, Irish Cruising Club Publications Ltd
John Clementson, Hon. Web Editor

NON-COMMITTEE ROLES

Editor Sailing Directions: Norman Kean
Editor Newsletter: Peter Fernie
Editor Annual: Ed Wheeler
Treasurer- Subscriptions: Tony Weston
Hon. Admissions Officer: Richard Lovegrove

Club Accessories: Cliff Hilliard
Club Trophies: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan
Distribution of Annual: Stanton Adair
Archives: Barbara McHenry

Challenge Cup Awards

Hilary Keatinge (nee Roche)

No hesitation on the evening the Commodore asked me to take on the AA (award adjudicator) mantle for 2015. After all I have read logs and written them; proof read, compressed, torn up and commented on.... 'Sure', I thought, I would really enjoy the task. All was fine then, at least for a couple of weeks, until the Dropbox landed on my desktop. The confidence took a bit of a dip. Well, first get organised, finish the filing, polish the desk, go to the tip, Amazon for ink. Next, to get the answers a plan is needed: on screen versus paper? Twelve awards, really? What for, exactly? Where on earth is Dismal Swamp? What is a *zarpe* (not to be found in any dictionary). Maybe this was all going to require quite a bit of effort, could I just have a headache? Get on with it... Roll up the sleeves and begin to read, forget about the awards just read the stories. And so I was to be wafted away by 'an Goath is an Taoide' (the wind and the tide) through thirty-five entries set in this time and before, by members of our octogenarian Club that was founded in my family's hotel in Kerry.



Boats ranging from 15m to 5, with a spread of cruising/passage grounds favouring Home Waters and adjacent, only one west of Panama and no one (unusually) above 70°N. Sun seekers went to the Med, the ice seekers north, and most had holiday or crew deadlines to meet. Fuel filters feature, as do underwater obstacles, plus the increasing ingress of modern systems for navigation. (Thank God for plotters and iPads and AIS, say some). But what is the recipe for a good log entry? It is not just the account of the swell and the shelter, the pints and the pontoons but rather what gems of information will the members of 2016 or 2060 find therein. Does it portray the atmosphere on board, is there fun as well as scare, would the reader want to be part of the crew? And this is what I found, with my 'Wow' stickers to hand and, as the reality shows say, in no particular order.

THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

4,000 miles may seem a long way but the return to Ireland after six years of *Pure Magic* with **Peter Killen** and crew comes over as a well organised team who made a very successful passage in just over nine weeks, from Nova Scotia up the gulf of St. Lawrence and then, as if it was a trip round the bay, north for 1,000 miles to Asiaat, where the pubs were closed. My only concern about the crew was their addiction to moose shavings! Peter is a worthy recipient of The Atlantic Trophy.

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

Is for the best cruise in Irish waters, (there are no Round Ireland contenders this year), and this was a group of very enjoyable logs. Michael Brogan scattered ashes from *Mac Duach* and was making history for the Galway Hookers attending a gathering in Moy, while Geraldine Hennigan recounts a close encounter with tandem pot floats. However, this award goes to **Paul McSorley**, who had a close encounter of his own in the South Sound off Aran. He was sailing an International 'H' (based on the folk boat) with few if any home comforts and a back to basics modus operandi, "The way I like it" he writes. You will read how the cruise came to an abrupt end but lessons were learnt and with some understated skill, Paul and his daughter brought the boat safely and calmly alongside in Burtonport in time for lunch.

THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

On the far side of the Atlantic, another member was having problems of a singular order. When your son asks for help in making the boat delivery of a strongly built 46-footer for a friend in the Caribbean, there is only one answer – sun and sand and cool beers call. But this was a passage that would have tested Job. I hugely admired the way the 1,900 miles across the Caribbean was completed by a resourceful, resilient and resolute crew, a passage during which not a cross word was spoken and, as I read of their safe arrival in the Virgin islands, my Wow sticker went on in a flash! Congratulations to **Paul Cooper**, his wife **Valerie** and their son **Rob**. Paul is awarded **The Rockabill Trophy** for a feat of both navigation and seamanship and cool-headedness that would have tested many.

THE FORTNIGHT CUP

That last adjective is essential on a circuit close to home. An area known, but little visited by Members and heavily dependent on the careful reading of tide tables and forecasts, was chosen by **Harry Whelehan** for two weeks of what is titled 'a quickstep around the Irish Sea'. And rather than my rambling on I will quote his summary of *Sea Dancer's* summer cruise: "Gales, spits, guts, locks, grey skies, strong tides, heavy undies and full oilies..." all tolerated in good heart thanks to an occasional drop of anti-freeze.... A useful account by this year's winner of the **Fortnight Cup**, that is if you are going that way.

THE FAULKNER CUP

Maybe it is time for the big one now, the Club's premier award, first awarded to a Keatinge in 1931 (no relation, though) and to my father in 1963. You will read about a trip to the Azores in an extremely well found boat, well prepared for the sea and good living. An easy trip to those islands, a bit of whizzing around on a motorbike, bit of

history and definitely the return of someone who had made many friends on his earlier visits. All goes calmly for the first half of this well constructed log, then the solo passage back, when the easier option taken in a force 9 was to keep going and hope that the Legend 34 would not run into Ireland. **Alan Rountree** is this year's winner of the **Faulkner Cup** with *Tallulah*. You hint, Alan, that maturing years may deter you from more long distance adventures: I doubt it.

THE WILD GOOSE CUP

What must it be like to have an encyclopædic knowledge of all shapes of craft, their ups and downs and fores and afts? To be able to amble from decade to decade and keep the reader reeled in, on the seat's edge, wondering what is going to happen next? Was it the *Cherub III* that was swaggering about with full lower sail (circa 1921) or the able full-bodied cruiser with the bowsprit end within three metres of the xxx cliff (2015) en route to an historic race that does not take place? Riddles and wisdom are intertwined in **Winkie Nixon's** Soundings from Swallow Cove; you do not need the photos, they are in the words (but the editor has put them in anyway). Hugely enjoyable and winner of the **Wild Goose Cup** – or was it an *Ainmara*?

THE WYBRANTS CUP

Several cruises to the Scottish Isles, some in good weather – hard to believe but Denise Wright knows how to do it, something she did not tell to the Leonards who were wearing full oilskins 12 days out of 13. Seán McCormac had the heater on most evenings but Peter Mullan did not worry about the weather too much as he was on the trail of lobster and whisky, successful on both counts. It was the winners of the Wybrants Cup, **Vivienne and Derek White**, who had expectations of a mixture of sun and rain. I got to the count of 4 with their storms and may have missed one as they wove through the Sounds and Bays with dreadful forecasts. I was taken by their fishing prowess by line; I have not had marinated Skye lythe and the very thought of the pipework system being blocked by sand eels... Those on *Ballyclaire* were not put off and made the very best of the weather, confident in craft and crew and their unshakeable Delta.

THE MARIE TROPHY

Conor O'Byrne and his wee boat *Calico Jack* logged 840 miles with longish passages to the Hebrides and back from Galway, and with three weeks to hand almost made it. There were anchor watch nights and head winds that tested the 9hp Volvo Penta, but awe-inspiring anchorages and interesting navigation. Conor rightly deserves the **Marie Trophy** for a well-planned cruise in his Sadler 25 and a competent and easy-to-read log.

THE FINGAL CUP

A boat for the job, the right cruise for the boat, **Donal Walsh** wanted to touch the Arctic Circle (very much an ICC thing) and with a 31ft bilge-keel Moody big ocean passages were perhaps not the most sensible so he planned to coast hop up the Norwegian coast. No shortcuts on the relentless push through the Scottish Isles (one such attempt was enough), gale bound in Lerwick then 260 miles to the Norwegian coast at Ålesund. Anchorages and mountains and finally the proof of arrival, an interesting photograph of the owner with the monument in the background, though he does not mention how long he spent in the water. *Lady Kate* was asked to return to Dungarvan the long way round via the Netherlands and English Channel to clock up over 3,500 miles in eleven weeks – a mighty trip and winner of the **Fingal Cup**. (I felt I had been part of the crew, but maybe not the swimming, and so often, when I lived there, I was part of that free-for-all at Kornwerderzand lock entering or leaving the IJsselmeer!).

THE PERRY GREER BOWL

At the same time and also in search of the Arctic Circle via Norway were **Michael and Anne Madsen** on board their Starlight 35, *Gabrielle*. Not everything went as planned, for 'everything' read 'weather', as they had many days of delay owing to storm forecasts. The navigation weaving through the islands and rocks was challenging but they had a good stock of charts (150+ thanks to Jennifer Guinness). Coping with the schedule was one thing but then Michael's ladies both had problems: Anne twisted her knee and *Gabrielle* lost her prop. Weary but not beaten the crew returned to Dun Laoghaire after a 15-week cruise of highs and lows and for a well set out first entry for the Journal, earned the Perry Greer Bowl.

THE STRANGFORD CUP

As always, a page-turner from **Paddy Barry**, bit of a tease too, what on earth were they going to do with sods? The modest cruise plan for *Ar Seachrán* 2015 included the Hebrides, Faroes, Iceland, Greenland and back, but maybe the weather gods had not heard, as certainly the return trip was not for the fainthearted, or even the faint stomached. But there were mountains to climb and songs to sing and the social landscape to explore. Chased by ice, not the bears, shimmying past floes and 'carrying the cloth' when they could, this log comes over as the tale of a tough, happy and confident crew on a warm and well provisioned boat. The **Strangford Cup** goes to Paddy - comhghairdeas.

(Hilary Keatinge is the daughter of Terry Roche, who joined in 1935 and won the Faulkner Cup in 1963 for a cruise from Scandinavia to Ireland, on which he was joined by Hilary. She is also an RCC member and is active in the RCC Pilotage Foundation. We believe that Hilary is the first lady to adjudicate the ICC log competition. It is encouraging that the few early female pioneer members, eminently qualified in seamanship though they were, are now being joined by larger numbers of lady members - Ed.)

Club Awards 2014

THE JOHN B. KEARNEY CUP: Awarded to **Justin Slattery** for an outstanding contribution to Irish sailing, for his participation in ocean racing at the highest level for two decades including five Volvo Ocean Races, two as bowman on the winning boat. He is a very effective publicist for the sport of sailing to the general public and a leading ambassador for the Irish sailing community.

THE WRIGHT SALVER: Awarded by the Northern Committee to **Robin and Denise Wright** for their comprehensively described cruise to the West Coast of Scotland in *Geronimo*.

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY: Awarded by the Western Committee to **Justin McDonagh** for his 3 year family circumnavigation of the Atlantic.

THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP: Awarded by the Southern Committee to **Donal Walsh** for a cruise of 3,500 miles in 80 days from Dungarvan to the Lofoten Is above the Arctic Circle via the west of Scotland, Orkney, Shetland and back home via Denmark, Germany, Dutch canals to Amsterdam. On to Belgium, Dunkerque and the South Coast of England.

THE DONEGAN MEMORIAL TROPHY: Awarded by the Eastern Committee to **Alan Rountree** for his significant cruising exploits, carried out quietly over the years. Alan built his own boat, *Tallulah*, a 34' Van der Stadt design. He was awarded The Perry Greer Bowl in 1995 for his cruise to Scotland and around Ireland. In 1997, he received the Fingal Cup for a cruise to Norway via Scotland, and in 2004 the Round Ireland Navigation Cup. He has cruised to Galicia 10 times, usually single-handed, and to the Azores three times.

THE DUNN'S DITTY SALVER: Awarded by the Annual Editor to **Jarlath Cunnane** for his description of the building of the schooner *Mac Lir* and the delivery to new owners of *Northabout*. He and Michael Brogan built her over four years in their "mens' shed" as a vessel suitable for "relaxed coastal cruising". With such mighty men as owners, I'm sure she'll do more than that.

THE FASTNET TROPHY: No award this year. The Fastnet Trophy is only awarded to a person or persons inside or outside the Club for outstanding achievements in sailing anywhere in the world.

Editor's Remarks

This is the third and penultimate Annual which I shall edit. It has been a pleasure, albeit a somewhat time-consuming one, to carry out this task, in which I get to read the wide variety of members' logs in their raw state and try to put manners on them. Next year's will thus be my last and I hope to produce it jointly with a new Hon. Editor, to whom I am willing to impart such of the mysteries of Adobe InDesign and Photoshop as I have painfully learned.

The process of producing the Annual is now completely electronic. Logs, photographs and other supporting information may be emailed or sent in on a data stick or CD/DVD. There is no longer any need for any kind of hard copy. On receipt of the log texts, which should be in MS Word or Text form, they are read and corrected for spelling, grammar, punctuation, syntactical and factual errors. If too long, or containing irrelevant material, the logs may be edited. However, the raw logs and photographs are sent to the log adjudicator before correction or editing. Information for track charts, if supplied, is sent by the Editor to John Clementson, who produces the finished charts. I am particularly grateful to John for his work in standardising and producing these track charts. Photographs to go with logs are selected and processed using Photoshop. The log texts, charts and photographs are then brought into InDesign for design and layout of the book. This program is also used for the introductory pages and list pages. At the end of the process, the program generates a print package which is sent to the commercial printer, who sends back a hard copy proof for final checking before printing.

Position as Hon. Editor of the ICC Annual

Applications for this much-coveted post are now invited and should be sent to the Honorary Secretary.

Photos in the Annual:

All photographs published in the Annual have been taken, or are assumed to have been taken, by the author unless the Editor has been advised otherwise, in which case appropriate attribution is given.

Lough Ree Rally

The more-or-less biennial inland waterway event took place on Lough Ree on October 9th -11th, organised by John O'Donnell, ably assisted by David Beattie and John Banim. The rally met up at Wineport Lodge, where a buffet dinner was provided on the Friday night. There were about twenty boats attending, including several privately owned barges and yachts, as well as hire boats. On Saturday, the fleet sailed to the Rinn Dúin peninsula. There was a raft-up, some of the boats using a free-floating pontoon in the little bay and the rest making fast alongside Alan Algeo's vast steel barge *Linquenda*. A lunch of rolls and soup was served on board *Linquenda*, after which the shore party were ferried ashore in dinghies for a guided tour of Rinn Dúin, a site of national importance, which has the best preserved deserted Anglo-Norman town in Ireland including a 550 metre town wall with three towers and a gatehouse, windmill, parish church and a fratres cruciferi hospital which have recently undergone extensive conservation. Our guide for this tour was Col. Richard Collins, a most enthusiastic and entertaining amateur archaeologist who lives nearby. He also served the soup! Afterwards the fleet sailed to Lough Ree Yacht Club near Athlone, for a convivial dinner.

Most of the photographs on this page are by Aoife Nolan



Dinner at Wineport Lodge



Lunch on *Linquenda*



Raft up at Rinn Dúin



Commodore welcomes libertymen



Col. Collins serves soup



Church at Rinn Dúinn

To the Arctic Circle in *Lady Kate*

Donal Walsh



I always wanted to get *Lady Kate* north of the Arctic Circle. In the Baltic in 2009 we got as far as 60° north. 2014 saw us at 62° in the Faeroe Islands. We intended to continue to Iceland and hopefully tick the box. The cold deterred us and just as well too. Over the winter I realized that the only sensible way to achieve our goal in a bilge keel Moody 31 was by way of a coastal passage and that route would take us through Norwegian waters.

The plan was to leave our home port of Dungarvan in early June, head north through the Irish Sea to Scotland and from there to the Shetlands and on to Norway, hopefully making the Lofoten Islands before returning home. Clare, my crew from last year, offered to come with me and I would be joined by others along the way.

The poor weather in May prevented us getting in our normal shakedown weekends prior to setting out. This is always a bit of a pain, as you are never sure you have everything on board and you don't realize you have forgotten something until you actually find you haven't brought it. Our planned departure was to be Saturday 30th May, but we were blown out so badly we didn't even get to go on board, and the continuing bad weather dictated that there would be no departure from our home port of Dungarvan until things settled down a bit.

On Wednesday June 3rd and with less wind forecast, we slipped our mooring and headed east in a moderate southwest wind. We made a good passage and successfully carried the tide at the point of Cairn before anchoring for the night off the boat cove at Rosslare.

To get the maximum benefit from the tidal stream, it was an early start next morning and we did carry a fair wind and stream as far as Wicklow Head. As it was too early in the day to stop, we plugged the tide, keeping close along the shore and made Poolbeg that evening, where Emma & John came aboard and cooked dinner.

After an early start, but with almost no wind we were motoring north, carrying a fair stream. By evening the wind had freshened and we entered Strangford Lough, where we anchored off Kilclief Castle, as we could not negotiate the narrows against the ebb. It blew stink during the night and I was amazed at the good holding in our chosen anchorage. The morning forecast was dismal and put a stop to our gallop. We upped anchor and headed for Portaferry Pontoon and sat out the gale in Dumigan's pub.

A lively passage next day got us to Carnlough, where we went alongside in the inner harbour. Carnlough was always one of my favourite places but it tends to be bypassed nowadays, as most yachts prefer the marina in Glenarm.

The tide again called an early start and we had an uneventful passage under power to Jura, where we anchored off the pier at Craighouse. We were away before dawn next morning in effort to avoid adverse tide at the north end of Jura and were close up along the shore of Mull when the stream turned. At Tobermory, the harbour master noted our ICC burgee and recalled that a few hard cases from Strangford Lough sailing under the same burgee had returned earlier that morning to replenish their supply of whisky! A leisurely morning in Tobermory brought back memories of my last visit with my children almost 20 years ago. A short 25-mile passage brought us to Arisaig and after negotiating the narrow, winding but well-marked entrance, we dropped anchor in the bay. Departure time next morning coincided with low water. For some reason I had it in my head that there was a northern exit from the bay and made my way in that direction. Very quickly we were aground. Nothing new in this for me as we regularly take the ground negotiating the channel to Dungarvan. This time



Mount Suilven

it was different. We were on rocks, there was no danger as it was flat calm and we were on a rising tide, but as a precaution I decided to go over the side and take a look at what was happening and to discover the best route out of our predicament. (*A bit cleaner there than last year in Father Thames ... See Donal's log in 2014 Annual - Ed*). In the water the visibility was great, it obvious that no damage had been done and it was easy to push *Lady Kate* clear into deeper water. A chastened and a wiser man, I took the longer marked channel to the south and exited the bay. In the calm we motored through the Sound of Sleet – carrying the tide through the narrows – and under the bridge at Kyle of Lochalsh. Here we decided to detour to Plockton, where we anchored and had a leisurely evening. Now we were beginning to experience



longer daylight hours and found that there was much advantage in making an early start, which allowed us to cover more ground each day. The morning departure from Plockton was picture postcard – a flat mirror like bay lit by a rising sun. Our northward passage was uneventful along a stretch of uninteresting coast, after which we rounded Rubha Réidh and brought up at Aultbea inside the island in Loch Ewe. As ever, the relentless push north continued and our passage turned into a slog into freshening northerly winds. 20 miles further north we rounded Rubha Mór, gave up and entered Loch Inver. The magnificent and unusually shaped Mount Suilven dominates the landscape here. Now nearing Cape Wrath, Kinlochbervie was the last port of call for us on the west coast of Scotland. Here we encountered *Gabelle* with Michael & Anne Madson aboard and discovered that they were bound for Norway also. A favourable forecast allowed an easy transit of Cape Wrath and we made the passage to Stromness, Orkney in calm conditions. I was surprised by the strength of the tide in Hoy Sound – fortunately it was with us and we recorded speeds of up to 13 knots as we entered. The weather changed and we were caught here for 3 days.

Departing, the first 10 miles as far as Brough Head were miserable, dead on into a lumpy sea thrown up after three days of gales. It was easier when we bore away into Westray Firth. From Rapness Sound we took the narrow Weatherness Sound which leads into North Sound. That evening we anchored in South Bay at the southern tip of North Ronaldsay. Our next passage brought us to Shetland where we anchored in a cove close to the Airport, just north of Sumburgh Head. The forecast was poor and, not wanting to be caught in this isolated anchorage, we sailed the 20-odd miles north to Lerwick. Incidentally, this was the 21st June – the longest day of the year but to us it was like a bad day in February. *Gabelle* was in Lerwick ahead of us and we spent three days here waiting for the gales to pass through. Time was not wasted here though, as our windlass needed repairs. When I dismantled the motor I discovered that the keyway had split and the motor was not

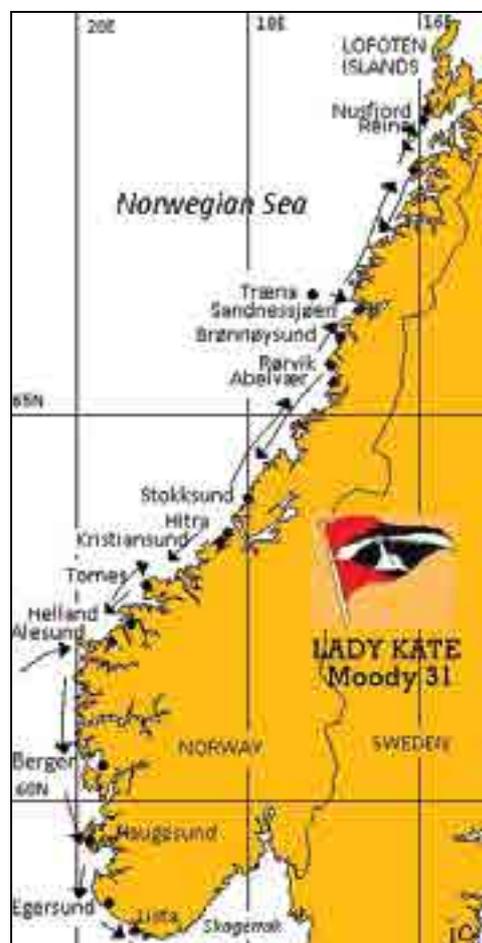


Clare off Norwegian coastline

driving the gear unit. A new motor would not be available to us before we left for Norway so I had a local machine shop cut a second keyway in the shaft on the opposite side to the original one. This worked well but it was one hell of a job to refit the unit given the limited access available. We stocked up on stores, as we had been warned that Norwegian prices were way more than what we were used to at home. Given the rate of exchange from Euro to Sterling (£100 = €150), one wondered if the UK was more expensive than Norway. After three days the forecast looked good and we were off. Our 260-mile passage took us 48 hours. We encountered a pod of orca whales 60 miles east of Shetland; they were busy about other matters and paid little attention to us. Later that night we passed through the Brent oilfield and, although there were guard vessels on all the platforms, just like the whales they had no interest in us either. The wind was fair for the early part of the passage at about 18 knots, exactly what we need to get a fast comfortable sail out of *Lady Kate*.

The high Norwegian Mountains are visible from a long way off and so it seemed like an age before we closed the coast from first sighting land. Not being familiar with the area, I had identified Ålesund as our first port of call, probably because it was the only reasonable sized town in the area. We went alongside the pontoons in the town centre, but our choice of berth was a mistake. My visit to the customs office –just across the street by the bridge- was unnecessary. They were amused by my declaration of there being 2 litres of spirits on board but I assured them I had come to sail and not to drink! *Gabelle* arrived later that evening and we shared experiences of our passage. As the evening progressed the berths started to fill up and soon we were surrounded by a large fleet of motor cruisers. We were destroyed by fatigue and turned in early. Initially we slept like stones but as the night turned into morning the competing music from three different cruisers, each with its own high tech amplification system, proved too much. It would wake the dead. Next day was Saturday and, fearful that it would again be another hectic night on the pontoons, we put to sea and headed up the coast about 25 miles and anchored in a remote cove at Helland. The pilot book advises on a particularly dangerous stretch of coast – Hustadvika - which we would have to transit to get to Kristiansund. The inside passage attracted me and we had a fantastic pilotage experience as we made our way through the rocks and skerries. As we became more familiar with the style and type of marks used, it became easier to negotiate the narrow passages. At Kristiansund we parted company with *Gabelle*. They had a crew change in Bodø and would make longer passages to meet their deadline. From Kristiansund we crossed to Hitra and anchored in a cove, where despite the cold, Clare went for a swim. I was happy to watch. Heading out next morning we were entertained by a seagull and a sea eagle having a turf war. It wasn't really dark any more at night and the long hours of daylight allowed us to get away early and make longer passages.

60 miles up the coast at Stocksund we had great difficulty finding a place shallow enough to anchor. The fantastic depths encountered right up to the shore are so different to our experiences at home. The wind was generally from the northern quadrant and very cold. Most days we wore extra layers of clothes and



had to use the heating in the evenings to get any degree of comfort in the saloon. For us Rørvik was a disappointing stopover, the berthing was badly organized and the other visiting yachts there were reluctant to allow us to tie alongside. North of Rørvik lies the island of Torget on which is the mountain Torghatten, famous because there is a hole right through it about half way up. First we tried the anchorage at Moyhamna but it was a long walk to the mountain. Further south, we found a fair weather anchorage off a campsite with limited swinging room and went ashore. We went through the hole in the mountain and down the other side – fellow travellers who follow this way be advised to go from north to south as the climb on the south side is demanding. Back aboard again, we relocated to our original anchorage at Moyhamna and had a peaceful night. Passing through Brønnøysund and Sandnessjøen reminded me of the journey to Dublin before the motorway was built. We passed through the towns and had a built up area on both sides, effectively a water street.

At Sandnessjøen we were headed again and decided to bear away to the northwest and head for Træna. Our pilot book showed a picture of the Arctic Circle monument located there and we wanted to have some pictures with it in



Lady Kate at Svartisen Glacier

the background. This was a delightful island and I loved the well sheltered natural harbour we found there. We did our photo shoot but try as I could, I was unable to get as good a picture as that taken of Brian Cudmore in the 2012 Annual. I assumed that the background buildings had changed and thought no more of it. In the morning we paid a brief visit to Sanna Island and walked to the cave. The crystal clear water tempted Clare to swim. I made of sterner stuff resisted temptation!

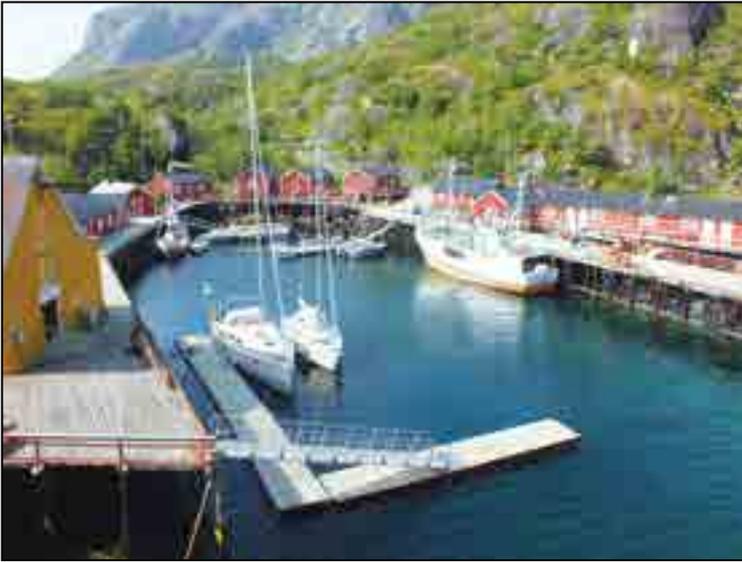
Fresh wind from the Northwest ruled out any hopes we might have of getting to Lofoten for the time being. We headed back to the mainland, planning on visiting the Svartisen Glacier at Nordfjord. There are two Nordfjords. Of course we picked the wrong one, influenced by a recommendation of two wonderful anchorages described in the pilot book. The anchorage at Ytre Handvika was fantastic. Clare's swim here was more challenging than before – there was lots of melt water coming from the mountains which made the sea really chilly. North of us lay the other Nordfjord and we arrived at the glacier landing place at the same time as a cruise ship and some local ferries. There is a new pontoon here and there was plenty of space for us to use it, despite the commercial activity. We walked to the Glacier and touched the ice. Later that evening we overnighted in a cove on the east side of Mesøya. Now it was really cold, - the heat was on most of the time in the evenings. The fresh wind from the north gave us lots of grief next day as we tried again to make progress. In the shelter of the islands it was possible to make good progress, but in open water the wind chill was really a factor. We found Bliksvær in the centre of a protective layer of other rocks and islands. There was a community pontoon, together with the usual honesty box, and some good trails ashore. The break came and we were bound for Lofoten. Nusfjord a village of almost Stepford like perfection, was our chosen stopover. There were lots of tourist cabins and remnants from the cod fishery. The honesty box looked for a larger than expected donation but this was well offset by a free laundry which was a very timely discovery.

This was to be our furthest north; our underwriters in their wisdom had decided that we might turn into a pumpkin or a pillar of salt if we ventured north of 69°. Perhaps their chart had 'here be dragons' at this point. At Reine a little further south, we rented a car and became tourists for a day. Our return passage took us south to the south west corner of Svenningen, where we found a lovely anchorage. Continuing southward we came on the island of Vikining with its Arctic Circle monument. Now it dawned on me that this was the one that Brian Cudmore photographed when he was here. Knowing that the editor will not print the same picture twice, I had to be inventive – only one way to get a better shot.... I swam in the cold sea here. Later we anchored in a cove at Loekta Island – it looked like a good anchorage but it was subject to wash from passing ships and wasn't the most comfortable place until the traffic eased off. In need of fuel and supplies, we stopped at Brønnøysund but mooring was at a premium, as there was a concert being held there and many of the visitors had arrived by boat.

In the light breeze next day we motored south. I didn't want to over-night in Rørvik again and carried the tide through the narrows and on under the bridge. Then we found Abelvær. The pilotage was wonderful and we found an old ramshackle pontoon which served us well for our



Donal has Arctic Circle swim



Lady Kate at Nusfjord

were glad to find the little harbour at Tornes. I dismantled the Autohelm and found that the working face of brushes in the motor had crumbled and they were making an uneven contact. A quick check on the internet revealed that it would be next to impossible to get a replacement unit in the time frame available to us. I dared not open the motor as I felt it would be really difficult to get it back together correctly. By carefully filing the face of the brushes it was possible to get the motor to run again when power was applied. I sprayed it with WD40 to help get rid of the carbon fragments and ran it for a longer time. Things were looking good! Unit reassembled and ready for sea – definitely deserving of a beer, the test would come tomorrow.

Retracing our track from our very first day in Norway, we made our way south to Ålesund. Later we discovered that the Tall Ships had visited and we missed them by just one day. The autohelm worked well but growled a bit in gusts; we hand steered on and off to give it a rest. As the day progressed the performance improved and I thought how lucky we were to get it working again. South west of Ålesund we found Holmfjorden a lagoon surrounded by 4 islands. The entrance and exit are guarded by two bridges. At Fosnavaag we stopped to get some supplies then crossed to another island, where we were able to lie alongside a local pontoon. Next was the challenge of Statt – a peninsula jutting out into the sea, with absolutely no shelter whatever from the ocean. Such is its notoriety that there is a proposal to build a tunnel through the headland as a sheltered route for low air draft craft. Here also the Norwegian Lifeboat service escort pleasure craft through the open water. Our transit was so calm that we motored all the way. From Statt to Tananger is undoubtedly the most scenic part of the Norwegian coast, if I return again I will concentrate my time here. The offshore islands offer complete shelter all the way. The pilotage here is brilliant and the mountains drop sheer into the sea. Our passage was confined to the coastal route with insufficient time to venture into the fjords. The longest at Sognefjord is 115 miles long and would take lots of time to explore fully.

In a remote horseshoe shaped canyon type cove called Botnane we anchored for the night. There were really strong gusts coming down the cliffs but, satisfied that we were holding, I turned in. Sometime later I woke and discovered that we had dragged our anchor and were less than 2 metres from the shore. I gunned the engine and held her clear until we sorted things out and recovered our anchor. There was a mass of kelp with two stones – as big as footballs – attached to the anchor when it broke surface. Fearful of a repeat performance, we relocated to an old ramshackle wharf across the harbour, narrow escape!

Two days of rock hopping through the islands brought us to Bergen, which lived up to its reputation of being Norway's wettest town. On average they get 260 days rain per annum. Despite the pouring rain, a visit to Vagen on the waterfront in the heart of the city is an experience. Here yachts tie alongside at the fish market and although everything was beyond the size of my pocket, it was fascinating to explore the stalls. Bergen is the departure point for return to Scotland but with talk of unsettled weather – not going to be stuck in Lerwick again- we took a bold decision to carry on south and return home via the English Channel.

South again well reefed down in the freshening northwest winds, we made a good passage to Haugesund. Here I learned that the BBC shipping forecast area of Utsire takes its name from a nearby island of the same name. The coast from Haugesund to Lindesnes, Norway's southern tip, is bland and uninteresting. We stopped at Egersund where one is welcomed by the statue of a nude nymph on a pedestal in the approach to the town. Taking advantage of the strong following wind, we dashed along the coast to Lista, our chosen departure point for Denmark.

Opting for an early start, we figured that the passage across the Skagerrak could be made in a day. With little wind we motored and made a good passage, arriving at Thyborøn by evening. A few miles offshore, the wind freshened dramatically and it was a bit lively in the approach to Limfjorden. Here mooring was alongside the quay wall in the yacht basin and the new shore side facility was really good. We lost a day here while we waited for the wind to abate. The following day, thinking it had died off sufficiently, we headed south again. In the following wind, I opted to set a reefed foresail and

overnight stop. Taking advantage of the light winds we poked our way through another archipelago. Back in the open sea again the wind had freshened but was favourable and carried us south to Stocksund where we anchored in a cove at Lunnfjorden. Calm again next day, just before we crossed the entrance to Trondheimsfjord, we saw the first “proper” Norwegian lighthouse of our cruise at Kjeungskjær. Looking at the chart, I had earmarked a cove for our overnight stop but on arrival the entrance was really difficult, shallow and unmarked. A mile further on we found Åkvika, peaceful & sheltered.

After a fair start, an interesting passage through the islands was spoiled later in the day by torrential rain and we were toughly soaked by the time we arrived in Kristiansund. In freshening wind we again had to face the notoriously dangerous passage at Hustadvika. Shortly after departing Kristiansund we were faced with another challenge – our autopilot kept overloading. Hand steering in the freshening wind, we took the inner passage and



we made fantastic progress all day. The wind was freshening and the sea was building all the while and by the time we were off Hvide Sande it was gusting 34 knots and the sea was running about 5 metres. The entrance was now on a lee shore and we decided to shorten sail for entry. The reefing line parted and with the memory of a previous experience when I lost the foresail I foolishly made the wrong decision to drop the sail on deck and motor into the harbour. In the approach I realized that if we lost the engine we might be in trouble. There was however so much wind that running under bare poles would carry us into the shelter. Hvide Sande is primarily a fishing harbour and I have never seen gulls as big or so lazy. They stand on the pontoons where a plentiful supply of food is readily available. Lacking exercise, they have grown as big as chickens. Now in the howling wind we had the difficult task of tidying up our sail

again to avoid it being covered in bird shit by morning. It took another 30 hours for the gale to pass over; at its height it was difficult to walk past the beach for fear of blown sand getting in our eyes.

Another 50 miles along the coast lay Esbjerg, which was to be our final stop in Denmark. A day's motoring then brought us to Helgoland in Germany, where we had a lay day. Alongside us was a Russian from Kaliningrad – could I help him with a problem? Thinking it was some technical difficulty with the boat of course I would. He had a €500 note that fell in the sea and was a bit faded and although the bank said it was ok they wouldn't take it. I suggested that the German bankers would be naturally suspicious of a Russian trying to cash such a note. Why not try another bank and tell them that you accidentally left it in your pocket when you washed your clothes. Sometime later he returned to the boat beaming "Hay Irish very guth plan you make vork vell" later I got a shout again "Hay Irish I haf gift for you" He then presented me with a Russian naval uniform. I protested that I couldn't take it as he would be in need of it at home. "It ok I steal another" Helgoland is mental with day trippers with lots of busy tourist shops competing for business. In the harbour as the raft gets bigger there are mooring buoys to which the outer boats run lines. This prevents the raft twisting and crashing into the next one. Sometimes the rafts are 12 boats or more deep.

Another mediocre forecast – this time more rain than wind. We headed for Holland. It was calm to begin with; later it poured rain and the wind freshened. Because of the conditions, we diverted to the German island of Borkum and, although this involved a detour that would ultimately cost nearly 16 miles, we had little choice. Next morning we were promised strong westerly winds which would really make it difficult to make progress around northwest Holland. We clawed our way west round Schiermonnikoog then locked into the canals and took the sheltered Stande Mast Route through Friesland. I was familiar with this territory, having been through here twice before. The strong winds didn't affect us and we were able to make progress despite the wind. At Harlingen we returned to the sea briefly then locked into the IJsselmeer at Kornwerderzand. This was mental to negotiate as it was a virtual free for all; everybody tried to jump the queue and it took us three attempts before we eventually got through.

After an overnight stop in Hindloopen, we crossed IJsselmeer then entered the Markermeer, followed by a stopover at Sixhaven Marina in Amsterdam. 12 miles along the Ij River we locked back into the North Sea. By now the strong winds had abated and we sailed south along the coast, making a stop at Scheveningen. Another crazy place, we were allocated a berth in a corner and before I realized it the space in front was immediately filled to capacity leaving absolutely no exit channel for those like ourselves berthed on the inside. Our plans for an early start were going to be seriously upset if we didn't resolve this issue. Marina management made all the right sounds and promised everything would be sorted. In reality little happened and we were trapped. I spoke to my immediate neighbours and explained that we would have to leave early. There was a bit of a reshuffle which would allow us to get out without too much disruption. A long calm day's motoring brought us to Zeebrugge. As I result of a previous encounter with Belgian Customs, I was reluctant to stop at a Belgian port but hoped that we would be in and out before they had time to "process" us.



Windmill at Dokkum

The Belgian bureaucrats lived up to their reputation. The port office still had details of our previous visit in 2008 on record.

Wind back in the southwest, we slogged along the coast but gave up when we reached Dunkerque. It was fabulously

calm next day, so much so that we encountered several Channel swimmers as we made our way to Dover. This was a quick overnight stop and we were carried west by a fresh easterly wind. It is difficult to get clear of the Dover Straits tide, as the east going stream runs for a lot longer than the ebbing west-going stream. Standing on, we arrived off Brighton and when we called the harbour for a berth we were advised that there would be a delay of a few hours before we could enter, due to combination of low water and dredging operations that were in progress. We weren't going to waste time here and carried on to Shoreham. The locking was ponderous – although there was no other traffic we had to wait until the scheduled locking time before we got in. The pontoons and facilities are a bit ramshackle and cost almost as much as Brighton.

The rain next day was unbelievable and we opted to stay put. During a visit to Brighton, we witnessed fire services dealing with flooding and there were lots of shops with buckets catching water from leaking roofs. We were set for an early start out of Shoreham but the lockmaster postponed our exit owing to "tidal conditions" outside. This was frustrating and the delay cost us an hour of west going stream. The wind was favourable but with poor visibility we were on our toes as we entered the Solent. Last year I discovered Camber dock in the heart of old Portsmouth, but was whisked away to Cowes before I had time to explore the area. Now we spent a few hours walking the old streets and laneways. Later in a quayside pub I was amazed to meet Clifford Nicholson from Dunmore East. Small world.

We transited the Solent against the tide, but made reasonable progress by keeping close to the Wight shore. A planned lunchtime anchorage at Alum Bay didn't work out, as the wind had freshened out of the west and was dead onshore. And so we carried on until off Anvil Point we had to give up, beaten by a wind against tide situation which made us abandon and settle for a night at anchor in Swanage bay. Well up for it next morning, in lighter winds we rounded Anvil and St. Alban's Head, then put our nose into Lulworth Cove for a look. There was no comfort here, as it was mobbed with boats of all descriptions and very crowded. In Portland harbour we anchored off Castletown, went ashore and walked to the top of the Verne.

Now the tide dictated everything. To round Portland Bill with as much tidal advantage as possible, we were under way by 03.30 and we passed the Bill in the dark. With little wind we motored west, encountering some of the Fastnet Race fleet becalmed around us. By evening we were off Salcombe and decided to overnight there. The motor was required again the next day and it wasn't until we passed the Eddystone that the wind picked up. At Falmouth we anchored off the town quay. Here we had a lay day. Leaving Falmouth, our intention was to spend a night anchored off Mousehole before making the final leg of our journey to Ireland. At the Lizard, yachts from the Fastnet fleet passed us in large numbers as they made their last few miles to Plymouth.

There was a fine south-westerly breeze and, as it would be in our favour for our passage home once we rounded Land's End, we decided to keep going. It was great sailing with speeds of 6 knots or more for most of the early part of the passage. During the night our autohelm started to make unusual noises and finally packed up altogether. The drive belt had broken but I didn't have a spare. I dismantled the unit and spliced the belt with some wire staples which I located away from the drive sprockets when reassembling. This trick worked for a while but eventually it was back to hand steering. All this on a night with a new moon and cloud cover that prevented us seeing the stars. I hate hand steering by compass but passed the time fuming and plotting all sort of evil things to do to the design team of the autohelm. The two year old unit seems to have given an inordinate amount of trouble but I have to concede that it has almost 6,000 miles logged. We picked up the Comeragh Mountains and as they rose out of the sea the Waterford coast followed. It was weird to see the familiar coastline after so long away. Helvick Head & Ballynacourty Light welcomed us home. As in previous years our arrival coincided with dead low water and, although we made it to the town quay, we could not get alongside on arrival. Now on August 21st some 78 days since we set, out we had covered 3,549 miles, visited 7 countries, circumnavigated Britain for the 2nd time, and achieved our goal of putting *Lady Kate* north of the Arctic Circle.



Glens moored in front of RSt.GYC (see Dunn's Ditty overleaf)

Glen Ditty 2015 Pete Hogan

I should begin by saying that this will be my last Glen Ditty. I must thank the editor of the ICC Annual for publishing my efforts over the past several years and patiently allowing me to propagandise unashamedly on behalf of the Dublin Bay Glens. I will no longer inflict my modest sailing adventures on the membership. Better to bow out graciously rather than be shown the door, I feel.

The 2015 season in the Dublin Bay Glens was busy and blessed with lots of wind rather than too little. 11 Glens remain outside the R.St.GYC. (What I like to call the legacy fleet.) The big event of the season was the Volvo regatta, which had a bit too much wind for comfort. This resulted in a smaller turnout than one might have hoped for. I prefer heavy weather for racing and tend to do better in these conditions but was disappointed in my Volvo results. As in previous years, the usual suspects won.

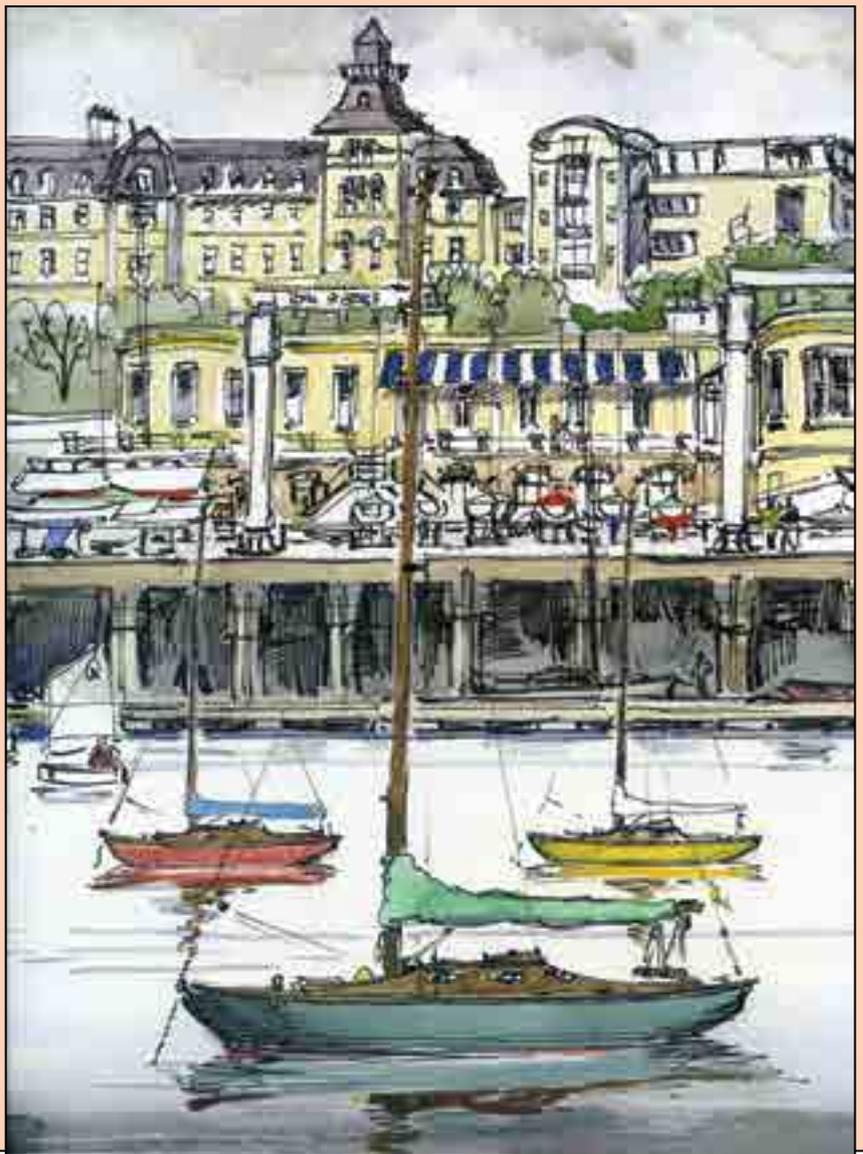
This predictability in the racing results underlines the downside of Glen racing. With fleets numbering an average of 6 or 7 boats and two or so of the fleet consistently taking the lead and winning, the races become stylised processions, parades of sail, really.

Getting regular crew and help in maintaining *Glenshane* has been an ongoing challenge. This year I was blessed with one crew who was exceptional. It was hard to hold him back. He delighted in putting up the spinnaker and in developing ways to make this more efficient. He knew the next mark and the compass course to it before I could ask him. You only had to explain once how and why one did something a certain way or what something was called. He always turned up. Did not go in for idle banter at inappropriate times. With his smartphone at the ready he had the tide, course, wind direction and anything else you care to mention at the ready. Take a bow Johannes.

It's a worrying time for the Dublin Bay Glens. The cruiser berthing plans for the harbour could evict them from their mooring patch outside the George. The fleet, numbering 11, is close to the lower limit of its sustainability as a class. The annual maintenance drudge becomes yearly more onerous. Glens need to be valued more for what they are, a fine example of classic Irish-built pocket cruiser from a certain era. When one sees the resources poured into sailing in other places, the UK south coast, the US, or the Med, one realizes that the Glens are grossly undervalued and underappreciated. To allow the Glen fleet to disband would be a tragedy.

The Dublin Bay Glens are always looking for additional members. They have at present up to three boats needing crew and TLC. If you have done your cruising on the briny deep and wish to retire gracefully but still would like to keep sailing, consider the Glens. www.glenclass.com

(It's a pleasure to publish Pete's pieces on the Glens. I hope this won't really be the last. Also, I have to declare an interest as an RUYC sailor, where the class started nearly seventy years ago; and it give me an excuse to print Pete's lovely Glen paintings. ...Ed)



Pure Magic's Odyssey continues, via Greenland

Peter Killen



Last time I sailed to Greenland, in 1995, we had eight gales and two storms over a six week period. Meanwhile, Ireland had the best summer in years. Our hope was that the weather this time around would be better, and indeed it was, while Ireland had the worst in years.

Any worries I may have had about how *Pure Magic* fared over the Nova Scotia winter were put to rest as soon as I saw her. She had been very well cared for by the Shining Water Marina staff and was in perfect order. Indeed they had had the hardest winter in living memory.

Mike Alexander, ICC, and I arrived on 30th June. My wife Bev arrived on 5th July and *Pure Magic* was launched on Monday 6th. Joe and Trish Phelan, both ICC arrived the same day

We virtualled the boat and sailed to Halifax through thick fog, docking at Armdale Yacht Club for the following two nights. While there, we were very lucky to be taken on a tour of Halifax Harbour in a large Canadian RIB, compliments of Karl Hesjedahl, a friend of Mike's. It was a glorious morning and he peppered the trip with lots of anecdotes, which had us mesmerized.

We sailed on up the coast 40 miles to Jeddore Harbour, where we stayed overnight on a mooring belonging to John Van-Schalkwyk, a Port Officer for the OCC. John was the person who sourced and recommended Shining Water Marina to me. He and his wife Heather, joined us for dinner on *Pure Magic* that evening, and Karl also joined us.

The following morning, we headed sixty miles up the coast to Spanish Ship Bay, where we anchored in Liscomb Harbour. It was a lovely spot, and we were the only boat there.

Next morning, it was on to Port Hawkesbury, a distance of 90 miles, in thick fog for the first three hours.

Port Hawkesbury is a marina, very close to the lock of the Canso Canal. This canal separates Nova Scotia from Cape Breton Island and early the next morning, the 15th, we were up early and through the canal (in thick fog) by 08.00, and thence to Prince Edward Island (PEI).

We had met a yachtsman from PEI who recommended a marina some miles up the Montague river and what a beautiful spot it turned out to be. Much nicer than Georgetown, our initial choice.

We stayed here for two days, rented a car and drove to Charlottetown (a lovely town) and to the north of the island, where we visited the Anne Of Green Gables Farm. Bev and Trish were thrilled to see it all. The whole island is really fertile and attractive and well worth a visit.

On 17th July, we departed Montague bound for Port Aux Choix, on the East coast of Newfoundland, a distance of 375 miles, and had a bracing passage, with Joe and Trish, who were sleeping in the bow area, hang gliding from time to time as a result of the head seas. We arrived on Sunday evening, 19th July, and were steeped to find a spot on a small pontoon. Dinner in the local hotel was the business!

En- route back to the boat, we passed a house where a "Shed Party" was in full swing and they called to us inviting us to join them. The place was hopping. Shed parties take place in people's garages that have been kitted out with a cooker, a stove, table and chairs, plus a drinks fridge, music and lighting.

This shed and house, which had stunning views overlooking the water, is owned by Clari and Phil Hinks, and they insisted that we should come back the following evening for a proper garage meal with them, their son, Peter (on



Pure Magic in Port Aux Choix. Photo: Joe Phelan

leave from the Canadian Army) and one other family member plus a friend who turned out to be an absolute hoot. So the next day, following a great walk, we were treated to a super meal of Shrimps Pizza (no dough at all, just Philadelphia cheese) plus moose and salmon. We were stuffed. They insisted on giving us frozen bags of moose shavings, which we used later whilst sailing and which were delicious.

On Tuesday 21st July, we departed Port Aux Choix and decided to head straight for St. Anthony, since the forecast for later in the week was for strong to gale force North East winds, and a noser plus bergs didn't sound attractive at all. We had a fine sail up the coast, with sightings of plenty of Humpback whales, and we got around Cape Norman without any problems.

Given that we were now on the correct side of Newfoundland, and not far from St. Anthony, where a crew change was to take place, we

anchored for the night in Pistolet Bay. It was a desolate spot on a cold grey evening, with a strong South East wind blowing, but we were well sheltered and had good holding. We cranked up the heating, had a great dinner, and laid the heads down for the night.

Early on Wednesday morning, we departed for St. Anthony, a distance of 40 miles and arrived there by midday, tying up to a fishing pier, surrounded by trawlers. Sure enough, by that night, the North Easterly had whacked in, and to make matters more uncomfortable, at 02.30 we had to move the boat back some distance on the quay, in driving rain, to allow another trawler to dock. All great fun! The final thing to happen was that *Pure Magic* was covered in an oily soot from one of the trawler engines, which we found impossible to subsequently remove, despite furiously scrubbing attempts over the next few days. This was really the first bad weather we had encountered since the start of the cruise, and it wasn't all bad, for the weather picked up, it stopped raining and we rented a car for a few days. Off we went to L'Anse Aux Meadows to see the remains of a Viking settlement, which was really well illustrated and explained in a visitors' centre. From there we went to another site named Norstead, where there is a replica



Viking long boat, originally built in Greenland and then sailed to Newfoundland, where she is permanently housed. She is 51 feet long and is very wide and deep.

Bev and Trish flew home on Saturday 25th July and Robert Barker and Hugh Barry, both ICC, joined us later the same day.

The following Monday, we departed St. Anthony and 65 miles later, following a fast sail past lots of whales and dolphins, we docked in Battle Harbour, Labrador. It's a fascinating island where the whaling station and houses have been preserved by a voluntary charitable trust and we thoroughly enjoyed our visit, which coincided with a tour group of elderly Canadian people who had been dropped there that day, and were staying overnight in some of the houses which have been restored. We all had a communal dinner in the main meeting house, which was really pleasant. They obviously asked us about our current cruise and were stunned to learn the ages of the crew members; Robert (the child) 66, me nearly 68, Joe 74, Hugh 75 and Mike 78! I'd say a fair few were younger than even I, but our lifestyle, aided by gin, was keeping us sprightly, (I think).

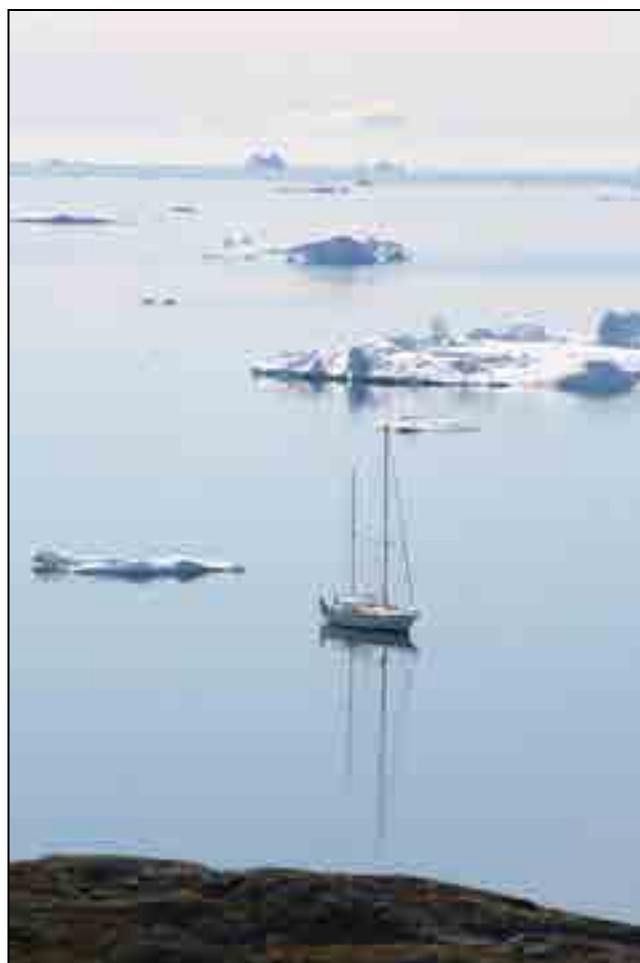
Another lady, named Janice Lewis, who is a retired teacher and who grew up on the island, gave some of the group including Joe and Mike, a fascinating tour and history of the settlement, going back to about 1770. She is 1/8th Inuit. She explained that the name "Battle Harbour" is the Anglicization of the Portuguese word "BATAL", meaning "a boat harbour".

On Tuesday 28th July, we departed Battle Harbour at about midday, bound for Disco Bay. We were waved off by the tour group, who were definitely considering taking to good doses of gin to try and emulate Joe's hopping around, and on Monday the 3rd August, we docked in Aasiaat, having sailed about 1,000 miles.

That evening, we discovered that the only two pubs we could find were closed, but we had burger and chips in a small café on the waterfront, plus a beer each. Such divine decadence!

On Wednesday 4th, we headed North to Christianshab and anchored in the bay, having had a truly wonderful trip through Disco Bay, past tons of bergs and whales. Once parked, we headed up the hill to a nice looking hotel, with super views of the bay, to an awful meal of burgers and chips.

The following morning, we upped anchor bound for Jacobshavn, and the Isfjord Glacier, and threaded our way through



Pure Magic at Nordre Huse. Hugh Barry



The restaurant at Rhode Bay. Hugh Barry

where we were able to anchor near the settlement to the chorus of what seemed to be hundreds of huskies, all chained for the summer months. A good walk ashore was followed by a very nice meal in an extremely neat boathouse restaurant by a slip. We were served by a lovely Inuit lady, owner and chef, who was being helped by her 2 year old son.

Our final destination, heading north, was to be Saqqaq at 70.0N and we finally reached there on Saturday 8th, through a good deal of ice. It is a really interesting small settlement, with lots of people coming and going in small fishing boats. Two families arrived in to the pontoon in their boats, with seals that they had just shot. It struck us that everyone there was really industrious. All the houses looked extremely neat, as did the church.

Regretfully, it was time to turn south once more and we departed Saqqaq on Sunday 9th of August, and 70 miles later, tied up along side an American yacht named “Palawan”, on a ferry dock at Godhavn. We had bumped into her earlier in the week (*hope not!* - Ed) and she was now also heading for home, which was Newport R.I. She is a beautiful yacht, a Hood 70 and immaculate.

On Tuesday 11th, from Godhavn we went to Kronprinsens Ejland and then on to Kangaatsiaq, again a lovely small settlement. As we walked along a road overlooking the sea, and passing small houses, we thought of the occupants washing their dishes at the kitchen sink and looking out at a stunning view of bergs floating and whales swimming past the settlement in the evening sun.

From 12th August, we sailed down the coast via the inland route, which was enchanting, overnighing in various settlements en-route to Sisimiut where we initially docked, but had to later move as a small freighter required the space. We anchored here for two nights and during our time here, we had one of the best meals of the trip in the Sisimiut Hotel.

On the way in to the shore in our dinghy, a fast motor boat opened up his engine throttle as he passed us, and the resultant bow wave sloshed into the dinghy, soaking Mike’s trousers.

We arrived at the hotel, and Mike asked the very nice waitresses if he could borrow an apron. They handed him one and off he went to the loo, emerging a little later clutching his trousers with the apron wrapped around him, and headed up to the bar counter to ask the girls if they would be able to arrange for his trousers to be dried by the hotel staff. They very nicely agreed. There was just one problem. Unbeknownst to Mike, the apron didn’t fully wrap around him, and various diners stared in horror as Mike strolled past them giving them a great stern view. All the staff laughed so hard, they had to disappear into the kitchen!

Time was moving rapidly on and we had to be in Nuuk for Thursday 20th August, when Sean Colbert was due to join us. We motorsailed southwards, against, for the most part, light headwinds, but good weather, anchoring overnight in some wild and beautiful anchorages, until Monday 17th when we picked up a large piece of fishing net. It had wrapped itself around the propeller. Mike, who was on watch, reacted instantly and killed the engine.

We were lucky that there was no wind at the time and the sea was very slight. I had a wet suit, which I have had for

a myriad bergs, before progress North was halted. We anchored in a cove close to Nordre Huse, (69. 08N 51.06W) inside a line of bergs and went ashore for a two and a half hour walk up to the top of the highest headland, from where we got a panoramic view out to sea and inland, up to the snout of the glacier. The ice booming and cracking as the glacier calved and the bergs split, was “awesome” and was, as described in the pilot, “one of the wonders of the world”.

We finally managed to find a space at a quay wall in the incredibly busy Jacobshavn (also called Ilulissat) harbor, where we stayed one night, before having to vacate for a fishing trawler and heading to Rodebay, an anchorage 8 miles away,



the past 25 years, and which, as Joe pointed out, I had outgrown at this stage! I also had some breathing gear with me, so it was over the side and following 20 minutes of net cutting, we were once more on our way.

We anchored that evening in a place named Sukkertoppen (meaning Sugar top) at 65.25N 52.54W, where for the first time in weeks, able to tie up to a pontoon Thank The Lord! The small secure marina is administered by the local hotel, perched above it on a cliff face. Indeed three sides of the harbour are surrounded by high cliffs, resulting in a very sheltered spot.

We trotted up to the hotel to clock in and met a person manning reception, who would have made Basil Faulty seem like a consummate hotelier. We explained that we were here for two days and could we have a key so that we could enter and exit the marina. No, he had no keys left. Could I borrow his key and have another cut? No. Could we leave the gate open to our pontoon? No. How were we to get in and out? Don't know.....And then the good bit.....How much did we owe for a two night stay? "Nothing. Since I can't complete the paperwork, to give you a key, I cannot charge you!" We decided, with some trepidation, to book dinner that evening, given that we had a free berth.

We solved the problem of entry and exit by stationing the dinghy just inside, or outside the gate, and paddling it around the gate carefully avoiding the acres of barbed wire.

We need not have been worried. Basil had disappeared and two waiters, one an Inuit, and the other a Dane, looked after us extremely well in a marvellous and well-attended dining room, with stunning views overlooking the harbour and a backdrop of snowcapped mountains glowing a soft rust in the setting sun.

That evening, a Polish yacht, which had tied up next to us earlier in the month, appeared and the skipper told us he had a bad forecast of up to 40 knots from the south for the following day. We were most surprised, since our most recent forecast was for 10 knots, at the most. He invited us to look for ourselves and Joe went on board for a look. Sure enough, it seemed bad, but was not due to come in until later in the day.

We downloaded another forecast ourselves which still matched our original one, so, having always found our system to be very accurate, we decided to depart early in the morning, just to be sure. We did, and all went well and by 13.40 we were anchored in another lovely and sheltered bay named Tovqussak 35 miles away, where an abandoned fishing harbour lay. It was a dank damp afternoon, but with the heating whacking away, and a good book, lots of dozing, followed by a great fresh salmon dinner (cooked by Mike) accompanied by some very nice wine, we never even noticed the torrential rain which fell during the night.

On Thursday 20th August, at 05.15 we upped anchor and set sail for Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, and arrived there early that evening in bright sunshine and blue skies.

We were tied up in the inner harbour, more or less exactly where we had docked the last time we were here 20 years ago. That time, we had arrived in a howling gale, and Nuuk had looked a drab miserable, rundown place, with hideous Russian-like flats, and people who appeared to be unemployed, depressed and drunk. What a contrast! In 1995, the population was approximately 5,000. Now it is about 16,000. Nuuk is smart with plenty of fine buildings, both commercial and residential, with many good roads to service the outlying areas. Many of the inhabitants must be comfortably off, for there is a plethora of smart private motorboats of different shapes and sizes, and in general, there is an air of dynamism about the place. What we also noticed was that many of the positions of authority and management are now occupied by Inuits. Indeed, the harbourmaster of Nuuk is Inuit.

Sean Colbert, who was sailing back to Ireland, with us, joined us here on the Friday, whilst Hugh and Robert departed by air on the Monday. While in Nuuk, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, visiting an excellent museum, revisiting the Thai restaurant where we had had a first class meal all those years ago and which is as good as ever.

We also had a great afternoon in the magnificent municipal swimming pool complex, frying in the sauna, and floating about in the pool. Whilst there, I noticed there were some glass cubicles at one end of the pool, which looked a bit like individual shower cabinets, and I hopped out to have a closer look. I couldn't work out exactly what they were, and one of the others, floating about, called to me to ask the guy behind the counter alongside them.

It transpired that "The Man Behind The Counter" was, in fact, a man in a kind of Turkish Bath, and it was only his head sticking out of the contraption, that was visible from the water. The rest of his body was zipped up into the thing and his face was beetroot.

He got even redder as we stared at the whole affair, trying not to laugh. It turned out that the units were infra red steam rooms,....very smart indeed.

On Monday 24th August, we departed Nuuk bound for Nanortalik, in dense fog and by Wednesday 26th we had arrived there in the early afternoon. Having fuelled up and found a very nice berth at the Royal Arctic wharf, we headed off for a walk and a final shop, given that this was our final stop in a settlement. Last time here, we had had a whale of an evening in the Hotel Tupalik. Sadly it now a hostel, and looking very run down. However, the Cape Farewell Hotel is open for business and looking good.

The main changes we noticed were that the Wild West louvred swing doors into the bar were no more. Last time around, as we had approached the bar, a very large Danish barman had burst through them with a small, struggling Inuit woman under his arm, who he chucked into the track in front of the hotel. As we had stared, stunned, she had picked herself up, dusted herself down, and charged back in through the doors once more. It was here too, that my son Andrew, then 18 years old, had been proposed to by an Inuit mother who "Wanted him to settle down there with her daughter, and make babies!" On that occasion, Andy had gulped down his beer and hightailed it back to the boat as fast as his legs

would carry him.

This time, there was a very efficient Inuit barman and a group of geologists whom we got chatting to and who were on contract taking core samples, on behalf of a gold mining company. They were five in all and were fascinating to talk to. Two of their number were also good climbers, and their task was to take the samples in the more inaccessible locations.

Joe, who studied geology, thought he had died and gone to Heaven, and for two pins was ready to jump ship and join them.

Early the next morning, we downloaded a forecast which gave very strong winds from the south east off Cape Farewell in two days time. We decided to go immediately and try and get away from the Cape before they whacked in. Off we went and had a stunning motor sail through the 50 mile Prins Christian Sund, in bright sunshine and flat calm conditions. The mountains, up to two and a half kilometres in height, make the waterway feel extremely narrow, when in fact it is at least half a mile or more wide, most of the time.

The play of light as we motored along the twisting route, making sure we didn't go up one of the many Cul De Sacs, took our breath away and we finally arrived near the exit in a darkness lit up by a huge moon and the Aurora Borealis, which helped us spot the growlers and bergs littered everywhere. We sadly passed by the weather station, where we had had a wonderful meal, the last time, so didn't get to sign the visitors book and look for our previous entries.

We managed to stay ahead of the weather, and had one of the easiest crossings I have ever had. Our only worry was fuel, for we motored for much of the way home, only finally finding wind in the last two days or so, and meeting the only gale of the entire trip when we were in the northern approach to Ireland. We finally docked in Howth marina on Saturday 5th September at 22.30 and rushed to the bar, which thankfully, didn't close until 00.30.

This, we are agreed, is probably our last long trip, for age is rapidly catching up on us all, so I reckon it will be European waters from now on, which is no hardship at all, and as I said to the others, "we didn't need even one of the two body bags I had brought!"

It had been, we all agreed, a wonderful trip. Joe, in his usual expert way, had handled all our navigating requirements for the full trip. Indeed, I really never needed to look at a chart for the duration. Sean Colbert and Robert Barker kept our faulty fresh water pump going for the duration, Mike looked after the stores, Hugh kept sheets and warps in top condition, and had us constantly laughing with his ready wit and we all had endless debates which were always interesting, and novel, despite the length of time we had been together.

Lastly, it is lovely to have *Pure Magic* back in Ireland following a sojourn away from home waters of six years.

Total distance sailed from Halifax to Howth; 4,194

Number of engine hours; 305



Mike, Peter, Hugh, Aqgalu, Rob, Joe

Joe Phelan writes about a Ticket in a bottle

My good friend Patrick Jackson, stepson of the late and esteemed ICC member Mungo Park and living in Baily on Howth Head, spends time on a beach conservation “hobby” at Doldrum Bay (one of the coves between the Baily lighthouse the Needles Beach). In April this year, filling sacks with junk plastic, one of the many bottles which drift onto the small beach in large numbers piqued his interest as there was some yellowing paper inside. Upon opening the bottle he extracted three ship tickets, all used. One was illegible; the second dated 22 September 1998 was for Uummannaq (a settlement on the North West coast of Greenland) on the KNI Pilarsuissoq line. The place of departure was unreadable. This company now defunct but then based in Sisimiut operated, at that time, a chain of stores in remote locations in West Central & North West Greenland. The third ticket, dated 1st October 1998, was from Illorsuit to Uummannaq, on the Arctic Umiaq line. Illorsuit is a very small settlement about 50 nautical miles to the northwest of Uummannaq. Both are in Uummannaq Fjord situated on the north side of the Nuussuaq Peninsula about N71 degrees.

Intrigued, Patrick tweeted, with a hashtag, a picture of one ticket. This was picked up by a Greenlander, Ove Poulsen, living in Copenhagen. The two made contact and Ove, through his Facebook page, spread the word in Greenland where, it seems, it made something of an impact.

In late June Patrick realised that I was joining Peter Killen in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to sail with him on his boat, *Pure Magic*, home to Howth via Greenland. (Peter tells the story of that cruise elsewhere in the Annual). He hurriedly organised the framing of one ticket and, two days before my departure, dropped the package into my house with a note asking me to find a good home in Greenland for it. I, knowing only that he had found a ticket in a bottle from Greenland & nothing else, was not the most enthusiastic recipient of such a charge. After all, Greenland is a big place! Nevertheless, six weeks later as we approached the second largest town in Greenland, Sisimiut, with a population of 5,500, and realising that this was probably my last chance to find a home for the package now buried in my locker, decided that it had to be the local museum. By this time I had realised that most settlements had a museum with a sharp young curator and hoped the same would prevail in Sisimiut. And sure enough it did. The man in charge was Aqqalu Augustussen. When the five crew of *Pure Magic* filled his little office I was afraid it was not going to work – see the motley crowd in the photograph! However, I had hardly launched into my spiel when it became apparent he was fully conversant with the tickets in a bottle and was delighted to take responsibility for the package. He said he would contact his opposite in Uummannaq and they would look for the individual who had placed the tickets in the bottle all those years ago. When I returned home I filled in Patrick with the details, whereupon he told me that his Copenhagen friend, the Greenlander Ove Poulsen, was originally from Sisimiut. A fortunate coincidence then as, maybe, his FB page had a local following which must have included the museum curator.

So, how did it get from Uummannaq Fjord to Doldrum Bay? Perhaps as follows: the narrow Greenland west coast current flows north from Cape Farewell until it is turned westerly by the Hayes Peninsula, way to the north of Uummannaq Fjord. This peninsula forms the south-eastern entrance to the Nares Strait, the western shore being a section of Ellesmere Island. A cold current from the Arctic Ocean flows south through the Nares Strait and the Greenland west coast current is embraced by its cold flow. This is the current that becomes the narrow, cold Labrador Current eventually flowing over the Grand Banks and, sometimes, as far south as Bermuda or as far east as the Azores. Flotsam could easily transfer in the prevailing southwest wind of this area into the broad, North Atlantic current, which, as we all know, keeps us warm in winter. An unknown in this tale is the length of time the bottle spent on the beach in Doldrum Bay and the transit time. The distance travelled by way of the above route can be roughly estimated to 3,500 nautical miles.

The settlement of Sarqaq at N70.04 was the northernmost point on *Pure Magic's* cruise. Sarqaq is on the southern side of the Nuussuaq Peninsula. Nevertheless, even had we known then what we now know, the extra three, at least, days to get to Uummannaq and back would have stretched the schedule..

Another coincidence, perhaps: the Arctic Umiaq line had two ships with which it provided a ferry service from Qaqortoq in the south to Uummannaq Fjord in the north in the 1990s. These were the *Sarpik Ittuq* and the *Sarfaq Ittuq*. In 2006 the company sold the *Sarpik Ittuq* to Nova Cruising and now the northern limit is Ilulisat in Disko Bay to the south of Uummannaq Fjord. In January 2007 my wife and I were on the *Sarpik Ittuq* for a cruise to the Antarctic Peninsula from Ushuaia in the Beagle Channel. There is, therefore, a 50% chance that we sailed on the very vessel from which at least one of the tickets emanated.

So, what at first appeared to be a tedious task turned into quite an enjoyable exercise!

North Atlantic Crescent

Paddy Barry



In 2014 we had accompanied currach friends as support vessel on their rowing Camino from Dublin to Brittany. With 2015 being for them a coastal row southward, they no longer needed a support vessel and we were free to go elsewhere. My 'modest proposal', circulated to friends in November 2014, elicited adequate interest to make it a 'goer'. Our North Atlantic Crescent would be Dublin, Hebrides, Faroe, Iceland, East Greenland and back.

Ar Seachrán wintered, as in recent years, in Waterford City Marina. She is a 35-year old aluminium ex-racer, 45 feet long, converted for cruising. Principal engineering work required was on bilge pumps, rudder bearings and fuel injection. Sails were repaired by Yannick in Galway. In April she was lifted out and, with sea-ice in mind, her Maxprop replaced by a more robust fixed 3-bladed one. There was of course much more. "The man who would be fully employed should procure a ship or a woman, for no two things produce more trouble" (Plautius. 254-184 B.C.)



Ar Seachrán at anchor in Jacobsen Fiord. (Harry Connolly)

Our 'shakedown' for the season was a May-week to Snowdonia, based in Caernarvon Marina; a shakedown for the boat and ourselves, both.

Dublin to Stornoway. June 18th to 30th.

Aboard with me were Ruadhri O Tuairisg, Liam Ó Muirlithe, Donncha Ó hÉallaithe, Ruaidhri Breathnach and Kevin Cronin. We were carrying some turf sods from Ruadhri Ó T's bog in south Connemara, of which more later. We had loaded 10 weeks supply of 'hard food', ie the non perishables, in Poolbeg Marina and duty-free drink in National Y. C., Dun Laoghaire. Pushing an afternoon southgoing tide, we had a slow but pleasant sail to Clogher Head. There we tied alongside this busy pier, glad not to be anchored in the lively sea outside, or even on the inside mooring. Some walked the mile up to the village; I to bunk.

To Strangford, was 40 miles, good close reaching to begin with, then engine, then sailing again; to tie at Portaferry Marina. There we met some old friends, Raphael and Al from Killyleagh, ran into Gomesie & Lawsie and enjoyed a few pints in Dumigans.

Rathlin seemed unlikely, but tide serving well, engine running, in fog clearing, there we finished next day. Ruadhri Br., as ever, had dinner all ready. The evening was calm with no sign of the forecast fresh westerly. The hotel bar unfortunately is closed, leaving only the never-very-attractive pub as alternative hostelry. Next morning, Sunday, some walked westward to the Lighthouse, where there now is a welcoming bird observatory. The afternoon tide swept us northward on Rathlin's east side with mainsail and ½ rolled headsail pulling us, in the rain, across the Sea of Moyle, towards Islay and then Jura, to tie at Craighouse jetty. This, if well fendered, is an alternative to the visitor's moorings. Mackerel dinner was up, the Eberspacher heater blowing warmly within the cabin.

Next day, a finer one, Alex, in his bus, took us out to The 3-Arched Bridge, from where in various directions, we walked; I to the Three Paps. Well pleased and well fed we were that night commemorating Irish Saints who had passed this way long ago. Our intent was to plant one of our turf sods on Eilean Bhríde, (Brigid's Island) the northernmost of the three outside the Small Isles, together with a cast clay medallion. However, more comfortably instead in the Bar, we presented these to 'the people of Jura', they to bring out some fine day. It rained all night. Liam put pen to paper:

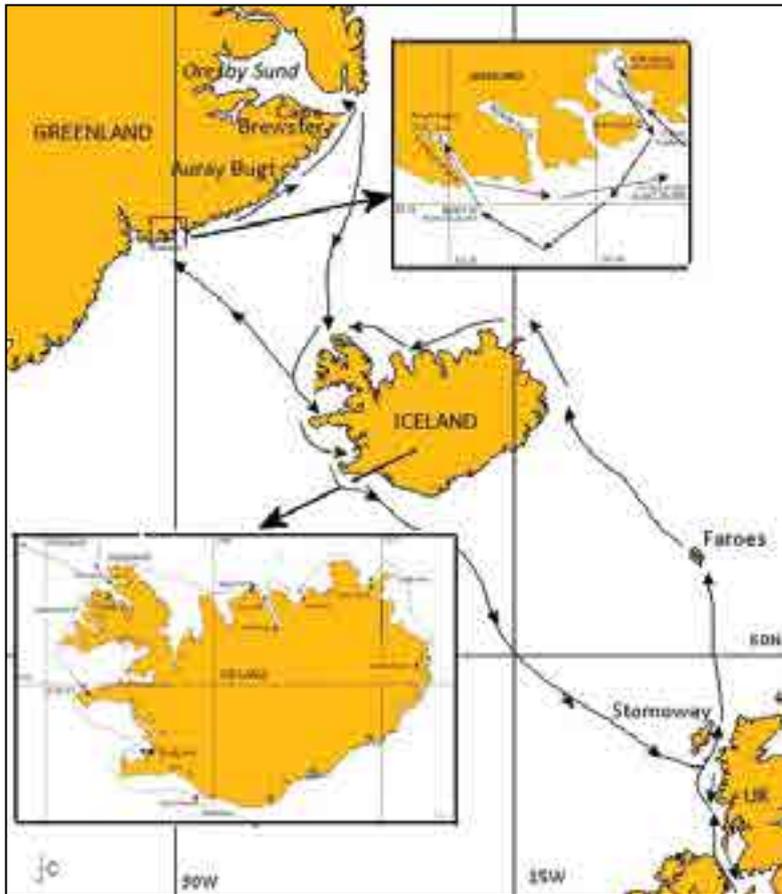
Guí Chun Bríde

Fód móna ón mbaile
Bonn teilgthe ó Chill Dara
Faoi chrá oileáin I gcéin,
Guimíd sórla coimira Bhríde
Faoi scath a hoileáinín
Ar ár seachrán féin.

Prayer to Bríd

A turf sod from home
a cast medallion from Kildare
under clay of island afar,
We pray for Bríds protective seal
in the shadow of her little island
On our own wanderings.

On Iona next evening, June 23rd, the Eve of St. Johns Day, we lit a small fire on the shore, placed one of our turf sods on top and passed the Jameson bottle round. Some Swiss, from the pub, thought they were in Heaven!



Going north-westward, the conversation roamed freely. Bonny Prince Charlie, by some being condemned, “he ran-while his people were being slaughtered”, Henry VIII being right when he closed the monasteries. Even Stalin got good mention, despite having killed 300 Ukranian poets for ‘spreading dissension’—“but he had a lovely singing voice”. We goose-winged off the south end of Tiree, then, pole down, we beam reached. Mingulay was hidden in the rain as we went into Castlebay, Barra, had one of our not-so-great sail drops and took a visitors’ mooring. Barra is the most joyful of the Outer Hebrides, but not when the mist shrouded all. I walked across the causeway to Vatersay then joined the others on a 2 ½ hour bus circle of Barra. The population is now about 1,400, the fish factory employing 100-150. That evening was rough and wet; all stayed aboard.

We had a good sail northward to Loch Boisdale, where there now is an excellent marina. Donald Currie, manager/mechanic, fitted a new alternator belt for us, a man worth knowing (075 86787 678). He also found a leaking engine hose, on which remedial action was definitely required. Wind blowing and rain falling, we dragged ourselves to the nearly empty but friendly village hotel, ½ mile distant.

Loch Maddy too now has a new marina, small, a little tight to get into, but serviceable. This village supports Glasgow Rangers, unmistakable sign of a changed social landscape.

A pleasant downwind passage, on June 30th, took us up The Minch into Stornaway for a full crew change. There we were met and entertained by Malcolm Maclean, joint editor with Theo Dorgan of *An Leabhair Mór*—The Great Book of Gaelic (Poetry). With Malcolm, we stood at the monument to The Reef Raiders, who had struggled for basic rights in the face of feudal landlordism, still prevailing in Lewis in the 1920s. The marina, somewhat tide-rod, makes Stornaway much more yacht friendly—a general trend as commercial fishing diminishes.

Stornaway to Isafjordur. Iceland. July 1st to 26th.

Our next crew were new to me, and for the most part to each other. This was refreshing in its own way but also interesting, not least in their view of my own style, whatever that might be?

Rob Ó Foghlú, in his mid thirties, I had met while making currach sails in west Kerry. Ciara ó Flynn, his partner, had done a little sailing in her native Cork harbour. Frank Spiers, retired Scottish graphic artist, sails a Folkboat out of Dun Laoghaire. His friend Willie Finnie, from Kildare races Ruffians and so knew what’s what, round the buoys at any rate. It was Willie who cast the Saint Brigid Medallions. Rob & Ciara are tasty musicians on flute and fiddle. Frank I knew to be a singer, but not that he also played well on whistle. My own offerings would be more that of the guitar-strumming ‘street-singer’.

So, very well equipped, in the music department at any rate, we went to sea on an afternoon, with Rona, 70 miles to the north, being our first objective. The forecast was for Variable Force 3 or 4, becoming easterly and fresher. Slow sailing allowed easy settling in and civilised dinner; all were keen to cook. By midnight it was calm as we moved under engine. At 02.00 our log records ” Flat calm. Full moon through the clouds. Still red sky in the northwest. 1,200 revs/4 knots”. Watches are in pairs. Our intent is to get to Rona about 8am.

07.30 Fog all round. Viz. 100 metres ? Blue sky above. 4 miles to go.

08.30 Thank God for Plotters. Cliffs ½ mile. No break in fog. We can hear birds and breaking water.

12.00 Sailing away in the sun @ 5 knots. The fog cleared about 10 and we closed. There was no obvious landing, other than a sloping shelf of rocks. An anchoring depth of 10 metres would have put us very close in. Feature had emerged, the remains of a monastic hut (we think), grassy but no sheep and high above, the lighthouse. We could have the spinnaker up, but leave “as is”. And so all day it continued, a lovely introduction for our new crew; waypoint set for 5 miles east of Munken rock, south of Faroe.

Sat. July 4th. 00.00 I came on watch, with Rob, to a glorious red sunset in the north.

03.00 Red sky again on our bow. Only 2 hours between.

In freshening wind, we reefed; sighted Suderoy and by 12.00 were into the town of Tvoroyri.

Much had changed since our last visit in 2011. The three small harbours, referred to in the RCC Directions, are

no more; now filled in and overlain with large industrial buildings. We took an uneasy berth round the corner of the new quay. This is well located near the bakery and Kongeliga Café /Pub. The wind rose, the rain fell. We doubled our lines and slept the afternoon away.

That Saturday night the Kongeliga was abuzz with happy Faroese, singing and having a great time. We barely got a look-in, but we did! This for me was a new picture of the Faroese; many of whom were home on holiday from working in Norway and Denmark.

For the 30 mile passage north to Thorshavn, the log is sparse. I got the tides wrong. It was slow and rough—the only consolation for us being that a French yacht, leaving 4 hours earlier, right time, had it as bad. Thorshavn has always been nice. In 1987 I had been awed that the public toilets were heated. They still are. And all the streets so clean and Danish; though we heard that there is less Danish spoken now and more English.

On the Monday we hiked out to Kirkjubar/Brandanvik ; 2 hours over the hills in cloud and mist. Kirkjubar Cathedral is one of ‘the sights’ but our objective was a couple of hundred metres beyond, remnants of an older stone church with connections to Saint Brendan, after whom the bay (Vik) is named. There we did our turf sod/medallion thing, reciting a verse of The Song of Amergin.

On the public bus we journeyed to Klaksvig, 1 ½ hours each way, on coastal road, bleak hills above, looking down on fishing villages, through inter island tunnels and emerging into this prosperous town. I broke the return journey and met up with archaeologist/historian friend Stemman Hansen, who had hosted us so well in 2011. Since then his scholarly ‘Toftanes—A Viking Age Farmstead’ has been published. Returning to an early bunk, I contemplated our next 270 mile passage to Seydisfiord on Iceland’s east coast.

Departing on Friday July 10th, this time we did get the tides right, picking up an 8 knot push. Rounding the west end of Mykines, we were somewhat disappointed at the famous bird cliffs, but wary of what the Pilot calls ‘fierce tides’. We met only light broken water, donned thermals and got sail up for a pleasant 6 or 7 knots. Stronger wind was forecast to come, a Force 7 possibly touching 8, from astern. And it did, and pasted us. But progress was good, first reefing down and then under part-headsail only until on Sunday July 12th

“03.30 Land visible, snow capped, abeam and ahead.

06.30 In the Fiord, 3 miles to go. Tidy up, Heater on.

07.00 Alongside. All quiet, breakfast cooking.”

Seydisfiord’s main thing is that it is Iceland’s ferry port for landings from Faroe and Denmark. That hasn’t changed, but it is now a brighter livelier place, with cafes, boutiques and a swimming pool. Even through the rain we could see that. The Euro/Kroner exchange rate wasn’t too bad either, so a beer or two ashore doesn’t break the bank. More importantly, Harry Connolly was there waiting for us. Harry, old friend, has sailed and climbed with me over 20 years, me taking him to some out of the way places and he dragging me up mountains I had no right to be on. Now, six aboard, we were bound round the north coast of Iceland for a fortnight, plenty of time to meander. But first we had to get round Iceland’s north east Langanes headland (pronounced ‘ess’, as in Lough Ness).

Porshovn was our first destination, of which we knew nothing other than what was in the RCC Sailing Directions. We engined there overnight, uneventfully, in much mist and fog. Within minutes of arrival, curious locals made us welcome, none more so than Kathleen from Fethard, County Wexford. She had settled here marrying Solvi Stein, foreman of the Fish Factory. Well, they couldn’t do enough for us.



Back in Iceland. Peter, Harry, PoB, Frank, Ronán, Gerry & Paddy. (Harry Connolly)



Running hard, Faroe to Iceland.

Over a couple of days, they drove us around, introduced us to people and fed us. We sang and played in the Café. Icelanders too. Out in Axel Johannesson’s farm, of 120 hectares of grassland plus mountain grazing, we saw his horses (he has 60), his sheep sheds (he has 1,200) and the shed where his father used to breed foxes, for the fur. A resourceful man is Axel, with wife Vala and six young children, typifying what is best in rural Icelandic. www.Belginur is the best local weather forecasting site. It was giving light northerlies and dry with maximum temperature of 7 degrees. In Iceland it had been, and still was, a cold poor Summer.

Our next destination was Husavik, 80 miles distant. We left at 06.00, motored all morning, saw some blue sky, wonder of wonders, and even got spinnaker up, to get in by 18.00. Husavik is a combination of a working town, fish and outlying farms, and big-time tourism; chasing the whale. Boats, with 12 to 20 passengers, were coming and going constantly. Willie left, to meet his wife for some touring. Veteran arctic sailor Roger Capp was there, now aboard the very traditional timber yacht *Ezra*, bound for Scoresbysund. We now were taking a serious interest in the ice conditions off East Greenland. It appeared to be late in breaking up; but as it was yet only July 17th, it still was early days.



Harry Connolly and Paddy. (Harry Connolly)

We were bound for Akureyri, to collect Paddy O'Brien; but with time in hand, went first to the small and pleasant town of Dalvik on the same fiord. Dalvik exemplifies everything that is good in Iceland. Friendly people, all of whom work; a clean and tidy place, fantastic campsite and sports facility, including as everywhere, swimming pool, hot tubs and sauna. Topped off by a friendly café owner, Bjorney—we called him Barney. There also Harry, Rob, Ciara and I climbed the hills behind the town, up onto crisp snowfields.

My hero Bill Tilman had written 'Even in Summer the Icelandic climate can be a little harsh'. Which, coming from him, is saying something. In poor visibility and rain, Force 6 or 7 from astern, we did the 17 miles downwind to Akureyri in short order. There we got the last berth in a small marina and Paddy O'Brien joined ship, carrying a groin injury from mountain biking back in Ireland a few days earlier. Akureyri, capital of northern Iceland is a nice though impersonal town, with hotels, pedestrianised main street and such. We left for Siglafiord, once the 'herring capital', whose factories now are museums. Hildur, in the Folk Music Centre, played and sang. Rob & Ciara left ship for Reykjavik, great couple, who fitted well into *Ar Seachrán*, as did Willie and Frank very much too.

To Isafiord (pronounced 'eesafjordur') was a 20-hour most glorious sail, with birdlife abounding along the north coast of Hornstrandir. Frank Spiers left ship here, happy man.

Harry and I climbed round Eyrarfjall into the neighbouring valley, road-walking it back.

This was our take-off point for Greenland, where on Sunday July 26th Frank Nugent, Peter Gargan and new men, climber Gerry Galligan and all-rounder Ronán Ó Caoimh, with gun and banjo (to frighten the polar bears, he said) joined. It was Gerry who had suggested the Turf Sod idea.

Isafiord to East Greenland to Reykjavic. July 26th to August 15th.

The Plan for this three weeks was to sail across Denmark Strait to the Kangerdlugssuaq area, 68 degrees north, there spend a week or so, climbing coastal mountains; then go 150 miles south west to the fiord area around Nigertulik at 66 degree north, spend a week or so climbing there; go visit Angmagssalik /Tasiilaaq Settlement and then sail for Reykjavic. Kangerdlugssuaq was selected because it is in that area that the sea ice first clears, usually around the last week of July, the clearance spreading along the coast, over the following few weeks northwards and southwards.

Non perishable 'hard' food we had carried from Dublin, including Mountain House dinners (add boiling water), fresh food just purchased, bottled butane gas (propane is unnecessary in these latitudes), 400 litres of water in the boat tanks and 600 litres of diesel (200 in boat tanks plus 20 drums). For climbing, we had a full range of hardware, tents, ropes, stoves and such. For shore going and kedging we had a 3.1 metre inflatable with 5 HP outboard and a backup smaller dingy and engine. Ground tackle was the usual, but with a couple of added 100 metre lines. We had Satphone to talk to 'baseman' Paul Cooper back home who would advise on weather and ice updates; and for emergencies, if occurring. For our own comms., we had boat VHF and two handhelds. Boat insurance had been extended to cover Greenland, with a €2,500 excess. In the case of any 'medivac' the cost would be shared. We did not register with the Greenland Authorities, for reasons both of cost and the onerous frequency of contact they require. The risk of damage to or loss of boat was mine.

In Isafiord were several other yachts awaiting ice clearance and passage. *Aurora Arctica*, substantial and well fitted, does commercial trips, as do a couple of others out of Husavik. Brian Black of Strangford was aboard an RCC yacht, whose skipper later forsook their Greenland intent.

Seven aboard, we departed at 11.00 on Monday July 27th under engine, in a light north easterly breeze, setting a waypoint for Nansen Fiord, 200 miles distant. As we cleared the land, we saw several Minke whales and many birds. The afternoon brought some sun, some occasional headsail, with seawater temperature of 9 degrees. All in all a good first day, well fed, calm seas and good progress.

During the night (there now was several hours of dullness) the sea temperature dropped to 3 degrees, as we got into the southgoing East Greenland Current. A whale was sighted close by, big one, about 50 feet.

The log notes:

" 08.50 Porridge up. Day of Interest lies ahead."



Going into Nansen Fiord. We're not alone. (Ronán Ó Caoimh)

these parts, having no very active glacier discharging into it and so being much frequented, in relative terms at any rate. From 20 miles out it appeared accessible, but an hour later however, as seen from the lower spreaders, it looked blocked off. From deck level one can see the sea surface for about 2 or 3 miles, as with navigation buoys. From the first spreader, about 7 metres up, the visibility, of sea level and hence ice, extends to 5 or 6 miles. Often what looks impenetrable, on closer inspection, is navigable. We decided to alter course for Kangerdlugssuaq Fiord, about 10 miles further west.

And it was while we were on our way towards it in about 3 or 4/10 ice that we saw another yacht about a mile away, a Schooner, weaving her way south westwards. We could see her masts, but not her hull. On VHF we spoke. She was French, *La Vlimeuse*, and bound for Tasiilaq. Quickly I passed our VHF to Harry. He has lived and worked for many years in Luxembourg; and speaks fluent French of course. And then the Luck, a 'Rub of the Green', as Gerry put it. The French had been the day before in Jacobsen Fiord, where it was accessible and clear of ice within. Wow! What news. We thanked them, wished them well and turned north; shimmying past floes, making about 3 knots.

By 19.00 we were off Kap Irminger at the entrance to the fiord, high unclimbable cliffs of friable rock abeam and clear water ahead. Fantastic.

9 miles on, we anchored off a delta shown on our Topographical 1:250,000 map. Deltas are usually good anchorages, being relatively shallow. But this one wasn't. Going as close as we dared to the shore, we still were in 25 metres.

A word on charts in these parts. The most detailed Danish are 1:400,000, with no soundings within the fiords, and not many outside either. The Topographical maps are much better, but without soundings, but do show rocks with a +. 'C charts' merely repeat the Danish. This lack of charting detail is in contrast to the most out of the way parts of the Siberian coastline, which are fully charted, accurate and freely available on 'C charts'. We ran a second anchor, had a good dinner, in surroundings magnificent. What luck to have heard that Jacobsen was open. To bunks and a good nights sleep all round.

Thursday, July 30th. A slow rise and breakfast in the cockpit, sun shining. Boat minding was by rotation, Frank and I being on for the day. The others dinghied ashore and took to the adjacent mountain. Frank and I dropped the headsail and stitched a 1 metre tear in the leech, fixed a broken oar, topped up the diesel tank and dinghied up fiord and sounded for shallower ground.

The lads returned about 21.00, 'bet out' after a hard day, making a couple of snow covered summits, but finding the lower ground very 'cobble covered'. We moved to a new anchorage, 8 metres depth, 40 metres of chain out. Dinner and wine.

July 31st. Fine, sunny and calm. Ronán and Harry today on boat-mind, and cooking. Frank and I went ashore and away to another mountain, unnamed on our map. This was higher, harder and further than we expected, but topped it at 68 13.9 N. / 31 10.5 W.

On returning, the lads had cleaned the boat, caught some sea-trout (*Arctic Char?* – Ed), sewed the sail (a further 2 metres was needed) and freed up the steering which had become tight, possibly because of cold contraction. These glorious days continued, hard going on the mountains, driftwood fires by the shore, good food and banter in the evenings, Robert Service recitations, and Jameson, "just a tot".

From the high col. At the head of our fiord we

First ice, 3/10 or so, was met by evening and mountains were in sight shortly afterwards. We continued inwards within Nansen Fiord, ice thickening but 'goeable'. Further inwards, we saw a bear on a floe about 200 metres distant; much photographing. However, added to the floe ice we now had brash ice, probably from the glacier at the head of the fiord. It slowed us, and occasionally whacked us. "This boat wasn't built for this", Frank said. Quite right! But we kept at it for a few hours more, hoping that our anchorage of intent might somehow be adequately ice-free. Not so, not even enough clear water to float the dinghy. We turned seaward, our intent now being to get out of the ice, heave to and try next day for Mikis Fiord 40 miles to the west. By 04.00 we were more or less out and in open water and set one hour 'ice watches'.

Mikis Fiord is a recognised anchorage in



could look across at the head of Mikis and beyond at Watkins and Kangerdlugssuaq fiords. All appeared totally ice clogged. A major technical climb on the south side of our fiord, routed through formidable glacier walls and 300 metres of steep snow gully gave Frank, PoB, Gerry and Harry considerable satisfaction, possibly a first ascent.

It was time to move on, to our second area of choice. But the ice report from Paul was not encouraging. To the south west of us, all the way to Angmassilik, the sea was heavily iced over, 7/10 and that far out to sea. "Stay east of 31 degrees to clear it", Paul had said. That would be over 100 miles offshore, almost half way back to Iceland. But northwards, conditions were much better. So we set off for Scoresby Sund, 250 miles to the north east.



Approaching Greenland Coast at 68° N. (Ronán Ó Caoimh)

Over a couple days we motored, outside the ice and sometimes within. We tried for Auray Bugt, but were blocked. Continuing inshore, we occasionally had to divert up to 5 miles outward; 20 miles offshore. The mountains became less sharp, more rounded. At Cape Brewster, the southern end of Scoresby Sund, the sea was clear; thoughts social of the Settlement, were surfacing. Not to be. The Sund, while clear inward to the west, had a hard line of 10/10 ice, the 15 miles to the north, where the Settlement, now called Itoqortoormit, lay. Furthermore, this ice lay only about 1 ½ miles north of Brewster, the gap through which we had come. If this closed, we'd be bunched, trapped within.

Prudence, or perhaps cowardice, prevailed.

We turned outward and set south for Iceland, regretfully cutting short our time in East Greenland. We had 150 miles of diesel in the tank, for the 250 mile passage. Happily we got great wind, though from astern and uncomfortable, but effective. We carried our cloth all the way, turning on the engine only when going into Heysteri, in the wilderness area of Hornstrandir. There we spent a few days, mostly rainy, but had one glorious hiking day. We heard that it had been a 'bad ice year'—though I believe that it was merely a reversion to 'normal', and that one boat had been crushed, her crew helicoptered off. Skipper Sigurdur Petursson, I would regard in any event as somewhat of a stuntman, rejoicing in the name 'The Iceman' and his website lauding him 'swinging a shark by the tail'.

Over the following days we sailed southward to Reykjavic, calling in turn to Patreksfiord and then Olavsvik, to arrive at 03.00 hrs, Saturday August 15th. From there, early on Sunday morning, Peter, Frank, Ronán and PoB prepared to fly to Dublin.

Reykjavic to Dublin. August 15th to 31st.

To join Harry and myself for the passage home were Wilf Williams, all-round sportsman, working with Harry in Luxemburg, Corkman Theo Dorgan, exiled to Baldoyle and modestly describing himself as a 'passage-maker, not a sailor' and Mick Delap, with family origins in Kerry, but now living the UK, from where he had been the BBC's Africa Correspondent. He sails his small gaff rigged boat *North Star*, based in Valentia. An eclectic lot, literary and soon to be liturgical.

Reykjavic is nice, but overtouristed, its main streets pedestrianised and could-be-anywhere. The Tours, I'm sure, were wonderful, Blue Lagoon, Geysers, Land of Fire & Ice stuff. Theo and myself preferred the Market, where I bought a shirt, which pleased me greatly. On Saturday night, both crews, the ten of us, dined out; a nice occasion.

Liturgical, ah, yes. I had arranged to attend Lutheran Sunday Service at the Rev. Gunnthors, he who had hosted and sailed with us in 2011 on our south Icelandic Celtic Monks journey. We joined the few attendees at his church in Hafnarfiord, where the enthusiasm of the organist compensated for lack of vocal support, had coffee, planted one of our Sods in the church grounds, enjoyed dinner in Gunnthors house and got away. Before Monday night we wanted to get round the 120 miles to Heimay (pronounced Haymay) in the Vestmann Islands ahead of some bad weather coming in. This we did, largely under engine, but concluding with a few hours under sail, in sun, flat sea with islands panoramic ahead.

A 987 Mb. low affecting the whole north Atlantic sat to the south west of Iceland, giving various degrees of easterly and south easterly wind, from the direction in which we wanted to go. Saint Kilda, 500 miles to the south east, was our objective. As we waited for movement of this low, and waited, happily Heimay was not at all a bad place to be. Gisli Oscarson, drove us around. In wind and rain we visited the, still warm, ground of the 1973 eruption which devastated the town. In the natural amphitheatre, where concerts are held, we stood at the Irish Well. Theo later wrote:

Ag an dTobar seo
fé brath naomha na manach
Guím go dtéimís slán
ar ár dturas ó oileán go hoileán.
Ó thobar na nGael
Go mbaclainn Bríde,
Gurab séibh linn,
An Gaoth is an Taoide.

Here at this well
under the holy mantle of monks
I ask that we go safely
on our journey from island to island.
From this well of the Gael
To the bosom of Bríd,
May they be kind to us,
The Wind and the Tide.

At Wednesday evening dinner, not a drop of drink stood on the table; in anticipation of an early start on the morrow. We left at 06.00, spoke to Icelandic Coastguard—and were back in by 08.00, blown back.

On Friday I wrote “Yesterday was a day of dejection, with not a sign of changing weather. Various forecasts were incontrovertibly consistent. BBC gave southeast gales for S. E. Iceland and Bailey.”

I jogged from the Sports Centre round the coastal grassland. Harry took to higher ground. Kari Bjarnason, Librarian hosted us. The days hung heavy.

On Sunday we left, 06.00. Speaking to the Coastguard we gave an ETA of 5 days to the Stornoway area. They would ring Stornoway Coastguard, which they did. The next four days are best forgotten, as we engined into Force 6 and 7 headwinds and seas. We carried some headsail when we could. For a time we were pushed way too far to the west.

Wilf was down, badly; he hadn't eaten or drunk, couldn't hold it down, for three days. The First Aid Book said that 'prolonged seasickness was to be taken seriously'. Through Paul on Satphone, we advised Stornoway—and ourselves wondered how far out the Sea King helicoptered. Diorolite drink was the remedy, we were told. In our €200 First Aid kit, we had stuff for broken bones, 2nd degree burns, the lot, but no Diorolite. Wilf was mortified at the thought of his being 'medivaced' and he forced down the liquid. The engine revs. faltered. We changed the fuel filter. On the fourth day, with Saint Kilda now less than 80 miles ahead, Wilf revived, referring to himself as “the previous casualty”. Good man Wilf, and he insisted on taking his watches.

At 01.00 on Thursday morning, we approached Saint Kilda. Heavy wind blew down from the cliffs above. We could get fragmentary glimpses of them in between the rain squalls. With our two plotters, a 'Garmin 551' at the wheel and 'C charts' on the laptop below, we felt our way into Village Bay, wondering would we get shelter? We did. At 02.45 the anchor went down in 8 metres and held. Anchor watches were spoken of, and ignored; as we took to our bunks, whacked.

Next morning we changed our time to BST. Still the wind howled and the rain came in squalls, gradually clearing. The Army have made some mess of the village; Buildings, power plant and roads are placed without any apparent sensitivity for either the landscape or the stone houses and cleits of the islanders, now gone this last 50 years. We dinghied ashore. It's not unlike the Blaskets. But the Blasket people didn't pay rent and they were joyful. They had music and drink, too much sometimes. Not so in Kilda, the Minister saw to that. And from this meagre subsisting life, they had to pay rent, in woven wool and feathers, all they had.

To get through the Sound of Harris, 50 miles distant by nightfall, we had to leave by 13.00-ish. At last a good day, as we sailed in the sun with the wind off our quarter, well satisfied with our Kilda visit, even if too brief. There are two recognised passages through the Sound, Cope Passage, south of Pabbay and Stanton Passage, a few miles longer to the north. In time, just, I copped that a sandbar on Cope would be barely passable and that on a falling tide. We went through Stanton Passage as the street lights of Leverburg came on. Turning southwards, we dropped sail and engined into a headwind, past Skye, Canna, Rum, and Ardnamurchan. Turning into the Sound of Mull, we got sailing again, past Tobermory, Duart Castle and into Kerrera Marina by evening. The marina ferry over to Oban now runs during daylight hours only. The rain poured down as we ate in the marina café.

Next day, after a breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast by Wilf, we took the tide south, past Corryvreckan, then pushed it, going close in along the east of Jura, swung into Lowlandman's Bay and continued to anchor off Eilean Bríde, for 'unfinished business'. Going ashore, Harry carved, or rather punched, a Brigid's Cross into a rock and beside it, we placed a Sod.

A pleasant evening followed in Craighouse pub, as always there. Going down the North Channel, we caught good tide. We adjusted course at South Rock under a full moon and later, spinnaker up, enjoyed the day, going alongside Poolbeg Marina at 14.00 on Monday August 31st; our North Atlantic Crescent happily completed.

Hugh Barry writes of Five Men in a Boat

Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, when pigs drank wine and turkeys chewed tobacco, (a good way to start any story) there were five men in a boat. At first sight they didn't seem to have much in common; no two of them had the same employment history: one was a banker, another was an accountant; the third had been an airline pilot, another was a laboratory manager and the fifth used to be a dentist. Look more closely now and you will discover a common factor; they were all *jubilados y pensionados* – the joyous ones who were securely in possession of their bus passes! In fact their combined ages exceeded 360 years (if you do the maths, you will see that their average age was about 72).

Apart from their seniority, they had something else in common; they all liked to visit places where few tourists could (or would want to) go. This often meant isolated places with cold climates but they didn't mind the cold – much; after all, they travelled in a well heated conveyance and they didn't have to brave the elements often. Their chosen mode of transport to these far off and remote places was a sailing boat; something else they had in common: they all sailed.

Even though they were confined to a relatively small space, they got on reasonably well. It helped that the watch system and other work rotas devised, and subtly altered at intervals, by their leader ensured that exposure of any one to any other was kept to a minimum. After the initial friction had subsided and once areas of special expertise had been recognised and deferred to, it was for the most part plane sailing. The work was not onerous; watches of two hours on were followed by eight hours off! They read much, the subject matter ranging widely from history and chronicles of exploration through contemporary literature to whodunnits. They debated widely, if not wisely, on many topics but voices were rarely raised (before dinner anyway). And if by chance any difference of opinion did occur, it was quickly forgotten when another whale or iceberg hove into view, when a “photo opportunity” presented or when a tricky bit of pilotage demanded concentration.

It helped also that their leader was an accomplished man-manager who listened, didn't take sides, allowed one to feel that one's opinion was being taken into account and then took the action he had already decided upon: democracy in action! Was he really a paragon, this skipper? Well, no: not quite. He had a disordered temperature regulation system which encouraged him to swim in places where the water temperature would be lethal to normal people. That being said, there were no challenges to him, no volunteers, when a large portion of discarded fishing net wrapped around the propeller necessitated a prolonged dive with a knife to free it. It was also true that he was a night owl with a taste in music inappropriate for one of his years - he especially liked to play Broken Arrow by Rod Stewart at full volume very late at night, when those of the crew of diminished stamina had retired, while he ate large portions of cheese and! But, enough of that.

Their itinerary took them from Canada to Greenland: from St Anthony, Newfoundland via Battle Harbour, Labrador to West Greenland. The details of the voyage are described elsewhere in this publication. Suffice it to say here that they encountered large quantities of ice, many cetaceans and countless seals; saw a monochrome Aurora; observed the industrious indigenous population as they hunted and gathered; sampled the cuisine; and, breaking the habits of five lifetimes, studied the history and culture of the country in several excellent museums. At Nuuk, two left and one joined the boat for the homeward leg.

When asked what they thought of the voyage, all were unanimous that it had been magic- *Pure Magic!*



Ilulissat glacier Mike, Rob, Joe and Peter

Incident at Black Ball Head

Geraldine Hennigan – *Coire Uisge*

Page 22 of the current E&N ICC Sailing Directions, in the Introduction's section on Fishing, advises that "...orange plastic buoys... generally mark the ends of a long string of pots on the bottom. It is normally safe to pass within a boat's length of a buoy, but beware of floating ropes, especially when two buoys are tied in tandem to cope with a fast tidal stream. Don't sail between them."

On Sunday 6th September, Norman (who wrote that advice) and I set out on a short late-season cruise, aiming for Derrynane. The anchorage there hasn't been sounded in detail for many years. A recent conversation with the Department of Ag Food and Marine about some possible new nav aids had reminded Norman that the plan in our S&W book is the largest-scale chart of Derrynane in print anywhere. So it's important to have it right.

On Monday 7th we had an early start at Baltimore, catching the low tide in the North Passage for some snaps of the drying rocks between Goose Island Channel and Heir Island. We had a pleasant sail to Crookhaven, where we tried to find the rock reported in 2014 by the crew of *Eleanda*. We weren't having much luck (if that's the right word for clanging a rock that someone has told you to avoid), so we moved on. Time and tide, and Alderman Sound, needed attention – Maeve Bell on *Oisín Bán* had reported that the sound is perfectly navigable. So directions had to be checked out and photographs taken, and then it was off for diesel and overnight at a very quiet and peaceful Lawrence Cove.

Next morning we called into Castletownbere to check out the new pontoon and do a little restocking. We left at 13.15 under reefed main and jib in SE F5, forecast to increase to 6, and sailed west along the coast in a lumpy sea and bright sunshine. We were remarking how much more comfortable it should get once we'd rounded Crow Head and gybed for the run through Dursey Sound. Black Ball Head was coming abeam, about 300m to starboard.



Blackball Head from the SE

With 75 metres of anchor chain available and 46 metres of water under the keel, we were rapidly running out of options. At 14.44, Norman made a PanPan call on Ch16 giving our position as one cable south of Black Ball Head. After waiting for what seemed like over a minute for a reply, I dialled 999 on the phone. I got an immediate response, and requested the Coast Guard (CG). Just as I was put through, Valentia came back on the VHF. The person I was talking to was sitting next to the guy on the VHF to Norman. I hung up.

Meanwhile in Castletownbere (as we found out later), the lifeboat was on "limited availability". An Assessor was visiting, paperwork was being checked, and belts and bits of engines were arrayed about the workshop bench. The mechanic, Martin O'Donoghue, flew into action. He reckons the status added just 10 minutes to their response time.

On *Coire Uisge*, we rolled up the sails – not very tidily – since they were only contributing to our drift shorewards. The anchor was dropped, more in hope than expectation, and the boat stayed stubbornly stern to the wind. The sea became more confused close to the cliffs. The dinghy, on davits, was being thrown around and filled with water. One of the tubular davits folded up, and eventually snapped. The coastguard made sporadic returns on the VHF, to confirm that we were still in one piece, our current proximity to the rocks, and our GPS position. Finally they advised an ETA of 11 minutes for the lifeboat. I took our longest and sharpest kitchen knife and taped it to a long boat-hook handle. Reaching down between the dinghy and the rudder, I came up against a taut line and started sawing. It seemed useless – the arrangement just wasn't rigid enough, plus I couldn't see what I was doing. For all I know, I may have been hacking at the dinghy painter.

What we didn't know was that there had been a second buoy tied in series with the first, and it was the line to this buoy that had us snagged. Black Ball Head is not the kind of place you'd expect to find two buoys in tandem.

Our position seemed to stabilize at about 25m off the rocks, where the sea state was jumbled and chaotic. The 11 minutes seemed like an eternity. Then the CG reassuringly advised that the lifeboat was one minute from our position, but we couldn't see it. At 15.21, we caught sight of *Annette Hutton* as she came round the corner to join us in our uncomfortably snug anchorage. The fishing boat *Celtic Dawn* was there too, seeming to appear from nowhere. (Pictures,

Suddenly Norman, at the wheel, became uncharacteristically quiet. But on seeing a pot-marker buoy pop up behind us he issued a "phew" in relief. He had dodged clear downwind of it, but then felt it hit the hull, and now assumed it had been just a glancing swipe. But the relief was short lived. The steering got stiff, the boat speed quickly dropped and it became obvious that *Coire Uisge* was hooked, although we couldn't see the line or understand how it had happened. With the wind on the port quarter, we tried to make searoom under sail, dragging whatever pots we were snagged on, but to no avail. Full power on the engine was no more effective – being held by the rudder stock, we had no directional control. To our dismay, we were simply crabbing slowly closer to the cliffs. We even tried the bow-thruster, but it was powerless to turn the boat against wind and sea.

taken from the shore, of both boats approaching at speed were later posted on the RNLI website.) As they got close, I heard the cox'n advise the CG to stand down the helicopter – it was in the air already.

The first line thrown didn't reach us, but the second one, streaming from a bright orange bag, did. Norman secured the heavy tow-rope around our anchor windlass, and the lifeboat started to pull us away from the cliffs. At the same time, Norman was using the windlass to haul up our anchor and chain. It all came up surprisingly well. However movement was very slow, as we were still dragging whatever was attached to the rudder. *Celtic Dawn* came as close as they dared, with a grappling hook to catch the pot line. Their first attempt straightened two prongs of the hook, and they had a couple of close shaves - once when the grapnel shot back at them as they dived for cover, and then when one of our davits briefly got entangled in their pot-hauler gear as both boats bounced around. The skipper, in agreement with the lifeboat crew, changed plan and went for the other end of the line at the far side of the buoy. The lifeboat slowed down to give them a bit of slack. By 15.45 *Celtic Dawn* had succeeded and we were free. And then we were off at about 5 knots under easy tow. As we got into calmer waters in Pipers Sound, we partially unfurled the jib to stow it properly - much to the lifeboat crew's bemusement. We wanted to look smart while being towed into Castletownbere, not pathetic and scruffy.

The cil.ie records indicate average wind speed at the Fastnet of 27 knots from the south-south-east with gusts up to 32 knots at the time of the tow. On reflection, the fact that we transmit AIS must have helped the whole operation. The Coast Guard and the lifeboat didn't have to ask us how to spell our name. Given our position to begin with, they then had details of the boat, and continuous information on our position, and rate and direction of drift, for themselves.

Next morning, Wednesday 9th, Norman dived on the rudder. He cut the first buoy off and eventually extracted the second buoy and line from the slot between rudder and skeg. There had been *over five metres of 12mm floating rope* between the two buoys. Apart from dented egos, our damage amounted to the loss of the davits, the dinghy seat, a can of diesel that had been lashed on deck and a chip out of the gelcoat on the rudder.



Tow passes Ardnakinna Point, at the entrance to Pipers Sound

We remained in Castletownbere waiting for favourable weather to carry on to Derrynane. By Friday (a day of unceasing torrential rain) it became clear this was not imminent. So on Saturday 12th September, we had a pleasant sail all the way to the Ilen river, mostly engine assisted, and tied up to an old fishing boat at Oldcourt by 17.00.

Sequel

Since arriving home, I've done a little research on the requirements for pot marking around our coasts. It looks like there are none, for vessels operating inside 12 nautical miles. There are some guidelines. The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) published a Guide to Compliance for the Irish Inshore Fleet in July 2010, which states "Marker buoys and similar floating objects intended to indicate the location of fishing gear must be clearly marked with the port registration number of the vessel to which they belong." This is a great rarity in practice. The same guide also states "Whilst this document constitutes a concise guide to the requirements it does not purport to represent a detailed legal interpretation of the legislation."

August, acting skipper of the survey vessel *Keary*, (which regularly gets propped) had previously told us that such practices would not be tolerated in his home waters in Iceland. Any fisherman using floating rope like that or failing to mark buoys adequately would be arrested on the spot and have their gear and boat confiscated. Isn't it time we dropped the mealy-mouthed "guidelines" and actually demanded safe practices by all? We've been snagged in unmarked (illegal) nets on the Donegal coast, abandoned unmarked marine-farm equipment in Connemara, and more than once on pot buoys with long lengths of floating line on them. Until now, we've been able to cut and sail away. But the trap laid by the octogenarian potter of Black Ball Head (well-known to the locals, and possibly having broken no law) would have required sterner measures. In rough conditions, a knife strapped to a pole just doesn't (pardon the phrase) cut it.

In Courtmacsherry, our local lifeboat cox'n Sean O'Farrell offered an answer. In the old days, lifeboats had trunking over their prop shafts, with access hatches so that they could cut the shafts free when they got caught in ropes and nets. (Today's lifeboat propellers make mince of such trifles). The device used back then was a vicious sharpened hook surrounded by sharp scalloped edges, and was deployed on the end of a pole. Sean was about to throw this long-disused device away when we provided a home for it. Two weeks later Norman met Martyn Smith, the head of the RNLI in Ireland, at a meeting at the Irish Lights, and told him the story of how we became his customers. The part about the gift from Courtmac was prefixed with "you're not hearing this, but" and Martyn said "Oh God, he didn't give you the Tudor Axe..."

Coire Uisge will in future carry a grappling hook and the Tudor Axe, and woe betide any pots that threaten us.

Our thanks to Valentia Coast Guard, cox'n Brian O'Driscoll and his crew on Castletownbere lifeboat, and Kieran and his crew on *Celtic Dawn*. "You never know when you might need them" can sound like a cliché, but it isn't.

Tallulah goes south to the Azores

Alan Rountree



Where to go this year? I had now been to Galicia ten times and felt a change was called for. My wife Angela loves the sun so it must be south and we decided where else but the Azores? I had been there twice before and with maturing years it might be my last chance.

Most of my trips to Galicia had been single-handed but I thought a bit of company would be good for the longer trip. My friend Greg McGarry who is a horseman with no sailing experience, but is up for anything, had joined me for one of my trips to Galicia. There was fog all the way and he had put up with the discomfort admirably so I asked if he would be interested and he jumped to the challenge. Now I had crew and I set about preparing *Tallulah*. I replaced the standing and running rigging and upgraded the insulation of the fridge. Everything was checked and in perfect working order.

Greg and I provisioned *Tallulah* with twelve fillet steaks, four striploin steaks and loads of mince, all vac-packed, with the intention of sailing west towards Mizzen Head, all the while looking for a suitable forecast to depart Ireland. However, on reaching Kilmore Quay, there appeared to be a very stable high pressure stretching from the Azores to Ireland, giving NE winds, so off we went. With sunshine and calm seas, we glided off and had wonderful sailing and sumptuous meals. The forecast proved accurate and we had a great trip all the way to the Azores, using a bit of diesel on the last two days. Our only challenge was to get some colour on our skin so we wouldn't stand out too much on arriving at our destination.

On my first trip to the Azores in 1991, *Tallulah* was one of three yachts anchored in Ponta Delgada but this time we found a massive marina and a concrete jungle. Ponta Delgada was destroyed! The coffee shops and bars on the waterfront blared out loud music into the late hours and the streets were jammed with cars. Michael O'Leary can take the blame as he, and others, now fly tourists daily from all over Europe. I phoned a friend I had made all those years ago, Carlos Pato, to complain about what he had allowed to happen to the Azores in our absence. Within ten minutes he joined us for a drink and informed us that, while Ponta Delgada was destroyed, the rest of the island had not changed. We hired a car and toured Sao Miguel, where the scenery was as wonderful as ever. The hydrangeas line the roadsides, which are manicured like private gardens. We bathed in the hot pools in Furnace and walked the magnificent gardens there. It was a thrill to swim in the Atlantic Ocean where the temperature of the water was 35°C. A thermal spring spouts water into the ocean at 60°C and when mixed with the waves results in 35°C.

Greg was keen to see other islands but, as his return flight was only a week away, our only option was to sail to Santa Maria, which is 60 miles. We hired a car and did a quick tour of the island. On my earlier visits to the Azores my friends in Ponta Delgada had phoned ahead to islands we were visiting and arranged for a welcoming party on each. So it was this time as Carlos Pato phoned his friend, Angelina, to welcome us to Santa Maria. A festival was underway in Vila Do Porto and we partied into the small hours. The Azores are famous for their festivals honouring every saint the Pope has heard about and when they run out of saints, they invent one.

It was now time to return to Ponta Delgada for Greg's flight home and for Angela to arrive. The following week Arnie and Georgina Poole were joining us so there wasn't time to visit other islands, resulting in me again hiring a car and touring Sao Miguel. Our friends Carlos Pato and his wife had us to their home for a party, where they gathered old friends from 1991, and of course we returned the compliment aboard *Tallulah*. When Arnie and Georgina arrived we again toured all the sites in a hired car. We sailed to Vila Franca do Campo. The offshore island of Ilhen da Vila is as perfect a natural swimming pool as one is likely to find and the main harbour is an old fishing port where traditional fishing boats are painted with the faces of saints, who are believed to keep them safe.

The following week Angela and I set sail for Santa Maria, as other islands were too far away to ensure that we could return in time for Angela's flight home. The weather was really hot – too hot. We hired a motor bike which was marvellous, cooling us down as we toured the island visiting different beaches each day. This island is unique in that it has white sandy beaches which are approached by land down really steep twisting roads. The views are breath-taking and the swimming was marvellous. All the beaches are patrolled by lifeguards. There are flags flying that denote whether there are stinging jellyfish present. Apparently, as the sea temperature has risen, the jellyfish have become more common. After ten days Angela took the ferry back to Ponta Delgada and I sailed alone. The ferry, which was a large displacement vessel, was amazing in that it has the same propulsion as a high speed catamaran and travelled at 30 knots, completing the journey to Ponta Delgada in two hours.



Baía de São Lourenço

Having said goodbye to Angela, I set sail to return to Ireland. My plan was to break the journey in Galicia and there await a suitable break in the weather to cross Biscay. However, the winds were light SW and to keep wind in the genoa, I was forced to sail more north than planned, resulting in me being 500 miles west of Finisterre when I arrived at that latitude.

One of the questions I am most frequently asked about sailing alone is how do I put in the day with no-one to talk to? Well, I took on board a family of flies, three in number, one quite large, one medium sized and a baby fly. The weather was extremely hot and I was almost naked, perspiring a lot. I took three cold showers on the first day. However, it was a bonanza for the fly family who took it in turn to land on me for their dinner. I had a sticky fly catching strip on board and hung it from the ceiling. I quickly discovered that flies will not land on a moving object. So the plan was for me

to lie motionless, with the sticky strip on a piece of paper positioned on various parts of my body, and await a kill. Each day I got one fly and that was how I passed three days – busy all the time.

Now at the latitude of Finisterre and 500 miles west of it, I had to make the decision whether I would continue to Ireland or divert to Spain. The distance to Ireland was only 700 miles so I decided to use the satellite phone I had borrowed from Frank Ranalow, ICC, and ring Bruce Fennell, ICC, to get a weather forecast. The following day gave 14 knots SW, the next day 30-35 knots and then dropping back to 20 knots for the next two days. I decided I could live with that and kept on towards Ireland. Before I left Ireland, Philip Watson had put a fourth reef in the mainsail and, as I had never used this tiny sail, I decided to put it in while the weather was calm in preparation for a bit of a blow the following day. Two hours after securing this reef the wind rose to a strong gale, probably F9, and I was surging along at great speed. Both the staysail and the genoa were rolled in and I surfed down the face of huge breaking waves. The wind continued to blow and the Navtex gave strong gale force 9 for the following two days. As the seas grew, the breaking waves rolled over *Tallulah*, filling the cockpit and pouring in through tiny cracks around the companionway. Everything in the boat was soaked and I was forced to lie on the floor for the next three days. One wave caught the spray hood and bent the stainless steel bars into S-hooks. On peeping through the companionway I noticed that the outboard motor was hanging off. A stainless steel bolt head had been pulled through the stainless steel bracket. I donned my life belts with two lines so that I could tie onto each side of the boat and managed to replace the bolt using large washers and also tied down the now mangled spray hood. Meanwhile the Aries wind vane continued to do its job perfectly, steering from one complete lock to the other in two seconds. I would have preferred to have a tiny bit of staysail up, with no mainsail, but I was in no position to secure the mainsail so decided to keep going as I was. On reading a book some years ago the famous sailor, Bernard Moitessier, advocated speed when running before a gale. The other option was to deploy a sea anchor but I judged that I would be dangerously swamped if I did that so the easier option was to keep going. The wind vane on the Aries was continually hit by large breaking seas but didn't break, as I had reinforced it with fibreglass and epoxy resin. Also its leading edge was facing into the waves.

I was worried and nervous as I approached the continental shelf as, in 1991, *Tallulah* had been rolled through 360° there and I didn't want a repeat of that event. For about five miles while crossing the shelf the seas were indeed dramatic and confused but, to my amazement, as I approached shallower water the large waves had been broken up in the confusion, resulting in a much less dramatic sea. The wind continued to decrease to about F7 but it felt very moderate. I was glad I didn't have crew as they would have been no help and there was only space for one on the floor. While still 150 miles out, I had the strange feeling that I need to slow down in case I ran into Ireland. It was all the time reassuring that I had new rigging, that Philip Watson had reinforced the sail and put in the tiny reef and that *Tallulah* seemed to be up to the job.

On arrival at Kinsale I was welcomed by Bruce and Barbara Fennell, ICC, who had arranged a berth for me on the marina. We staggered up to the Dock Bar for a couple of pints and Barbara cooked a lovely steak aboard *Bees Nees*. Bruce's friend Hal is the manager of the Trident Hotel and he arranged to have the cushions dried in a hot room in the hotel. My clothes and four wet sleeping bags were all washed and dried.

The following day Frank Ranalow, ICC, arrived to accompany me back to Dun Laoghaire. We stopped off in Youghal, Kilmore Quay and Wicklow. I had sailed 3,120 miles, had a wonderful holiday but will not be asking *Tallulah* to take on the Atlantic again. The routing charts for August in the Atlantic show no wind over F7 from the south in the area of the Atlantic that I was sailing.

My recollection of water temperature in the Azores on past visits was pretty chilly for swimming, whereas this year, according to the local forecasts, the present temperature was 23°C. I wonder if this increase in water temperature has anything to do with creating unusual weather systems. Perhaps there is something in global warming....



Marina at Vila do Porto

Shelduck's American Cruise, **Chesapeake to Maine**

Neil Hegarty

Great Bridge Virginia to Annapolis Maryland

I was looking forward to returning to America after an eleven month absence from *Shelduck*. Peter Clarke, Howth Yacht Club, who sailed with us from Cascais to Grand Canaria in 2013, and I arrived on April 25th to prepare the yacht. We were joined for the cruise on the Chesapeake to Annapolis by my youngest sister, Barbara, and her husband Fergus. They were brought to Atlantic Yacht Basin by Fergus's brother Coilin and his wife, Julie. As soon as they arrived I took the opportunity of the available car to provision. Julie and Coilin returned to their home in Washington after dinner in the cockpit.

On 4th May we departed for Portsmouth, Virginia. As the Great Bridge opened, we had to give way to a tug pushing a large barge, which we followed to Portsmouth under four high bridges. The barge eased our way, particularly at the one remaining opening bridge where, as soon as she approached, traffic was stopped and the bridge opened. On arrival at Portsmouth we entered a marina. Next day we took a ferry across the river to Norfolk where I renewed my US cruising licence at the Custom House. After lunch we visited the Maritime Museum which included the floating battleship *Wisconsin*. Norfolk is a huge base for the building and repair of naval ships.

On Wednesday 6th we departed Portsmouth marina at 08.30 in a light south easterly and motor sailed into Mobjack Bay and up North River to anchor off Bellville Creek at 16.05. We weighed anchor at 08.45 the next day after breakfast, a beautiful morning but with no wind. We headed out from North River back into Mobjack Bay then round New Point Comfort to anchor off Mila Neck in the Great Wicomico River at 17.15. The 8th dawned another beautiful morning so we delayed over breakfast until 10.00 before leaving.

Our passage was up the Chesapeake to the Patuxent River to anchor in St Leonard's Creek, where we had read in our Pilot, the excellent "Cruising the Chesapeake: A Gunkholers Guide" by William Shellenburger, that we might see Cownose Rays cruising under the surface. We anchored off Breeders Point at 19.15 but we didn't see any rays that evening. Next morning we headed back out for a passage across the Bay to Oxford, Maryland and arrived at the entrance to the Choptank River at 15.45 and sailed on to the Tred Avon River to berth at Brewers marina. We stayed on the fuel dock for the night because staff had left before we arrived at 17.15. We were immediately welcomed by others on the marina, particularly by Maggie, who arranged a drive to a restaurant for dinner. She also told us about and arranged a drive to the Firemen's breakfast next morning. This is a fortnightly event during the summer run in the Fire Station. All you can eat for eight dollars and the chance to watch American families interact.

I came to Brewers in Oxford on the recommendation of ICC Commodore, Peter Killen, who wrote about them in the 2014 Annual. After the first visit, substantial discounts are available at subsequent visits to their other marinas, which stretch up to Maine. Early that morning I remembered to phone Homeland Security to check in. We had been instructed only to do so when we move from one State to another and go ashore whereas in Florida we had to call in every day we moved position. We were now in Maryland and we enjoyed two days of swimming while there and can confirm that the water in Chesapeake Bay is warm at this time of the year.

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On the morning, of the 12th, we were visited by Barbara's and my first cousin, David Buckley, son of the late Charlie, an ICC member in the 1940s, who lives nearby. We reminisced for four hours over lunch then we left for Wye East River and anchored in Shaw Bay in darkness at 21.15. The wind had quickly become strong after dark and was gusting 30 knots as we anchored. I had had a ten litre container of methanol delivered to the boatyard which fitted neatly adjacent to the fuel cell so we were able to leave the chart plotter and the electronic anchor watch on to warn if we were going to drag without draining batteries. After our late night we did not weigh anchor until 11.30 and enjoyed a brisk sail down Eastern Bay at over seven knots and anchored at the entrance to West and Rhode Rivers. We had accidentally positioned ourselves alongside the gybe mark for yacht racing which started soon after we arrived so we enjoyed a grand stand view of the racing. May 14th was to be the last night aboard for this crew so we sailed up West River to Hartge Marina and enjoyed dinner at Pirate's Cove, which was recently acquired by an Irish couple. We departed the marina at 09.00 and had a good full sail



reach over the 16 miles to Annapolis Yacht Club, where we arrived at noon.

I had arranged a reciprocal agreement for short term membership of AYC through the RCYC. I had been recommended to berth there by another cousin, Brendan Donegan, who lives nearby. He is the only surviving son of the late Young Harry ICC. On his visiting *Shelduck*, I gave him a copy of the spring 2015 ICC Newsletter, which included an article by Winkie Nixon about the first Fastnet Race and his grandfather Skipper Donegan's part in it. After another "cousin's" reminiscence, Barbara, Fergus, Peter and I were collected by Coilin at 16.00 and brought to his house and spend three enjoyable days there. Shortly after arriving at Coilin and Julie's house in Alexandria, near Washington, we attended a convivial evening at nearby Mount Vernon Yacht Club, where we were introduced to many of their friends. On Monday 18th Coilin drove Barbara, Fergus Peter and myself to Dulles Airport where they flew back to Ireland on the same aircraft on which Anne Kenny arrived. Soon after Anne landed Coilin drove us, in heavy traffic, to *Shelduck* at Annapolis Yacht Club On Wednesday morning Brendan Donegan returned, this time with his daughter Sarah. They drove us to a supermarket and Sarah helped with our shopping, then to lunch in town and afterwards to the yacht club where Brendan introduced us to the sailor's favourite drink here, Dark and Stormy, which is a mixture of rum and ginger ale. That evening Anne and I dined at the club, where the food is excellent.

Annapolis to New York

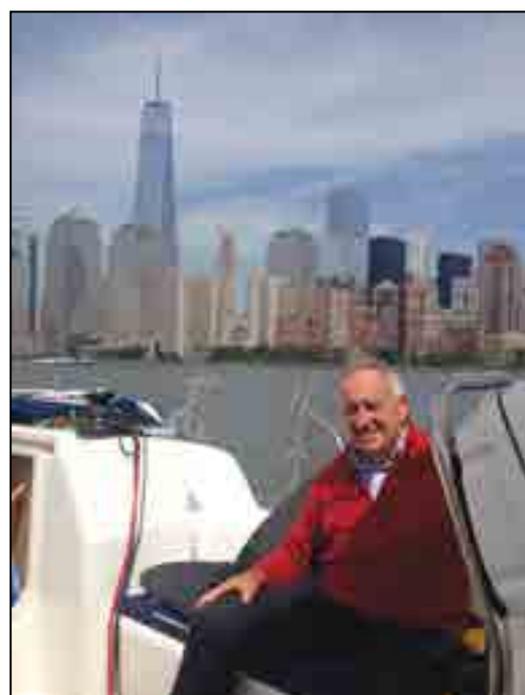
We planned to leave for Baltimore on Thursday the 21st but a low with heavy rain lingered, so we stayed put. Up at 08.00 on the 22nd, through the nearby opening bridge at 09.00 and alongside at the club again to have the holding tank pumped out. A good reach for 15 miles then a 16 mile beat in Force 4 up the Papapsco River to a marina berth in Baltimore City centre. Baltimore to Baltimore in eight years and over 12,000 miles sailed. We were up at 05.00 for the passage down the Papapsco River, up Chesapeake Bay and through the 12 mile long Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, which has no locks, to the Delaware River and into a berth in Delaware City. We had to enter at high tide as there is only 3 feet at the entrance at low water and arrived at 15.30 at an average speed of 6.2 knots. Current and wind changed with us at every corner we turned, as in the 1984 record-breaking Round Ireland Race on *Moonduster*. The Dockmaster gave a very good briefing to all heading down the Delaware River to Cape May at 18.00. With the wind forecast to go South on Monday, I decided to take the south west breeze in the morning.

When planning this part of the 2015 cruise from Great Bridge Virginia to South West Harbour Maine, I expected the passage down the Delaware River and out again into the Atlantic from Cape May to New York to be the most challenging. Tidal rise and fall is in the 5-7 foot range and tidal currents run up to 3 knots. We were up at 05.00 again for the passage to Cape May to take the tide which in neaps, as we had, runs at 2 knots. We reached Miah Shoal Light at 09.50, on average doing 7.5 knots with the current, and bore off 20 degrees across the banks for the Cape May Canal. At 10.30 the tide turned against us and the wind shifted to the South so we were pushed towards the north. At 11.15 the wind went light on the nose so I dropped sail and motored the last 6 miles at 3.5 knots to the Canal entrance and arrived at 13.00 for an average speed of 6 knots. The fastest speed achieved was 9.3 knots at 07.45. Surprisingly the Cape May Canal was used during WW 2 by ships to avoid German U Boats off the Cape sinking American ships

We were back in the Atlantic as she left Cape May on Monday for a 38 mile passage to Atlantic City. A beautiful sunny day with a 4 to 6 knot south wind, we motor sailed along the coast. Quite like the Southern Atlantic Coast of Spain and Portugal, there was an endless beach and many high rise buildings. In Atlantic City we went to a restaurant in a Casino nearby. It was very good but also expensive. Next day the 50 mile passage to Manasquan Inlet was a great sail, dead downwind with full main and a 10-15 knot southerly the whole way. The inlet is on the New Jersey Intracoastal Waterway which *Shelduck* could not use from Cape May because it is too shallow for her.

As we entered we had to wait for a railway bridge to open. I went to the fuel dock at Brielle Yacht Club and found out that this was the only place *Shelduck* had depth enough to lie alongside in this inlet. There was no room to anchor. Luckily the fuel dock was long enough and not so busy so we were allowed to stay there for two days. This inlet is not a suitable place for keelboats. We came here at the invitation of Linda and Joe Foster, whom we met last year on Long Island, Bahamas. At 16.15 Linda drove us to buy propane and provisions. Joe joined us at 18.15 and they took us to a restaurant nearby for dinner.

Wednesday 27th was a day of rest and research. I contacted the West 79th Street Boat Basin in New York, who don't take bookings, but who said I had a good chance of a berth on Thursday. I phoned Gretta O'Brien, a cousin of my late wife Angela. We had stayed with Gretta and Joe in New York on our honeymoon in July 1963. They planned to join Anne and me for lunch at the Boat Basin Cafe on Friday. Joe and Linda collected us at 17.00 and took us on a tour of the area, where we saw beautiful Grand houses, many of them flying the Irish tricolour below the American flag on the front lawn. We had all been invited to dinner at Joe's sister Mary's and her husband Art's house. We had a very enjoyable evening, with much discussion about Ireland and the United States.



Hudson River, NY

Next day, we motored away from the Brielle Yacht Club fuel berth at 08.30 and, shortly after, quite a thick fog descended. We crossed the channels entering New York Harbour to the Brooklyn side of the Verrazano Bridge. The fog was lifting and the wind light southerly so we were able to run north with full sail up the Hudson River and with many opportunities for photographs and arrived at the West 79th Street Boat Basin at 16.00, where thankfully there was a berth available. We could, however, have gone on to one of their moorings. The marina was badly damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and only this week have any major repairs started. Many berths are missing and passing river traffic can make it rough there.

New York



Anne, Sarah Donnegan, Neil, Brendan Donnegan

Sean O'Sullivan, who lives in New York and is the brother in law of Anne's daughter Heather, called at 19.30 and joined us aboard for dinner. On Friday at noon Anne and I had lunch at the Boat Basin Cafe nearby with Joe and Gretta as planned. After lunch Anne and I walked up 79th Street to Central Park where we took the Big Bus tour of Uptown and afterwards dined again on board. Next morning after a short walk to Broadway and then the Subway to Times Square we took the Big Bus Downtown tour. We hopped off it to see the High Line linear public park but first had breakfast in a 1950s Diner. Angela and I did much of our eating in Diners in 1963. The High Line was well worth the stop; it is world class, with excellent detail throughout. We went back on the Big Bus to Times Square and then by Subway to the station near *Shelduck*.

Sean O'Sullivan had managed to get us a table in the Four Seasons restaurant at the Seagram Building for dinner

at 17.30. The restaurant itself was designed by architect Phillip Johnson in 1959. I met him on arriving unannounced at his famous Glass House home at New Canaan Connecticut in '63. He lunched at the Four Seasons every day until he died in his nineties. We took a taxi and enjoyed delicious food in a wonderful atmosphere of elegance, sophistication and quietness. At 19.30 another taxi back to the boat, where Anne's American cousins Maureen, her daughter Dawn and grandchildren Johna and John visited us aboard.

New York to Woods Hole

On our way into the West 79th Street Boat Basin, we went aground near the entrance so we had to leave near high water and this meant we would have to traverse the East River against the tide. We had help leaving the marina at 07.30 on the 31st and then headed round Manhattan to the East River, where the views of New York are stunning. Anne and I enjoyed every minute and managed to enter Northport Harbour just ahead of a thunderstorm at 17.00, after a great sail in Long Island Sound.

I had arranged for a mooring from Northport Yacht Club, one of the easiest and best Anne and I had ever picked up. *Shelduck* was staying put until Wednesday, when the weather was forecast to clear for a couple of days. We had heavy rain, cold and strong winds for three days in Northport as forecast. Northport Yacht Club has a ferry service but the rain was so heavy that we decided to stay aboard and miss a visit to a Vanderbilt house nearby. We cast off the excellent mooring at 10.30 for a passage to Mattituck Inlet, Long Island, sailing almost due east in a light south easterly. When we arrived I decided not to enter the inlet, which looked narrow with a dredged channel, and so anchored for the night in sand off the entrance. We weighed anchor next day at 09.15 and motored, again in light wind in the lee of Long Island, towards Plumb Island before heading across Long Island Sound to Fishers Island. It was a cold cloudy day with a north east wind.

We set sail at noon off Rocky Point with 20 miles remaining to Fishers Island. It was a lovely close fetch. *Shelduck* crossed many ferries plying between New London on the Thames, Connecticut and Orient by the Sea, Long Island. We arrived at West Harbour, Fishers Island at 16.00 and were given permission to pick up an excellent Town mooring with no charge. Friday 5th, we left West Harbour at noon, motoring out into Block Island Sound in a very light headwind and light rain, so like Ireland or Scotland. We were passed by another ferry, *Jessica W*, which works New London-Block Island, doing 35.1 knots, and anchored in Great Salt Pond, Block Island at 17.30 among many other yachts.

Next day the wind was light from the north, at first giving a gentle reach towards Newport, but off Point Judith it freshened to 18 knots and for a time was on the nose as we pressed on and picked up a mooring near the Ida Lewis Yacht Club. There must be thousands of yachts in Newport Harbour and nearly all on moorings. The Harbour Master regularly patrols and he told us the mooring owner was Newport Mooring Service and we settled our account with Neill Gray for \$35 a night. Anne and I dined aboard and enjoyed all the action around us. Next day, Sunday, was a beautiful day. There are excellent ferry services to take you to and from your yacht so I called one, Oldport, and then went to the Visitors' Centre and booked a tour of Newport and the wonderful houses dating from the 17th to the early 20th century.

The tour was organised by the Preservation Society of Newport County. For 70 years the society has been protecting, preserving and presenting the story of some of America's most important legacy landscapes, buildings and furnishings, as

well as the stories of the people who created them here in Newport. The tour included a visit to one of The Mansions. We chose The Breakers, completed in 1895, which was the 70 room summer estate of Cornelius Vanderbilt II. We also saw St. Mary's Church where Jack and Jackie Kennedy were married in 1953 and also her family home. Many of the large 19th and 20th century summer homes are now converted to condominiums. Anne and I dined in a restaurant near the ferry service base and returned on board amazed by the scale, scope and rich heritage of Newport. An outstanding place to visit and with a marvellous all weather harbour.

On Monday 8th we left the mooring at Newport at 09.15 and sailed North up the East Passage of the Providence River round Conanicut Island to Wickford, where we arrived at a Brewer marina at noon and took on diesel. I had booked two days here to provision and to avoid the strong winds and rain forecast. We went shopping to the supermarket, which is outside the village and a long walk from the marina. A kind woman gave us a lift back with our goods. Later I watched the boatyard lift the famous yacht *Carina* which, it seems, belongs to the Vice-President of Brewer. We had an early start on Wednesday, leaving the marina at 06.00 for Cuttyhunk, a 30 mile passage.

The wind was light as we set the main just outside the harbour and sailed the West Passage out to the Atlantic, which had a leftover lumpy sea from the recent strong winds. We rounded Brenton Reef and I set a course for Cuttyhunk Harbour. Soon we had to head south to avoid a huge fish trap area of floating nets. It was like the old days of drift net fishing off the coast in Ireland. The wind then increased to 18 knots so we ran at speed towards the Elizabeth Islands and arrived in Cuttyhunk at 13.00. The harbour entrance and a large square area in the centre have been dredged to allow entry and possibly 100 moorings for visiting yachts set out in a grid pattern like soldiers on a parade ground. The top is at gunnel level so it is easy connect your own rope. On Thursday 11th we departed Cuttyhunk at 09.30 and sailed downwind 14 miles to Hadley Harbour, a beautiful all weather anchorage where we enjoyed brunch. It had been a dead run in 15-20 knots of wind.

Woods Hole

On leaving Hadley as we headed into Woods Hole on a passage to Chappaquiddick Island, we were hit by a squall where there is a meeting of strong currents and brushed off a channel buoy which was over at an angle from wind and current. I thought I felt the rudder touch something, maybe the chain, so with the winds help we headed inshore towards a small secure harbour area outside a bridge. I received assistance from a boat nearby who pulled the bow around for me and I was able to back into an empty berth.

I immediately went ashore to the Port Office where I met Dutch, the harbour engineer, who told me *Shelduck* was docked at the world famous Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. I was then introduced to Doug Handy Dockmaster who said we could stay in the berth because the boat that normally used it was away in New York. Doug arranged a diver, Zaneck, to come almost immediately and he reported the keel and the prop were OK but there seemed to be a small crack in the rudder. Doug then cleared us with reception which was at the entrance to a block of laboratories and also introduced me to the bridge operator and pointed out aspects of the village including the grocery, best pub and best restaurant. He also gave me the names of boatyards for a lift out so I could check the rudder myself.

A number of those working at the Institution including scientists came to have a look at us and admired *Shelduck*. One, Leo Fitz from Lithuania, but in the USA for 16 years, stayed for tea after which he took us on a tour of the research vessel *Knorr*, one of the largest ships in the US academic fleet. This Institution works to increase human knowledge in the world's oceans. After so much excitement in one day, I decided to take Anne out to dinner to Doug's recommended restaurant, Quicks Hole, which was excellent. Next morning Friday 12th, we had a visit from Robert Munier, Vice-President for Marine Facilities and Operations of the Institution, who invited me to his office nearby and introduced me to Kimberly Grodski his Executive Assistant. She helped me with the paperwork for a boatyard, MacDougalls in Falmouth, who agreed to lift *Shelduck* but not until Tuesday 16th. When hearing this Doug told me it was best to stay at their berth until then.

We had a visit then by Diving Safety Officer, Ed O'Brien who introduced himself as the Bord Failte of Woods Hole. He offered to drive us to Falmouth at 15.00 on his way home. I bought propane and visited the boatyard who were to lift us out. Ed then drove us to his home where we met his wife Fiona and daughter Ella. We all walked to the local Yacht Club where Ed invited us to dinner after which we enjoyed a leisurely walk back to their house and he then drove us back to the boat. Monday 15th June Anne and I took the bus from Woods Hole to Falmouth bus station, where we were collected by Hertz to hire a car. Anne drove 60 miles to Taunton, in heavy rain, where I bought 6x10 litre containers of methanol for the fuel cell, enough to get us back across the Atlantic again. Next day *Shelduck* was due to be lifted out at MacDougalls.



Shelduck at Treanor's pontoon

Falmouth Massachusetts

Doug Handy appointed Ben, with a fast skiff, to monitor our short passage. Ben arrived at 0800 and we agreed to communicate on channel 09. Before we left the berth at 08.45 I checked the VHF with Ben who was staying, at the ready, at Woods Hole, The five mile passage to Falmouth was uneventful. I was very careful to keep well clear of all buoys. Soon after we arrived at MacDougalls, she was lifted out and we found the rudder had split and had dropped 50mm. I was able to steer fully to starboard but only about 25% to port. The boatyard staff dismantled the steering and dropped the rudder to the ground but it could not be removed until *Shelduck* was lifted again.

The next day Wednesday was spent preparing estimates which I forwarded to my insurance broker. Work here in the boatyard starts at 07.00 and next day *Shelduck* was the first to be lifted to remove the rudder for repair. Upon further inspection it was discovered that the bottom bearing was cracked and research commenced to find out whether a replacement was available. I spent the rest of the day cleaning the brown staining off the hull, which all boats get here from a fungus in the water. The yard provided me with a cleaning compound diluted in water. On Friday the bearing replacement was found in France and put on order. I was told that the Dufour website was a great help in this. I continued to work on the hull for the day, climbing the ladder many times.

On Saturday Anne and I took the bus to Logan airport, arriving at 14.00 to collect my daughter Patricia. Her plane arrived on time at 14.40 but she did not emerge until 16.40. It took two hours to clear Immigration. She was flying from Paris via Madrid. We then took a bus back to Falmouth, arriving at 19.40, and found there was no taxi available to bring us back to the yacht. While sitting in the bus station a trolley bus pulled in so we went aboard to see what route it took. It had a stop about three quarters of a mile away. Having got to our stop and with only us aboard, the trolley bus driver told me that as it was his last run of the day he would drive us to the boatyard. It must, surely, be the first trolley bus seen at MacDougalls.



John Treanor arrives to rescue us

We continued to meet so much personal kindness here in the US. On Monday 22nd, Anne, Patricia and I were still living on *Shelduck* on the hard. Anne and Patricia went to visit Martha's Vineyard for the day on the ferry which left from nearby the boatyard. They took a guided bus tour of the island. I prepared a list of works to be completed while I was away. I planned to return in September. On Tuesday Anne and Patricia spent the day cleaning the yacht and washing bed covers and bedclothes. Wednesday was a very busy day putting everything back together again.

Maine by plane

Mary and John Treanor met Anne and Brian Kenny in Santiago, Chile on the aborted ICC, CCA, and RCC trip to Antarctica in 2003 and many times after it. I first met them at the CCC Centenary Cruise in 2010. Anne and I met them again cruising Norway in 2011 and Denmark in 2012. It was there John suggested we sail *Shelduck* to America, saying we would not be disappointed. At 09.00 on Thursday we were packed and ready when the taxi arrived to take us to the small airport in Hyannis where John was waiting, complete with his aeroplane, and would fly us to his home in Southwest Harbour, Maine.

The flight took an hour, including a tour over his house and the harbour. His wife Mary had a Maine lobster lunch prepared and we dined at their home that evening. During the afternoon I went with John to visit the Hinkley boatyard nearby to see John's yacht, the 52 foot Hinkley *Wiki Wiki*, which was being prepared to be launched on Monday. Southwest Harbour is on Mount Desert Island, at 104 square miles the largest island off the coast of Maine. Most of Acadia National Park is there. We visited the park on Friday after lunch at Bass Harbour. John drove us through the park to the summit of Cadillac Mountain, 466 metres above sea level. It was a beautiful clear day so the views over the nearby islands and sea were stunning. Saturday was another lovely day and Patricia went sailing, at last, in the Treanor family dinghy. It is a Nutshell pram, rigged like an Oppie, but bigger. That evening we were invited for drinks to a neighbour's house. Patricia stayed home and cooked us one of her famous chicken dinners.

Sunday, my birthday dawned as expected, a very wet day. We all relaxed in the house and after cocktails I invited all to a restaurant recommended by John, Red Sky, where I had my traditional birthday fare, lobster. I had invited Patricia to fly to Boston for a holiday cruise on *Shelduck* from there to Southwest Harbour. All in all she seemed happy enough with only getting sailing in the Nutshell pram and the excitement of sitting next to John up front as he flew his plane. On June 30th we returned to Boston where Patricia flew back to Paris and Anne and I to Helsinki to join *Tam O'Shanter*.

Falmouth Massachusetts to Maine

On arrival back at Boston airport on Wednesday 9th September I phoned MacDougalls boatyard to find that *Shelduck* was not afloat as promised. Anne and I were accompanied by long time *Tam O'Shanter* crew and husband of Anne's sister-in-law Joan, Peter Cassidy. We booked into a motel across the street from the yard. Next day she was launched in torrential rain so we decided to spend another night at the motel. It rained again on Friday but we managed to board in a dry spell and also do some provisioning.

Anne and Peter spent the day on Martha's Vineyard. I had planned to leave next day but with winds forecast force 6/7, I decided to wait until Wednesday 16th so as not to risk another accident in Wood's Hole. Up at 05.30 Wednesday and we left the boatyard marina just before sunrise to catch slack water and the start of the flood at Wood's Hole at 07.00.

We had a successful passage through and carried the flood up Buzzard's Bay to the Cape Cod Canal, where we reached a maximum of 9.5 knots. The 5.5 foot difference between the canal's east and west ends causes the current to run as high as 6 knots. We then motor sailed in a light southerly on to Plymouth.

Thursday dawned warm and sunny and we all enjoyed visits to the important town sites, including the Plymouth Stone, the Mayflower and the hilltop graveyard where the 17th century settlers are buried. Friday 18th was another beautiful day and we enjoyed a gentle 44 mile passage to Boston. As I put the engine into reverse outside Constitution Marina I noticed an unusual vibration of the yacht. I booked a diver to come who confirmed that the propeller was slightly out of alignment. On ringing a boatyard at Cape Ann I discovered that the place to have a propeller renewed was Salem so I booked into the Brewer boatyard there. Later Peter went for a walk and Anne and I took a trolley bus tour of the city. We left Constitution Marina at 08.00 Sunday to catch a fair tide and sailed the 25 miles to Salem in a south westerly force 4.

I had been asked by Rebecca of Brewer Salem to go on their website and send in a Works Order, which I did and received an emailed copy by return. The boatyard marina area is a little shallow for *Shelduck* except on the outside so, next day, she was lifted on a rising tide at 14.00. It was immediately discovered that the port propeller blade was slightly out of position and it was quickly fixed and *Shelduck* returned to the water. Meanwhile Peter and Anne did some sightseeing and provisioning. Early on Tuesday I walked the town, which is unspoiled with most houses in original condition.

Wednesday 23rd September early start again, leaving Salem just before sunrise at 06.00 then rounded Cape Ann at 09.05 motor sailing, with the headsail only, in a light north westerly off the land. We sailed passed a large pod of whales at the Scantum Basin off the New Hampshire coast, leaving Smuttynose Island in the Isles of Shoals to port. We looked out for the Bush family home as we entered Kennybunkport, avoiding the presidential protection buoys. Two large prominent dwellings overlooking the harbour entrance were flying the Irish tricolour from masts in their garden. The marina slip proved expensive at \$5 per foot per night, electricity not included. I called Homeland Security in Maine to be instructed to do so here in Maine, like Florida, every time I change position.

Next day with little wind and beautiful sunshine, we motored through the wonderful island landscape to the Brewer dock at South Freeport. This is their last location going north so the last opportunity to get their 20% discount. Navigating through the islands is interesting and concentration is needed to avoid the thousands of closely spaced lobster pot buoys. That evening we dined at the famous Harraseeket Lunch and Lobster Company, which serves up classic Maine seafood on the harbour side. We had a soft shell lobster each, a corn on the cob and a dozen large clams. Food is ordered and paid for through a window outside where most of the tables are. We ate inside in the small dining room as the evening was cool.

On arrival at Boothbay Harbour on Friday we found that the in-town Supermarket recommended in the pilot had gone out of business, so Anne and I walked a mile out of town to an excellent new one. Next day the passage was very cold, with wind on the nose for the 47 miles to Camden in West Penobscot Bay. As we entered the small harbour, a passing yacht recommended the Town dock. We had already turned down \$6 a foot for the night and were planning to pick up a mooring. It was dark as we stepped ashore from this excellent town centre facility for a pre dinner drink. In the morning the Harbour Master asked just \$50 for the berth, very reasonable for Camden.

The final passage of this cruise was 42 miles to Southwest Harbour with a force 4 from behind, an exciting final 2015 sail. As we sailed through the beautiful Deer Island Thoroughfare, we passed the Sheldrake ledge between Sheep Island and Eastern Mark Island at the entrance to Jerico Bay. *Sheldrake* was the name of my first boat, a 12ft Cobh T Class racing dinghy acquired in 1954. We reached Treanor's pontoon at 15.15 to a great welcome from John and Mary. Monday 28th was a lovely day, luckily. We spent it removing sails and everything from the deck, getting ready for lift out. John arranged for three Hinkley boatyard people, all with different duties, to visit *Shelduck* and go through our winter lists and he helped me bring the sails to Acadia Sails for storage and checking.

Tuesday, the final evening, was very enjoyable and spent at Mary and John's house in the company of four of their cruising friends. Next day John drove us to Bangor to catch the bus for Boston airport and soon after we left the house Hinkley collected *Shelduck* from his pontoon for winter storage. On this cruise from Great Bridge Virginia to Southwest Harbour Maine, we sailed 1,119 miles.

Papageno finds that The Rain in Spain stays mainly in the Plain.

Peter Haden

Henry Higgins was quite correct this summer and whilst messages from home complained, the weather on the Atlantic coast of Galicia was excellent, especially for May, June and July. There were plenty of long warm days of pottering around when perhaps we hoped for more wind, and then the thrill of evening sea breezes inside the sheltered deep and wide estuaries.

Papageno was launched down the railway line at the Lagos yard at the end of May and, at the pontoon, a yacht inside me announced he was leaving in twenty minutes, so I was gone in ten. With the boat in good order and all work completed, I was at sea only thirty five minutes after getting off the new high speed train in Vigo and on my way over to the friendly and inexpensive marina of Cangas much favoured by ICC members.

Usefully, there is an excellent chandler very close to the marina: Manuel of Ibericamar. He is highly skilled in electrical work and has all the contacts for any emergency work on a yacht, such as refrigeration, rigging or mechanics. The nearby supermarket delivers to yachts in the marina, which is especially appreciated when taking on first stores usually including many bottles of local wine. Although it was still May, the temperature was above 20 degrees every day and a good afternoon swim pleasantly broke the commissioning routine.

After a few days the slack winds enabled me to motor north towards Finisterre through the National Park islands and up to the very welcoming yacht club at Portosin, where ICC members get 25% discount on summer berthing fees. Fernando Gonzalez has retired as president after eight years and has been replaced by Jorge Aran, who speaks perfect English and is very anxious to attract Irish yachts to this club, with its especially commodious clubhouse and friendly staff.

Plenty of lazy days followed, reaching and running gently in the rias and around the beautiful islands.

In mid-May a delegation representing marinas in Galicia, led by Jose Juan Duran, president of the Galician ports authority, had visited Cork to encourage more Irish yachts to visit Galicia. Dan Cross and Flor Long made splendid arrangements at RCYC and KYC and in return Jose invited me to lunch at Bueu to discuss the probability of an ICC Rally in July 2017. This is now going ahead. Inside the fishing harbour at Bueu there are some new yacht pontoons, including berths for visitors. The Masso maritime and fish canning museum opposite the harbour is well worth visiting.

Moira came out for two weeks, and, as she prefers to stay in port, we chose a week at Portonovo, where the *presidente*, Javier Ruiz, gave us a very special rate. Apart from a good choice of places to eat in Portonovo, an excellent fish and vegetable market, and a Cortes Ingles supermarket, the possibility of stepping directly onto the sheltered beach from the pontoon walkway makes for easy living. Joe and Mary Woodward in *Moshulu III* know the best places and were there to greet us. Another morning, we strolled into Sanxenxo hoping to do some shopping, but the horrendous boom boom at 11.00 from the marina night club put us into a fast retreat. A few days later, Peter Cullen in *Zig Zag* arrived.

Then, after a pleasant week, we moved on to Cangas, which is Moira's favourite place in Galicia. Several ICC members, especially Mandy Stokes and family in *Clipper*, have judged that the best place to eat in Cangas is O'Peolas restaurant. It is family run and, as there are only six tables, you need to be there by 20.15 before the locals take over. After dinner here, a usual retreat is made up the hill to a small square, Praza Eirado do Costal, where the bar owner "Giani" makes ICC members particularly welcome. Here you can enjoy conversation away from the busy harbour front.

A UK yacht *Ambler of Arne*, John and Linda Scottom, arrived in Cangas. She is the original first build Tradewind 33 and in October following the advice of Dermot Lovett and myself she was hauled out at the Lagos yard for a winter of TLC. The weeks passed with various friends coming to visit and then a big surprise when, with Onora Lynch and John crewing, I sailed into a favourite harbour, Cabo de Cruz, where at the next pontoon we found a small wooden St.Petersburg registered Russian yacht just arrived. The family, who teach sailing at home, were leaving her for the winter, and expect to continue their camino next June. The name of the yacht is *Isha* and to our great surprise we learnt that she was built in Newtownards and is a full sister ship of Don Street's *Iolaire*. Being spoilt by the comforts of modern cruising yachts, we found the genuine mostly original condition of the yacht a little spartan, especially when daughter Anna explained that with four bunks they can sail with five crew as "There is always one person on watch"! She also told us that with the Rouble in free fall, the price of bread at the local *panaderia* was going up every single day. The family are very anxious to find out the early history of their boat in Ireland before she arrived in Russia. I have volunteered to pass this on.

In the year 1915 in Vigo, the famous boat yard of Astilleros Lagos was founded. For this, the centenary year, a celebration



***Papageno* in the approaches to Ria de Arousa**

rally had been planned and four ICC boats *Lonehort*, *Orchestra*, *Papageno*, and *Toby Too*, together with two more Irish yachts, *Oystercatcher* (Brian Cronin, KYC) and *Wife of Pi* (Enda Connellan, RIYC) were invited by Alfredo Lagos Snr, now in his 90th year. We were joined by English, American, German and several Spanish boats; a fleet of about twenty. The start of the rally was a Reception at the all time favourite Monte Real Yacht Club in Bayona and certainly the high point of the rally was a dinner party in the Lagos boat yard for 185 guests surrounded by the equipment and tools of one hundred years building and repairing. The yard is still at the heart of wooden boat maintenance in Galicia and has recently been honoured with royal patronage. We enjoyed a visit to a palace and gardens, the new Battle of the Rande museum in Ria de Vigo with its own visitor's pontoon, and several dinners. Brian Cronin entertained and led the post-meal international singing. The Spanish taught us how to sing 'Senor Capitan' which I later heard described as 'That song we Spanish always sing when we have had too much wine'! At Combarro Michael and Anne Craughwell generously fed and wined everyone together on their magnificent 22m Jongert *Orchestra*.



Boatyard dinner

The rally was timed to finish at the small friendly marina and club of San Vicente do Mar so as to coincide with the start three days later, of the Annual Regatta for Classic Yachts. This regatta is organised by Ignacio Montenegro, vice president of the club and long term friend of Alfredo Lagos. Ignacio had also been on the delegation to Cork and Kinsale last May and was especially welcoming to Dermot, Margaret and Aoife Lovett with their immaculate Salar yacht *Lonehort*, which was entered for the racing. The weather changed for the weekend, but we had splendid fun on the Saturday with Dermot commanding a racing crew of Paddy McGlade, Brian Cronin, myself and Maria the tactician, a young Portuguese girl who has been racing since the age of five and kept all us old fellas in order. We discovered later, somewhat to our surprise, that we had come second in class. Being an Irish boat, we were immensely welcomed and showered with prizes and hospitality. This is an event that ICC boats should support more. The whole weekend is sponsored and you cannot pay for anything.



***Lonehort* racing with *Dorna Meca*, a *Dorna Xeiteira*. (*Pesca al xeita* means fishing in the local style for sardines and other small fish). Dornas are the Rias Baixas equivalent of Ireland's gleiteogs. They are the original everyday boat for fishing and other work, and can be seen everywhere. This one is 6.1m LOA and the type of rig is called *de relinga*. She was built by Hermanos (the brothers) Garrida at O'Grove, in a lovely old-fashioned yard behind the market.**

Moira had come out for another two weeks and we enjoyed the many beaches and walking along the coast. Later we had another week in Cangas enjoying the start of the Cristo festival and a superb religious candlelit procession of statues, bands and several thousand people led by Don Julian Barrio Barrio, the Arzobispo of Santiago de Compostela. This finished with a 30 minute firework display, all being launched from the pier rather close to our berth.

Moira went home and I sailed off for a three week cruise north to Finisterre, coming back via all my favourite places. In Portosin I met six Swedish yachts all cruising in company. The weather held and I had just one wet night at anchor in Muros.

Returning to Cangas I met *Grand Slam* (John Bourke) with Terry Johnson and also *Rebound* (Donal Morrissy), both in turn getting ready to lay up for the winter in the care of one of the many inexpensive yards. We made the usual restaurant and bar circuit.

It was a good summer and as Henry Higgins famously sang, the rain in Spain did stay mainly in the plain. Weather forecasts for Galicia often say that it will be wet, but in fact the coastal strip where we sail is an exception and is usually dry. The waters are not crowded, and apart from August, very few other yachts are seen. The Irish sailing community have a definite presence in Galicia, and always receive a warm welcome.

Biscay Circuit with *Hecuba*

John Duggan

After cruising the Azores and other Atlantic islands three years on the trot, the crew of *Hecuba* (Tony Castro designed CS40), were looking for something else to do in 2015. In a spirit of open democracy, I offered the choice of the Western Mediterranean, taking in the Portuguese Cruising Association's visit to Ceuta, in commemoration of the 600th anniversary of Portugal's conquest of that city, or a trip to South Brittany, to join the Royal St George YC's Cruise in Company.

As others before me have found, the newly enfranchised frequently fail to exercise responsibly their rights under the democratic process and it became clear that my crew had not heeded my warnings about stifling heat in the Mediterranean in Summer, the overwhelming crowds, the crippling mooring fees and endless motoring, punctuated by howling Mistral. It was obviously necessary for me to exercise strong leadership and I quickly made contact with Tony Linehan (ICC), to book *Hecuba* onto the RStGYC rally, which was to start in Brest on 23 June and finish at Le Crouesty on 3 July.

As *Hecuba* and I are based in Cascais, Portugal, this outing would require a double crossing of the Bay of Biscay, preceded by the ever-present challenge of getting north against the prevailing northerly Portuguese Trade Winds. An initial departure date was set for 13th June but the forecast for the week before showed a gap in the Trades, so I rustled up my friend Tom Bruce and we made an early departure on Tuesday 9th June.

My early season collywobbles were in full quiver, not helped by the inexplicable failure, the previous week, of the fuel pre-filter, which resulted in some 150 litres of diesel getting dumped in the bilge. The clean-up was done efficiently by the local Volvo service agent but, inevitably, traces of fuel continued to turn up months later.

It all felt much better, however, once we were under way and we had an uneventful trip north to Oporto, mostly under power and with overnight stops at Nazaré and Aveiro. My previous visit to Aveiro had resulted in a two-day hangover but all was quiet this time and we survived unscathed.

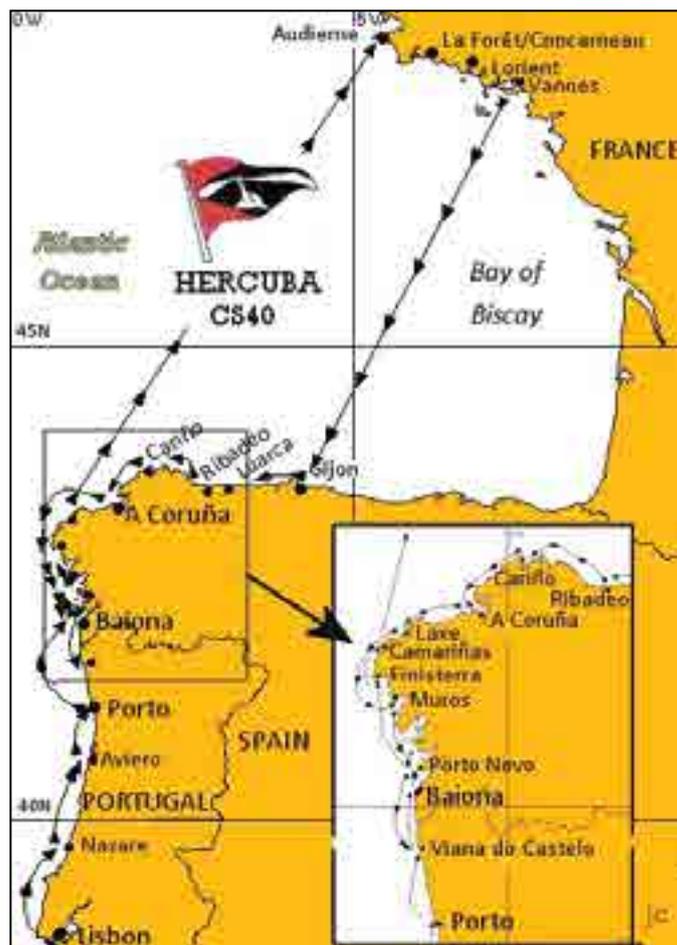
Our arrival at the Douro Marina in Oporto was a bit fraught. The previous year, we had been met by a boatman, who led us around the shallow patch outside the marina and took us straight into a suitable berth. This year, the boatman was late arriving out to us, leading to some anxious moments as the depths got critically shallow and, to make matters worse, the marina office changed the allocated berth at the last minute, no simple matter to deal with in a brisk cross wind and some tide. Steam was duly let off but tempers were soothed by the calming presence of John Ahern (ICC), already there to meet us, and a few stiff G&Ts, followed by a great fish supper in the nearby village of Afurada.

Tom left the next day and John and I had a chance to do some sightseeing in the lovely downtown part of Oporto and have a delightful dinner with my friends Maria and Paulo Torres, before being joined by Desmond Green for the trip north. Our first destination was Viana do Castelo, reached after some 5 hours of mixed sailing and motor sailing, in mostly fine weather, on 14th June. We were met there by the friendly marina master, Carlos, who placed us on the waiting pontoon outside the swing bridge, to make for an easy getaway the next day. Also there was Donal Morrissy (ICC), an engineering contemporary of John and Desmond. We agreed to meet Donal and crew for dinner but, on arrival at the recommended restaurant, we decided that Donal had been sold a pup and we flew solo to another restaurant, "O Pipo", where we ate well, with personalized service (being the only clients), for 25€ a head.

Across the border

We motor sailed to Bayona the next day, into a freshening wind out of the north. The discovery of a sprung hose on the domestic freshwater pump led to time spent on hands and knees, sponging diesel-tainted water out of the bilge, but the scenery was getting more interesting and nothing could spoil a pleasant voyage with bright sunshine and good food and drink on board. There are two marinas in Bayona and we opted for the one at the yacht club – Monte-Réal Club de Yates. A mention of the ICC gave an immediate and appreciated discount on the mooring fee, a useful contribution towards an excellent dinner in the Club's elegant restaurant. Bayona itself is a fine and attractive town but, as was to be too often the case, we had little time for more than a cursory visit.

After a further overnight stop at the marina in Porto Novo, in the pretty Ría de Pontevedra, we set off in earnest on



18th June for the dreaded Cape Finisterre. The Volvo Ocean Race fleet had had their teeth beaten out here in murderous conditions a few weeks earlier and, while the weather was not nearly as bad for us, it was blowing hard enough out of the North East. The sailing was great and the sun was shining but we had the third reef in the main by the time we got into the lee of the Cape. There, we found shelter in the charming and secluded anchorage at Enseada de Sardiñero, enjoying a homely dinner of bacon, cabbage and spuds while the wind whistled around us.

I had rather optimistically hoped to get from here to Corunna but the conditions north of Cape Finisterre on 19th June soon put paid to that ambition. We had initially some shelter from the coastline but at the cost of truly revolting sea conditions, with waves and their reflections coming at us from all directions. The RCC Pilot recommends keeping some 5 miles off but, as soon as we got clear of the coast, we were exposed to the full weight of Force 6-7 from the North East. An attempt to sail was frustrated by the genoa furler jamming and, as we could see that the halyard was twisting around the forestay, we quickly rolled it up again and continued motor sailing with deeply reefed main.

I had found, to my dismay, that there was no diesel fuel available in Porto Novo, due to a problem with the pump, and we now had not enough to motor sail to Corunna. After contemplating setting the storm jib (I had had an inner forestay fitted for just this), we decided that a better plan would be to cut our losses and put into Camariñas. This is about the most north-westerly point of Spain, with a marina sheltered from all wind directions, and, from here, we could either press on to Corunna or head straight for France. With some relief, we arrived at this plain but rather pleasant town, just in time for a late lunch, and sat down to evaluate the situation.

In fact, the situation was just fine, as there were decent shops and supermarkets to stock up for the Biscay crossing, a fuel pump had that day been installed on the pontoon, we were a 90 minute bus ride from Corunna for sightseeing, and there were more than enough good restaurants to see out the three days we expected to spend in Camariñas. We also had enough time to sort out some minor repairs, including resealing some of the deck hatches and lubricating the upper swivel of the genoa furler, which then worked without further complaint. John applied his ingenuity to stopping the freshwater hose from springing again and we enjoyed the help and company of our neighbour on the marina, Jonathan Mason, who was on the first stage of an extended voyage from Rush on *Calymbo*, with final destination who knew where.

We had a day out to Corunna, which I found pleasant enough but slightly disappointing. Its architecture and layout are handsome but, for some reason, it feels a little like a movie set and the restaurants seem to be geared for tourists – which we were, of course, but one doesn't like to be so obviously reminded of it. A sundowner at the Club Réal sounded like a good idea but the doorman made it clear, politely but firmly, that the gentlemen's knobbly knees were required to be covered if we were to gain admittance, so that project was abandoned.

Across the Bay

Our departure for France was set for Sunday 21st June and my hopes for a quick and easy passage were dashed by the forecast of fresh North Easterly winds for the Finisterre area and lighter winds further north. We were slightly discouraged by a chat with John Bourke (ICC) and Paul Montgomery, off *Grand Slam*, who, after two attempts to go north from Corunna, had abandoned the idea of joining the George rally and were now on their way south to Vigo. In view of the forecast, we decided that it was not feasible to make the first meet of the Rally, in Brest, so we opted to head for Audierne and catch up with the fleet as they came along the coast.

Our full complement of four was made up by Barny Wainwright, who joined us on Saturday 20th June and who brought our average age down some ten years. We finished off our maintenance issues and had a final, magnificent seafood meal in La Marina, in preparation for an early departure on the Sunday.

We left Camariñas at 10.30 and putting the third reef in the mainsail turned out not to be unduly pessimistic, as it was blowing harder than forecast by the time we cleared the last headland. With the genoa well rolled, we could only make good a course of 355°T, while the course to Audierne was 030°T, and the going was well and truly uncomfortable, close hauled in winds at the top end of Force 6 and a 2-3 metre sea. John Ahern heroically produced some soup and rolls for lunch and only this and the bright sunshine served to cheer things up. Nonetheless, we were making good progress, the land disappearing from sight in the early afternoon, and we then had the task of winding our way through the heavy shipping in this area. We could have tacked to the east so as to avoid crossing the shipping lane but this would have prolonged our time in the strong winds close to the Spanish coast, so we trudged north rather miserably through the night, until the wind started to die off, around dawn, some 100 miles north of the Spanish coast.

On came the engine and we motored the remainder of the way to Audierne. While not the most exciting, it was definitely better than what we had sailed through and nobody complained as the seas flattened, the sun came out and the standard of cuisine took a quantum leap for the better. After a little under three days at sea, we arrived in Audierne at 08.30



Desmond and John Ahern, South of Cape Finisterre.

on Wednesday, 25th June.

La belle France!

Audierne is a thoroughly charming place, with a small marina up the river, at the town centre. I had last visited in 1974, among a cast of thousands aboard the good ship *Tritsch Tratsch II*, including ICC members John Malcolm, Winkie Nixon and the late Brendan Cassidy. At that time, the marina did not exist and we spent the night there at anchor, off the rather wonderful beach. My abiding recollection is of the crew on the strand at midnight, fuelled by beer and pastis, writing their names in the sand and singing loud choruses of *Lloyd George Knew My Father* and impolite versions of the *Marseillaise*.

We were all much younger then and this visit was rather more sedate but we thoroughly enjoyed this friendly and picturesque town, which has excellent bakeries and grocery shops, plus some good supermarkets about a 15 minute walk from the centre. The LeClerc supermarket, however, is the only source of fuel, so the price of a taxi needs to be built into the budget. In celebration of our safe arrival, we had a wonderful meal at L'Iroise, most notable for the gigantic and excellent cheese board, served atop a vintage carpenter's bench.

Despite dire warnings in the RCC Pilot about French bureaucracy and the necessity for extensive documentation, we found the check in process here very straightforward and in neither Audierne nor anywhere else were we asked for any paperwork other than valid Euro notes of modest denomination.



Audierne.

Les Îles de Glénans

Having shelled out rather a lot of money on a new 20kg Rocna anchor, I was anxious that we should not spend our time marina hopping, so a visit to the Glénans archipelago would be a nice contrast to the landlocked tranquility of Audierne. The islands are low-lying, with an abundance of rocks and shallow soundings between them, so we took what looked like the easiest approach from the north and found a peaceful anchorage in clean sand, on the east side of Île de Penfret. After a brisk swim and a reviving G&T, we enjoyed Desmond's elegant rendition of grilled tuna steaks, with my last bottle of Graciosa white wine, from the Azores, and an evening of refined conversation. The still was briefly broken by the clatter of windlass pawls, as a businesslike wooden sloop nearby departed under

sail at the change of the tide, her sternlight disappearing slowly into the gathering dark.

Party Time!

The next event on the schedule was our first get together with the crowd from the George and, while only a half dozen boats actually made it, we had a fantastic evening at La Forêt Golf Club, housed in a beautiful chateau near the marina. This was arranged by Michel, the retired manager of the Glénans Sailing School in Ireland, at whose hands several of the George skippers had learned their nautical skills. Bounteous plates of Dublin Bay prawns with copious volumes of local wine got the party going in great style and it was a delightful opportunity for making new friends and unexpected renewal of long-lost acquaintances.

A quick trip across the bay was enough to get us to the lovely town of Concarneau, dominated by the old town within its frowning battlements. We ran riot in its excellent market, stocking up on good charcuterie and wonderful cheeses, in varying stages of affront to the nostrils. Not to be missed is the local specialty, Kouign-Amann, literally "butter cake", a caramel-infused pastry which, straight from the oven, is quite the most delicious cake I have ever eaten.

Desmond treated the crew to a slap up meal in L'Amiral, whose giant Concarneau oysters have to be experienced to be believed, and then it was time to say farewell to Barny, who faced a cross-country trek to Quimper, for onward flight to London. John and Desmond and I had time for a quick visit to the fascinating fishing museum, before setting off for Lorient, some six hours to the east.

The best of Breton picnic material combined with the best of Breton weather, gave us a memorable sail down the coast, before making our way up the busy river to Lorient, past the grim ruins of the WWII U-Boat pens and on to the packed marina in the heart of the city. Some of the George contingent were already there but we failed to find the rendezvous restaurant and opted instead for dinner aboard and a quiet evening.

27th June was to be John Ahern's last day aboard and, after much consultation with timetables, we decided that we needed to get him to Quiberon, for a train connection to Nantes, the most convenient airport. A mixture of sailing and motoring took us to Port Haliguen, a decent if slightly characterless marina about a mile from Quiberon. The on-board trolley proved its worth in schlepping John's gear to the station, French rural taxis being as notable for their non-availability

as for their eye-watering cost. Quiberon itself proved to be much more charming than we had expected and, having left John to the train at the rather Wild West style railway station, Desmond and I made free in the boulangeries and fish shops, snapping up rather too much in the line of fresh food supplies.

From there, it was on to the pretty island of Houat – the name being designed to catch out smart alecs showing off their schoolboy French, as the *t* is pronounced rather than silent. There, we tried out my new oyster opening equipment and, as we dallied in the bright sunshine, over a fine lunch of oysters, lobster salad and Chablis, we averred that the wealthiest man in the world didn't have it any better than we.

I had agreed a rendezvous there with Gauthier Tyrel de Poix, whom I had met two years before at Flores in the Azores and who keeps his boat near La Trinité. We anchored, initially, on the west side of the island but there was a bit of a wobbly swell, which showed no sign of subsiding, so we moved around to the bigger anchorage on the east side, at Treac'h er Goured, where we met up with Gauthier. A quiet drink before dinner turned into something a bit more boisterous and much progress was made in cementing the Irish-Breton relationship.



Hecuba at Île de Penfret.

Back to the Mainland

The weather had been rather warm until now and we were surprised to awake the following day to a chilly fog, with visibility down to a few hundred yards. We delayed our departure until after lunch and were glad to have Gauthier as pathfinder for the crossing to the mainland and, especially, to pilot us into the Morbihan and up to the George rendezvous anchorage, off Île d'Arz. In fact, the pilotage was not as terrifying as I had expected but it was still necessary to keep a sharp eye on plotter, depth and transits, as there were times when we were covering the ground at over 10 knots and things were happening very quickly indeed.

Tony Linehan had hoisted his pennant aboard David Bagnell's comfortable *More Latitude* where Gauthier joined us and the others of the rally contingent for an evening of great hospitality and chat.

After a miserable morning of rain, the weather cleared and Desmond and I made our way up to Vannes, at the head of the Morbihan. There were a few anxious moments near the north end of Île Aux Moines where we found ourselves having to buck a bit of tide and it was clear that the engine was not producing its full drive. Donning wetsuit and mask and going over the side at the waiting pontoon before the swinging bridge at Vannes was the obvious thing to do but the visibility was practically zero and I had great difficulty in getting down to the propeller. The solution was a warp slung under the boat and secured tightly between the two main winches; this led me easily down to the prop, which I found wrapped in a meter of heavy weed. Once in at the quayside at Vannes, it was only a short walk to the ancient and fascinating town centre. There, we enjoyed an excellent meal, partly in celebration of some good news from home and partly because life was just great!

The next day, Friday 3rd July, we caught the first of the ebb for an uneventful trip to the mouth of the Morbihan and into the gigantic marina at Le Crouesty. This was the setting for the final dinner of the George cruise in company and a fine evening it was. Thanks were enthusiastically given to Tony Linehan for setting up the event and all agreed it been worth the effort of getting there. We made our farewells on Saturday, and Desmond and I headed to Nantes, for our flight to Dublin, where I was taking a few days away from the sea.

Leaving France

John Malcolm (ICC) and I joined the boat on Thursday 10 July, somewhat peeved by rural France's lack of joined up public transport. The early evening train from Nantes had left us at Vannes station, some 20 minutes after the last bus to Le Crouesty but still in time to pay nearly 100 euros for the half hour taxi ride to the marina. A good steak and a few beers helped to get us back into holiday mood.

We were to be joined the next day by José Marques and, after topping up fuel and water, we decided to fill in the time by heading back to the Morbihan, to meet José at Vannes. The trip up to Vannes was pleasant and uneventful, apart from having our stern rail assaulted by an elderly French couple on an extremely solid cruising boat, who misjudged their approach to the waiting pontoon. Insurance papers were exchanged but the incident wasn't really worth following up and we didn't allow it to spoil our evening ashore.

We would now have several days away from land so it was time to stock up on provisions and few places are better for this than a medium sized French provincial city. The Saturday morning market in Vannes provided the best of fresh fruit and veggies, bread and cakes, fish, meat, cheese and, best of all, homemade butter, fresh from the churn. This last was so irresistible that what we thought to be more than adequate for a week disappeared in less than three days. Say what you want about *Hecuba* but we eat well and John and José know what good food is all about!

As the port would be closed on Sunday 12 July, with the Tour de France passing through Vannes, there was a great rush to get out at the first bridge opening, late Saturday morning. Cannily, we figured that this was too early to get the best of the tide, so we used the time to have a leisurely lunch, before joining the throng at the 13.30 opening. This, for some reason, evinced a tremendous spirit of competition among the departing yachts, not really appropriate for the narrow channel, and it was no great surprise to see one (French) yacht executing a violent swerve away from the north bank, too late to avoid uprooting one of the port hand perches in front of Pointe de Bararac'h – the No 2 mark, for anyone who wishes to update his charts.

Avoiding the chaos, we zoomed downtide and passed uneventfully into the open sea, en route to a last overnight stop, at Houat. Once more, we anchored at Treac'h er Goured but the holiday season was now in full swing and I was astonished to count not less than 160 boats anchored in the erstwhile secluded bay. John Malcolm proclaimed that there are only two types of people, those who don't like oysters and those who think they should, but José and I got stuck into a few dozen (we ate John's share) before devouring José's stunning meal of Ray with Black Butter Sauce, and we slept well in the gentle swell bobbling across the anchorage.

The morning was not promising for an interesting sail, with grey skies and a mirror-like sea, but the wind filled in from the west before lunchtime and we had a fine sail in bright conditions for much of the trip to Gijon, halfway between Santander and Corunna. The spinnaker made a rare appearance on Monday afternoon but the only other drama was the great detour made on Monday night around not one but two vast fleets of Spanish fishing boats, each with more than 30 large vessels, some 100 miles off the Spanish coast. I love eating fish, as much as the next man, but it was sobering to think of the enormous quantities of sea life being vacuumed up by this insatiable industrial machine.

In Asturias

Sailing conditions were perfect on Tuesday 14 July and we arrived in bright sunshine at 15.15 at the spacious marina of Gijon, met by a gratifyingly efficient and courteous boatman. Celebratory pints were consumed, showers had and telephone calls made, before setting off for a most wondrous meal of tapas at Cava Baja in the old town. The town is very attractive, despite having been hammered by Nationalist troops in the Civil War and the only thing we didn't enjoy was the 54 euro marina fee, the most expensive of the summer.

Our next stop was Cudillero, a bizarre little town which seems to have grown out of the geological folds in the spectacular cliffs which adorn the Asturias coast. Protected by a vast artificial wall, it offers complete shelter but requires visiting yachts to secure themselves to extremely heavy fore and aft moorings, uncomfortably close to neighboring boats. The Frenchmen on the adjoining mooring invited us to raft alongside them and this proved to be a reassuring solution for both of us. An entertaining run ashore the next day left us time for the six hour hop to Luarca, where José was to



Cudillero, Northern Spain.

leave us. Mooring here was another challenge, also a fore and aft job but this time between a mooring buoy and the pier, complicated by a distinct shortage of bollards. José got great exercise in the dinghy, trying to get a line ashore, but we finally achieved it and settled back to watch further arrivals grapple with the task. A swim in the crystal clear waters was in order but the Hebridean temperature ensured that this would be a brief and bracing experience!

Luarca is a busy town, with lots of tourists and good dining options. Unfortunately, we did not choose well, our chagrin being all the greater for meeting our French neighbours from Cudillero, still licking their chops after a memorable seafood dinner. Ice-creams on the pier, followed by a row back in the moonlight were some consolation.

José was flying out from Oviedo, which seems to have a better choice of connections than Corunna, so John and I saw him to his bus before setting off for Ribadeo, another 6 hour passage. The scenery is very impressive along this coast and the trip passed easily, with a mixture of sailing and motoring in mostly fine weather.

The approach to Ribadeo looks a bit gnarly, with lots of sharp fanged rocks but is actually straightforward, as long as you follow the transits carefully. Once again, the pontoon staff were absolutely on the ball and arrival was a cinch in this spacious marina with generous pontoons. The town itself is a bit of a trudge up the hill but it is surprisingly lively, especially around the park by the cathedral, where several generations of Spanish families were enjoying the night. Goey hot chocolate, "churros" (a kind of doughnut) and a glass of firewater rounded off our al fresco evening.

We topped up the water tanks here, the only negative note, as the water turned out not to be very nice and we subsequently dumped it in Corunna.

In the meantime, we pressed on for the little port at Cariño, some 40 miles to the west. This was enlivened only by an unsatisfactory dice with a Bowman 40, explained away, variously, by our dirty hull (the touchup of our Coppercoat had not been properly sanded down after launching), the light weather effectiveness of the Bowman's cutter rig, the dark possibility

that he had his engine ticking over in gear, etc. In any event, the wind dropped completely for a few hours, filling in later from the South West and then getting up to Force 5-6. The pretty anchorage at Cariño is very sheltered from this wind direction and we anchored securely in clean sand; this on the second attempt, I must admit, as I was too hasty in letting out the chain and we discovered the only failing of our excellent Rocna, in that it does not hold well when being dragged backwards with a bight of chain wrapped around it!

We had no time for exploring, as we had a long stretch to Corunna the next day, where we were to be joined by Philip Portal. The breeze was again on the nose, enough to give us good speed under full sail, and the weather was warm enough for tee-shirts until late afternoon. We got into the marina at around 18.00 and were efficiently received by the boatman and the reception staff at the Réal Club Nautico de Corunna. This is an excellent marina, in the heart of the city and I was surprised that both it and the even larger adjoining marina were very empty, especially in the light of the most reasonable 25 euro mooring fee. We had a pleasant enough meal ashore and another look around but I can't say I came away with any better impression of the city than I had formed on the way out.

What with shopping, fuel and replacing our Ribadeo water, it was early afternoon by the time we got away and it was motor, motor all the way to another anchorage, off the beach at Laxe. The town is a reasonable size but, again, we had no real inclination to go ashore, as we had probably the best view, looking shorewards off the beautiful sandy beach and sheltered from anything except a strong breeze from the north.

Round the Corner

The morning of 21 July started bright and sunny but our departure was met by a light breeze from the South West and poor visibility in fog and drizzle. The fog cleared south of Cape Finisterre, which showed us a better side than it had a month earlier, and it was warm and sunny by the time we made our way into Muros in the late afternoon. We were unaware that the marina, described by the RCC Pilot as small and unsuitable, has been expanded into quite a fine establishment but, on this occasion, misinformation worked to our advantage. Shunning the town, we anchored a mile away, off the charming wooded shore near Isla de San Anton, one of the most beautiful anchorages of our cruise. The Yamaha Crazy 8 on our little Avon made short work of the trip to the town.

The following morning was warm and sunny but we shook off our inertia with a grand swim - the water still fresh but perceptibly more comfortable than in Luarca - and headed off for Porto Novo, where we had agreed to catch up with Joe Woodward (ICC). Joe is a regular in Galicia and has almost ambassadorial status in his tireless promotion of the pleasures of cruising the Rias. We have little reason to challenge his enthusiasm, based on experience to date, and we had a great evening with Joe and Mary, enjoying a fine meal at the unpretentious restaurant by the marina. Plate after plate of tapas, numerous bottles of red and the freshest of seafood appeared, followed by a bill at the ridiculously modest price of 14 euros per head.

Back to Portugal

We had had a fine sail to Porto Novo but the wind deserted us for the trip to Viana do Castelo and we had a long day of motoring before arriving at the marina around 19.00. Donal Morrissy was there to take our lines, having used the boat as a base for local touring during the previous month. Also aboard for evening drinks were Anne and Philip Cowman (ICC) off *Scamander*, and Dick McKeever off *Wind Whisper*.

An early start was called for, to catch the flood upriver to Aveiro and, indeed, we caught the last hour of daylight as we made our way past the salt flats and under the worrying electricity cables (clearance 20m) to the pontoon at the sailing club A Vela. Docking was a little tricky, with a stiff breeze against the last of the flood stream, ending with a jolly game of Find The Dropped Fender Under The Pontoon. All was fine ashore in the pretty town, however, where we had a great meal in the ever-dependable Restaurante O Bairro, before wandering around to admire the canals and the charming Art Nouveau architecture.

The return to Cascais was uneventful, other than another cocked up docking in Nazaré. We had a lovely sail down the river from Aveiro but the wind dropped then and most of our progress was made under engine. The leg from Nazaré was made in mostly poor visibility and light winds, until we got to Cabo da Roca, some 10 miles short of Cascais. This is a notoriously breezy corner and, despite it being almost calm north of the headland, it was blowing nearly 30 knots by the time we shot out of the fog, into bright sunshine, near Cabo Raso. We had a final, lovely sail in a fresh Northerly, all the way to Cascais, where we were met by Philip's family, with a celebratory bottle of champagne. A fine end to a great cruise!

Our total rhumb line distance was about 1500 miles and we spent 326 hours at sea, 215 of them under power (including battery charging).



Misty morning at Viana do Castelo.

ReeSpray leaves the Med

David Beattie

This account describes my voyage from Alcudia, on the north coast of Mallorca, to Vilamoura in the Algarve over 14 days in September this year. To put it in context, having spent two winters in Croatia, I sailed *ReeSpray* from Zadar in Croatia, via Montenegro, Brindisi, the Ionian Islands, and Sicily back to Malta last year. The boat over-wintered there. I could not help noticing the reducing number of cruising yachts, growing numbers of refugees ashore and the increasing refugee rescue crisis. Mindful of the vulnerability of a small sailing craft at sea, and the aggression being shown to fishermen and the rescue authorities by the people-traffickers, and being very clear that the purpose of cruising is pleasure, I decided that it was time for *ReeSpray* to leave the southern Mediterranean. It was clear that many yachts were being moved – mostly to the already over-priced and over-crowded northern shores of the Med so it was time to begin the journey home.

We left Malta in May, went east about Sicily, encountering the international rescue fleet off Cape Passero and had a pleasant cruise via the Messina Strait and Aeolian Islands to Castellamere del Golfo, leaving the boat there for five weeks before continuing via the Egadi Islands, southern Sardinia and Menorca to Alcudia. What was noteworthy was the absence of yachts, both in port and at sea until we were within 100 miles of the Balearics. Once there, marinas were choc-a-bloc and prices hiked.



At 07.55 on 5th September, we slipped *ReeSpray's* lines and motored out from Alcudia. Aboard were Aoife Nolan, David Meredith and myself. The plan was to make Vilamoura in time for flights home on 20th. We had arranged to pick up Peter Crowley en route on the 12th, or thereabouts, and he had a flight booked to Almeria on that date. I wrote “passage towards Ibiza” in the logbook rather than a more ambitious target, prompted in part by the lumpy sea. That sea made all three of us feel decidedly queasy as we motor-sailed just above close-hauled to clear Cap de Pinar: when we reached that point we were able to fill the sails and beat up to Cap de Formentor, passing the latter at 10.40. Once around Formentor, we were able to free the sheets, replace the staysail with the yankee jib and watch the speed increase to over 6 knots. Two of us now had our sea-legs and the third was sleeping soundly. We sailed down the northwest coast of Mallorca, Aoife logged the sighting of a basking shark and by 02.00 on the 6th we could see the loom of Ibiza ahead and had picked up the light on Punta des Moscarter. My two crew were happy to carry on – at least they didn't object - so in the favourable northwesterly force 4 we altered course slightly towards the west watching, but managing to avoid, some dramatic thunderstorms with associated sheet lightning. I find that radar is very helpful in tracking the heavy rain associated with these storms. During the night the wind slowly veered to the northeast and we had a spanking sail, achieving well over 7 knots at times during the morning, reaching Calpe by 16.00. We topped up our tanks, had a good shore run for tapas and wine and an early night, content that we had made 182 miles. The massive lump of calpe limestone to the north of the harbour presumably gives the stone its name and not vice versa?

A later start of 10.00 the following morning in a light and variable breeze saw us at sea by 10.15. I ventured writing “towards Almerimar” in the logbook. Some members of my regular crew have the blessed habit of rising early when in port, visiting the local bakery for fresh bread and croissants and then supplying the rest of us with freshly brewed coffee et al. Training in this regard was suggested at Calpe!



Calpe from south

We were not far out from Calpe when we picked up a Pan Pan call from a 60 foot British registered yacht – *Quadrillo*. His engine had failed and, while he was in no immediate danger, he was unable to make progress towards a port. He was about 4 miles ahead of us, so we motored towards him while monitoring the VHF traffic. By the time we reached him and offered assistance, the Spanish Coastguard were on the case and he wished us a good passage. We then watched as he was taken in tow by a big Salvamento Marítimo rib. One wonders what that exercise cost him?

Meanwhile a good breeze had filled in from east-southeast and gradually backed east-northeast during the day, great conditions for the *Spray* and we made hay through the day and following night, achieving speeds of between 6 and almost 8 knots. At 02.00 on the 8th I wrote in the log “spectacular lightning across

western horizon”. Despite the use of the radar, this was a storm that could not be avoided. It enveloped us and continued with sheet lightning that quickly turned to fork and lasted for over five hours, although the most intense period was some three hours and seemed forever. I put all the moveable electronic equipment in the oven, although I hope that the hull being steel would be an effective faraday cage in itself. We were not hit, although Aoife, on watch during the worst of it, reported hearing the sea nearby sizzling from being struck. The upside was a complete cleaning of the deck and sails by the torrential rain.

The morning dawned eventually and the air cleared. We were still making good progress and a cooked breakfast improved the morale on board. Crews and armies have that in common. We picked up a Ch 16 VHF broadcast from NATO warning of an anti-terrorism exercise in the general area and the first of what became a series of Spanish Coastguard alerts of refugees adrift in an inflatable boat, not that far to the south of us. This tallied with some rather bizarre calls on VHF that we were beginning to receive. Starting in what sounded like Arabic they would turn to shrieks or screams. Earlier in the summer, we had heard this sort of thing repeatedly from Castellamere, past Sardinia and until we were about 100 miles from Menorca. They were all very clear, so we thought that they either emanated from a nearby vessel or a coast radio station. In some cases the positions of yachts (including our own) were announced followed by comments such as “heads are rolling on the sea tonight” and then wails or screams. The most memorable incident was witnessed by my crew member Mick Dooley while we were off Sardinia when such a signal was followed by the background sound of machine gun fire, an intervention by a wireless operator on a Spanish warship and finally, within earshot on what was otherwise a quiet night at sea, four rounds of a heavy weapon followed by silence. In due course I reported all of this in conversation to a member of a government security agency who nodded sagely and confirmed that much of what is going on in the southern Med is simply not being reported.

Anyway back to breakfast! This was followed by an excellent lunch at sea and so by 15.00, with Almerimar just 16 miles away, the first (and modest, as we were at sea) jug of Pimms of the trip was put up and down, if you get the drift? By 17.45 we were on the waiting berth in Almerimar and by 18.15 secured and watered. It was noticeable that this far south, the marina was only about half full and we were immediately offered a special deal to stay longer. I declined the offer and we repaired to El Tonel tapas bar. It was just beside our berth. The three of us wine and dined royally and had small change from €25! Surely it was a mistake? No, the tapas came with each round of drink for an extra 50c per dish.

Having now covered 374 miles in four days, we awarded ourselves an extra day in port. Exploring the marina, we found



David Beattie, David the restaurateur and David Meredith in Marina del Este

a large number of berths vacant and many of the surrounding apartment and retail buildings shuttered and empty. We came across *Mary Lee* – owner Jack McCann, ICC and had a good chat on board his boat. Another night in El Tonel followed when we pushed the boat out even further with a bill of almost €30!

In discussion we decided that we had made enough progress to have the luxury of a day sail. Sailing ended up being optimistic as there was no wind so we motored from departure at 08.50 until arrival at Marina del Este at 17.15. The only excitement was another coastguard Pan Pan asking for watch to be kept for more refugees, this time about 20 miles south of our track and thought to number about 45 people in an inflatable boat. Marina del Este was a new find for me and I heartily recommend it. Sheltered, scenic, intimate and friendly, whilst good value, it has much to commend it. I must admit that our opinions were coloured when on arrival we were told to tie up stern-to the restaurant cum bar and that the waiter was perfectly happy to serve drinks to us in the cockpit. The restaurant is called David's and as we had another two of that name on board the proprietor was most amused. It turned out to be a pleasant establishment and good value if one kept away from the catch of the day.



ReeSpray stern to the restaurant at Del Este

The next day was the 11th so I telephoned Peter to warn him that we were ahead of schedule, but planning to keep going as strong westerlies were forecast from the evening of 12th and expected to last. He decided to ditch his flight rather than try surface transport and said he would fly in to Gibraltar. Unfortunately the flights were heavily booked so the

earliest one he could get was arriving at 21.00 on 14th. We left del Este at 09.00 with absolutely no wind and decided to motor as far as we could get before sundowners at 18.00. By early afternoon, visited by more dolphins it became clear that Fuengirola would be the logical destination. In fact it was a better berth than it might have sounded, although when we rose at 06.00, for a ten past departure, the parties in the town could still be heard.

A moderate breeze from west by south greeted us at sea and held all day, although as we sailed westwards it became intensified by the Rock itself and Europa Point. I had bypassed Gibraltar on the way in to the Med in early 2009 and, not having been there since 1972 on a delivery trip, was interested to see if my memories of a generally rough and run-down port town, with a dozen or more naval vessels based there, still held good.

As we approached the Rock from the northeast the sea quickly became quite steep and I therefore altered to approach the mid-point of the Rock itself through the myriad of anchored ships that lay in its lee. In this way we crept inshore around Europa Point against the first of the new tide and then reached up to the Ocean Village Marina – just where Shepard's used to be. The welcome was warm and we were quickly secured. It was certainly warmer than the reception given to a Spanish police RIB that we soon learned was teasing the Gibraltarians every day by entering their waters. On each day that we were there it would nose its way in and receive a warn-off by radio followed by the dispatch of a small black two-man RIB with a White Ensign – the only vessel with one in Gibraltar!

Having got over the culture shock of the apartment buildings bedecked with Union flags – much like parts of Northern Ireland in July - we enjoyed the cheap beer and did our best to avoid the tattooed holidaymakers and the multiplicity of fish and chip vendors. We took a minibus tour of the Rock – the cable car to the top being closed because of the strong westerly winds, the forecast having held true - and marvelled at the caves and extensive tunnels.

I believe that ports tend to rot crews and this was no exception. The strong westerly combined with a spring tide meant that the Straits held little attraction, so we waited for Peter to arrive. As luck would have it, his flight was diverted at the last minute to Malaga while airborne. His arrival on foot just before midnight on 14th had required us to use every power of delay and inducement we could muster, just to keep the bar open for a welcoming drink at our rendezvous – oh the joys of UK licensing hours!

Our timing was now predicated by tide, so at two hours after high water Gibraltar next morning we slipped and motored southwestwards to avoid the last of the east-going inshore tide and take the beginnings of the west-going one. Just over half way across the bay towards Albufeira we spotted a whale blowing twice, although we saw nothing of the creature itself. It was still blowing force four, gusting into five on the nose and we needed most of the muscle from *ReeSpray's* six cylinder Ford Dorset to punch westwards through the wind-over-tide. The doom merchants in the marina had told us that we wouldn't make it past Tarifa but in fact we did so and then had an easy close reach up to Brabante and our first pontoon berth since April 2009.

There is not a lot to say about Brabante, although its location is convenient. It was built under General Franco's command economy, and it looks it. We left it early next morning and made a fast passage on a close reach to Cadiz.

Puerto America was very welcoming and recommended a tapas house in the city. It is called Balandros and is on the northern edge of the old city not far from the city end of the causeway to the marina. It was exceptional and is "worth a deviation" as they used to say in the Michelin Guide. We stayed two nights in Cadiz and went to Balandros both nights, having to push ourselves to order different dishes the second night as the first night's choices had been so good. Cadiz rewards a good walk and Lord Byron – quoted in the RCC pilot – was right about it being very beautiful. There are many fine buildings to see. We visited the magnificent cathedral and the attractive botanic gardens. The Chilean four-masted sail training barquentine *Esmerelda* was in town and the brand new P & O cruise liner *Britannia* called. However for us time was now pressing, so after a good though early lunch in Cadiz on 18th we left for Vilamoura. We had an uneventful overnight sail, saw the dawn rise over the Faro lagoon and were alongside the welcoming pontoon at 08.25 ship's (Spanish) time and in our winter berth by 08.55 local time – shortly after the office had opened. Prices in Vilamoura had not changed markedly since I was there over the winter of 2008/9 and the winter is costing only a fraction more than five and a half weeks did in Alcludia.

The usual work of removing and stowing sails and cleaning ship was rewarded by an exceptional meal in the Akavit restaurant, succeeded by a flying visit from Peter Redden (former Commodore RIYC) and a regular crew member aboard. So thus ended *ReeSpray's* almost seven year Mediterranean sojourn with a two week cruise of 700 miles and 8 ports, making it a six week season of 1,520 miles and 23 ports.



Rock of Gibraltar and Europa Point from due east

David Beattie was also Locking down in to Friesland

I accepted an invitation from regular *ReeSpray* crew member Frank Browne, to join him and a motley crew sailing a lemsteraak in the Netherlands for a week this summer. I was delighted to accept, especially as my own lemsteraak, *Schollevaer*, has been in dry dock for almost five years having a 100th birthday refit, down to bare metal inside and out.



Dutch traditionally rigged sailing ships – in fact Baltic traders

Highlights included locking up out of Makkum onto the Ijsselmeer. Some fantastic off-wind sailing on the IJ'meer and the plethora of traditionally rigged vessels wherever one looked. My old school chum Robert Schouten, who has lived in the Netherlands since the mid 1970s, joined Aoife, Alan and Joanna Algeo, Sheila Thomson, Frank and me for the week.

We had rather hoped to venture out to the Frisian Islands across the Wadenzee but the forecast wind prevented it. I was relishing the thought of some good old-fashioned cross-tide pilotage, Riddle of the Sands style, but it was not to be. In fact, for the latter part of the week, prudence required us to return to the hire base via the Frisian canal and lake system. This too was a revelation, with the myriad of lift bridges opening silently at the toot of our hooter.

It was wonderful to get back to the physical challenges of a heavy gaff cutter rig, what with running backstays, peak and throat halliards, twin topping lifts and a widow maker of a boom. Luckily *Schollevaer* is back afloat, although awaiting a new mast, so relearning the old skills will come in useful for next season.



Reitschoot, the 12.5m lemsteraak chartered by Frank Brown

To Croatia and the Adriatic on *Tidal Dancer*

David Jones

Our Log in last year's Annual finished in Civitavecchia at the end of June. We returned at the beginning of September and continued our cruise down the West Coast of Italy visiting, among others, Rome (Ostia), Bay of Naples, Amalfi Coast, Tropea, Aeolian Islands, NE Sicily and via the Straits of Messina to Sibari which is in the instep of the Italian Boot, where *Tidal Dancer* was to spend the winter.

We had heard of Sibari from the late Brian Hegarty and Bud Bryce among others who had wintered their boats there in the past. It is very safe from winter storms and is very reasonably priced; sadly though the marina appears to be dying. The reason appears to be the silting up of the canal that leads up to the marina gates. The Local Authority seems to be responsible for dredging the canal so the marina have no control over when it is done. The canal accesses the sea by cutting through the beach; any wind blows sand from the beach into the canal causing it to silt up. This had happened just before our arrival on 9th Oct and we were advised to wait till high tide, which happened to be a Spring, before attempting entry. In spite of that we did touch ground and had to be assisted over the shallow bit. Once safely inside we noted that there were very few boats, particularly sailing boats. All the retail units appeared to be closed although thankfully a couple of restaurants and cafes were open. The staff were great but an air of decay hung over the place. We could see however that the boat would be completely safe, with two large gates protecting the marina from any surges up the canal.

Trish and I returned to Sibari in mid-April to find *Tidal Dancer* just as we had left her six months previously. She was hauled to allow for normal pre-season anti fouling, polishing etc. We went down to the beach and found that the mouth of the canal was completely full of sand and you could walk across it; this was a cause for some concern! We were told that dredging should commence in mid May and take about 2 weeks. This meant that we would have to postpone the normal mid May start to our cruising season.

I returned on 31st May accompanied by Derek Bothwell and Neil Inglis. *Tidal Dancer* was launched the next day and we started to prepare her for sea. There was however an added complication that could prevent us from leaving. During the winter a sandbank had built up about 30m from the mouth of the canal which ran parallel to the beach with a depth of only 1.6m. The only possible way out was to exit the canal which had been mostly dredged by this stage, execute a 90 deg turn to port and run between the beach and the sandbank for approx 500m by which point there is only about 20m between the bank and the beach. A turn 90 deg to Starboard is then required to keep to a very narrow channel with a depth of about 2m, *Tidal Dancer* needs 2m.

We decided to make the attempt on 3rd Jun as this was another Spring Tide. About an hour before high water which was approximately 17.00, Gino took me out in his dinghy to check the depths. He is the man who runs the boatyard, seems to run all the practical parts of the marina and was responsible for helping us get over the silted up part of the canal

8 months earlier. We used his measuring stick to check depths in the canal and between the sandbank and the beach. At the critical point where we would make the turn to starboard he dropped a marker buoy. The depths here were only barely 2m so it was going to be very tight. I didn't relish the thought that we could be trapped in Sibari Marina.

Time to depart: we followed Gino in his dinghy down the canal and between the sandbank and the beach; the sea was flat calm. Approaching the critical point, the beach seemed awfully close. Derek was calling out the depths. As indicated on our instruments, we can expect to touch at an indicated 1.6m. As I made the turn to starboard I could hear Derek calling the depth, "1.8 - 1.7 - 1.6 - 1.6 - 1.5", the pitch of his voice increasing, "1.6 - 1.6 - 1.7 - 1.8 - 2.0 - 2.2", we had made it with just mm's to spare. Gino stood up in his dinghy, crossed his arms over his heart and apologised to us for all the inconvenience. We thanked him for all his help and set off into the night very relieved. It was a beautiful calm moonlit night as we motored ENE towards Gallipoli on the heel of Italy, arriving at 08.30 next morning.

We berthed in one of the small marinas and set off in search of coffee, not difficult to find, a supermarket, more difficult and a Camping Gaz dealer, much more difficult. After some time and searching we had success in all our endeavours. Being tired after the night sail, we indulged in an afternoon nap and then set off to find a nice restaurant in the old town for dinner. Gallipoli, which is not to be confused with the famous peninsula in Turkey of WW1 fame, was originally founded by



the Ancient Greeks. It has a fine old town on an island, joined to the mainland by a 16th Century bridge.

Being nearly 2 weeks behind our original schedule, we did not tarry and set off next morning bound for Santa Maria di Leuca Marina, which is beside the headland of the same name and is on the tip of the Heel of Italy. Then a 08.00 departure next morning, rounding the headland into the Adriatic bound for Brindisi. A good breeze from the SE blew up and we got a number of hours of good sailing, not that common in the Med. We arrived just after 18.00 and, after refuelling, took a berth in the marina. Due to a combination of thundery weather, a number of boat jobs that needed to be completed and a pile of dirty laundry that needed attention, we stayed there for 2 nights.

The marina is very close to the airport and is a bit out of town so on the morning of Mon 8th we made the short hop to the town quay, only to find it full. The Brindisi to Corfu Race Fleet was in town but we did manage to negotiate a temporary berth for a few hours. The time was used to have a look round the town, do a supermarket shop and have lunch. Brindisi was to be our starting point for the hop across the Adriatic, a distance of 120M. Lines were slipped at 14.10 and on exiting the impressive harbour we set a course of 015. Light headwinds became calm as night fell, making for an uneventful passage, except for a few rain showers.

We entered the Gulf of Kotorska, Montenegro, between Mamula Island and Ostra Point at 08.30. Derek and Neil were taking a nap so I enjoyed the magnificent scenery alone as we motored towards Tivat, berthing at the Customs and Immigration Pier at 10.15. A very helpful and friendly official took me in a golf buggy to Police, Immigration and then to the Harbourmasters Office, where I had to purchase a Cruising Permit. Even though Montenegro is neither in the EU nor the Eurozone, the currency in use appears to be Euro. Formalities completed, we motored the short distance round to Marina Montenegro, berthing at 11.40. This is a new marina with very good facilities and can accommodate the largest super yachts. The waterfront area has a brand new upmarket hotel, plus cafes and restaurants. The town of Tivat itself does not have a lot to offer, though. We had dinner in a restaurant at the back of the town but it wasn't particularly good. Walking home with the sky alight we ducked into a little pub about 30 seconds before the heavens opened. Sadly we were forced to remain there and drink beer for some time to avoid getting drenched.

Next morning after a supermarket shop and coffee, (Neil doesn't function very well after 11.00 without a morning coffee), we departed for the spectacular trip up the gulf to Kotor. The inner part of the gulf in particular is very fjord-like, with high mountains rising steeply out of the water. Kotor itself is in a spectacular location at the head of the gulf and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is one of the best-preserved walled medieval cities in the Adriatic. As well as accommodation for Cruise Liners and Mega Yachts, there is a pontoon and inner section of waterfront that can accommodate a reasonable number of normal sized cruising yachts, although in high season there wouldn't be much spare space. We were going to be joined by my wife Trish and Derek's wife Gaye, so a cleanup job was done that afternoon. The girls joined us about 17.30, having flown to Dubrovnik and then a bus to Kotor. After a welcome drink on board, we all set off to the walled town for a ramble and to find a nice restaurant for dinner. The town is beautifully preserved with narrow streets and alleyways, churches, squares and of course restaurants.



Kotor and the Gulf of Kotorska



***Tidal Dancer* in an Idillic Croatian Anchorage**

Situated 260m above the town is the Fort of St John and for a small fee it is possible to climb up to it. We set off early next morning to make sure we reached the top while it was still in shadow. The climb is quite steep and is made up of rough paths and steps; it was tough enough but we all made it. The reward is a stupendous view of the old walled town, surrounding mountains and the Bay of Kotor (part of the Gulf of Kotorska). Needless to say the descent was much easier and on reaching the bottom we treated ourselves to breakfast followed by the rest of the day and night in Kotor.

It was now Fri 10th June and time to move on. Lines were slipped just after midday having stocked up in the supermarket. We were now five. Exploring the gulf, we passed the two islets off the town of Perast, each with its own little church but nothing else and separated by only about 50m.

The Adriatic is known for its warm clear water so the anchor was dropped in U Krtole, a bay on the south side of O Stradioti, near Tivat, for a swim, water temperature 27 degrees, lovely. Returning to Tivat, we made use of the facilities, toilets and showers that would not be out of place in a luxury hotel. Dinner was had in a very nice balcony restaurant overlooking the waterfront, a great improvement on our experience a few nights earlier.

Exiting the gulf and turning south, we motored to Budva next morning. Just south of Budva is the Island of St Stefan which used to be a small walled town and is now a luxury hotel. The island is joined to the mainland by a short causeway and is featured in all tourist brochures of Montenegro; sure enough, it is a very pretty place. The marina in Budva is right beside the old town and boasts the most attentive staff I have yet encountered anywhere. As usual, marinas took our lines, handed us the mooring line, or slime line as we called it, and assisted us in securing the boat. Then a very pretty young lady took me by the hand, figuratively speaking, on the quite long walk to reception, chatting away in good English and pointing out any features I needed to know about. This makes the task of paying the bill less unpleasant as marinas in Montenegro and Croatia are not cheap. Budva itself is on the tourist trail and has its own walled old town which is very pretty but not quite as impressive as Kotor. That evening we dined in a beachfront restaurant by the marina.

Departing at 11.00 next morning, we headed north in an increasing SE breeze which with a quartering sea made for a sometimes uncomfortable passage. Our destination was Cavtat in Croatia which is designated as a Port of Entry. Like Montenegro, it is necessary to head for the nearest Port of Entry after crossing into Croatian Territorial Waters. Cavtat is south of Dubrovnik and is very close to the airport. It's in a deep sheltered bay but does not have a marina. The Customs quay is fenced off and a fee must be paid for the privilege of berthing there while formalities are completed. This consists of going to the police with passports, registration documents etc., then a visit to the harbourmaster to pay the Tourist Tax and purchase a Cruising Permit (Vignette), followed by the police again who will make copies of them. On return to the boat the Customs Quay must be vacated and, in our case, move about 30 m to berth against the Town Quay, where you may have the dubious pleasure of meeting Antonio, who has a concession on part of the quay. Unusually, berthing in Cavtat involves dropping the anchor and reversing to the quay. Antonio's only greeting seems to be "who will pay the diver", a reference to possible crossed anchors, which he uttered to every boat that we saw arriving. He must be the worst advertisement going for Croatian Tourism and interestingly we didn't see anyone with crossed anchors during the two days we were there. Cavtat itself is a nice little town but we did leave with a feeling of being ripped off, an experience that was only repeated once more during our period of nine weeks cruising in Croatia.

Having paid our dues etc, we were now free to cruise the Croatian coast and islands, next stop being the short hop to Dubrovnik. We joined the many tripper boats and motored round the coastal part of the walled city before going under the suspension bridge by Gruz and heading up the river to Dubrovnik Marina. The forecast for the next couple of days indicated strong winds and thunderstorms, so we were happy to be safely tied up in a secure marina. The marina is on the bus route to the old city but a local taxi man offered us a price that equated to five bus fares. We made two trips into town over the next few days. There's no doubt that the walled city is a very impressive and beautiful place and a walk round the city walls is not to be missed. The number of tourists seems to depend on when and how many cruise ships are berthed in Gruz, some days being better than others. Sadly Neil and then Derek and Gaye had to depart for home, so it was now just Trish and myself. We noted a yacht called *Insouciance* in the marina flying the ICC Burgee and managed to meet the owners, George & Lynne Ralston ICC. They have been in Croatia for 10 years and were able to give us much useful information over dinner in a marina restaurant.



Trish & Myself with Pete & Gillie Adams on *Modus Vivendi*.

After the third day the weather had improved. It was now Fri 19th, time to head North. Passing to seaward of the Elaphite Islands, we motored through the Mljetski Kanal in brilliant sunshine and light winds in the direction of Korcula. There we were to get together with another ICC couple, Pete & Gillie Adams on *Modus Vivendi*. They invited us to dine on board and meet their lovely friends Guy & Vanessa Walker for a very pleasant evening. Next morning after the rain had stopped we took our dinghies ashore to explore the old walled town of Korcula. It is quite amazing the number of well preserved walled towns there are along the Dalmatian Coast. Exploration over, *Tidal Dancer* followed *Modus Vivendi* for the 10M trip up the Peljeski Kanal to Loviste, a fine anchorage at

NW end of the long Peljesac Peninsula. After pre-dinner drinks on board *Tidal Dancer* we took our dinghies across the bay to the village of Loviste for a very pleasant evening in a waterside restaurant. Pete and Gillie have been cruising Croatia for the past 5 years or so and were also able to give us more good pointers for our cruise. Sadly they were coming to the end of their time there and had to leave early next morning to return to their base in Murter.

Our next destination was the port of Hvar which fills up very quickly, so we also departed early. On our arrival a little after midday, there were boats milling all over the place but eventually we were called in to a berth on the main quay. Within half an hour the quay was full. The quay is the most convenient but not the only option, as there are mooring buoys in the harbour area and Palmizana Marina on the adjacent island of Sv Klement, from which there is a water taxi service. Hvar is another walled town with a fortress on the overlooking hill which begs to be climbed, the reward being great views of the town and adjacent Pakleni Islands. These islands were our destination next day and after doing a circumnavigation we decided to anchor in Uvala Tarsce, a deep bay on the south side of Sv Klement well sheltered from the afternoon Sea Breeze (W-NW) and the night time Land Breeze (N-NE) plus the Bora (NE). The weather was due to change next day with the onset of a Jugo. This wind blows strongly from the SE, is warm and humid and normally accompanied by cloud, rain and thunderstorms. The advance swell started to penetrate the bay in the morning making the anchorage uncomfortable so, along with most of the other boats, we hauled anchor at 07.30. Soon we were romping along under jib only, with the wind increasing above 25kts. Aware that a couple of days of bad weather lay ahead, we decided to head for Marina Kastela, a new marina on the mainland coast between Split and Trogir, arriving at 11.40.



Hvar and the Pakleni Islands.

We were both impressed with Kastela, even though it is predominantly a charter base with a number of companies operating from there. Prices are reasonable by Med standards, facilities are good and the staff are friendly and helpful. It is also very close to Split airport and on the Split-Trogir bus route. Being pretty much in the middle of the Croatian coast, it is well placed for cruising to the South or the North. We arranged to keep her there out of the water for the high summer months of July and August. Trogir is a short bus ride away and as it is yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site walled city so a visit is a must. There is a marina opposite the town but it is crowded and expensive so I reckon Kastela is a better bet.

With the weather remaining unsettled for the next few days, we made use of the time doing polishing and cleaning jobs on the boat. *Tidal Dancer* was now looking pristine. On one of the days we hired a car and drove down the beautiful A1 motorway into Bosnia to visit Mostar. There is something special in seeing and walking over the 16th C bridge, Stari Most, after it was so wantonly destroyed during the wars of 1992/3, having stood for 427 years. It was rebuilt with international assistance using as far as possible techniques of the time and materials from the remains of the original. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it was reopened in July 2004, well worth a visit.

Sat 27th July and the weather had returned to normal, by normal I mean that the wind blows from the direction one is planning to go. This it did as we departed Kastela heading for the Krka River, spending a night in the well sheltered anchorage at Vinisce. There we met some Aussies, who had met Olivia (RIP) and Pat Murphy in Brisbane during their Round the World Voyage. There are lots of good anchorages in this part of the coast between Trogir and the mouth of the Krka River, which we entered at 11.43. The initial mile or so is quite narrow in places, although it is used by some quite large ships going to the port of Sibenik, where it opens up.

Heading upstream in quite blustery conditions we passed under the road bridge, clearance 28m, and checked out the anchorages at Zaton and Rasline, eventually opting for the remote sheltered (from the N) bay, U Beretusa. Once the wind dropped in the evening, it became a quiet idyllic place with just 2 other boats there. The trip up the river is fabulous, most of the lower part wide before going through a narrow gorge with sheer cliffs, a number of 90 degree turns and then opening out into a lake. The final part to Skradin is through another winding gorge with ample depth throughout. The lovely little town and marina of Skradin is as far as yachts can go and is the entry point for the Krka National Park. The marina is quite expensive but there is a couple of ways to avoid spending one night there; one is to anchor as we had done in one of many bays within a couple of miles of the town; the other is to berth at the pontoon of the Restaurant Vidrovaca, which is free if you eat at the restaurant. The food is excellent, some of the best tuna I have ever eaten, and the lady who runs the place is a great character. We went there twice in Sep/Oct.

From Skradin there is a regular ferry to the park which is included in the entry price. The Krka Falls are only a short

walk from the ferry drop off point and are quite beautiful but rather crowded with tourists. Above the falls there are a number of boat trips that can be done, up the river and lake to a monastery, another set of falls and to an old fort. We chose the monastery trip which was very pleasant. There is also a lovely walking path which winds among the various cascading sections of the falls. Most people come to Skradin to visit the National Park; however the town itself is very pleasant and we grew very fond of it. On the way downriver we spent a night at the town quay in Sibenik. It is very exposed to any wind from SE through S to NW, in which case Marina Mandalina is a short distance away. Reasonably priced with excellent facilities if a bit soulless, it also runs a regular water taxi service to Sibenik. The town itself has an old section climbing the hill opposite the quay with the famous cathedral and a reconstructed fort overlooking the town, river and surrounding countryside.

It was now 1st July and we were approaching the end of our Spring Cruise; time to make our way back to Kastela. Over the next few days, we toured some of the many anchorages along the coast and on the islands of Drvenik, Solta & Brac, lunching in some and spending the night in Rogoznica, Vinisce (again), U. Necujam (Solta) & U. Borovisce (Brac). Some of these anchorages now have laid moorings, for which there may be a charge. The summer of 2015 was extremely hot in Croatia and other parts of Central & Southern Europe; by 5th Jul when we returned to Kastela the heat was well established. This made the job of closing the boat up for the summer rather onerous, so the evening shower and beer were very welcome. *Tidal Dancer* was hauled on the morning of Tue 7th July and that afternoon we set off for home via Dubrovnik.

After spending the summer, for 2015 I use that term lightly, in Dublin we returned to Kastela on Wed 2nd September to commence our Autumn Cruise. Rachael and Paddy Cronin accompanied us and *Tidal Dancer* was launched that afternoon. This cruise was to last for five weeks and I realise that, based on the length of the log of the Spring Cruise above, I will only have room to mention some of our better destinations and events. Before starting our cruise we caught the bus to Split, famous for the Diocletian Palace dating back to Roman times. This is another place that is worthy of a visit. With new batteries fitted, we set off on our cruise, visiting some of the places we had been to before but the Island of Vis was new to us. It is the farthest inhabited island from the mainland. The main port of Vis (Viska Luca) and adjacent Kut are in a deep bay on the NE of the island. Berthing is against the quay wall and is quite expensive; however the town and, in fact the whole island, is lovely. We hired a scooter to tour the island. Paddy and Rachael hired bikes but the island is very hilly and the descent into Komiza is pretty daunting so we had much more success. The small and very pretty port of Komiza is in a large bay on the west of the island. During WW II, the Yugoslav Partisans, with the help of the British, conducted some of their campaign against the German and Italian occupiers from Vis. Tito himself spent some time in 1944 running operations from a cave in the mountains close to the centre of the island, so a visit to the cave on our scooter trip around the island was a must. We also took Paddy & Rachael up the Krka River and berthed at the Restaurant Vidrovaca pontoon, mentioned earlier in the log. They departed from Skradin on Wed 16th. Trish and I, alone again, made for Marina Mandalina, Sibenik, where we were able to purchase a permit to visit the Kornati Islands National Park, it is cheaper to buy beforehand rather than at one of the Island Reception Centres, about €100 for 5 days.

The main island, Kornati, is bereft of trees due to a couple of disastrous forest fires in the 17th & 19th Centuries. There are many anchorages, a couple of Reception Centres and a marina in the park. We moored on a buoy run by a little restaurant in a deep sheltered bay, U Lavsa, a really nice place. Another place we visited was Luka Telaskika, a very deep bay on the very south of Dugi Otuk, which is a National Park in its own right. We anchored at the very head of the bay, which is pretty much uninhabited. According to the Cruising Guide, a small charge would be made per head. About 18.00 an official came to extract payment and informed us that the system had changed to a per boat payment, which for us would be 350 Kuna, about €50. As we were hanging off our own anchor, this was the other time I felt we were being ripped off. He then informed us that if we could depart before his colleague did his rounds next morning about 08.00, he would only charge us 100 Kuna, straight into his pocket no doubt! Needless to say, we were well on our way before 08.00. A Bora was on its way so we headed to the Kornati National Park Marina at Piskera, where we would be safe. There is nothing else on the island but at least the marina has a pleasant restaurant. No wifi though: there's a lovely notice on the wall which says "No Wifi, Talk to Each Other"! There is another restaurant across the bay and the owner operates a boat taxi service to the marina but we did not go there as it was windy and cold.

Two days later the Bora had blown itself out so we departed and set course for Murter, spending a night in Hramina marina where Pete & Gillie Adams keep their boat. Sadly they were not there but we did meet some members of the Gardai who were competing in an International Police Sailing Regatta. Among them was Conor, son of "Gerry the Diver", who will be known to members of Howth YC. Conor has recently completed some legs of the Clipper Ocean Race. It was nice to meet some people from Ireland and have a bit of craic. Our next stop was Zadar where we were to welcome our next guests, Bernie & Ian Condy on evening of the 25th.

Our plan was to continue North to Istria and hop across to Venice and then South to Ravenna, where I had arranged to winter the boat. Italian marinas are offering good rates for wintering. Around this time Ireland and Northern Europe were enjoying lovely weather due to a large high pressure area. This sets up the conditions for the Bora in the Adriatic. We had already endured a night and half a day of rain and thunderstorms while getting the boat ready for the Condy's. As the depression went through the Bora was to follow. Looking at the Wind Animation Charts on computer, our trip seemed feasible if we didn't delay. Allowing the Condy's time for a quick look round Zadar, we departed early afternoon of the 26th for the 25M trip to Prolaz Zapuntel anchorage. However, as we went North the wind kept increasing up to the 25kn zone. This was a bit tough on Bernie and Ian for their first sail on the Med. As we were going to an anchorage and there was no better shelter anywhere near, we decided this was not a wise idea, so we turned back. The wind is normally light



Skradin on the Krka River.

do was shout at them, the facilities although reasonably modern were dirty with broken showers, missing toilet seats etc, very unusual in Croatia, and it was expensive. It was decided to go to Dalmacija by the village of Sukosan, a huge marina with a large charter fleet just to the South of Zadar. Contrary to instructions in the Cruising Guide, to access the visitors' berths you must turn to starboard after entry and go to the eastern end of the marina, where there is a brand new Reception Centre. Facilities here are excellent with once again, toilet/shower areas fit for a luxury hotel room.

The Bora was still blowing, in fact it lasted a week. The official Croatian Sea Area Forecast for the North Adriatic made for interesting reading as it also issued a **WARNING** in bold print which read as follows "NE Winds will gust to between 35 and 50kts in the open sea and up to 80kts in the Velebitski Kanal." I had not heard of the Velebitski Kanal until I started looking at Croatian forecasts. It is famous for very strong katabatic winds due to the orographic effect of the high mountains which run along the mainland shore; gusts of 70 to 80kts are not unusual during a Bora. The Kanal begins to the NE of Zadar and continues NW and N by the islands of Pag & Rab. These strong winds spill out into the Northern Adriatic across the area we were to traverse. I for one have zero interest in sailing in these sort of winds, a sentiment that would be echoed by my crew so a new plan was needed. I contacted Marina Kastela and they indicated that they would be very happy to accept *Tidal Dancer* for the Winter. It was time to head back South.

With clear skies, normal for a Bora, and a quartering blustery wind we experienced some pleasant sailing in very sheltered waters, heading for the Krka River via a night in Biograd. Once again we experienced great food at Restaurant Vidrovaca plus some excellent entertainment watching boats trying to berth on the pontoon in very blustery condition. We had the luck of the Irish managing to berth without a hitch in a lull. Bernie & Ian departed on Sat 3rd Oct from Sibenik and next day Trish & I started on our way back to Kastela via a night at anchor in a bay by Drvenik. The Bora had gone and the wind was now OTN from the SE. Our last leg to Kastela was in the rain but thankfully the wind was light.

The next few days were spent closing up and getting *Tidal Dancer* ready for the winter. On Thu 8th Oct we set off for home, once again via Dubrovnik. Returning to Howth we found Ireland bathed in lovely Autumn weather and did not see a drop of rain for over a week. So in Ireland it was a lousy Summer, lovely Autumn, in Croatia a very hot Summer, lousy Autumn, the foibles of the weather.



Trish at the Krka Falls.

Note:- I have written Croatian names without any accents. Most do have accents, which may considerably change their pronunciation.

Tam O'Shanter visits Eight Baltic Countries in July.

Anne Kenny

Finland

Neil and I arrived in Helsinki at 14.00 from Boston on the 1st July. Neil's brother Frank and his wife Ann were joining us for the trip on *Tam O'Shanter* from Kotka to St Petersburg. We met at our hotel, which was well located near the bus and railway station. We all rested for the afternoon before dining together that evening nearby. The next morning we took a bus from Helsinki to Kotka, which took two and a half hours, finishing with a short taxi journey to arrive at *Tam O'Shanter*. While Neil went off to provision the boat, using the same taxi, I showed Ann and Frank around. In my knapsack I had a repaired anemometer which I carried here from Cork via America.

The following day we did more provisioning and rigging, making ready for departure. On Saturday 4th we left our bunks at 07.00 and left for a nearby self service fuel dock and then travelled on to the beautiful Haapasaari Island to check out of Finland. This was the first time we had to produce passport documentation and ships papers since leaving Fenit on the 30th January 2010, having cruised Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland in the meantime. The paperwork was complete at 11.00 and we then started the 80 mile passage to St Petersburg. We crossed the Russian border in an hour. Neil called the Russian Coastguard as we crossed, as instructed, but got no reply. The passage to St. Petersburg was much quicker than planned because we had a 25 knot westerly driving us on.

Russia

As darkness approached we were sailing into the very busy narrow traffic separation leading to the St Petersburg harbour entrance. Here we noticed that on turning on the masthead tricolour only the anchor light would come on. Neil was watching the AIS and noticed that the entry and exit of large ships was controlled through the entrance with groups of ships coming in and going out together. We waited for a clearance of those leaving before attempting to enter the harbour.

Vladimir Ivankiv of Sail Russia had arranged our invitation to Russia. He requested that we phone him two hours before arrival which Neil did. Vladimir told him of the new location of Customs and Immigration, as it had changed from that shown in the RCC Pilotage Foundation's *The Baltic Sea*. It is now located just inside the harbour entrance at Fort Kronshtadt. Soon after turning to port, we heard disco music and saw someone waving. We ignored this person as we thought it was one of the party goers. We did not expect the Customs and Immigration to be located alongside a nightclub. We carried on up the harbour as far as we could and arrived alongside some pilot boats. Unknown to us at the time, the person we saw waving was the Immigration officer. We had a great welcome from the pilot boat crew when they discovered we were Irish. "Dublino" they were calling as we were invited on board for a beer, which Frank politely refused. Meanwhile Immigration was frantically on the phone to Vladimir, who instructed Neil to turn south to their location, immediately. We headed back in the direction given to us but we still had trouble locating the pontoon until the officer walked towards us ashore and waved again to guide us in. When we had *Tam O'Shanter* secured, Neil identified one reason why we had missed the pontoon in the first place. The floodlight showing the sign for the dock was pointing out to sea, blinding us, instead of illuminating the sign and helping us arrive in the correct location. He pointed this out to Vladimir, who agreed it was wrong and said he would explain it to the relevant authorities.

The following night a Swedish yacht from Gothenburg ended up in the Russian naval base nearby and they were towed back to the Immigration post by a naval boat to ensure they did not wander anywhere else. Immigration is available 24 hours but Customs only from 09.30 to 21.30. *Tam O'Shanter* had to wait until the morning for Customs. They arrived onboard at 09.30, with Vladimir present while they carried out a search of the boat. Paperwork took two hours to complete and then in a relaxed mood we set off on the 16 mile passage through the harbour to the marina. We went aground near

the naval harbour but having checked the plotter for the route to deeper water we were afloat very quickly and back on course. The channels in the harbour are narrow and very busy.

Vladimir had booked *Tam O'Shanter* into the Krestovski Yacht Club, which is newer and smaller than the Central River Yacht Club. The pontoons were concrete and in excellent condition, as was the club house. The WiFi was good but only available by sitting outside the office. Berths are reasonable and cost €33 per night for the 37 foot *Tam O'Shanter*. The manager was very helpful and efficient and provided a safe inexpensive taxi service using his mobile. He arranged collection at



the club house and our return from the city when we attended the ballet and opera. The metro system and trolley bus service were also nearby, just a ten minute walk from the club house.

That Sunday evening Neil's sister, Jane Moynihan joined Neil, Frank, Ann and me aboard, having been collected from the airport by Vladimir at 23.00. Frank and Ann had been to St Petersburg before and so they decided to do their own thing and not join us on the city tours which Vladimir had arranged. This allowed him bring the rest of us everywhere in his own car which, for us, was a great luxury. The next day's highlight was all attending La Traviata at the Mariinsky II Theatre. We enjoyed an excellent production and were impressed by the new building.



Vladimir, John, Jane, Anne, Neil.

On Wednesday Vladimir drove three of us, Neil, Jane and me, to the Hermitage where he acted as our personal guide. On

Thursday we went to the Catherine Palace, where Vladimir arranged an experienced English speaking guide for us. This guide was able to bypass the queue and fast track us into rooms. We were booed by some of the people who were in the queues as we passed. That evening Neil's son John arrived from Cork bringing a battery operated set of navigation lights which I was delighted to receive. We were now six people aboard for one night.

On Friday 10th Frank and Ann left for the airport at 09.00 and Vladimir collected the remaining four of us to drive 30km to the Peterhof Summer Palace. It was extremely crowded, with many people visiting from cruise liners as well as Russian tourists. We had lunch at the Palace and on the way back to *Tam O Shanter* we bought a battery to replace one that was overheating. It cost €230, which was similar to the cost of the same battery in the EU. Vladimir also sourced a good electrician, mechanic and had someone to check the autopilot. They were small problems but needed attention. That evening we returned to the Marinsky II with Jane and John to see a production of the ballet Spartacus. It was an unusual ballet, selected for us by Jane, and beautifully presented by about seventy dancers, equal numbers of men and women.

The following day Jane left at noon for the airport and Johnny, Neil and I departed from our berth and left for the Immigration and Customs at 14.00, arriving there at 17.00. We sailed very close to enormous container ships on the way. Even with the help of Vladimir it took three hours to complete. It seemed to us that the focus was to ensure there was not a hidden passenger aboard.

Tam O Shanter sailed through the night and we arrived at Customs in Hapassari at 07.30. The port opens for business at 0800 until 2200. This process was pretty simple as we had no forms to fill out. The Customs officer informed us that there was not enough water in the guest harbour, for *Tam O Shanter's* 6 foot draft, to get diesel and so he provided us with a wheel barrow to fill our two 20 litre cans. We did not need fuel in St. Petersburg; if we did *Tam O'Shanter* would have had to go to the Central River Yacht Club to get it. After our busy night passage which included a lot of traffic, we all retired for four hours sleep and then collected the diesel at the excellent shop at the guest harbour, where we also bought the dinner for that night. With the borrowed wheelbarrow we had a comical walk back over the rolling rocky landscape of the island.

Neil had decided that we would return to the boat yard in nearby Kotka to get the navigation lights repaired, so we left Hapassari at 14.00 and arrived back in the boatyard at 17.00. The next morning the electricians came aboard, got the tricolour working and we set sail for Tallinn at 15.00.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

The wind was westerly at 15 knots and we reached the traffic separation zone as darkness fell. It was again very busy with ships coming and going to St Petersburg. We were free of it by midnight in a very light westerly, so we then motor sailed on to Tallinn, where we arrived at the Old City Marina at 06.45. At the entrance to the marina, we were able to top up with diesel and water and have breakfast before catching some sleep in a free berth until 14.00. Neil finally checked in at 1500 and *Tam O'Shanter* was relocated to a different berth in the visitors' area. There are a limited number of berths for visitors at this city centre location but is worth going in with the hope of getting one rather than at the TOP marina, built for the yachting Olympics 1980, which is 6 kilometres from the city centre. That evening we walked around the adjacent and breathtaking historic city and dined there. On Wednesday 15th having showered and breakfasted, we left this excellent marina at 11.30 and with the yacht traffic light green, we were able to motor past the ferries and out of the harbour.

Ahead was another overnight passage, this time to Ventspils Latvia. We had planned to sail to Riga, where Neil had arranged for John to be dropped off for his flight home. However, on reflection, we decided that if we sailed into the Gulf of Riga we might not have time to get back to Travemünde in the unsettled conditions prevailing in the Baltic



Anne arrives with anemometer.

this summer. We were also beginning to realise how long the southern coast of the Baltic is, particularly in westerly/south westerly winds. Neil thought that if we were planning a Baltic cruise again it might be easier to go anticlockwise rather than clockwise as we had done. We had gone clockwise to attend the RCC Meet last year.

John generously abandoned his Riga flight and bought one from Gdansk. This worked out to our advantage as Neil and I were happy to have the extra hand on board to help us get to Poland. *Tam O'Shanter* arrived at the fishing/marina harbour in Ventspils at 18.00 on the 16th and, as the marina was full, the harbour master put us against a well protected quay wall, where he was able to connect us to electricity. We had motor sailed to this point as the wind was light and on the nose even as we turned south round Saaremaa, so we needed fuel.

There is no fuel berth in Ventspils; even fishing trawlers have to drive to the local fuel station with cans. The Harbour Master arranged for a Russian, Sergey, to take us there. He also brought two large drums to go with our two smaller twenty litre drums. He was born in Murmansk, northern Russia, had been in the Russian Army and is now one of the 26% of ethnic Russian people living in Latvia. He arranged a small discount for us at the fuel station and came aboard for an hour for coffee and talk of international politics. He did not want any payment.

Friday 17th at 11.00 *Tam O'Shanter* headed out of the harbour entrance at Ventspils and found a heavy breaking sea outside. As we motored to the turning mark, the top of the cutter headsail came loose so we decided to return to our berth at the quay wall to reset the sail and

wait for calmer weather. We dined early and headed out again at 17.00 after the comfort of roast lamb. The sea was still rough but the wind had moderated. We had an uneventful sail to Klaipeda Lithuania through the night, and arrived there at noon. On entering the harbour we were approached by two Customs men in a RIB who asked us the usual questions in a very polite manner. The harbour mouth led to a wide impressive channel lined with great industrial coloured cranes. The weather was still very broken with a poor forecast so Neil decided to press on to Gdansk after topping up in the picturesque Castle Harbour.

The entry is past a hand operated pedestrian bridge leading to a well sheltered marina. By chance it was open when we arrived but on our return it was closed. We had a short wait, as it opens on the hour for fifteen minutes. Leaving Klaipeda, Neil set a course for Gdansk which would have us about 10 miles off the coast of Russian Kaliningrad. He had calculated that to sail round Russian waters would add 50 miles to the passage.

Poland, Denmark and Germany

As we sailed out of Klaipeda we were treated to a very dramatic thunder storm directly overhead, with torrential rain. At midnight I was off watch and settling into my bunk, as Johnny was doing the 00.00 to 04.00 watch. He likes to steer the boat himself rather than use the auto helm. In the dark Neil noticed a boat heading for us in the distance without AIS. He asked John to head north away from the coast turning on the engine at speed for fear we might be unwelcome in Russian waters. Ten minutes later as this fast boat continued to approach *Tam O'Shanter* she fired a red flare so we stopped. She then fired a green flare and turned off her very loud siren which sounded like an air raid siren. They then flood lit the yacht and called on the radio and informed us that they were Russian Customs and asked that we turn off our engine.

Over the radio Neil had great difficulty in identifying ourselves to the Russians. *Tam O'Shanter* is not the easiest yacht name to spell out, even with the help of the phonetic alphabet, and at one point Neil was heard cursing the inclusion of an apostrophe and suggesting to me that I change the name of the boat to a four letter word. Some humour



Hermitage St. Petersburg.

in a difficult situation. After about half an hour of radio communication, Neil remembered that we had dodgers with the boat name printed on them in large letters which were not fitted. John on deck hung one over to starboard, with Neil's help, and shortly after Russian Customs are on the radio with, aaahhh Tim O'Shinter. At this stage they knew we were Irish.

Tam O'Shanter's name and home port are gold on a blue transom and so may not be easy to read at night even when flood lit. The Customs boat circled us for another ten minutes and then at about 01.00 they wished us good sailing to Gdansk. At all times the person on the radio was very pleasant and, thankfully, also had good English.

If you sail into Gdansk, keep going up river until you get to the Gdansk Marina in the city centre. The sail is dramatic with industrial cranes and great shipbuilding lining the route. Although it is very busy in July, they will always find a berth for you.



Maritime Museum Kotka .

Tam O'Shanter was put outside a long- stay boat with a very welcoming and helpful skipper living aboard used to having visitors alongside. For Neil, John and I it was a day of recovery from five consecutive overnight passages averaging 165 nautical miles each. Later John left the boat to photograph the city and Neil and I joined him for dinner which cost €22 a head for a three course meal, including wine. We found Gdansk to be extremely beautiful.

The next day we were up at 06.00 to join John for breakfast before he took his taxi to the airport at 06.45. His forty five minute journey only cost €9, which included a tip. We had some great laughs with John on the boat and were sad to see him go. We spent the rest of the day exploring the city. *Tam O'Shanter* has been cruising Scandinavia each year since 2010 and this was our first year of very broken weather, so I was lucky to have John to help with the, mostly, upwind work from St. Petersburg to Gdansk.

I had paid a deposit to a boatyard in Travemünde, Germany, for winter storage and Neil was searching forecasts for a window to get there in what seemed like a forecast of permanent strong westerly winds. At 09.45 on Wednesday 22nd we left Gdansk for Christianso, Denmark. Its harbour featured on the cover of the RCC Pilotage Foundation's *The Baltic Sea* which we had found so useful during our cruising here. Neil and I spent the night avoiding shipping near the Stolpe Bank and the many fishing boats busy on the bank.

On rounding Sweden in 2012, Neil wanted to go out to Christianso then but he decided to put it off until we passed near again. It was not to be because next morning the wind, again, on the nose freshened to force 6 and, with the seas building, he decided to peel off for Nexø, Bornholm at 07.30. It is described in the pilot as an all weather port and a useful landfall if coming from Poland. *Tam O'Shanter* entered the harbour at 10.00 and we were quickly tied up. It is a fishing and commercial port but there were plenty of berths for yachts. That evening we dined at the waterside, having a perfect large plaice served which may have been caught on the Stolpe Bank the night before.

Next day, Friday 24th, with a force 9 westerly forecast for Sunday, Neil and I decided to head directly for Travemünde, another passage of about 160 nautical miles. There was very little wind as we motored across the bank to the south of Bornholm and onto the buoy off Arkona in Germany. A front was going through and as darkness fell, we had a 20 knot easterly and rain.

Things got very busy as *Tam O'Shanter* approached the deep water route to and from the Kiel Canal. Having seen it and the entry to St Petersburg, I think the western end crossing to France in the English Channel is a walk in the park in comparison. Neil had to alter course 90 degrees off Rostock to avoid a large ship coming out to the deep water traffic separation. He did not want to chance crossing it. At dawn the wind shifted, as forecast, from southwest to south and lightened, so we motored the short distance to the harbour entrance. A great number of yachts faced us coming out the narrow entry, followed by a large ferry. Neil enjoyed dicing and avoiding about 500 yachts going out to their racing courses, many with spinnakers up. We had arrived at the end of Travemünde Week. The following day, the final day, had to be called off when the forecast force 9 arrived and strong winds continued to blow for days. *Tam O'Shanter* had got here just in time to allow us home for August.

We had cruised 1174 miles visiting eight countries in four weeks and were able to include a week in St. Petersburg. If you plan to sail into Russia contact Vladimir Ivankiv, well described by Griff Rees-Jones as the enabler.

Mac Duach – Moy Hooker Challenge

Michael Brogan

Last May I received a letter from a friend inviting me to take *Mac Duach* to the revived Ballina Quay Regatta, pointing out that it would be the first time a Hooker would sail into the Moy Estuary. Not since the 1940s had any large boat sailed across the bar and into Ballina. I consulted my ICC South and West Coast sailing directions which reads as follows: “The Moy has a shallow and very hazardous bar at its mouth.....which is very mobile and no consistently reliable directions can be given for a stranger”. I had previously decided that my Summer cruise would be to the Tall Ships in Belfast in early July, so I decided to take up the challenge to attend the Regatta on the weekend of 13 June on the way North.



Mac Duach in Kinvara, 2008

In keeping with an age old tradition, we dipped our mainsail peak as we passed west of Mac Daras Island, a mark of respect to the local Saint of the sea, on the first leg of our journey from Kinvara to Inisboffin, where we spent the night at the old Pier. I was fortunate to have an experienced crew, including Jarlath Cunnane, Ben McDonagh and Christian Coady, because a SW gale which was forecast for later the following day arrived instead early in the morning after we left Boffin, en route to Rosmoney. After clearing the Island to the east, I felt the Perkins was labouring for fuel and immediately switched off the engine. I soon discovered we had a leak in our diesel system and had lost almost all of our fuel. As the wind increased from the west we had a very lively sail to Rosmoney under mizen and staysail. Approaching Inisgort Lighthouse, I topped up the fuel tanks from the spare 5 gallon drum, and to our relief the engine fired up to help us manoeuvre in the following gale and wind over tide, to a safe mooring and shelter east of Inislyre. *MacDuach* handled the gale very well under mizen and staysail, vindicating my decision to convert to ketch rig.

A week later, Jarlath and I were joined by another experienced gaffer, Tom Moran from Corraun, on the next leg to Kilcummin in Killala Bay, where we spent an uncomfortable but secure night in a NE swell. Traditionally, Galway Hookers were rarely seen south of Blackhead or north of Slyne, so it was no surprise when we received a great Mayo welcome as we sailed across the Bar on the Moy estuary (with two metres to spare), and into Ballina Quay for their first regatta since the early nineties. Once inside the estuary, it is well buoyed, but the channel into Ballina is in places very winding and I would not recommend doing it without a local pilot.

The next day, our joy turned to sadness on hearing of the death of a lifelong friend Tony Moylan, whose inspiration led to the first Cruinniú na mBád in 1979. I grew up with Tony in Kinvara and shared his enthusiasm for Hookers. It was he who prevailed upon me to buy a Hooker, ‘*Bád gan ainm*’ (boat without a name) – now the *Mac Duach* – in 1987; for me, a life-changer.

After a fine weekend of hospitality and music in Ballina, we sailed out of the Moy estuary and back to a mooring in Kilcummin. At first light on 27th June, feeling somewhat bewildered after the hospitality of Bessie’s pub and a plentiful supply of Moy salmon, we headed on our next leg towards Belfast. With a new crew, including Ben McDonagh (previous owner of the Hooker *Lady Mór*), James Linnane (Hooker *An Traonach*) and Laura Taylor of Kinvara, Seamus Breathnach of Carna, and Killala accordion player Andrew Gillespie, we arrived in Tory Island, where we received the usual exuberant welcome from Patsy Dan, King of Tory. That night, I had to compete on my fiddle with four accordions at the local session. On the positive side, it was uplifting next day to hear the sound of the corncrake and witness the aerial acrobatics of the Island choughs.



Inspecting Bens “Old Girl” in Greencastle

Later, I found the necessary parts to repair the



Hooker Fleet, Roundstone

world, inevitably there was much comment about the absence of a vessel to represent our island nation. Seamus and I decided to do a recce of the area to find a base (pub) for our crew and friends during our stay in Belfast. The Rotterdam Bar in nearby Sailortown seemed to fit the bill. However, on closer inspection, as with many other building in the Docks area, it was closed and we learned that it had been slated for demolition in 2008. York Dock is situated in Sailortown, previously a poor working class enclave where Protestants and Catholics lived and worked side by side, mostly in the Docks and shipbuilding. The gradual demolition of this historic area began in the 1960s, with the construction of the M2 motorway and the decline of the shipbuilding industry. Our visit to the Titanic Museum proved to be one of the highlights of our visit to Belfast.

Sailing out of Belfast, our next commitment was to attend the traditional Mass on Mac Dara's island off Carna on the 15th July. Built in Maonis in 1981/2 by the late Colm Mulkerrins, *Mac Duach* is still regarded as a Carna boat. We were joined by Paul Monaghan and Colm Brogan from Kinvara. *Mac Duach* clocked ten knots rounding Fair Head, calling again into Ballycastle and Greencastle on our way to Rathmullan and another crew change. Paul Monahan was joined by a young Conemara crew, MacDara Breathnach and Fergus and Ronán Ó'Cualáin, who grew up in Carna, steeped in the Hooker tradition. With a break in the relentless weather of Summer 2015, *Mac Duach* arrived in Roundstone two days ahead of schedule.

Tony Moylan's ashes were taken on board, to be spread as he had requested at Mac Dara's Island, Golam Head and Kinvara Bay. The Mass at Mac Dara's Island had to be cancelled due to the weather, but we managed to spread part of his ashes a week later at the Roundstone Regatta. For the first time since leaving Kinvara we found ourselves becalmed at Golam Head. Unplanned, we were joined by a number of currachs fishing in the area, all friends of Tony's, and as we spread his ashes we shared fond memories of the man who did so much for the revival of the Galway Hooker.

Rounding Golam Head, the wind increased to force 4/5 from the west, as *MacDuach*, under full sail, headed back to Parkmore and home, in time for the 36th Cruinniú na mBád in Kinvara.



***Mac Duach* in the Moy (Henry Wills)**

diesel leak in Cavanagh's chandlery in Greencastle, where we also visited the Maritime Museum, and got a great deal in rope which was manufactured locally in McLaughlins rope making business. Also in Greencastle, Ben McDonagh was somewhat surprised and emotional when he saw his 'old girl', the *Lady Mór*, in McDonald's boatyard, where she was sent by her present owners, Derry City Council, for repairs.

We were struck by the high standard of marinas when we crossed into Northern Ireland in Ballycastle and Glenarm.

In Belfast, we were allocated a berth in York Dock with the Old Gaffers, alongside another Hooker, *Naomh Cronan*, up from Dublin. We took pride in the fact that ours were the only truly Irish-built sailing vessels at the Tall Ships. With ships present from so many countries from around the

Soundings from Swallow Cove

W.M.Nixon



How a 103-year-old yawl made a mini-cruise to an event which never happened, yet her crew had a fine old time.

“Just what is it” demanded the skipper from the foredeck with some heat as he nursed the electric windlass towards functionality, “just what is it that you don’t understand about three metres? I want to anchor in three metres as recommended in your ICC book. Please take me to three metres immediately so that I can lower this anchor.”

“But skipper” responded the helmsman, “even if I get the bowsprit-end within three metres of the (expletive deleted) cliff, the echo sounder is still showing four metres-plus under us, and it’s dead low water. The ICC Sailing Directions can’t be wrong, for after all, I am the Honorary Chairman of Irish Cruising Club Publications. But there may be a slight discrepancy, which I will of course rectify upon my return home.”

Crouched as I was on the cockpit sole the better to operate *Ainmara’s* gear lever for close-quarters manoeuvring as this splendid dialogue turned the air blue above me, I could only note that the little chart plotter immediately above the companionway showed that, having been cliff-kissing, we were drifting gently towards precisely the spot where any sensible cruising man would want to drop his hook in that cove to be best placed through the evening’s brisk southerlies, which were forecast to continue overnight. So I plaintively suggested we drop the anchor there and then, and in the absence of any better ideas from fore or aft, this was done and it took up nicely.

Even if *Ainmara* was now in depths nearer five to six metres than the recommended three to four, she lay serenely in the best place while the attractive surroundings soon worked their charms to erase any friction, helped for skipper Dickie Gomes and helmsman Ed Wheeler by the inevitable dark nectar of “Dockers”, which are allowed to become “Double Dockers” when an anchor has been deployed. A leisurely discussion ensued as to how best the Honorary Chairman of ICC Pubs. might diplomatically convey the possible inaccuracy on preferred depths to his Honorary Editor, for there was no way we could be in three to four metres where we were lying sweetly in Swallow Cove (known to the soul-less as Saltpan Bay) on Lambay. But apart from that, everything was very well with the world, and goodwill towards all had become the theme of the evening.

That we should be planning to overnight in an anchorage just seven miles from where I’m writing this in Howth is entirely Pat Walsh’s fault. Long before the foundation in 1929 of the Irish Cruising Club (in which he was included in the first published membership list in 1930, later serving on the Committee and as Acting Honorary Secretary), Pat Walsh of the Royal Irish YC was a cruising pioneer, starting with a 21ft sailing canoe designed and built for him in 1901 by the then-very-young but already noted John B Kearney of Ringsend.



***Satanella* in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum. Photo: Alan Leonard**

***Ainmara* revelling in the breeze in Strangford Narrows, with owner Dickie Gomes keeping a close eye on the alloy mast he built himself (with some help from friends) in 1966. Described by Pat Walsh as “an able full-bodied cruiser with excellent accommodation, designed and built by her owner”, when she won the Lambay Race in 1921, she was gaff rigged, and the mainmast – 18 inches forward of its current position – was only the height of her current upper spreaders. Photo: Pete Adams**

Pat Walsh (or more properly Captain Walsh, for he was a veteran of the Boer War) cruised several of the rivers of Europe by the simple expedient of sailing his canoe yawl from what was then Kingstown into Dublin docks, and on finding which ship was bound for the river of his choice, he’d strike up a deal with the captain, and get his mini-cruiser *Satanella* lifted on board.

Satanella is now hidden away in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum in Cultra. Her last owner was the late Paul Osterberg ICC, who lived in Hillsborough and sailed her on Lough Neagh. He had thought he was making this interesting boat available to the museum on loan. But northern ICC members have recently found they had to use some persuasion to view *Satanella* in Cultra, for she’s in store and has never been officially on display. Yet the word is that as far as the Museum authorities are concerned, they own her.

Be that as it may, by 1914 Pat Walsh had moved on to the famous

Albert Strange 25ft yawl *Sheila*, originally built in Port St Mary in the Isle of Man in 1905 for the marine artist Robert E Groves. This acquisition confirmed Walsh as an Albert Strange enthusiast. He became a member of the Humber Yawl Club, the Fount of All Things Strange, and in 1921 he contributed a charming article to the Humber Yawl Club Journal about racing *Sheila* in that year's annual Howth SC Lambay Race, which dates back certainly to 1904, and maybe even to 1899.

August of 1921 was an interesting time to be running a yacht race in Howth, as the Irish War of Independence had been ended with a Truce as recently as July 11th, the Treaty wasn't to be signed until 6th December 1922, and then the Civil War over that Treaty broke out on June 28th 1922, continuing until May 24th 1923.

But such disruptions off-stage weren't going to interrupt Pat Walsh from his regular yearly race – the only event in which he ever raced *Sheila* – round Lambay. And as for any intrusion by neighbourhood wars and whatnot, all he noted was that Howth Sailing Club were required to signal their starts by horn for the time being, rather than the time-honoured cannons.

With the passage of time, Pat Walsh's gem of an article becomes ever more valuable as a testimony to people who want to get on with a civilised life even if there's some mayhem around, while his accounts of the boats involved – a selection of cruisers and the class of Howth Seventeen Foot One Designs mustard-keen to strut their stuff in a strong but veering southwesterly – is more than useful.

But the real point of it is that it's the only known account of John B Kearney while he owned and skippered the 36ft 9-ton own-designed-and-built-*Ainmara*, for on the outbreak of the proper peace in 1923, he sold her to Belfast lawyer Sam Porter, and set to over the next 18 months in a corner of Murphy's Boatyard in Ringsend building his dreamship, the 38ft yawl *Mavis*, which in July 2015 was launched again in Camden in Maine in beautifully-restored form, but that's a story for another day.

In 1921, the Walsh description for *Ainmara* was “an able full-bodied cruiser with excellent accommodation, designed and built by her owner”. In those days the 1912-built yawl had a compact gaff rig – at 37ft 6ins from truck to keel, her mast was only 18 inches longer than her LOA – and thus before the Lambay start, only she and the hefty 6.5 ton Cherub III design *Gretta* “could swagger about with full lower sail set”, as everyone else was reefed.

The *Ainmara* of those days was very different from Dickie Gomes' *Ainmara* today with her sky-scraping Bermudan rig. And her coachroof profile was different too, for in Sam Porter's ownership she first had her coachroof greatly enlarged (in Harland & Wolff's shipyard no less, for there were few if any yachtbuilders around Belfast Lough in the late 1920s), and then the Bermuda rig was added in the 1930s.

But though she may be superficially different from the original form of *Ainmara*, the fact that she won that splendid breezy race of 1921 (taking line honours while she was at it) has long been thought worthy of a re-enactment, while the second place on handicap taken by Pat Walsh with *Sheila* (despite being single-handed) could likewise be re-created, for *Sheila* still sails, albeit in Suffolk but in much more purely original form than *Ainmara*.

Be warned, though, that re-enactments can be fraught projects. So many factors must be just right for them to go even half well. But every time *Ainmara* has been in Howth since her restoration for her Centenary in 2012, whether going to or coming from the Dublin Bay Old Gaffers Association *Leinster* Trophy race, invariably the temptation to do the Lambay Race re-enactment is placed in her doughty skipper's way. But it never fitted the schedule, and anyway the Lambay Race of 2013 was very different from the Lambay Race of 1921.

The traditional Lambay Race course was “through Howth Sound leaving Ireland's Eye to starboard, then round Lambay leaving it to port, returning to finish line through Howth Sound”. It had since become much more fancy, with extra marks added to lengthen the course to facilitate modern racing machines. But in 2014, when a Howth Seventeen family of several generations realised that their boat's Centenary was upon them, they requested only that it be honoured at Howth by allowing the Howth Seventeens to race the classic course.

The idea was so beautifully simple that Howth YC decided to signal a second start for Gaffers and Classics five minutes after the Seventeens. But as *Ainmara* couldn't be present, I did that race with Stu Spence on his 140-year-old Pilot Cutter *Madcap*, which you'll have to agree was an impressive substitute.

However, the pressure for *Ainmara* to do this Classic Lambay continued, and some time in the depths of the winter of 2014-2015 in remote Ballygarvan House beyond Strangford Lough as the old boat slumbered nearby in her winter shed, the decision was taken that the Lambay Classic Race on Saturday June 6th 2015 would be part of the coming summer's programme.

This didn't ease the pressure in the least. Howth Yacht Club Commodore Brian Turvey (a son of the late Des Turvey ICC) was particularly keen on *Ainmara's* presence, and so too was the Lambay Race Chairman Jamesie Markey, brother



The 25ft Albert Strange yawl *Sheila*, recently photographed in Suffolk. In 1921, sailed single-handed by Pat Walsh, she came second in the Lambay Race Cruiser Handicap Class.

of our Honorary Secretary. They moved mountains to ensure there'd be an easily accessed berth in the marina, and that as many other classics as possible would be there to make a real race out of it, while the Seventeens guaranteed a full turnout. So as May swung into June and *Ainmara's* commissioning was completed, there was no backing out. But there was a fly as big as a bluebottle in the ointment. The most accurate wind forecast sites were showing that there'd be a summer southwesterly gale on the Leinster coast on Saturday June 6th.

But what can you do? Dickie didn't have the reassuring presence of his trusted shipmate Brian Law ICC for the jaunt to Howth, as he was away cruising in Greece, but he'd signed up Ed Wheeler instead, I was going north from Howth to Ballydorn in order to see the old girl down and back again, and then in Howth my son Brian would join to make up the ideal racing strength.

So in the hope that the gale would be either six hours early or six hours late, we swung into action, with the beginnings of crew assembly on Wednesday evening (June 3rd), with personal gear thrown aboard *Ainmara* at the pontoon at Down Cruising Club's lightship headquarters, and then Dickie and I hared off to Strangford Lough YC in Whiterock Bay next door in order to sail the absent Brian Law's River Class *Uladh* in the weekly evening race.

Designed by Alfred Mylne in 1920-21, the 28ft 6ins Rivers were the worlds first Bermudan rigged one designs. Their simple rig set-up was dictated by a requirement in the preliminary exchanges between potential owners at Royal Ulster Yacht Club on Belfast Lough, when one of them requested that the new boats "be capable of being sailed by a man and his daughters".

A first hearing, it sounds like remarkably enlightened instance of gender quotas in sailing. But the reality was much more grim. So many young men from what would very soon become Northern Ireland had been lost in the Great War that the large and enthusiastic amateur crews of the Golden Age of Yachting pre-war simply couldn't be found, and the eight members of the RUYC who commissioned the boats to be built in Mylne's yard on Bute

felt the only way forward was through a handy class of able, handsome and manageable boat which were a realistic response to the new situation.

But the new boats so capably fulfilled the new needs that others almost immediately coveted them. Land-owners around Strangford Lough were soon in pursuit of the boats, as their relatively shoal draft of 3ft 6ins means they could conveniently be moored at the Strangford Lough anchorage nearest to the prospective owner's big house.

After only a year on the turbulent waters of Belfast Lough (for it was all a very long time before there were proper harbours at Carrickfergus and Bangor), the first River was enticed away to Strangford Lough, and by 1923 the movement was irreversible. It was reinforced by the fact that Edith, the Marchioness of Londonderry and chatelaine of Mountstewart, the stateliest home on the east shore of Strangford Lough, was so impatient to acquire her own River that she ordered a new one, which became *Uladh*.



***Uladh*, River Number 10, built 1923 for Edith, Lady Londonderry, is now owned by Brian Law ICC, and is here being helmed by Dickie Gomes.**

Inevitably *Uladh* became the River with the most colourful history, for her first owner – who didn't sell the boat until 1951 – cheerfully used sailing to further her husband's international political ambitions, and thus their two Rivers (he had to have his own boat, as they seemed incapable of amicably sailing together) provided sailing for people as various as King Alfonso of Spain and his daughters as he rested from his struggles to keep Franco at bay, and then they took Hitler's chum von Ribbentrop sailing while trying to pursue peace with Germany in 1936. It was a weird way to pursue international peace, for during the race, one Londonderry boat T-boned the other, and von Ribbentrop never sailed again.

But you didn't have to be a German plenipotentiary to be involved in the Marchioness's sailing scrapes. By the late 1930s, the entire River Class found it more convenient to be based at the newly-formed Strangford Lough Yacht Club at Whiterock. Yet the more regular racing did nothing to improve the Marchioness's regard for the racing rules, so much so that after one incident, the SLYC Commodore Lord Bangor of Castleward had to write a pained letter which began:

"Dear Edith,

I am afraid you have missed out on the rules yet again. You did something quite dreadful...."

You have to admire his Lordship's style. "Missed out" is such a gentlemanly substitute for "blatantly flouted". Quite what it is that *Uladh* did to get such a reprimand we don't know, but in stepping aboard her on that summery evening of Wednesday June 3rd, there was no doubt we were stepping aboard history. And of course there's history in other directions, for in their 94 years the Rivers have attracted people who have played, and still play, a leading role in the Irish Cruising Club. So racing a River is in line with the best traditions of our club, and if our third across the finish line that evening was

obtained only through certain moments of excitement and agitation, at least we'd a podium place, while my brother James took second with *Faughan*, but the invincible Kenny Smyth was first yet again with *Laragh*.

So all was as it should be, while the sailing supper in SLYC was as ever great fun, and then as we were sleeping only until daybreak before heading away from the lightship with *Ainmara*, there was an element of late crack in Down Cruising Club's headquarters where many members were gearing up to head with their boats across to the Isle of Man for the TT. But we were well gone before any of them in the morning, and after sluicing out through the Narrows with a roaring ebb, had covered many miles more or less Howth-wards until a forecast rising sou'sou'easter started to fill in.

This gave increasingly lumpy progress with *Ainmara* hobby-horsing more than somewhat as she motor-sailed along, but in the depths of the homely saloon motion was minimal as we wolfed down a lunch of about half of a splendid beef daube which Ed had pre-prepared at home to provide at least two meals, and continued on our way rejoicing as we closed in on Skerries in late afternoon. With its many links to John Kearney, it would have been an ideal staging post, and we've always found Joe May's pub welcoming. But the wind was biting as it swept across the isthmus, the exposed harbour looked distinctly hostile without a friendly fishing boat to berth outside, and the bay was cluttered with nondescript moorings which ruled out the option of dropping the hook.

So when Ed suggested we overnight in the snug lee of Lambay instead, it was recognized as a thought of pure genius. With the last of the ebb we were there in jig time, the evening brought some stronger sunshine, and though the sky was not looking good, we'd reasonable prospects for an uninterrupted night once the matter of anchoring had been resolved. At first, the vast array of island-nesting seabirds had got themselves into a bit of a pother with our arrival. But they quickly settled down, and soon we even had a Welcoming Committee swimming about us, for after all "Ainmara" is a very Anglicised version of the Irish for "seabird", and she was at home among them.

It was just a perfect cruising evening, with the beef daube tasting every bit as good the second time around, after we'd very carefully separated the makings of a good breakfast from everything else, for a hungry crew were ready to eat anything available. Yet thanks to some ingenuity, we'd a fine feast despite our gallant skipper's idiosyncracies in the victualling department.

Some rain went through in the morning at breakfast time, then the wind went to the southwest to give us a weather shore down to Howth where the buzz was building in anticipation of next day's Lambay Race, with the presence of the 1921 winner adding extra spice. But already there were doom merchant who said the forecast ruled it all out.

Yet we'd plenty happening with Michael Branigan ICC, the first visitor aboard, with his recently-completed mature student's dissertation on the historic development of Ringsend hot off the presses, a massive tome which he insisted on lending us. This extremely well-researched insight into *Ainmara's* birthplace was indeed well read and much enjoyed by the time it got back to



Swallow Cove on Lambay, alive with seabirds of many kinds, provided the perfect overnight stop even if the sky didn't look too hopeful.



Tim Magennis's *Marguerite* at Howth. Designed by W H Boyd and built by Jack Wellington of Malahide in 1896, she was Mungo Park's first keelboat.

Howth after it had been taken sailing north to Ballydorn, and we weren't at all surprised to hear later that Michael got a First for his efforts, in fact we felt positively proprietorial about it.

Other boats were coming in to join the classics, including Dublin Bay Old Gaffers Association President Tim Magennis across from Dun Laoghaire with his 1896-vintage 25 footer *Marguerite* which was the first keelboat owned by Mungo Park, and there too was Darryl Hughes over from Poolbeg with his 1937-vintage 43ft ketch *Maybird*, a Tyrrell of Arklow built sister-ship to Billy Mooney's 1934 *Aideen*, which was ICC Commodore's yacht from 1942 to 1948.

Darryl had come across *Maybird* while working in New Zealand, and had her shipped home to Southampton where on retirement he set himself up as his own project manager in a temporary shed in the midst of the Solent marine industry. In two years, he achieved a magnificent restoration at half the price of the lowest quote he'd received from the specialist classic boatyards, thanks to being able to draw on the talents of their top employees on a just-in-time basis. The boat is so comfortable that he had based her at Poolbeg and lived aboard through the winter while doing a course on Irish



Maybird (Darryl Hughes) and Ainmara in Howth, poised for the re-enactment that never happened. Maybird is a 1937-built sister-ship of Billy Mooney's 1934-built Aideen, ICC Commodore's yacht from 1942 to 1948.

diverse fleet in such conditions would have been irresponsible.

Nevertheless the Race Officer gave it his best shot, signalling a postponement and then going out at intervals in HYC's new Committee Boat to find it was breezier than ever. Although one source was quoting a German website which suggested a real easing from noon onwards, Dublin Airport firmly predicted it would just keep building and there wouldn't be the slightest easing until 7.0pm, and the airport met men were spot on.

So on that one most special day of the entire Howth sailing season, we'd a non-event. At such times, the club spirit is well tested, and when Georgina came down to join us for what was meant to be the post race mega-supper in the club, she'd expected irritable frustration. Instead, she was pleasantly amazed by the good will which prevailed, summed up by Dickie who cheerfully told her that if the guns had started firing then he'd have been there on the line and ready to race, and race his old boat hard too, but he was *extremely* glad those guns hadn't started firing.

As it is, we'd passed the afternoon in genteel style with tea on *Maybird* (Victoria sponge with all the extras) and there was even time for a little *zizz* before the revels began, and when we re-joined the ship after the party in the club, it was a quiet enough night, and at dawn on Sunday the skipper had us on our way back north with what proved to be the most perfect westerly sailing breeze. There was warm sunshine with it, and Ed excelled himself in the galley with what he announced would be just another pedestrian spaghetti Bolognese.

However, Ed's spagbols are completely in a league of their own, so much so that the skipper asked for a second helping, which we'd never ever witnessed before. But then the luxury of being able to eat with the ancient gimballed table doing its thing (we've known it since 1960) while the sea miles reeled effortlessly past made the meal a celebration of sailing and old friendships and whatever you're having yourself.

In that unsettled period of weather it would have been expecting too much for such a decent breeze to last us all the way to Strangford, but we'd got past St John's Point in what was now calm before the first hint of a forecast nor'easter appeared, and had gone so well that we were able to take the last of the flood through the Narrows and alongside the pontoon in Strangford Village. By this time the breeze was quite brisk from the nor'east, so the dawn patrol for our departure was well rewarded.



Homeward bound in a perfect sailing breeze, with the skipper enjoying the early morning sun as Lambay slips effortlessly astern.



Strangford Rowing Club's four-oared Oughtred skiff. There are now nine of these based round Strangford Lough, usually headquartered in the pub next the pier.

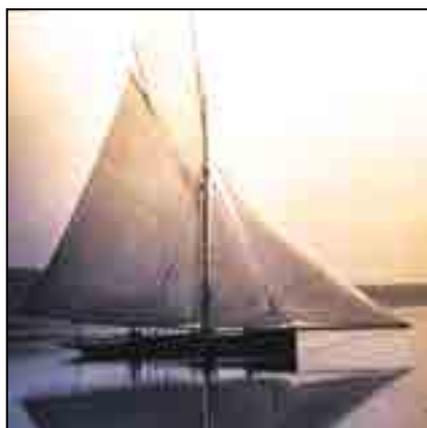
Strangford was bustling with the local rowing club out in their Iain Oughtred-designed four-oared skiff. There are now nine of these attractive boats around Strangford Lough, and they're team built, usually under the aegis of the local pub. Being much lighter than the traditional East Coast skiffs, road trailing them to distant regattas is an easier proposition, while within Strangford Lough there's a healthy inter-port league.

We were temporarily sharing the pontoon with Derek and Viv White ICC's locally-based Fastnet 34 *Ballyclaire*, which has

the rare distinction of having Ardglass Golf Club across her transom as one of her allegiances. Derek himself was soon inveigled aboard *Ainmara* to put the world to rights, and then Dickie brought his crew into a pleasant family reunion in the Lobster Pot for a good supper, with Deirdre coming down from Ballygarvan to meet up with us and their daughter Anne and partner Brian and the grandchildren.

And there on the wall beside us was the photo of what might well be the late Roy Starkey ICC's ancient *Bonito*, aboard which his regular crewman was Bob Geldof Senr ICC. *Bonito* – which was finally broken up in Dun Laoghaire a few years back – was for some years the oldest boat in the ICC until Stu Spence's 1874-built Madcap came along, as *Bonito* had been built in 1884. She'd been constructed in a little boatyard at Castleward just round the corner from Strangford village to a design created by the formidable Colonel Saunderson of Castle Saunderson in County Cavan on Lough Erne, whose ancestral estate is now the headquarters of the Scout Association of Ireland, though the castle itself – a pile worthy of Dracula – is a ruin.

The Colonel was something of a whiz as an amateur yacht designer, and when *Bonito* was first launched, she was a classic straight-stem narrow-gutted cutter very much of her era, setting an enormous spread of sail. But by the time Roy Starkey and Bob Geldof were making their leisurely way along the Irish coast under the ICC burgee with her in the 1960s and '70s, she'd become a Bermudan sloop with a spoon bow and quite a large coachroof. Yet it was still possibly to discern traces of the original hull, which had been forced outwards into providing a wider beam, then had a couple of planks added to the topsides, and finally a completely new bow was added.



Bonito?

Was this Roy Starkey's 1884-bult *Bonito* ICC in her original incarnation? The mysterious cutter displayed on the wall of the Lobster Pot in Strangford is certainly classic 1880s, and she's about the right size to have become *Bonito* in her much-altered later form, when Roy cruised her from Dun Laoghaire with Bob Geldof Senr..

We breakfasted under way in the Monday morning heading up-lough, and were in alongside the Down Cruising Club lightship in timely fashion. The others were nearly home and in no hurry for ablutions, but before driving back to Howth I sought a shower in the old ship, and was recommended to use the ladies' as they're much roomier than the mens' – they are too.

It had been a busy but bitter-sweet venture. For the local Howth fleets, the Lambay Races were to be re-staged when a convenient date came up, and in due course it all went perfectly, with the Howth Seventeens on the classic course being won by Ian Malcolm's *Aura*, built by Hilditch of Carrickfergus in 1898. But for *Ainmara*, it is unfinished business, and with the Royal Ulster YC 150th Anniversary Celebrations on Belfast Lough top of the agenda for the 2016 season, it may remain so for a year or two yet.

But despite the frustration, we'd had ourselves a fine old time. And as ever, the old lightship – definitely a hundred years old in 2015 after a premature centenary celebration in 1912 – made for a fitting conclusion, for she provides such a fantastic amenity for true boat enthusiasts. Yet as the display at the entrance gate of an image of the original cheque to Hammond Lane Foundry in Dublin in September 1968 well testifies, she was within an ace of becoming manhole covers before the members of the new Down Cruising Club did some useful negotiation behind the scenes to secure their new headquarters, and give visiting cruising folk a wonderful destination in the inner recesses of Strangford Lough.



The cheque that sealed the deal. Thanks to some delicate negotiation with support from Irish Lights, by adding £50 to the scrap price paid by Hammond Lane Metal Company, the founders of Down Cruising Club were able to save the lightship *Petrel* from becoming manhole covers, and they've successfully used her as their headquarters ever since. The signatories are Bill Watson and Dermot McConnell.



Down Cruising Club's hospitable former lightship HQ. Those in the know are aware that the womens' showers are much more commodious and effective than the mens', and there are usually no women about on a Monday morning

Yet another cruise to a very cool Hebrides for *Marie Claire*

Seán McCormack



Marie Claire in Loch Skavaig

Marie Claire, a 1981 vintage Beneteau First 30, has had many cruises to the Hebrides but never in such cool, non summerlike weather as experienced this year. Even after mid June, when Ireland enjoyed some warm temperatures we were all wrapped up in Scotland and boat heaters required on many nights. On the plus, side apart from the planned departure day, we were never weather bound due to strong winds. From the day we left Howth until we made landfall on Rathlin Island on our way home 30 days later, we did not see a single Irish flagged boat. This was quite extraordinary. Another notable feature this year was how few cruising boats we saw in ports north of Ardnamurchan. Did they have weather information that we missed?

Our scheduled departure from Howth on Saturday 13th June was put back a day due to fresh northerly winds and a lumpy sea. On board were long time sailing friends Con Moran and Vivienne Cahill. On our passage up the Irish Sea we made overnight stops in Ardglass, Glenarm and Ballycastle marinas. In Glenarm, the castle grounds

were being prepared for a July concert featuring the Hot House Flowers and Bagatelle. The leg to Ballycastle gave us some hours of great sailing with a strong northerly ebb tide under us and the nine Antrim Glens looking magnificent.

Wednesday 17th June gave us a brisk sail to Port Askaig in the Sound of Islay. This busy ferry port is not very yacht friendly, but owing to *Marie Claire's* size, we were able to go alongside on the northern end of the pier, out of the tide and away from the ferries. Our fender board was deployed here to good effect. The next day, with two reefs in the main and a partly rolled genoa, we encountered a very rough sea at the north end of Colonsay and the seas around the Torran Rocks, southwest of the Ross of Mull, were not for the faint hearted. Arriving into a very tranquil Tinker's Hole, we were surprised to find not a single yacht and had the place to ourselves overnight. Next day, we anchored for two hours in the adjacent David Balfour's Bay. This bay, with its pristine white beach, has become popular in recent years. In the afternoon we enjoyed some good sailing to drop the hook in Coll's Arinagour harbour.

We had an early start on Saturday 20th June for the 60-mile passage to Loch Dunvegan, on the west coast of Skye. This was another great sailing day. We anchored in Loch Bay between the islands of Isay and Mingay in the outer part of Loch Dunvegan. This anchorage saved us the five mile trip up to the head of the loch to the village of Dunvegan. Next morning, we motored up the Little Minch and North Minch. With excellent visibility, the chain of outer Hebridian islands to the west and the mainland to the east were breathtakingly beautiful. This was Scotland at its best. We arrived into Stornoway's small marina mid afternoon to discover that, as it was Sunday, everything was closed except the hotel beside the marina. This was to be the most northerly point of this planned five week cruise and, with another four weeks to go, the crew predicted that the skipper would adjust to a more leisurely pace from now on. Why is it that crew never fully know their skipper?

We departed Stornoway marina on Tuesday 23rd June, motorsailing in a light wind, through a benign North Minch to Loch Inver, with the weather still dull and cool. This is a large fishing harbour with a huge fish processing warehouse but with little activity. The next day saw us make a two hour stop in the Summer Isles anchorage of En a Saille, on the northwest corner of Tanera More. In the afternoon we made the 20-mile journey to our night anchorage in Loch Ewe, where we picked up a mooring in Poolewe at the head of the loch. This loch in the past provided the principal anchorage for the Royal Navy on the west coast of Scotland. The next morning we moved the short distance and anchored off the landing steps for Inverewe House and Gardens. Perched on a peninsula at the edge of loch Ewe, Inverewe is regarded as one of the most beautiful gardens in Scotland. An oasis of exotic plants from around the world, the 50-acre garden and estate run by the National Trust for Scotland is also home to a wonderful array of wildlife. The garden has a network of walks leading out into the surrounding landscape, offering great opportunities to spot some of the diverse wildlife here and to enjoy the spectacular views. Well worth a visit. The



afternoon provided more great sailing as we made our way to Flowerdale Bay in Loch Gairloch, where we availed of their pontoon berthing. The sun had appeared this evening and it was lovely sitting outside in the local hotel garden, enjoying a pre dinner drink.

Away next morning 27th June, but outside the harbour while unfurling the genoa, it got jammed and we could not get it in or out. We had to unfurl it manually and take it down. We then set the detachable inner forestay and hanked on the no. 3 jib. At anchor later we discovered that the Furler swivel and halyard were at the top of the mast. Con volunteered to go up, with Vivienne and I winching and tailing. I'm not sure that Con had the more difficult role. I still don't know how this happened. Got into the lovely and sheltered anchorage of Aarseid Mhor on Rona mid afternoon. This is a favourite anchorage of mine, where we had the company of 8 other yachts for the night. I sailed into this gem of an anchorage many times over the years and enjoyed the lovely scenery and unspoiled landscape ashore. Now there are big changes, with new management in place. The former derelict cottage at the head of the anchorage now provides showers, washing machine and certain food items. Ashore there are now several industrial-type ugly buildings, with no attempt at camouflage. Building material is strewn everywhere and warning notices to the public abound.



Inverewe Gardens, Loch Ewe

The next morning we found ourselves motoring with reefed main into a strong headwind, recording 33 knots at one stage. Luckily we were only going the short distance to Portree, the capital of Skye. On arrival we went alongside a bouncy pontoon. We were awakened early next morning by an irate harbour official. He explained that it was not permitted to stay overnight on the pontoon and that we had to move immediately, as a ferry was due in but only after we paid him. He seemed very annoyed that we were there most of the previous day, Sunday, when he was obviously off duty. We apologized and paid him before going on to a mooring to have breakfast.

Plopton in Loch Carron was our port of choice for Monday 29th June. On the passage from Portree we experienced good sailing and on arrival, we picked up a visitors' mooring in a fairly full anchorage. Ashore, we found a neat and very picturesque town with many visitors. The next day was very fresh as we made our way south and under the Skye Road Bridge to the recently extended pontoon facility at the Kyle of Loch Alsh. In the southerly wind, the pontoons here were rather exposed and uncomfortable and the pontoon in the former Skye ferry port of Kyleakin would have provided more shelter. I spent a few days there weather bound 2 years ago and was reluctant to go there again. In the afternoon the wind eased, the sun came out and my shorts got an airing for the first and last time on this cruise.

Wednesday 1st July promised to be the best day so far as we headed down Kyle Rhea in bright sunshine and with some heat in the air for a change. The plan today was to fulfil an ambition I had for some time and that was to explore the dramatic Loch Hourn. This loch is on the east side of the Sound of Sleat and opposite Isle Ornsay. It is a magnificent fiord-like loch with high mountains all round. It is extremely wild and remote and on the day of our visit there was still snow in the valleys near the mountain tops. The two sections of the loch extend to just over ten miles inland and in windy weather are subject to violent squalls. At the first narrows there were some very dramatic light and sound effects, as a ten minute electrical storm raged very close to us. Very dramatic and might even have been enjoyable, were it not for the twelve metre mast over our heads! Afterwards we proceeded cautiously through the second and third narrows to anchor just short of the fourth narrows on the south side. After lunch we went ashore and went for a walk along a rough path beside the shore. This route was very attractive, heavily wooded and scented with many wild flowers and with breaks from time to time in the heavy foliage offering framed picture views of the loch. The night at anchor here was an experience never to be forgotten. We were so lucky to get this one good day to experience this rather special loch.

The next morning was very misty as we made our way back down the loch and had headwinds from the loch entrance to our destination of Mallaig. We found the small marina here nearly full and a new marina facilities building under construction. This should facilitate plans to extend the marina, which up to now had no shower or toilet facilities. We stayed three nights here, as Vivienne was leaving on the Friday and Robert Hayes was joining us on Saturday. Mallaig is a good place for a crew change, with its train service to Glasgow.



Sean, Vivienne and Con at 4th. Narrows, Loch Hourn

On Sunday we departed Mallaig, with the idea of impressing the newly arrived Robert with a visit to the dramatic

anchorage of Loch Scavaig, set deep in the cirque of the black Cuillins on the south side of Skye. We had the main anchorage in the pool of Loch na Cuilce to ourselves until a French yacht came in later in the day. Ashore we explored around Loch Coruisk, framed by the Cuillin Ridge, one of the most famous mountain views in Britain. With little wind forecast, we were quite happy to stay the night here, as this anchorage can be dangerous in fresh conditions due to severe downdraughts.

The following day dawned bright and after breakfast we were away in calm conditions to Loch Scresort on the Isle of Rum. Ashore we found that the island's main attraction, Kinloch Castle, now only opens when pre booked parties are expected. George Bullough employed 300 men over three years to build his Victorian extravagance. No expense was spared as puffer after puffer brought in Dumfriesshire sandstone and 250,000 tons of Ayrshire soil for the gardens. A number of new wooden buildings, under construction when I was here in 2013, lie idle and forlorn looking. All very sad, as it is home to the red deer and the white tailed sea eagle and is owned by the Scottish National Heritage. Leaving here we went to Eigg, another of the four islands that make up the group known as the Small Isles. On arrival we briefly went aground in our first choice of anchorage and then moved to a more exposed one, but with more water. The next day we headed south in light winds past Ardnamurchan Point, to a busy Tobermory. Here we did the usual things, such as checking the quality of the malt whiskies in the seafront bars, which were found to be as 'dangerous' as ever. Peter Bullick and Myles Lindsay (ICC) on *El-Torro* came in while we were here.

Over the following days we had an overnight in Loch Drumbuie, made a lunchtime call to Salen, an overnight in Loch Aline, before going to Oban marina on Kerrera. This marina had many empty spaces and also complaints from boat owners about the facilities. Due to a dispute with a supplier, there was no diesel or gas available. The condition of the toilets and showers left a lot to be desired. The staff were not very friendly but the free launch service to Oban still operates. Con left for home from here and now just Robert and I were on board for the week ahead, to get us back to Howth.

On the afternoon of Saturday 11th, Robert and I set out for the short trip to another of my favourite anchorages, Puilladobhrain. It started to rain as we arrived and none of the crews of the other eight yachts at anchor went ashore in the miserable conditions. In my many visits to this anchorage over the years, this was the first time that I did not walk over the hill to Clachan Bridge to visit the famous Tigh an Truish Inn. The weather next morning was dull and grey as we set off for a lunch stop at the Black Isles to wait for a favourable tide through the Sound of Luing. In the afternoon we had a good sail to Craobh marina, availing of their excellent facilities and enjoying dinner in their restaurant.

With the extended weather forecast predicting strong winds from a southerly quarter, it was thought prudent to make progress south. Tides dictated a 05.00 hour start on Monday, as we motored in misty conditions to our destination of Gigha. We picked up a visitors' mooring in Gigha at 11.15 hours. Going ashore in the dinghy, we had to land on the beach as a new jetty is under construction to replace the old one. It is planned that the outer end will facilitate 3 yachts on either side, providing temporary berthing to take on fuel, water and provisions. The sun came out in the afternoon as we walked to the gardens of Achamore House and then enjoyed a thirst-killing pint, sitting in the Island Hotel garden.

Next day we again had a 05.00 hour start as we motored in calm conditions to Rathlin Island. Despite the calm conditions, there was a nasty sea as we approached the island and tried to avoid the worse effects of the Macdonnell Race. We tied up at 11.05 hours at the greatly improved pontoon facilities here. Dr. John Madden (ICC) on yacht *Bagheera*, came in during the afternoon and kindly invited Robert and me for drinks aboard. This was the first Irish-flagged boat we saw since leaving Howth 30 days earlier. I was surprised at the amount of activity and facilities around the harbour, as Rathlin appears to be doing well with a population of just over 100. The island has a water supply from boreholes on the island, electricity is supplied by undersea cables and broadband is also available.

Wednesday 15th was again a 05.00 hour start as we headed down the North Chanel to Bangor marina. For a period our speed over the ground was double our boat speed. Just as well that our direction was south and not north! At 16.50 hours we were at sea again, heading for the handy little marina in Ardglass, where we arrived just as darkness came in. The next morning we had the luxury of not departing until 06.00 hours. Our passage to Howth was mostly motor sailing and in the afternoon the weather closed in, with rain and freshening wind. However we tied up at our berth at 16.35 hours, just before the real heavy rain started and the now very fresh wind went into the south. Good to be home safely and thanks to the crew for a job well done.

Duration of cruise 33 days
Total cruise distance 811 miles
Pontoon/marina stops 14
Alongside stops 1
Mooring 3
Anchorages 15



Kinloch Castle, Rum

John Clementson writes of a possible final cruise on *Faustina II*

Ann and I have decided, due to our advancing years, to put *Faustina II* up for sale. As I write she is still ours but we hope that 2015 will be our last season on our own hull. Time will tell. During the year we have been building and moving into a new home and so time has been at a premium. Nevertheless we resolved to get away and have a short break aboard. We chose Scotland as our modest destination and we set off from Portaferry on 2nd August heading north. As we approached Belfast Lough we heard a forecast that was quite simply dire – so we decided to go into Bangor marina and go home until it all improved a bit.

We left again at 0300(!) on 6th August. We began our cruise by going from Bangor via Gigha to Ardfern (in one day) where we joined a two day RCC Meet that began in Ardfern and concluded in Loch Spelve. The latter venue is used annually by the CCC as they are invited to the mussel farm there. The owner kindly provides as many mussels as one can eat, cooked wonderfully in a variety of tasty ways by a chef from Glasgow – all for a donation of £5 that goes to the RNLI. This year the RCC was invited to join in and it was an occasion to savour! During the Meet we had a couple of great evenings with Bill and Rosemary McKean and their friends.

We then went on to Tinker's Hole. We were joined by three other yachts but next morning we woke to find just one there and she was stuck on the rocks by her rudder. Apparently another yacht had tripped her anchor on leaving. The yacht's skipper was doing all the right things to get her off on a falling tide and I went over to help. Nothing we did seemed to work, so we gave up – and just then the yacht slipped off the rock by herself! There was a little rudder damage but more seriously the propeller wouldn't rotate despite the engine being ok. We towed them out to sea and left them in a fair breeze to sail back to their base.

We headed south and returned to Portaferry via overnight stops at Loch Tarbert Jura, Port Ellen, Rathlin and Larne plus a few lunch stops. We arrived on 16th August. It had been a very pleasant trouble-free and restful cruise despite the poor weather. If it was our last cruise, it could have been much worse.

We have had such fun and great adventures in the 19 years that we have owned *F2* but we are selling her now without regret. Once she is gone, *Faustina 3* will likely be a medium-sized camper van in which we can explore the inside of Ireland and attend ICC rallies for many more years from the other side – with our dog! See you there!



Faustina II is a Bowman 40

From Howth to Torre Vieja

Ken and Carmel Kavanagh

2 OAPs in a Boat .

In late 2012, we sold *Safari of Howth*, our beloved Hallberg Rassy 42. After a long and thorough search she was replaced with *La Lumière of Howth*, a Hunter Legend 36, which we thought would better suit the needs of two ageing sailors who wished to spend their final years pottering around the Med.

In 2014, we found our new boat in St Quai Portrieux in Brittany and sailed her home to Howth where we spent a season getting to know her and kitting her out for what we hoped would be a new beginning in the Med. We initially decided to go via the rivers and canals of France, entering at Le Havre and exiting at Port St Louis in the south of France. We consulted extensively with two ICC friends, Paul Clandillon and Sean Mc Cormack, both of whom had travelled this route in their own boats and who were generous with their time and information on how best to go about this.

However, the lure of the sea and, perhaps a final opportunity to take on the challenge of a long sea voyage were too compelling and so we decided in favour of taking the long way round, which would involve crossing Biscay and riding the Atlantic swell down the Portuguese coast one last time.

As we had really enjoyed our year in Sardinia with *Safari of Howth* in 2010, we thought it would be nice to return to Federico and his team at Ser Mar Marina in Alghero, a voyage of some 2,200 miles.

On a miserable, wet, cold Sunday on 24th May, we finally set off for Greystones on a mini shake - down cruise to check that everything was in good working order before leaving the jurisdiction, as it were. On the way down we thought we had a real problem on our hands when the autopilot refused to hold a course. Upon investigation, we discovered I had packed an electric polisher too close to the fluxgate compass in the cockpit locker and the magnets in the motor had led the autopilot astray. The skipper hinted at planks and lashes but in the end was so relieved that the problem was so easily solved, I was forgiven.

After sorting out the best time to depart for Milford Haven to catch the tide to take us round St Anne's Head, we left Greystones at 15.00 the following day to cover the first 100 miles of the journey. Light variable winds accompanied us for the first few hours, then veered to the west and so we were able to roll out the sails and motor-sail down the Irish sea. However, it was a cold, bumpy and, on one occasion, alarming passage.

At around 23.30, while I was on the first night-watch of the season, a red mast-head light suddenly appeared in front of me on what looked like an imminent collision course. According to the AIS, this would occur within the next 2 minutes. I quickly knocked off the autopilot, flung the boat to starboard, shouted down for the skipper as a rather large yacht glided past under sail far too close for comfort. While I was recovering from the fright and trying to convince the skipper that I hadn't in fact fallen asleep on watch, the other yacht disappeared from the AIS screen. Next, its navigation lights were extinguished. Sailing up the Irish Sea with no navigation lights could not be described as smart at the best of times but definitely not while two rather anxious OAPs were at large in the middle of the night.

The delights of Milford Haven

At 11.00 the following morning, we duly locked into Milford Haven marina without any further excitement, not realising nine days would pass before we would be on our way again.

The plan was to call into Milford Haven to collect our new Rocna anchor, which was to be delivered there. The delivery was delayed due to the May Bank Holiday weekend in Britain, so the anchor did not arrive until Wednesday, 27th May, the day after our arrival. Then followed a week of absolutely appalling weather with winds of up to Storm force 10 raging in Lundy, the Bristol Channel and the Irish Sea. Even though Milford Haven is far from being a "des res" town, the excellent facilities and the staff of the marina turned the unexpected 9 day stay into quite a pleasant experience.

Crossing the channels

On Thursday, 4th June, the weather forecast was reasonable enough to make the 120-mile passage across the Bristol Channel to Newlyn in Cornwall. We exited the dock at 11.30. The SE 3-4 allowed us to make good progress for the early part of the trip but at midnight it backed to the southwest, which resulted in a long, slow slog down to Lands End. Soon the wind had reached 22 knots on the nose (not forecast) and we were concerned that we would miss the tide to take us round Lands End.

However, the decision to depart Milford Haven two hours earlier than required, prompted by the forecast, paid off. By 08.45 the following morning the fog had lifted, making the Longship's Lighthouse finally visible. We shot round



Lands End with the help of 4 knots of favourable tide and a nice westerly breeze, nipping down past the Runnel Stone and Manacles into Newlyn by 13.00, 25 hrs and 30 minutes after exiting the lock in Milford Haven.

The following day, 6th June (71 years after D-Day), we, too, found ourselves crossing the English Channel, though from Newlyn to L'Aberwrac'h in North Brittany. We left Newlyn at 17.15 for the 100 mile passage. The wind was forecast to be W 4-5, backing NW 3-4 later. All went mostly according to plan except for the extreme cold. This was to be our 3rd really cold night at sea, which makes sailing in our home waters very unpleasant but which made us all the more determined to reach warmer climes as quickly as possible.

There was one 'funny incident' along the way. While once again on a solo night - watch, I roused the skipper from his slumbers to seek advice on how best to handle the very large orange-coloured cruise ship coming over the horizon. (Another cruise ship, bedecked in green lights, had passed a short time previously.) After peering at it for a second, he looked at me as if I had lost the plot, said "that's the moon" and returned to his bunk. I was left to ponder my own rather amazing imagination (or stupidity.) all alone in the cockpit of a small yacht in the middle of the English Channel as darkness descended.

More gales but blue skies on the horizon

At 12.45 the following day, we arrived at the visitors' pontoon in the small, very exposed marina in L'Aberwrac'h. For the next 4 days, we were kept in port by gale force winds.

On one of the days, we took the bus to Brest. Nearly everyone on the bus was from the visitors' pontoon in L'Aberwrac'h. It was like an outing of the Romeos ("Retired Old Men Eating Out", a group of retired males in Howth Yacht Club who go on regular outings) with just myself and another female sailor thrown to add a touch of glamour.

Eventually this strong, noisy wind abated and we set sail to pass through the Chenal du Four bound for Camaret just 35 miles further along the coast. We departed L'Aberwrac'h at 10.40 and were abeam of Le Four Lighthouse by 14.00, 50 minutes after HW Brest. We then proceeded to barrel through the Chenal, reaching a top speed of 8.6 knots off Le Conquet Lighthouse. Soon it was raining heavily with visibility reduced to two miles and so we were quite relieved to tie up in the rather deserted marina in Camaret at 18.00 on this murky, wet evening.

We were not tempted to prolong our stay here and therefore set off early the following morning to pass through the Raz de Sein into south Brittany and hopefully into some sunshine. Because of a long delay waiting for fuel, we were once again under immense pressure to reach La Vieille Lighthouse in the Raz by 13.45 in time for the 15 minute window to pass through this short but difficult stretch of water. We just about made it and to our absolute delight emerged into south Brittany and the first real sunshine of the trip so far. The 37 mile stretch from the Raz to Loctudy also produced the first really enjoyable sail since departing Howth. We tied up at 20.25 on the visitors' pontoon, exhilarated from the experience of a cracking sail under clear blue skies.



La Lumière of Howth alongside in L'Aberwrac'h

Competing for a berth with the Volvo Round the World yachts

The following morning, 30th June at 10.15 saw us depart Loctudy bound for Lorient, which was 38 miles away. The forecast was for light variable winds gradually going NW 3-4 in the afternoon. We had another lovely sail in sunny conditions, arriving off Lorient at 17.00. But nobody had mentioned that the Volvo Round the World Yachts were spending that very same weekend in Lorient and that as a result, no berth could be found in any of the marinas we contacted during our approach.

Then, as a result of a misunderstanding on Channel 9, a RIB from Marina Locmiquelic, a small marina on the opposite side of the river to the town of Lorient, hailed us and escorted us in to a nice comfortable berth, thinking we were another boat.

Upon discovering their error, they kindly allowed us to stay and that is how we came to be berthed alongside the renowned meteorologist, Frank Singleton and his wife who were cruising Brittany. The village of Locmiquelic was an absolute delight and boasted an excellent boulangerie and charcuterie where we stocked up with some very tasty provisions.

The first 500 miles completed

For the 4th day in a row, the Gods of the Wind cooperated with our sailing plans, forecasting N 3-4 occasionally 5 and some showers, excellent conditions for the 55 mile passage to Pornichet/La Baule at the mouth of the Loire. We were aware that the shortest crossing of Biscay is from Audierne to La Coruna, (320 miles) but because we were keen to meet

up with some friends from Nantes, we decided to commence our crossing of Biscay from Pornichet.

At 08.50 we bade farewell to our kind neighbours in Marina Locmiquelic and headed southwest. At around 14.00 it was finally warm enough to don the shorts for a few hours and commence working on a tan for a change. Pure bliss. The sunshine didn't last too long, however and we docked in Pornichet at 18.30 in an absolute downpour but pleased that we had completed the first 500 miles of the journey.

Biscay-always a challenge

A relaxing day was spent in Pornichet in the company of our old friends and then it was back to business once again and to planning the crossing of Biscay. After a considerable amount of soul-searching and discussion, we decided to opt for a 2 night crossing from Pornichet to Gijon, a sail of 262 miles which would bring us a good distance west along the north coast of Spain.

With just two OAPs on board, night passages are no longer the fun they used to be. If off-shore passages have to be undertaken, the preferred option is a 36 hour passage beginning at first light and ending the following day around 18.00. However, exceptions sometimes have to be made, so on Tuesday 16th June, we rose early. At 08.00, after quietly slipping our lines, we began the passage to Gijon. We were soon making 6 knots with the help of a NW 3-4. Once the outlying dangers were safely passed, we altered course to 210 degs. which would bring us across to Gijon.

When we were about an hour out, we were hailed by a Customs' boat from the ever-zealous Lorient region and requested to pass over our passports and ship's registration documents. A large fishing net was used to pass the papers back and forth. Thank goodness all was in order with the ship's paperwork and we were sent on our way with cries of 'Bon Voyage' ringing in our ears.

All went well until 18.30 when the passage came to an abrupt and juddering halt. As we were meandering peacefully further into Biscay, there was a sudden vibration from the engine. We quickly realised we had fouled the propeller and as neither of us are into scuba diving, the only option was to turn and head across to Les Sables d'Olonne which was the nearest port on the French coast, lying 55 miles to the east.

As darkness closed in, the NW wind increased to 20 – 25 knots. With a 2 metre swell also from the northwest, life on board became very unpleasant as we bumped and banged our way through the night. By the time we docked at 08.00 the following morning, we were absolutely exhausted but relieved to be safely in port. A diver went down to examine the prop and reported that all was well. Apparently the offending article had somehow detached itself in the very rough conditions we had experienced during that night.

Mutiny on board

I have to admit that I was totally freaked out at this stage and presented the skipper with what I considered to be three reasonable options for the onward journey, the 4th being himself going across Biscay singlehanded:

Do an overnight to Santander and work our way along the north coast of Spain.

Get a 3rd person to accompany us across Biscay as far as La Coruna.

Have the boat transported by road to the Med.

I shared my concerns with the people in the marina office and was referred to Jean-Louis, owner of the nearby boatyard. He offered to introduce us to his cousin, Jean Garnier, a retired fisherman (he had actually owned a fleet of trawlers,) but who was also a highly experienced single-handed sailor. Jean-Louis also agreed to get a price for transporting *La Lumière* by road to the Med. The following morning, he introduced us to one of the most wonderful men to have entered my life since I met Ken in 1962.

10 minutes into the chat Jean offered to accompany us across Biscay. We would depart the following Monday, 22nd June. We would cover his costs – food, flight home, etc – a minute price to pay for what turned out to be one of the most informative and fun sailing trips of my life. As it would cost around €5,000, including all expenses, to have the boat transported by road, Jean's offer was a no-brainer.

Biscay. Here we come.....again

The following Monday at 07.15, the three of us departed Les Sables d'Olonne with a forecast for light, variable winds. While initially there was some wind from the predictable northwest, it soon died off never to reappear again during the 84 hours it took us to reach Bayona. Every time there was the slightest puff of wind, the sails were hoisted but rather sadly rolled away again a few hours later, having been of little use. After all my fear and dread of Biscay, it turned into a long, uneventful passage in flat, calm seas.

Under these circumstances, there was plenty of time to chat. So I can now speak with some authority on fishing for tuna off the Azores, prawns in the Irish Sea, conger eels off the northwest coast of Spain and the politics of EU Fishing. Jean also regaled me with stories of the fleshpots of Waterford where storm-bound French fishermen not only found shelter but plenty of relaxing diversions. I hadn't realised that the night-life in Waterford was quite so colourful.

(I also discovered that Quai Garnier, to starboard of the entrance to Les Sables d'Olonne, is named after Jean's uncle, a war hero, who was a member of the French Resistance and who died on a train heading for Auschwitz after being captured by the Germans in 1944.)

As we passed La Coruña at 22.00 on the Wednesday, we decided to continue on to Bayona which was another 150 miles away. When we checked the weather with La Coruña radio, we were advised to expect ENE 4 occasionally 5 which

would be perfect. The visibility, which can be a huge issue between La Coruña and Cap Finisterre, was to be good.

This turned out to be pure fiction. The wind died off completely, a dense fog descended and our speed dropped to 4 knots as we battled against tide and current towards Cap Finisterre, finally struggling past it at 10.00 the following morning. The fog didn't dissipate until 14.30 that day when Jean shouted 'The fug is out' (The fog has lifted.). His English wasn't the best.

With clear visibility, a freshening wind and with hoisted sails, our speed increased and the final 36 miles into Bayona passed pleasantly and swiftly. Upon arriving in port, our main priority was to replace all the fuel we had used over the previous 84 hours.

Then, we went in search of food and enjoyed a tasty meal in Café Naveiro just across from the marina. It was a nice break for the galley slave.

Lobster-pot dodging and friendly pirates

We were now under some pressure to reach Porto from where Jean was booked to fly back to La Rochelle the following day, Saturday 27th June. We departed Bayona at 07.00 and covered the 63 miles to Porto in 11 hours. With good visibility, a flat sea and a NW 3, we were able to motor-sail on low revs, just bumping over one unseen lobster pot along the way. The Portuguese coast is like a minefield of lobster pots with thousands of them dotted along the coast, just waiting for unsuspecting yachts like of *La Lumière of Howth* to become entangled in them. This time we had a lucky escape.

We docked in the marina in Leixeos a few miles from Porto. The town was abuzz with a Mediaeval Pirates' Festival in full swing. We celebrated the completion of another 518 miles of the journey with a delicious meal in a local restaurant where all the serving staff, cooks and indeed many of the patrons were dressed as pirates.

After Jean's departure on the 27th, we enjoyed a few days R & R exploring Porto, also enjoying the fun of the Festival, and befriending our neighbours in the marina, especially a Norwegian couple in *VidVandre* and a French couple in their yacht *Lazycat*. They, too, had just crossed Biscay and were on route to the Med. We met up in numerous marinas along the way and were firm friends by the time we all reached Torrevieja, south of Alicante, in the beginning of August.



A gang of friendly pirates in Leixeos

We arrived in the marina at 20.30 to find the office closed. So we tied up at the fuel pontoon and were wondering how to pay for the overnight when a night security man appeared and relieved us of our cash. At 06.00 the following morning, we were up and away and bound for Peniche, 52 miles away. When we arrived, we had to raft up to the Norwegian yacht, *VidVandre*. We spent a truly awful night being flung in all directions by the wash from the many fishing vessels entering and exiting the harbour throughout the night.

At first light, all the yachts fled within 5 minutes of one another towards Caiscais at the entrance to Lisbon and enjoyed a more peaceful night in the comfort of this excellent marina.

Then came another day of lobster pot dodging as we proceeded further south to Sines, a fishing port and holiday resort 35 miles south of Cascais. Although the marina is quite small, the facilities are first class and the town itself a delight to visit.

The weather forecast was predicting increasingly strong winds along the west coast of Portugal and in particular at Capo Sao Vincente, which is notorious for strong winds and big swells at the best of times. As the winds were due to last for 4-5 days and strengthen to gale force, we decided to break our golden rule of never going out when a Force 6 is mentioned. On Friday, 3rd July we departed Sines at 04.00 with a Force 6 expected once we rounded Capo Sao Vincente.

There was plenty of wind and a big swell at the Capo. Once rounded, we were met by 25 knots of wind, gusting 30, from the NW, and even though the lobster pots still abounded, there was no need for engines as we hurtled under sail towards Lagos. At precisely 17.00, we docked at the waiting pontoon in a mere 20 knots, relieved to be safely in port but also delighted with ourselves as we now knew we would be able to keep our date with our son and his fiancée.

Great value in the marinas of Andalucia

We decided to reward ourselves with a two-night stay in Lagos marina. We also needed to catch up with laundry and provisioning so this was an ideal place and time to catch our breath in every sense.

On Monday, 6th June, we headed along the coast to Vilamoura, which was a huge disappointment. It was a really

expensive but characterless marina, full of very large motor yachts, surrounded by a huge number of restaurants with even larger numbers of tourists dining in them. By 06.00 the following morning, we departed for the much more authentic marina of Mazagon, 66 miles across the Gulf of Cadiz. We tied up at 17.45 and after checking in, enjoyed a supper of delicious *paella* in the small, friendly restaurant at the marina. It was nice to be back in Spain. (Mazagon is part of a group of marinas in Andalucia run by the local council where charges are fixed and affordable, unlike Cascais, Lagos and Vilamoura in Portugal. The price per night for a 36 ft boat is €27.67 which is great value given that it was now high season). From Mazagon we made our way to Chipiona and then on to Rota in the Bay of Cadiz where we met up with our son and his fiancée and ended up attending a fantastic wedding with them in Jerez de la Frontera.

At last the Pillars of Hercules

After a 4 day stay in the really lovely town of Rota, we headed for Barbate to position ourselves for passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, a sometimes tricky 20 mile stretch of water. Unfortunately a strong easterly wind, which makes the Straits impassable for a small yacht, delayed our departure from Barbate for 5 days. Our French and Norwegian friends from *Lazycat* and *VidVandre* were also held up, so there was plenty of time for socialising. We all participated in the major celebrations which took place on 16th July to honour our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Patron Saint of the Sea, and indeed we had a party on board *La Lumière of Howth* given that it was my very own Feast Day.

On 19th July the wind changed direction and we were finally able to leave the swell and roll of the Atlantic breakers behind and head into what we hoped would be the less turbulent waters of the Med at Gibraltar.

We enjoyed a few days in La Linea, first of all celebrating our arrival in the Med and then, by coincidence, celebrating



“Domingo Rociero”, the first day of a week-long celebration of Spanish music and dance. The town was in lively mode with many inhabitants dressed in traditional costume spontaneously singing and dancing in the streets and of course consuming large amounts of alcohol in the cafes and bars around town.

The mixed delights of the Costa del Sol

After La Linea, we popped into La Duquesa to meet up with an old school friend who was holidaying there. After dropping her off in Estepona, we headed for Benalmadena which has to win the prize for the dirtiest marina we have visited to date. The heat, noise and dirt were so overwhelming that we were glad to make an early departure for Marina del Este (Punta de la Mona) after just one night.

We enjoyed two nights in this beautifully located marina and then nibbled our way along the remainder of the Costa del Sol, calling into Almerimar which was like being parked in the middle of a busy street, as a public road runs all around the marina. Then we spent a few nights in Almeria which is a small marina with little or no space for visiting yachts and finally Cartagena, a place we were really keen to visit. We enjoyed our stay in this historic city, made all the more enjoyable with the company of our

La Linea – Carmel with The Rock in the background

friends from *VidVandre* and *Lazycat*. On our final night there, we all assembled in a local winery for farewell drinks as we thought this would be a parting of the ways. The Norwegians were returning to Norway for a few weeks and the French couple were heading slowly for the Balearics and we were speeding towards Sardinia ahead of the August crowds.

The Levanter strikes again

Our original plan had been to do an overnight sail to Denia about 95 miles to the north. On Wednesday 29th July we departed Cartagena but unfortunately the wind, which had been so benign and cooperative since departing Gibraltar, swung round to the northeast and strengthened turning this trip into a slow slog against wind and swell.

At 17.30 we got a weather update which mentioned the risk of severe thunderstorms later in the night just north of Alicante, the direction in which we were heading. So we contacted Marina Salinas in Torrevieja which was only an hour away and booked a berth there for the night. We soon discovered that we were beaten to it by *Lazycat* who had heard the same forecast.

Marina Salinas is a new marina in Torrevieja with excellent modern facilities but unfortunately the non-stop music from the surrounding bars and discos throughout the night turned our overnight stay there into a sleepless nightmare.

Journey's End

First thing the following morning, we phoned the two other marinas in the harbour looking for a berth. Marina Internacional was full but Real Club Nautica de Torrevieja had berths available. We were then forced to spend 3 nights there as the north-easterly wind continued to blow hard. This gave us time to familiarise ourselves with the club and the

surrounding area. The swimming pool and gym programme offered to club members were particularly attractive as was the proximity to both Alicante and Murcia airports for direct flights to and from Dublin.

We carefully explored the town and discovered that what little charm it possesses is in the area of the marina. The attractive pedestrian zone with cafes, restaurants and some really nice clothes shops was very appealing. A Carrefour hypermarket is a 10 minute bicycle ride away and there is an excellent bus-service to many other towns and cities in the province of Valencia. Even though there are thousands of tourists from many different countries in Torrevieja during the month of August, they didn't impinge on life in the marina. Most of the boat owners were Spanish and welcomed us warmly into their midst. The adjacent cruising ground is also most interesting with Ibiza, gateway to the Balearics, 145 miles to the northeast and the fascinating Mar Menor, a few hours to the south. Furthermore, along the Costa Blanca between Torrevieja and Denia, there is an abundance of pleasant daytime anchorages and harbours.

With all these advantages in mind, we began to reconsider our plan to winter the boat in Sardinia. We spoke to the Assistant Manager of the yacht club who invited us to join, explaining that if we became members, the cost of an annual berth would be 50% less than the visitors' rate and so would be well within our budget. We decided to take the plunge and on Monday, 3rd August, applied for membership of the Real Club Nautica de Torrevieja. Our odyssey from Howth to the Med had come to an unexpected but happy end.

Having covered 1,945 miles and visited 31 marinas in the 10 weeks since departing Howth on 24th May, we were quite happy to finally hang up our sailing boots, sit back, relax and bask in the pleasure of having successfully brought *La Lumière of Howth* safely to a new home in the Med.

Peter Williams was taken by this passage “From Three Yachts” by Conor O’Brien, first published 1928, his account of Lough Scavaig (p.80):

..... Half a gale of southerly wind swept us into the anchorage of Lough Scavaig. That was all right as far as anchorage went; a goodly island prevented the sea from running in, and a thousand foot cliff behind us banked up the air and kept the wind from getting at us. But next day the wind went round behind the mountains, and hatched its nefarious plots in their higher corries. It was a very simple plot, if you consider that the circulation of the air may just as well be in a vertical as in a Horizontal plane. The Garbh-choire, which is just above our friendly cliff, is so formed that air can get out of it in all directions, but into it only through a narrow funnel in which was our anchorage. So the gale—for it was blowing a full gale by now—created a high vacuum up there; and first it sucked up the cushion of air that had protected us, for that was the nearest thing; and then it sucked up the sea—it was amusing to see spray off the beach streaming up a perpendicular cliff. I once found the blade of a broken oar up there, and, wet as the climate is, I wondered who was fool enough to go boating in the Garbh-choire, till I realised that it was the wind that had brought it up; that wind stole a frying pan from me one night and pitched it into the Coruisk—and the vacuum was still unsatisfied. So the gale that blew over Sgurr Dubh on the North side of us, the Black Peak in a group where all peaks are black, was turned down over our heads and drawn into the funnel; the gale blowing legitimately from the West came roaring round the shoulder of Garsbheinn, the Hill of Blasts; and the gale on the other side of Sgurr na Sri, the Peak of Squalls, shrieked in from the East; and there must have been a fine commotion where they met, a mile or so from us, but we could not see it, for it kicked up such an amount of spray that everything in that direction was hidden. So I do not know if the gale blowing out at sea was able to force its way in from the South; anyway, three gales are as bad as a hurricane.

Where we lay the hurricane was fortunately a steady one; the gales had to get through the anchorage at such a pace that they had no time to jostle each other, so a boat that would lie quiet was comparatively safe as long as her cables did not part. But *Kelpie* was always a bad boat to anchor; she sheered about prodigiously, and broke her warps and dragged her anchors and only brought up a few yards from the rocks, with all her ropes and chains and every heavy thing spilled out into the bottom of the loch, and her masts stripped to a gantline, as the seaman puts it; that is, with all the gear unrove and only a single line left aloft to hoist it up again.

It seemed almost certain destruction for my yacht, and I began to think about getting my valuables into a place of safety. Luckily it happened that *Molly* was straight up to windward of me, securely moored alongside to the island, and all her lines joined together were just long enough to veer her boat, a good big one, down wind within my reach. I put my bag into the boat followed myself and abandoned ship. I don't know whether Botterill quite expected that; the weight of two of us even in his big boat made the passage back very wet and rather hazardous.

I spent the night in *Molly*; a very uncomfortable night, broken by the necessity of tending lines, and being almost thrown out of one's bunk when the ship was heeled over by the force of the wind acting solely on the topmast, for the hull and lower mast were in the shelter of the island. And in the morning, wonderful to relate, *Kelpie* was still there. In the course of time the wind left Garbh-choire and went off to worry someone else in some other loch; and as soon as it was safe *Molly's* crew retrieved my anchors, put my ship in order, and towed me clear; and I assure you neither of us wasted time in putting the miles between us and that infernal harbour of Scavaig.

Bearding the Hellenic Dilemma

Robert Barker

The summer of 2015 will surely be remembered for the 'in/out of the Euro' dilemma facing the Greek people and for the thousands of *clandestini* desperately navigating their way across the Eastern Mediterranean.

Hadrian's Beard took the opportunity to sally forth across the Mediterranean to visit the Ionian Islands in the run up to the so-called 'Bailout Referendum' and observe the impact of the government's debt crisis. We were, of course, fearful of encountering any of the heavily over-loaded boats making their way to Greece, Italy, Sicily and Malta. We thought out a plan to tackle the possibility, in the darkness of a night passage, of encountering such a boat seeking assistance.



***Hadrian's Beard* moored on the Styx River**

of safety where masters of ships can disembark rescued persons, with minimal disruption to the ship's planned itinerary. There were lots of details (like: what do we do if there are 500 in distress and we can only accommodate 20?) which would bewilder Socrates and certainly worried us!

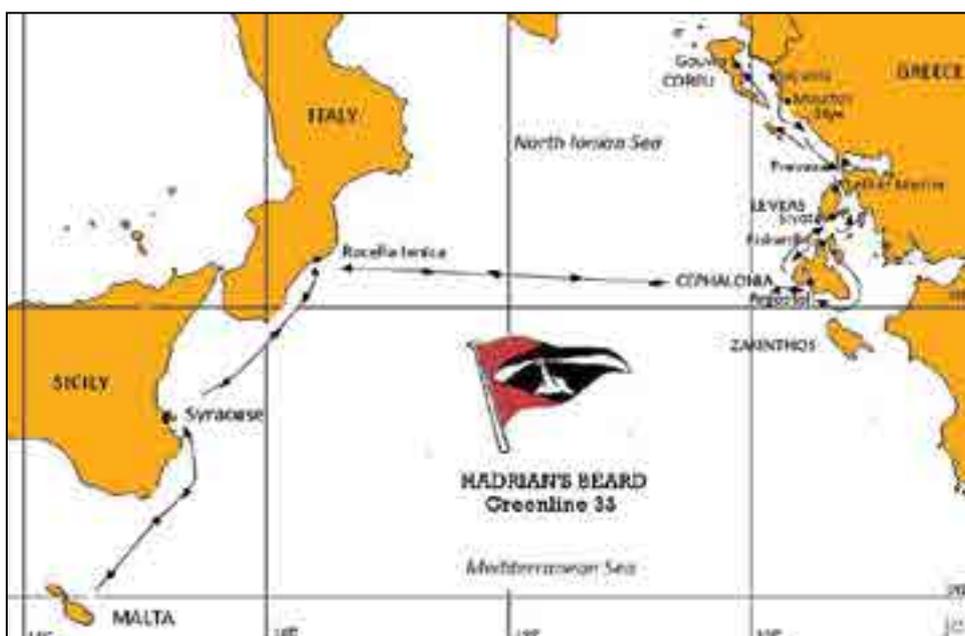
So, we set off from Valetta in Malta on 8th June, with some trepidation and praying to the gods of the sea that our few words of French and Arabic and the additional bottles of water and miscellaneous other preparations we had made would not be called upon and that the search and rescue vessels like the *LE Eithne* would pick up all distressed *clandestini* before they reached our track. Crew was Pat and Robert Barker, Michael and Mary McCann and John McSweeney. We left Valetta Harbour at 06.00 with wind F1 variable and set course for Syracuse. There were two search and rescue vessels coming into Valetta, and we were quizzed as to our destination and flag. The wind rose during the day, but had dropped again as we rounded Sicily at Marzememi. We were found a space in the marina in Syracuse which had suffered considerable damage during the winter storms.

9th June, we paid off our marina fees at 04.45 and, following some open heart surgery on the workings of the gang plank, we dropped the lines at 05.05 and glided silently into the breaking dawn light under solar power. Wind negligible and seas were flat. By 06.30 the wind had increased to F4, NW. We sighted schools of dolphin at 11.30 and 17.45. It was great to see them again in such profusion after a couple of barren years. A short rain shower hit at 15.30, otherwise we had good sunshine and calm conditions for the passage of 96 miles to Roccal di Ionica on the Italian mainland, arriving at 18.25. The marina crew came out to guide us in as there has been silting at the entrance and it was necessary to come right over towards the beach to the tall red light on the breakwater and take a line in tight to the port side of the entrance. The depth went down to less than 2m in spots. Finger pontoons eased the berthing.

Next morning, after a trip into town for fuel, we had final showers and cast off at 10.00 bound for Cephalonia. We had flat seas and light breezes all the way across. We sighted dolphin and spotter aircraft during the passage. The night watches came and went and we enjoyed the magnificent star-studded sky, undiminished by light pollution. We kept a weather eye open for shipping, including possible migrant boats. The blood-red crescent moon rose from the sea at 02.00 and quickly lightened and charged upwards. We arrived at Argostoli at 14.30 local time and tied up at the town quay. Embarrassingly, the anchor jammed as we pirhouetted in for our landing – much to the amusement of the locals. The water is free on the quay, but it requires a certain amount of joining up of hoses. Fuel is delivered by tanker to the customs

quay and there is no shore power.

Friday 12th June and harbour fever set in. We strolled along the beautiful wooded shore tracks and had a leisurely breakfast which morphed into morning coffee. The town of Argostoli was destroyed by earthquakes in 1948 and again in 1953. Some of the lovely old buildings of this ancient capital of Cephalonia survived, but most of the town had to be rebuilt. There was another quake in 2002 and a less damaging one two years ago. The 2013 earthquake damaged the quay wall and seriously damaged the famous Archaeological Museum, which we could not therefore visit. Steel girders shore up the walls and crude wooden frames secure the windows. A local man shrugged balefully and told us that there was no money to repair it: "The Germans want all our money!" he told us. So, instead we visited the



Coriolanus Folklore Museum that has a small but delightful collection outlining the social history of the islanders and displaying an amazing group of photographs before, during and after the 1953 earthquake. We bought fresh fish from the fishermen tied alongside the town quay and watched two turtles swimming around the boats, who gorged on the fish innards as the our fish were gutted. We found that prices were generally the same as home and we noticed some construction underway on holiday apartments and tavernas. People engaged in the tourist business were surviving, but complaining bitterly about their government. They all talked of keeping cash at home and having to grease the palms of the police and officialdom. Generally people were glad to see us and were very welcoming and friendly. Young people were glad to practice their English as they awaited their permits to travel to Australia and Canada.

13th June. We tried to walk around the bridge, which had miraculously survived the earthquakes, but it was closed for repairs, so we were unable to inspect the still half-built marina across from the town quay. It was unclear whether it is serviced, but current advice would be to tie up on the town quay, in spite of the lack of power. We dieselled up and travelled to Fiskardho, leaving at 10.30. We spent the day anchored in the beautiful Myrtos Bay (where Captain Corelli's Mandolin was filmed). Apart from a small spell of freshening wind in the late afternoon, we had flat conditions all day. We tied up at the end of the quay wall in Fiskardho at 18.30 just as a brisk F4 N wind blew up. We had difficulty getting the anchor to hold and had to come at the quay wall at an angle. Pat hopped ashore to take lines. After a bit of rope fever, we were satisfied with our position, albeit with something of a gap from the wall. Pat then leaped back on board, missed her footing and splashed into the water, crashing her ribs against the stern platform. She suffered cracked ribs, considerable haematoma and rather a serious case of bruised dignity. Onlookers rushed to the scene and offered advice, ropes, lifts to the hospital and other very helpful suggestions to treat the patient. The patient, however, just wanted to skulk back up the ladder and lick her wounds in private. The sappers constructed a bailey bridge to get us ashore. Luckily the wind dropped right away with the sunset.

Our waiter at dinner was a dentist from Athens who could not get any work and was waiting on table for the summer to try to feed his family. We had an uneasy feeling that we should be inviting him to sit with us and have a glass of wine and nipping into the kitchen to serve ourselves. Our wine waiter was a business graduate who was just glad to have any income.

14th June: Three well-marked walks in the vicinity gave us plenty of choice to set us up for the day. The town was buzzing and business seemed good. The locals were critical of Germany, but would not countenance a 'Grexit'. There was no sign of austerity and July and August were expected to be bumper months. We left our berth, which we discovered was marked: *For Ferry Only – 11.00 – 18.00*. We lingered to watch the spectator sport of two yachts with crossed anchor chains, the crew of which displayed an amazing fluency with non-nautical verbal exchanges. With light winds and lovely sunshine, we made our way towards Sivota. We tied up at Stavos' pontoon with water, power and showers, all in consideration of dining in his restaurant. We met Anita Begly, Frank Traynor, Michael Slevin and crew who had chartered for the week. We fell into an extensive conversational exchange of mutual acquaintances and reminiscences.

15th June saw us up early for a walk around the tree-lined cove. We headed for Levkas Marina, where there seemed to be a fair proportion of the charter yachts still tied up along the quay. The uncertainty surrounding the stability of the Greek economy and the possibility of currency collapse had resulted in cancellations of bookings for the charter companies. We took advantage of the very efficient laundry service.

16th June. After collecting the laundry and taking advantage of the showering facilities and cleaning up *Hadrian's Beard*, we departed at 11.50 to catch the noon opening of the 'ferry' – the opening bridge that cannot be called a bridge

for tax reasons! We had a pleasant trip to Mongonisi on Paxos, arriving at 17.00, total distance of 34 miles. We anchored in the small snug cove with shelter from all quarters. The wind dropped with the sun and we enjoyed the peace of the anchorage with some 6 others as we tucked into some chicken curry and a tincture of Greek wine.

17th June. We enjoyed early morning swimming, but Pat discovered that swimming is impossible with cracked ribs and had to be life-saved back to the swimming ladder! We lifted the anchor at 11.30 and motored five miles north to Laka using the silent solar engine. We tied up on the quay at 12.45 with some welcome local assistance. It was a lovely sunny day in the picturesque village of Laka, but the wind increased during the afternoon to a stiff onshore F 5-6, gusting 7. Lots of boats came in for shelter and the quay and the bay became crowded. The young, enthusiastic Adonis flotilla masters scurried around in their RIBs with anchors and fenders, tending their chickens. We dined ashore on a wind-lashed restaurant patio while Nana Mouskouri serenaded us. We enjoyed our dinner in the theatre of anchor and rope fever afloat. The wind blew all night and into the morning as we kept regular checks on the lines, but we were snug.

18th June. We had planned to travel on to an anchorage at Petriti, but the wind was still 6, gusting 7 from NE, so we stayed put and hiked up to an old Greek Orthodox Church. We climbed the tower and rang the bell over the sleepy olive trees below. White horses were visible at sea. By lunch time, the wind had increased to a full gale and it howled around the bay. The waves crashed over the sea wall and we had to leap into a large lake on the quay to get ashore. We watched the passing tourists as they negotiated the sea-washed esplanade. A young Austrian man who had given up the uneven struggle against alcoholism stood with water soaking into his hiking boots and told us of his very sad descent into vagrancy. Two British yachtsmen who were old enough to know better, dinghied ashore from their 48' Bavaria and tied up beside us and wandered off to one of the quayside tavernas for a very liquid lunch. When time came for them to return on board, they paddled through the lake on the quay and clambered into their very soggy rubber dinghy and proceeded to flood their outboard. They decided to give it a rest and crawled ashore again for some post-prandial refreshment. Later, the engine still refused to fire and so, with a F8 onshore wind blowing, they borrowed a pair of oars from a rather bemused Frenchman. After 30 minutes of rather erratic rowing, an Adonis rescue patrol picked them up and towed them towards their Bavaria. Their sartorial elegance was utterly uncluttered by ere a buoyancy aid and after some rather heart-stopping gymnastics, they managed to haul themselves up over their stern and flopped into their cockpit. We were all hugely relieved!

Some 60 minutes later, with a full gale still whistling around the bay, we noticed that their dinghy was gone. Our two brave boys, pulled up their anchor and set off in pursuit of the missing craft. They circled out and around the anchored yachts and then repeated this manoeuvre several times. Pat tried calling them on the VHF, but no response. Then a dinghy sped forth from the quay with two Neilson Adonises. They boarded the Bavaria, took control and eventually the anchor was safely laid to enormous cheers from the watching boats. Turns out that their painter had "untied itself" and the dinghy had taken a dive towards the quay. They decided to chase after it. It had eluded them and they managed to crash into two of the Neilson yachts. They beat a hasty retreat, trying to return the oars to the astonished Frenchman. They then discovered that their anchor windlass got jammed – hence their maniacal circumnavigation of the bay! The wind dropped away to F 2-3 as night fell and peace descended.

After breakfast ashore, on 19th June, we took off for Ormiskos Valtou/Akra Vatatsa at a distance of 19 miles. We were the sole occupants of this lovely quiet bay and enjoyed the overnight solitude.

20th June, we set out for Gouvia. We needed fuel and cash and had some concerns about getting both, given the increasing heat in the debate about Grexit. However, no problems with either. There was a cloud burst as we had some drinks on the marina and I had to leg it back the 5 km round trip to the boat to close the hatches.

We changed crew and Harry Whelehan, Liz Mullan, and Catherine and Bill Walsh joined us. Showers did not deter us and we sallied forth to have lunch ashore. We shopped at the marina supermarket and stocked up. We got a lift back to the boat with supplies and had chapter and verse about the economic situation and the Referendum to be held on Sunday to determine acceptance or rejection of the bail-out provisions. A crowd gathered to add to our information. Views ranged from "Our Government is corrupt and they are making an international laughing stock of us" to "Those two witches – Merkel and the IMF witch are trying to throttle us – we are men and we can beat them!"

We left Gouvia at 13.30 2nd July, Wind F 1 – 2 NE and travelled to Sajarda by solar power – total distance 16 miles. We spotted dolphin at 15.45. The entrance is very narrow and could not be attempted in any kind of wind. We tied up on the harbour wall. As with most places, there are no tailed lines, but no harbour dues. It is a sleepy little village which has seen better days. It has four restaurants, no shops and a seriously large police station and separate Harbour Master's Office, both with a fleet of large black SUVs. We guessed that this was justified by the proximity to the Albanian border. Bureaucracy was at its most bounteous as we filled forms, produced passports and answered questions. At no point did they want to see the huge Greek entry document that had been issued with such pomp and circumstance in Argostoli when we entered Greece. We had to leave all our documents with the Customs for an hour for some unexplained purpose.

Bill and Robert engaged in a highly technical debate speculating on the actual depth crossing the harbour entrance. They constructed a very complex Heath Robinson lead line and wandered off to the harbour entrance to plumb the depth. The Last of the Summer Wine could learn a few things.

We chose the furthest of the four restaurants to spend our money. The family owners were delighted at our arrival, assuring us of the freshness of their fish. They pointed out Grandad's fishing boat and let loose a couple of live prawns to scuttle across the table to our whoops of shock and delight! During the course of dinner (which was delicious), we chatted to the family about their take on the forthcoming referendum. They understood that we (the Irish) had rejected the bullying of the Troika and had sent them packing and had managed very well without their money. They noted with

glee that we had not been ejected from the euro and everything was now great with the Irish economy. Why should not they do the same and tell Merkel to take a run for herself? Clearly, Enda Kenny's plea to the Greek people to take a lesson from the Irish experience had lost something in translation.

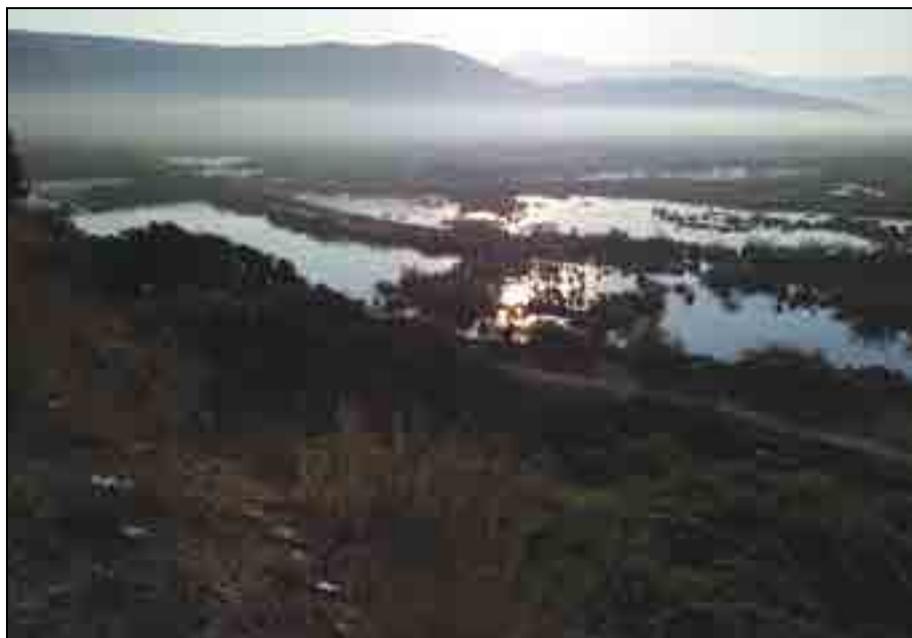
3rd July. We started the day with a walk towards the Albanian border and departed at 11.15 bound for Plataria. Here we dressed up and celebrated Rose and Robert Michael's daughter Kathy's wedding. We were virtual guests and probably were more disgracefully behaved than any of the real guests.

Before departure on 4th July, we chatted to locals as we shopped and heard their take on the economic crisis. Business people cited the Financial Times, which told of a 30% haircut on all bank accounts. Banks are now closed and the ATMs will only give Euro 60 per person. However, they only have Euro 50 notes, so that means 50 per day. Policemen can retire on full pension at age 50 and taxpayers won't pay tax because the politicians cannot be trusted. The general sense is that the vote will be 'Yes' to accept the bail-out. We left Platiras at 13.30 and headed for Mourtos. We stayed overnight at the beautiful little anchorage at End Bay behind Nisis Mauros Notos, tucking right up to the sand bar and enjoying the exceptional clear azure blue water.

Referendum Day! Great excitement among the Greeks. We set out at 11.40 for Fanari. The weather was benign throughout. We gingerly motored up the narrow entrance into the river Styx. We negotiated the use of a local's berth on the riverside dock and spent the evening watching the voting results. Much to everyone's amazement, the vote turned into a 61% 'No' result. One local fisherman, William, who had agreed to take us up the River Styx on the morrow commented about the referendum result. "What is it to me? Every day Tsipras gets out of bed and travels to Brussels and talks nonsense and comes home with nothing. Every day I get out of bed and take my boat out fishing and come home with food for my family."

6 July. We arose early and hiked up the hill to enjoy the spectacular views down over the delta with its meandering oxbow streams laced with fields of corn and the irrigation sprays merging with heavy blankets of early morning mist. As the sun rose and burnt off the mist, the light caught the spraying water to throw up filigree rainbows across the delta. After breakfast, we took a trip with William up the Styx River and reflected on the origins of this ancient site. The Styx, according to the Ancient Greeks, was the river that formed the boundary between earth and Hades (the Underworld). It is made up of four rivers which converge at the centre of the underworld on a great marsh. The river that we traversed was the Acheron. Apparently, Achilles was dipped into this river by his mother to give him the renowned invulnerability the Acheron endows, but she held him by his heel and so the protection did not extend to the heel. The river is a delightful nature trail with plenty of river turtles, stunning green and blue dragon flies, nightingale nests and the occasional flash of kingfisher.

On 7th July we noted the practical implications of the vote. The cash economy continued, shops opened, coffee was consumed, fishing boats went in and out and the Greek people were happy to see us. We departed after breakfast for Preveza. We tied up at the marina at 14.30 and the harbour master organised a taxi for us to visit Nikopolis. This proved to be a very worthwhile trip to the stunning and informative new museum and then to the old walled city and Basilica – entrances to both cost €2 each. The archaeological work had ground to a halt, but it is a truly amazing site of the city built by Octavian to celebrate the victory over Anthony and Cleopatra at Aktium. We were saddened by the paucity of visitors to this lovely town and its historic environs. Liz cooked for us and we had an evening of good food, Greek wine and mellow song.



Sunrise over the Underworld.

Liz and Harry left us on 8th July and flew home from Preveza Airport. We waited for the "ferry" and shimmied through and tied up at Levkas Marina. We took on water and supplies did a major clean up and visited the laundry. Nice dinner at the marina.

Early morning saw queues of people waiting for the promised reopening of the banks. A couple of young policemen flicked through their mobile devices and looked unconcerned as the queues grew. The banks eventually opened and life proceeded. We left Levkas at 14.00 with wind F2 var. We went into Tranquil Bay at Nidri. We dropped anchor, passing Leonard Curtin's *Chain*, which looked nice and snug at anchor. We relaxed, swam, read and had dinner on board. We were visited by a rather charming English gentleman from Liverpool in his battery powered rubber dinghy. He pointed out his boat which he mentioned, rather significantly, was flying a Royal (*White?* – Ed) Ensign. We were singularly unimpressed by this.

A little application of spit and polish to the hull and fenders before departure on 10th July for Megalisi. Tied up at Porto Spilia Taverna pontoon at 15.15. We dined at one of their beach-side tables, which was very romantic in a sort of Shirley Valentine way, but had disadvantages in that our chairs slowly sank into the soft sand and had to be regularly re-positioned.

Pat and I rose early 11th July for the climb up the hill to the village of Spartacloori. It was well worth the effort to visit the beautiful little village nestled half way up the mountain. We persuaded the swimming Walshes to join us for breakfast – good call. We solar powered around to Porto Atheni and anchored at the head of the bay in 5m sand. The wind was forecast to increase to F7 in the afternoon. We were well sheltered and the wind dropped towards evening and the only noise to disturb our peace was the tinkling of sheep bells. We spent a night of 12th July in Sivota. There were lots of briefing meetings going on with the new flotilla crews all dressed up in their brand new little shorts and holiday shirts, clutching Prada handbags and eagerly absorbing the information while we sauntered past in our sun and salt bleached worn swimming togs and t-shirts.

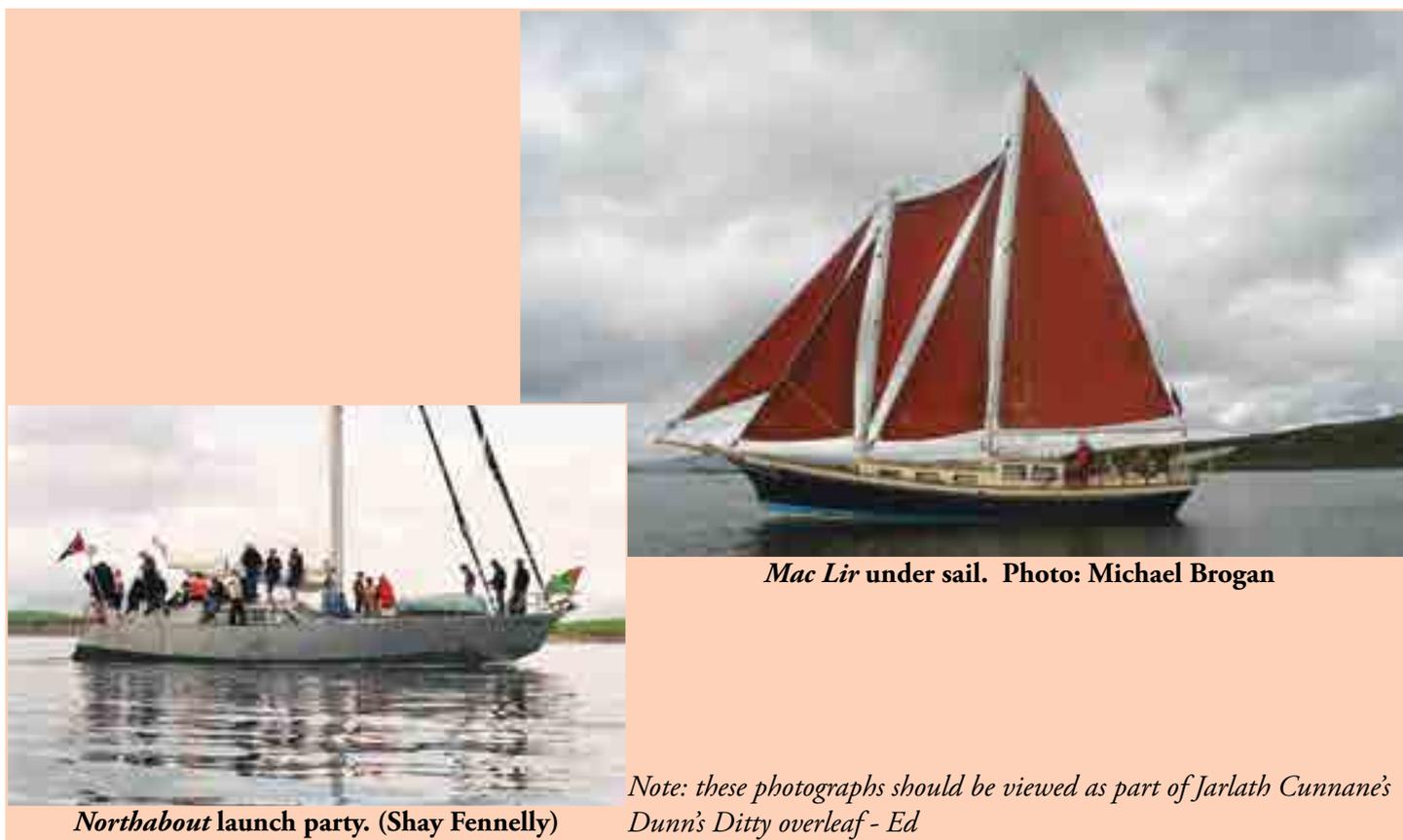
Next morning 13th July presented the challenge of getting away before the new enthusiastic flotilla skippers tried out their new steeds around the narrow bay. Arrived in Fiskardho at 1430 and again had to navigate a quay berth and tie up to the rope tied along the quay wall, positioning the dinghy between stern and wall to enable a (fairly) dignified boarding and getting ashore. We had a day in Fiskardho and chatted with locals about the parliamentary vote to accept or reject the even more severe bail-out plan. There was a lot of anger and frustration, but with such big flotillas in town, nobody was complaining about the exchange of cash that was going on.

15th July provided us with some interesting moments as the flotilla skippers (aided by their Adonis nannies) hauled anchors and uncrossed chains with some modicum of dignity. We travelled the 35 miles to Argostoli and tied up at the town quay. We ordered fuel for the morning.

16th July. The fuel man came an hour late and there was no water at the quay. We had a certain amount of fixing things with the police to release the paperwork to allow us (as a foreign vessel) to have fuel. The fuel man invited us to motor down to his fuel station on the quay to have use of his water hose. We were delighted to take him up on his offer as we did not fancy the passage to Italy with low stocks of water. We cast off at 10.00 for Rocella Ionica and had an uneventful passage.

18th July saw us leaving Rocella at 05.00 and we arrived at Syracuse at 18.15 having rung to book a marina place. 96 miles travelled. We spent a relaxed day in Syracuse visiting the Leonardo de Vinci exhibition of his scientific inventions and then an exhibition of Archimedes' inventions – all very interesting and sited in lovely cool rooms which were welcome relief from the 35 degree heat outside.

20th July saw us leaving Syracuse and heading for Malta. A good passage with no incident, although lots of traffic in the Malta Channel. Arrived Malta 16.15 after a daily distance of 83 miles. Our total trip log was 1,213 miles which represented an interesting journey with the Greek people through a difficult economic time for them and, thankfully, with no encounters with people in difficulty on the sea.



Mac Lir under sail. Photo: Michael Brogan

Northabout launch party. (Shay Fennelly)

Note: these photographs should be viewed as part of Jarlath Cunnane's Dunn's Ditty overleaf - Ed

Jarlath Cunnane built his new Atkin Schooner, *Mac Lir*



Over the years in the ICC annual I have described my involvement with a number of vessels:

Lir, Van De Stadt 34, 1990 (Now owned by John Coyne ICC).

Clew Bay 40 ft Junk rigged schooner design 1995.

Tom Crean, A boat for Antarctica 1996 (abandoned in the Antarctic).

Northabout, 2000 (A boat for polar exploration).

And now the latest: *Mac Lir*, A handy schooner.

Some sailors are content to sail the same vessel all their lives; others, like me are always looking for new vessels as their ideas of the perfect boat change over time. When built, *Northabout* was judged to be the perfect vessel for arctic expeditions, as indeed it proved to be. Having circumnavigated the North Pole via the Northwest Passage and Northeast Passage, plus some other great cruises, other areas of interest prevailed over the beauty and isolation of the arctic icy regions.

During our voyaging in *Northabout*, fellow crewman Michael Brogan (ICC) and I talked about jointly building a new vessel of a handier size for coastal sailing. Having considered various yachts, we decided on a traditional 37-foot staysail schooner designed by Atkin and Co. We felt that, at this stage of our lives, a more relaxed coastal cruising lifestyle would more appropriate. And so, in our men's shed, over the course of 4 years we spent the winter months contentedly building the new vessel in our spare time, while continuing sailing in the summer in our respective vessels as time and weather permitted.

The new vessel was launched in mid-May this year, with some difficulty, as the crane driver deemed it unsafe to travel on the narrow access road. A 30-ton excavator was pressed into service; the schooner was launched and named *Mac Lir*. The handy sized sails are perfectly balanced and she has proved a joy to sail. The schooner rig gives the option of many sail combinations, a minor downside being the additional sheets to be handled. One sail-maker had the temerity to remark - she has one mast too many! We don't think so, for she is a beauty, with her clipper bow and classic sheer line. She is so well balanced that one can leave the wheel and go below to make tea without her straying from course.



***Mac Lir* under construction.**

As the Polynesian islanders say- 'man with big canoe has big problems', and so with some reluctance I decided to sell *Northabout*, which had taken us to 'the uttermost ends of the earth' during its 14 years of ocean voyaging. *Northabout* needed some maintenance work and was sailed to Kilrush Marina, where she was lifted ashore on the travel-lift. The marina now under new management, is a model of efficiency and friendliness. During the winter, thanks to an introduction from fellow ICC member Ken Kavanagh, *Northabout* was sold to a UK based adventure company, who planned an arctic circumnavigation. Before sailing to the UK, the new owners (or their insurers) deemed *Northabout* should be re-rigged, new headsail furlers fitted and safety equipment upgraded.

I was asked to join the delivery crew to 'show them the ropes' on the trip to her new home port of Bristol. The delivery crew included Graham Hoyland, James Hale and John Panter; all ex marines, and mighty tough men they were. The weather, if you remember this spring was very windy, 15 metre seas were common off the west coast; so after several postponements we eventually sailed on May 20th at first light, bashing out of the Shannon estuary and through the Basket Sound. With the Basket islands astern the seas eased somewhat, giving us more favourable sailing conditions. After an overnight stop at Kinsale, we continued towards the Bristol Channel, arriving at low tide the following evening.

This was my first time sailing the Bristol Channel, but fortunately Graham was familiar with the Bristol Channel and river Avon. Graham piloted us expertly up the muddy river with the rising tide. As darkness approached we motored under the Brunel-inspired suspension bridge over Avon Gorge at Clifton, passed through the lock into Bristol harbour and moored to the quay wall. Bristol is well worth a visit, with much to see, and offers a sheltered marina in the middle of the city.

Next evening, David Hempleman Adams, the new owner arrived and saw his acquisition for the first time. He must have been suitably impressed, for he took the entire crew to dinner ashore. Though David has many polar, mountaineering and flying records to his credit, this is his first venture into sailing and with his experience we can expect some sailing records.

As I write, *Northabout* is again doing what she was designed to do: cruising around Svalbard. *Mac Lir* is cruising the western seaboard awaiting a decent spell of weather to show her potential.

Adventures on *Drumbeat*

Paul Cooper



A Trip from Honduras to Virgin Gorda

Rob, our son, who was living in Nicuragua, had sourced a yacht *Drumbeat* in Rio Dulce, Guatemala, for his friend Ross as a live-aboard. I was asked to skipper the yacht on its delivery from there to its final destination, Virgin Gorda. Valerie, my wife was to come as chef. So in January this year we flew to Honduras to meet the boat and with Rob and Ross deliver it to the BVIs. Rob and Ross had taken it from Rio Dulce to Utila.

We arrived intact in Roatán island off Honduras, 24 hours after leaving Dublin. Roatán, one of the Bay islands, is quite beautiful and not too developed. Rob had been there for the last two weeks trying to source an engine for *Drumbeat*. The original one had seized and had to be replaced before we could set off. Rob had seen an engine in Oak Ridge Bay which he thought might be suitable but wanted a more experienced opinion before making an offer on it.

The engine, a 56 HP Yanmar, had been in a shed for the past 5 years. It is a re-manufactured one, still in its box and seemed ideal for our purposes. The asking price however was well outside our budget but we had made an offer and were hopeful we could come to an agreement. Trevor, the local mechanic, had a dock there where the engine could be fitted and all going well *Drumbeat* would be there within a week and the engine would be installed.



Roatán

On Sunday we took the ferry to Utila to meet Ross and see *Drumbeat* for the first time. Utila is known as the “Ibiza of the Caribbean” and it certainly lives up to its name, though it is considerably more run down. It is also infamous for its sand flies and by the end of our stay, Valerie and I looked like the greater spotted Gringos. We had to cover up, as the sight of our arms and legs were making people nauseous.

Drumbeat is an impressive sight. Built in the late eighties, she is a one off, 46ft fibreglass ketch. Loosely based on Slocum’s round-the-world yacht, she is a 46ft Bruce Roberts Spray. It is obvious from her design that the builder was an engineer first and a sailor second. Everything is over specified from the 18mm thick chain plates to the 18mm wire rigging. She weighs in at a hefty 22 tonnes. I have never seen such a strongly rigged boat.

Before we left Utila, we did a deal on the engine. We paid more than we would have liked but in actual fact got quite a good deal as we got the wiring loom and control panel included. So it was back to Oakridge Bay in Roatán to have the old motor taken out and the new one installed. The trip is 40 miles and mostly upwind. We decided to leave in the evening and sail through the night, so that we arrived in Oak Ridge in daylight. What could be easier? A lot of things it seems. Roatan lies directly east of Utila and the wind was easterly so that it was a beat. To cut a long story short by 5 pm next day we had made 12 miles towards our destination. By ten the following morning we were still 20 miles short of our destination, with no breeze, little food and the prospect of at least a third night at sea. So we called Trevor and he arranged a tow for the last 20 miles. We arrived in Oak Ridge in the dark at about seven that evening. In all we were at sea for 50 hours and covered 124 miles to achieve a 40 mile trip and we were towed for 20 of those. The tow was the right decision. With the wind direction and strength over the next few days, I reckon we would have spent another three days getting there. So the engine is essential as the boat just does not go to weather in any kind of moderate air. I reckon the proposed trip would be impossible without one.



The first impression of Oak Ridge is third world, with unpaved streets and some shoddily built wooden houses. Most of the houses are built on stilts on the water's edge. They call it the little Venice of Roatan. It is very under developed and has a true "Pirates of the Caribbean" feel about it. Even the townland names like "Bandit Town" and "Cooper Town" add to this feel. Yes "Cooper Town". Cooper is a very popular name around these islands so maybe I have some distant relations here (rich ones I hope). However, just like Nicaragua, appearances can be deceiving. Certainly, by European standards the standard of living is poor; however, while there is a level of poverty, nobody is starving and there is no begging, not in the small towns and rural areas at least. I have no doubt it is quite different in the cities, just like everywhere else in the world. That said, the treatment that we received while we were there was to say the least outstanding. Trevor and his family received us like long lost relations.



Drumbeat in boatyard

The dock is a homemade concrete affair with a yard with a container in it to store the tools. There are all kinds of weird and wonderful craft moored around in various states of disrepair. The whole community was there to tie us up. I expect we were the first yacht to use the place and were a real novelty. Added to that is *Drumbeat's* quite unique appearance. Trevor's dad Donny, a chief mechanic on an oil rig supply vessel, was in charge of the job.

On Friday morning, once the deal for the new engine was finalised, they began the process of removing the old engine, a Ford Lehman. It is a big weighty thing and they decided to strip as much as possible off it before trying to remove it from the boat. The head, gearbox, flywheel and other bits were removed to lighten the load for Saturday's lifting attempt. On Saturday we got the engine out with remarkably little trouble, using ropes, boards, blocks and tackle. It was jungle mechanics at its best.

Sunday is a day of rest here. They are quite religious with at least four different churches in Oak Ridge alone. Audrey, Trevor's sister, is heavily involved and invited us to the service so Valerie and I went. We were collected by the church boat and brought to an island where the church was located. No escape, so! It was a two and a half hour affair with lots of lively music and plenty of hell fire and brimstone being preached. It reminded me of the sermons given by the visiting priest during retreats we were forced to attend at school. Interesting as it was, I couldn't see myself becoming a regular attendee.

On Monday, Donny, Trevor and I went down to French harbour to get a plate machined so that the coupling on the new engine could be connected to the shaft. On Monday afternoon after we got back from the machine shop we got the new engine into the engine bay. This didn't take too long as it was just the reverse procedure of taking out the old one and the new engine is only half its weight and size. This was a milestone event and everyone was feeling pretty happy about it. Because the new engine was so much smaller, we had to make new engine mounting brackets, which took some time. However progress was good and by Thursday evening the engine was finally lined up and secure.

I have to say that Donny was extremely thorough and patient and the consummate professional during this process. He didn't cut any corners. He compared seeing a shaft not spinning true as like having an itch that you couldn't scratch. It would just irritate you more and more.

By midday on Saturday we were ready for the big event and presto she started first turn of the key. Alleluia! Accelerator worked fine, forward and reverse worked fine, but hold on a minute, it seemed that the gears were reversed. A quick jump over the side confirmed that we had a left handed propeller and a right handed engine.

After much deliberation it was decided to remove the rudder and take the prop off that way. Trevor called his cousin "the diver", who came over and had a look at it. Elon is the most unlikely diver you have ever met. Big, with wild hair and beard, and an accent very difficult to understand. He talked incessantly. However he seemed to know what he was doing and agreed to come over on Sunday morning to take off the rudder and prop and fit a new one.

In the meantime we tried to restart the engine but to no avail. The batteries seemed to be flat, which confused us as we were on shore power and we thought the batteries were fully charged. No matter, we would charge them and try later. Try we did but with no success. Did we now have an electrical problem to add to our list? In the evening, Trevor's cousin, who has a boatyard on the mainland, stopped in to see what was going on. He had a good look around and asked us to try to start it. No joy, so he looked at the engine, rocked the flywheel back and forth and declared we had water in the engine! He took off the exhaust bracket, water poured out and confirmed his suspicions.

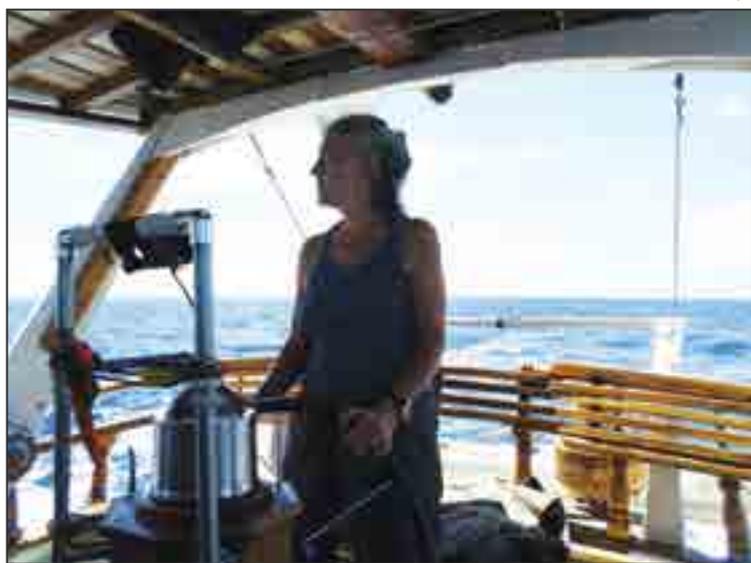
To say we were devastated is an understatement. At least the batteries were ok but that was little recompense for the news we had just received. On a more positive note, we were fairly happy that the engine had not suffered any permanent damage and that we would be able to drain it, which we resolved to do so on Sunday. The problem apparently was the fact that the new engine was much lower than the original with the result that it was below the water line and the water kept

flowing in even when the engine was stopped. The solution, for those of you of a technical bent, was to put in an anti-siphon device between the heat exchanger outlet and the exhaust inlet.

So it was an early start on Sunday. Rob and I were ready for the off at seven, the appointed time; however it was nine before anything got going. We pulled the boat out into slightly deeper water and Elon, or “SpongeBob” as he is locally known, and Rob took off the rudder and prop, while Donny and I fitted the anti-siphon, drained any water from the sump, took out the injectors and cleared out all the water. An hour later we are ready to start up the engine. Success! it started first time and ran like a dream. All we needed now was the new propeller and we were off.

As with all things on this boat, the prop is a little unusual. It has a very low pitch, which is needed to give enough drive to push this leviathan along. Trevor picked us up on Monday morning and off we set, full of confidence to find a propeller. We spent the next four days visiting every nook and cranny in Roatán looking for one without any success. It was now lunchtime on Friday and we were left with no option but to order one from the States. So off Rob and I trekked to the wifi access to look for one on line. After much frustratingly unsuccessful searching we eventually found an exact match in Ron’s Marine Salvage in Florida. A phone call later the prop was bought and would be despatched on Monday to arrive in Roatán on Thursday. So we had another week’s wait but at least the end was in sight, or so we thought.

Only we had not allowed for the weather. Friday was very wet and windy and the flight was delayed until Saturday; the freight office closed at lunch time so we wouldn’t be able to collect the prop till Monday. By nine on Monday, we had the prop and were on our way to the lathe shop to have it bored out to suit our shaft. Meanwhile we had dropped Valerie at the supermarket to get the last few things we needed for the trip. The only other things we needed were diesel, water and charts, which were proving very hard to find. The water and diesel were to be delivered later that evening, which only left the charts. Trevor said his cousin had a set which they would get copied, so all would be good.



Val at the wheel.

Elon arrived about nine and we set about fitting the prop and rudder. All went well but the prop was hitting the rudder. However with a few adjustments and a little nick out of the rudder all was well and she seemed to have plenty of power in forward and reverse. Ross arrived back with the diesel which we took aboard and off we set for a short sea trial, which also went well. Then back to the dock to take on the water and we were ready to go. The water truck was delayed and we were going to have to wait till the morning to get it, which was ok as we hadn’t planned leaving until then anyhow.

There was still one problem: we had no paper charts. Trevor was unable to copy them as they were too big for the machine. We had a small Garmin aboard with the charts on it but it only had a very small screen. I had downloaded a set of Navionics charts for the Caribbean, but it hadn’t downloaded properly so that not all the detail was visible, so I determined to go back to the wifi spot on Wednesday morning to try and download them properly before we left.

At this stage I very reluctantly accepted that we would not have the paper ones but the Navionics package was very good and we weren’t planning many stops en route, because of all the delays we had. Already our plans of being home by the end of February were not looking realistic. The water duly arrived on Wednesday morning and I set out to update the Navionics package, except when I got there the power was down and was unlikely to be back before nightfall. We, or should I say I, decided we would go as is and so at eleven we slipped our warps and bade farewell to Fiddlers Bight and all the new friends we had met there. It was with a genuine sense of sadness that we left.

The plan was quite simple: we would sail as directly as possible to Virgin Gorda, which on the rhumb line was about 1300 miles due east. Winds were very light so we motored in idyllic conditions due east until nightfall. On the way we saw dolphins and whales and even managed to catch a dorado, which unfortunately we were unable to land. As night fell a northerly wind filled in and we hoisted sail and throttled back on the motor. A few minutes later the engine over heating warning light came on so we turned it off and waited to let it cool down. There was no need to panic, the winds were good from the right direction so we could carry on and inspect the engine in the morning. We tried to start the engine next morning but it wouldn’t turn over. The batteries must be flat, but no they seemed ok. Then the dreaded penny dropped, it was hydraulic lock. Water had got into the cylinders, despite our new anti syphon device. A quick check on the exhaust manifold confirmed our fears. There was nothing for it but to remove the injectors and clear out the cylinders which Rob and I did over the next few hours. Luckily the water had not gotten into the oil so we were all set to go. But why had the water stopped flowing through the engine in the first place. It had to be something to do with the anti syphon. Maybe it was too high and the water pump couldn’t pump the water through at low revs. We adjusted its height and off she started again.

Now *Drumbeat* is not designed for upwind sailing and while we were making 90 degrees on the compass, in truth we were also making about 15 degrees of leeway, which meant we were sailing quite a bit south of our rhumb line course,

which in normal circumstances would be just an inconvenience but in our case it was to prove nearly disastrous. We had the small Garmin mounted over the compass which gave us all info we needed and every few hours I would plot our position on the Navionics chart so as to monitor our progress. Just after it got dark the wind came up and the boat started to heel a little. As it did so the engine noise changed and we realised the water had again stopped flowing through it. So we turned it off and settled in for the night.

It was pleasant sailing, with a warm breeze and the moon to lighten the darkness. At night we had two watches doing three hours on and three hours off. Valerie and I were on from one till four, when Ross and Rob took over. By now we were two days out and had put 200 miles between ourselves and Roatán.

We were sailing along nicely at about 5 knots when at three fifteen there was a crunching sound and the boat came to a shuddering halt. Rob and Ross were up on deck in seconds. What had happened, had we hit a whale or a container? No, unbelievably, two hundred miles offshore, we had grounded on a reef. Not having the charts was beginning to prove costly.

However there was no panic. We took down the sails and started the engine, which we quickly remembered was not pumping water. Rob went below and disconnected and bypassed the anti syphon in record time and thankfully the water started to flow. Problem one solved. Now all we had to do was get off the reef which, with Rob and I on the bow giving directions, Ross on the helm and Valerie in the middle relaying our instructions, we managed to do quite quickly. Once off the reef I did a quick inspection below to see if we were taking on water which thankfully we weren't. We consulted the Navionics chart which showed nothing, but this was not surprising, because it hadn't downloaded the detail for that area. When we consulted the Garmin and had it at maximum gain the reef became evident. We motored clear of it and continued north and back to our rhumb line course.

It was not until we were off the reef that the enormity of what had just happened hit us. We were extremely lucky to have gotten off, if also unlucky to have hit it. But I like to think it was more than just luck. We didn't panic and did all the right things in order to free ourselves. In part I have to thank the Irish Coast Guard for that, as most of our training involves working calmly in stressful situations. As to the others, I put it down to their natural cool headedness. We motored north until daybreak. The mood on board was pretty sombre and uncertain so we had a debrief and resolved to put the grounding behind us and learn the lessons from it. We still had at least another five days at sea and we had to make the most of them. Having said that, the next night at sea was an anxious one with everyone consulting the Garmin on its highest resolution at very frequent intervals and sleeping with one eye open. However we survived the night and all the nights thereafter.

During the morning, the wind began to increase and we were able to sail, so we turned off the motor. Just as we did we remembered that we had bypassed the anti syphon device but it was too late water had gotten into the cylinders. There was nothing for it but to remove the injectors and clear out the cylinders, yet again. By this time it was blowing a gale and the boat was being tossed about a bit. Not everyone was feeling the best so they stayed on deck while I took the plunge and began to work on the engine. Two hours later I had the cylinders cleaned out and the oil changed and we tried the engine. Unfortunately the engine was locked in reverse to stop the prop shaft from turning and the load was too much for the starter motor which overheated. Once we took it out of gear she started but not very convincingly and I knew we were going to have trouble ahead with the starter. We still had the water problem. For some unknown reason there was some kind of back pressure which had the effect of pushing the water back down the water filter and inlet pipe. As a result the water pump was starved of water and did not work. Without getting too technical I came up with a Heath Robinson type of solution which meant lowering the water filter and venting it to relieve the pressure which seemed to work. Rob was feeling better at this stage so he came below and helped put everything back together.

We were now three and a half days at sea and were pretty shattered. Over the next three days the wind blew constantly at 6 or 7 with at least twenty four hours of a full gale. The boat took it in her stride. She was very stable and dry and even with two reefs in the main and the jib furled to about a third, she only took one wave into the cockpit the entire time. On Wednesday the 18th at about four in the morning we spotted Jamaica about 40 miles off. At this stage, we had started to motor sail in order to maintain a good course. We decided to anchor in Bloody Bay, which according to the guide book was a hidden treasure with white sand beaches and a few shore side hotels, some of whom welcomed yachties. The only comment I have is that the guide book must have been written some time ago. Yes there is the lovely beach but there are also two big resorts, one at each end of the beach. They are monsters and do all inclusive packages. In between the two resorts, on the beach, there are a series of stalls selling souvenirs and trinkets. There is also Don's Lobster restaurant where from \$20 up you can choose your lobster and have it barbequed and served to you there and then. We stopped there for a beer and typically Irish got chatting to the staff who agreed to give us a 5 dollar chicken dish, which was fine. After some more negotiations we agreed to come back for dinner at \$10 per head for a typical Jamaican beef dish, which was delicious.



Don's Lobster Restaurant

There was a weather system forming that was due to give strong northerlies, which meant that we were going to have to stay for a few days. This was fine as the anchorage was safe, the water clear and warm and there was great amusement on board every morning watching the ladies do their organised aerobics on the beach. Over the course of our few days in Bloody Beach, we became friendly with Don and his staff and they visited us on board a few times. On Saturday night we had a lobster dinner for Valerie's birthday, at special rates of course, and they presented her with a wood carving as a present. There was great people watching to be done also as the guests from the resorts, bolstered by their free drink, came down to have their lobster dinners. They all wanted the biggest one, at a cool 100 dollars but none were willing to pay the price. Don and his team were totally unphased by any of their arguments or protestations, partly I suspect because of the effect of the "medicinal" cigarettes they were fond of smoking.

The first thing we did after dropping anchor was to get into the water to inspect the hull for damage after our reef experience. To our great relief all the damage was superficial. Nowhere on the hull had the gel coat been penetrated and the only real damage was where the rudder had been nicked on the trailing edge by the coral. If it had been any other boat, especially one with a keel, then I think the outcome would have been very different and Ross would have been able to claim his free Epirb from the company from where he got it as they promise to replace them for free if they are used in a real emergency!

The bad weather was due to end on Sunday and by Saturday afternoon the winds had eased and the sun was back. We had decided to go north along Jamaica, then cut up the strait between Cuba and Haiti, stay north of there and make our next landfall in Cabriette in the Dominican Republic. First we were going to stop in Montego, Jamaica's second city to refuel and restock and get some engine spares. When we went to start the engine on Saturday it would not turn over. At first we thought it was low batteries but we quickly determined that it was the starter motor. We took it off and sure enough it looked pretty burnt. We stripped it, cleaned it and put it back and it started the engine, but only just. We determined therefore to get a new one or get our one fixed in Montego. Montego was 30 miles away so we left Bloody Bay at one in the morning in order to get there by daylight. There was no wind but there was a big confused sea after the storm. We had a thoroughly miserable seven hour motor but got there in one piece. Literally as we were dropping the anchor the engine stalled and stopped and we couldn't restart it. The starter motor had had it. Montego is a nice anchorage with a yacht club and all the facilities, though it is a little expensive for our pocket. We either had to have the motor fixed or alternatively source a new one either here or in Florida. Once that was sorted, we would be off again.

On reviewing what I have written thus far it seems all a bit gloom and doomish and while I think it is a fair description of our adventures so far, it probably doesn't reflect the full picture. Yes we had awful weather and engine problems not to mention the reef, but we also had some lovely sailing, especially during the day. That's because it's warm so that even though it's blowing stink and there are 20 ft seas, you are still in your shorts and tee shirt and even if you do take a wave it is usually cool and refreshing. The same cannot be said of the night, though. It gets dark here about six in the evening and stays dark for a full 12 hours, so that unless there is a moon shining, you cannot see the bow of the boat. This makes sailing in heavy weather very tiring at night, especially as we didn't have self steering. Then there was the food. Valerie conjured up some fantastic meals out of few ingredients and in all weathers. This was a real source of comfort and did much to maintain the morale on the boat, though Valerie would be too modest to accept this.

We got the starter motor repaired but as we suspected it did not work. So it was back to the internet to see if we could get one. We got onto a dealer in Kingston who said a new one would be 350\$. However a little more digging got one for 98\$ with free shipping anywhere in the States. A local club member Everitt, who had earlier helped us move our anchorage as we were in the way of the cruise liners, had a friend coming down on Wednesday and if we had it shipped to his home address he would put it in his hand luggage. So we hunkered down for the wait. There was some great winds so Ross and Rob were able to kite surf and drew great audiences among the locals and yachties alike, especially when Ross decided to jump over one of them! On Saturday and Sunday Rob and I got a berth on one of the local J22s and had two days' great racing. We also became friendly with a few of the cruising yachts. On Wednesday, after discussion and agreement with us, Ross decided for personal and work reasons that he could not continue the passage and that he had to go to Virgin Gorda next day. So he left on Thursday lunchtime and the starter arrived that evening. We fitted it and the engine started. We were back in business.

Friday was going to be a busy day. We had to scrub the water line, refuel, fill with water, provision and clear customs and immigration. Up early Rob and I set about cleaning the bottom. Weed grows incredibly fast here and she had a nice green beard. We started at the bow, Rob to starboard and me to port. After an hour or two we had reached the stern but, when cleaning the skeg and rudder, discovered that the prop was loose. It had worked its way up the shaft so that there was a gap between the nuts on the end of the shaft and the prop. So we took off the nuts and put in some washers to take up the slack and put the nuts back on. This was a very interesting exercise as we only had snorkels and so were limited in the time we could spend under water. By lunchtime it was all done and dusted but we were now behind schedule. Also the wind had got up and I was not happy to bring the boat alongside as we had to moor stern to and *Drumbeat* is not the most manoeuvrable, especially when going astern. We did the provisioning and got some 25l cans for diesel and decided to leave next day. Saturday dawned bright and calm and we were alongside by eight o'clock for fuel and water. Back on anchor we stowed the full fuel cans and prepared for sea. By two we had cleared customs and were on our way. The forecast was for light airs between Jamaica and Hispanola (Haiti and Dominican Republic) and lighter airs to the north rather than the south. However on talking to other sailors they advised against the northern route as it was usually much windier and we were given advice as to the best anchorages, etc. That is one of the things I have discovered about cruising, people love to talk and offer advice and indeed help to fellow cruisers. You also keep meeting the same people in different places which

makes for a great camaraderie. Each anchorage usually has a unique channel that everyone listens on to share info and to call if there is a problem.

So with a fair forecast and the sun shining, off we set for Ile de Vache in southern Haiti. The first thing we noticed was that there was quite a swell running, but this was probably to be expected, as the winds had been very strong for the past week. Our course was due east but, as *Drumbeat* doesn't point, we motor sailed in a north easterly direction for six hours, Rob and I doing three hours on and three off, while Valerie didn't stand a watch but kept us fed and watered. By ten next morning we were back on the Jamaican coast about 50 miles on, with 25ft seas and a gale blowing. We decided to take shelter and found a small island "Cabrita" to shelter behind. We dropped anchor and determined to stay till dusk when the winds usually eased. A local fishing boat happened by and advised staying till morning, which in the end we did, even though it was pretty rolly. On their way back in the fishermen called by and we exchanged a half bottle of Vodka for a nice white tuna to which Valerie did justice for dinner. At six next morning we upped anchor and set off but not before the engine gave us a scare by not starting. A quick run of the generator solved the problem.

There was not too much wind but there was still a big sea running. Again we were motor sailing in a north easterly direction. Gradually over the day the winds and seas increased so that by nightfall we were in a full gale with a reefed main and no head sail. It continued to blow all next day until dusk when, after we had closed the Haitian coast, the wind backed by 60 degrees and eased off, so that when we tacked, we were able to make our course. This was great and our mood lifted considerably. Unfortunately it was short lived and two hours later we were back in the teeth of an easterly gale. However we were closer to the coast and the seas had eased so we dropped the sails and headed straight for our destination. At about two in the morning just before I came on watch, I was woken by the engine having a little hiccup. Fifteen minutes into my watch it stopped dead. We restarted it but it did not last. To add to our woes, just before the engine stopped, a wave caught the dinghy which was hanging on davits on the stern and ripped it off on one side. We decided that we were low in fuel so we siphoned four of the drums into the tank and tried it again but to no avail. It was now obvious that the fuel filter was clogged and of course we didn't have a spare one. There was nothing for it but to take the filter off and try to clean it, which we duly did. We got the dinghy back in position and strengthened its ties and we were in business again. The upside was that we were not low on fuel as suspected and it looked like we would make Ile de Vache by lunchtime. By dawn we only had 36 miles to go and were looking good for an afternoon arrival. We just had to continue down the coast around the headland and there we were, what could be simpler? A lot, it seems.

As we got near the headland around one, I went below to get a few hours sleep. No sooner had I laid my head on the pillow than the engine coughed and stopped. The filter was clogged again. The remainder of our journey involved avoiding reefs and races around headlands so rather than try to clean the filter we decided to bypass it and set up a jury rig where we took the fuel directly from one of the cans. The solution worked elegantly and just as it was getting dark we motored into the anchorage in Ile de Vache. As we approached the anchorage I noticed a small row boat coming across my bow. Should I carry on or dip him as he didn't seem to see me. Then another one appeared and another and even more. By the time we were dropping anchor there were about a dozen small craft of all sorts hanging out of us asking to speak to the captain and offering all kinds of service. We politely refused all offers of help explaining we were tired and in need of nothing. Eventually they drifted off and we were left alone. As we turned off the engine we were overcome with a great tiredness, so much so that after two beers we were all ready for bed. We all slept soundly that night and were woken early by our friends returning to offer their services yet again. But not before the harbour master arrived to check us in. It cost five dollars for the boat and oh did we have a Haitian flag? No, then that will be another five dollars for the one I just happen to have with me. Fair enough. More polite refusals followed until the message got through that we were in need of nothing. The initial approaches left us feeling that this place was going to be a nightmare, but far from it, they died off and we were left alone, aside from the odd visitor. We did engage the services of one of our admirers, Kiki, who turned out to be a real asset.

Kay Kok on Ile de Vache is a most beautiful anchorage, with a beachfront and palm trees all along the shore. Except for "Port Morgan", a very up market and tastefully built hotel, the area is totally undeveloped, with sail powered fishing smacks called "Bois Fouille" plying their trade in the bay as the klic klac sound of dominos being played on beachfront drifts over the anchorage. They take their dominos very seriously here and are very vocal as they slam them on the table with every move. It has a population of 25,000, most of whom must live somewhere else on the island, as where we were was very uncrowded. The main town is Madame Bernards, which is about a six mile walk. There are no provisions to be had on the island. You have to take a water taxi to Les Cayes on the mainland. The journey costs 400 gourds (2\$) each way. When you get to the far side the taxi stops a little off shore and you are given a piggy back ashore for another 40 gourds. Apparently they charge double for larger people!

There were about 10 boats anchored in the bay and, true to form, one of our neighbours "Hank" came over to greet us and fill us in on all the ins and outs of the place. He had been here for the past eight weeks waiting on engine parts, which made our waiting seem small in comparison. But, unlike us, he was not on a schedule so the wait was of little consequence. The weather was not due to break for a few days so we decided to stay until it did. In any case we had quite a few little jobs to do. We had ripped the mizzen on the passage, burst one of the blocks on the mainsheet traveller and the mainsheet itself was fraying in one spot and would have to be end-for-ended. Then there was the fuel problem. Over the next two days we drained and cleaned the tanks, filtered all the diesel and cobbled together a new fuel filter out of the original casing and bits from various filters we had in stock. The engine was now running sweeter than ever and would with luck get us to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, where we could buy spares. Meanwhile Kiki turned out to be really helpful and introduced us to Felix, who was trying to build a small four bedroom hotel on the other end of the beach. He had two rooms almost built with the foundations in for the other two. It was a building site really but what a site, right at the water's

edge. Felix offered to cook us dinner, which he duly did on Friday night. It was the most idyllic setting, with the table on the beach and the water lapping around our feet. We had conch, lobster, fish and chicken with a variety of salads and rice, all of which was delicious. Beers for Rob and me and wine for Valerie and the total bill came to 78\$, which wasn't bad at all.

It was now Sunday morning and along with another three boats, also heading east, we decided to leave just before sunset to take advantage of the benign weather window we were told was approaching. With any luck we would make Santo Domingo by Wednesday.

Before we left Ile de Vache, we went ashore for a cool beer. There we met Fiona from Dublin, who was doing her PhD on child slavery, which brought home to us the actual reality of life in Haiti for a lot of people. Apparently, poor families from the country sell their children to rich ones in the city, where they become virtual slaves. She had a really interesting story to tell and hopes to return to Haiti someday to do something to combat the problem.

We weighed anchor at 1730 and headed off into the night, as it gets dark here at six in the evening. As we left the anchorage a local water taxi pulled up alongside us with four quite inebriated persons aboard, all Irish, working for an NGO on the island. One of them, Damien, is well known on the island for his good works and is well respected among the local community. They tried to persuade us to turn back for a beer but we were not for turning. We were on a mission of our own. The plan was to go to Boca Chica in the Dominican Republic which is a bay and marina about 15 miles from Santo Domingo, the capital, where we hoped to get engine spares so that we could replace the filters and change the oil, etc. The total mileage was 250. We motored in moderate seas and little wind and were at the entrance of the Beata canal by seven the next evening, which gave us a 24hr run of 120 miles, our best so far. We passed through the canal without incident but, after we got through, the seas became much larger and confused. So we put up the sails and started to motor sail, which meant that we were not making our course. By dawn we had closed the coast and the seas had moderated so that we could resume our course for Boca Chica. Our only concern was that we would have enough fuel to make it. We had a reserve of 5 gallons in a can on deck and determined not to use it until we were within 2 hours of our destination so that we knew we could motor in. As it happened the fuel lasted and we picked up our mooring at 1145. As it was still Paddy's day, we celebrated with a beer and some rum.

Next morning we were awoken by a knock on the hull and an instruction to move to the marina where they wanted to search us. This came as no surprise as we had been warned about the Dominican Republic's bureaucracy. We duly complied and were boarded by immigration, customs, coast guard and intelligence officials who searched the boat quite thoroughly. We also had the company of the marina manager and the shipping agent, who were going to relieve us of \$250 for the pleasure of visiting their fair land. Once the search was completed, I had to accompany the ships' agent to his office, where more formalities were completed and I had to pay up. I produced the credit card. Sorry we only accept cash so I was brought to the nearest ATM to withdraw the cash. We were no sooner back on the boat than I was summoned to the immigration office, where I was subjected to a light interrogation as to my identity. After producing various other forms of ID I was cleared, hand shaken and welcomed to the country. I was being confused with some American they were interested in who happened to share my birthday.

We were told that there was a very good chandler's nearby and that we wouldn't have to go to Santo Domingo for the parts, which was good news. So Rob and I got all the various Yanmar parts numbers we needed and headed off to get them. But not before Rob had gotten a 6 inch wooden splinter in his foot off the marina. It was a bit of an operation to get it out and he was left with quite a wound on the ball of his foot. The marina was treacherous, with splintered wood everywhere and screws sticking up out of it. It was only eight years old but by the look of it was not going to last another eight. We went to the chandlers but they had no Yanmar parts. So it looked like we might have to go to Santo Domingo after all. That evening we got a taxi into Boca Chica for a meal. We had heard that there was an Italian quarter in town with quite a few nice restaurants. We strolled up and down the main drag which, if I'm honest, was very touristy and even sleazy in places. However we found a little Italian restaurant and had a very nice and reasonable meal. The pizza even passed the Rob test, which is very hard to do, since he considers himself quite a pizza expert after building and operating his own wood fired oven in his previous existence as a restaurateur in Nicaragua.

Next morning we had a lovely and reasonable breakfast in the marina café and got talking to the owner. I suggested that a motor factor might be a good bet and he offered (for \$10) to take us to his friend's one. This proved a great success and an hour later we had all our filters, replacement oil and a new fan belt. The rest of the day was spent changing the oil and fitting all the new filters. Later in the afternoon Valerie and Rob went to the local supermarket to re-provision.

By eight next morning we were on the fuel dock and by nine we had taken on 200 gallons of fuel and were set to leave. All I had to do was settle the bill and we were off. Up to the marina office I trundle where I paid for the extra two nights and a night on the swinging mooring we picked up at 23.45. Had we picked it up after midnight there would have been no charge but because we arrived 15 minutes before midnight we had to pay for that day. Now there was the small matter of the diesel, just \$1,000 worth. They had to use a separate machine for this which promptly rejected my card. Try it again as it had just worked in their other machine. No, it was rejected again so I called my credit card company who assured me that all was well and that it must have been a problem with their machine. Naively I suggested they use the first machine, but no that couldn't be done. I would have to go to the bank. What followed was one of the most frustrating days of my life. Next morning I called my credit card company again only to discover that they had put a stop on it because of suspicious activity. However give them an hour and that would be sorted. Back to the marina office for one last time, pay the cash, the balance on the card and we're off. But not quite, we had to get our despacho from immigration and be searched again before we could leave and this wouldn't happen until 1500. Ok so we had to wait. In the meantime we checked the fluid

levels in the engine before setting off. On dipping the oil, it was very overfull which was probably as a result of putting in too much when we changed it. Not a problem, we would drain some off, but when we did, pure sea water came out of the bung, a whole half gallon of it. How could that be? We checked everything and the only thing we could think of is that the boat had sat down in the water after taking on the fuel and that the anti-syphon had failed. The only problem with that diagnosis is that we didn't have hydraulic lock. There was no water in the cylinders and we could turn the engine over by hand. Could the water be getting somewhere else and if so where? It would have to be somewhere internally, which would mean major surgery and be something well outside our expertise. So we drained all the water out and took a very accurate reading of the oil on the dip stick and decided to wait until next morning to see if the oil level rose and water got in. All this caused terrible confusion with the authorities, who eventually agreed to let us leave at nine, but not before, next morning. That day was a fraught one to say the least and spirits were at the lowest they had been all trip. We had been through so much and were so close to the finish line that the prospect of failure was unbearable. We resisted the temptation to dip the oil that night and waited till the morning. At seven I took out the dip stick and held it up to the measuring tape. No change! we were still in business. We topped up the oil, held our breath and turned the key. The engine spluttered a little and fired into life. We were on our way again. Customs et al searched us around nine thirty and five minutes later we were gone. It was 10 on Sunday morning and we had 300 miles left. With any luck we would be there before dark on Wednesday. As it happened we had the easiest leg of our trip so far and by sunset on Tuesday we were within 20 miles of our final destination. The only excitement we had was when reeling in a fish it got eaten by a shark. Or should I say half eaten, he left us the front half which we ate that night and was quite delicious. Fishing can be quite difficult here as there is lots of floating weed which seems to constantly get caught in the hook.

Rather than arrive tired and in the dark, we decided to anchor, tidy the boat and have a last family meal aboard, as we knew there would be no peace when we arrived. As a special treat Valerie even made a steamed pudding for dessert, which went down very well. Just as we were finishing our meal there was a knock on the hull and a face peering through the window. Rob went up to investigate only to find Adam Mc Donnell (Adz to his friends) in a RIB alongside. From Clontarf, he had been a junior with Rob on the sailing course. He was working on a super yacht "Cherish 2" which was anchored alongside us and he had recognised me at the helm as we came in. Just goes to show what a small world it is.

Next morning we were up bright and early, had breakfast, finished cleaning the boat, weighed anchor (all 160 feet of chain pulled up by hand) and left.



The half fish



***Drumbeat* at anchor at Virgin Gorda**

By 1145 we were alongside in the Bitter End and the adventure was over. We had travelled 1900 miles on a 1300 mile journey and had taken over six weeks to do it. At no stage during the whole trip was there a cross word spoken, which given what we went through, is quite remarkable and a tribute to the individuals involved. I have sailed with many people and in difficult situations and I have to say, fatherly pride apart, that Rob is one of the toughest, most competent and good humoured people I have had the privilege to sail with and any skipper would be lucky to have him. As for Valerie, on more than a few occasions she was pushed well outside of her comfort zone but always managed to hold it together and carry on. Then there was her cooking, which she managed in all weathers and which contributed immeasurably to our wellbeing and humour. She is too modest by far and doesn't appreciate just how tough and needed she was on

the boat. In all we spent 12 weeks on *Drumbeat*, including our four weeks in Roatán.

A quickstep around the Irish Sea and Anglesey

Harry Whelehan



The plan: Liz and I, cruising from Howth as a couple over the last 10 years, have seen a lot of Irish and Scottish waters. This year looking at the charts for new ground, I could see, within easy reach, a large area which we had not yet explored. The Irish Sea looked like a coherent and simple circle and it offered the opportunity to visit Northern Ireland, the Solway Firth in Scotland, the coast of Cumbria, a visit to the Isle of Man (in the centre of the circle), North Wales and Anglesey and all, it seemed, possible in a fortnight or thereabouts. It was only when I consulted the charts, the Clyde Cruising Club sailing directions and Ralph Morris sailing directions for Anglesey in more detail, that I appreciated the challenges inherent in undertaking a cruise in these waters, where most anchorages, ports and marinas are heavily dependent on tidal water for access and tidal currents are a big factor on most passages.

I quickly understood why this area is not often visited by our members. However, I still liked the shape of the itinerary from the charts and I was encouraged by having read the 2014 idyllic log of our late esteemed member Seamus O'Carroll ICC *Leda* last year covering his cruise to Anglesey shortly before his very untimely death. I was also fortunate to talk to Cyril Geran HYC, *Dovetail*, who had recently been to the Solway Firth. Simon Healy Quoile YC agreed to join us for the first week of our cruise, graciously interrupting fitting out his beautiful *Maggie Mai* to be with us. The plan was to complete the cruise clockwise from Howth over the last week in May and the first week in June. This schedule and itinerary allowed us to incorporate the ICC East Coast Rally in Newry, and facilitated Simon in joining us from nearby Strangford.

Here we go: Howth - Port Oriel (26miles): On May 22nd at 11.00, having voted in the referendum (same sex marriage), we set sail from Howth in a north west force 4. We aimed to overnight in Port Oriel and arrived there five hours later after a very pleasant sail, only to find Dick Lovegrove ICC, *Rupert*, already tied up at the pier. He kindly invited us alongside and took our lines. Sadly we both had to move in order to make room for the busy fleet landing razor fish, which were being aggressively harvested in the bay outside. I walked the few miles over the headland to Clougherhead and enjoyed my own company and a pint, while Liz prepared dinner on board. Shortly after my return to *Sea Dancer*, I inveigled Dick and his crew to join us for a drink as they were returning from having their pints together in Clougherhead ---surprisingly we had an early night. Next morning Liz and I, while awaiting the tide, had a very pleasant stroll on the headland and visited an excellent fish shop on the pier. Port Oriel is a busy fishing port and a bit noisy in the very early morning, but it is a very useful and convenient stopping point going north or south, and I feel is underutilised by yachtsmen.

Day two: Port Oriel-Newry (23 miles): We left Port Oriel at 11.00. The wind was variable easterly and motor sailed to the Hellyhunter buoy off Carlingford, where we lost the breeze. The engine took us up the Lough to Warrenpoint, arriving at 15.00, where we joined a growing flotilla of ICC boats mustering for the rally in Newry waiting for the tide to rise sufficiently to give access to the Victoria Lock at the entrance to the canal. I counted 17 boats in the lock for our "lift ". There was much excitement and tension around organising the boats within the lock and the tension was elevated by the presence of a noisy drone overhead operated by some genius recording proceedings. To my embarrassment, as we were edging into this sardine can, my stern was caught by a significant puff from behind and this caused a nasty altercation between *Sea Dancer* and the lock wall. I was grateful that the only damage suffered was to my ego and to the GPS aerial cable. The damage was quickly and expertly repaired by Philip Dwyer, who was crewing for the week end on *Lady Patricia* with Mike Alexander ICC. The trip through the canal was a special experience, as was the revelation at the Albert basin, and the shore side development at Newry ----- well worth visiting, and worthy of an extra day or two in Carlingford Lough. The pre- dinner drinks were liberally hosted by Stanton Adair on Tony Weston's beautiful *Mandolin Wind*. This teed us up for a predictably convivial ICC dinner and a not so early night, which was fine, since "locking out" was not until 17.20 the next day, by which time, after much drinking of water and swallowing of Solphidine, everybody was more or less seaworthy.

Start of cruise proper: Newry-Kircudbright May 25/26 (104 miles): We left the Albert basin at 16.00 and yet again enjoyed the canal passage in the other direction. On entering the lough proper, it was calm, but the forecast was for north west 3-4, increasing 5-6 on the morrow. We decided to sail for our destination, to keep ahead of the fresher forecast, at the same time keeping open the option of taking refuge in Peel (IOM), if the going got tough. We motor sailed with full genoa through the night and made good progress on the freshening breeze. As usual, St. Johns Point took forever to reach, to pass and to leave behind. However visibility was good and we had the lights of Strangford, South Rock and the Mull of Galloway to keep us company and draw us forward. Despite the freshening wind we decided, (while the wind was fresh, it was fair), that we would keep going north rather than head east for Peel, as that would just postpone grief if the wind stayed fresh in the northwest for the next few days (which in fact it did).

We saw the light on Little Ross Island at 04.50, and arrived at the anchorage at 09.15, where we needed to wait for a rising tide to get us the 5 miles up the River Dee to Kirkudbright, which is accessible only 3 hours either side of HW (ie for us 16.00). The Clyde C.C. sailing directions describe very well the entrance, and also the anchorage where one can shelter in comfort and await the tide.

As we were looking for a place to anchor (now blowing a full force 6), we were approached by a MOD launch and advised that we were on the edge of a land and sea firing range, which was active that day. We were politely conducted to a well sheltered spot nearby, out of danger, where we anchored in 8 metres. I then discovered that our windlass wouldn't work. Simon grudgingly fed 40 metres of chain, well knowing that he would have to haul it all back by hand. However with anchor down, wind blowing, and with audible and visible activity on the firing range ashore, we had breakfast and a

few hours' sleep.

At 16.00 we shipped the anchor and started the five-mile journey up the river. It was chastening to observe that, even with four hours of flood already in place, the channel was narrow and fearsome, with massive sand banks close by the buoys to port and nasty rocks, very close by, to starboard (with 18kn of wind across our hull towards a rocky lee shore). However once we got into the river there was relief from the wind and the seaway. The channel was well buoyed, we relaxed and lapped up the remote and rural atmosphere before finally rounding the last bend, revealing Kircudbright with a well-serviced pontoon, in a very restricted but dredged channel, and beyond, a delightful heritage town. We got a visitors' berth, hooked up to the electrics and got the code for the Marina. It was now 17.15. We went ashore, freshened up and had a very good dinner in the Selkirk Arms Hotel.

It was surprising to note that this tide-restricted port harbours a large fleet of heavy fishing boats which organize their lives coming and going on the tide.

Ashore in Kircudbright May 27: After a good night's sleep we had a late breakfast and Simon set about trying to sort out the windlass. It transpired that water had got into and corroded the windlass circuit breaker. I searched uptown for somebody who might replace or bypass the problem, but without success. Meanwhile Gary, who had been on the range patrol boat the previous day, having seen us struggling with the chain while anchoring and hauling, came along and offered to help. Unfortunately he could not sort out our problem, but he did organise a fuel top up and made us feel welcome. I had been hoping to meet up with Douglas Mellon (whose father had been Commodore of Howth Sailing Club back in the 60s). Douglas had proposed me for junior membership of the club in 1955, before he left Howth to practice as a doctor in Kircudbright. I was very disappointed to learn from Gary that he had recently died.

Despite having a wet day for our visit, we found this town to be delightful in every respect and well worth the visit; the charm of the place shone through. We might have stayed over another day, but as the wind had moderated outside we planned to take the fair north-westerly to Whitehaven on the coast of Cumbria. For this passage we had a serious tidal situation, for our departure, for the passage and again for our arrival at Whitehaven.

Kircudbright-Whitehaven May 28 (27 miles): We left at 06.30 and had a calm and easy passage down the river and into the estuary. The wind was north west force 5 and we set the genoa for the 25 mile journey, visibility was good but the sea was sloppy, confused and uncomfortable, due I believe to a combination of wind strength, direction and the strong crossing tide exiting the Solway Firth. We entered the lock in Whitehaven at 11.10 and were lifted very efficiently to the inner harbour. The lock at Whitehaven has pontoons within, on either side, so there was no issue with shorelines during the lift. While in the lock, a person from the marina (which we had earlier contacted) lowered a plan of the inner harbour and the marina to us, with our designated berth marked clearly, plus a booklet with local information. The facilities in the marina were excellent. As for Whitehaven itself, our impression was, and whatever about its past or its future, its present is somewhat bleak and depressed. We did however enjoy a visit to the Maritime Museum close by the harbour, which was well worth the visit and engagingly detailed the glorious past of Whitehaven as a busy shipping port, all illustrated by photographs and old film footage. There was also, strangely enough, a compelling justification of nearby Sellafield Nuclear Plant (or whatever it is now called). Sorry to say we finished our day with a very indifferent dinner ashore, but we did enjoy sampling the local tittle in a dingy pub- this involved drinking a pint of bitter alongside a shot of rum.

Whitehaven-Douglas May 29 (38 miles): At this stage my focus was on getting to Conwy in North Wales, but we decided to break the journey in Douglas. We left at 09.00 and had a good passage, tying up to the pontoon at the Battery Pier alongside another yacht. We were able to confirm with the harbourmaster that we could stay there overnight; this saved us from locking in to the very tight marina and simplified our departure the next morning. We walked the promenade and had a drink in one of the spic and span great Victorian hotels, and were impressed by the way in which this hotel had been updated and made comfortable without interfering with its vintage grandeur. We were tickled by the swarms of bikers and their leathered-up ladies who were in the Isle of Man for the annual TT racing, due to begin the following week. We were told that during this period the speed limit on the roads in the Isle of Man is lifted and so visitors on wheels can have a burn up without fear of prosecution.

Douglas- Conwy May 30 (58 miles): While we had no problem with tides leaving the Isle of Man, the timing of arrival at Conwy was critical since Conwy dries and access is only possible 3 hours either side of HW. We had phoned ahead and reserved a berth at Conwy Marina, which is controlled by a drop gate sill. We needed to be at the fairway buoy



Sea Dancer at Kircudbright

at about 18.45 and the forecast was for south west force 3-4 possibly 5, backing southeast 6-7. Yet again we were promised strong wind; we therefore had to kick on ahead of the south easterly and wait outside Conwy, or sail at a slower pace and time our arrival for 18.45.

We left Douglas at 07.55 with 55 miles to cover in 10 hours. By noon the wind had settled in the south west. We held our course of 160 until 16.20 when we shortened sail, because we were well ahead of schedule. We were grateful to find the fairway buoy at 18:00 and reached Conwy marina at 19.15, once again marvelling at the narrowness of the access (even at half tide) and the enormity of the sandbanks, through which the channel runs. The town is about a mile and a half further inland from the marina. There is a very good pub/ restaurant in the marina complex, where we dined. After dinner we were pleasantly surprised when there was an outbreak of '60s and '70s rock 'n' roll with a live cast, to which we danced enthusiastically until late, relieving quite a bit of pent up pilot tension, while gaining some much-needed lower body exercise.



Low Water Conwy.

Ashore in Conwy May 31-June 4 (Gale): We woke to a wet, windy day and a forecast of gales for the next few days. Simon was leaving by train/ferry for Belfast. I went with him by taxi to the station, and since it was clear that we were going to be here for a few days, I got the taxi man to give me an overview of the town and Castle and generally suss out the facilities. I was heartened by what I saw and looked forward to exploring the locality and some nearby accessible attractions and destinations, to keep us sane while we were confined, waiting for the gale to blow itself out.

Having lost Simon it was a priority to get the windlass sorted out, as neither of us fancied continuing without either Simon or the windlass. The marina office contacted an electrical engineer and he devised a way of bypassing the damaged circuit breaker, fitting a maxi fuse to the windlass cable in its place. This solution worked a treat for the remainder

of the cruise. By afternoon the wind had increased, but the rain had abated and we were able to take an open top bus to nearby Llandudno. This classic traditional Victorian seaside resort was seriously overrun and thronged by the native English in their traditional windswept summer cottons, accompanied by their candy floss and ice cream eating children, all queueing to take their turn on the hurdy-gurdys. The promenade pier was most impressive as was the bay and its massive beach, with the gale driving breakers onto the shore, all overseen by great Great Orme Head.

On our return to the marina, via a very attractive shore side walk, at low-water it was dramatic to see that 90% of the boats moored in the estuary were aground, even those that were on pontoons, as indeed were some of the pontoons themselves. This spectacle, not for the first time, or indeed the last on this trip, brought home to us how fortunate those of us are, who have access to our boats, and the open sea 24/7. That night on the boat was extremely uncomfortable and cold, while the boat and the pontoons were hopping with the wind. The gale was forecast to continue for two more days. Next morning Liz went ashore to do some shopping and when she came back she announced that she had brought forward the celebration of our pending wedding anniversary, and booked us into the beautiful ye olde worlde Castle Hotel in the town.

We stayed ashore for two nights while the gale howled across the marina. During this sojourn ashore we saw many interesting sites, eg The 13th century Conwy Castle, stunning (though when we were halfway around the mile long outer rampart wall, the Curator evacuated the entire site due to high winds) and the "Big House" in Conwy, a 13th century Squire's residence, beautifully preserved and presented. Next day we travelled by train to Betsy -y-Coed through classical Welsh valleys arriving at a Cotswold-type sylvan town set 5k downstream from the Swallow waterfall. We walked to the waterfall along the fast flowing river in the sheltered cover of a wood which cast dappled shadows on the bubbling fast flowing river, every bit as good as an exhilarating day at sea.

We checked out of the Hotel, bought provisions, and re-established relations with *Sea Dancer*, having abandoned her for two nights.

Conwy-Menai Strait June 4 (25 miles): With a forecast south east 4-5 increasing and veering south west 7, we were happy to leave Conwy for the Menai Strait. We needed a cosy spot to see us through the fresh wind which was forecast. We left Conwy when the sill gate was lifted, at 09.44, 3 hours before HW, and soldiered down the estuary in the company of many other boats, which like ourselves had been hung up by the weather. We had a short passage, with a gentle breeze, blue skies and warm sun for the first time, so we decided to make the most of it and took it as slowly as we could. We sailed under genoa alone (leaving Puffin Island to port) to Beaumauris. The anchorage there did not appeal to me, given the forecast, so we carried down to a spot opposite Bangor close by the Gazelle Hotel, and were offered a good strong



Anchorage at Gazelle Hotel

the forecast, it was a relatively calm, misty morning. I had checked ahead to confirm we could have a berth in either Port Dinorwic or Caernarfon, if we survived the Swellies. With the south west 7 forecast to last for a few days, I favoured Port Dinorwic for its unique shelter, despite its relative remoteness.

Thankfully the wind had abated overnight and the forecast wind had not yet filled in. It was comforting to be only 20 minutes away from the northern entry to the Swellies. I did, however, find it a bit disconcerting that no other boats seemed to be on the same timetable as us, as we made our way towards the Menai Bridge. All went well and calmly as we passed under the two bridges, and over the horrendous underwater hazards, now well hidden by HW, and not in the least apparent above water owing to the slackness of the current. It was with a great sense of relief, and a very acceptable sense of anti-climax, that we arrived at Port Dinorwic at 12.45, after an exhausting one hour passage suffered in a state of quite unnecessary tension.

By the time we were securely tied up there were white horses dancing outside on the strait and this was to continue as the wind increased over the next few days. We were very comfortable where we were, as snug as two bugs in a rug. I walked to a high vantage point overlooking the strait and observed the effect of strong wind over strong current in the sound. It was an easy decision to stay put for the duration of the gale and do yet more touring ashore.

Ashore ---- Port Dinorwic--- Bangor--- Caernarfon
June 5+6 (Gale)

Port Dinorwic's charm begins and ends at the unique and charming harbour with all the facilities a yacht might require, though there is a superb pub/restaurant called Robinsons at the sea front of the town. We made a visit to Bangor, which was short and uninteresting; apart from the opportunity it gave us to observe, from the bus, the raging gale whistling through the sound.

Our visit to Caernarfon, in contrast was spectacular in every respect, in particular the magnificent castle beautifully restored and coherently presented. I visited the marina and when I saw its entrance I was glad we hadn't taken it on in the freshening breeze two days earlier. I spoke to the harbour master about our plan to leave the strait via the Caernarfon bar and he gave me a sheet with the up to date position of the buoys (which are regularly re positioned to mark the moving bar); this proved most useful and reassuring. The forecast at last was for the wind to moderate and go north west 3-4 then veer north north-east. This was good news even though my preferred next destination was Port Dinllaen, north of Bardsey Sound, an anchorage exposed to winds with any north in them.

Port Dinorwic-Porth Dinllaen June 7 (22 miles): We locked out of this very special haven at noon, in fine sunny weather and a fair wind. We enjoyed our passage to, and past Caernarfon in tranquil conditions, the castle looked even more impressive from the sea. However I did not enjoy the passage through the bar; there was a lot of breaking water around, as ever, but accentuated by a combination of wind against tide and the aftermath of the previous days of gales.

mooring for the night. It was just after midday, the sun was shining, and the sky was blue, the boat was lying head to wind, and there was a glorious 360° vista of the magnificent landscape/seascape, and best of all we were at sea again.

We decided to stay on the boat, have a leisurely lunch, and dinner on board. While Liz took the sun, I tormented myself getting ready for our assault on The Swellies tomorrow. The wind piped up as predicted, which was grand as the boat was comfortable and lay head to the wind even when the massive tide was going counter to the wind. It was a revelation to sit on the boat in this location and experience the flow of water through the straits on each tide, and to witness the extent to which the width of the strait expands and contracts with the ebb and flood.

Bangor-Port Dinorwic (Y Felinheli) via Swellies
June 5 (5 miles): Calculations (much revised and checked) dictated a departure from our anchorage at 11.45, slack HW at Swellies being at noon. Despite



Port Dinorwic entrance.



Caernarfon Castle.

However once we had cleared the bar and squared off for Port Dinllaen we had a force 3-4 on the beam and skipped along like never before on this cruise, with the Snowdonia range replicating, in its own way, the beauty of our own west coast at its best. We arrived at 16.15 and were kindly offered a mooring for the night. Obliging the wind died away with the daylight and we had a quiet night on the mooring watching a warm sunset over calm water in a beautiful, isolated and comfortable anchorage. We were initially disappointed to find that the charming Ty Coch Inn ashore closes at five o'clock on Sundays. However we overcame our disappointment and celebrated the last night of our challenging cruise on board, in what was the nearest we had experienced, to a proper summer evening.

{Two Swallows don't make a summer!..... as we were rowing ashore for a much anticipated drink in the pub, a man hailed us from a moored boat, and cheerily told that the pub had just closed for the day (5pm

Sunday). When he saw and heard my strong reaction to this news, he announced that his wife was Irish and from a place called Mullingar sez I... "What was her maiden name"?sez he ... "Osbourne!" ...sez I ... "And her father's name is Leo, with whom I played rugby for Mullingar in the 60s" sez he "small world". Later when we met up ashore he and his wife introduced themselves as Mr. and Mrs. Swallow!}

Porth Dinllaen-Howth June 8 (63 miles): We started our homeward leg at 05.30 and had a fine sail with the north north easterly 4, fine on the bow, but fetching Howth. We were comfortable carrying the mainsail with two slabs and half the genoa; this combination gave us 6.5 knots. Though we had blue skies, it was cold and brisk again and the long johns and oilies etc were still in commission. When we got clear of the land and the sun rose in the sky, things were looking up and by the time we reached the Kish the wind had moderated, and freed us, so we shook out the reefs and opened a bottle of wine as we tramped along at 7 knots+ for the last 20 miles, though we still needed the layers.

It is amazing how a few hours of bliss can erase the memory of days and even weeks of hardship and near misery. We arrived back in Howth at 16.15 exhilarated and in a forgiving mood. We had completed our cruise as planned according to the itinerary and the timetable.

Summary

Gales, spits, guts, locks, grey skies, strong tides, heavy undies and full oilies All tolerated in good heart thanks to an occasional drop of anti-freeze, taken orally (and regularly) by the crew.

Reflections

While my choice of cruising ground may be regarded as eccentric, and somewhat challenging, I have no regrets about having undertaken this cruise. I would, of course, have preferred if the weather had been warmer and the winds more favourable.

Leaving aside the pain caused by the weather and the need for constant attention to tide, both for passages and for access to anchorages, the destinations were mostly worth visiting and the hospitality and facilities made everything bearable. Ashore when we were stormbound we had an abundance of places of interest to visit all of which were easily accessible by public transport.

We were so taken by North Wales that we resolved to return there again in August when the weather would be warmer and the winds more favourable. We did return in mid-August to Cardigan Bay, we met the same unfavourable winds and unseasonal weather ----so don't count your chickens!

It all goes to show that the weather will always do its own thing no matter how we try to plan around it. In that part of the world the bilge keel is king, since going aground is an ever present risk, a risk which is more easily tolerated in a boat designed to take the ground. Once we left Carlingford we did not meet any Irish boats on our cruise.



Liz in control.

Sean Fergus recalls *Starolite* 1978/1979

One evening in August this year I was chatting to Rodney Best, a long term member of the Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club and a stalwart of the committee boat in Dublin Bay Racing over many years. He mentioned in passing that he recently came across a small yacht named *Starolite* sitting on the mud flats in Cobh, Co Cork. He vaguely remembered the boat and expressed his sadness at her sorry and neglected condition. This immediately struck a cord with me as *Starolite* was my first keel boat. She is a Halcyon sloop at 23 feet LOA.

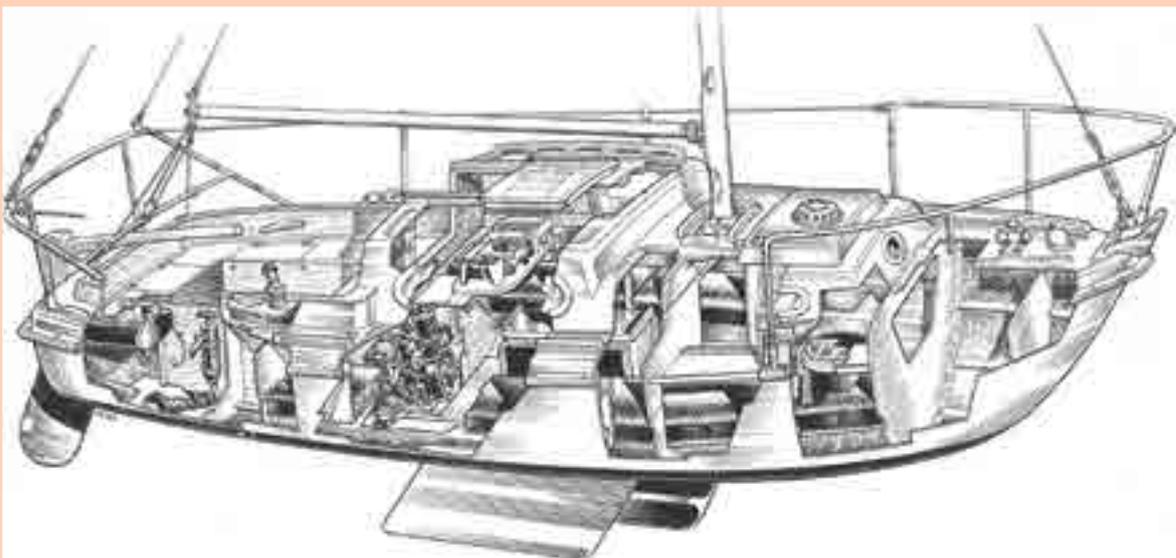
In August 1978 I bought this boat from a Rev Cartwright in Moville Co Donegal. I think I paid £3,250 for her. I trailed the boat from Moville to Carlingford, as I had arranged a mooring outside the pier directly in front of St. John's Castle. I spent the remainder of that summer getting familiar with the boat and had many enjoyable weekends going up and down the lough in all kinds of weather conditions.

The following year at the June bank holiday weekend 1979, I decided to make my first open sea trip to Port St Mary in the Isle of Man. Unfortunately, this was at a time when there were serious fuel shortages and rationing, with long tail-backs of cars queuing up outside filling stations. I could not fill my tanks. I set out nevertheless with barely a half tank of fuel optimistically hoping for good breezes. One crewman and myself set out from Carlingford at 04.00 on Saturday. As it turned out, we were beset with very light winds and calms and endured a long passage. We used our fuel very sparingly and eventually arrived at Port St. Mary at 22.30 after a passage of 18.5 hours duration. We went briefly to the Yacht Club for a pint and learned that fuel was unlikely to be had there. We returned to the boat at midnight and retired to our bunks immediately as we had an early start next day.

We departed at 05.00 Sunday hoping for a quicker passage. We had another very slow passage. Light winds and calms were again the norm. After some 20 hours we were off the Mourne Mountains in grey misty conditions with no wind. At dawn we were off Killeel. I then used the last of my fuel to get to the entrance of Carlingford Lough and realised that I little chance of further progress, such was the utter stillness.

After some hours a fast RIB approached us. It turned out to be the RIB of the Royal Marines, in which they patrolled the lough. They boarded the boat and carried out a perfunctory search. As they were about to leave I politely asked if they would give us a tow up the lough as far as Carlingford Harbour. This they readily agreed to do but pointed out that we would have to drop the tow when off Carlingford as they could not cross the North/South border line. Needless to say that I was extremely grateful for the tow after all the frustration. I arrived in Carlingford harbour at 14.00 hours on Monday after 33 hours. Luckily I arrived before the lifeboat was called, as some of the yacht club members and my wife Karen who had arrived from Dublin were beginning to get concerned. Remember this was the era before mobile phones.

I kept *Starolite* for five years. The August after this incident, I moved her to Dun Laoghaire, where I got a mooring at the West Bight. I traded up to a Shipman named *Sinead* in 1983 and joined the ICC in 1985 after a French/Channel Islands cruise in this boat. Sometime afterwards I sold *Sinead* to the late Freddy Cooney who renamed her *Therapy*. This boat is still active in Dublin Bay racing.



Cutaway drawing of a Halcyon 23

Ariadne around Skye

Colin Leonard

My father Alan and I, after several years pursuing separate sailing schedules, decided upon a summer cruise together in July 2015. The diaries were cleared late in 2014, and remarkably, some might even say miraculously, they remained clear. The early organization allowed us to indulge in that most risky of cruising pastimes, making plans and setting objectives. It was with muted confidence that we set the aims of circumnavigating Skye, trying to sleep in new rather than favourite anchorages, and if time and weather permitted, to climb a Munro along the way.

Despite departure being delayed 24 hours by a south easterly gale, in the cool of what passed for a summer evening we waved farewell to Whiterock and set off down Strangford lough. Arriving in Audley's Roads, we settled down to enjoy an excellent chicken Cacciatore, which my mother, Elizabeth, had kindly provided. Thus started an evening of what can and should only be described as "bimbling." The sporadic charging of the laptop, with which we have become accustomed to navigating, was further investigated and led to the discovery that it had melted the 12V charger. At least we had the paper charts. It is fair to say that we were already questioning the folly of setting aims for a cruise.

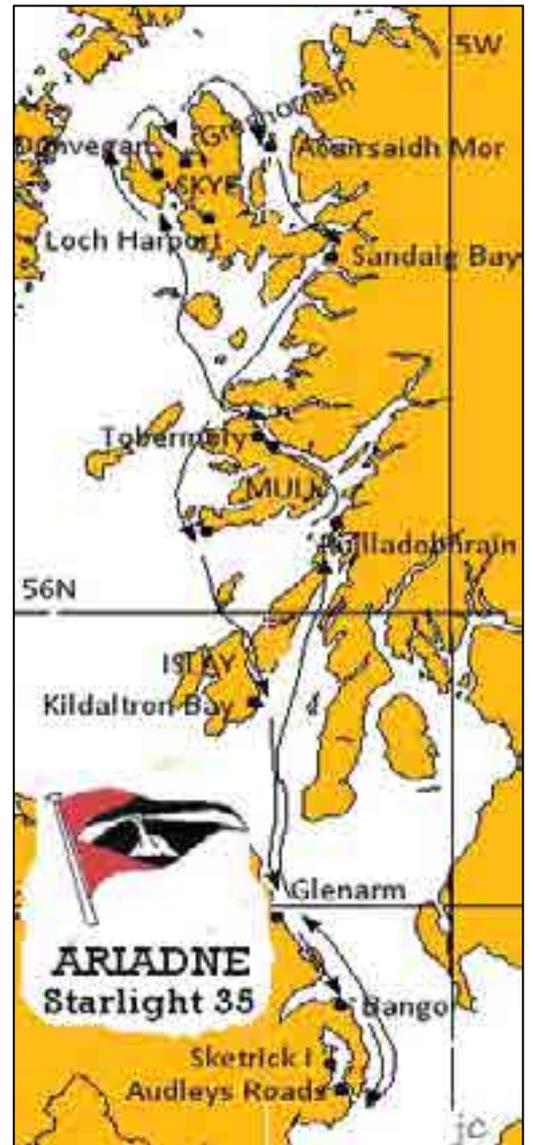
The alarm woke us early on the 19th July and a light breeze ushered us out of Audley's and into a fresher breeze that carried us with the last of the ebb through the narrows and out of the east channel. As the breeze came and went, we intermittently sailed and motorsailed. It was a clear day along the Ards peninsula and calm across the mouth of Belfast lough. We slowed to observe clearly the significant civil engineering works to re-open the Victorian Gobbins path. There is little doubt that the views from the cliff path will be spectacular; we resolved to visit when the it opens.

Favourable tides and good progress led to discussions as to where to seek a night's rest. The initial decision to press on and aim for Ballycastle was soon put to rest when zephyrs from the north east built to an unforecast but presumably thermal 20 knot breeze. After a short beat and a powerful reach in the early evening sun, we tied up alongside *Valhalla* (Uel Gillan) in Glenarm. A cacophony of bird sound greeted us as we settled in to plan the following day's journey. The harbour wall has many natural and man made nesting niches. The black guillemots seemed determined to please the photographers with "fish in mouth," poses.

We motored gently out of Glenarm at 0500, barely a breath of wind disturbed the water and crisp clear air made for superb visibility. It was hard to believe the forecast, that this calm would soon be disturbed by a fresh south easterly air flow. A few hours of strong favourable tide later, the south easterly gradually built. The cloud closed in over the Mull of Kintyre and visibility and rain fell. We were soon roaring past Gigha with 25 knots over the starboard quarter. "Harry" our hydrovane steering gear coped admirably and Alan provided a second breakfast of bacon sandwiches. A rolling sea made for fast progress despite the now moderate adverse tide and we carried the south easterly as far as Skervuile. Sadly the shift from south east to south west was rather prolonged and we spent several hours making slow progress. We succumbed to starting the engine south of Corryvreckan. Thankfully the diesel topsail was only used briefly as the tide soon swept us along to the boiling oily waters of the sound of Luing. Here, just as the south westerly was developing, a thick low fog filled the air and it was easy to appreciate how seafarers in days gone by might have been superstitious of the area.

Again conversation turned to our stopping point. We headed for the tempting tranquility of Puilladobhrain, anchoring in a heavy downpour near the narrowest part of the entrance, next to *Ballyclaire* (Derek White). We settled down to the dinner as the south westerly breeze freshened. Several hours later I was awoken by the sound of shouts. Two of the eleven boats further up the anchorage were steaming around and attempting to re-anchor. Grateful that they weren't nearby, I returned to my bunk. I was chastised in the morning for being "a baby elephant on deck," during the night.

Enthusiastic to press on, we reached across the south end of Kerrara before breakfast in a moderate south westerly and rain. The breeze followed us round and it wasn't until Duart that sheets were ground in for beating. The weather remained cool but clouds scudded over Mull and cleared. Sunglasses and woolly hats became order for the day. The Sound of Mull granted us a pleasant force 3 – 4, and *Ariadne* revelled in the beat to windward in flat water. Little wildlife that wouldn't be common in home waters was seen, but the usual smattering of seals, gannets and small birds provided a pleasant distraction from the boats motoring dead upwind and indeed downwind. The wind veering off the land eventually allowed a close-hauled course on port to make for Tobermory. In the early afternoon sun, thermal gusts came from all directions.



A puzzle for any yachtsman! Nevertheless we tied up in Tobermory marina in the early afternoon and took aboard fuel, water and provisions. A pleasant summer's evening followed and we admired not only the ever pleasing vista of the town, but a Starlight 39 which surely would win the best kept boat in any cruise in company. Scrubbing *Ariadnes'* decks moved straight to the top of the to do list, as we considered the next few days of cruising.

A period of calm weather was expected after 72 hours of moderate to fresh westerly. Should we stall our sailing and focus on our pursuit of a Munroe? Time and tide wait for no man, and we resolved that they favoured an anti-clockwise circumnavigation of Skye. We went to bed no wiser.

We made an unscheduled early start, as the advance party from a cruise liner made a fine alarm clock as they docked. After crossing paths with the ubiquitous Caledonian MacBrayne, "Harry" took us on a beam reach past Ardnamurchan lighthouse in a gentle westerly swell. The prospect of slow progress against the tide along the sound of Sleat did not appeal. We chose instead, the pleasant and fast sailing available if we continued our track north. Muck was abeam when we first remarked Hyskeir, and pondered the frequency with which weather would allow a craft to approach and anchor.

Towering banks of cloud skirted around our path, drawing wind to and from us in equal measure. The sun began to dominate the sky and we ran goosewinged between Rhum and Canna. The cliffs of Rhum were spectacular in the bright light and clear visibility. We closed Loch Harport quickly as ever more frequent banks of cloud masked the sun. Ocean Youth Trust 53, a challenger 72, handed sail as she approached the mouth of the loch. She made a fine sight in the fresh breeze, bright sunlight and rolling sea. We pulled down a reef and enjoyed a blustery fetch at the end of the day, anchoring at the head of the loch. A rain cloud finally took its aim at us, just as we approached our anchoring spot. The high land swept the gusts down on us, like a catabatic wind. It was the first time either of us had been able to remark on the waves in a cup of tea.

The combination of burbling brooks on the nearby shore, the distinctive heron calls from the multitude of these graceful birds, and a dram of the local spirit, made a peaceful evening. The following morning, we used our seclusion to return to "bimbling." Decks were scrubbed, lists were made and perhaps most importantly leisurely breakfast was enjoyed. A trip ashore followed and, dodging a plethora of tourists from all corners of the globe, we were able to book a tour of the distillery in the late afternoon. A short walk away we enjoyed excellent seafood lunches on the deck at the Old Carbost Inn, and watched two stonemasons carry out their back-breaking trade on a new dry stone sea wall. After lunch, a brisk walk took us to the war memorial, below which we had anchored, and back to Carbost in time for a tour of the distillery. It was more than mildly baffling when we asked to purchase a bottle of the 10 year old, to be told to try the local Co-op. It would appear they had been doing a roaring trade to the throngs of tourists.

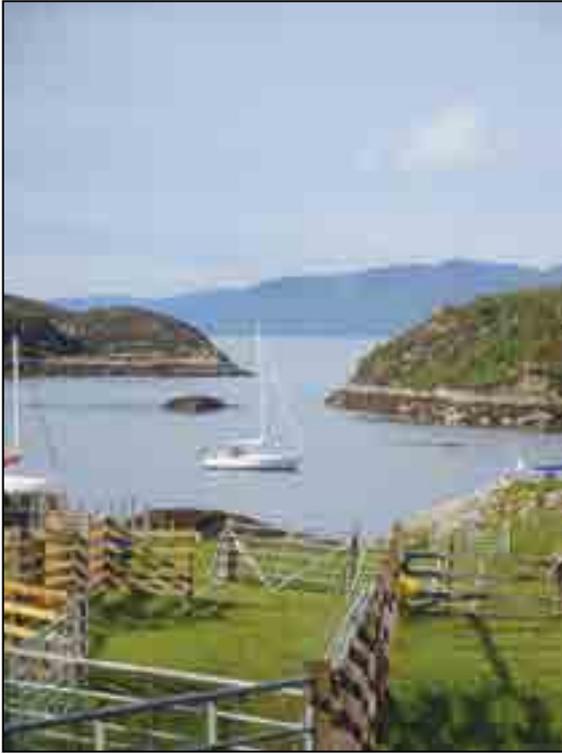
The strong westerly breeze having settled we motored down Loch Harport on the morning of the 24th July. We waved to tourists of "Wild Skye Adventures" and put in a few tacks to dodge fishing pots but we were soon on a heading outside Macleods Maidens. The flat seas and light winds allowed us the pass close to these fine natural sculptures. It wasn't long before the herons of the night before seemed to have been the start of the wildlife we would see in abundance over the next few days. A flock of gannets dove close around us as we passed through the disturbed waters at An Dubh Sgeir. This sight also heralded the end of the wind and the start of the rain. Great waterfalls poured down the cliffs as the diesel topsail was pressed into service, and a pilot cutter motored gracefully south. As we passed Neist point and Dunvegan head, we set a GPS track on the autopilot to try and recalibrate the temperamental speedometer. Sadly, despite our attempts, and the slightly odd looks we received from local fishermen, our top-speed competition was to remain wildly inaccurate.

After this futile exercise, a light westerly breeze filled in and we ghosted along Loch Dunvegan. Arriving at the head of the Loch in the late afternoon, we anchored underneath Dunvegan castle and light drizzle gave way to a sunny evening. We headed ashore for a brisk, midge-dodging walk and to attain signal to report our progress to home. Motoring back out to *Ariadne* at dusk, we were treated to the incredible aeronautic displays of a flock of terns. As they took their roosts for the night, the seal colony near which we had anchored frolicked and played. We turned in discussing the remarkable wildlife, innumerable seals and a remarkable sunset to end the day. Red sky at night; we hoped a clear day to follow might allow us a first sight of the high Cuilin.

We set off without oilskins, a refreshing and surprising change. The forecast was for the weather to stay clear and warm during the day. We motored out of Loch Dunvegan to Waternish head as the sun beat down. A minke whale breached off our port quarter a number of times and we read in the sailing directions that the Ascrib islands provided a "pleasant distraction in calm conditions." What more could we wish for? We were greeted to the islands as if by a bowing *maitre de* by a flock of juvenile cormorants drying their wings in the sun. Each turn and bow seeming to usher us along. After a short period of time contemplating the channels between the islands on the chart, we decided half tide falling was not the time for such adventures. As we departed we circled several times and marvelled at an enormous flock of puffins. Away from prying eyes and noisy boats, the Ascrib Isles must be a haven for these shy creatures.



Ariadne, Loch Dunvegan.



View from Rona Lodge.

We could not argue with the quality of the shelter in Loch Greshornish, but it lacked a certain something, compared with Dunvegan and Harport and after lunch we headed north again. As we departed, we caught our first fleeting glimpse of the Cuillin in all their glory, their lower slopes veiled in cloud, as if to emphasize the peaks as they stood clear. Motoring into a light northerly out of Greshornish and towards Uig, despite the sun the weather turned cool. Several seal pups assessed our passing with indifference. We passed Uig and witnessed the peculiar sight of seals leaping, dolphin like, clear from the water. We had a little time before the tide turned against us, and we passed through Duntulm bay.

We passed out of the north end of Duntulm and headed east, pondering the forecast of a fresh easterly wind the next morning. Rounding Rubha Aiseigh in the early evening, we took in the breathtakingly clear vista from Foinaven to Ben Nevis. Despite the clear sky to the east, the Cuillin and most of Skye remained veiled in cloud. The small swatches of Skye bathed in sunlight as it pierced the clouds heightened the contrast between the clarity of the mainland and the forboding murkiness of the weather approaching from the west. We had dinner underway, observed the Storr pinnacle, dodged trawlers making their way south and reflected on the significance and number of waterfalls cascading off the cliffs directly into the sea. A few hours of gentle sailing and motorsailing saw us arrive at the remarkable Acairsaidh Mor, South Rona. Lying just closer to the mainland than Skye, we enjoyed the warm red light of sunset as it fell on the iron-rich rock all around. While it was low water, the promise of warm bunks and threat of midges meant that we declined to investigate the Antares charts "new rock."

Awaking to light winds and a blisteringly sunny morning, we ventured ashore while pondering a forecast very wide of the mark indeed. An excellent ascent of the two mighty peaks of South Rona (118m, 114m) was followed by a walk to "Church Cave." The residents of the lodge had been married there and a small wooden box sheltered prayer books. It was not hard to imagine Sunday service in years past, looking out of the cave over the inner sound to Torridon. A fearful location in a South Easterly gale!

We returned to the lodge, and enjoyed a short spell as part of island life. Bill, the tenant was making oatcakes. His guests were enjoying morning coffee, and the sheep shearers were awaiting the ferry to take them back to the mainland. We took on some provisions (venison from the island) and showered before returning aboard. Setting off through Caol Rona, we waved to a camper who had isolated herself for charity on one of the rocky outcrops. A light, warm breeze greeted us as we passed Applecross. Sail trim and concentration were order of the day as the breeze veered, before a fortuitous lift saved a tack past the Crowlin Isles. Thereafter we eased sheets and close reached across Loch Carron to the Kyles. Strong tide in our favour increased the apparent wind and allowed us to beat through but we added comfort to the crossing of a barge by motorsailing briefly.

It was at this stage that the cruise became 'Ariadne and Skye-fall 007,' rather than 'Ariadne around Skye.' A helicopter flew extremely low overhead, landing in Kyle of Lochalsh. No sooner had its rotors changed pitch than two military, apparently 'stealth', speed boats roared past us at great speed, vanishing through Kyle Rhea. We returned to our gentle sail, admiring Eileen Donan castle basking in a localized ray of sun. Glen Elg funnelled a brief burst of fresh breeze but after that, as the wind eased, fishing produced only tiddlers. In what would soon be a familiar pattern, we had wind off, rain on, engine on.

After a calm night in Sandaig bay, we made an early departure to take the last of the tide towards Ardnamurchan. Blustery gusts out of Loch Hourn and Loch Nevis sped us on our way south west. All remained quiet for the first few hours, until we were joined in our procession south by a few boats leaving Arisaig. At the Aird of Sleet, four jets "buzzed the tower," flying low enough to vanish from our sight below the cliffs of Eigg (393m). Watching these feats of engineering mock-fighting each other was spectacular. As they vanished from our sight, we heard the thunderous roar of a military heavy transport plane approaching low overhead from the south. As if this monster in the air had disturbed the weather system, the wind failed and the rain began to fall.

The sun appeared off Sanna bay and we were joined by a pod of dolphins. They frolicked and leapt in our bow wave, and the young seemed to play for the video camera. A real treat, which ended as we turned to the south east for the return to Tobermory. We reset the sails, and close hauled in a new breeze across Loch Sunart to weather Rhubh na Ghall. Alan made a memorable venison casserole and we hunkered down below as the rain fell heavily through the evening.

Tobermory proved to be unusually quiet. We replenished supplies and bought gifts for those left at home. After lunch, aware of timings to get home, we motored in the flat calm out of Tobermory and away to the west. We got the first of the tide in our favour shortly after passing the Treshnish Isles under engine, in the rain. We passed well to the west of Staffa, and remarked that it was good that on this occasion we were not looking for clear skies to view the transit of Venus (*Ariadne* log 2012). Grateful for the break from the rain, we joined three others already anchored in the Tinker's Hole. We hoped

for more wind and less rain as we fried scallops, bought from a diver that morning.

Setting off the next morning, having watched four more jets as we ate our breakfast, we had a moderate to fresh north westerly on our backs. When the cloud dispersed, we had sun on our faces and we could barely believe our luck. *Ariadne* surfed downwind across to the lee of Colonsay with a gentle swell from the south west. The weather being so good, there were many boats on the water. We admired a “a little ship,” as it scudded along the Ross of Mull under a press of sail and “raced” all those other craft heading even vaguely along our course. In our enthusiasm, we arrived slightly early for the tide at the north end of the sound of Islay. Dad used the mounting wind against tide waves to surf the boat to, the all be it inaccurate, top speed of the cruise. Running at a GPS 10 knots over the ground, the Sound of Islay was clear. We had a fine view of the raised beaches on the Jura shore and the distilleries on the Islay shore. In the freshening breeze we handed sail and motored through the north entrance of the Ardmore islands and, forsaking our better instincts, anchored in the more open, Kildalton bay.

A few short hours later at 0500 we set off in a flat calm, still pondering the squeaks and clunks of the night before. A glorious sunrise to the north east bathed the boat in a red glow, and the tides of the north channel swept us across the separation zone ahead of three north going ships. We observed two yachts heading to the west of the channel out of Port Ellen. Initially I assumed they were heading to Foyle or Donegal; however they had planned their passage to use the McDonnell race to maximum effect. Their progress from the northwest along the Antrim coastline was remarkable, despite the extra distance sailed. Tying up in Glenarm at lunchtime after a very settled crossing back to Northern Ireland, we made brief conversation with our neighbours before the author took to his bunk. Alan headed ashore for a walk and one suspects the allure of an ice cream was too much on so pleasant an afternoon.

The weather forecast suggested a blustery southerly breeze for the following day and, hoping to be back in home waters by the Friday, we used the next tide to head south. The trip to Bangor passed quickly, motoring in a flat calm and pleasant but cool sunlight. We dodged a small flotilla of canoe fisherman at Blackhead and slowed so as not to disturb the racing/drifted fleet at Royal Ulster. The weather cooled further and darkened as we tied up.

As seemed to have been the norm, the alarm clock went early and we motored out in a light southerly. Reaching across Ballyholme bay and into Donaghadee sound, the breeze backed south westerly. We hardened up and enjoyed fantastic flat water sailing until just south of Skulmartin. Here the wind veered slightly and built to 20 knots, bringing with it a significant chop. We pulled down a reef and used the GPS plotter to calculate, rather than estimate, laylines in and out of the bays along the shore. The accuracy of the scientific method satisfied both generations on board. The calm of the narrows was particularly welcoming after surging through the east channel. The weather had one last whip in its tail as the breeze freshened and we scorched across the lough and home, in the damp embrace of a rain squall. How appropriate a way to finish a cruise, in which we had required full oilskins 12 days out of 13!

Looking back on our goals, we rounded Skye and visited three anchorages new to both of us (six new to the author). In Acairsaidh Mor, Alan was returning after four different boats, and 50 years of cruising. It was not his first ascent of the “tiddlers” of South Rona. Just as the Cuilin tower over Skye, the highlights of this cruise tower over our failure to bag a Munroe. Next time.

Date	Day	Start	Finish	Daily NM	Total NM
18th July	Saturday	Sketrick Island	Audleys Roads	7	7
19th July	Sunday	Audleys Roads	Glenarm	52	59
20th July	Monday	Glenarm	Puilladobhrain	85	144
21st July	Tuesday	Puilladobhrain	Tobermory	29	173
22nd July	Wednesday	Tobermory	Loch Harport	56	229
23rd July	Thursday			0	229
24th July	Friday	Loch Harport	Dunvegan	35	264
25th July	Saturday	Dunvegan	Greshornish	25	289
	Saturday	Greshornish	Acairsaidh Mor	33	322
26th July	Sunday	Acairsaidh Mor	Sandaig Bay	31	353
27th July	Monday	Sandaig Bay	Tobermory	42	395
28th July	Tuesday	Tobermory	Tinker's Hole	32	427
29th July	Wednesday	Tinker's Hole	Kildalton Bay	44	471
30th July	Thursday	Kildalton Bay	Glenarm	42	513
31 st July	Thursday	Glenarm	Bangor	22	535
31st July	Friday	Bangor	Sketrick Id	40	575

Alan Leonard goes clockwise round the Clyde

When the Northern Region end of season rally was planned for Campbeltown, I planned a week's cruise from Strangford Lough, anticlockwise round the Clyde, to end up in Campbeltown for the rally. When the venue was changed to Strangford/The Quoile, it seemed more appropriate to go clockwise, but the prevailing south westerlies were to be our undoing. More of this later.

John McCrea, Connla Magennis and myself went onboard on Friday 21 August. There was a stiff southerly, so the plan was to leave Strangford Lough at low water. We motored down the Lough, but only just made it in time. There is slack water at Strangford Bar, but it lasts about thirty seconds. We were there! Out timing was rewarded with a flat sea in the east channel. There followed a goosewinged run up the County Down coast and across Belfast Lough. The wind left north of Blackhead and a couple of hours motoring brought us to Glenarm.

Next morning was gray but dry and the wind light variable. We motored across the North Channel. Our heading was almost for Ailsa Craig, while the tide brought us in nicely between the Paterson Rock and Sanda. Fuel was short so into Campbeltown to refuel. We were visited by Connla's sister-in-law Judy and her son Andrew, who live in Macrihanish. The new pontoons in Campbeltown would provide a suitable venue for a rally on some future occasion, if everything else was suitable, but they take a little getting used to as they are at an acute angle to the main pontoon.

The passage up Kilbrannan Sound provided all manner of conditions but, with a brisk easterly, mostly severe squalls coming down off Arran. Eventually we were becalmed off Skipness Point in warm sunshine. The south easterly filled in again and we had a brisk reach up to Tarbert, where we stormed in through the north entrance and luffed up in the Deuchlands, beside *Saboo* (Holman 43ft yawl), to hand sail. Members who attended the seventy-fifth anniversary rally may recall that *Saboo* won a prize for being "the yacht with which I would most like to share an anchorage". Our initial berth near the end of the main pontoon was uncomfortable, so we later sought shelter deep on the inside, near the ramp.

After a morning spend in Tarbert and visiting the castle, we motored out through the Deuchlands to admire *Saboo* yet again. To quote, "her sheerline knows exactly what it is doing - being uninhibitedly beautiful from one end to the other". A pleasant beat into a light southerly brought us to Ardlamont Point, from where we motored up the West Kyle in warm sunshine to my favourite anchorage in the Clyde - Caladh, at the mouth of Loch Riddon.

Next morning the wind was light, so we motor sailed through the narrows at the Burnt Isles and down the east Kyle. Off Port Bannatyne the wind filled in to give us a nice beat down to Largs. It was a sunny afternoon, so it seemed a pity to stop. We beat on down the Hunterston Channel. Shoal water extends a long way offshore off the Power Station, as we discovered when we looked over the side and saw the bottom! We tacked and fortunately didn't touch. The wind left when we were south of the Cumbraes, so we motored to Lamlash where the anchorage looked uncomfortable, as a light southerly had filled in again. We went to the south of the bay where we anchored in perfect shelter, just inside the entrance.



Saboo, at Tarbert, Loch Fyne

John had to return home on Thursday 27, so the plan was to put him ashore in Troon the previous day. When we came out south of Holy Isle, there was a nice southwesterly. It seemed a shame to waste a good breeze with a couple of hours reach across to Troon, when we could lay Loch Ryan on starboard tack..... That was to be our undoing. When we cleared the south end of Arran the wind started to back. We closed the shore south of Girvan, where further backing gave us a lift on port tack but it was now a dead noser to Loch Ryan, where we had to dodge the ferries coming out from Cairnryan as we beat in as far as the number one channel marker for Stranraer. A freshening wind and heavy rain compounded the misery. We motored dead up wind from there to make fast in Stranraer Marina at 21.30.

John left early next morning to get his ferry home from Cairnryan. *Ariadne* sat in Stranraer on Thursday..... and Friday..... and Saturday, while it blew hard from the South West. Connla and I explored Stranraer very thoroughly. The Castle in the centre of the town is worth a visit if it is open - use as a goal for some years has resulted in preservation of the Norman Keep. We were glad of the company of Jim and Liz Brown on *Trininga*. They also had been

hoping to make it to the rally. After spending Saturday night at anchor in Lady Bay, rocked by the wake of passing ferries, we eventually motored back in calm conditions on the Sunday. We were sorry not to make it to the rally, but were glad to hear that it was a great success.



Stranraer Marina from the Castle. *Trininga* (Jim Brown) is the outermost boat

“Gibraltar with Care”: from Alicante to Lagos

Guy B Johnston

Being invited to sail with someone shows outright trust, bravery or naivety. Whichever, I was invited by Chris Elliott, to do some cruising in the Med and onto the Algarve. His aim was to bring his yacht to Brittany over the months of May and June 2015. There were several legs where crew changes could take place. With Ryanair, locations were numerous and very affordable. The lure of sea level cruising, in waters heretofore unknown to me, was very appealing.

Before we commenced the adventure, I visited Chris's yacht in Cannet close to Perpignan to establish if there was compatibility between us. Alas, as many will know, a yacht is smaller than a prison cell, so compatibility is critical. I soon discovered that Chris and I shared many views:-- “Don't rely on kit to recover crew who have fallen overboard when it is easier to ensure they don't fall overboard in the first place. Invest in and use good harnesses and clip on. Stay on the boat: it's easier, a sound boat will look after you.” Later we were to find out.

Polynya is a Rustler 36 which Chris himself fitted out from new. She is an encapsulated deep keeled yacht, equipped for short-handed serious offshore cruising. She has all the essentials, all in good order including:

- a seventeen year old continuously-modified Duo Gen that just constantly feeds the domestic batteries while sailing and appears not to impact boat speed.
- A good Hydrovane which behaves very well, even downwind with spinnaker up.
- A baby tiller pilot to steer the Hydrovane rudder when sailing, using very little power.
- A Lewmar electric windlass with the controls and motor below deck, so there are no trip hazards on deck and controls are away from salt exposure.
- A good set of sails
- An array of today's electronic navigational aids, chart plotter/ radar, separate GPS and a magic AIS. This I found a great aid, with traffic around and it uses a fraction of the power of a radar. The AIS gives valuable data to the navigator; viz., name, type of vessel, speed, direction etc, a must for those without one. Friends and relatives can also use them also to track progress over the Internet.

Then there is Chris's baby, his Taylor paraffin two burner with oven cooker. This, along with his father's paraffin oil lamp in the cabin, make *Polynya* a proper sea-going yacht. Incidentally, the oil lamp is always on at night, even on passage. It gives a glow to the symphonic sounds of any snoring.

Having agreed a target arrival date with Chris over email, I set off on my adventure.

On 10th May 2015 I flew to Alicante with Ryanair (for c. €80) and joined up with Capt. Chris Elliot, retired master mariner of British Antarctic Surveys (BAS), on his boat *Polynya*. Chris is a member of the OCC and RCC, with transatlantic yachting under his belt from an Ostar race some moons ago. A man who knows how to navigate and is also extremely gifted with his hands and capable of repairing anything, aided by his small portable vice.

Chris's charming wife Françoise, who sailed the seven seas before they met, is always lending a hand to others. Françoise acts like a ship's agent to *Polynya*. She organises flights, accommodation etc for Chris and others who sail on *Polynya*. Of course Chris is used to having a ship's shore base. With BAS it was Cambridge, with *Polynya* it is Françoise in Pau, located in the French Pyrenées. On arrival at the marina at Santa Pola, I was greeted, welcomed



Polyna, a Rustler 36

aboard, allocated my berth amidships, a locker for my clothes with a separate compartment in the heads for my wash bag and a shelf in the saloon for my “need at hand” items eg, glasses, hat, sun lotion, book and wallet. The organization was exemplary. I said to myself, this will be a regimented and an interesting journey. Little did I know what lay ahead. The following day I visited Alicante while Chris tended to more varnishing, keeping *Polynya* always immaculate.

On the 11th May the Ship's Mate arrived, retired Capt. John Marshall, a canny west coast Scott with a great sense of humor. Chris and John go back 30 years. John joined BAS as a chief officer under Chris on the *James Clarke Ross* and three years later became Master on the *Ernest Shackleton*. When I signed up for the adventure, I did not know that these two on *Polynya* had covered tens of thousands of miles together and have innate communication between them. So much so I christened them “the Odd Couple” Felix and Oscar, from the comedy of old. The days that followed were great.

Each day started with “The Marshall Rant”. John on his soapbox giving out about something in life. It was one funny story after another, a great way to start the day. He has a repertoire of one liners: Foxtrot Oscar, You Charlie; Too much no good, plenty OK; If you’re looking for sympathy, it’s under S in dictionary between Shi and Syphylis.

John is obsessive about keeping the boat ship-shape and Bristol fashion. He brings the concept to new levels on a yacht, cleaning the cabin sole and scuppers daily. Every five minutes he adds to his lists of chores for shore time for each of us, including a list for Chris. He would make a great wife, although his one vice is his habitual consumption of rusty-nail fags served from his antique silver case. Victualling with John is a panic. Armed with lists, only one deviation or addition is permitted on each shop visit. A strict regime with great good humour.

On 12th May, *Polynya* sailed with the three us up, from Porta de Santa Pola, 27 miles down the coast to Puerto de San Pedro de Pinatar, a shake down introduction to our cruise. It offered an expensive Marina, charging €38 for one night, stating it was high season. There were few visitors around other than ourselves. However Chris was too polite to use John’s vernacular, who relayed his message in phonetics by suggesting to the Marina to *Foxtrot Oscar you Charlie* with your charges. These emerged as three times that of the other marinas we brought our custom to in the following weeks. Onwards and upwards.

The following day we set off for Almerimar, doing an overnight to cover the 161 miles. We started with a 7-hour spinnaker run along the coast; the winds veered a little and freshened but were always favourable. Thirty one hours later, we arrived at Almerimar, which is a large welcoming port with many yachties wintering there. As a gateway to the Mediterranean, it is a good location, offering good value and a large boat yard. Unfortunately, Almerimar has suffered badly from the economic crash and many apartments are empty or for sale, as are business premises. It has an excellent supermarket close by and a variety of eateries.

On 16th May we planned to exit the Med. We looked at surface weather charts and other sources to calibrate the forecast, being cautious mariners. We were on the edge of a high, with a depression SE of us. We passed the Rock of Gibraltar on a broad reach 25 hours later in 15 knot winds. All augured well and we were looking forward to Sunday afternoon going along the now Atlantic coast to Barabate. Over by Morocco, we noticed some heavy puffy, orographic lifting cumulus clouds: this happens where the air mass is forced up over the mountains. The air condenses to form the clouds. We noted but thought little of it.

By 13.00 the barometric pressure was dropping a millibar an hour and the wind was now gusting 35 knots. Over the previous 24 hours, the barometric pressure had dropped 11 millibars. We had three reefs in the main sail, surfing down the waves comfortably, at speeds over 8 knots, by Tarifa. This is typical for here. We thought it would reduce, but alas, that was not to be.

The sea continued to build as the barometric pressure continued to fall at 1 millibar per hour. The wind kept rising and gusting. By 14.30, we were down to bare poles, heading SW to clear the Trafalgar Banks. By 18.00, we had battened everything down. We attempted to reef the Bimini, (stow) but were forced to remove it, so Bimini was now under bare poles also. Wash boards were locked in place, with full heavy weather gear including harnesses clipped on and bunnets deployed. We were prepared.

At 18.30 *Polynya* was pooped from astern and the winds were a steady 40 knots gusting 50 knots, a force 9/10. A safe port in these SE winds was not an option. Most were exposed to SE at the entrance and with the shallow water close to shore, it was too risky. So we took the decision to head to the safety of the sea and trust the well-founded Rustler 36.

By 20.20 we had cleared all dangers, shallows and coastal deep sea traffic. We made a decision to lie a-hull under bare poles. We had one person on watch down below, with the others sleeping soundly. The wind did not abate until Monday 05.00, by which time we had drifted some 15 miles NW. By 06.15 we had sufficient daylight to set a course of 030 for Cadiz, 21 miles off, with a reefed Genoa and motor. By 08.45 we were able to sail under single reefed mainsail and a 3/4 Genoa. At 11.00 we entered the Cadiz main buoyed Channel, tying up at Real Club Nautico de Puerto Santa Maria, all fast alongside at noon. The wind piped up further in the afternoon. We are convinced we were at the centre of the depression at 05.00, with the barometer recording its lowest at 1005.8. We have since learnt from other master mariners who regularly transited the straights of Gibraltar, that this weather phenomenon is often encountered. So yachtsmen be warned. Expect the unexpected in this area, ensure boat and crew are prepared.

At Real Club Nautico we got a great reception. It is a must stop for anyone passing Cadiz, a club with a welcome, style and charm. Two days later we headed for Ayamonte at the mouth of the River Guadiana. A very pleasant Andalusian town with many good restaurants and a handy supermarket by the marina. A detour 23 miles up River to Sanlucar de Guadiana is worthwhile. The river is the border between Spain and Portugal, with a one hour time difference over the 70 metres at Sanlucar. We then headed to the Algarve, stopping in Albufeira and onto Portomio, which has a lovely Marina, giving neighboring Lagos competition for best marina in the Algarve. Portomio also boasts a sheltered anchorage by a beach in the outer Harbour. I sadly departed the fine yacht *Polynya* at Lagos at the western entry to the Algarve. From Lagos to Cadiz are some of the finest cruising grounds in Southern Europe, with good anchorages, marinas, restaurants, boatyards and easy access via Faro airport. It also has great value for wintering on the hard or in the water. But beware, for high winds and seas can pop up very quickly, particularly around Tarrifa. Coastal sailing in May along the Algarve and Andalusian coast, despite the sunshine, is not always benign.

Jill Cross describes an Adriatic Adventure.

My husband Dan and I were invited to my brother Neil's old stomping ground, the Adriatic, where we sailed on board his 57ft sloop *Imagine*, which was previously owned by Bruno Troblé. She is a twin-rudder, lifting-keel, water-ballasted carbon rigged cruiser. With Neil Kenefick (ICC) as skipper, Glynn Meredith (RORC), Nigel Brooks (RCC) and Dan Cross (ICC) on board, we set off from Corfu.

The staff at Toulas restaurant in Agni welcomed Neil back like an old pal and we dined on delicious dentex fish to mark the beginning of our Adriatic adventure. Glynn had remarked that he loved waking up on the crystal-clear waters of Agni and watching the bay 'come alive gradually', but our wakeup call was quite different. At 07.00 the tranquillity was shattered by the loud clattering of a JCB grooming the stony beach on shore. We departed for Dubrovnik at 11.00 With zero wind, we had to motor all day at 8.5-9 knots with keel up.

Then at 18.30, the engine stopped abruptly. We had zero wind – glass. We tried to contact *Armonia*, a New Zealand yacht which we were cruising in convoy with but had no response. After consultations and a few visits to the engine room we were on our way. Dinner of Neil's finest chicken spuds and veg was washed down with Rioja as we watched the sunset, catching a dazzling flash of green light that illuminated the sky.

I went on watch at 05.00. There was a magical sunrise, made all the more special by breaching dolphins alongside the boat. This is the Adriatic at its best. Landfall was Cavtat but Neil suggested a detour to Montenegro. As we sailed down the Bay of Kotor, we were flanked by imposing peaks on either side. With the mountains rising up out of the sea to a height of 3000 feet, one cannot be but impressed by the sheer beauty of this part of the world. Motoring up past Zelenika, we saw old Soviet submarine pens and an abandoned naval shipyard but cranes showed signs of development, with little resorts on the shores and hamlets high up in mountains.

We went right up to top of 'Ria' to Kotor. We could see up past a church on to a great wall. It reminded me of Macchu Picchu. An absolutely sublime trip. Awestruck by the landscape, we were very grateful to Neil for seizing the opportunity to see this natural wonder. After clearing custom formalities in Cavtat, we motored on to Dubrovnik. The dramatic townscape of Dubrovnik matched the drama that was unfolding on board. The bow thruster jammed. Then diesel started pouring out onto the deck owing to a faulty valve. Luckily we were on a marina. A diver dislodged a pink net on the prop and we washed down the deck after solving the diesel debacle. There was only one way to deal with the day we'd had and all was soon forgotten after a few drinks with friends on *Armonia*. Later that evening we had dinner in the beautiful old town of Dubrovnik.

After breakfast in town, I was unfortunate enough to twist my ankle, so we stocked up on ice before getting back on board. With the sun on our backs, we motored the narrow channel of Miljet and onto the old town of Korčula, where we enjoyed a long lunch of the best tuna steaks I've ever had in a restaurant overlooking *Imagine*, berthed at the marina.

From there it was onto the 'St Tropez of the Adriatic', Hvar. An explosion of sights and sounds, it's a vibrant cosmopolitan hub full of fun for all ages. United with the *Armonia* crew and after dining on a feast of lobster, shrimp and scallops at the Macondo restaurant, we made our way to the legendary Hula Hula bar for a few sundowners. There I took in the sunset surrounded by seven males who made revelry at the expense of New Zealand rugby.

The next day we departed Hvar for Vis taking in Zori en route. At Vis we got a great welcome in Neil's favourite restaurant, Pajod. The next three days we cruised among the Kornati National Park archipelago. Made up of 89 separate islands, islets and rocks, it is almost completely devoid of human settlement. We anchored in the beautiful bay of Zut and ate at Konoba Sabuni restaurant. This is the only building on the island and serves nothing but big fish and thirst-quenching ice-cold beer.

The next day we lunched at Pasma in the north of the Kornatis. We had the whole restaurant to ourselves. The owner had caught a selection of fresh fish that morning and barbequed them on a crackling timber bonfire as we took in the scenery. After lunch we sailed up to Preko on the island of Ugljan, where *Imagine* has been based for the last seven years. There Neil, Glynn and Nigel took a water taxi to Zadar, whence they flew to Dublin with Ryanair.

Dan and I stayed on board *Imagine* in Preko and explored the island, including the new resort/marina complex of Sutomiscica. We visited Zadar and saw the Museum of Ancient Glass which offers outstanding views overlooking Jazine harbour. Later that day we had the thrill of witnessing some 3,500 Vespa scooters rally through the town. We also took some time to hear the enchanting sea organ, an experimental musical instrument that plays music by way of sea waves and tubes located underneath a set of large marble steps. To mark the end of our wonderful holiday we dined at Foša restaurant, which serves the best of what Dalmatian cuisine has to offer.

In total, we travelled approximately 500 miles in what was a truly magical and unforgettable trip.



View from hilltop over Konoba Zakan with *Imagine* at Anchor

A Norwegian Cruise

Michael and Anne Madsen



(Note: for chartlets covering the area of this cruise, refer to Donal Walsh's log on *Lady Kate*, pp10 onwards. - Ed)

Summer 2015 was to be the season of unfinished business. In 2014 we had planned to cruise from Dun Laoghaire to Iceland and at the eleventh hour, owing to a crew emergency, we decided to abort the planned cruise when we were within three days of leaving Stornoway. Right or wrong decision – who knows? Subsequently we spent Summer 2014 cruising the west coast of Scotland in Mediterranean-type weather.

Back to 2015 and while ruminating over another attempt at Iceland, Norway seemed to become slowly more attractive – better scenery, better weather and a less hazardous open sea passage. Plus during the previous winter Anne had arranged a trip to Reykjavik to see the Northern Lights, which took the sting out of the disappointment over the failed cruise. So Norway became the new destination.

Our boat is *Gabelle*, a 1992 Sadler Starlight 35 designed by Stephen Jones. Because of the prep work done for Iceland in 2014, little work was required for Norway. We reinsulated the fridge (going inside the Arctic Circle!), bought a new 110% genoa, got a new AIS transponder unit (linked to the chart plotter and laptop) and made a host of other “cosmetic/comfort” changes and we were ready for the off. Or so I thought.

While doing the planning, the devil was surely in the detail. The basic plan was to leave Dun Laoghaire and go up the Scottish west coast, around Cape Wrath and on to Orkney and Shetland, cross the North Sea, go as fast as possible north to Bodø and start leisurely cruising around the Lofoten and Vesterålen Islands. Then return slowly south to Ålesund and possibly to Bergen and Stavanger before recrossing the North Sea, through the Caledonian Canal and home.

Cruising the Norwegian coastline as we had planned would require many charts. Strings of islands (rocks) along most of the coast, with a multitude of leads and long winding fjords, would demand more accessible information than the electronic Navionics charts could provide. Jennifer Guinness to the rescue! After being introduced at our inaugural ICC dinner in Killarney, Jennifer kindly loaned some 150 charts from the Norwegian Hydrographic Service (NSKV), which although dating from the 1970s, proved invaluable in guiding us through the various leads going north and south (not to mention the beneficial effect on my bank balance – NSKV charts are very expensive). Other sources of cruising information were the RCCPF publication Norway, the UK Cruising Association publication – Norway and the Norwegian Cruising Guide by Phyllis Nickel and John Harries (published by Attainable Adventures).

So we had a well set-up boat, plenty of help for navigating our way out and back – the missing ingredient, good crew! Apart from Anne and me, we were joined by my brother-in-law Phil, fresh from a Competent Crew course and keen as mustard, Mark, a tried and trusted crew from previous adventures and Tom and Ellen, sailing companions from our dinghy days in GP14s. And did I mention Buddy, our two-year old springer spaniel? Buddy tolerates sailing, enjoys it when playing ball in the confines of the cockpit, needs TLC when things get bumpy and roly and really prefers dry land – but his energy is infectious. He sleeps in the ‘Dog House’, otherwise known as the aft cabin, with me. Buddy was to accompany us to his holiday camp outside Oban. Anne’s sister Pat and her husband Fedor would care for him in the Glens, plenty of forests and rivers – “paradise” says Buddy!

Dun Laoghaire To Oban

Dun Laoghaire - Malahide – Ardglass – Glenarm – Port Ellen – Kerrera/Oban

Total: 229nm

Beset by a multitude of last minute problems/delays, we (Michael, Anne and Buddy) eventually cast off from the marina in Dun Laoghaire on Saturday 30th May, heading to Malahide, a grand distance of 14nm, just to get moving and cut the home ties. Heavy weather was expected later on Saturday and into Sunday and Monday, so we decided Malahide was better than Ardglass. From Malahide we motor sailed to Ardglass and ducked for cover as more strong winds came in.

This was to be our tale as we sailed/motored northwards; strong, mainly northerly wind (or no wind), rain and cold. The Arctic Circle seemed to have moved south. From Ardglass we sailed to Glenarm, lost three more days due to bad weather, crossed the North Channel in northerlies to Port Ellen, and then on to Oban Marina on the island of Kerrera, connected to Oban by an hourly ferry. We spotted a minke whale about 20 metres off our starboard side, close to Skervuile Lighthouse in the Sound of Jura.

In Oban we threw Buddy overboard into the welcoming arms of Pat and Fedor. By this stage he had found his sea legs and had performed heroically, maintaining good bladder control on the long passages of up to 10 hours. But the more serious business of making up lost time was upon us. It was now 9th June, a delay of six days on our planned arrival in Oban. We were now in an optimistic frame of mind and decided to continue north to Cape Wrath and onwards and not take the calmer route through the Caledonian Canal.

Oban To Lerwick

Kerrera/Oban – Mallaig – Lochinver – Kinlochbervie – Stromness – Lerwick

Total: 373 nm

Phil joined us in Oban and we left on 11th June for Mallaig, then on to Lochinver and arrived at Kinlochbervie on

13th June, seeing plenty of snow on the Highland peaks on both south and north facing slopes. A last minute decision before leaving home was to bring the Nespresso, a great decision in hindsight. It made early morning departures in the biting cold much more bearable. Yes, we're becoming softies! There was also plenty of marine life to be seen in Kyle Rhea, between Skye and the Scottish mainland – innumerable seals lying on the rocky shores in the weak early morning sun. Some four sea otters also appeared, crisscrossing the narrow channel in the strong ebb tide. While searching for the local pub in Kinlochbervie, we met the intrepid ICC member Donal Walsh and Clare (*Lady Kate/Dungarvan*) on a similar mission. We enjoyed some welcome pints in the hard-to-find pub and discovered that Donal and Clare were also heading to Norway.

A 13-hour motorsail saw us in Stromness after a cold, light-wind passage, passing the Old Man of Hoy and entering the narrows of Hoy Sound doing 12 kts SOG – spring tides were approaching. After a welcome meal in the Stromness Hotel, we hit the bunks early, too tired for any game of Scrabble or Bananas, staple evening entertainment on board. Three further days were lost due to adverse weather and we duly explored Stromness and Orkney by foot and hired car. I can highly recommend the Maritime Museum in Stromness, packed to the rafters with interesting objects, information on ships etc, and a large section devoted to the famous Arctic explorer John Rae, who discovered the final portion of the North West Passage and reported on the fate of the Franklin expedition. Born in Orkney, his grave is in the grounds of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall.

The exit from Stromness through Hoy Sound can be difficult/dangerous in strong wind against tide conditions and even with a light 10 kts westerly breeze on the nose, and an ebb tide of 5 kts when leaving, we had to thread our way out through large patches of breakers which stretched across the Sound. We made an overnight passage from Stromness to Lerwick, 21 hours motorsailing in light north westerlies, leaving Fair Isle to starboard in the distance and tied up on the Lerwick pontoons at 13.00 on Saturday 20th June. *Lady Kate* arrived and rafted up outside us.

Lerwick was a busy port, cruise ships coming and going, their tenders displacing unlucky yachts on sections of the pontoons, two large converted cruise ships berthed on the quays serving as accommodation vessels for migrant workers employed on the conversion of the Sullom Voe terminal from oil to gas. Strong cold winds and rain kept us in port for the following three days as a number of lows moved through. Even the locals were complaining of the cold. We went to an enjoyable Shetland Fiddlers Concert in Lerwick where the radiators were on full blast and you still could wear a sweater – and this was 22nd June.

A weather window was appearing for a departure on Wednesday, 24th June, which would allow us to cross the North Sea to in Norway. This was timely as it allowed us (and some 5 or 6 other yachts, including *Lady Kate*) to leave before the expected arrival of about 20 yachts from Norway on the Bergen to Lerwick Annual Race commemorating the WWII Shetland Bus (now a booze-buying convoy).

We left Lerwick at 15.50 on Wednesday 24th June in favourable conditions with westerly winds 12-15 kts. It had taken us 28 days to travel from Dun Laoghaire to Lerwick, which included 13 days of weather delays, but now we were only five days behind our planned schedule. Things were looking up.

Crossing The North Sea – Lerwick To Ålesund

Total: 269nm

This 47-hour passage proved to be the best sailing of the whole cruise, with winds from the northwest varying from 10-20 kts, allowing us to make good time in relatively good conditions – and it was getting warmer. We agreed our watch roster and Phil was eager to test himself on his first proper overnight watch. Traffic avoidance and charging the batteries via the Duogen became the priority. At 05.15 on the 25th June, we spotted our first oil rig in the UK sector. Soon we were in the thick of them, carving our way through the Brent platforms, and then Sod's Law, visibility deteriorated, a thick fog descended. The rigs disappeared, reappeared and disappeared again. The rigs were not appearing on the AIS screen, only the guard/supply boats, so three pairs of eyes were drilling through the fog for a few hours. Crossing into the Norwegian sector the fog lifted, and blue skies and sunshine appeared – what a difference it made. With the clearing skies, the wind soon dropped to 5-10 kts and we turned on the engine. Anne hoisted the Norwegian courtesy flag and a supper of spagbol was prepared as we readied ourselves for a second night in good conditions. At 06.20 on Friday 26th June the Norwegian coast appeared as the wind almost disappeared and traffic increased. We passed, at a good distance off, the infamous Statt Headland (and wondered what all the fuss was about) They are currently seriously considering building a shipping tunnel through the Statt Headland. Ålesund beckoned, and what a welcome, blue skies and sunshine, temperature of 20° degrees and higher. Had we arrived mistakenly in the Med? No, there was plenty of snow on the surrounding mountain tops and slopes, gleaming in the sunlight, to reassure us that this was Norway. Being early in the sailing season there was space available on the pontoons and we tied up at 15.36 on Friday 26th June.

We again met up with *Lady Kate* and had a celebratory drink on board to mark our arrival – and Donal was warming up at last after the cold of the past few weeks. Saturday morning was spent pouring over charts, getting a feel for the various leads along the coast, and plotting courses for the next few days. Then in the afternoon we explored. Mt Aksla, 418 steps high and overlooking the town provided stunning views of the fjords and surrounding chains of islands, a must do for any visitor. Ålesund is also renowned for its Art Nouveau buildings, as the town was rebuilt in 1904 after a major fire destroyed much of it.

I needed to now make decisions about the planned crew changes at Bodø, some 400nm north of Ålesund. We were 5 days behind schedule. Phil was flying home from Bodø and Mark was arriving, both on the same day, Friday 3rd June.

Could we complete the passage in time or did we need to reschedule the crew changes with ensuing inconvenience and cost for all involved? “Yes we can”, became the rallying cry.

Ålesund To Bodø

Ålesund –Kristiansund – Rørvik – Bodø

Total: 401 nm

We decided to do an ‘express train’ passage north, doing some overnight passages, aided by 24-hour daylight and good settled weather. The fly in the ointment was the need to do a lot of intricate passage planning.

We reluctantly left sunny Ålesund at 07.00 on Sunday 28th June, bound for Kristiansund. The wind was 10-12 kts on the nose as we motorsailed through the leads, constantly changing direction, sometimes getting some drive from the mainsail, carefully watching the traffic all moving past, motorboats, high-speed ferries, cargo ships, Hurtigruten ferries, not to mention the fish farms around every corner and headland (all extremely well marked and maintained). The route to Kristiansund passed the Hustadvika, a dangerous 13nm stretch of water in which unpredictable wave patterns can be experienced, and which merits special mention in the Norwegian Marine weather reports. A navigator has the choice of an Outer Lead, an Inner Lead or an Inner Inner Lead. We hedged our bets and opted for the middle route via the Inner Lead. Once again, what was all the fuss about? Navigation was tiring but satisfying, seeing the many islands and low lying rocks pass us by as our confidence grew. Important lessons on using chart plotters were quickly reinforced – chart plotters are not “real time” and vector charts need to be zoomed continuously. Kristiansund was reached at 20.00 on Sunday evening and we were welcomed on to the pontoon by *Lady Kate*, who had arrived a short time earlier.

A fast turnaround and next day, Monday 29th June at 12.40, we left Kristiansund for Rørvik, an overnight passage of 152nm which lasted 26 hours. The weather was misty and rainy with slack winds. We quickly got into our watch routine again and Phil graduated to completing log entries. Traffic was plentiful and fast, the rain was heavy and the wind swung round to south west, blowing 20 kts up the transom. We decided to motorsail, dropping the mainsail because of the restricted space for gybing and the need for rest and sleep for off-duty crew. A minke whale was spotted and lots of dolphins also. We reached Rørvik at 15.30 on Tuesday 30th June and, because we bypassed Trondheim, we were now back on schedule, a good feeling. Rørvik was an interesting old port, gulls had taken over many of the wooden dock buildings where they built their nests on roofs, gutters, window ledges and the resulting smell and noise made it a memorable visit.

The next trip was to be another overnight to Bodø, 184nm and 30 hours. An engine check next morning revealed significant water mixing with the diesel in the primary filter. We changed the filter and were ready to go. The weather was a repeat of the previous days, west and southerly winds plus heavy mist. We departed Rørvik at 10.00 on Wednesday 1st June. Everything wet, lots of traffic, we were kept on our toes. We passed a “major” milestone at 07.00 on Thursday 2nd July crossing the Arctic Circle. Phil had secretly bought a bottle of champagne (a small bottle, it was Norway after all) and prepared Bucks Fizz for all, a nice early morning pick-me-up, and the first time we’d broken our ‘dry boat’ rule. Never mind, it was a good feeling and things were going well.

From Rørvik the scenery was spectacular; you run out of superlatives to describe it. From Kristiansund to Rørvik, the focus was on the islands and the coastal scenery, which was relatively flat. But now we were into high snow-capped mountain ranges flanking the fjords and the magnificent Svartisen Glacier lurking in the background. At first it seems to be low cloud and then reality dawned, this was the glacier continuing for mile after mile, appearing and disappearing between and behind the peaks. Svartisen is the 2nd largest glacier in Europe (Norway also has the largest) but more anon.



Gabelle At Svartisen Glacier

With the high peaks came the sea eagles; four were spotted over a few hours. Passing through the narrow passages at Rødøy, Meløy and around Støtt, we knew we were reaching into the real “hidden” Norway. About six hours to Bodø, things were going too well! Off watch in the saloon, I heard a new sound from the engine, so, off with the engine box cover and I found the alternator belt had started to fray, rubbing off a small “snot” of paint on the pulley. To change or not? – the canvas belt cover had torn off in a few places but the belt rubber appeared undamaged. We left it, kept checking it and it lasted to Bodø. The last hour into Bodø brought very heavy rain which lasted almost 24 hours into Friday but we happily tied up in the marina at 18.30 on Thursday 2nd July, three happy campers despite

the downpour and we had arrive on time for the crew changeover in Norway.

A good celebratory dinner in a harbour side restaurant and drinks in a 17 storey high rooftop bar capped off a good day.

Crew change happened on Friday, Phil leaving in the morning rain to return to Aberdeen and Mark arriving from Dublin in the evening in the rain, albeit warm rain. I found the Yanmar agent for my alternator belt spare and in the process got thoroughly soaked. Much better weather on Saturday, sunny and warm and the day was spent doing engine maintenance – what a waste. On Sunday we explored Bodø but before that we discovered we had a leaking fresh water tank which we attempted to repair, not very successfully, but it was not a major problem yet. Next stop the Lofoten Islands.

Bodø To Lofoten And VesterÅLen Islands And Back Again

Bodø - Skutvik - Lødingen - Harstad - Sortland - Trollfjord - Svolvær - Henningsvær - Reine - Bodø

Total: 318nm

Now we could relax, we were on schedule for our cruise and we were in the “real” Norway, old red timber buildings built on wooden stilts growing out of the rocky shoreline, small wooden pontoons seemingly everywhere, Norwegian sailors



Summer houses - Austvagoya.

tides separating the mainland from Hinnøy, part of the Vesterålen Islands. The scenery had changed once more to low hills and a pastoral coastline. We decided not to go to Tromsø because of time constraints with our crew. A disappointment but that would be offset by spending more time in the Lofoten Islands later.

Friday 10th July was spent in Harstad chilling out and enjoying the warm sunny weather.

Saturday brought us from Harstad on Hinnøy to Sortland on Langøy. Leaving Harstad at 08.30, fuelling up, we reached our most northerly point 68°59'N and passed through Risøyrennon, the marked narrows (very) in the north part of Risøysund. It was a scenic passage of 47nm, about 8 hours, getting some sailing in and arrived in Sortland at 17.15. What a disappointment on a fine Saturday evening. A pleasant town would be the kindest thing to say about it. We looked forward to moving on next day.

Our objective was Trollfjord on Sunday, a passage of 28nm to one of the jewels in the Vesterålen, a mini fjord. We left Sortland at 11.30 in warm sunshine, passed through the Raftsund – wonderful scenery with mountains and waterfalls and small villages jumbled together. To the west of the Raftsund, we turned into a very short, narrow, shallow channel which was a short cut into the Trollfjord (on a “technical” note, Navionics showed a depth of 22 ft but SeaPro on our laptop showed zero cut – not good).

Trollfjord is about 2nm in length and about 100m wide with steep sides but very deep. We entered and went to the head of the fjord, saw the small 2-boat pontoon was full, turned about to head out again but then spotted one motorboat

all very friendly, almost everyone with impeccable English. Pity about the price of alcohol though – Irish habits of having a bottle of wine at dinner had to change rapidly to having a single glass or so. We left Bodø on Monday 6th July at 11.55 for Skutvika, 64nm away, motor sailing and rock hopping among the leads. We rafted up at 23.45. Next day brought strong winds so we stayed put – an excuse for Mark to go swimming inside the Arctic Circle off a nice sandy beach. Verdict was ‘cold but manageable, not much different from Ireland’. Wednesday saw us leaving Skutvika for Lødingen, a trip of 34nm heading into light headwinds. On passage we had good views of Stettinden, Norway’s national mountain (I still don’t know why it is so called, it is not the largest mountain).

Next day, Thursday, tidal considerations had us leaving Lødingen at midday for Harstad, 34nm away. It was a cool day to start but warmed up on arrival at the pontoon in Harstad at 17.00. We had passed through the Tjeldsund and Steinlandestraum, narrow passages with strong



Mark's Arctic Swim! Skutvika

was leaving, so we returned and tied up. It was like a magical amphitheatre (an open air concert was held here two days previously), sitting on board in the sun and watching the Hurtigruten cruise ships performing 360° turns in the confines of the fjord, the bow and stern almost kissing the fjord sides as the passengers were showered from the waterfalls. We went for a short hike for about two hours, hot and sticky with lots of midges – it was good to return to the boat.

We were now in the Lofoten Islands but time was passing fast. We left Trollfjord on Monday 13th July, passing many boats arriving for day trips, and headed for Svolvær, the capital of the Lofotens. Weatherwise, in Irish parlance it was a scorcher - t-shirts and shorts were required. A short passage of 15nm brought us to the harbour, jammed with motorboats and yachts, so we rafted up 3-deep, with great views of the famous Svolvær Goat Mountain from the cockpit. Next day another short journey brought us to Henningsvær, a small traditional fishing village with many arts and craft shops - a bit like West Cork. Drying cod on racks could be seen in all the warehouses and the docks. In better fishing days you could cross the harbour by stepping from boat to boat in the winter season.

We moved on to Reine on Wednesday, a harbour in a spectacular mountain setting.

A crew change was coming up on Friday, so we sailed from Reine back to Bodø on Thursday, 16th July, a trip of 55nm, accompanied at times by a small pod of Whitebeard Dolphins. We entered Bodø marina at 16.30, just before the mass arrival of more motor boats.

Next day, Friday 17th July, Mark left at 05.00 and our new crew, Tom and Ellen, arrived in the evening. The weekend was spent doing engine checks, routes and chilling out and exploring – Tom visited the Aviation Museum and found it very interesting.

Bodø To Ålesund

Bodø – Sørfugløy – Engen – Halså – Tonnes – Brønnøysund – Rørvik – Kurinvågen – Brekstad – Magerøya – Kristiansund – Ålesund

Total: 446nm

We were now officially on our way back home. We left Bodø on Monday 20th July for a 21nm trip to Sørfugløy, a remote island only occupied by summer residents and very peaceful. Next day, Tuesday, we left early at 06.00. We were heading for the Svartisen Glacier and arrived at Engen on a rickety pontoon, hired bikes and set off for the glacier. It was an adventurous day for some of us, part cycling, part walking, crossing rope bridges, rock climbing and almost falling into the glacial river - it doesn't help when you don't keep to the designated paths. After our glacier experience we headed that evening for Halså for an overnight stay on the pontoon, me being tired and shaken.

We cast off on Wednesday, moving on to Tonnes, passing the Arctic Circle sculpture on Vikingen, then on Thursday we motorsailed 69nm to Brønnøysund where we stayed two nights owing to adverse weather. The next port of call was Rørvik, where we arrived on Saturday 25th July into a packed harbour, everyone there for a major rock festival. On our way to Rørvik we made a diversion to see Torghatten, the famous Hole in the Mountain. A quick exit next morning saw us heading to Kuringvågen, a sail of 62nm. Then on Tuesday on to Brekstad, a holiday resort with a fast ferry connection to Trondheim. We visited Trondheim and Nidaros Cathedral – it was St Olaf's Day, a major day of pilgrimage and the cathedral grounds were a melee of pilgrims from Norway and afar. Back that evening to our boat at Brekstad and on next day to Magerøy, a lovely desolate island with a small pontoon and a maritime museum.

The weather was changing for the worse, wind and rain arriving again. After two nights in Magerøy, we moved on to Kristiansund where we spent three days, partly due to weather but also getting help in rectifying an electrical problem. From Kristiansund we headed back to Ålesund, a motorsail of 64nm. Having left Bodø on Monday 27th July, we travelled 446nm in 16 days, with weather/engine delays of five days.

In Ålesund we treated ourselves to a day cruise on the Hurtigruten *Midnasol* to the Geirangerfjord (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) – recommended, luxurious and let someone else do the driving!

A weather window was beckoning next day, Thursday 6th August for our crossing back over the North Sea to Lerwick. We had decided to postpone our plans to go south to Bergen and Stavanger – no time, best kept for another year.

Crossing The North Sea – Ålesund To Lerwick

Total: 276nm

After engine checks and refuelling, we made way at 13.40. The forecast was iffy, could be this or could be that, but nothing serious either way. We set sail with an easterly breeze, perfect, then it went north and increased to a F4/5 and the sea state became very roly. We cleared the TSS and the wind swung again into the south west. With wind and tide against us, we turned on the engine to help us maintain a decent speed. Passing through the oil fields we transferred fuel from the cans into the main tank before darkness descended. We had left the 24-hour days of daylight long behind us. We were tacking back and forth trying to maximise the drive from the sails and also avoiding the many fishing boats about. After the second night and into day 3 of the crossing, the wind freed up, it went into the north and we were “sucking diesel”. Would we get in before nightfall? No, at 22.45 hrs on Saturday 8th August we rafted on the Lerwick pontoons, tired but happy.

Tom and Ellen left on the ferry to Aberdeen on Monday, leaving Anne and me alone for the first time in almost nine weeks. Lerwick was again very busy with cruise ships and yachts returning to base, either in the UK or Norway, the sailing season drifting to an end.



Ålesund - last night in Norway

Lerwick To Inverness

Lerwick – Kirkwall – Wick – Inverness

Total: 229 nm

We left Lerwick, 2-up, on Wednesday 12th August, intending to do an overnight passage to Kirkwall in Orkney. Winds were light and southerly and after avoiding many fishing fleets (the majority sending no AIS signals – a complete contrast to Norway, where AIS transponders were the norm for all vessels), we arrived in Kirkwall at 11.20 on Thursday. We had a polite but very firm grilling from a Border Control RIB which came alongside us as we entered the harbour – not as pleasant as a similar incident conducted on VHF with a Norwegian Coastguard vessel at Brønnøysund.

We cast off from Kirkwall on Saturday bound for Wick. Winds were moderate from the Northwest but created a huge swell that pushed us down the Scottish east coast and this created a tricky situation entering Wick Marina basin from the main drying harbour, our boat being

lifted and twisted through the narrow entrance. Safely inside, we came alongside the pontoon, then disaster struck – Anne hopped down from the boat and her knee collapsed under her. I finished tying up the boat but Anne's knee was badly twisted. From 2up we were now 1+1/2 up?

With Anne's knee heavily strapped we continued next day to Inverness, through the Moray Firth getting a foul tide at the Kessock Bridge. We tied up at 19.30 and began thinking ahead about the Caledonian Canal.

Caledonian Canal – Clachnaharry To Corpach

Total: 50nm

The canal trip was expected to be a relaxing, non-stressful passage. Both Anne and I were beginning to feel tired, both mentally and physically fatigued. We had to negotiate 29 locks and 10 swing bridges which lay ahead of us, and we were, as previously mentioned, just 1+1/2 up.

Suffice to say that it was very stressful and tiring, despite the best efforts of the lockkeepers. We were making feeble attempts at throwing the line up to the lock attendants, lines getting jammed in cleats on an emptying lock – it was a nightmare of our own making. Loch Ness was a welcome relief, motoring in light headwinds; not so in Loch Lochy with 25kt headwinds reducing our boat speed to under 2 kts at times.

Our dog, Buddy, was reluctantly returned to us in Fort Augustus, a welcome distraction. After spending a few days resting at various places in the Canal, we exited at Corpach on Saturday morning, 22nd August and made for Dunstaffnage Marina outside Oban.

Oban To Dun Laoghaire

Oban/Dunstaffnage – Craobh – Port Ellen – Glenarm – Bangor – Ardglass – Dun Laoghaire

Total: 265nm

After resting in Dunstaffnage we departed from the pontoon at 13.35 on Monday 24th August. Just as we left the main channel in the marina, I lost all thrust from the engine – was it a throttle or gear cable failure? Neither, we had lost our propeller. A quick U-turn, a slow return to the outside pontoon and a lasso of a cleat and we were secured. We quickly established that we were propless. Another fine mess etc.... A local diver went down twice to search for the prop but to no avail. We organised a liftout, put on our spare fixed three-blade prop and prepared to go again on Sunday 30th August. The prop we lost was a Brunton Autoprop and it was caused by a shearing of the prop/shaft key, which I believe in turn was caused by a failure in the hull anode protection system.

Tired and humbled, but not beaten, the two crew plus dog continued on to Craobh and Port Ellen. We sheltered from strong northerlies for a day, and then had a sleigh ride across the North Channel to Glenarm. We sheltered again for a day, experiencing a huge surge inside Glenarm Marina, nonstop rocking and rolling, then left on Friday 4th September for Bangor. North winds of 20/25 kts didn't slow us down but made for very awkward seas before and after The Maidens. Arriving in Bangor, we rested for a day and discovered a very dog friendly hotel/restaurant, The Salty Dog, opposite the marina - recommended.

With the north winds easing, the passage from Bangor to Ardglass was pleasant and on Monday 7th September we left Ardglass for our final run home to Dun Laoghaire, and in the process, seeing two basking sharks about 1nm apart north of Lambay Island.

After a total of 2,856nm and almost 15 weeks away, with many great highs and a couple of horrible lows along the way, but boy, were we happy and relieved to be home. As for how Buddy felt, don't ask!

It was a memorable and highly enjoyable cruise, one of our best I believe.

Mary P cruising in the Baltic

Neil J. Prendeville & Crew

When the 2014 cruising season ended, I asked my fellow members of Kinsale Yacht Club if they would be interested in a six-week cruise to the Baltic Sea. At first the replies were “too cold; ice bergs; oil rigs; north sea too rough; too expensive”, etc. However when they read the website of the World Cruising Club concerning the ‘ARC Baltic’, I got a very good response from KYC members Nigel Dann, John O’Regan, Dominic Falvey, Paul & Mary Cotter, and Tom & Pat Salter. The itinerary would start in Hohe Düne, Rostock followed by, Ronne, Bornholm, Visby, Gotland, Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Helsinki, Mariehamn, Aland, Stockholm and finally ending in Kalmar, Sweden.

The biggest problem was how to get *Mary P* up to and back from the Baltic so I made contact with an old friend, a French man named Guy Kettells, who is an ex coxswain of the St. Malo lifeboat and a single handed sailor who has come to Kinsale many times in the past in his own 30ft yacht. He volunteered to cruise the *Mary P* to the Baltic and back to Kinsale with his own French crew.

Mary P was laid up in Kinsale boat yard for the winter and a full maintenance programme conducted; the liferaft, EPIRB, Flares, lifejackets, harness, paper charts etc. were updated to comply with the organiser’s safety requirements.

A major setback was the prohibitive cost of the C -Map NT+ discs for my out of date Raymarine chart plotter. So we downloaded Navionics charts on to two Apple iPads and a separate programme for a computer. The use of iPads for navigation was very effective during the trip. The Navionics software allowed navigation through the Finnish and Swedish archipelagos without having to enter multiple waypoints. The large screen and zoom feature was much easier to use than the conventional chart plotters.

The adventure started when *Mary P* participated in the KYC rally to the Isles of Scilly on the weekend of 5th June 2015, with a delivery crew of Neil, Seamus Caher, Tom Salter, and Cillian Campbell. We had a little drama when fuel ran out when picking up the moorings in St Mary’s; later the fuel gauge and a torn mainsail had to be repaired. We met the Ocean Cruising Club port officer, Dr. Davis, who very graciously gave us a tour of the Island. After a few pints in the Mermaid Pub and a meal in the Atlantic Hotel, we provisioned up the boat and headed for Jersey with a favourable weather forecast of 4/5 knots but we ended up motor sailing to maintain 5.5kts so that we could enter the Jersey Marina with a 2.3m height over the sill. While in Jersey we enjoyed meals in the ‘la Taverne’ restaurant. The hospitality and meals in the St Helier Yacht Club were excellent.

Guy took over as skipper for the onward trip to the Baltic. Departed 16.45 heading for Guernsey. after a few hours rounded the south corner of Jersey wind on the nose as usual so back to the Iron sail with a +COG 320

Arrived Guernsey about 22.00; the forecast was not ideal for the direction we wanted to go, so stayed on in Guernsey for another day.

Weather much improved on 16th so the skipper decided to leave heading towards Dunkirk, left about 10.30 because needed to pass through Raz Blanchard (at St. Malo -2 hours tide table) no wind so motoring all the way to make it. Ended up crossing Raz at 18.30.

Departed next day (17th) heading east, weather forecast south west force 6 with gusts. Sea was getting rough especially as we approached straits of Calais; decided to put in a reef and reduce headsail. Visibility was getting poor also so decided to head for Boulogne; arrived 21.30, we were checked thoroughly by customs as three Frenchmen on an Irish registered boat heading east aroused the suspicions of the French customs. Fortunately, the crew did have a letter from Neil explaining all.

Thursday 18th: forecast was a good 15-20 knots, north west with gusts, departed about 14.00 and had great passage until wind totally died then had to motor so decided to put into Calais instead and arrived 22.00.

Tied up on waiting moorings but very busy port ferry coming and going every 30 mins.

Departed Calais for Ijmuiden, Netherlands at 05.00 on the 18th; out of the shipping channel 09.00. Passed Rugtingen and Hinder buoys on the way wind finally died about 18.30; engine on.

Wind started coming again after midnight 4-5 heading towards the Hook of Holland. Passed the Hook about 06.00 with a rough sea and a lot of traffic. Had to wait for Ijmuiden TC for permission to cross. Finally entered Ijmuiden harbour at 14.00 but not very safe with strong south west wind at the entrance.

Departed Ijmuiden on 21st July for Borkum at 10.45, forecast was a very good south west 4-5 knots. Passed buoy MR at 15.25 at 5 miles from the coast, which was exceptionally flat, by 20.30 sea coming directly from behind only using headsail, boat rolling quite a bit.

04.30 on 22nd July, the *Mary P* entered the very long channel towards Borkum. Tides here are very strong and there are many sand banks. Careful passage required so the engine was started. Finally arrived at Borkum harbour at 08.00; found to be very busy with workboats for windfarms, cargo boats, and buoys - no easy sailing here!

It seemed to be easier to enter Elbe from Helgoland as it is essential to be with the tidal stream. Left Borkum 08.10 on the 23rd for Helgoland, motoring for nearly 2 hours, wind then came up to Force 6 and sea became rough, ended up putting 2 reefs in the main with very little jib; made good speed though 7/8 knots. Reached Helgoland by 18.15 and found many boats also waiting for better weather. Met some German crew who said that tomorrow’s weather would be worse and it was not advisable to enter Elbe with wind from that direction.

24th July, the crew visited the island of Helgoland, which is quite stunning and is also a nature reserve for birds and



best of all is duty free!

High water at Brunsbüttel is 17.35 on June 25th, forecast west to south west 2/3, decided to depart 09.30. Wind started decreasing so ended up continuing under engine as we followed the buoys along the Elbe. There was a huge amount of cargo boats coming and going. 15.30 arrived at the waiting pontoon with the other yachts. 19.30, traversed the lock and all tied up on canal side of Brunsbüttel lock by 21.30, time to relax.

Did some shopping in Brunsbüttel on the 26th before heading through the Kiel canal, a distance of about 66km, keeping to right hand side - lots of green cans to follow. Arrived in Rendsburg on a small tributary off the canal, a very nice little village. Topped up with water and fuel.

After a great rest departed Rendsburg at 09.00 on the 27th, ended up joining two other yachts and a motor boat. One of them enquired about the flag, French speaking Irish boat. They gave us a lot of information about passage between Fehmarn island and the coast, which saved us sailing around the long way to Rostock. Passed through the lock at Kiel and stopped at a small marina.

Up early next morning up early 07.30 no wind at all, decided to start motoring while breakfasting along the way. Finally got to the western end of Fehmarn island where there was a bridge with an air draft of 22 metres, which only gives us a clearance of 2 metres, passed under bridge just about at 14.30. Motoring towards Rostock, stopped engine at 16.00 as there was a strange sound, found on inspection that rear engine mounting had sheered. Keeping speed down, we continued towards Rostock, eventually arriving in Hohe Düne Marine at 21.30.

Enjoyed a few days in Warnmünde, a coastal town not far from Rostock. It had a very nice old town with plenty of restaurants and bars. It is very much a seaside town for the Germans. There was a regatta that weekend so many people around. Facilities were great in and around the marina complex but was quite expensive.

Neil and John O Regan arrived on July 2nd and took over from Guy and crew. Guy went through a few issues that came up during the trip, mainly repair of aft engine mount, which Neil brought with him from Cork. Guy and crew left shortly afterwards and Neil thanked them for safe and efficient delivery of *Mary P*.

The next day the new crew started checking over the boat to see what needed to be done before the weekend and departure on Monday. There appeared to be many of the ARC Baltic crew boats around, as many of them were flying their buntings and flags. There was a Rally gathering that night in the Hohn Düne marina complex hotel, where we met other rally crews.

Had a great day on 4th July getting to know the other boats; also fixed the engine mounting, though the temperature was 36°C; there was a heat wave over Europe at the moment. Most importantly, Dominic and Nigel arrived today. Crew dinner tonight in the hotel which had a great view over the harbour entrance, which was very busy with shipping. Dinner went very well and food okay for hotel food. ARC reps introduced themselves and outlined the plan up to leaving on Monday, weather routing, what to expect overall, etc. There would be a more detailed briefing the following day.

It was going to be another very hot day on the 5th. The plan was to attend briefing and finish provisioning the boat and top up water and diesel for the next leg to Ronne, Bornholm. The briefing went well and was very detailed, with good information on marinas, entry regulations and overall plan. As it was Sunday it turned out the Supermarkets were very busy; did manage to find an Aldi which was very handy. Had a very nice meal in one of the many restaurants in the

complex. Forecast was north west force 6/7 with gust of force 8.

Departure Hohe Düne

Some of the fleet headed off at first light and others over the course of the morning. We delayed departure due to wind strength so had a great breakfast in the hotel before tidying up boat for departure and completed final checks. Had a light lunch and decided to leave about 14.30 as wind was beginning to ease. Marina was at the river head so we went straight out into the Baltic. Still well over 30 degrees and sunny. Started off with two reefs in main and $\frac{3}{4}$ jib, scooting along at 7.5 knots. Turned off engine shortly afterwards (15.30). Heading mainly north to clear headland. 18.00 reached headland as wind began to ease so shook out one reef. Now heading 036 degrees @ 6.5 knots going well and considering dinner. 18.30 passed a north cardinal mark for Darber, Germany. 19.00 was the scheduled time for the fleet to check in their progress and how conditions were... Saw quite a lot of wind generators in distance off the coast of Denmark. At 20.30 shook out final reef and set a full jib, wind easing further. Many of the boats in the fleet were still in view. Enjoyed a lovely dinner of spaghetti Bolognese and red wine. Wind down to about 10-15 knots keeping 6.0 knots heading 057 degrees.

02.30 on 7th July, wind starting to build 20 knots from north west took in a reef and some jib going well now at 7.5 knots. Windfarms look like an airport landing strip with so many red lights in a line; they appear endless. We were now passing the 13th eastern meridian. Strange to be writing-in eastern longitude when so used to entering West. ETA harbour entrance of Ronne was 07.30 if wind holds. Watch change 05.00 Nigel and John gone to bunks. We arrived almost to the minute outside Ronne, contacted harbour master and Rally control who were on hand to direct us to berths for the rally fleet, which were at the commercial part of this relatively small harbour. We were about the 5th boat to arrive. Joel was there to take lines and berth 'bow on' Baltic style.

After breakfast we had a rest as the last few hours were lively; quite a chop had built up and we had to be careful taking down the main before motoring into the harbour. Later on after showers and lunch on board, as we were a good walk from the town, we decided to check out the fridge, which did not seem to be as cold as it should. Luckily we had not one but two engineers on board. It turned out that the seawater pump for the condenser was seized. There was very convenient chandlery right beside the berths and they had just the pump we wanted. Nigel and Dominic fitted same and we then enjoyed colder beer and wine.

Weather was staying fine and was ideal for rally BBQ, which was planned for the fleet on the dock side, which we had pretty much to ourselves. The idea was basically BYO food and beverages; they would provide a BBQ. It turned out to be a great night and the fleet were really getting to know each other. There were 19 boats in all, with many countries represented i.e. Ireland, Germany, Holland, Belgium, UK and USA.

On 8th July, a bus tour of Bornholm was organised. It has an interesting history, being occupied by Germany in the war, followed by Russia. The island did not revert to Danish control until 1946. In the evening we took a bus to the town of Allinge, in the north of the island, for a jazz festival. The following day we had a meeting with the ARC personnel about the next leg. Our departure was delayed by a day due to the weather, but then looked good for a passage to Visby. We left Ronne, wearing plenty of layers, as wind was beginning to build again and the air temperature was low. Came up on watch to a nice cup of tea and got sailing again soon afterwards. Engine off at 06.45. Crew gone to their bunks and not very anxious to come back on deck again; they were getting very fond of their bunks. Speed now up to 5.8 knots and at present speed should be in Visby by 20.00 tonight. Still on a heading of 030 degrees. Weather was great all day and had a lovely sail with lunch alfresco and sunbathing/reading.

By afternoon we had the engine on again and as the wind now was almost gone, we took down the main and furled the jib too. The coast of Gotland was very plain, flat and wooded. We arrived at Visby entrance just as a ferry was leaving for Stockholm. As there was not enough space at the entrance, we waited until the ferry left. The harbour was very pretty but small; again we were at the commercial end of the port, which turned out to be a blessing as the marina was very full and had music blaring from young sailors on motor boats. After we berthed alongside *Catmando*, a German catamaran, we changed and went ashore. We found an excellent restaurant called "Kalas". On an early morning walk one of the crew found a mobile shop (van) selling bread and cakes down in the marina. Luckily we had brought Swedish kroner and got some lovely bread. Today was check in with ARC rally reps. The plan for the next day was to tour Visby on foot. It is a beautiful town and a UNESCO heritage site. There was a market in the main square and lots of restaurants, not cheap but very good and quaint streets everywhere you turned. This was a chill-out day on board and planning for the next leg. We topped up our stores for departure the next day.

The next day we fuelled up, where a very pretty attendant helped us fill the tanks. Weather was great and by 10.30 we were soon sailing north up the west coast of Gotland. Soon doing over 6 knots, heading 020 degrees. It was great sailing as the sea was flat and we held a full main and full jib. Once we cleared the north of Gotland we turned east for Tallinn. By 18.00 the wind had completely gone and we were continuing under engine. The sea was much flatter than we had ever experienced before, so smooth we had tapas and wine on deck before dinner.

We were still motoring nearly all of the next day until about 16.00 when the wind started to come up. We managed 4.8 knots with full main and head sail heading for the Traffic Separate System off the north west corner of Estonia about midnight.

Finally reached the TSS zone at 01.30 clear skies and hardly dark at all. We finally reached the harbour entrance of Tallinn and headed for the Piritä marina. Mike Bishop was there to greet us and take our lines. Mike is the Managing Director of the World Cruising Club, which organises all the ARC events. He gave all the details about Tallinn and

information on the marina facilities. The marina was constructed for the 1980 Moscow Olympics sailing events. We all went for a sleep and later got up and showered and went to city centre in the old walled city which was beautiful. Found a great restaurant “Deja Vu” by chance. The next day we went on a “hop on- hop off” bus tour of Tallinn, which was very interesting. We went to the Seaplane museum which was well worth seeing and timely, as it started raining.

On the 18th of July at 18.00, crew members Mary and Paul arrived at Tallinn airport to take the place of Dominic. A short taxi ride later they had met up with the rest of the crew of *Mary P* in the restaurant, Maitineke, for the ARC rally dinner. This was followed by drinks in a nearby pub, christened Neil’s ‘crèche’. The following day, the weather was dull and overcast which did little to cloud the crew’s mood. John and Nigel went shopping, Paul and Mary embarked on a tour of the old town of Tallinn, a picturesque spot full of beautiful and history buildings. Later that evening, the crew went for a meal in the local Yacht club: KJK Kalevi Jahtklubi, which was deemed by all to be ‘salubrious’.

Monday 20th July was our day of departure; sunny but very breezy. The crew were ready to depart for St Petersburg at 09.30 but these plans were soon scuppered when it was discovered that our Russian interpreter, Vladimir, was not available for our arrival in the Great Russian city; his role was paramount to ensuring a quick trip through the infamous Russian customs. A stop off at Virige, an island just outside of Russian waters, was advised but we opted to stay in Tallinn for the day and postpone the departure for twenty-four hours. Half the crew visited the KGB Museum on the top floor of the Hotel Viru. The other half went for a swim in the Baltic. The whole crew converged upon Neil’s crèche that evening for a farewell drink.

Tuesday dawned sunny, with a northerly wind on the nose. Early start for the crew; rising at 06.30. Water tanks were topped up and *Mary P* departed from Tallinn, motoring north into the wind. On setting a course East, South East, at 13.00, we hit 7.3 knots while goose-winging the sails – not a bad feat for a cruiser. At 21.00 we placed two reefs in the main sail and reduced the jib to a half while passing Gogland; our speed had dropped to 4.5 knots and we settled down into our watches for the night. By 05.00 the wind dropped away to nothing and we turned on the engine. For this part of the trip we followed the shipping lanes as required by the Russian authorities.

At first light on 22nd July, a light drizzle enveloped us and, through the early dawn haze, we spied the many lights of the neighbouring ships in our vicinity, ethereal in the eerie half-light but a comfortable presence to us throughout the night. By 09.20, the wind began to fill in from the South and we were reaching 7 knots with the engine off and the sails full.

On the stroke of midday we arrived at the ‘Gates of Russia’, Kronstadt, which is the main Russian naval base; this consisted of a huge causeway, arching across the narrowing body of water. Ships were then navigated through a small gap towards the city. An hour and forty-five minutes later, we were summoned to the St. Petersburg customs dock, which was located just inside the gap in the causeway.

After a thorough search of the boat, (floor boards taken up, lockers emptied), helped in part by Lassie the dog, and our passports and visas rigorously scrutinised, our comrades welcomed us to Russia. It took five hours to complete the visa and customs formalities. The customs took great interest in prescription drugs, especially ones containing codeine. They insisted a prescription be provided for the codeine; however when none was forthcoming they gave special dispensation to temporarily import it. Another ARC boat had to fax the UK for a prescription before being allowed to proceed. We departed Fort Konstantin customs at 17.30. Geographically our final destination, the St Petersburg River Yacht Club, was still a two hour navigation up river, and we arrived at the marina at 19.30. The channel was very narrow and dredged. We shared the channel with cruise ships and high speed hydrofoils.

On 24th July, crew went on the ARC rally organised tour of the Winter Palace and Hermitage museum – home of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. Later Neil decided to do a boat trip; as there were no trips in English, he did the German version! Another early morning dawned – 09.00 start. We visited the Summer Palace on a beautiful sunny day and enjoyed the Peterhof Gardens, where all the ARC crews enjoyed a private lunch. Russian ballet and folk night was attended by the crew, both excellent.



Exit Permit from Russia!

26th July is the Russian National Navy Day. Russians celebrated in style by parading along the streets in their navy/white jumpers and blue and white navy flags. A submarine and warships were anchored in the Neva River for the occasion, which was attended by Vladimir Putin as well as the crew of *Mary P*. St Petersburg is a lovely city with beautiful streets and buildings; the marina facilities are only adequate, however. The day we left the great city of St Petersburg was sunny and breezy. At 09.30, after refuelling, with very low cost Russian diesel (ca 70c/litre), we motored through the busy shipping lane, meeting hydrofoils, cruise liners, oil tankers and, of course, two Russian naval ships (one being towed). We arrived at Fort Konstantin (Russian customs) at 12.30 and departed at 14.30 following another rigorous search of the boat. The day, even though bright and sunny, had no wind for us so we motored our way west towards Finnish waters.

At 22.45 as Mary, Nigel and John were on watch, just as the sun was setting, the engine stopped without warning. After a quick assessment by all the male crew members (Mary said the prayers), it seemed that the engine had

'seized'. We radioed the English yacht, *Shenanigan*, another ARC boat which was close by and at 23.30, we rigged a bridle and picked up a tow from them. They towed us out of Russian waters and onto our destination of Haapasaari island, the Finnish customs and immigration point, 35 miles ahead. While we were stopped in the shipping channel, preparing to be towed, a very large cruise liner spotted us on AIS and requested our intentions on the VHF, we reported our predicament and the ship altered course to avoid us without any fuss. We learned that the invention and use of AIS is now a very important part of maritime safety.

The next day dawned brightly at 05.30 when we arrived in Haapasaari, an island in the Finnish archipelago. *Shenanigan* dropped us at the quay wall of this beautiful island and at 09.00 the customs officer came on board and checked our passports, as we had now re-entered European waters. He informed us that there was a Volvo Penta dealership in Kotka, a busy harbour some 15 miles away. The customs officer was very helpful and even offered to tow us out of the harbour when leaving. The decision was made to stay on Haapasaari for the day. This is a beautiful island full of holiday homes for the Finnish. The local shop opened from 16:00 – 20:00 each day and stocked cans of Murphy's Stout – we felt right at home. A dockside party ensued that night with the crew from *Gertha*, another ARC boat.



Engine Installation.

The following day, the crew of *Gertha* kindly offered to tow us to Kotka, where we were picked up and towed into the harbour by the expert crew of the Finnish lifeboat at 12.20. The crew left the *Mary P* in Veleiro boatyard and made the one hour bus journey to Helsinki for some R and R for the weekend. We contracted with Veleiro to replace the engine with a reconditioned one that fortunately they had in the workshop. The replacement engine was the same model and so fitted directly on to our sail drive.

Our time in Helsinki proved to be a lovely relaxing time away from the engine troubles, albeit an expensive one. We were tempted to go and view a soccer match on the Saturday evening, Liverpool vs a local Helsinki team but this clashed with the ARC Baltic meal in the local yacht club NJK Nylandska Jaktlubben, the oldest yacht club in Finland, founded in 1861. Neil exchanged club burgees with the vice commodore.

On Sunday 2nd of August, John, Mary and Paul departed Helsinki, having enjoyed a wonderful two weeks in the Gulf of Finland.

3 Aug to 16 Aug Finland to Sweden

3rd August. A depleted crew of Neil, Nigel and Pat Salter returned to *Mary P* in Kotka from our sojourn in Helsinki. We travelled by bus, arriving in the boatyard at around lunchtime. We checked in to the engine workshop to see how our mechanic Marrku was progressing. He reported that he expected to test run our new reconditioned engine in the workshop tomorrow Tuesday and fit it Wednesday. He lent us the boatyard van, which allowed us to go into the centre of Kotka for dinner at our local pub. The

next few days we spent stocking the boat for Sweden, taking advantage of the lower price of beer and wine in Finland. In addition we visited Kotka's maritime museum. This was in a striking new building on the waterfront; it also had an excellent canteen, which served a 3 course buffet lunch for about €10 a head.

On Wed the engine was successfully run on the test bed in the workshop. The compression test showed the replacement engine was up to the original factory figures. Thursday, the engine was lifted into the boat and bolted to the sail drive. A test run flagged up a water leak. Since we were running behind schedule, Veleiro's boss even got his hands dirty to locate the problem. The problem was traced to a cracked casting on the water injection point on the exhaust. This was replaced with the casting off the original engine. Friday, the wiring for the alternator etc. was completed. We decided to depart early on Sat morning, so we had dinner in our local pub.

Saturday 8th August, we departed Kotka at 05.00, with a good sound coming from our new engine; we were leaving with a better engine. Light winds were forecasted with no tide and a distance of 290 miles to Stockholm. Our course was south west to thread through the Finnish archipelago to the shipping lanes, which we would use for night passages. Navionics software on the iPad facilitated this, enabling us to navigate around the islands without entering multiple waypoints. Midnight, still no wind, the engine was behaving perfectly (no more smoke behind us). We decided that it would be wise to look for somewhere to refuel, since it seemed likely we would have to motor the whole way to Stockholm. The almanac and Navionics chart showed fuel was available in Hanko, which was the last point on the Finnish mainland.

We arrived in Hanko at about 07.00 on Sunday. Fortunately the pumps had credit card facilities and the skipper's credit seemed to be good. We refuelled and left without setting foot beyond the fuel dock. Back on the water and still no wind. The engine was getting a good workout. About 02.00 on Monday the wind filled in from the south, allowing us to sail and give the new engine a rest.

We sailed as far as Revenggrundet light house, which marks the start of the entry to Stockholm. After rounding the lighthouse with a few car ferries, we left the shipping lane to thread our way through the islands, following the preferred routes on the Navionics chart. The weather was bright and clear, which had half the population of Stockholm on the water. So we had traffic jams of boats waiting their turn to go through the narrower passages between islands. Our destination was the KSS Royal Swedish Yacht club at Saltsjobaden, a suburb of Stockholm. We saw an Irish yacht, *Oisin Ban*, going in the opposite direction. They were flying an ICC pennant. Fortunately Neil had his ICC members list, so we were able

to exchange texts with the owners Adrian and Maeve Bell of Belfast. They had wintered the boat in Sweden and were cruising the Baltic for the season.

We arrived in Saltsjobaden mid-afternoon. We were guided in to our berth by friendly marina staff in a RIB. The yacht club marina is in a very attractive sheltered lagoon overlooked by a large hotel. At the very busy restaurant and bar, we reacquainted ourselves with the rest of the fleet, who had arrived a few days earlier from Mariehamn.

The next few days were spent resting, eating and drinking, interspersed by sightseeing. Another crew member, Tom Salter, joined us for the last week. The sightseeing was topped by a visit to the Wasa museum. This houses a complete 17th century warship, which capsized on her maiden voyage. It was rescued from the mud of Stockholm harbour in the 1960s. It was found to be completely preserved by the mud and the low salt brackish water of the Baltic.

The next week was spent exploring the Swedish archipelago: We spent the next three nights in Nynashamn, Vastervik and Oskarshamn on our way to the final destination Kalmar. Kalmar marina is accessed by sailing under the road bridge from the Swedish mainland to Oland Island. The clearance is 42 metres but looks less when approaching from the water.

Kalmar is a large and vibrant town, which was hosting an Ironman competition when we arrived. Sadly the crew were too old and unfit to take part. The final day was a tour of Kalmar castle organised by our ARC organisers Joel and Cecilie. We finished the trip with a farewell dinner of all participants and slide show of the highlights of the trip.

While we were sailing to Sweden the boatyard had stripped down the old engine to see what the problem actually was. It turned out to be a broken crankshaft. Clearly we were lucky to get out of Russian waters.

Return to Kinsale

Guy arrived with two crew (Hermes Daniel and Rousel Yves) for delivery back to Kinsale. We headed for Kiel directly, a distance of 270 miles, the wind was East/South East. By 12.00 the wind had come up and we had 2 reefs and $\frac{3}{4}$ jib. Traffic increasing on southern edge of Sweden. At 23.00 passing between south Sweden and Bornholm Island. By 05.00 gone round to the Southeast force 3 heading for Fehmarn Island and under that famous bridge again. Reached the bridge at 15.00, engine on as wind had gone completely. Finally arrived at Kiel at 02.30. 44 hrs sailing in total, average 6.2 knots. Entered the lock at 10:00 the following morning. Temperature rising and day getting very hot. Motoring towards Brunsbüttel, arriving 20.00 without stopping.

09.00 into the locks at Brunsbüttel and heading for Borkum in the Netherlands

08.00 made Borkum, very windy. Weather deteriorating, so decided to wait out until it improved. Decided to leave as weather had improved. Heading for Dover a distance of 270 miles, wind Southwest 20 knots. Departed about 09.30 but wind on the nose so had to use engine to keep the show on the road. Weather not improving so headed for Den Helder. Wind becoming north easterly and stayed in Den Helder another day.

08:00 decided to leave for Dover, a distance of 175 miles, wind northeast. By the evening there was severe lightning; we put three reefs in the main but luckily no wind. Lightning spectacular and lasted all night. Passed South Falls buoy, weather really strange, fog and lightning. Reached Dover by 13.30 the next day.

Left Dover heading for Newlyn. 17.30 arrived in Newlyn motoring most of the way, a total distance of 470 miles 80 hrs in all. Stayed in Newlyn for rest. Planning to head for Kinsale on Friday distance of 160 miles. Forecast North/Northeast 15/20 knots. Planning to go with the tide at 14.30 but the forecast was for the wind to rise. As predicted, wind increased to 25 knots and rough seas. Weather started to improve in the afternoon, approached Kinsale about 18.00 engine on and sails down. Arrived alongside the marina at 21.00 where Neil was waiting to take lines.

Cruising the Baltic has the following to recommend it:

Good weather in summer June to August, in particularly July short bright nights, flat seas, no tide, friendly people with very good English even the bus drivers, and plenty of variety. Challenging navigation (made easier with iPad) good marina facilities. Nice restaurants which were not as expensive as we expected. Mooring is generally bow on even in marinas making boarding difficult unless a proper bow ladder is used.

However due to winter temperatures (- 25° C) most visitors leave their boats in heated sheds until May. The locals use the winter for ice fishing and driving to the islands on ice roads.



KSS Royal Swedish Yacht club at Saltsjobaden.

The Azores – round and round again....

Nick Musgrave

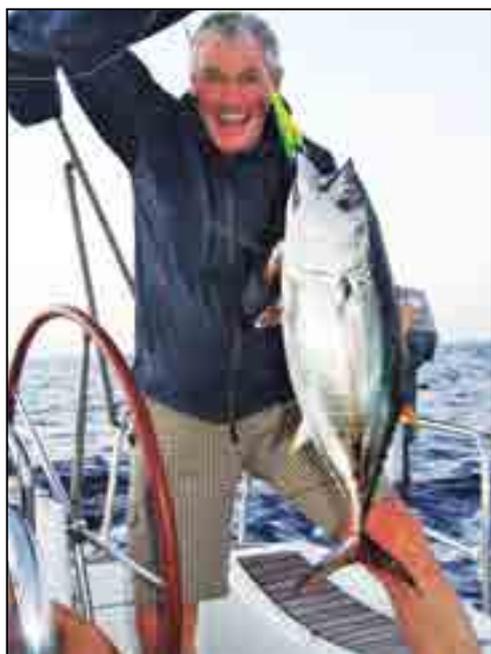
When I departed Angra Do Heroismo at the end of the ICC and RCC cruise in 2009, I promised myself that I would return in the not too distant future.

Joined by Donal Mc Clement, James O'Brien (Joxer) and Mike Hodder (all ICC), we departed on my recent acquisition, a Sun Odyssey 50 DS named *Jasmine*, from Marina Davila in Vigo on 19th June for the short trip to Bayona. We spent that evening with local residents Joe and Mary Woodward (ICC) and obtained their permission to return to Galicia later in the summer!

A few days before departure, Mike and I purchased a serious amount of top of the range angling equipment, as specified by Leslie Payne, son of the late Somers. Armed with the best rod and lures in the North West Atlantic, Mike and I commenced battle to catch big fish on the cruise.....

We left Bayona at midday on Saturday 20th June, and set course for Santa Maria some 850 miles away. For the first 36 hours we had a moderate northerly breeze and some lovely sailing. We quickly settled into a comfortable passage routine and were very well fed by Mike who was our star chef. Alas so far no fish were caught. Joxer said the best time is at dusk. We'll see about that. By early on 22nd June we started to motor sail and made good progress on a flat calm sea. Three days of boring motor sailing with an increasingly lumpy sea and some rain followed. With 185 miles to run our luck ran out and a south westerly slowed our progress. Early that evening a pod of killer whales appeared and a large male dived a few feet astern of us. Very impressive though a little alarming. Mike sighted Santa Maria at 20.20 while I was still busy trying to catch something.

It took us all by surprise when the reel began to whizzzzzz out..... an epic battle of biblical proportions ensued and we eventually landed a lively 4 kg yellowfin tuna. With great team work and a liberal douse of vodka to kill the fish, it was then gutted, cut into steaks and in the freezer within 30 minutes. I knew I should have bought a fishing boat rather than a sailing cruiser. Oh! and Joxer was right about twilight fishing...



Having checked into the marina at Vila Do Porto, on 26th July it was interesting to see that all the ICC art work from the 2009 Rally was still in excellent condition and we added *Jasmine* 2015 to this. The modern marina building has been completed, as has the boat storage hard standing area. As always we felt very welcome and the facilities are excellent. We hired a car and spent a day touring the island. The stone terraces on the steep hillsides are very impressive. A swim off a beach on the south side of the island was in warm water and the beer afterwards mighty. We were beginning to chill out.

We refuelled and departed on the Sunday morning for Lajes Do Pico. We had a lovely southerly breeze and made great progress along the rhumb line until the middle of that night. The wind increased and headed us. It rained heavily and some of the squalls became so uncomfortable that on Monday morning we decided to divert to Terceira. We made fast in Angra Do Heroismo later that afternoon.

Determined to press on to Lages Do Pico, we left early on the Tuesday morning. Our relentless fishing activities continued without further success except that Mike managed to catch a Cory's Shearwater. Word went out as we hauled him in that they pack a sharp bite so I donned my sailing gloves in anticipation of a bloody encounter. The bird was hauled into the cockpit and we covered his head with a tea towel. Some deft handling untangled him from the line and he was despatched back to his flock, none the worse for wear.

We encountered probably the strongest winds of our trip on the southern side of Pico with gusts in excess of 40 knots. The approach to Lajes Do Pico is, at best, daunting as it has a very narrow but well buoyed channel surrounded by rocks. With the strong wind and restricted space it was a shock to find no berth available on the marina. Being committed to entry a retreat was awkward and we had no other port within 25 miles. You could say that things didn't look too good for a few minutes. "Seldom wrong and never in doubt" Donal handled this with the calmness of the veteran sea dog that he is and berthed her on the pier head without a hitch. After this we really started to chill out more "Azorean style". The Pilot says not bigger than 13 m loa and 2 m draft for the harbour. This in my view is ultra conservative though caution should be exercised. Not many yachts call into Lajes; however, it is a gem. The next morning, we made the short hop to Horta on the island of Faial. This port and Ponta Delgado on Sao Miguel are the two main administrative entry ports for the Azores. So, in addition to port marina authorities, we were processed by the police, the customs, who asked us for a sight of our VAT documents and finally we paid lighthouse dues. This completed the proper entry formalities to the Azores. This visit was to enable Mike to see the famous Peter's Café Sport and experience the port that is considered to be the mecca for Trans-Atlantic sailors. We agreed that the wives, who were due in Ponta Delgada, would not enjoy the long trip to the middle islands so we decided they should fly out. The only suitable flights available were to Terceira.

The next morning we departed and sailed close along the southern shore of Sao Jorge. The waterfalls are stunning

and the scenery amazing. Our relentless fishing continued and today I caught another Shearwater which received the same treatment as his mate. We became quite adept at catching seagulls but not too successful at fishing. We made fast in Angro Do Heroismo that evening.

The following evening Joxer and I flew to Ponta Delgado to meet Cathy and Jan. We spent the night in a hotel in town and the next day had a super tapas lunch nearby before flying to Terceira where Donal picked us up from the airport. In our absence he and Mike had moved *Jasmine* to an inside berth. This was much more comfortable as it was sheltered from the ever persistent scend which affects the outer berths. In addition they had cleaned the whole boat, done the laundry, made the beds and even stole some hydrangeas which were beautifully arranged on the saloon table.

The next day armed with maps and loads of touring literature, we piled into the car and headed for a trip around the island. We drove up to the viewing point in the centre, where we had a spectacular vista of the huge caldera. That evening we went to the very popular Restaurant Beira Mar in nearby Sao Mateus.

We left for Lajes Do Pico the following day. Thankfully we had a sunny and very calm passage in contrast to what we had experienced the previous week. This time we berthed *Jasmine* on the pontoon just inside the pier head. That evening we dined at the restaurant in the hotel "Whale'come ao Pico" near the harbour and this was very good.

The next afternoon we went whale watching. Lages is recognised as the premier place in the islands for this activity and they are very professional in their approach. They have expert whale spotters operating from the shore who liaise with the RIB drivers to ensure that they find animals to interest the visitors. We went out over 10 miles to watch a Bryde's Whale, a rare visitor to the Azores that was migrating through the islands. The RIBs were also equipped with hydrophones and they could identify each species from their calls. Next we saw pilot whales and it confirmed my belief that "Albert" who roamed around the Baltimore area in the 1960s was indeed one of these. We watched a feeding frenzy as hundreds of dolphins gorged themselves on sprat. Finally, we saw a family of sperm whales slowly gathering speed before heading to the bottom some 1000 m below us. All told an amazing afternoon.

We continued to Horta on 9th July and berthed, for the second time, outside *Orontes*, owned by Steve and Laura Brown from Texas. They are at the start of a 5 to 10 year round the world odyssey. The next morning we headed for the caldera in the centre of the island. In 2009 Donal, Colin Hayes (ICC) and I had taken a taxi to the same place only to arrive into the clouds. This time there wasn't a cloud in the sky. The Caldeira is almost circular, with a 2 km diameter, 11 km perimeter and is 400 m deep. It is truly an awesome sight. Next we headed to the western end of the island to the Capelo Volcanic Complex with its superb interpretive centre. In December 1956 a volcanic eruption, which continued till May the following year, added 2.4 square kilometres to the island and it put the lighthouse 500 m inland.

Early on the Saturday, Mike flew from Horta to Ponta Delgada and onwards to Ireland. The next day we made the short trip over to Velas on the Island of Sao Jorge. The harbour is very compact but the marina is well equipped and maintained. Sunday was Jose, the marina manager's day off and his boss was in charge. He admitted that this was Jose's patch and that we'd better wait for him to return before paying dues and getting local information. First thing Monday morning we met the most helpful Jose and were soon in a hire car touring the island. Like Pico, Sao Jorge is a long island with an elevated ridge running along its centre. Driving here is largely confined to the coast and some of the views are magnificent. Every evening at dusk the Shearwaters return to their nests in the cliffs above the port of Velas. Their chattering, which sounded like children playing, continued all night.

We tried to persuade Jan and Cathy to join us for the 130 mile passage to Sao Miguel. Alas we failed, so on Tuesday 14th July we packed them off for the forty minute flight. Donal, Joxer and I left mid afternoon and Jose took photos of our departure promising to put them up on the marina website. The trip was uneventful, though we had rain and lightning during the night, and we made fast in Ponta Delgada at 11.30 the next morning, where the girls rejoined us. On Thursday we drove to Furnas, a crater with hundreds of hot springs located on the eastern side of the island. The Terra Nostra Gardens, over 200 years old, are situated in the middle of this water system and they are a joy to walk through. The next day we went for a swim in the "hot springs in the ocean" near Ponta Da Ferrara. I can't say we felt any extra warmth in the water but then we may have hit it at the wrong stage of the tide. Donal bade farewell to Jan and Cathy and he flew to Flores to say that at least he had visited it. The ladies flew back to Stansted on the Saturday morning and Bill Kearney arrived later that evening.

Not hanging about, we hit the ground running with Bill and left Ponta Delgada the next day at noon heading for



Lajes do Pico, entrance. (Marina is on the left, out of frame)

Pico. Murphy's Law struck again with 20/25 knots on the nose. Once again we took the gentlemen's decision to bear away for Angra and be more comfortable. No doubt about it we were definitely getting soft... We arrived at 03.30 and anchored off the beach. Later that morning we were back on the marina for the third time. Bill and I sought out a local English speaking taxi driver who took us on a tour of the island. This included Praia da Vitoria, the main port on Terceira, which has a nice marina in the north east corner of the harbour. Finally he drove us along the south coast through the numerous small villages each of which were remarkable for having a tiny chapel.

Still in a rush, we left early the following morning bound, yet again, for Horta. It was a beautiful calm day, with temperatures in the high 20s, as we motor sailed between Sao Jorge and Pico. Around lunchtime Bill, Joxer and I decided to have a swim to cool ourselves and were aware that we were in 1000 m of water. We thought this was cool until we were later told that sperm whales can dive up to 2000 m.

For the third time we tied up beside Steve and Laura on *Orontes* Just as well we knew them by now as our engine cut out moments before berthing. Donal was again at the helm, no harm done, need I say any more.....It might sound repetitive but we toured Faial in the same manner as before. We all agreed that we got as much and more out of the Capelo Volcanic Interpretative Centre during this visit. Such is the compelling nature of the place and vast subject matter.

We returned to Lajes Do Pico on 23rd July with only one thing on our minds. We arranged another whale watching trip on arrival and within an hour we were more than 10 miles down the coast with the wind and sea increasing. Whatever about "seldom wrong, etc", Donal is made of stern stuff. Bill, Joxer and I sat in the middle of the RIB and hid behind lots of the other punters but our Donal brazened it out in the front stalls. He got the c**p knocked out of him, drenched from spray and wind burnt. To add insult to injury the heavens then decided to open....What's that about the Azores being a glorious place? This trip was massive, we spent a lot of time watching five adult sperm whales swimming alongside one another. After about thirty minutes they began to increase speed and with heads down and tails vertical in the air they dived to the depths below. There was a gasp from everyone on the RIB as this spectacle unfolded in front of us; it was awesome to see almost choreographed, five sperm whales' flukes in the air. I should say while there were a number of RIBS following these mammals, at no time did they enter the whales' space. Our viewing was done from a very conservative distance. Undoubtedly the whale watching from Pico was the highlight of the cruise.

We left Lajes the next day, for what was to be our last inter island passage. We sailed with boomed out genoa for the afternoon but by early evening the wind dropped and we motored on. At 04.50 the engine stopped and, despite transferring fuel, it failed to restart. Joxer then bled the system and managed to get it going but only for a very short while. Plain and simple we had run out of useable fuel. On reflection we had chilled out so much that we had taken our eye off the ball..... We limped in to Ponta Delgada at midday and took on over 720 litres of diesel.

Saturday 25th July saw us stock up for the passage back to Vigo and Con O'Leary joined us from Stansted. We left Ponta Delgada for Ilheu de Vila Franca some 10 NM east. This is a small volcanic island with a flooded caldera off the port of Vila Franca do Campo. It was a recent venue for the Red Bull cliff diving world circuit which was screened on Sky TV. We later received a very warm welcome from the locals on the marina. One of the party noticed we had bananas on the saloon shelf. He asked why we had imported fruit on board. Within the hour he arrived with three massive hands of his own, locally grown, bananas and chastised us for having fruit from Santa Maria (imported) on board. The restaurant, overlooking the fishing harbour, was probably the best we visited during our five weeks. Next morning I went on deck and was blinded by a low sun. I hear "Ahoy there Nick" and initially I did not recognize Chris and Siobhan Guy on their Contest 43. We had made plans to meet up whilst in the Azores but a few days previously we had to abandoned them due to lack of time. They were en route from Santa Maria to Ponta Delgada when they spotted *Jasmine* on their AIS and decided to call in and meet up. After catching up on our news, we were on our way to Vigo by 09.30.

By midday we had cleared Sao Miguel and set course for our waypoint 150 miles west of Cape Finisterre. We motor sailed, on a flat calm sea, till midday on Tuesday 28th July, when we boomed out the genoa and shut off the engine. By now we had settled into a pleasant watch system made easier by having five crew. Early the next morning the wind had increased and we took in two rolls on both the main and genoa. We were making good progress but the wind dropped and we ended up motoring again. By 02.00 to our dismay we had 25 knots on the nose. This lasted for the next 54 hours and was most uncomfortable. We all subscribe to the theory that the best way to go to windward is on a 737....Finally by early Friday morning we agreed we'd had enough punishment and bore away to get some respite. Even Porto looked off limits. The good news was that we were making 7 to 8 knots in an easterly direction. Later that afternoon I caught a 2 kg dorado (my second fish of the trip) which was much easier to deal with than the tuna. Bill baked him for a delicious meal that evening. At 09.00 the next morning we got a forecast from a passing ship which indicated less wind from a more favourable direction. Conditions began to moderate and in the early evening we were able to come back slowly on course. By midnight we were motoring again in very light conditions. We dropped anchor off the Islas De Cies at 06.30 the next morning Sunday 2nd August after 5 days and 21 hours with 960 miles on the log.

The Azores are a wonderful group of islands which, by and large, have excellent facilities for sailing boats, wonderful scenery, amazing history and offer great value for money. The local food, mainly beef and dairy products, is of the highest quality and the wine is not too shabby. The only problems/damage we encountered were running out of fuel, due to our own stupidity, and the loss of the potato peeler.

We covered just under 2,800 miles and spent 275 hours under engine. All told we had a memorable 7 weeks in mostly excellent weather, when it only rained during the night.

Sancerre just tickled the Hebrides for lobster and whisky.

Peter Mullan

Monday morning 22nd of June. Starting from Strangford, and just two-handed, a week is a short time to cruise Scotland. I had my vet Michael Bready as crew to look after me. A long day takes you from Strangford village to Ballycastle with a fair wind and tide but we had neither. Monday evening in the marina in Bangor was improved by a visit from my daughter Barbara.

On Tuesday, a second day of punching the tide, motoring with just the feathered main, was made bearable by the hot sun. To kill some time to allow the tide to turn at Fair head, we made a detour past Brown's Bay exploring Larne harbour. One day I might be glad of the shelter there. We pressed on enjoying the beautiful Glens of Antrim. Damien in Ballycastle marina made us welcome with spotless showers and just £21 a night to stay.

Wednesday morning was dry. The bay café over the marina does a perfect fry and we were off properly to Scotland.



The wind filled in and we could sail at just over four knots. That would bring us to Ardmish bay on Gigha before tea. Plenty of visitors' moorings and just as well, as this is now a very popular anchorage. The main reason for our trip was to find the perfect lobster and the perfect whisky. Before we even pumped up the dinghy, I looked up the boathouse restaurant on my new iPad and phoned them to book two lobsters. We went ashore in the dinghy and landed on the beach, as the new jetty is not finished. As expected of this Michelin-mentioned restaurant, the lobsters and the bottle of Chablis were superb but not cheap. It was Thursday so on to the other challenge. I have been through the sound of Islay a number of times over the last few years and never visited even one of the distilleries. The names are magical. Caol Isla, Lagavullin, Ardbeg, Port Askaig and my favourite, Bunnahabhainn. This last is the most northerly in the sound. For once the tides would work for us. On Friday we left Gigha at 8.30am hoping to be at the distillery at noon for high water. I felt we needed to feed the inner man to be fortified for the distillery tour so asked Michael to do his full Ulster fry. It was ready at noon just as we arrived and Michael said it could not wait. *Sancerre* was left on autopilot nodding very slowly north against the tide until we did the fry justice. I had phoned and booked the 1 pm tour as soon as I had a phone signal off Port Askaig. We anchored very close in to the end of the jetty, threw the dinghy into the water and paddled ashore for 1pm. As we were a little early, we had half a dram to keep us going.

Gigha

The distillery has been going strong since 1881, mostly in the same ownership. They produce just over a million and a half litres a year. It is mostly not peaty, and aged in mainly bourbon or sherry casks. The whisky is produced in copper pot stills and appears in the spirit safe in the centre of the photo. They are very proud of their quality and will not chill filter it to pander to the US market. We each bought a bottle, leaving just under a million and a half litres for the rest of the world to enjoy. Again our tides were helpful with 10.2 knots SOG for the motor back down the sound, with up to 21 knots apparent on the nose. It blew the yeast fumes out of our noses. Rounding Ardmore point, the tide assist eased, the wind came more on the beam and we had a great sail into Port Ellen. Skipper cooked a Chicken Curry, with help from Arthur Guinness.



Bunnahabhain

After dinner, I took the opportunity to speak to Stephen on *Rafiki* and thank him for the use of his mooring in Killyleagh last Saturday while we watched the start of Quoile regatta. So we sort of got retrospective permission to use it. Both aims of our cruise had been met so we could now go gently to Bangor, where we were booked in for a week to see the Tall Ships in Belfast. Saturday morning brought more rain but better prospects. I went for a walk right around the bay to photograph *Sancerre* in the marina. On the beach I found a newish curragh. A man appeared and it was the owner, Jim McFarlane. He had



Sancerre in Port Ellen

built it about four years ago for a marine festival with plans from Dunfanaghy and assistance and guidance from the curragh builder McPolin from Donegal. He also knew Wallace Clark well. I bought jam in the Macauley and Torrie general store and a sultana cake for afternoon tea. This little shop was a step fifty years back in time and a total joy to experience. The rain eased, visibility improved and off we set for Craighouse. After a discussion on the forecast for the next few days, it was decided to be better to go on straight to Gigha and miss the planned night in Craighouse. Navigation wise we decided to accept the self imposed challenge and to thread the needle by going through Cara sound at the bottom end of Gigha. Although it meanders a bit, it is a tenth of a mile wide at the narrowest bit passing Cara rocks. Michael was using the chart plotter and I was using my new iPad with Navionics software. We decided afterwards the iPad

was by far the clearer view and so easy to use. It also has very up to date charts and tides, does not stop and shut down, but keeps going and battery lasts really well. It can also take photographs, find numbers for restaurants and lets me write this log for you to read later! It was a retirement gift and a boon. We had another attack on the menu of the Boathouse restaurant. Again it was excellent. A young couple were dining and smiling and as usual I chatted to them. They were from Campbeltown

so I asked them where we should eat if we ever visited. They recommended the Ardsheil Hotel. We dallied with a UFO 34 from Coleraine called *Mahuri* on our way back to our mooring. One or two gins and we discovered we were on a boat that survived the awful Fastnet race. Very sobering. Saturday morning brought sunshine for our sail against the tide back to Ballycastle for crew change. Eventually we had to motor to make Rathlin sound at slack water. New crew Brian Best arrived and after a good dinner in the Marine hotel, Michael left with Brian's wife Heather. That's not as bad as it sounds!



Boats ashore, Port Ellen

Sunday morning, with more sunshine and showers and some gusty westerly winds, saw us off to Campbeltown. We set off against the full ebb through Rathlin sound. Even with 3.5 to 4 knots going NW, this is possible. There are eddies and we stayed a hundred feet off the shore to stay out of the tide. No problem with depth as it was usually 70 to 80 feet minimum. At Loughan bay we altered course for Sanda and punched a bit of tide to try to hit the Mull at slack water. We were early but made it into Campbeltown in time for a pint in the Royal hotel. There are great new pontoons, very ordinary toilet and shower facilities and fuel. We found the Ardshiel Hotel and had fine food. The hotel has officially the best whisky bar in Scotland. It has 1820 different whisky varieties on the premises, 750 are on display and over 300 are available to try. It also has some great gin and I bought a bottle of the Botanist from The Bruichladdich distillery on Islay. It has 23 locally foraged wild flowers as part of the recipe and this has caused a hoo haa. Half of these plants are protected species. It is only delicious. This gin was an unexpected bonus on my Lobster and Whisky cruise. The owner of the Ardshiel, Flora and staff Jade and Michelle, were fantastic. There is also an excellent fish and chip shop. If you are on your way home and there is a day in hand, it would be a sin not to try to fit in a new marina to visit. I had two nights before I was due in Bangor to see the Tall Ships. That meant Stranraer and possibly Carrickfergus had to be explored.

Monday morning and again hard on the wind most of the way and then motoring with wind on the nose into Loch Ryan past the two ferry ports at Cairnryan. Stranraer marina was spot on. The town does not have a good restaurant that we could find. I did not feel like putting on the apron. We settled for very mediocre fish and chips. Next morning, Tuesday, the forecast was southerly 16 gusting 28 knots. Heading up Loch Ryan, I asked Brian to make sandwiches. By the time we were clear of the land, the wind speed rose to a steady 34 knots southerly against a south going



Fair Head astern

was preceded by the Red Arrows giving a very long display. Being on the water gave us a fantastic view of the display. One or two of the ships were under full canvas by the time they reached Bangor so we had yet another fantastic display. We headed home by car after a great fortnight.

P.S. We left *Sancerre* in Bangor for a few days until the wind came round to the NW. Coming out of the marina it was the same old, same old story. 21 knots on the nose, lumpy seas but as we came round to follow the coast to Strangford Lough, we had the 21 knots over our shoulder for a fast run home. 8 hours up to Bangor, 4 hours home. We ticked the Hebrides and just kissed the Scottish mainland on our way to Bangor. *Sancerre* looked after us well again covering 496 miles. We look forward to going north again next summer for the 150th anniversary of Royal Ulster Yacht Club and the joint cruise with the ICC and CCC.



Three girls, one tall ship. Rebecca, Maria and Barbara.

tide. The Dufour 385 *Talisker* that left just before us was just visible away ahead also heading for Belfast Lough. It seemed happy enough so we carried on. The spinnaker pole came loose, battering the hull so Brian donned a lifeline to go forward and re fix it. Half way across the north channel, the wind eased to 19 knots so we could attack the sandwiches. Tea was out of the question. Sandwiches done, it blew up again to over 30 knots. We had the engine going along with two reefs in the main and 1/3 of the jib. This let us point higher than the Dufour and we sneaked into Bangor marina just ahead of him. We had Bangor Marina booked for a week to spectate at the Belfast Tall Ships. After a day at home to relax after the windy crossing (and to cut the grass), family and friends enjoyed trips sailing up to Belfast harbour and then motoring in to see the visiting Tall Ships. My daughters Rebecca, Maria and Barbara had a ball. The parade of sail to mark the leaving from Belfast

Stormy Skye

Vivienne White

Our season started with a trip to Newry/Crossmaglen on the May bank holiday weekend – a difficult journey by boat but anything is possible with the Irish Cruising Club. The ICC was running a joint North and East rally to the Albert Basin in Newry and we decided to attend, taking our old friends Malcolm and Hillary Crichton. A short sail for the *Ballyclaire* but a very memorable weekend superbly organized. We had also decided to take the *Ballyclaire* for our annual 3 week cruise heading north this time to Bonnie Scotland, expecting the usual mix of sun, a bit of sailing, motoring in flat calms and the odd shower. Little did we know that poor old Scotland would endure her worst summer of rain and high winds for many years and we would be in the middle of it.

3rd July 2015 Strangford Harbour: Departing Strangford at 06.00, we anchored in south harbour, Gigha 14 hours later in brilliant sunshine. The trip was uneventful and the skipper had calculated the tides in his usual exemplary fashion. He had also assumed from the forecasts that the light wind would shift to a strong south easterly and he would be very clever and anchor in behind Gialum Island in Caolas Gialum, as Ardminish Bay was open to any easterly wind. We dined in the cockpit feeling rather smug and comfortable in our private anchorage, surrounded by wildlife and birds. We retired to bed after a modest toast to Scotland. We were woken from our slumbers by huge claps of thunder, very dramatic forked lightning over the Kintyre peninsula and poor *Ballyclaire* started bouncing around the bay and straining at the anchor chain in a most violent north easter. The one knot of tide through the sound made our chosen anchorage most uncomfortable. We rolled it out until mid-morning and then motored round to Ardminish Bay to pick up a mooring and get some sleep. When the rain stopped, we launched the dinghy and potted ashore to dine in the Boathouse, where we bumped into Uel and Liz Gillen (ICC), who joined us. We had a delightful evening with much wine and chat. The next day was spent in Gigha, me to hire a fancy bike with many gears to roam the island and lunch in the (very quiet) hotel, the skipper to stay on board and fight with several sand eels which had invaded and blocked the salt water pipework system. We dined on *Valhalla* with the Gillens and enjoyed another convivial evening.

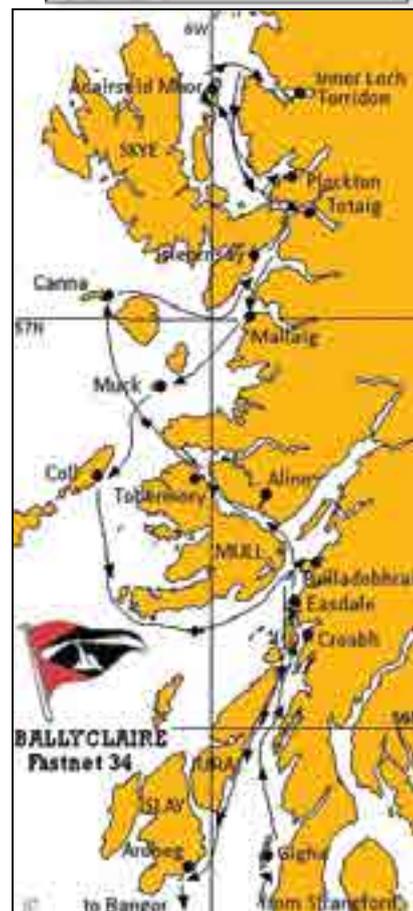


Ferry Pier at Caolas Gialum, Gigha

close to the metal beacon in Loch Aline with other yachts but unfortunately there was a piper on a yacht anchored nearby who treated his captive audience to half an hour of his music (some can be awful). I was tempted to get into competition with my plaintive version of Peggy Gordon but my skipper thought I should refrain, owing to the possibility of a national incident and I deferred to his better judgment.

8th July 2015 Lough Aline: Next day we upped anchor at 10.15 and set off up the sound of Mull into big seas, wind on the nose, dodging waves but with the sun shining. Arrived Tobermory 15.30 and picked up a mooring with some difficulty under the trees in high winds and then dined ashore in the Tobermory Hotel, where we met a charming couple from Glasgow who were hiking on the island. We were surprised to see a couple of large cruise ships anchored outside the bay and met several of their American passengers who were doing the town and hopefully spending their money in the local shops.

9th July 2015 Tobermory: We hit the shops in the morning for smoked trout, lovely bread and departed Tobermory at 13.00 hoping to go somewhere north or escape into Loch Sunart. Passing Ardnamurchan Point at 14.30, the weather improved and we motored in warm sunshine towards Canna, anchoring in the harbour at 18.30. To our amazement, there



6th July 2015 – Gigha: Clearing Ardminish Bay at 09.00, we headed north and motored in thick fog until we reached the Corryvreckan, where it eventually cleared into a soft, dull miserable Scottish afternoon. We arrived at Craobh Haven marina at 15.30 in torrential rain and rising wind, filled diesel, found a berth and later dined on board with Heather and Tom Parker, Quoile Yacht Club members who were cruising in the area. The wind increased to Force 9 in the night with lashing rain and we were glad to be safely tied up on the pontoon.

7th July 20 Craobh Haven: In the morning we had thick mist, rain and high winds, improving around 12.30 and we set off through the Cuan Sound, then through the unfriendly Easdale Sound. Picked up a fair tide off Lough Spelve and were off Loch Aline at 18.45. Off the entrance to the loch, the skipper managed to catch several mackerel, which made a lovely starter. We anchored

were 23 boats in the bay and the forecast was dreadful. The Minch forecast was force 9 to storm 10 and later that night the wind increased to Force 9 gusting 10 with lashing rain again. Luckily we had taken great care to make sure that the anchor got through the kelp into the sand and we were fairly secure. We did spend the night on anchor watch with boats breaking loose and skidding round the bay and skippers roaring at each other, one of them the noisy piper from Loch Aline who spent most of the night trying to relay his anchor.

Next morning an oil skinned figure in a dinghy came alongside asking if this was the *Ballyclaire* and was I the Vivienne that he had met some years ago in Tinker's Hole. It turned out to be an old Scottish sailing friend whom we had not seen for some 20 years and he and his wife joined us for dinner on *Ballyclaire* to catch up and discuss our cruise plans.

11th July 2015 Canna Harbour: The anchor was relieved of its duty at 10.15 and we checked our creel to find to our delight a lobster, which with our left over steak made for a surf and turf lunch as we sailed in light winds up the sound of Sleat. We picked up a mooring in Isle Oronsay and, just as we were settled, the wind and rain came roaring in again blocking out the lovely view. We watched the *Hebridean Princess* anchor nearby presumably full of punters who had paid a small fortune to admire the Scottish mountains and glens. All they could see through the mist was us!

12th July 2015 Isle Oronsay: Woke to more rain and mist and set off at 11.30 through Kyle Rhea, looked at the visitors' pontoon at Kyle Eakin, which was bunged with local fishing boats, and diverted to Kyle of Lochalsh for water on a very wobbly pontoon, followed by a 15 minute supermarket dash, then under the Skye bridge and a wonderful sail at last in sunshine arriving in Plockton at 16.00. We spent 2 nights in Plockton on their visitors' moorings, met our old friends Peter and Rosanna Ballentine on *Lough Rival*, with whom we would cruise in company for a while, went ashore and walked the railway track round the bay and then dined in the local hotel, all very pleasant. 13th July 2015 Plockton: We left Plockton at 14.30 and motored in pleasant sunshine to Acairseid Mor, Rona. The sun kept shining and we dined in the cockpit and thought how lucky we were to spend the night in such a beautiful spot eating superb food and drinking fine wines. Next morning Rosanna and I trekked up the hill to take in the fabulous views and admire our wee yachts from above.

14th July 2015 Acairseid Mor, Rona: We upped anchor at 10.00 and motor sailed across the top of Rona. As usual the skipper, needing a challenge, took the short cut through the rocks past the naval base and then across the Inner Sound into Inner Loch Torridon, a new anchorage for us and *Ballyclaire*. It is a spectacular place with the towering peaks catching the setting sun and the water like glass.

15th July 2015 Inner Loch Torridon: This was as far north as we had decided to go and the crew rose early and left with regret, knowing that we now had to head south for home. Off the entrance to the loch the skipper hove to over a rock and caught many fish, most of them large lythe. We anchored in Applecross and lunched in the little pub, which was full of happy people asking if we were enjoying a lovely holiday, totally unaware of the horrendous weather we had experienced to date. A lovely place serving very good food but carrying the dinghy back down the beach over the rocks and boulders dampened the spirits slightly.

Back to *Ballyclaire* and up anchor at 15.30 and shortly after our little engine Perkie complained of fuel starvation and huffed. *Lough Rival* towed us for half an hour while the skipper gave Perkie a good talking to and found and fitted a new fuel filter from his apparently endless store of spares, then we motored under the Skye bridge, tied up again in Kyle of Lochalsh for another 10 minute Tesco supermarket dash and then on to Totaig, where we dropped anchor at 20.15. A fine evening in this lovely anchorage opposite Eilean Donnan Castle, one of our favourites. The skipper then made a wonderful Sri Lankan fish curry from the Skye lythe, which we devoured despite saying we could hardly eat anything after our delicious pub lunch.

16th July 2015 Totaig: Up early and away to catch the tide through Kyle Rhea. Not a bad day but very nasty weather forecast for later so we got ourselves tucked into the marina in Mallaig Harbour, which was very crowded, including all the fishing fleet that had come in for shelter. Skipper took the opportunity of going into the fuel berth in the Fish Dock and filling with diesel at the right price – the presence of the lobster creel on deck determined the rate. By 23.00 the wind was howling, the rain was pouring and many halyards were crashing in the darkness. We were stormbound in Mallaig for three nights with lots of other yachts, Rosanna and I tried to take the ferry to Skye for a change of scene but they had all been cancelled due to the high winds. We amused ourselves with lots of walks, trips to the pub and chats with fellow yachties, the skipper experimenting with marinated Skye lythe.

19th July 2015 Mallaig: Finally the sun came out, the wind went light northerly and we departed Mallaig at 09.30 and sailed to Isle of Muck, anchoring at 13.00 and ashore to lunch in the wee café. Back on board at 15.00 and we then had a cracking sail to Coll; only three other yachts in the bay. Ashore for a lovely dinner in the Coll Hotel and to pose on



Viv approaches Plockton.



Busy Mallaig Harbour.

the helipad. Malt whisky nightcap in the cockpit with the skipper, who tells me he saw several sea otters after I retired.

20th July 2015 Coll: Early start, no lobster in the pot, en route to sound of Mull. By 9.00 the wind was on the nose, damp, with big seas. Horrible trip, especially off Duart Point and we were very glad to anchor in Puilladobhrain at 14.30. The bay soon filled up with other yachts, while the skipper in his friendly fashion glared at their crew daring them to anchor close to the *Ballyclaire* at their peril. More rain.

21st July 2015 Puilladobhrain: Departed Puilladobhrain at 08.00 and motor sailed across to Jura. Craighouse abeam at 13.00 but not visited this time, anchored off Ardbeg distillery 15.30. Ashore to the distillery, Rosanna and I for a small walk, the skippers to the malt shop and then a wee dram with Jackie the manageress, who fondly remembers the ICC muster a few years back. A very pleasant spot to while away an afternoon and the food is very good, as we all

know. Peter's memory of cars at the vintage Riley rally was once again discussed in detail

22nd July 2015 Ardbeg Distillery: With the weather so unsettled and southerlies forecast, the skipper decided to run for the Irish coast. Departed Ardbeg 07.30 with good brisk sailing. By 12.00 large black clouds advancing, wind rising very quickly and torrential rain, up with the henhouse lid, ease the sheets, and we are flying down the North Channel at 12 knots SOG. We arrived in Bangor Marina at 18.00, two weary people. John and Angela Ley spotted the boat coming in and invited us out to play but we were quite tired and just wanted to curl up on our berths. Next time, Angela!



An Angry North Channel.



Essential Stores.

23rd July 2015 Bangor Marina: Left Bangor Marina 10.00 after showers and large fry. The wind backed southerly as predicted and increased off Ballywalter with wind on the nose and choppy seas. By 15.00 we were tied up on the pontoon in Strangford and eager to hug our lovely grandchildren who were waving from their window above the anchorage as we arrived home.

Reflecting on our cruising this season, I think we both agree we made the best of the weather, did a respectable 750 nautical miles and visited ports old and new. Perkie only let us down once and the Delta anchor was unshakeable. We met some lovely old friends, made new ones, caught some fish and our first Canna lobster and thanked the Lord for our wee Ronaldson "hen house" investment, which kept us dry and mostly sane when the rain and storms raged outside.

Grenada to El Salvador via the Panama Canal on *Chantey V*

Daragh Nagle

Return to Grenada

Spring Break went by quickly back in Victoria, BC. Saltspring Island sailor Ole Andersen returned from Canada with me on 29th March. I had left *Chantey V*, our 1987 Moody 376 on the hard at Prickly Bay, Grenada, some three weeks earlier for some maintenance and crew change. The southernmost island in the Grenadines, it is a beautiful place to sail with steady easterly trade winds in the 15 to 25 knot range.

The bottom paint job by Spice Island Marina looked terrific and the topsides have never looked better with the now matching dodger sewn by Turbulence Sails. In my opinion this island has a deservedly good reputation for marine work. Our insurance required us to get a new survey and this was passed easily by local marine surveyor Bob Goodchild (pew) and we were ready to go. We made the usual provisioning run and were soon on our way for a double overnighter to Los Roques in Venezuela.

Los Roques, Venezuela

We started with 22 knots all dead downwind with Main and Genoa but this sail setup was not ideal and it was hard to balance the rig with the big seas in the 7 to 9 ft range. We trimmed as best we could and settled into our watch routine of three hours on and three hours off for the next two days. Los Roques turned out to be a lovely spot with white sand beaches ...and white sand streets! It was a Saturday and the customs officials were very friendly and efficient. The exchange rate of 200 Bolivars to the \$1 made the change from \$50 look an impressive stash. The beer at 60 cents a can in the restaurants has to be the lowest of anywhere we have been, so it was no surprise most locations were sold out by Sunday night. We toured the nearby Francis Island by dinghy, and it was bustling with locals having swimming and dancing events.

Bonaire

We got our departure *zarpe* on Monday and moved on to Bonaire. More dead downwind sailing but this time we twinned our storm jib with a poled out genoa and what a difference. Completely stable and steered easily by our trusty Helga the Hydrovane. We reached Bonaire without incident and found the check-in process reasonably quick and efficient. A little bit of Holland in the middle of the Caribbean and still quite unspoilt, with a population of around 12,000. Its history of colonization and slavery has created an interesting mixture of cultures, all of whom we found very welcoming to visiting sailors.

Curaçao

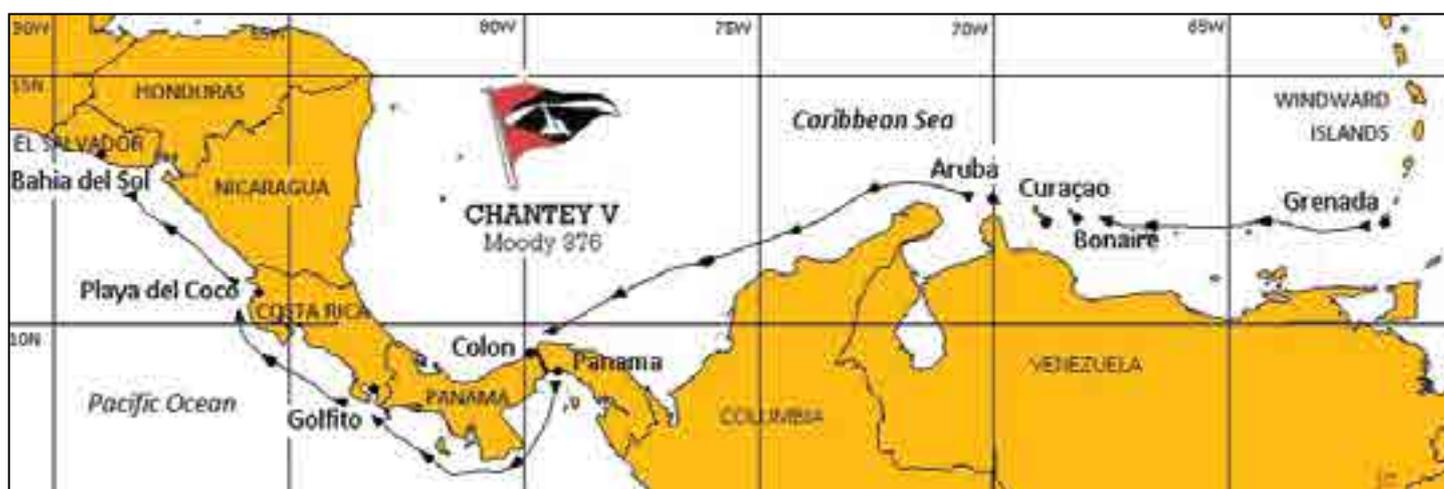
Next on to Curaçao and the double headsail rig was just great again, with very little slapping in the persistent big sea. Of course, up to 2 knots current assist would make any boat put up an impressive VMG.

We anchored in Spanse Water in Curacao but still there was no relief from the 25 Gust 30 Kts winds. We awoke next day to find we had dragged a couple of boat lengths and went for a reset only to pick up an abandoned mooring chain. One hour of back breaking labour to hoist this (and Ole) convinced me I needed to get myself an electric windlass. Within a few hours I had located one on-line at Trotac in Victoria, BC and incoming crew member Linda Ellen agreed (God bless her) to bring it down in her luggage when she came to join us in Aruba. We managed to pick up some related parts at the local chandleries and began the installation process, expertly directed by Ole.

We made a day trip into Willemstad to complete our customs and immigration formalities, which have separate offices each side of the city. We had a nice lunch beside the 550 ft Queen Emma floating pontoon swing bridge which is quite something to see in action. The last pontoon at the opening end is motorized with two propellers and a control cabin. It was built in 1888 and it still works perfectly.

Aruba

The strong easterly trade winds would not abate but with Linda flying in on Saturday we really had to get going to



Aruba. It's all downwind we reasoned which was true but it's not often you can make 8 knots with just a dodger and bimini for sails. In fact we had to drop the bimini to try and slow down for our arrival at dawn into Oranjestad. After checking in with customs, we docked at the Renaissance Marina which was a bit of luxury after being on the hook for a week. Linda joined us and we took advantage of the weather window to rest and relax at the pool in between boat projects. We had a great meal at the Driftwood Restaurant, where the owner personally catches all the fish he serves daily.

Panama

Finally the winds and seas eased a little and we decided to go for it to Panama. Our carefully timed departure was spoiled by a local immigration official missing a stamp in one passport and then disappearing to lunch for two and a half hours before we could get him back. Now that we were a crew of three we had the luxury of six hours off for every three hours on watch. We went as fast as possible to make up but we ended up passing the notorious Barraquilla river effluent (off Colombia) after sunset but fortunately all logs and debris disappear after dark....right?

The Caribbean current now turned against us and the wind gradually eased such that it was four days later when we set foot on the docks of Shelter Bay Marina in Colon. This is just inside the breakwater marking the east entrance to the Panama canal. It was a very welcome sight and we relished the pool, showers, bar and restaurant at this excellent and well run marina. John Halley the manager remembered us from our last visit three years earlier and he was still his super helpful self brimming with useful local knowledge.

We made a re-provisioning run into Colon and had a quick look around. Ole and I went to work on completing the windlass installation, which now looks terrific. Our Canal agent Roy Bravo got us a transit slot in an unheard of two days and Wednesday afternoon we were off to the Panama Flats anchorage to pick up our Canal Company Advisor. This was our first use of the new windlass and it worked perfectly. *Muchas gracias* Ole for the inspiration and Linda for bringing it down.

It was near 18:00 by the time our Canal advisor showed up so we had to do the Gatun Lock transit in the dark. Not nearly the smooth operation we had with *SV Tension Reliever* three years ago and it took three attempts before we could raft with our assigned buddy-boat catamaran. Our local linesmen Daniel along with his son Alan were excellent crew and good company as well. Our Canal advisor Francisco was also excellent -no surprise as his other job is tug-boat skipper and the reason he was late was he was filling in for another no-show advisor.



Panama Canal night passage.

We were then paired with a huge canal tug for last two locks at Miraflores and this was easily the most difficult transit of all, trying to tread water in a huge lock infilling current in the dark. Finally we got out and made our way to drop off the advisor and try to find a mooring at the Balboa Yacht Club in the dark. We were so happy to get ashore for a beer only find to they were sold out of food. Ole got a taxi to his hotel and we returned to the boat for sandwiches for supper.

Next day we all met for lunch at the Flamenco peninsula before saying *adios* to Ole. Thanks for all the help Ole; *Chantey V* will never be the same again.

Costa Rica

Next morning Linda and I prepared to get under way for Golfito, Costa Rica, at first light. We took advantage of the light wind conditions to hoist the main at the mooring and were given clearance to depart on a track just outside the reds on the main channel. We were almost clear of the main channel when a canal official boat approached us and ordered us to drop the sails. Darn - "no sailing allowed in the canal zone". Kinda silly considering we were allowed to sail completely across the canal itself.

Still, we began to notice positive currents again and we were really moving as we passed Punta Malo. Our route was planned to go outside all the small islands off Western Panama and we enjoyed positive currents of various strengths all the way to the Costa Rican border. Not so much with the wind and we had to motor sail most of the way. Still, we arrived in



Wing on wing storm jib.

Golfito at 12.00 two days later and were six hours ahead of schedule. It was great to be welcomed by Tim & Kathie (and the doggies) at Land Sea Marina, the cruiser-friendliest place in Costa Rica. We later combined a trip to the *Aduana* (customs) with a visit to the Latitude 8 bar for happy hour and to get caught up with the resident Gringos who have swallowed the hook there.

Next day we got a national *zarpe* and went for an overnigher to Manuel Antonio National Park. Once again favourable currents had us slowing down for a daylight arrival and we tucked right into the anchorage at first light. A dinghy surf landing onto the beach was a reminder of even worse conditions here three years ago. We had a good walk around the park and saw lots of monkeys, sloths, snakes and lizards and well as amazing jungle. Later we took a trip by local bus to Quepos and had an excellent lunch at the Marina there. We just barely got back to the Park before it closed and had to hustle to get back to the dinghy. Another wet surf launch but by now we were content to make any getaway at all.

We decided once was enough at the Park and we planned to set out for Playa del CoCo next day. The sky had darkened considerably over coffee and sure enough we were awash in torrential rain for the next hour such that you could hardly see the beach. I guess rainy season is arriving. The new dodger is great and kept us pretty comfy and dry inside. We got under way soon afterwards and one overnigher later we were dropping the hook in the North of the bay at Playa del CoCo. Not too roly and a little later we tried a beach landing - a little more co-ordinated this time and not quite as wet. We checked out the town and had a nice lunch at a

local bar. I booked a snorkel tour for next day with Rich Coast Diving. They picked me up right off our boat and I got a personal guide for the morning. This is an excellent diving outfit that I would recommend but be aware that water clarity can vary a lot from day to day in this area.

El Salvador

Next day we were back to the paperwork “cha cha” to get an International *zarpe* to leave Costa Rica. It took all day including over an hour wait at the bank to pay a \$20 port captain fee and two trips by bus to Liberia airport to track down a customs agent to surrender our Temporary Boat Import permit. Finally, at 16.00 we were back on the boat hoisting the anchor to set out for El Salvador. We had a good forecast from Chris Parker’s weather service and he was spot on. As a result we sailed all the way at great speed under a triple reefed main and reefed genoa, easily our best sail of the trip. Once again we really had to slow down at the end as the bar crossing into Bahia del Sol was not possible until 16.20. We met John Kieser on *SV Polaris* standing by outside waiting to go in as well. The surf looked ...well quite intimidating and it did not help when the bar pilot advised he was delayed getting out to us “because of the big surf”.

We motored back and forth at the meeting place and finally the pilot showed up. We went first and actually had a pretty smooth if exciting ride over the bar. Not so much for *SV Polaris* as a wave broke over his stern and some water went down his companionway, soaking his computer. We tied up at the Hotel Bahia del Sol docks. They have on-site Customs formalities, which are quick and efficient in this part of El Salvador.

Over the next week we prepared *Chantey V* for her summer to be spent at the Santos Marine mooring field. There she awaits the resumption of our cruise north to Mexico at the end of the 2015 Hurricane season. We flew back from San Salvador to Canada on 12th May, having sailed 2,000 miles and visited eight countries over six weeks.



Bahia del Sol bar crossing.

First Hebridean Foray for *Calico Jack*

Conor O'Byrne



In the hot, hot summer of 2013 we had hoped to take in at least one of the Scottish Islands on our two week cruise north from Galway. Unfortunately time came against us and we got no further than Downings in Sheephaven Bay, Co. Donegal. Having lived in Scotland for eight years and having done lots of hill walking on the west coast, I have always wanted to sail there from Ireland. Our Sadler 26, *Calico Jack*, averages only about 4 kts when cruising and a quick perusal of the charts shows the return distance from Galway to Islay, the nearest Scottish island, is over 500 NM. Two weeks was always going to be tight, so I thought that this year I should be a bit more realistic and give myself a fighting chance with a three week cruise. My applications for 3 weeks' leave were duly processed and approved by the relevant work and domestic departments, so I was good to go.

Finding crew proved to be difficult at first as not many of my friends could immediately see the appeal of using their limited holidays to head further north from our beloved temperate oceanic climate to a slightly soggy one, in a small boat. Of course in the end the cream always rises to the top and I found five stalwarts who would join me at different stages of the cruise. Two of them immediately booked flights to Scotland, so that meant we were under a bit of pressure to actually get there this time.



Walter O'Byrne at Kilronan

So on Monday June 22nd my father, Walter O'Byrne, and I set off from New Harbour in Galway Bay to Kilronan on Inismor. The 30 NM trip was faster than usual as the wind was north westerly for most of the day, giving us a fetch for Inismor (usually we beat into westerlies all the way), although it backed later which pushed us off towards Inishmaan. Arriving alongside the steps of Kilronan pier at 17.30, we had glorious sunshine and we soaked it up with a couple of cold beers from the freshly chilled cold box (*Calico Jack* doesn't have a fridge on board). After some further refreshments in Tí Joe Watty's pub we moved the boat out to a visitor's mooring for the night, as we didn't want to block access to the steps on the pier. The following morning brought a light southerly breeze and after a hearty fry-up we departed for Inishbofin at 09.35. The spinnaker got its only outing of the cruise that morning. We managed to carry it for a couple of hours before the wind dropped to almost nothing. We motor-sailed most of the remaining 20 NM or so to Inishbofin, arriving in the harbour at 19.00. We anchored in the harbour and took the dinghy ashore for showers and dinner at Inishbofin House Hotel. The hotel kindly didn't charge us for the luxurious showers (part of the hotel's spa facility) as we were staying for dinner.

The following morning while waiting for the new crew to arrive we took the dinghy ashore to explore the promontory on the south side of the harbour, which includes the spectacular Cromwellian Barracks that overlooks the entrance to the harbour. Comms are pretty limited on Inishbofin as there is almost no mobile signal available on the island (a blessing in many ways) but it meant I was uncertain whether my new crew, John Dodd, would be on the 12.00 ferry or not. I was delighted that he was because I was keen to take advantage of the favourable SW wind that would send us on our way to Donegal. We planned to sail overnight to Aranmore in Donegal. My father left on the same ferry that John arrived on and he was able to use John's car to get back to Galway, which suited John as he would be travelling back home from Donegal. We finally departed Inishbofin harbour at 13.15 and carefully made the passage north west through Ship Sound, between Inishark and Inishbofin. Once clear of the sound we set a course to clear Achill Head some 20 NM away. John is a keen fisherman and had brought some lines with him but despite several attempts there wasn't even a nibble. Maybe that explains why Donegal bay is such a quiet place these days; we didn't see a single fishing boat, or indeed any other vessel, during the whole 120 NM of this passage.

On our approach to Aranmore we toyed with the idea of going through the south sound of Aran but the available tide was very marginal so instead we stayed west of Aranmore and approached the visitors' moorings at Leabgarrow from the north. We picked up the visitors' moorings at 1615 on July 25th, which made this a 27 h passage from Inishbofin. We took the dinghy ashore where we met the new crew, Lyle Goodwin, an experienced sailor who sails his own Jouet 26 on Lough Derg. We headed to Early's for some pub-grub before retiring to the boat around 21.00 for nightcaps and some badly needed sleep.

In the morning we said goodbye to John, who was taking Lyle's car back down to Galway, and then we made our preparations for the passage to Scotland. I was keen to make sure we had full fuel tanks so I filled our main tank from the reserve 10L containers on board and then went ashore to refill the empties. The only supply of diesel on Aranmore is at the co-op, about two miles from the pier, so I hitched a ride there to save time. A local man kindly picked me up and dropped me to the door. He insisted on coming back for me after he picked up his friend, an elderly gentleman called Mr Rodgers, who needed a lift to the village post office. When they picked me up again they were keen to hear where I was headed in

my “wee boat”. Mr Rodgers didn’t believe that I was heading to Scotland (or maybe that I would make it to Scotland) so I promised to send him a postcard from the Isle of Barra, which I duly did.

We dropped our mooring at 10.45 and with clear skies and a fine southerly breeze (F4-5) we departed for Barra, 122 NM from Aranmore. With the wind forecast to stay southerly F4-5 we had ideal conditions for the passage. We enjoyed good close-up views of Omey Island and Tory as we left the Irish coast. With a goose-winged genoa poled-out we made great progress north, often touching 7 or 8 knots in the gusts and aided by favourable following seas. We started 2 hour watches at 2200 and had an uneventful night with not a single vessel sighted. The morning brought foggy conditions and although we were now only 4 NM south east of Berneray, the southern most of the Outer Hebrides, we couldn’t see it or its neighbour Mingulay. Eventually, at 10.00, out of the murk the hazy outline of Mingulay emerged. We took the shortcut into Castlebay on Barra by going through the narrow (30 m) “Fisherman’s passage” rather than going west outside of Muldoanich island, a saving of 4 or 5 miles. This route gave us a nice view of the stunning marble-white beach on the island of Vatersay, which we noted as a must for our next visit. But for now the allure of showers and dinner ashore on Barra were too appealing so we made for the visitors’ moorings in Castlebay.

Well rested we left our mooring at 10.00 the following morning bound for Loch Scavaig on the south west corner of Isle of Skye, some 46 NM away. This anchorage was suggested to me by Brian Cudmore (ICC), and the CCC pilot concurs, describing it as “one of the most dramatic and awe-inspiring anchorages in Europe”, so with such distinguished recommendations we were keen to visit. Winds were south west F5-6 and with a course just north of east we had a lovely passage on a day that saw plenty sunshine. We had good views of the cliffs on the north side of Canna, which we passed around 16.00. We passed south of Soay, the island that guards the south west approach to Loch Scavaig, at 18.30. An hour later saw us motoring into Loch na Cuilce, the innermost pool in the north west corner of the Loch. Entering this spectacular pool requires care as there are rocks in the narrow entrance that cover near high water. We were rewarded by stunning views of towering waterfalls and the sheer walls of rock that led up to the high mountains of the Cuillin ridge. On the shore there were deer and dozens of seals unperturbed by our visit. We didn’t have it all to ourselves, as there was another yacht already at anchor there. Although the protection from the sea there is excellent it is subject to some violent gusts and during the night we experienced gusts of up to 40 knots. For this reason we thought it was prudent to implement an anchor watch through the night – hour on, hour off. Despite the strong gusts the anchor held firm, which, at least in my mind, fully vindicated the decision to extend the anchor chain by 20 metres before we left Galway. The wind eased near dawn allowing us to reclaim some of the sleep lost during the night, and then following a hearty breakfast we made for the island of Canna. From here on we were heading south into winds that were mostly coming from that direction, so the easy days were numbered.

The comparatively short passage to Canna (5h) in south westerly winds F3-5 was uneventful but we were struck by the stunning approach to Canna, with dramatic cliffs and sandy beaches guarding the entrance to the main harbour. Although nice when we arrived on the visitors’ moorings, the weather soon turned *dreich*, that lovely expression the Scots have for weather we might refer to as soft. With full all-weather gear on we went ashore for a look around. We walked up to the 7th century Celtic cross and the nearby ‘punishment stone’, which thankfully with such an excellent crew we had no cause to use. After a few sociable drinks in Café Canna, we adjourned to the boat for the last of the home-made food, which was excellent. But the cold box was now bare and sadly cold-no-more.

The following morning brought a forecast of F5-6 south easterly winds, which meant a headwind all the way to our next destination, Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, 30 NM away. We motorsailed south west out through the sound of Canna, which with our 9 hp Volvo Penta was a real battle against winds gusting up to F8. An hour later, at 09.00, we cleared the sound and had fantastic views of Rum to our east and Canna to our north west. We made good progress south under engine and mainsail, with occasional bursts of sunshine and had a visit from a lively pod of dolphins. But then as we approached Ardnamurchan Point, the wind increased to south east F6-7 and in bumpy conditions it took us over 3 hours to weather this infamous headland. Our mood at this stage was no doubt affected by VHF radio traffic that involved the coastguard answering a Mayday call from a yacht in the area. Finally at 1815 after a fairly tough 10.5 hour passage we arrived into Tobermory. We were keen to get a berth on the marina at Tobermory but it looked to be full when we arrived. Lyle spotted a small berth which I thought looked too small but he was right, and on a second attempt we managed to squeeze in. An enjoyable evening followed in Tobermory where we had some excellent seafood and enjoyed the company of Uel Gillan (ICC) and his partner Liz, who were also berthed on the marina in *Valhalla*, their Hallberg Rassy 36.

The 1st of July brought a windless day, which – being quite honest – was very welcome. We had an enjoyable trip down the Sound of Mull in warm humid conditions, with the highlight being the stunning views from the lighthouse on Eilean Musdile to the mountains on the mainland. We picked up a visitors’ mooring at Oban after a 5.5 hour passage from Tobermory. When we went ashore for some domestic chores (mainly to refreeze the ice packs for the cold box), we met Peter Williams (ICC) and his friend Robert, who were spending the night in Oban on their way north to Tobermory. They invited



Calico Jack in Tobermory



Lyle Goodwin

us on board *Reiver* and we received the best Northern Irish hospitality, which included his son-in-law's beer, a fantastic India Pale Ale called Farmageddan. Later that evening they joined us for dinner in Oban, where we had super seafood and spread our custom liberally.

Next morning Lyle departed early bound for home via Glasgow, only to be replaced by another Goodwin, his younger brother Neil, who I have known for many years. We left the mooring at 14.20, which was calculated to have us arrive at the tidal gate in the Sound of Luing in time for the south going tide. On the approach to the sound at approximately 18.00 we passed west of Bono Rock and then between the islets of Belnahua and Fladda. As our plan was to make Crinan that

evening. Once we had passed east of Scarba, we headed SE through the Dorus Mor, a channel with notoriously fast tidal streams (up to 8 kn at springs) between Craignish Point and the island of Garbh Reisa. Now motoring in drizzly conditions with the tide under us, we flew through this channel at an exhilarating 9 kn with all sorts of interesting eddies and whirlpools around us. We arrived at Crinan at 1950, picked up a visitors' mooring and went ashore for dinner in the Crinan Hotel. The rain cleared, giving way to a really spectacular sunset view to the west over the island of Jura (I kicked myself for not having brought my camera ashore).

On July 3rd we made a passage south to Port Ellen on Islay, where we were due to have the last crew swap of the cruise. Neil was going to make his way home to Galway via Glasgow and John Morrissey an old college friend was due to arrive by ferry that evening. Unfortunately he got the ferry to Port Askaig instead of Port Ellen but he was able to blag a lift from a local who was driving down to Port Ellen. In the event he got a fantastic guided tour of the island en route so he had no regrets about landing in the wrong port. We berthed on the pontoon in Port Ellen that evening and prepared for the crossing back to Ireland the following day. We planned to leave at 13.00 on the 4th to make the most of the strong tidal stream off the south coast of Islay. The forecast was for a fresh south to south east breeze, which we decided was suitable for a passage to Lough Swilly. We passed north of Inishtrahull at 20.00 and felt that we were making such good progress that we should press on for Tory Island, but then as we approached that we decided that we could make Aranmore in time for breakfast. So at 09.00 on 5th July after a 20h passage, we picked up the same visitors' mooring on Aranmore that we had used on the way north the previous week.

After some sleep and a hike to the top of Aranmore to admire the panoramic views, we motored in the narrow channel to Burtonport, where we spent the night after a very good feed in the Lobster Pot. The forecast for the following day was a south easterly breeze F5-6, which we thought would give us a good fast reach to Rossan Point and from there a short beat up to Teelin harbour in south Donegal. We motored out from Burtonport at 09.10 and navigated the shallow channel through the South Sound of Aran, staying east of Illancrone before setting our course for Rossan Point. Initially the wind was south east F5 but this increased to F6 and then later to a very gusty F7 as we approached Rossan Point. The mainsail was rigged for two reefs but not for a third, which forced us to drop the sail altogether in the strong gusts coming off the headland. With about 20% of the genoa out and no mainsail we motorsailed at a snail's pace through Rathlin O'Birne sound and were relieved to find much less gusty conditions in Donegal Bay. We arrived in Teelin harbour at 16.10 and were very pleased to be able to get a berth alongside a fishing boat at the end of the pier on the western side of the harbour. A swim followed by a pleasant two mile stroll into the village of Carrick gave us a great appetite for dinner. There we rented two bikes from the post office, which involved a spectacular amount of paperwork, including a personal guarantee that no alcohol would be consumed prior to their use. I am almost always true to my word.

The next day saw a very fresh south westerly wind, which was forecast to veer north west and moderate that evening so we decided to take a day off to wait for the more favourable NW wind. I would like to report that we took the opportunity to climb Slieve League cliffs but the cloud was too low and instead we bought newspapers and spread our custom liberally around Carrick. Then on Wednesday July

8th we made a 14.5 hour passage to Inishkea South off the Belmullet peninsula, anchoring in a beautiful spot just south of Rusheen Island, an islet off the north east end of Inishkea South. The plan was to make for Inisbofin the following day but the wind had other ideas and after bashing our way around Achill Head in a southerly F5-6 with heavy rain we decided that Clare Island was going to be the quicker and easier option. We sailed just north of Bills Rocks and around the north coast of Clare Island, which produces strong gusts from its spectacular high cliffs, to finally reach the harbour at 17.45 in very heavy rain. In very damp conditions we trudged ashore and



View from Aranmore



Conor at Inishtrahull

found refuge in Sailor's Hostel, where they kindly agreed to let us have showers for a very small fee, which they then waived when we stayed on for dinner and drinks. The great food and vista from this hostel-restaurant make it well worth a visit.

On Friday 10th John had to return home so he departed on the 09.15 ferry to Roonagh. I had exhausted all my crew options by this point so the last leg (85 NM) back to Galway was going to be solo. The forecast for the next few days was horrible, with strong winds due from the south. As I had to be back at work on the Monday, I decided to leave the boat on Clare Island and make the last passage of the cruise the following weekend. It wasn't an ideal end to the cruise; a return to the home port within the 3 weeks would have been more satisfying. Also the harbour on

Clare Island is quite exposed to the East and with some easterlies forecast I knew I would be worrying about the boat while I was back in Galway. In the end I discussed my plans with several of the locals and they promised to keep an eye on her and let me know if the mooring became unsafe. The ferry driver very kindly picked me up directly from *Calico Jack* on Saturday morning and took me into Roonagh on the mainland and one of the locals, Raphael McCabe, who is a mine of information on the island's heritage, dropped me into Westport.

After what felt like a long week back at work I was ready for closure. So early on the following Saturday morning (18th July), I got a lift back up to Roonagh with John Dodd, who unfortunately wasn't able to fit the sail in, and then I was ferried directly back to the boat by O'Malley ferries. I dropped the mooring at 11.45 and with all sail up sailed north of Caher and Inisturk islands in a light south-south westerly breeze. As I passed 1 nm west of Inishark, this increased to F4-5 and then later to F5-6 as I passed west of Slyne Head. Conditions were very lumpy and unpleasant for an hour or so as I approached Slyne Head, even though I gave it a generous clearance of 3 NM. The conditions were not helped by frequent heavy rain squalls passing through. But then as soon I came due west of the Slyne Head lighthouse at 20.20 the wind veered to the west allowing me to bear away and enjoy some fast reaching towards Inismor. There was a stunning sunset over the starboard quarter and the boat was skipping along for home; at that moment everything was good with the world. At dawn we passed Black Head at the entrance to Galway Bay, where we were welcomed home by a school of porpoises. I cooked up some breakfast as we sailed the last few miles in the bay and then picked up our own mooring in Rinville at 0730 on Sunday morning. Closure at last!



Crinan Sunset

Total distance logged: 840 NM

Total engine hours: 74

Photos of this cruise are available online at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskgnVNHg>

The GPS track of the cruise is available at: <https://goo.gl/maps/uotIA>

Islands in South Brittany

Jonathan Virden

The cruising season of 2015 was a simple year for *Twayblade*, with episodes. The 32 ft. yacht was designed by Buchanan and built in 1961 by Harry King and rebuilt in 1982 by John Hill to a longer-lasting standard. Since that time *Twayblade* has taken us on adventures, north, west and south, all but one of them within 800 nm of Plymouth.

After a very hurried preparation between other events, we reached the boat from home a few hours later than planned on 17th May 2015. She was ashore in Blagdon's yard in Plymouth. Early next morning, rather against the advice of the yard because of squally winds during launch, she was put into the water. We took her away from the quay to a deeper place as the tide retreated. All the heavy gear and supplies were on board, but not set up or stowed. We spent the rest of the day putting some sort of order in place. This included replacement of the old Optimus cooker by an Origo 3000 alcohol cooker. We learned to be wary of this new beast as it is quite silent and has a nearly invisible flame. After a night at the pontoon we motored to our mooring at Cargreen 8 miles up the Tamar estuary, north of Devonport. There we did three nights of "boatwatch" for the Cargreen Yacht Club and had time to do all the commissioning for cruising. These days also allowed us to meet many friends again at our sailing base at the club.

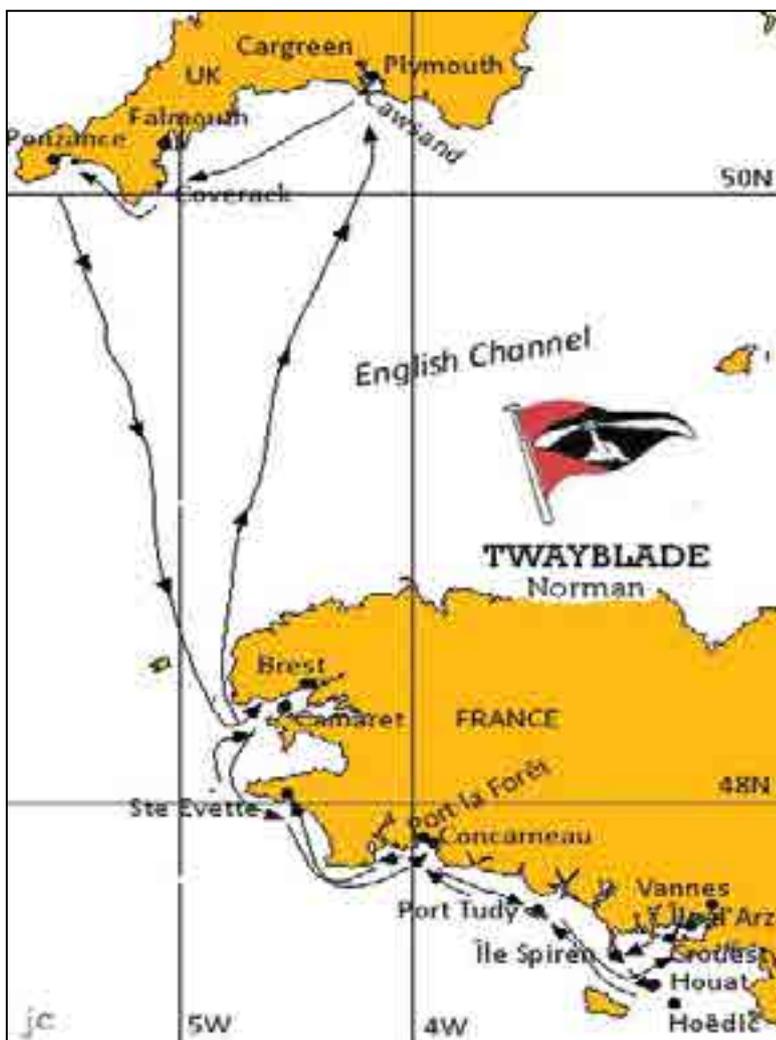
On 23rd May we sailed down river past Devonport to the same pontoon at the yard. Next day we collected my nephew Thomas Virden from the station. The evening and night were spent at anchor at Cawsand, and briefly ashore at a pub. With crew complete, all rigged and stowed we could just stop rushing about. But we had an informal appointment to keep with other RCC yachts, if wind and tide allowed.

We left Cawsand at 05.55 and had a day of motoring, sometimes with close-reaching sails, to Coverack. We anchored near *Bethulie* RCC, whence came Charles Nodder RCC and Nick Waite RCC bearing strawberries, for tea, cake and talk. This was a gorgeous quiet sunny evening.

After a cold, nearly still night we left at 06.00 to take the tide past the Lizard with mist flowing off the cliffs. After 3 hours the wind was too slight to be useful so we motored to St Michael's Mount to anchor near eight other RCC yachts. The evening was memorable for the large number of persons that it proved possible to stack on the deck of Paul Heiney's *Wild Song* RCC. For several hours all the sea-cocks had to be closed. For us this splendid gathering was followed by the invitation to dinner on board *Gas Pirate*. The ever hospitable Mike Pidsley RCC had engaged Sarah Gleadell RCC to work the galley, with great success. Thomas demonstrated the eating power of young people to the rest of those present, all fairly senior. That evening was a real treat.

The next day dawned still and clear but with unpromising forecast for our passage to Brittany. Therefore we went into the wet dock at Penzance. We filled up with diesel, water and other provisions and looked at the weather rather gloomily. On 28th May we had to choose whether to go on or stay in Penzance, perhaps for several days. The timing of tides at each end was in helpful mode for departure and for landfall in the morning to meet the south-going tide in the Chenal du Four. After much doubt and deliberation and detailed information from the internet in the harbour master's office it seemed that there was a 24-hr slot from opening of the dock at 11.30 until next day, with wind from west, after which the wind and sea would become much more contrary. So we set off with the big genoa, no mainsail and 16–18 kts of wind on the beam.

The passage was very fast and splashy. By dawn we were able to take advantage of the last of the two hours of the south-going tide previous to the one we had planned to catch. The visibility was very good but there was some confusion about our exact position approaching the coast. Compass bearings, the GPS and the principal waypoint seemed to be completely discoordinated. Resolution came when we passed a labelled buoy and we came through Chenal de la Helle and rounded Pte de St Mattieu as the adverse tide gathered speed. The problem turned out to have been caused by my having recorded the main waypoint 20nm south of the correct position (partly caused by rather indistinct numbers on the GPS screen, e.g. confusing 3 and 5) which had led us too far west at landfall. By 11.30 we were alongside the pontoon at Camaret Vauban marina with wind



rising from SSW. We all slept well during that afternoon.

We remained in Camaret for six nights. The weather was variable but always unfavourable for us to go south, with winds 20 to 25 kts. some drizzle and considerable swell which we could see on the coast near the Goulet de Brest. Thomas was very lucky. For his return to London he accepted the very kind offer of a lift by car with Nick and Sue of yacht *Pisces*, who were doing a crew change and had a spare seat.

While in Camaret we went to amateur music-making in the chapel on the harbour wall. We found several useful things in the large chandlery on the east quay. I set up the wind generator but it did not work well because the flow of wind was obstructed by high-sided vessels on the other side of the pontoon. We also took a day trip by bus to Quimper. This is a very interesting and pleasant city with open air exhibitions, a fine cathedral, flower boxes along the river and on bridges, a big square for art students to do silly things in front of multitudes of tourists and an outdoor exhibition of painted pigs. (It is also a good rail and bus link)

We escaped from Camaret on 4th June, having been delayed by the late arrival of daily meteorological information at the marina office. There was little wind. We sailed for a couple of hours but otherwise motored to keep appointment with tide at Pte du Raz. We came to La Plate an hour later than planned, when it should have been slack tide, to find that the north-going tide already well established and increasing rapidly. After a careful check of the times I came to wonder whether the turn of the tide was affected by the big spring tides of that day. We found a visitors' mooring at Ste Evette and had a quiet afternoon and night.

On 5th June we motored over calm sea with no wind to Concarneau for fresh provisions, laundry, showers and a civilised evening in the old citadel. The burgee had to be recovered by Joy from the mast head. It had frayed and caught around the VHF aerial. A much longer staff will be on duty next year and perhaps an unfrayed burgee too. After the second night there we sailed to Ile de Groix with variable wind. By 15.40 we were alongside a pontoon in the inner harbour at Port Tudy. The sun shone and it was warm.

We stayed on Groix until 11th June. Wind from ENE, NE, NNE, all F5 to 7 made any further passage uninviting and not part of our sailing plans for the elderly. Our adventures on bicycles had their moments too. The advertised cycle track around the island is permitted to coincide in some places with the pedestrian-only part of the coastal path. Much of that part is next to impassable without four feet each and no wheels. We did reach the intended place and the group following a guide. Groix is a most interesting island with its own flora, fauna, geology and human history. The museum, near the harbour, is quite absorbing and well worth the EU funds spent on it. The facilities for sailors are good but simple. Diesel has to be fetched in cans from beyond the steps up from Café Jetée. One needs to keep along the cliff track until the source is visible. It takes 12 minutes to walk to the pump which is always open for sales with a payment card, including UK cards.

As the time needed for all we had hoped to do was running out we set sail on 11th July through the reefs of Quiberon to Crouesty. The passage was very simple with some help from sails, but mostly by motor. On entering Crouesty marina we were met by the harbourmaster and were allocated to a nearby slot. This was on the north shore across the fairway from facilities and *capitainerie*. The distance round five basins of the marina, out of six, was a little less than a mile. We arranged for *Twayblade* to stay alongside for four weeks, and moved to one of the visitors' pontoons, which was highly unsatisfactory because it had very short pontoons and was exposed to swell, wash and a cross tidal flow. We extricated *Twayblade* with considerable difficulty and found a much better place deep in the visitors' basin clear of traffic and swell.

By good fortune one of Joy's friends from Cambridge days has a house quite close to Crouesty. Madeleine and Michel were most welcoming and showed us their house on the coast, and took us to two superb restaurants. Once we had prepared the boat for a long stay they took us by car to Vannes to take the trains to Paris and home in Kent... That took nine hours, door-to-door.

The prelude to the second part of the 2015 cruising season was the return from Kent to *Twayblade*. En route we attended a glorious French wedding in Chamonix-Mont Blanc. This was achieved by train from Ashford to Lyon, by hire car to Chamonix, followed by two days of celebrations and a very long day of driving to the airport hotel at Nantes. We drove on to Vannes to return the car and took the local bus to the boat in Crouesty. We found all in good order.

At 14.30 on 16th July we were assisted by harbour master's staff to creep out of the bolt-hole deep in the marina. We hoisted the mainsail outside the harbour and with some assistance from the engine we took the tidal sleigh ride into the Morbihan. At 16.20 we anchored east of Ile d'Arz on a quiet sunny afternoon. At 19.00 the *brize de terre*, an occasional very strong land-breeze, dragged our anchor. After looking for a deeper, more sheltered spot we anchored a bit further from Arz with twice the length of chain and a heavy weight on it and stayed there undisturbed.

After the previous frantic week we spent most of 17th July on board doing not very much. In the evening we moved to a small deep spot south west of Ile Spirren, east of Ile aux Moines. As it was high season we expected many other boats to occupy the space. But we had it to ourselves for two nights, with accompanying wash from all sorts of passing motor craft. Some sightseers' boats made wash two to three feet high. This anchorage has very little tidal flow and is well clear of oyster farms, past which I rowed to the slip which is just visible from the anchorage at the east point of Ile aux Moines. From the landing to the 'Bourg' is a pleasant 40 minutes walk and we enjoyed lunch under an enormous eucalyptus tree. In July the island is full of day visitors: we met many of them on the paths and roads. Their needs for sitting, watering and eating are well provided by numerous bars, restaurants and similar establishments. The harbour office had no useful information like weather forecasts for casual visiting sailors.

We motored out of the Morbihan on 19th July in murky visibility and hoisted sails outside, near the rough patch at the

edge of the flow of the spring ebb tide. We sailed to a pleasant anchorage on the north east coast of Houat, well sheltered from south and west. Although the murky drizzle had cleared as we sailed towards Houat and it was bright and warm for a while, the heavy drizzle and showers returned in the afternoon and we remained on board. On 20th July we sailed to Argol on Ile Hoedic through very poor visibility and little wind using radar. We rafted with some other boats on the outermost of four buoys. That buoy had plenty of depth at spring tides, unlike the next one, but had much less shelter from ferry wash and the open sea. In the afternoon the weather cleared and we went ashore. There we found beer and a small but remarkably comprehensive supermarket which is clearly adequate for the big summer visitor population. During the night the raft of boats rolled out of phase and one of our cleats was broken by being pulled up towards the high topsides of our neighbour. The harbour master told us that the very primitive facilities for visitors were to be replaced by modern ones during the next twelve months, including an office for him in place of a dilapidated shed.

From Hoedic we motored back to Houat and anchored off the great eastern beach. Being French holiday time, there were many yachts there: we counted eighty four at one time. But there was always plenty of room. I rowed the third of a mile to the shore and we went for beer and supplies. This was a chance for exercise and to enjoy the brilliant flowers and shrubs. Among the signs there was a trail leading to a mysterious business which clearly advertised itself for visitation. However, after a mile or so of grassy tracks we met others who had found the place to be closed; apparently it uses seaweed to make cosmetics. Another place of total contrast worth more than five minutes of visit is the church: it has bright but discrete modern stained glass, great simplicity of decoration and quiet but serious recorded old music. The following day was used as a pure sunny, sandy beach day. Joy jogged from end to end of the beach. I discovered that the dinghy was an excellent backrest for reading (no need for a deck-chair). Joy avoided sunburn with oceans of lotions. We had to evade a shower briefly but that made an interval for beer and lunch in the town.

Leaving Houat on 23rd July, we started the journey back to UK from the sunny holiday islands. We motored over almost glassy sea to Port Tudy on Groix. There was no room in the inner harbour so we spent a night on the fore-and-aft mooring buoys in the outside harbour and went to the inner pontoons next morning. This was a useful move because the outer harbour became very uncomfortable for two days. Also we could do all the provisioning needed for the rest of the cruise. I took the opportunity to revisit the interesting part of the coast to see some rare minerals again.

On 26th July the forecasts, so far as we could understand them, predicted S to SW F 4 to 5, later increasing SW to W F 5 to 6. As the next passage was likely to take less than five hours we set off at 0820 in poor visibility and almost no wind. Before we had reached the west end of Groix we were motor sailing in SSW 15 – 17 kts, close reaching and an alarm we had not heard before sounded from below. It took a couple of minutes to discover that the engine had boiled away half the circulating coolant because there was no flow of sea water. Lots of steam and panic were both present. After the engine had been stopped and cooled a little and the fluid had been replaced from the kettle and I had checked the cooling water system, the engine seemed to return to normal operation. However I did not know how much damage might have been done. This was a great worry because we were likely to depend on it for the rest of the cruise.

Half an hour later the wind increased to 22 to 25 kts from 60 degrees off the port bow. We took the mainsail down and continued to sail at six knots with medium genoa only. The rising sea and extreme irregularity of the wind made it very difficult for the hydrovane self-steering to keep a suitable track although close reaching is usually one of the best directions for control. Therefore I had to steer in parallel with the Hydrovane, largely doing the prediction and early correction that it could not do. The wind increased again over the next hour to 27 to 33 kts and for several minutes at a time was 35 to 36 kts. The coast of Brittany between Lorient and Concarneau is not hospitable and had become our lee shore. To make matters worse the visibility was only occasionally as much as two miles. So the read-out of GPS bearing to waypoint off Corn Vas was critically important. It gradually shifted in the right direction while *Twayblade* went in all sorts of directions in the rapidly rising sea.

When we had passed the waypoint and could bear off a little the wind eased gradually. By 1320 we were alongside a pontoon in the Marina La Forêt with much to tidy and restow. I had visited this harbour in 1974 in its second season of operation. Now it is a very big marina with excellent services of every sort among the groups of buildings near-by. The sail maker mended a small tear in the leech of the old genoa and resealed all the seams of the hood where the stitching had become threadbare during the previous decade and some had separated. The Volvo engineers took a long time to check every detail of the cooling systems. The circulating fluid was entirely replaced with fresh coolant, the impeller of the sea water pump and the alternator belt were replaced. The latter was unusual in that the old belt had only done 300 hours but it made a high-pitched squeal like a dry bearing resulting in disbelief that it was the cause until the new one was quite silent!

The marina has become a major visitor attraction with bars and cafes and occasional mobile markets, like the nearby town. This town is only 30 minutes delightful walk up beside the estuary and has a Carrefour supermarket on the central square, to be found up the hill from the sea front.

We sailed most of the way to Loctudy where helpful directions for visitors are displayed outside the sea wall in the approach. After one night there we motored round Pte de Penmarche and sailed gently from there, close hauled to Ste Evette. The sun shone, the sky was blue, the clarity of air was infinite and there were many other yachts about. At Ste Evette there are many small white visitors' buoys, each with a good big hoop on top. They are quite close together but some seem to be displaced so that some boats get too close to each other for comfort for some people. Everyone uses short strops.

After a quiet night we left Ste Evette and sailed to pass through the Raz de Sein. As before, the tide had turned in our favour at least an hour earlier than the books suggested. The wind gradually died and we finished the passage to Camaret



Twayblade

through Chenal de Toulinguet using the engine. We had great difficulty in spotting the buoy marking the south approach to the *chenal*. The buoy is a grey framework rather than the usual SCM type. Against the cliffs it was hard to see in spite of good visibility.

The forecasts for the next few days were not very favourable, but we had reached the point of wanting to get home. We had a last French dinner ashore; galette for Joy and mussels for me. 1st August dawned still and bright so we did rapid last shopping and got a fill of diesel to top up the tank. At 11.25 French time we set off from Camaret and caught the start of the north-going tide at Les Vieux Moines tower. There was just enough wind to fill the big genoa, but the engine did most of the work. The sea was very calm and the visibility good. Four miles south of Le Four lighthouse we set the GPS to the waypoint at Penlee Point on Plymouth sound 114 nm ahead. For the afternoon and evening we saw no ships and gently rolled on a long swell at a steady 5.5 kts. This is a very economical speed. At 22.30 we took the genoa down because there was too little wind to fill it. During the operation the slight breeze and the rolling combined to wrap the sail tightly round the forestay and pulpit as it came down. The tight tangle of the big sail took much effort to clear. During the night there was the usual stream of ships: I am fairly sure that several did alter course slightly to avoid us. To help there was full moonlight and we had the brightest navigation lights on because the engine was making plenty

of electricity.

At 05.40 on 2nd August we hoisted the sail again and the wind was 12 to 15 kts from SE and we sailed past Eddystone to Plymouth Sound. We arrived at the middle of a big spring ebb tide. The ride against it was interesting both at the "Bridge" south west of Drake's Island and in the narrows at Cremyll. We came alongside the pontoon at Blagdon's yard at 12.00 BST, having taken 23 hrs 35 mins. and having used 32 litres of diesel fuel; the engine had run for all but one hour.

Upon reaching the entrance to the C&D canal we turned to port, out of the Delaware and into the cut where, immediately, our early morning breeze was lost. Under engine, Chesapeake City soon came into view, our first restful stop since New York. Turning in to the harbour entrance, the pilot book warns of shallows on the northern side of the entrance. Taking it slow, I was alarmed to see 1.3 metres on the depth log but *Selkie* was still driving through, still going forward. The very soft mud then deepened again in the anchoring area. Dropping anchor in three metres of water, our first impression was of a very welcoming small town or village, a folk village. We were delighted to be where we were and thoroughly enjoyed every nuance of the trip, for it had many interesting aspects and were pleased with our timing and progress. Many of the local sailors transiting south north and vice versa say they dislike that section of the coast and that I can well understand. For us it is a great memory with luck being a significant contributor.

Chesapeake City turned out to be a great place, a 'must-stop' place, to meet cruising friends, as they were all heading south these weeks. Chesapeake City was the perfect stopover en route to Annapolis for its annual boat show.

Every boater passing through seemed to be on the way to the boat show. *Selkie*, in the enviable position of not needing anything and her crew in the unenviable position of not having a budget to purchase anything, had originally decided not to attend but now it seemed like a good idea. With Signe and Henrik on *Capibara* (our Atlantic Odyssey pals) encouraging us to see the boat show, our mind was made up.

Finding a gap between the densely anchored vessels in Back Creek, Annapolis, we were in easy walking distance of the boat show. It was a pleasant experience to walk around the boat show and not be on a mission, as is usually the case at these events. The young crew, Cian and Ellen, were entertained at many stands and were delighted with their day. At Jimmy Cornell's new aluminium boat, the Allures 45, Jimmy knew Cian and Ellen by name – amazing memory – from Arrecife, Lanzarote, the start Atlantic Odyssey of 2013.

Next city Washington: when compared with the time required to sail to Washington on the Potomac, Annapolis was a perfect stopping point. Early morning buses dropped us in the city centre for breakfast and before the opening time of any of the visitor attractions. For visitors on foot, Washington is easy to access. With visits to the historical sites in easy reach and bus stops outside the Smithsonian, we achieved most of our goals. Having spent a full day in the Air and Space Museum, other days found us being elevated to the top of the Washington Memorial, reading the inscription at the Lincoln Memorial, being saddened at the number of names inscribed on the Vietnam and Korean Walls and most impressive, the Martin Luther King Park in solid granite – “Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.”

After two weeks, with plenty of memories for two eager children and many additions to their bulging scrapbooks, it was time to see more of the Chesapeake.

Lifting anchor at Annapolis, a fine sail to Norfolk brought us to Willoughby Bay. The beach on the north was the best vantage point for the launch at Wallops Island, Virginia, of the International Space Station Supply Ship, *Antares*. At the beach in plenty of time for the launch, Cian and I practiced our flying skills with an elastic-band propelled Smithsonian model of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Vega. Listening to the launch progress via the web on NASA radio, all were looking expectantly to the north east when there was a dull red flash in that direction. Then it was announced that there had been an explosion on the launch pad. As the disappointed groups quietly left the beach, our group was louder than most with many questions from our two wide eyed inquisitors.

Next morning, as *Selkie* was leaving the bay to re-enter the channel, the VHF informed us of a manoeuvre involving some type of carrier leaving the Norfolk base. Through the pounding of helicopters across the sky we heard the US Navy announcement that the carrier had a 100 yard exclusion zone and that failure to comply can result in the use of force, up to and including deadly. Though not appearing on our AIS screen, this, we concluded was in fact, a DANGEROUS TARGET and so waited patiently in the bay, until the carrier had well cleared the Elizabeth River.

Choosing the Dismal Swamp route with more confidence than her crew deserved, *Selkie* entered the first lock at Deep Creek and stopped there overnight. The following day, with *Selkie* frequently detecting sunken logs, we continued to South Mills Lock, then out through Turners Cut. Cian, on constant alligator watch with binoculars scanning in every direction, is certain he saw a submerged tree trunk wink back at him.

I was relieved to see Elizabeth City this Hallowe'en evening. Upon arrival the very welcoming townsfolk told us what we could look forward to in the town this night. Trish and I decided we had enough horrors for one day in the shallows of the Dismal Swamp and the things that go bump in the day. Though in the spirit of the thing, a deck-mounted extra-large



100 Yard Exclusion Zone.

jack-o'-lantern, carved out pumpkin with night-light candles became our deck light this dreadful night.

Cian announced to us he was a dementor and Ellen dressed as a black swan. One street in the town with old southern-style houses was dedicated to trick or treating; with creaking coffins (no, it was caskets), headstones inscribed with 'U. Willb Next', there was Gandolf and Bilbo and enough Zombies for a Michael Jackson video. And so continued the strange voyage of *Selkie* down the ICW – a thriller!

We sailed via Elizabeth City, then to Bay Point on the Alligator River, to Windmill Point on the Pugo River, then to Oriental. The fishing village of Oriental, (just 10 feet above sea level), North Carolina, is a very welcoming town or



Early Morning, Oriental.

more like a village. Each day spent there, without any effort on our part, increased significantly our knowledge of the townsfolk and local history.

The local community had arranged substantial pontoons for visiting cruisers. While we were there, along came the Austrian vessel, *Nomad*, with Wolfgang and Doris. Having first met them in the Canary Islands in 2012 and then in Newport earlier this year, it was great now to meet in Oriental. Wolf and Doris were returning from Greenland for the winter months in preparation for another attempt at the North West Passage in 2015. It made for a really fine sociable time and with many retired sailors choosing Oriental as a land base, there was much to talk about. One man asked if we had heard of the origins of the town and without waiting for an answer explained that local dwellers had requested a

post office for the area known then as Smith's Creek. The United States Post Office Department established a post office in 1886. As there were so many communities with the name, Smith, the post master's wife decided the village needed something unique. She is supposed to have found, on the beaches of the Outer Banks, the nameplate of the wreck of the sailing steamer *Oriental*, (built in Philadelphia, 1862 and used as a federal transport ship during the Civil War). The *Oriental* ran aground near Bodie Island, 33 miles north of Cape Hatteras where her passengers and crew were saved. The village officially became Oriental in the late 1890s.

With the northern winter biting at our heels, what followed was a succession of day trips to get as far south as quickly as possible. Passing through Swansborough to Wrights Ville Beach to Southport provided access to a sea route south. Leaving the ICW, on 16th November to make ground overnight with a following 4.5° C breeze, *Selkie* rolled her wet and blustery way to Charleston, SC. Charleston at 0° C this Tuesday, 18th November was the coldest night on record since 1949 or 65 years earlier. Deciding not to go ashore at Charleston and instead to spend some time further south, we refuelled and made for Beaufort SC. In Beaufort, at Thanksgiving, as a wintery 30+knot system passed through, the local sail club invited all sailors, club members and transiting cruisers to come along. It was a wonderful occasion and a great opportunity to meet and chat with crews of the other migrating vessels this winter. The crews of an ICW rally of approximately thirty boats were there, which meant there were other children, which meant our children had a rare play day with sailing folk of their own age.



Locals of Oriental. *Selkie* and visitors.

With St. Augustine in our sights and Florida and sunshine, all the crew was eager to get there without delay. Judging the tide for getting out to sea at Beaufort required that *Selkie* enter St. Augustine inlet at night, (sunset at 17.30). This entrance, as we discovered, had only day marks and not a straightforward route. We later discovered, that the day marks were not at that time in the positions shown on the chart. In an effort to identify the first mark, the engine revs were reduced. Though it was a calm clear night, this had the same effect as if *Selkie* were being pushed by swell. Trish on the foredeck with a 12V search light picked up the first mark and then we travelled as slowly as the swell would allow in an effort to pick the next and then the next, our track describing a long arc around the day marks until we were back in the ICW and at anchor by 20.00. Our experience was that whenever we left the ICW, leaving was easy but returning took effort in the shallowness of these Atlantic coasts.

Being in St. Augustine was as though we had left the northern winter behind and sailed into summer. This was it, the type of weather last experienced in Boston in August. And as it was the 1st day of December, Cian's birthday, it was an opportunity for a family lunch ashore. Unlike any US town we had visited, Spanish influence evident was everywhere and

for once the pedestrian was king. A pleasant walker's town with much made of its long history. Very easy to spend time here and given our cruising pace of late, we most definitely would have if there hadn't been an important scheduled event at Cape Canaveral. Departing St. Augustine, 2nd December, after a fast and witty introduction to Kenny and Amy cruising on the *Mary T* and overnighing in Daytona Beach, we got to Titusville Bridge, the evening before the *Orion* launch. As the launch was scheduled for 07.30, many spectators gathered on Titusville Bridge. After several restarts of the countdown, the launch was cancelled again on this clear-sky day owing to a ship entering the exclusion zone and, by the time the launch was rescheduled for another attempt, the wind speed was too high.

Motor sailing the twenty miles or so, Cocoa Village was the best we could do that day. Next morning under a blanket of rain cloud, local radio broadcast the countdown and then the thunder roar of the engines with the cracking burn of the boosters as *Orion* rose somewhere over on the cape. With no view, only the radio broadcast and the roar of the launch, carrying the new Mars Mission capsule in this test flight, it was still special and brought to life much of what we had seen at the Smithsonian.

Staying longer than intended due to a life-raft service, (which took longer than agreed), Cocoa Village was a good vantage point for the Kennedy Space Center. It held much memorabilia of the busy days of the Apollo missions and locals had their own accounts of the busy days of the 1960s and 70s into the Space Shuttle era.

With the liferaft remounted on *Selkie*, Fort Pierce was the next stop, there to investigate Riverside Boatyard for a lift-out, a scrub and antifouling. Though the hull had been scrubbed regularly over the months, our speed had become progressively slower in the sixteen months since the last lift-out in the Canary Islands.

21st December, we were deciding what to do for Christmas. We would either stay around Fort Pierce or else four hours further south at Peck Lake. As Santa had already made some drop-offs at a house in Hobe Sound, (three miles from Peck Lake), we needed to visit there before Christmas. The owners, George and Nancy Marvin whom we had met in Maine earlier in the year, offered a dock outside their house and always welcomed any cruisers to come, tie-up and stay a while. George and Nancy are OCC Port Officers, not just in name but in a welcoming spirit of generosity. Upon arrival they indicated they had eleven sailing friends visiting on Christmas day and that they had us listed as guests.

On Christmas Eve, we attended a candlelit music service with an impressive altar of two grand pianos, many fine musicians and singers. So as seventeen sea-folk gathered around the tables for a traditional Christmas dinner, we toasted each other, season's greetings followed later by many Christmas carols with Cian and Ellen entertaining with poems and songs.

The day after St. Stephen's day was our departure day, our return day, back up the ICW to Fort Pierce. Anchoring there overnight and with high tide the following day, 29th December, we hauled-out.

Six days of scrubbing, washing, antifouling, shaft seal replacing, engine realignment, anchor chain replacement later we were again afloat and instantly delighted with our new engine cruising speeds.

Back to Peck Lake again for our first anchoring since the boatyard, the forecast was for 30 knots plus from the north. With lots of scope in the shallow water we had no real concerns and kept an occasional watch on our position throughout the night. The position check at 05.00 had me running to the engine panel and closing the circuit breaker for the windlass. We were immediately in the cockpit wondering how we had missed the big motor cruiser which had anchored just behind us on rope. We had dragged passed that motor cruiser and it looked as if we were going to be captured in the open arms of a large aluminium motor catamaran. A moment later I was at the bow signalling to Trish to drive forward to take the pressure off the chain. Trish was concerned our propeller would get caught in the catamaran's chain. I responded through screaming wind that very soon it would make no difference about the propeller. Powering forward, the windlass rolled the chain into the anchor locker and we moved upwind from the catamaran to re-anchor. Due to the shallowness we were limited in where we could anchor so we just reset the anchor in the same area and hoped it had set better this time. This was an alarming situation for us as we had never dragged our trusty Spade anchor before and there that night with our new chain, 50% longer than our previous chain of similar specification, we had dragged. So we resolved not to sleep through 30 knots while at anchor in future.

Next was Riviera Beach Marina. *Capibara* had hauled out at this boatyard after being holed above the waterline on the SB bow. Henrik and Signe had been sailing through the Riviera Beach sea-outlet when a motorboat drove its bow-mounted anchor through *Capibara's* GRP hull, creating a 400mm hole. Apparently the motorboat owner and his friend were facing aft with fishing rods while in autopilot mode. The result of the itinerary-changing incident required that *Capibara* remain at Riviera Beach for three months, significantly reducing their cruising that year to a short run out to the Bahamas before lifting out again and flying back to Denmark. We offered whatever help we could but there was nothing that could be done until the insurance companies resolved their differences. Anyway, for *Selkie* at \$78 per night, we couldn't stay very long. So after one night of catching up with news since Annapolis and indicating that we hoped to meet again further down the ICW, *Selkie* started for Palm Beach, an overnight anchoring stop.

Passing down the ICW means trying to be at the opening bridges on the hour or on the quarter or on the half. Other bridges, on the smaller roads, will open upon request. Via VHF, a call to the bridge controller usually initiates the process, whereupon the operator requests the vessel stay a safe distance until the bridge has fully opened. When passing through and the vessel is clear of the bridge it is customary to thank the operator for the safe passage through, where upon the operator wishes, 'Safe travels cap'n!' So the radio is full of chat from vessels ahead and vessels following. Day after day travelling in the same virtual company you get to know the voices of the boat owners whose accents are constant while the accents of the operators change as we head further and further south. Usually good banter but occasionally a bridge

operator who is a stickler for rules meets a boat owner who won't be told how to manage his vessel. And then we came to George Bush Bridge. George Bush Bridge, (located between West Palm and Delray Beach at mile 1038), had a transiting boat owner announce in a slow drawl: 'I never thought I'd hear myself saying this but, Thank-You-Very-Much- George-Bush..... (pause).....Bridge Operator'.....(and reply)..... 'Safe travels cap'n!'

How many more bridges to go? Very difficult to make time through the bridges where some only open on the hour. The distances between and the timings mean that if you are travelling at less than eight knots there can be significant delays in a day's transit. Most of the vessels, even small sailing boats, were travelling much faster than us with engines on high revs and just going for it. We became very efficient at passing through the bridge openings at cruising speed, then rolling the genoa to catch those northerlies of that week's weather and with the aid of the chart plotter, calculating to the minute the time to arrive at the next bridge. One of these days, on our way to Fort Lauderdale, at max speed, *Selkie* hit bottom, a bank of material in mid-channel and we seemed to launch out of the water. *Selkie* just kept going as if nothing happened. Checking the chart, we were in the right place, mid-channel and enough depth but guessed there was some shifting of sand. It was alarming and did cause us to slow downfor a while. We were trying to keep an appointment, (an unusual event for *Selkie*) with our friend, Eddie Clearly who was flying into Fort Lauderdale.

After a couple of days with Eddie around Fort Lauderdale, *Selkie* then took us down the coast to anchor at Miami Marine Stadium. This provided an impressive view of the downtown Miami and as day faded into night, a very satisfying view of the illuminated city. Next day, a few hours further south brought us to Coconut Grove, a convenient place to anchor close to grocery stores and rapid transport to the centre of Miami. With fast, gold plated Lamborghinis around the city in daytime, slow motor yachts around the anchorage at night and someone's speakers looping 'In The Air Tonight' ,



Miami.

you don't have to work hard to imagine Crocket and Tubbs on the beat in the 1980's.

visitors), which turned into five weeks. This was not a transit anchorage like the type of anchorage we had become used to ever since Annapolis. Boot Key was a destination for many, an end of journey place, a place to stay and for many retired live-a-boards it was home. It appears the permanent community grows each year and with boats like *Medicinal Porpoises*, *BamBoozel*, *Jaws Because* and *Curmudgeon*, it is full of wonderful characters.

From Miami to Rodriguez and the clear water of the Keys for overnight anchoring, and then onto Marathon to anchor outside Boot Key. Boot Key, an island in the middle of the Florida Keys, is also the home of the Radio Martí transmitters, the US propaganda station, broadcasting in Spanish, originally established as Radio Free Cuba. One unfortunate cruiser who chose to anchor directly under the antenna was puzzled as to why some of his electronics and fluorescent lighting wouldn't switch off.

For us it was easy to slip into the community of cruisers and the daily routine, which started with Boot Key Cruisers Net at 09.00, VHF Ch 68. Here were news updates of any planned events. The Net also welcomes new boats to the harbour, lets visitors introduce themselves, says goodbye to departing boats, asks for any announcements, buy-sale-trade-giveaways, Q&A for anyone needing help and concludes with any final business. On occasion, 'final business' can be an engaging aspect of the schedule where one of the longer term residents might make an observation or air a gripe or suggest a different *modus operandi* for the harbour. Usually other cruisers will pile into the discussion, sometimes with good banter as was the case one Sunday morning when an individual innocently suggested that we should keep the O/B motor revs low in the interest of the endangered resident manatees. Next voice, agreeing, suggested the manatees had more right to the water ways than humans. This point of view alarmed many others until the Net Controller had to calm it down, called a halt and closed the discussion.



Key West on a Good Day.

While at Boot Key, Eddie and I installed the antenna tuner for the single side band (SSB) radio and then had several occasions of testing to improve range and broadcast power. This radio, from *Faustina II*, was supplied to *Selkie* with the

hope that it would have an active future. So far it had been a good companion for the Atlantic crossing and while in Maine, (summer, 2014 OCC gatherings and rallies), but operating as a receiver only. In order to utilise the transmitting function I needed to install an automatic tuner which would electrically match the backstay antenna to the selected transmitting frequency of the radio. Results with this tuner were inconsistent and the functionality of this Annapolis-purchased second hand tuner was in doubt. Here also we purchased a second hand sail, just in case our four year old genoa, which increasingly needed attention, let us down.

The *Mary T*, which we met briefly in St. Augustine several weeks earlier had in previous years taken its owners north to Newfoundland and several trips to the Bahamas and this year was heading for Mexico and Guatemala. Amy and Ken were wonderful company. Amy had us all entertained with her stories while slipping in and out of character with accents for each. Finding out that she was, in a past life a stand-up comic, had written several songs and now enjoys making independent movies was no big surprise. Her recent movie, *Red Dot on the Ocean*, of the sailor Matt Rutherford's nonstop trip around the Americas was offered one Saturday night as a free event in the Boot Key Tiki-Hut onto a fluttering sail as projector screen.

Cian and Ellen learned several new songs from Amy while she played the ukulele. And then we had a 'dark and stormy night', (thanks to Gosling's) which became pale and stormy and then just plain rum as stocks ran low and then we ran out of words for the songs we knew.

With beaches in kayaking range, Trish and children frequently headed out of the lagoon to an Atlantic facing beach for swims and company of other children. On one of the days, they noticed a blue motor boat, approximately 30 feet in length, with a trail of black smoke travelling fast along the shore before making a sharp turn, increased the revs and ran straight up the beach, high and dry. The men, approximately twelve in number, obviously aware of the special 'Wet Foot Dry Foot' USA facility, jumped onto the sand, gathered for a moment to share what looked like food, then all ran towards higher ground. The boat was abandoned with navigation lights left on. Children and adults slowly began to gather around the vessel and then later, groups of holiday makers gathered for photos in front of the vessel. Shortly after, one fellow made and affixed a sign indicating that he was claiming the vessel as salvage. Cuba can't be too far away now!

All very easy in Boot Key where the routine was just enough to be busy and just busy enough to be interesting. In fact, in all the time we were there we saw many vessels arrive and none leave. The only departures of which we could be certain were our crew man Eddie on his return flight from Fort Lauderdale and the release of Dorothy the loggerhead from the Turtle Hospital.

When we did finally leave it was directly to Cuba.

Anchoring outside Boot Key overnight, (23rd February) for an early start, we pulled the anchor at 04.00 in clear conditions. An hour later as the sky brightened, visibility deteriorated to the extent that the rarely used radar was mapping our way forward.

Having a semi functioning SSB antenna tuner we could say our goodbyes to Mary T, on 8 Mhz at 08.00. The fog continued until 11.00 and then burned off. Just prior to turning off the radar I could see a commercial fishing boat approximately 45 feet in length, a couple of hundred metres off our bow with two men operating the gear. It appeared to be an all GRP vessel and despite tuning the radar I could not detect any signal from the vessel. This was a good lesson for us and I thought of mentioning it to the fellows on VHF but guessed it wouldn't be appreciated.

Following the sailing directions we motor-sailed down the coast until the Key West Safe Water Mark was abeam, turned out to sea and phoned the US Customs and Border Control to say goodbye.

At 19.00 with fifty miles to go we picked up the Gulf Stream while averaging 5 knots under engine. Travelling through the night and picking up some wind and then set sail. At the change of watch, 14 miles north of the Cuban coast, a VHF broadcast about 'vessel in sector-sector!, area something-something, Please identify yourself'. This broadcast was issued several times in quick succession. Seeing a light in the distance but coming towards us we considered if the broadcast related to *Selkie*. With no other vessel answering the VHF broadcast Trish asked on Ch16 if we were the vessel in question. The reply was in the affirmative. The questioning vessel was a US Coast Guard Cutter and it requested information regarding vessel name, MMSI, skipper name, POB, nationality of crew, last port and intended port. When the process was completed, our vessels now in visual contact, Trish asked if the MMSI information they requested had or had not shown up on AIS. There was a pause and a voice came back to say that we had just 'popped-up' on their AIS screen.

On we went picking up the lights of Havana as we cruised further southwest. With the sun coming up as we closed the distance to Marina Hemingway, passed the day marks and up the extensive concrete canals until arriving and tying up at the customs building. The first visitor to *Selkie* was the doctor, checking to see if we were fit and had we been in West Africa in the last ten days. I explained that it was impossible for us to have been there or anywhere near the Ebola outbreak. Next it was the narcotics dog that, despite the stifled giggles from Cian and Ellen, had a good nose around and only stopped for a pet on the head. Next it was the customs and excise official. After that it was the turn of the official from the Department of Agriculture to witness the type meats on board. We had read and heard many accounts of officials requesting some help for their family and for the Cuban people, sometimes being asked for many dollars. This pressure wasn't strong but it was there and in anticipation, Trish had filled the fridge with cans of Coke and beer. Where there was a suggestion of a gift we offered these drinks and only one or two officials accepted. All very friendly and genuine warm welcomes. The longer we were there the more obvious became the need for helping where we could. And this was easier when we got to know some of the individuals, especially around the marina and they in turn developed a type of barter arrangement for locally grown fruit and eggs, currency exchange, fuel etc. And there were occasions where individuals



Havana.

energy display and this at 14.30 of a Wednesday. This was Cuba and we weren't disappointed.

With WiFi being a rare commodity, used by us for weather forecasts only, connections beyond the island were awkward to set up, so we immersed ourselves in the two communities: we the visitors at Marina Hemingway and the city folk of Havana. Connected by a hotel bus, daily travel was easy between the two.

A visit to the Museum of the Revolution housed in what was the Presidential Palace, publications on Spanish Cuba, the mafia in Havana, US foreign policy and some fascinating conversations brought its recent fascinating history to life.

At every corner, evidence of a slow decay, a decay of buildings and utilities. The fumes of the water delivery trucks compounded the wear to old road surfaces, down the small streets to the oldest buildings where water and sanitation utilities have fallen into disrepair. The numerous propped classical facades with crumbling rendering seemed to hope for better times. At every glance, the past, the present and a hoped for future.

As the days went by, getting to know the neighbours around the canals at the marina was a lot of fun with several evening gatherings organised by some very fine musicians and singers who it seemed, always wanted a party, a session – and we obliged, always. Some of the individuals were professional skippers looking after absentee owners vessels at a very modestly priced marina, (relative to USA prices), some long term live-a-boards and most like ourselves spending a couple of weeks before heading on.

Getting through the documentation for departure and settling our bill, (while avoiding the section of documentation where you agree to make a substantial contribution to help but where no receipt could be given), we were free to leave.

Motoring down the canal in the early evening into an easy sea we set a course to take us to the north of Andros Island in the Bahamas. This day was chosen over windier days so we could ride the Gulf Stream all the way up towards Miami. For days before this, the wind was in the wrong quarter, really cutting up the Gulf Stream making it almost impossible for travelling north.

While in the stream, under engine, *Selkie* was travelling at 8 to 8.4 and a max of 9 knots. On the evening of 19th March *Selkie*, to avoid the shallow areas, was coming up to the end of the Great Bahaman Bank then turned south east through the deep water of the Tongue of the Ocean and at 14.30 next day dropped anchor at Black Point on the Great Exuma. I hooked a very nice dorado and reeled it in but upon lifting the fine fish the hook failed and it became the one that got away. Examining the hook I found it now more resembled a fairly straight needle than a hook.

Coming towards Black Point anchorage, there was a fleet of sail boats at anchor – all turquoise. Through binoculars they were definitely turquoise – maybe club boats. Having set the anchor in the whitest of sand in the clearest water, I soon realised that the anchored vessels with white topsides were taking on the colour of the reflected light from the seabed. So clear was the water that when we met George and Nancy on their sailing vessel, *Trumpeter*, (last seen at their home at Christmas), we could, from *Selkie*, see their keel and the seabed under and beyond the hull as if in ordinary daylight without being obscured by water, as if *Selkie* and *Trumpeter* were floating on turbulent air. Strange experience!

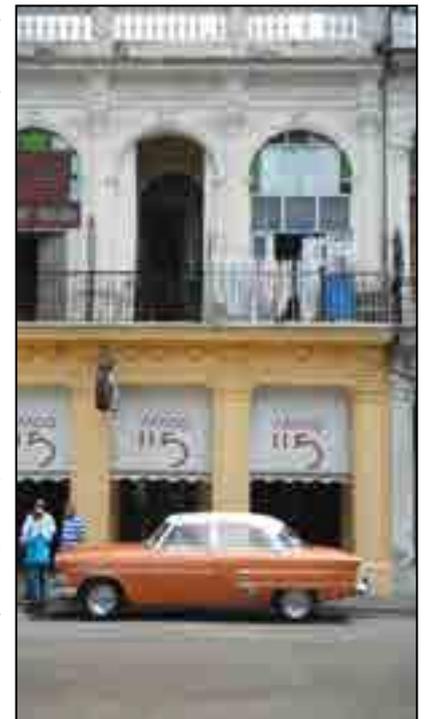
The following morning, we left through a narrow gap in the Exuma Island chain and down the eastern shore of Great Exuma, hooked and lost another dorado and put into George Town, our home for the next five weeks. George Town was selected above all other anchorages in the Bahamas as it had a name for attracting cruising families. Cruising families had been rare since our Odyssey experience the previous year. The hope was Cian and Ellen would get some beach fun and

would make a gift out of genuine friendship and accept nothing in return.

On our way to our allocated space on one of the canals there was an interesting array of vessels and we were surprised at the number of Canadian vessels; next in number were the US flagged vessels and then European: British, French, Austrian, Scandinavian, German.

Even on the canal, officials kept visiting and each visit required the business to be conducted in the saloon.

Having met many Guarda Frontera and other officials aboard *Selkie* on our first half day of arrival we were all now eager to see some of the local village. It was a short walk to Jaimanitas where there was little in the way of shops but there were one or two cafe bars. Deciding to get out of the sun and stop for a cool beer, we had to wait for the music and dancing to stop to discern patrons from staff. Getting the order in quickly before the Mambo Big Band PA system took off again, we found a couple of seats to enjoy this high



Mobile Architecture.



Ellen's View from Selkie.

swimming time with other children ahead of our return home. After clearing-in with Bahamian customs we took a handy spot across from George Town at Stocking Island and judging by the yells and screams from youngsters in the water, on the beach, in the volleyball court, around the makeshift bamboo huts, the white lagoons and the crashing blue of Ocean Beach on the Atlantic side, this had all we had hoped.

Each morning at 08.00 there was a VHF net, with a similar format to the net at Boot Key and, between our welcome and our farewell, it was our link to all things boating and ashore.

So while children played and played and played, Trish and I began our preparations for our next trip. Having found a broken strand in the 1x19 SB lower shroud in Havana, I had waited until arrival in the Bahamas to order a new pair of shrouds. Eight

hundred euro and three weeks transit time later, I changed the two lower shrouds.

Deciding to persevere with the SSB installation, I put out a request on the Buy-Sale-Trade-Giveaway section of the radio net requesting if any vessel wished to off-load or sell an antenna tuner. I had several offers of tuners but each had issues. I began to realise just how many damaged pieces of electronics in visually good condition there were in circulation. Lightning is a big issue around Florida and the Bahamas and while not always frying the equipment it frequently renders the equipment useless; as I guessed was the case with my consignment store purchased AT120 tuner.

Realising then that the equipment on *Selkie* was as good as could be found locally, I decided to investigate any possibility for improvement. (Purchasing a new antenna tuner from Florida was not an option as importing radio equipment into the Bahamas, even for a yacht in transit, attracts a 45% tax rate.)

I then heard of a fellow, Charlie Freeman, *Kamaloha*, in the anchorage who had some radio test equipment. Using his standing wave ratio (SWR) meter confirmed the good quality of my installation but lack of tuning ability of the AT120 tuner. This was the end of the road and I thanked him for the use of the equipment.

A few days later, not content with the result and considering the efforts to date, I decided try to set the tuner to manual mode and set the internal switches for two frequencies only. The same fellow Charlie had an instrument called an Antenna Analyser. With this instrument in-line while manually switching in and out the inductors and capacitors of the AT120 I found I could match the antenna to the chosen frequencies. Taking note of the switch positions, I could manually set the tuner to operate at each of the two frequencies when required.

Frequencies in the 8 and 12 Meg band were chosen as they were the frequencies on which Chris Parker, the Florida based weather router, communicated with vessels. (We had previously purchased a pack of ten weather routing requests for the trip home from Chris Parker to be supplied via email on sat phone). The SSB communication facility with Chris Parker would be useful if there were any issues with the sat phone.

Now testing the SSB transceiver on 8 Megs I had clear conversations with cruising folk in North Carolina and West Florida. This was a magnificent result.

Upon meeting up again with Russell and Lynne of *Blue Highway*, (last met in Maine, summer 2014), Russell insisted we initiate a radio net for cruising vessels leaving Caribbean waters and Bahamas at that time. Reluctantly I went along with his enthusiasm but he, from Florida, having sailed to Ireland, England and Mediterranean in the 1990's had previously set up a radio net en route to Bermuda and Azores. So agreeing frequencies and a daily broadcast time, Russell posted a note on the OCC Facebook page and also requested Chris Parker to announce.

Noon 8th May, after several days of squally thundery weather and some very impressive lightning displays, *Selkie* departed George Town. As Great Exuma slipped below the horizon, we could still see the reflected hue of turquoise on the base of the clouds. Motoring out for wind, finding it and then raising sail after midnight under a three-quarter moon, *Selkie* had the feeling of settling down for a long haul. And with the activity of settling *Selkie* no one noticed the arrival of the tooth fairy.

In the pale dawn light, a smiling toothless Ellen waves a one dollar note. A day of speculation follows as to how and from where and why a US dollar and if there was someone on watch why couldn't you see him or was it her?

This first morning at sea we had seven boats checking in on the Transatlantic Net for Cruisers. Apart from the Net Controller, we had *Blue Highway* (US) and *Kamaloha* (US) who were cruising the Bahamas / Florida and *Ojalá* (NL), *Sark* (NL) who were heading for Bermuda, *Serenity* (US), *Eschaton* (UK), *Emily Morgan* (UK), *Muscade* (AUS) with *Selkie* heading direct for the Azores.

At the end of each check-in, the family on sailing catamaran, *Blue*, would stay on so that their boy, Casper, could swap new riddles with Cian and Ellen. Each morning a new riddle communicated from each vessel and then the solving, preparation of a new riddle for next morning and so it went until the gap between their position in the Turks & Caicos and ours, heading east, became too great.

Second day out, one reef in the main, close reaching and doing exceptionally well at 8.4 knots for many hours. Take in second reef at dusk.

Third night out, the tooth fairy made another visit to an even more toothless girl – too early to be concerned about scurvy.

Hardening up all the time, we could not make any progress east and were now concerned that we might overshoot and run north of Bermuda. With an endless line of depressions, the weather this year dictated that we stay close to or below 32° N. All indications were that the wind would shift to the NW and allow us to pass south of Bermuda and so it did; we freed off and ran along the line of 31° N. Day five, (12th May) picking up Bermuda Radio and the next day we closed our loop on our previous run up to Bermuda from the BVIs a year earlier. Via SSB, we heard *Ojalá* had thirty miles to go to St. George's, Bermuda and Sark to follow.

Over several nights, for company, I had Carl Sagan pondering the universe; a perfect night-watch voice. Old now but timeless, Pale Blue Dot audio was a great companion in the cockpit but even after the hours of quiet contemplation and gaining some perspective of the thing, nearing the end of his reading, you'd still be asking yourself, 'What is the stars?' What if Mr. Sagan ever met the fictional Captain, what would they have say to each other? Thankfully, night turned into day and brought day six; Russell, Blue Highway handed over net control to *Selkie*. So it was a big goodbye and thanks to Russell. Hope to see Russell and Lynne in Ireland sometime.

Day seven, (14th May), sailing east, downwind at 31° 66'N, 61° 52'W. Picking up squalls, sometimes packing strong winds and sometimes just a heavy downpour, killing the wind. Either way, they really mess up a sail plan. The wind-killing downpours frequently required some engine time to get out to clear air, to steady wind, to set sails again.

Fast downwind overnight, need to drive south again, Day nine, to 30°N, 53°W to avoid a low tracking over us with forecasted high winds.

Day 10, (17th May), dropped genoa to repair, stick and stitch several patches while sailing with the aid of staysail.

Spoke to Russell again, located in Key Largo, approximately 1440 Nm distant.

Day 12, (19th May) goose-winged towards, 34°N, 48°W. With Chris Parker's suggestion, avoiding a band of very squally windy weather by sailing a more northerly course towards a declining low and by all radio accounts of the boats ahead, we had the least eventful night of our group; the boats ahead were already too far east to avoid the south-easterly tracking weather.

Day 13, via SSB, *Ojalá* departed St. Georges, Bermuda bound for Flores.

From 34° 55'N, 42° 11'W maintained a north east heading, rhumb line to Flores.

Day 18, (25th May) with wind now blowing from north almost from Flores. 38°14'N, 37°12'W, genoa fell into sea. Upon retrieval, we found the headboard web stitching had ripped. Decided to sail on, upwind with staysail for the final three hundred miles.

Ojalá reported a failure of the starboard shroud and with advice from the SSB community, Maarten and Anna developed a plan of bracing the mast, deciding to use only headsails and trying to secure enough fuel from a passing ship to get them to Flores.

Day 21, (28th May), wind eased, sea state eased, started engine to motor-sail last miles to Flores.

Leaving the low lying Bahamas and arriving at Flores was a wonderful transition. The greenery just extends, slopes up and peaks out somewhere in the clouds. From forty miles out we had its profile and then that of its neighbour, Corvo. Closing the distance at night, the lights of the settlements indicate the mountain villages, then the fishing villages, around the breakwater then at Lajes to set the anchor just before midnight under a big moon.

Though the final 700 miles were upwind in strongish wind, we encountered no slack wind areas, (except in downpours) and excluding squalls, nothing above 23 knots in the whole trip. Unusually for that trip, we had lots of diesel to spare.

The following morning, with the swell diminishing from the recent north easterly winds, the previously emptied Lajes harbour was again open for visiting vessels. With swell still causing the pontoons and vessels to snatch, additional warps were required and anti-chafe protection placed on the warps.

After twenty two days on *Selkie* there was a yearning for walking and exploring. Given the steepness of the island, legs were aching for the first couple of days. Very fine coastal, mountain and cliff walks to ancient fishing villages. All delighted with the welcome from harbour master and locals.

Lajes, small enough for us to greet every arriving vessel, west enough of the main Azores group to attract many long distance sailors and because of its position, being the first landfall heading east across the North Atlantic many interesting characters on good sailing vessels. Everyone had a story and nearly everyone broke something. There was a solar panel fire, stainless steel breakages, sail damage, self-steering damage, battery failure and diesel shortage. And locally, accounts of sailors having sailed in, never leaving and we were introduced, at a couple of gatherings to what some of us visitors agreed could be Sirens (or Sereia) of Flores. Indeed there were several vessels hastily laid up on the harbour wall, now with a look of resigned permanence.

After a couple of days when we had most of the 'SSB net boats', we had a big loud party on *Selkie* – a proper arrival party. It was fascinating putting faces to the voices and we all had lots to say – all eager to chat but the worst were single-handers, of course. And, whereas there was a certain protocol observed while on radio at sea, as this night went on we were all in transmit mode, very loudly. To be there in this company on a bright summer evening, the latest brightness we had seen in a while and the shared experiences and comparisons of weather and squalls and fish caught and wind directions sought, the repairs made en route and whales too close: just to be part of this migration was a wonderful thing.

First to leave of our group were *Harmony II* to Maderia and *Muscade* to Lisbon. We agreed to restart the net from *Selkie* in Flores and continue in Horta for the duration of their passage where they would check-in each morning, 8.152 Mhz at 07.30 UTC.

As we approached the end of our week in Lajes, the wind was again forecast from the NE. The Harbour Master requested, for our own comfort and his peace of mind, we find another harbour. Each vessel staying as long possible left within hours of each other in the early afternoon, (7th June), for a morning arrival next day at Horta. The AIS screen on *Selkie* that night displayed a couple of dozen vessels, end to end on the straight line track for Faial as if on a rail track to Horta.

Horta, already busy, had to contend with our group arriving, more or less together. Despite the pressure, the good natured officials found places for all and for us that meant, rafted four deep inside the harbour wall. Again there was wonderful buzz of activity. Some folk just arriving from weeks at sea, some like ourselves now, island hopping, some readying for departure, some taking in Faial and Pico from here but, (when not designing murals), all ultimately preparing for the next big trip.

Taking the public bus service loop around the periphery of Faial, which is supposed to just stop at bus stops, the driver frequently pulled off the road into many of the scenic spots and let us day trippers out for a walk and photos.

And back in Horta, Peter's Sports Cafe, accounts of which we had heard many times required a daily visit. For Cian and Ellen, the Scrimshaw Museum, overhead, was a wonder. Enjoyable too was photographing the harbour wall murals of Irish vessels which had passed through and of other vessels, the crews of which we met on our recent travels. There also, murals of the various campaigning crews of the racing vessel, *Cheeky Rafiki* and then sad to see the murals in memory of the 2014 crew.

Sailing to Sao Jorge, just a couple of hours to the NE was a very pleasant trip. Another interesting outline and very sheltered horseshoe shaped harbour of Velas tucked under high cliffs where nest the strangely human-sounding Cory's Shearwaters.

Here the producers of Sao Jorge cheese had to be visited and many trails hiked both high and low. To really see the island it is suggested a car hire of three days but we did pack a lot into one long perfect day. Driving to the sky, it seemed and then to the ocean and choices of restaurants at sea level and at cliff top, the views of Faial and in the evening, the perfect mountain island of Pico sitting on a blue still ocean.

Saying good bye for the last time to many cruising friends who were making a break for France and Portugal, appointments with work and other commitments; for us the slow realisation of our own trip coming to an end.

Departing Velas harbour 06.30, (25th June), had us motoring NE to the tip of Sao Jorge where *Selkie* picked up a good westerly. Setting only the genoa in 17 fresh knots of apparent it was a faster than expected sail, arriving at Angra, Terceira at 16.00.

This Saturday in June, the second last day of the ten day long Sanjoaninas, a festival dedicated to São João, (Saint John), the locals fill the streets of Angra do Heroísmo with parades, concerts, food stalls, theatrical shows, fireworks and sporting events ending with a parade of popular dances. Many outdoor events with marching brass bands, Portuguese religious processions, bull taunting on the harbour slip where the bull charges up the slip to attack and alternatively into the water after individuals on rafts of oil drums and timber.

With weather never too far from our minds, emails were sent to our SSB net group indicating that if anyone was departing, hoping to make the most of this forecasted gap in an otherwise unstable weather area between Biscay and Ireland, we would be calling for check-ins each morning on 8.152 Mhz at 07.30 UTC starting from 4th July.

Though 5th July was Ellen's seventh birthday we brought the party forward a day. And then with Ellen on the bow, still in party dress, departing Angra at noon, many good wishes from other family vessels for a good weather trip home.

Motoring, then motor sailing, then engine off at 02.00 as we pull away from the Azores. Set main and pole out genoa. 40°15'N, 25°40'W. Happy Birthday Ellen!



Sunday in Terceira.

Great to hear familiar voices and names checking in, on schedule. Lots of chat, lots to catch up. With *Egret*, (UK), and *Serenity*, (USA), leaving San Miguel; *Ojalá* (NL) leaving Praia de Vitoria; *Griffon II*, (UK) and *Selkie* leaving Angra; *White Witch*, (NL), leaving La Coruna and single hander Dan Hogart, (*Eschaton*, UK) with 400 miles to go to the Lizard, it was a bunch of old friends.

Day 4, (8th July), 44°42'N, 20°30'W, (600 miles from Ireland) *Ojalá* reported a rig issue. Having replaced the two

lower shrouds in Horta due to failure of one swage terminal at the mast, now the baby stay fell on the deck. They secured the mast and agreed to set only headsails. *Ojalá* sent out a request for fuel in case the rig completely failed. As the sea was just slight/moderate and with a forecast of F7 in two days' time, it was best to transfer the fuel as soon as could be arranged. Standing-by while *Ojalá* motored slowly to our position, Trish and I tied three, twenty litre jerry cans with a good length of rope between each jerry can on one piece of line and Maarten was asked to haul while I floated the jerry cans in the sea. *Selkie* and *Ojalá* separated but stayed within VHF range as much as possible.

Ojalá's plan was to run the engine all the way to Baltimore and use headsails only when the wind was suitable. Emails via sat phone from the rigger in Holland suggested that none of the seven swages which were replaced just a year earlier may be of Selden quality. As the cap shrouds depended on these failing swages, doubt was cast on the security of the mast and therefore a serious concern for us all. With two daily position updates taken by SSB and two more by sat phone email, we had a position fix for them every six hours.

Day 5, (9th July), cold front passes overnight, two reefs and stay sail.

Day 6, at change of watch in the night, vessel on collision course within the two mile AIS alarm radius, no identifying name, travelling at 19 knots and no visual indication. Looking out to port, nothing to see but black sea and sky. The AIS vector indicated a 'T-bone' type collision in six minutes. With binoculars, still nothing. We called ship in location 47°19N, 16°19W travelling at 19 knots on a NE course. Immediately the skipper replied and confirmed he had visual contact on us and that he would pass astern of us. At this point, the name, *Grey Power*, a 59 foot fast sail boat, appeared on our AIS screen travelling now at 12 knots. With binoculars I picked up a flash of a red and a white light then gone again. Then making out the shape of a reefed black genoa on a black mast on a black hull, *Grey Power* we realised was a stealthy racing machine. The lights, I guessed, were mounted on the transom, (maybe push-pit height), which only came into view occasionally, as was the case with the AIS antenna. The helmsman was vigilant and active in avoiding other vessels but *Grey Power* was as black as the night.



Looks Like Home.

Later, on Saturday morning the wind built to 30 to 32 knots apparent while we were sailing down wind at 7 to 8 knots with three reefs and staysail. Later as the wind went more south we dropped the main and set a course direct downwind, straight for Baltimore.

By Sunday afternoon with 70 miles to go, the sea fell to slight and we were motoring. Forecast was for light winds for the next day. Took out and prepared ground tackle, assembled anchor, pulled out our, stowed, forty five metres of 3/8 anchor chain and got ready for anchoring the next morning.

Then Valentia Radio announced a new forecast; F6 through the night into the morning with poor visibility.

This is exactly what we got which made getting a fix on the Fastnet light, (with a normal range of 27 miles) difficult even at 2.5 miles. Then picking up the beacon at the entrance to Baltimore, (three years since sailing out), we rounded Sherkin and dropped anchor at 07.30.

With the anchor well set, Cian and Ellen excited at the sight of Sherkin, *Selkie* at rest and for this moment at least, no more promises to keep. We were home, all safe, all well and all grateful.



Home at Last.

Summer Cruising in the Rias Baixas, Galicia

John O'Dea & Deborah Evers

Having our Westerly Falcon, *Toby Too*, based in Galicia, has given us the opportunity to have several seasons of wonderful sailing in the Rias Baixas and Northern Portugal.

We started our summer cruising season this year from Cangas, which is on the northern side of Ria de Vigo. The boat had been cared for, on the hard, under the capable and vigilant eye of Alfredo Lagos of Astilleros Lagos at Bouzas, Vigo. Cangas is an attractive old town with a thriving market, 20 minutes from Vigo by regular ferries. It has a significant fishing fleet and fish processing industry evidenced by the many *batteas* (mussel rafts) seen along the ria. Friday is the busiest day at the local market, on the front in the centre of town, where there is a fabulous range of fish, shellfish, meats, cold meats and cheese along with seasonal vegetables, flowers and honey from local farmer vendors along the street. This market deserves a dedicated visit.

Irish boats and their crews are made particularly welcome due to the efforts of Peter Haden ICC. Peter has introduced us and many others to Cangas, to Bea at Club Nautica Rodeira de Cangas, the old town and the useful services that are available there such as Manuel's Ibericamar Chandlery. In the weeks, prior to our arrival, we had the headlining replaced by Marcos Villar of Vigo, thereby replacing the 'Westerly Droop'. The results were excellent.

For a shake down sail Praia de Barra and Islas de Cies are ideal. Barra is just five miles west of Cangas, with approach to the *praia* through the *batteas*. The anchorage there is in the lee of Cabo de Home. Islas de Cies are just 2.5 miles due west again, where there are several anchorages. Islas de Cies, together with several other islands in the Rias, are part of a nature reserve that require a special permit, even if anchoring off. This is now easily acquired online.

Leaving on August 25th at 09.45, a heading of 012° took us to the entrance of Ria Aldan, our favourite Ria, and our total trip for that day was 15.2 miles. The anchorage at Punta Pintens gives shelter from a westerly wind and this is our preferred anchorage in Aldan. However Ria Aldan is quite exposed when the wind is from the north.

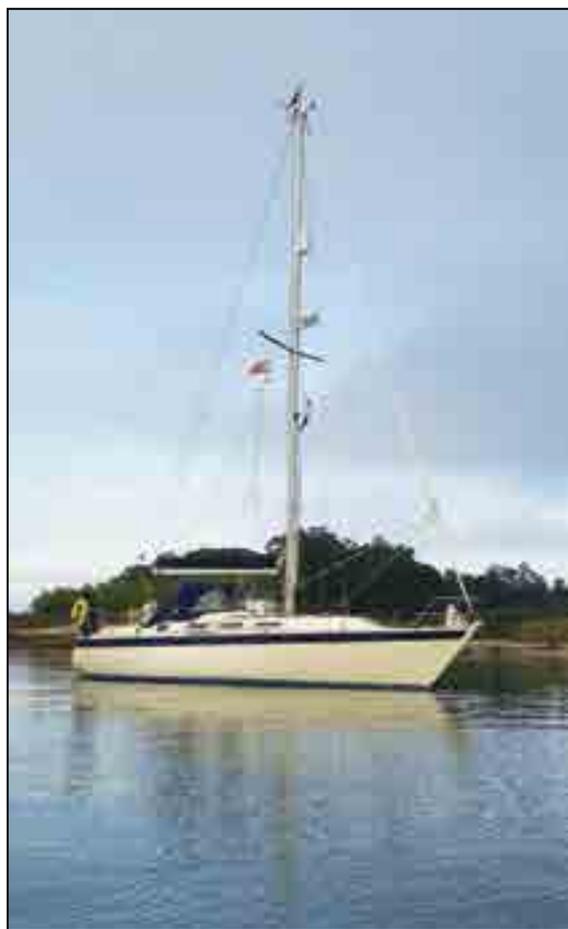
August 26, an early start 08.50. The destination from Aldan to Pobra do Caraminal in Ria Arousa is 25 miles. It was a tranquil morning in the shelter of the west side of the ria as we departed. Our fortunes changed as we sailed out into Ria Pontevedra. We had a stiff 24 knots across the deck gusting 30 from the NW. We had decided to put two reefs in the main and shortened the genoa on checking the forecast earlier. These conditions kept us busy until we reached Ria Arousa, having stayed on the West side of Isla Ons. Relief came in the form of a Force 4 westerly and with a poled out genoa and full main, we skipped along at 7.5 knots into Pobra do Caraminal.

The marina at Pobra do Caraminal is large and well attended, if somewhat expensive in high season (up to end of August). The town is a short walk from the marina. A restaurant worth noting is the O Rosal, which is found beyond the Post Office and across from the tennis courts to the right at the roundabout as you exit the marina. Ria Arousa is the largest of the Rias and it is possible to spend several weeks in this area alone. A gentle day sail across the Ria takes you to Area de Secada and Barbafeito Faro (lighthouse). We spent a couple of days anchored here swimming and kayaking to and from the boat to shore.

On September 2nd we sailed further into the Ria on a heading of 015° from O Pobra do Caraminal into the shoal area of Porto Bodion. This was a great sail on a broad reach in a force 4 to 5. San Christobal de Abanquero is the small hamlet, which sits high on the forested hill above Porto de Bodion. Access is a scramble up the cliffside and through small vineyards, so not for everyone. San Christobal de Abanquero sits there silently on the promontory. The church, in the sun and the silence, with the adjacent parochial residence, looks out on Ensenada de Rianxo. The now closed *cerrejeria* (locksmith) has its paint flaking in the heat. This little corner of Ria Arousa is worth a visit, if only for its tranquillity.

On the following day we had a brisk sail across Arousa in a Force 5 westerly which took us directly into Xufre. The port has more than 100 fishing boats and, as the town was also mid festival, we made the best of the only available pontoon without electricity or water. At this point we were settled into the idea of continuing North, turning into Biscay and finishing our summer cruise at A Coruña, where we were planning to leave *Toby Too* for the winter.

Cognisant of problems which can arise, we moved from Xufre to Muros the next day, a reasonable journey of 34 miles. We arrived as night was falling after a day which included some motoring against that north-westerly which was now building, as the forecast predicted. We anchored very close to the town, together with two Scandinavian yachts.



Toby Too of Hamble is a Westerly Falcon

Our Kobra anchor held well in 24-26 knots of wind throughout the night. With several days of this weather forecast, we moved into the very pleasant marina close by. Pedro, the *mariniera*, made us very welcome, as we had been there before. The rates were very reasonable and we settled into Muros life for five days. Manolo owns the bar Nova Scotia just off the front street. It is entirely a solo operation in his small and intimate cafe, taking the orders, for food and drink, cooking, and waiting on table. Between courses he breaks into song with his strong tenor voice and accompanies himself on the piano, then retreats to the kitchen once more. When the weather settled on the sixth day, it was more motor sailing into that north-westerly, which took us to Camariñas. This is a revived Galician village with two marinas, the new one on the starboard side as you enter the Ria. We were familiar with the old marina in town and the excellent cafe bars nearby were an additional attraction. Unfortunately, Camariñas has suffered the effects of poor development through those boom years. There we linked up with Dick McKeever, having come from Galway earlier in the summer in his Nicholson *Wind Whispers*. Dick regaled us with his experience of his Biscay crossing, and 40 knots wind which propelled a dolphin out of the water and half way up his mast.

Turning east from Camariñas, we now had the benefit of that north-westerly, which was now most welcome and saw us on a broad reach and making 6.5 knots in a somewhat lumpy sea. That coastline is harsh and inhospitable and not where you want rig or engine failure. There was very little traffic along this stretch except for the very odd yacht heading into these unfavourable winds with well reefed sails. September 12 now and with some time to spare, we avoided a long day on a confused and uncomfortable sea by anchoring in Corme for one night. This is a small village with some commercial activity and some basic services.

Our last day's sail was to A Coruña, about 20 miles in more settled conditions with the benefit of the wind on the port beam. As we rounded Torre de Hercules, our hearts lightened after many days sailing in less than ideal conditions. We were now looking forward to the gin and tonic at Real Club Nautica A Coruña, where ICC members get a warm welcome. We were so happy to slip into our berth in Darsena Marina and enjoy that great port of A Coruña. Debriefing took place the following morning in Café Macondo, a 1920s-style building on Calle de San Andres, with Donal Morrissy (ICC), Jimmy Cullinane, Brian Griffin and Maurice Cassidy, crew of *Rebound*, wintering in Galicia

Cruising the many Rias: Vigo, Pontevedra including Aldan, Arousa, Muros and Finisterra and Islas Cies, Ons, Salvora and others, allows for point-to-point sailing, as you are always rewarded with a favourable wind. Although you might suffer a little with northerlies, once you sail east or west you can get a very long tack, up to eight nautical miles in some cases, with wind on the beam from the mouth of the ria right into the head of the bay. There is ample shelter to anchor in the bays and some at the islands and a choice of three to five marinas in each ria.

Each of these rias has several fine trading towns, with modern buildings surrounding several refurbished 'Belle Epoch' buildings, most with older centres, medieval and even Roman in some cases. Equally, the region outside and on heights overlooking the sea has a host of palaeolithic and megalithic sites and structures. So when you have spent a day or three sailing you can go onshore and discover these places. The people of Galicia are probably the greatest discovery. Generous, kind and gracious they endeavour to assist you with any request, and give you some more Spanish and Gallego words to go away with. They are productive, interesting people with their own language and music and similar traditions to our own. Fishing is at the heart of their economy and so their delicious food, in tapas or raciones, features fish and shellfish in abundance. However you can get jamon (ham and pork) and all sorts of cold meat, chorizos, tortilla of egg, potato and onion with any number of other ingredients also. Fish, shellfish, all meats and queso (cheese), fresh vegetables, eggs, fruit and honey can all be found in the local mercado (market) open daily in every town.

Notes on A Coruña – Belle Epoch city:

To the south west Puerto de A Coruña hosts two marina, Real Club Náutico, Darsena Deportiva and Marina Seca boatyard, fishing fleets, ocean cruisers. On the front the old town (Cuidad Vieja) and the bustling Piazza de Maria Peta with side streets of restaurants and tapas bars. The city spreads southwards, a mixture of baroque, art nouveau and modern buildings.

Overlooking the Castillo de San Antón, which houses an archaeological museum, is the mausoleum burial place of General Sir John Moore in 1809 centred in the San Carlos Gardens on the edge of the walled old town by the battery. Sir John led the English forces against the French in the Battle of Corunna in January 1809 when he was killed defending the city. (*"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, as his corse to the rampart we hurried", etc....that one, Ed*).

New City: Macondo Bar on the long Calle San Andres, offers a good meeting point for coffee in the morning or a beer later on. The Belle Epoch is a bar with fine stained glass and original brass bar and fittings throughout. Fundacion Pedro Barrie de a Maza on Avenida primo de Riviera hosts the permanent collection of art donated to the University of Coruña and entrance is free. Museo de Belas Artes Da Coruña. The Museum of Art is housed at Zalaeta Square in a modern custom designed building. It features works by many famous Galician artists such as the painter Sotomayor and the sculptor Xoán Pinero as well as by Luycks, Goya and Rubens and many more.

Coral Restaurante Marisqueria, set back in Callejon de la Estacada on the Avenida Alfarez on the waterfront just opposite the main post office (Correos), is definitely a worthwhile place to eat. Many small bar restaurants offer the finest traditional Gallegan cooking in tapas or raciones (portions) throughout the town. The coffee is great everywhere.

Outside of A Coruña in the next Ria de Betanzos & Ares, the town of Sada has the Real Club Náutica Sada, which offers wintering in the water or on the hard. It is worth visiting this town to visit the A Terraza building along the front, where you can enjoy lunch, a drink or dinner. It is splendid. A work of art!

Close Encounters Of The Clutch Kind

Paul McSorley



The 2015 summer cruise was planned as an exploration of my local waters. Despite over 14 years in the northwest of Ireland, I had not ventured much beyond the northern coast of Donegal. Although the Donegal coast had been calling for some time, other coasts had won over and our own home waters had been somewhat neglected. So 2015 was time to put it right and we would gain Donegal bay.



Under the Torrs of Tory.

It was also to be a “back to basics” or “Riddle of the Sands” adventure. The mast on my Westerly Falcon, *Viking Lord*, had been damaged so she was out of commission for 2015. *Wild Cat* is an International H boat which is normally raced on Lough Swilly. Based on the Folkboat design and with a 50% ballast ratio, she is a capable sea boat but boasts few, if any, home comforts. Still with a couple of snug bunks, a single stove, a selection of buckets and a credible drinks locker what more would one need? Auxiliary power was via a 4HP outboard and is not much use in a sea. Basically we would be sailing wherever we wanted to go. Another novel experience on a cruise.

Sat 20 June, Midsummer’s day. Eimile (my eldest daughter returned from Uni) and I slipped our lines in Fahan and set off for Tory. Very soon we had a following breeze. The spinnaker had been included in the sail wardrobe and was retrieved from the jumble in the fore peak. A fine start to the cruise - spinnaker reaching with a wind behind. It was not to last. The southwesterly dropped before Dunree

Head and veered northwest. We were beating the rest of the way to Tory. Our long tacks brought us close under the steep cliffs of Horn Head and the imposing Torrs at the east end of Tory. The cliffs brimmed with squawking sea birds and puffins were in abundance. They are clumsy fliers and often struggled to airborne ahead of our approaching vessel, even though we offered no threat and did not mean to disturb. We made Camusmore Bay just before 21.00 and found a berth in the harbour. Midsummer was quiet on Tory. There were few visitors and the king, Patsy Dan, did not appear to be in residence. We are regular visitors to Tory Island and had looked forward to a warm welcome and a bit of banter with Patsy Dan.

Sunday 21 June: Tied up Tory Harbour. Midsummer was past and day 2 of the cruise was cool, wet and breezy. With a F6 from SW, we decided to stay put. No visit to Tory is complete without a walk to the Derek Hill hut. The view from here of NW Donegal is quite simply unique and captivating. There is something about the quality of the light and the wide vista of coast and majestic mountains that is spell bounding. The front passed in late afternoon and we were rewarded with fresh clean air, clearing skies and frisky birdsong to add to the Derek Hill experience. Highly recommended.

Monday June 22: Tory to Teelin. A dull and dreary dawn but the wind had eased and promised to veer in our favour. Time to press on and make for Donegal Bay. An unsettled sea was still running and the motion was uncomfortable. Cloud was low and visibility poor. I must have forgotten to pack the sea-legs. The going was tough. Cooking on the hoof usually presents little problem but this morning the smell of bacon was not helping. Eimile, at the helm, was revived by a bacon butty but I wasn’t enjoying this particular stage of the summer cruise. With a moderate westerly breeze and the tide in our favour, we made great progress on a beam reach through the chop. The northern chain of islands, Inishirrer, Inishmeane and Gola were hard to identify but by mid-morning we had Aranmore lighthouse on our beam. The afternoon brought clearing skies and a moderate breeze. *Wild Cat* under sail was in her element and the mood on board lightened with the improving conditions. Sea legs reporting for duty at last. Rathlin O’Birne was sighted. We transited Rathlin O’Birne Sound in fine goose-wing style and made our entry into Donegal Bay. A first for boat, skipper and crew. In Donegal Bay the sun shone, the sea eased and the magnificence of the mountain-rimmed horseshoe was clear to be appreciated- Slieve League, Benbulbin and Knochmaree. Eimile, who is studying geophysics, was enthralled by the twists, bends and turns of the rock making up Slieve League. I was fascinated by the remnants of watch towers on Glen Head, Malin Beg head and heads. They were not from the age of Anglo-Irish chieftains but of a similar vintage to the telegraph tower on Malin Head and indicated a political era which has since passed. These towers, which are square in outline and unlike the round Martello towers of a similar period, were built in the early 19th century in response to the threat of a Napoleonic invasion. The attempted landings by the French in 1798 must have seriously spooked the authorities and the Donegal coast warranted special attention.

We tied up in the serene and picturesque Teelin Harbour. The skipper of the fishing charter *Nuala Star* welcomed us in and took us alongside. He had time for a bit of light banter, despite suffering the ill effects of a dodgy oyster from the previous evening. A warm reception to top off a fine day’s sail. We took the short dander to the Rusty Mackerel for refreshment. Custom was quiet on a Monday evening but the episode of Coronation Street on the telly was complimented by a soap opera taking place on the very premises. The landlord and landlady got into exchanging a few unpleasantries which culminated in a walk out with a pack of fags and a slammed door. Difficult to know which way to look but I would trust it’s not a regular occurrence. A good pub with a great name and an acceptable stroll from the pier.

Tues 23 June, Teelin to Killybegs. Awoke to a fine morning and a burst of activity in the harbour. A fuel tanker arrived

and suddenly boats were seeking refuelling. I went to assist a brand new Beneteau motor cruiser with his lines and found myself at the helm instead. Charlie said he had just got the boat and I looked like somebody who knew what they were doing. Nice to get a compliment but a little bit daunting taking on somebody else's new pride and joy. I managed to manoeuvre her alongside for refuelling without distorting the gelcoat. The skipper of the *Nuala Star* then arrived with RTE on tow to make a documentary. *Wild Cat's* lines were cast, Charlie was seen back to his mooring, and we were adrift, heading further into Donegal Bay. Teelin- an enchanting stopover and never a dull moment.

Tuesday was an airless day and we drifted slowly eastward. A chance for spot of fishing, sun-bathing and a dip in the tide while going nowhere quickly. Late afternoon we had St. John's Point lighthouse abeam 1/4 nm off. A large dark gray whale surfaced between us and the point heading westward. I estimated it to be about 10m long. A rewarding end to a day's drift. At 17.55, we tied up Killybegs west pier. 11.5nm run. We decided on Killybegs for the evening and the helpful harbourmaster quickly found us a berth alongside the fishing boat *Eucaci* on the west pier. The Guinness was good and the seafood even better in the Fleet Inn.

Wed 24 June, Killybegs to Portnoo. The morning was still and heavy. There was little moving in Killybegs - neither wind, waves nor fishing boats. Plans to penetrate deeper into Donegal Bay were put on hold for another year. It was an unsettled season and the outlook for end of week was sounding decidedly ominous. Met Eireann alluded to "a complex series of depressions in mid- Atlantic with embedded frontal systems". *Wild Cat* was singing along again under sail. A warm front had descended and visibility was much reduced on this imposing section of coast. My faithful Garmin handheld had gone on the blink and the free chart plotter on my smart phone had just expired, so it was back to basics on the navigation front as well. Cliffs were high and steep and there was no welcome refuge from Malin Beg cove until past Dawros head. Port beach was guarded by a selection of mean and jagged rocks. We passed as close to Roannish as we dared with a depthsounder that was reading "OUT" more often than it was giving meaningful depths. Then we gybed through a series of broad reaches to reach Church Pool off Portnoo. We had this picture postcard anchorage to ourselves and dropped the hook in 5m. There were two visitors' moorings in place marked with a 15T limit, but I did not wish to chance their providence. It was a dull evening with a light breeze, but we were cosy and secure, and worries tend to ebb away when you ride on the chain between sand and sea on your own little spot on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Thursday 25 June, Portnoo to Burtonport – The Riddle of the Beacons. Our plans made and homework done, we weighed anchor and set off to Burtonport. Our intention was to take the South Sound of Aran approach. The chart indicates least depths of 0.3m SE of Aran so we could expect shallow soundings. We timed our passage to transit the Sound in the last two hours of the rising tide and still have a fair tide to carry us down Rutland North Channel into Burtonport harbour. We set only the jib and made a steady 3kn towards Crohy Head. Conditions were good for a first attempt- sea was slight and visibility was sufficient to pick out the marks. We made good progress, and picked off the marks in sequence. Ilancrone and Wyon Point beacons marked the entrance to the South Sound. There was Turk rock beacon to starboard and the low lying Inishkeeragh islet on port.

Our pilotage plan was line of sight. The ICC guide warns that GPS plotters cannot be relied upon in narrow channels in this area and recommends good visual pilotage and continuous use of the echo sounder. Back to basics, the way I like it. For the shallow bit we needed to identify Clutch Beacon and keep it close to port. Three beacons in line – Carrickbealatroha Upper, Carrickbealatroha Lower and Ballagh Rock- would provide the transit through this shallow patch. The latest edition (2013) of the ICC Guide shows a photograph of Clutch Beacon. A diamond mounted on a steel frame, leaning somewhat off the vertical. There was a hint of decay and I had a passing thought that it looked like a beacon with a limited lifespan! Still the guide was quite recent and we hadn't picked up any navigation warnings. So we kept a close look-out for our next mark –Clutch Beacon.

Three beacons in the distance were lined up. We had the pleasant isle of Inishkeeragh on our port, Turk Rock on our starboard aft quarter. Depths were as expected but the wind had freshened and our speed had increased. We dropped the jib and started the outboard to keep speed at 3 knots. The anchor was on the foredeck and ready to deploy. And then, breaking the surface a magnificent pod of large dark gray dolphins. They came up alongside and swam with us. A heartwarming sight. There was nothing in their behaviour to suggest anything was amiss but on deck all was not right. We had Inishkeeragh past the beam, the depths were dropping dramatically and I could see the bottom through crystal clear blue water. A bit too close. There was no sign of clutch but I had 3 beacons in line as I should.

Something was amiss. Time for a quick about turn and review of the situation. I put the tiller hard over and got Eimile to give us a bit more from the outboard. It was then we encountered the remnants of Clutch Beacon – a concrete mound sitting just below the waterline and completely unmarked. The tiller was hard over and we were abeam to the fresh southeasterly breeze and its chop. *Wild Cat* wasn't going around fast enough. We hit first amidships below the waterline. A nasty thud followed by relief. No mercy was shown, the next wave took us onto the mound by the rudder. Another nasty thud and then we were past it.



Goosewinging into Donegal Bay.

Assess the damage. Eimile went below, no water in the bilges. We had propulsion but the tiller was locked to port and would not go past the centreline. In this position we were going around again and in danger of having another encounter with the Clutch remnant. Time for a knife. I cut the elastic restraints on the outboard and we had steerage. Where on South Sound were we and how to get out of it? The pieces came together. Clutch Beacon had given up the ghost but the concrete base was still in place. We had managed to find it. Of the 3 beacons in line I had mistaken Aileen beacon for Carrickbealatroha Upper. Both were of a similar construction and not far distant from each other. The result was that I was further west than I should have been and closer to Clutch than was necessary. Pilotage rectified and with steerage of a sort we pressed on through the Sound. It was all quite clear now and the bilges remained dry.

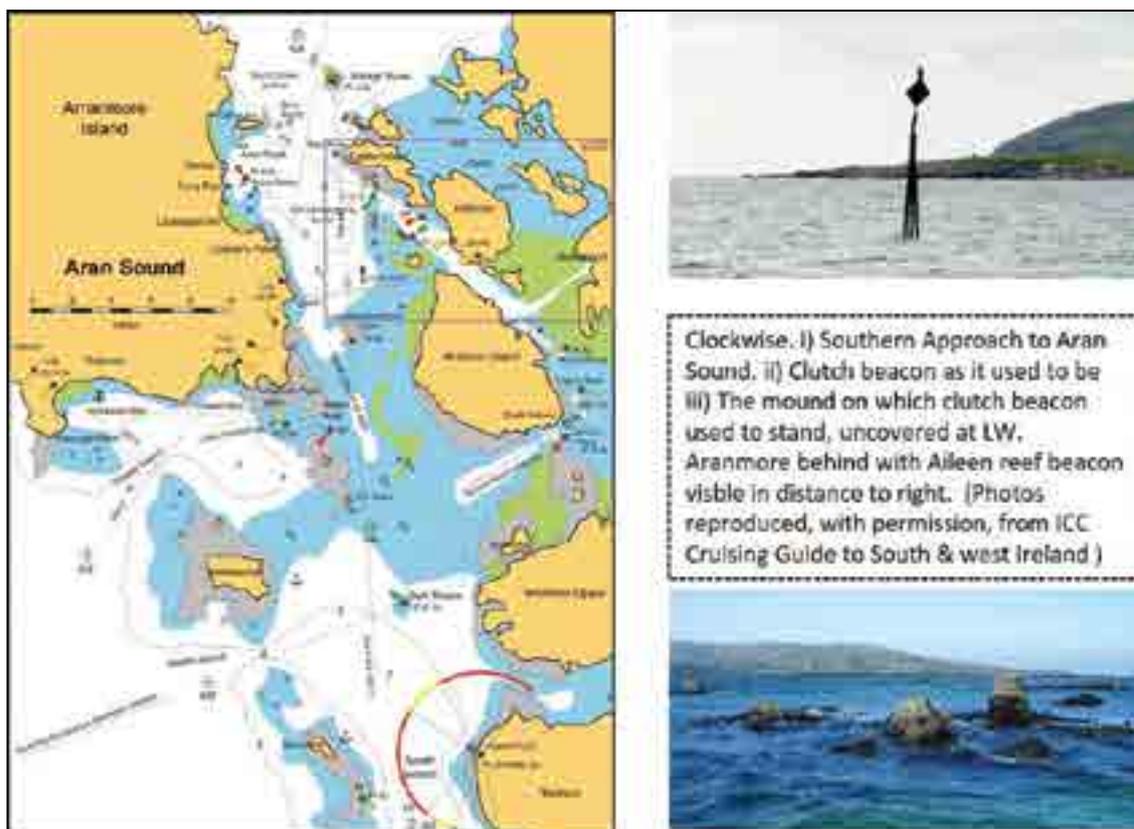
First option was to pick up a buoy of Arranmore and look below to assess damage. But we had steerage and there was no ingress of water into the bilges. We took passage down Rutland North Channel, dodged a few ferries and entered Burtonport Harbour. Despite the limited steerage and the outboard cutting out in the harbour, we managed to get alongside without too much fuss. Time for a well-earned pint and a seafood chowder lunch. Our cruise had come to an abrupt end. A dive below confirmed that the leading edge of the rudder had split. The rudder remained firmly attached but it had been dislodged and wouldn't cross from port to starboard. Handy if you wanted to go in circles but not for much else.

All fittings can be fixed. With the assistance of the Harbourmaster, Manus, *Wild Cat* was lifted out and Timmy Boyle from Atlantic Composites did a fine job repairing the rudder. I returned 3 weeks later to relaunch and return to Fahan. The summer of 2015 will be long remembered for unseasonal unsettled weather and the weekend of 18-19 July was no difference. Any plans for a restful night at anchor of Inishbofin were quashed by another aggressive frontal system over the horizon. We made our dash for Fahan before conditions deteriorated.

Donegal West and South was over for a year. We had seen some outstanding marine life and dramatic scenery, met new and helpful folk, and learned some hard lessons on our "Riddle of the Beacons" adventure. It is a challenging and unforgiving coast, but one with many rewards and simple pleasures. *Wild Cat* will return to Donegal West and South.

[Postscript - Clutch beacon has been absent since last season and the coastguard advised that it was included in their navigation warnings. We had kept a listening watch on Ch16 when on passage and tuned into all weather and navigation bulletins. I knew that the NW coast often features with notification of lights out of action. We had not picked up any notification about Clutch but we did find that picking up traffic on the working channels was intermittent and variable along the coast. There is a salutatory lesson to be had in updating charts and picking up notices to mariners before embarking on a trip. Hand up to that !

However my searches have not found it listed in chart corrections to date. More surprisingly coastguard bulletins are not yet available online, on social media or by smartphone app. So a sailor will set off dependent on local knowledge, receiving VHF bulletins or navtex for essential pilotage and safety information. I receive regular tweets from Irish Light Buoys around the coast, so surely it would cost little and protect many if coastguard bulletins were broadcast via modern media. There is a gap that needs to be closed.]



Southern Approach to Aran, Clutch beacon & remnant mound.

Back to The Future: another 16 ft Gaffer

David Whitehead

My first boat was a Paul Gartside designed and built 16 ft, 2 ton gaff cutter. Then there followed in succession an S&S 27, a 32 ft Buchanan designed one-off gaff yawl, a Victoria 30, a Legend 35.5 and an Oyster Mariner 35 before downsizing to a Moody 27 in 2011. In these vessels we cruised pretty much all of the coasts of Holland, Belgium, France, Atlantic Spain and Portugal and to the Azores and Madeira, as well as the south east, south and south west coasts of England, all coasts of Ireland and the west coast of Scotland as far north as the north of Skye. Aboard chartered yachts and crewing for friend, I had also crossed the “pond” twice and cruised in the western Mediterranean and the Caribbean Islands and visited both the Baltic and the Pacific coast of Chile.

By 2013 with anno domini advancing relentlessly, I was forced to accept that there were few new adventures both practicable for me and available within easy reach. The modern cruising yacht is very comfortable and seaworthy but electronics have taken much of the skill from the haven-finding art. Making predictable passages from marina to marina and always being able to call on the services of a powerful and reliable diesel auxiliary had started to become boring and I cast about to find a cruising modus that would be of new interest and bring new challenges. I eventually concluded that I had the solution to the dilemma literally on my own doorstep, as I live in the village of Kinvara on the shore of Galway Bay.

Galway Bay encloses about 1,000 sq nautical miles and the coastlines of the bay and islands add up to about 250 miles. The area offers extensive micro cruising opportunities, with over thirty bays and quays ranging from semi-sheltered piers to shallow, tidal, drying creeks. The Outer Bay, to the west of the Spiddal - Black Head Line and especially the Connemara shore, has extensive sheltered cruising water fit for exploration by a small, shoal draft boat and the Aran Islands provide a fair weather option only a half dozen miles offshore. The cruising ground of the inner part of the bay is on a small scale and the area is one of shallow drying harbours suitable for creek crawling: the subject of writings by F.B.Cooke, Maurice Griffiths and Charles Stock – all of whom cruised in the Thames Estuary. I had a Liberty 22, a centreboard Cat ketch rig for a couple of seasons and had fun exploring some of the inner recesses of Galway Bay and now realise how little of the potential of the bay I had actually exploited.

The Boat

If a boat suited to this sort of cruising ground could also be road trailed, she could have an extended cruising range and be able to explore other, mini cruising grounds such as Cork Harbour, Roaring Water Bay, the Shannon Estuary and Lakes, Strangford Lough and Mulroy Bay - and who knows one might even go further afield, perhaps to the Rade de Brest or the Morbihan?

Charles Stock's writings show that the criteria for such a boat are quite demanding. The vessel needs to be shoal draft and of a hull shape that can dry out level, which effectively rules out a keelboat. Road trailing requires her to be easy to launch from and recover onto a trailer, thus light in weight with a rig that is easily stepped and struck and spars that are light and short. Weight is critical as it determines how much work is involved and thus the motivation to head off to new pastures. The heavier the boat, the less likely she will be trailed far or often.

The boat is intended to be used in sheltered and semi sheltered waters and will only venture outside them in settled weather – and then with care. The small scale of its cruising waters means that passages of 20 miles would be unusual and they will more often be ten miles or less. The “accommodation” is for camping rather than caravanning and with judicious use of B & Bs, the crew is not likely to have to spend more than a night or two aboard in a week of cruising.

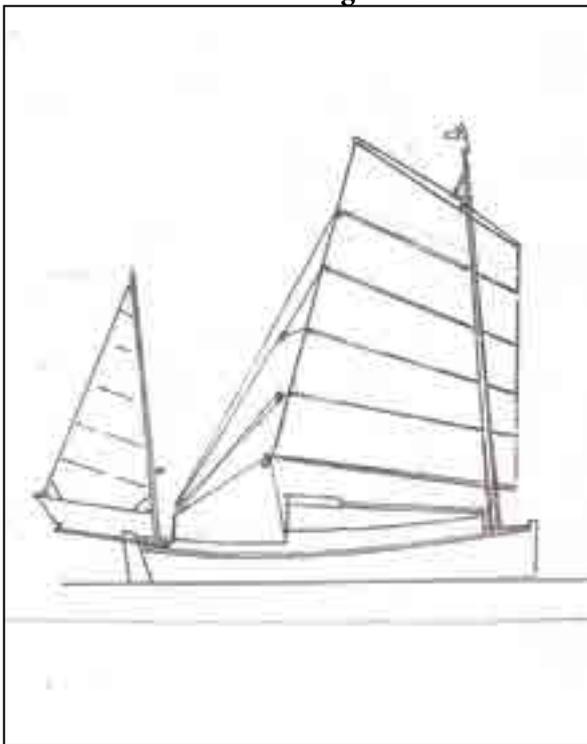
Charles Stock's 16 ft *Shoal Waters* is clearly about the right size. A low aspect rig with short spars is optimal and the Cat yawl rig allows the main mast to be placed far forward, clearing a space for the “accommodation”. A centreboard was preferred to leeboards or twin keels and an off-centre board makes the best use of space under the cuddy. Finally, a sharpie hull maximises the volume available within a given set of dimensions and is relatively easy, quick and economical to build. This hull shape also makes for easy loading on to a trailer and the centre of gravity is kept low. A study of designs, plans and descriptions on the internet found nothing suitable but many useful and ingenious ideas were seen and some of these were incorporated into the concept.

I decided to base the boat on Carl Stambaugh's Catbird 16 design. The principal modifications made were to move the centreboard a foot to starboard to improve the space under the cuddy; the centreboard shape was changed to reduce the height of the casing and the rudder was redesigned to make it easier to retract for drying out. One hundred and fifty kilograms of inside ballast was judged necessary to ensure the boat will right herself from a ninety degree knockdown. Watertight bulkheads were located at the fore and aft ends of the cuddy. The high coachroof and sidedecks, together with the ballast, are deemed adequate to ensure self righting from a knockdown, should one occur. This volume also made it big enough to hold a berth, a portable toilet, a cooking shelf and plenty of storage space. The cuddy roof gives four feet of headroom under the high camber at its aft end, and some inches more under the hatch. A small forehatch gives access to the main mast and the foredeck. The cockpit drains through ports in the transom and the side benches have watertight locker lids, so that in the event of a knockdown there is plenty of reserve buoyancy. About twelve cubic feet of foam is stowed in various locations around the boat so she will float high enough to be bailed out after a knockdown.

The lug mainsail of the design was replaced with a slightly larger gaff sail with all lines led aft to the cockpit. The original “leg o' mutton” mizzen, offset to starboard, and sprit boom was retained. A bowsprit was added, which allowed a



***Goblin* with her original Gaff mainsail.**



***Goblin* Chinese Lug**



Goblin

roller furling headsail to be set when conditions and the point of sailing permitted. Experimentation with this showed that the jib moved the centre of effort of the sail plan too far forward, causing the boat to carry a lot of lee helm, so it was abandoned and the rig reverted to a Cat yawl with a gaff main. There is no standing rigging other than a pair of dyneema backstays and the running rigging is as light and simple as possible. The bowsprit and bumpkin were also made to be easily removed and with no standing rigging it is easy to set up and strike down the rig. The all-up weight of the boat is about 350 kilograms, which allows the use of a lightweight, single-axle road trailer, easily towed by a small car.

The bottom, centerboard, rudder blade and the inside of the centerboard case were painted with CopperCoat so that antifouling is not needed, although the boat will most likely spend much of the time on a mooring. The stem, keel, centreboard, rudder and chines are protected with brass strip to prevent abrasion damage. The boat was built by Tiernan Roe of Ballydehob and her sails are of tan coloured Dacron. I decided to call her after Jim Brading's boat in Arthur Ransome's "We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea". My first boat, the 16 ft Gaff Cutter had been called "Imp", so "Goblin" seemed appropriate for another 16 ft gaffer.

Goblin was first launched for trials at Roaring Water pier close to Ballydehob in west Cork in 2014 but then spent the rest of the year on a trailer at the builder's house, as I had other commitments which prevented me from using her much that summer. In early 2015 *Goblin* came to Galway and was stored on her road trailer behind Pierce Purcell's boat shop in Clarinbridge. In February I managed to contract pneumonia (with complications), so that I was not fit for sailing until

late in the season. In any case the weather on the west coast this "summer" did not encourage much maritime activity!

With the assistance of Donal Morrissy and Peter Fernie, she was launched at Tarea Pier and brought to my mooring at Kinvara Harbour in July. What little sailing I did manage thereafter showed that the concept worked and the little boat is well balanced and stable, although, like all dory shaped sharpies, she easily heels 10-15° before becoming quite stiff.

I am looking forward hopefully to an active sailing season next year and intend to try to exploit *Goblin's* micro cruising and road trailing potential more fully – Deo volente!

Geronimo and the not so wild west

Robin and Denise Wright



Geronimo is a 2004 Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 40.

We left the pontoon at Ringhaddy Cruising Club shortly after 06.00 on the 20th June bound for Gigha and our fourth consecutive cruise to the west of Scotland. Previous cruises had taken us around the Inner Hebrides, along the Caledonian Canal to Inverness and along the eastern side of the Outer Hebrides and had given us a great introduction to this great cruising area. This year Denise and I had three and a half weeks on our own, no deadlines and no firm plans other than to be in Stranraer at the end of our cruise to meet up with our daughter Amy's future in laws. We hoped to re-visit some of the places we enjoyed most and also wanted to explore a little more. After a few months of getting *Geronimo* prepared, we were looking forward to another exciting trip.



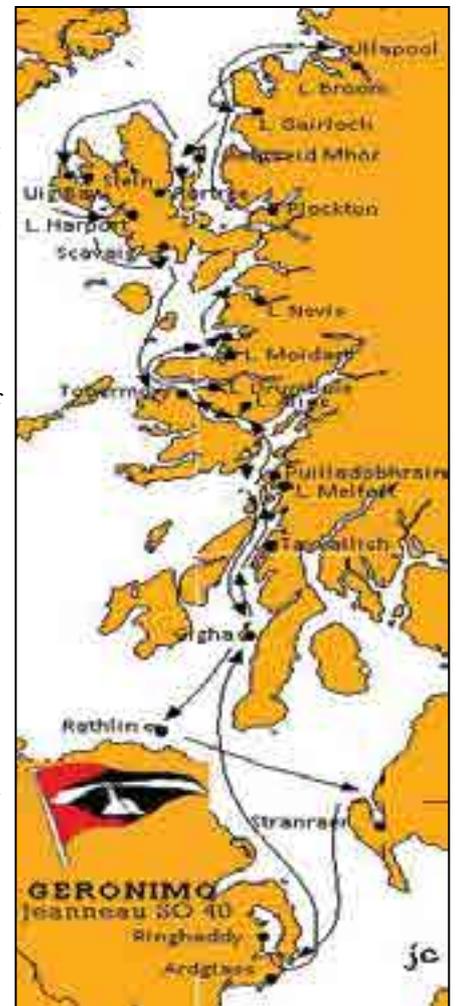
Early morning mist over DunnyNeill, Strangford L.

Denise has the reputation of being a bit of a sunshine magnet, because our weather is generally pretty good when we travel, a phenomenon for which she claims credit. This morning however, having had a busy few weeks, my sunshine magnet was tucked up in bed and consequently the passage past Limestone Rock, through the Narrows and out of the lough was a rather grey affair with only the early morning mist over DunnyNeill for company. As we passed Mew Island, the magnet surfaced and out came the sun. With little wind we motor-sailed up and across the North Channel, rounded a benign Mull of Kintyre, finally anchoring in Ardminish Bay just after 20.00. It was a great start to our cruise – we had made Gigha in a little over 14 hours. Anchored beside us on *Bonnie Boots* were David and Maureen Greenhalgh, who had arrived a little earlier than us from Glenarm and who are our 'next door neighbours' in Ringhaddy. After dinner they came over for a drink and we discussed the merits of our new Rocna (a Christmas

present from my mother) and whether or not our new davit mounted Ribeye dinghy made us look as if we had "duck's disease". In Ribeye fashion, the dinghy has a pair of eyes on the bow similar to the Maltese Luzzu fishing boats and when tied off the stern of the boat looked like a wide mouthed frog waiting to catch a fly.

Next morning after trialling the davits and dinghy, we went ashore for a short walk and morning coffee in the Boathouse. Later we called with the Greenhalgh's to have more coffee and some homemade cake. We reviewed our first night at anchor using the Rocna, contrasting it with our old Delta (we slept a lot more soundly) and heard stories of David's adventures on Gigha as a young lad in the sixties (a very young lad). Just before lunch we said our goodbyes and headed north - destination Tayvallich and the Fairy Isles. With a fresh SW, we made good speed up to and along Loch Sween, where we anchored in the extraordinarily quiet surroundings of the Fairy Isles. Barbecue lit, steaks on, not a soul to be seen - bliss. On a perfectly still evening we ate in the cockpit with the sounds of owls hooting in the woods behind us. The next morning was as still as the evening before and the backdrop of Scots pine, beech and oak were bathed in sunlight as the sun rose over the eastern shore. A trip in the frog-eyed RIB around the Isles was accompanied only by the sound of the water passing over the oars and the splashes of a few inquisitive seals. We then motored round the corner into Tayvallich, where we went ashore for ice cream. We then re-traced our wake back down Loch Sween and into the Sound of Jura but as the morning became the afternoon, the light wind moved round to the north and we had to motor-sail past the Corryvreckan and into Loch Melfort, where we picked up a visitors' mooring for the night. After going ashore to pay our mooring dues, the barbecue was duly lit and another gourmet meal was enjoyed in the still of the evening (we like our barbecues). Just before heading to bed, *Glance* came in and picked up a mooring.

As I lay in bed that night I could hear the voices of my friends from Ringhaddy, Jim and Eddie on *Drommedaris*, a 1963 Falmouth Pilot that's been based in Ringhaddy for 50+ years - "Have you been through Cuan Sound?" they would say after we returned from our Scottish trips. They've been cruising the west coast for 40 years with Eddie being the skipper and navigator and Jim the helmsman and entertainments officer. Today was the day to transit Cuan Sound. The tide was right and the weather was perfect - last two hours of the west going tide would take us through and we had another bright sunny flat calm morning. Leaving our mooring at 08.00 we headed off towards the sound. At first our cautious four





***Geronimo* alone in the Fairy Isles.**

of Mull past Duart Castle, nothing came of it and we entered Loch Aline with a table booked for lunch at the White House restaurant. We like to anchor in the south east corner of the loch just outside the moorings, though this makes for a bit of a dinghy ride to the slip at the entrance to the loch; however it seems pretty sheltered and the thick mud on the anchor when we bring it up would indicate that it should provide good holding. One fabulous lunch later it was back to *Geronimo* for an afternoon nap (though this actually turned into a full blown snooze and wiped out the rest of the afternoon).

We left Loch Aline at 09.00 the next morning, making for Loch Sunart and Salen Jetty. The couple who had bought the pier there installed pontoons and a few visitors' moorings a few years ago and we had stopped there last year to watch the World Cup final - it would be a good place to take on some water and diesel as an alternative to Tobermory. We did this over lunch and then headed back to Loch Drumbuie for a night at anchor. A damp, windless day but an interesting first time in Loch Drumbuie.

Day six, Thursday, offered a forecast of S F4-5 backing SE F-4 with F5-6 later. We left Drumbuie early and goosewinged our way round Ardnamurchan point in 12 knots of southerly breeze. Using Bob's charts we entered Loch Moidart via the south entrance and passing *Karan*, another Ringhaddy yacht, worked our way up the loch to investigate the anchorage at Castle Tioram. Exiting via the north channel, we then booked ourselves a visitors' mooring in Glenuig Bay, planning to eat that night in the Glenuig Inn (whose mooring we had booked). In the shelter of the bay the anticipated F5-6 was only six knots but the damp conditions from the day before had returned so we donned our waterproofs and headed ashore for a walk along the coast road that runs south from the Inn.

Forecast for Friday was SE F5-6 veering S F4-5 - what we experienced was S F3 with brightening skies. This made for a good passage north towards Mallaig where we had spent two nights on a visitors' mooring in 2014. This time we wanted to visit the Old Forge in Inverie on the Knoydart peninsula and on the shores of Loch Nevis. The Old Forge is Britain's remotest pub (according to the Guinness Book of Records) and access is only possible by walking in, by sea or by air (sea plane or helicopter). There are no roads in and Land Rovers abound. With the wind behind us we goosewinged our way past the entrance to Mallaig and entered Loch Nevis, where we picked up a visitors' mooring, dropped the sprayhood and caught the last rays of the day's sun. An American flagged aluminium yacht had picked up the mooring beside us and the young family headed ashore. We were beside them for dinner in the Old Forge and afterwards got chatting about their adventures and their boat. The Barnes family were working their way north to Norway, having come from the Azores and invited us for a tour - an offer which was gladly accepted. *Sila* is a Boreal 47 built as a live-aboard round the world expedition yacht and as it happens was the second Boreal we had seen in two days - a Dutch Boreal 44 passed us as we entered Loch Moidart the day before. We were to see three more Boreals this cruise - another 47 in Tobermory and two more 44s, one in Ardminish Bay and the other heading south in the Sound of Luing.

By now we had our first deadline. Our youngest son, Tom, had been working at the BUTEC range control at Applecross since April and given that he was on leave this coming weekend, was keen that we should come and visit. We decided to make our way up to Plockton and if the weather was kind to us we would come up and anchor in Applecross Bay, where he could come aboard for the night.

Next morning we sailed off the mooring, out of Loch Nevis and into the Sound of Sleat. The light easterly had become a 15 knot southerly and we were able to sail goosewinged again past the Sandaig Islands, through Kyle Rhea and into Loch Alsh, the ferryman at Kyle Rhea waiting for us to pass before snaking his way across to Skye. During this part of the day's passage, a lone porpoise swam from one side of the boat to the other and stayed with us for almost twenty

knots through the water matched our speed over the ground, then, following the CCC's pilotage instructions we aimed at Cleat Rock, watched our SOG increase to seven knots and at the right moment went hard to starboard and round the corner. Job done. I did have my tablet running Bob Bradfield's Antares charts on the cockpit table beside me - I'd heard Bob speak at the RYA cruising conference a few years ago and have used his charts on our last two trips with great success. Exiting the Sound, we were treated to a pod of bottle nosed dolphins, who swam around the boat but were more interested in fishing in the disturbed waters caused by the overfalls at the western entrance to the sound. As we rounded Easdale, a slight northerly breeze threatened to build a chop but as we worked our way into the Sound



The Fairy Isles.

minutes. Once through Kyle Rhea, we turned west through Kyle Akin but the wind veered forcing us to roll away the headsail and motor sail past the pontoons at Kyle, under the Skye bridge and into the Inner Sound. Turning NE we once again were able to sail goosewinged to Plockton, where we decided to pick up a visitors' mooring, as the lunchtime forecast for the next two days was for SE F6-7, so we were probably going to be there for a day or two. Tom decided he would drive down from Applecross and spend the weekend with us in Plockton. *Coll*, a catamaran from Ringhaddy, was beside us on another mooring, with Gomesie and Lawsie on the other side of us in Lawsie's 1961 yawl, *Twilight*. After going ashore for some provisions and water we barbecued and watched the Plockton Local Boat racing in the proverbial, calm before the storm, windless evening.

Tom arrived next morning after an hour's drive from Applecross and spent a windy Sunday with us before leaving early on Monday morning to go back to BUTEC and work. We decided to go for a walk to Duncraig Castle but instead jumped on the train to Kyle and had a very pleasant afternoon walking over the bridge to Skye and back again. By the time we got back to Plockton the wind had eased to 5 knots so we sampled the wares from the chip shop beside the yacht club, dropped our mooring and motored through Caolas Mor into the quiet anchorage of Poll Domhain.

Tuesday's passage commenced at 08.00 under grey skies and a light southerly. By 09.30 the wind had increased to almost 20 knots and, under full genoa alone, our SOG was 7.5 knots. We passed the BUTEC range control site, the entrance to Loch Torridon and as we approached the entrance to Loch Gairloch we decided to make the most of the favourable breeze and head further north towards Ullapool. By 11.00 the sun was out, the wind had strengthened to 25 knots and we were surfing along with two reefs in our large 135% genoa. At 13.00 we rounded Rubha Reidh, recording a maximum true wind speed of 28.7 knots, but as we worked our way past Greenstone Point under clear skies the wind dropped and we motored along a calm Loch Broom before picking up a "substantial" visitors' mooring at 17.00. A glorious evening then followed, with candyfloss clouds and rollercoaster mountains providing the perfect end to a great day.

Should we go further north or start to head south again? Wednesday's decision of the day was to head south again, as the wind was to move round to the NW and we were conscious that we were almost half way through our trip and didn't want to get trapped too far north. We left Ullapool in bright dawn sunshine and motored northwest towards the Summer Isles with only a creel boat disturbing the flat surface of the loch. As we passed Cailleach Head I noticed a trawler to the north of us and beyond that the familiar form of dorsal fins piercing the surface - the water was so still that even at some distance we were able to see them.



Dolphins off the Summer Isles.

Changing course to investigate we came upon a large pod of common dolphins. It was difficult to estimate their number but there must have been in excess of 50. We spent 45 minutes with them, first travelling at one or two knots, watching them weave back and forwards under the bow and then at six knots causing them to race alongside us. The water was so clear that at times it seemed that it would be possible to reach out and touch them. This was to be our best dolphin sighting of our cruise and one that was very hard to leave. However we had to head south and as we motored off two dolphins stayed with us, jostling for position on the bow; then, as if a whistle had blown, they turned and were gone. The wind did move round to the north but stayed light and we worked our way into Loch Gairloch, anchoring behind Eilean Horrisdale in The Bird's Nest, a less populated anchorage than the nearby Badachro. I left to explore the passage south of Horrisdale and to check out the pub in Badachro, where Denise and I later went for a drink before returning to *Geronimo* to barbecue and enjoy a sundowner or two.

Weighing anchor the next morning, I decided to go through the tight passage south of Horrisdale. I'd had a good look at it at low water the afternoon before and with Bob's charts thought it would be straightforward. No wind and half tide would help and so we transited the gut, entering the bay with all its moorings and out through the buoyed channel of Caolas Bad a'Chrotha. Today's planned destination was the anchorage of Aarseid Mhor, Rona, where we would get to meet Jim and Eddie's old friend Bill Cowie. The start of the day was good - the later part was not so good. Zero wind became 15 knots on the nose and we had an uncomfortable motor-sail along the eastern shore of Rona before passing through Caol Rona and into the lee of Rassay, where we found the large arrow on the side of Eilean Garbh directing us into the bay. All ready to drop the anchor, I spotted Bill's vacant visitors' mooring and made the fatal mistake of changing my mind - we would pick up the mooring and my £10 mooring fee would contribute to the island's economy. The mooring is quite close to the jetty. We were also at low water and that made the mooring feel even closer to the jetty but we had 15 knots of breeze and I thought that *Geronimo's* bow would blow off sufficiently to let us go forward and pick up the mooring. It didn't and so we did a 360, came back up to the mooring and Denise picked up the pickup buoy nicely. I went forward to take it from her to discover: (a) that the anchor which we move forward and balance half on, half off the bow roller in preparation for anchoring was still half on half off and (b) that the mooring was in fact an old fender holding up the riser and a very short strop and that (c) the whole thing weighed a tonne. The wind blew the bow off again, the strop ended up between the anchor and the boat and this, compounded by Denise putting *Geronimo* astern (she thought I had asked her to do this, as we would when setting our anchor) meant that only the world's strongest man could have held

onto the mooring. I'm not the world's strongest man so I dropped it and we went round again. Anchor stowed neatly this time, Denise picked up the mooring and knowing its weight I quickly got the strop onto a cleat with the intention of securing it properly once we were settled. Turning back to the cockpit we were greeted with shouts of "I've just videoed that and sent it to Jim - he told me there were a couple of novices coming up from Ringhaddy". Bill had, unbeknownst to me, been standing in his boat on the other side of the jetty with the two Danish owners of Rona observing our attempt to pick up his mooring. He then rubbed salt into our wounds by lifting up a large sign stating that the mooring was booked (although this turned out to be from the day before and the mooring was in fact available). Why is it an audience is only present when you make a mess of things?

We went ashore and walked over to the eastern side of the island, down the steep steps and visited Church Cave in search of absolution for the error of our ways - should have just anchored. We then walked further north to Dry Harbour where the main settlement lay and whose buildings have been restored by Bill and are now used as rental cottages. Returning to the bay we stopped at the cottage to pay our dues and to buy some venison steaks for the barbecue - more abuse from Bill. Back on board we lit the barbecue and watched the sun set over Skye. Just before going to bed *Glance* came in and dropped her anchor.

Leaving Rona via the north entrance, we close reached across to Portree where the plan was to go onto the pontoon for water and up to the Co-op for some supplies. The cruise ship *Wind Star* was in town. Therefore to facilitate the disembarkation of its passengers, the pontoon was off limits so instead we picked up a visitors' mooring and I did a couple of runs back and forwards to the boat with our two 25 litre water containers, while Denise headed to the Co. The obligatory check in with the harbour master revealed that a strong easterly was forecast for Saturday, that the sea eagles had again failed to rear another brood because the thrice daily boat trips kept enticing the birds off their nests, causing their eggs to fail and the reason the common dolphins were so close to the Summer Isles was that the young were being taught to fish in an area where the adults could corral their prey. Thus we headed north and round to the western side of Skye to seek shelter from the impending blow, stopping as we left Portree to check out the sea eagles perched at the entrance to the bay (though we didn't entice them down). It was another bright sunny day, the warmest yet, with a slight southerly breeze that was insufficient to set either the main or the genoa. We motored past the Old Man of Storr, Staffin Bay, between Rubha na h-Aiseig and Eilean Trodday, finally rounding Rubha Hunish thinking that the anchorage at Duntulum would be a good stopover for the night. However as we approached Duntulum Bay it was still only 19.30 and we still had bright sunshine and little wind so we kept going to Uig Bay, which was our next option. Along this part of the coast we could see camper vans parked by the roadside, their occupants decamped to deckchairs soaking up the last remaining rays of sunshine and to watch the sun going down over the Outer Hebrides - they weren't to be disappointed. Uig Bay doesn't get a good write up in the pilot guide and didn't look that appealing when we entered the bay. Camus Beag on the south side of the bay, despite being deep until close to the head of the bay, was a more attractive proposition and so, in 10 metres of water, we anchored, played out 50 metres of chain, set our riding sail and settled down for the night. Today was my birthday and to celebrate Denise made a wonderful meal of Portree scallops seared with chorizo followed by Bills' Rona venison steaks. This we enjoyed while watching the sun set over Harris. The sunset was the best of the cruise and the deep red sky persisted until well past 01.00.

Next morning the strong easterly which had been forecast failed to materialise and we made the short hop across Loch Snizort past the Ascrib Islands and around Waternish Point in grey damp conditions to pick up a visitors' mooring in Stein at 13.30. At 17.00 the forecast easterly had turned into a south easterly and it was now blowing 25 knots as we watched as a small yacht with a young couple sail past. They had a look at the other visitors' mooring beside us, decided it wasn't for them and proceeded to the slightly more sheltered south eastern part of Loch Bay where they anchored for the night. We, on the other hand, booked a table at the Stein Inn, rowed ashore and had another fine meal.

Loch Dunvegan and Dunvegan village with its castle were inspected but didn't spark any interest so we worked our way south west towards Neist Point, the most westerly part of Skye. Another day of bright sunshine and little wind meant another day's motoring and as we passed the cliffs at Neist Point the daytrippers on the top of An t-Aigeach (the Stallion's Head) and clambering over the rocks at the lighthouse waved and received a wave in response. Past MacLeod's Maidens, round Wiay and into Loch Harport, with a night at the Old Inn at Carbost, where the Talisker whiskey distillery is located, was the plan. As we made our way down the loch, we were overtaken by the 1926 Camper & Nicholson motor yacht, *Fair Lady* - this made for a pleasant entrance to Carbost, as she was indeed a fair lady. We arrived at the moorings provided by the Old Inn just as a yacht was leaving, so were lucky, as this was the last vacant mooring. After enjoying the rest of the day's sunshine (only interrupted by the not so pleasant sight of a couple of naked Germans swimming off the back of their Isle of Skye charter yacht), we rowed ashore and had a great meal in the Inn, mussels and venison. After dinner, a slight rain had started and by the time we got back to the shelter of the boat it had become a heavy



Sunset over Harris - Camus Beag.

rain - no wind, just rain. The Cuillin mountains, which had been our backdrop in the afternoon, had disappeared in the low cloud and the rest of the evening was spent thinking about the options for the next day.

We left Carbost on another sunny morning, though the Cuillins were still wrapped in their blanket of cloud, unwilling perhaps to partake in our early morning start. Today we were going to visit Loch Scavaig and if the weather held (it was forecast S F2 with sunshine and showers) we would stay the night (our backup plan was to anchor at Soay). It proved to be a fine day and as we slowly entered the inner anchorage at 13.00 we discovered that we were the only yacht there (bar the motor boat at the jetty waiting to ferry its passengers back to Elgol). We anchored, had lunch in the dramatic anchorage that is Scavaig and then went ashore to explore Loch Coruisk. Returning to *Geronimo* at 17.00, we found that the number of boats at anchor had doubled – a fine looking Nicholson 32



Loch Scavaig.

had anchored beside us. We had just erected our cockpit tent for the night when the heavens opened. This soon eased but the downpour and the subsequent drizzle that lasted through the night had a dramatic impact on the surrounding hillsides as the rivers that were a trickle and almost silent when we arrived slowly turned into fast flowing waterfalls with a soundtrack to match. It remained a calm evening apart from one 30 knot gust which spun the boats around and then disappeared. The rest of the night was windless.

Leaving Loch Scavaig we motored towards Canna, the damp calm having stayed with us from the night before. If the weather improved we would think of staying in Canna Harbour for the night, otherwise we would head to Loch Scresort on Rum. In the end a conversation with the skipper of a sea safari RIB about the strong northerly forecast for the next day and the inability of the sun to break through the clouds meant that we decided to head for Tobermory and another visitors' mooring. In hindsight, we would perhaps been better in Rum because the wind did pick up that night, more from the north east resulting in an unpleasant scend, which in turn gave us the most uncomfortable night of the cruise.

Morning eventually arrived and, after completing a few more trips in the dinghy for water and supplies, we headed south down the sound of Mull. The wind had backed into the north and was now a steady 12 knots gusting to 20. Under full genoa alone we were making 7.5 knots over the ground and by the time we had reached Duart Castle we had a steady 22 knots and our SOG had increased to over 9 knots. The forecast was that the wind would ease but not until later in the evening. My original plan was to head for Puilladobhrain but with this breeze and the sea that was building I wasn't sure whether it was wise to try entering the anchorage. We could go to Oban but I wanted a head start the next day so didn't really want to do that - that could be a backup plan if it didn't look good at Puilladobhrain. We could head into Loch Spelve as other yachts around us were doing but we had been there before and it was full of mussel and fish farms and didn't appeal. We were going to lose the tide before we got into the Sound of Luing, so that wasn't an option. In the end we took our time crossing the Firth of Lorn, the wind abating slightly and found that the entrance was fairly calm despite the waves in the main channel. There were other yachts at anchor but there was space at the north end so we dropped anchor so as not block the entrance, set our riding sail to stop us sailing so much at anchor (it was still gusting 20 knots) and decided to stay on board rather than walk over the hill to the Tigh Na Truish, an 18th century inn which sits beside the Bridge over the Atlantic between Seil and the mainland. The wind did ease and we had a lovely sunny evening relaxing on board.

The following morning the wind had died completely and we weighed anchor, cleaned off the mud and made our way south with that end of holiday feeling - we were heading home. As we approached Easdale another of Jim and Eddie's "have you been" echoed in my head – Easdale Sound. We therefore went through Easdale Sound. A very tight passage, especially on its southern side, but with the assistance of Bob's Antares charts on my tablet in the cockpit and very calm weather, it was a most satisfying thing to do. We were a tad early for the south going tide through the Sound of Luing but I'd just taken a call from a work colleague on his yacht, *Whisper*, to say that he was passing Fladda and asking "Where are you?". "About to pass Fladda" was the reply and thus we met in the middle of the entrance to the Sound of Luing at slack water, circled each other for a bit, took a few photographs and had a bit of a chat. After saying our farewells, we took full advantage of the 10 knots of south westerly breeze that had appeared and had a good close reach down as far as Craignish Point and through the Dorus Mor. Crinan was our lunchtime destination. Jim and Eddie on *Drommedaris* were working their way north to Tobermory and had stopped in Crinan for lunch. We picked up a mooring beside them and were then taken for a tour of the basin, meeting up for a drink with friends of theirs who happened to be there on their way to the Clyde.

Eager to be on our way (it was supposed to be just a lunch stop) we headed off back to *Geronimo* and quickly got underway, destination, Ardminish Bay in Gigha. By this stage the wind had dropped completely and we had to motor the rest of the way, intending to pass between the MacCormaig Isles. Just before Eilean Mor, a large minke whale surfaced beside us and we then spent the next 20 minutes following it as it made its way round the eastern side of Eilean Mor, presumably fishing in the strong tidal currents around the island. It was 20.00 before we had picked up our visitors' mooring for the night so we elected to eat on board and forgo the delights of the Boathouse restaurant. There was another strong wind warning for the next day, this time from the south. We were heading for Stranraer to see our daughter Amy

and stay with her future in-laws, who farm a large dairy herd on the western shore of Loch Ryan. I didn't fancy rounding the Mull of Kintyre in 20 knots with wind against tide so we made the sensible decision and headed to Rathlin. This was a good call as the forecast turned out to be pretty accurate and we had a good steady 15 to 20 knots from the south, giving us a nice reach to Bull Point. Only when we were in the lee of island did the wind ease and we motored our way around the point, past the wreck of the *Drake* and into Church Bay, where we tied up on one of the new pontoons. *Geronimo* used to be berthed in Coleraine Marina on the Lower Bann and Rathlin is a favourite of ours - we left *Geronimo* here for a week after the Clipper homecoming last year while we went to York for a wedding. Ciaran who looks after the pontoons on behalf of the council greeted us with a "Ach it's yourselves. I wondered when you'd be up with us!" We then debated the price hike that the Council has invoked - £14 up to £20. I thought we had zero inflation these days. We ate in McQuaigs that night, the only pub on the island after the National Trust's Manor House closed, though this has just been awarded a £700,000 refurbishment grant and the islander's plan is to reopen in the next year or two. The pub is under new management and the food was great.

Another day, Saturday, another deadline. Amy and her fiancée Hugh were travelling down from Glasgow and wanted us to go and look at some wedding venues on the Sunday, therefore we had to be in Stranraer that night. Forecast was for the wind to strengthen to 30 knots from the SW by late afternoon, just as we would be crossing the North Channel. Deadlines can be missed but apparently wedding venue visits are set in stone and so at lunchtime we left the pontoon to catch the tide at Rue Point. At this point it was a perfectly reasonable 14 knots but I knew we would get a few gusts coming off Fair Head, so we put a reef in the main and were ready to add a reef to the genoa. As forecast, the wind strengthened such that by the time we were mid channel we had two reefs in the main a tissue of a genoa, moderate seas, low visibility caused by low cloud and all encompassing drizzle. We were on a close reach and were doing on average about 7 knots over the ground and to be honest I was having fun. Initially the autopilot steered so I could get some shelter from the rain but as the size of the waves increased I found that the autopilot couldn't steer over the waves and we started to slam a bit. Switching the autopilot off I found that *Geronimo* was nicely balanced with no weather helm and I was able to get her to crest the waves with little slamming - if it hadn't been for the rain it would have been a great day out. I noted that as the wind increased, the channel deepened and the tide turned the wave pattern changed. I also spent time thinking about Plan B in case the wind and sea state became too much and that we should have to run for cover - at this stage our anemometer was recording 35 knots apparent. My biggest worry though was how I was going to get into a berth in Stranraer marina - there's not a lot of shelter in Stranraer and my memory from the last time we were there was that the berths are fairly tight. Denise spent most of the passage down below, head in another book. I'm blessed with a wife who has an iron stomach and who is quite happy to sit in the saloon reading her book (though I do have to keep a check on her putting the heating on), every now and then making a cup of tea and handing me a biscuit. We reached the entrance of the loch as the Stena Superfast car ferry was exiting and we waited for her to pass ahead of us before carrying on. We reached Loch Ryan in six hours. It took another hour and 45 minutes to get into the marina, because the strong southerly kicked up such a chop that we could only motor into it at four knots without slamming. My fears about getting into the marina were unfounded though, as the wind did ease slightly, an easily accessible berth was available and Amy and Hugh were on hand to take our lines. It was now almost 22.00 and after quickly tidying up we drove up to the farm to be welcomed by Paddy, a large black Lab, and a well-earned meal.

Sunday was spent doing the wedding venues but that's another story. The day ended well though with an hour spent in the hot tub watching the stars in a clear moonless sky above Loch Ryan - that's another story too.

Monday, the last passage of our cruise back to Ringhaddy. Leaving the Marina we had 10 knots behind us that offered a contrasting exit to our entrance to the loch two days earlier. As we turned south the wind died and a low fog rolled in which stayed with us for most of the day. Approaching Skulmartin, the fog gradually cleared and we could see a couple of container ships heading south, one of which looked to be on a collision course with *Geronimo*. We have radar and an AIS receiver so I could keep an eye on its course and in the end it passed astern of us but close enough to be uncertain as to whether they had seen us or not. The fog lifting coincided with the breeze returning from the north west and we were able to sail between North and South rocks, around the Bar Pladdy and through the Narrows into Strangford Lough on the last of the flood tide. We arrived back on our mooring at 21.00 and settled down in familiar surroundings with a glass of wine, reflecting on what was another memorable cruise around the not so wild west.

In summary, we spent 23 days away from home, were unable to sail on just one, covered 735 Nm, spent 13 nights on visitors' moorings, nine nights at anchor, barbecued on board 12 times and dined at local hostelrys eight times. We put 122 hours on the engine and almost an inch back onto my waistline. We saw common and bottlenose dolphins, porpoises, a minke whale and the pair of sea eagles at Portree. Our confidence and experience with *Geronimo* grew enormously (especially during the passage to Stranraer) and we were able to explore some stunning anchorages and transit some tricky stretches of water that had been on our 'bucket list'. In A W Mooney's obituary from the 1971 ICC annual, the author writes:

'His death breaks one of the last links with the days when cruising was done almost exclusively under sail. In boats which would scarcely go to windward, with unreliable engines, no radio forecasts and little information about many of the anchorages they visited, it is difficult to believe that people like Billy Mooney could have done many of the things we know they did. Let us hope that the softer conditions now prevailing will not produce softer men.'

With *Geronimo* we've embraced the aforementioned softer conditions. However, I hope that my softer side appreciates the beauty that is the west coast of Scotland as much as I'm sure Billy Mooney did all those years ago.

Obituaries

Robert “Bud” Bryce

Bud was born in Powell River, British Columbia, and trained as a pilot with the RCAF. After a brief spell with Air Canada, he moved to Ireland in 1961, starting a 30 year career with Aer Lingus. He met Gowan through sailing in Howth and they married in 1963.

Bud sailed out of HYC, first with Jack McDowell on *Maid of Malin* and later with John and Jenny Guinness on *Deerhound*. His early racing days were with Ian Morrison on *Querida* and he did a Fastnet with Denis Doyle, as navigator on *Moonduster*. Bud’s true passion was cruising and when he retired from Aer Lingus in 1991, he spent the next decade enjoying a variety of trips with Ian Morrison on *Safari*, including the western Mediterranean, Sweden, Scotland and around Ireland, to name but a few. Bud then joined Brian Hegarty on *Oleander* and over the next 7 years they covered most of the Med and he even managed to find time to slip in a more ‘challenging’ cruise with Mike Alexander in the South Pacific, resulting in a medevac home for an acute infection. In later years, Bud had many happy days pottering about with Sean Flood on *Rhapsody* and continued to enjoy the regular Friday lunches in HYC with all his sailing buddies until shortly before he died.

Bud gave a lot back to his beloved sailing and, amongst many other things, ran the HYC junior section in the 70s, taught navigation to many throughout the 80s and subsequently was local RNLI collection organiser for 13 years, earning a bronze badge in 2013.

John Currie

John Currie, or “Cloth John” as he used to be known to distinguish him from his late legal namesake, was born in Yorkshire but the family moved to Northern Ireland when John was still in his teens. He was keen to learn to sail and Michael McKee was asked to teach him; however, when Michael was at a party in Donaghadee aboard the old *Anolis*, John turned up on his own on a little double-ender which he had sailed from Larne, with a road atlas for a chart, so Michael reckoned that he would be all right.



John owned a succession of boats, including an RNIYC Fairy, *Psyche*, which he owned jointly with Michael McKee. He was a former Commodore of RNIYC. He took enthusiastically to cruising and his last boat was a Westerly Consort, which which he explored the West Coast of Scotland regularly. Having lived for a long time in Cultra, he moved some years ago to

Donaghadee with his wife Wendy and kept his boat in Bangor. His son Chris is an ICC member. John Currie had a very wide circle of friends in sailing and cruising and is very much missed.

Betty Hegarty (ne Morrison) 1938 - 2014

Betty had a life rich with people, places and passions which were not of the sea. However, her interest in the human spirit would find another area of exploration through a union with Brian (Heg) Hegarty.

Being proposed to by Heg on the sole of *Puffin*, a Mermaid which they sailed together, may have given her an indication of the central position that boats would occupy in her life (were she to answer in the affirmative). She was taught how to sail first by Heg but when things got too heated, it was Johnny Malcolm that completed the training and who she credited with the lion’s share of the task. Together they cruised and raced (with considerable success) the Folkboat *Alara*.

As soon as the family was deemed old enough, cruising became the summer holiday on the larger Achilles 9m, *Freebird*. France, Cornwall, Scilly Isles and many trips to the Hebrides followed. On these cruises, we got to witness first hand both the chronic seasickness which Betty endured with stoic good humour and the subtle but significant influence she had on the skipper’s plans to make these ‘holidays’ more family friendly.

After a couple more cruises, to the Shetlands and round Ireland, it was this influence to which Heg finally succumbed and agreed to do some cruising in the easier climate of the Mediterranean. This watershed began on *Safari of Howth* (her brother Ian Morrison’s Halberg Rassey), which they sailed for 3 years throughout the Med. Heg was hooked. They bought *Oleander*, a Westerly Conway, and explored every cove and harbour through Croatia, Greece and Turkey (amongst other places) for 18 years until 2003. Together, they hosted family and friends from the sailing community and beyond, creating for everyone unforgettable experiences both on and off the water.

We went for a sail (her last) just three years ago on our Puppeteer, *Eclipse*. She wobbled down the marina and as she helmed up Howth sound, she beamed a huge smile and shed a tear as ‘a flood of wonderful (sea borne) memories’ came back to her with the boat’s movement.

Where ever they are now, they’re sure to be debating whether to anchor in a quiet bay or stern-to an ancient harbour wall.



Past & Present Officers of the Irish Cruising Club

Commodores

1929 H. M. Wright
 1942 A. W. Mooney
 1950 M. A. Sullivan
 1953 J. B. Hollwey
 1954 R. P. Campbell
 1958 F. Cudmore
 1960 H. W. S. Clark
 1963 P. H. Greer
 1966 R. L. Berridge
 1969 J. D. Faulkner
 1972 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1975 D. N. Doyle
 1978 J. H. Guinness
 1981 P. J. Bunting
 1984 C. J. FitzGerald
 1987 J. Gore-Grimes
 1990 H. P. Kennedy
 1993 D. Nicholson
 1996 L. McGonagle
 1998 M. McKee
 2000 D.H. FitzGerald
 2002 A.R. Baker
 2005 C. McHenry
 2008 Peter Ronaldson
 2011 David Tucker
 2014 Peter Killen

Vice-Commodores

1929 H. P. F. Donegan
 1941 A. W. Mooney
 1942 H. E. Donegan
 1947 P. O'Keefe
 1948 M. A. Sullivan
 1950 J. B. Hollwey
 1953 R. P. Campbell
 1954 B. C. Maguire
 1956 F. Cudmore
 1958 H. W. S. Clark
 1960 P. H. Greer
 1963 C. Riordan
 1965 W. H. D. McCormick
 1967 J. D. Faulkner
 1969 D. N. Doyle
 1971 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1972 P. J. Bunting
 1974 G. B. Leonard
 1976 J. M. Wolfe
 1977 A. D. Macllwaine
 1978 P. J. Bunting
 1980 G. Kenefick
 1982 C. J. FitzGerald

1984 L. McGonagle
 1986 J. Gore-Grimes
 1987 H. P. Kennedy
 1989 D. H. B. FitzGerald
 1990 Arthur S. P. Orr
 1993 Brian Hegarty
 1996 Michael O'Farrell
 1997 Arthur Baker
 1999 T.C. Johnson
 2001 Donal Brazil
 2002 Peter Ronaldson
 2004 Cormac McHenry
 2005 James Nixon
 2007 David Tucker
 2009 David Whitehead
 2011 Joe Phelan
 2012 Alan Leonard
 2014 Dan Cross

Rear Commodores

1929 H. R. Wallace
 1930 A. W. Mooney
 1941 H. E. Donegan
 1942 D. Mellon
 1947 H. Osterberg
 1950 K. McFerran
 1951 R. P. Campbell
 1953 B. C. Maguire
 1954 F. Cudmore
 1956 H. W. S. Clark
 1958 P. H. Greer
 1961 C. Riordan
 1963 W. H. D. McCormick
 1965 R. L. Berridge
 1966 J. C. McConnell
 1968 J. H. Guinness
 1970 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1971 R. J. Fielding
 1973 H. Cudmore
 1975 J. M. Wolfe
 1976 A. D. Macllwaine
 1977 J. M. Wolte
 1978 G. Kenefick
 1980 M. McKee
 1981 J. Gore-Grimes
 1983 L. McGonagle
 1984 M. McKee
 1986 H. P. Kennedy
 1987 M. R. Sullivan &
 D. H. FitzGerald
 1988 B. Hassett &
 D. H. FitzGerald

1989 B. Hassett &
 A. S. P. Orr
 1990 Clayton Love Jnr &
 D. J. Ryan
 1992 Brian Hegarty &
 David Nicholson
 1993 Michael O'Farrell &
 David H.B. FitzGerald
 1994 Michael O'Farrell &
 P. Walsh
 1995 L. McGonagle &
 P. Walsh
 1996 Arthur Baker &
 Jarlath Cunnane
 1997 J. Cunnane &
 P. Ronaldson
 1999 P. O'Sullivan &
 J.C. Bruen
 2000 J.C. Bruen &
 P. Ronaldson
 2001 P. Ronaldson &
 P. Killen
 2002 T. Clarke & P. Killen
 2003 T. Clarke &
 C. McHenry
 2004 J. Nixon &
 G. MacMahon
 2005 D.Tucker &
 G.MacMahon
 2006 D.Tucker &
 D.Whitehead
 2007 C. Magennis &
 D. Whitehead
 2008 C. Hilliard &
 B. Kenny
 2009 C. Hilliard &
 E. Cudmore
 2010 J. Phelan, E.Cudmore
 2011 A. Leonard
 F. Ranalow
 2012 P. Courtney
 2014 Stanton Adair
 Frank Ranelow
 2015 Peter Fernie
 Stanton Adair

Honorary Treasurers

1929 W. MacBride
 1948 G. B. Moore
 1964 N. Watson
 1973 L. Sheil
 1979 R. Shanks

1984 D. O'Boyle
 1993 D. Brazil
 2001 A. Baker
 2002 B. MacManus
 2005 M. Kirby
 2007 T. Fitzpatrick
 2013 R.Barker

Hon. Secretaries *

1929 H. B. Wright
 1933 D. Keatinge
 1935 R. P. Campbell
 1937 K. McFerran
 1941 D. Keatinge
 1944 M. F. Hally
 1948 T. J. Hanan
 1960 P. D. Moreck
 1965 A. Dunn
 1977 P. J. D. Mullins
 1981 B. Hegarty
 1990 C. P. McHenry
 2003 R. Cudmore
 2008 G. FitzGerald
 2011 C.Hilliard
 2015 Alan Markey

* NOTE: From time to time there were acting Honorary Secretaries; the names listed are where the incumbent has held office for at least one year.

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List of Award Winners

Year	Winner	Yacht
THE FAULKNER CUP		
1931	Keatinge & McFerran	<i>Marie</i>
1932	A.W. Mooney	<i>Nirvana</i>
1933	D. Tidmarsh	<i>Foam</i>
1934	Mrs Crimmins	<i>Nirvana</i>
1935	H.D.E. Barton	<i>Dauntless</i>
1936	A.W. Mooney	<i>Aideen</i>
1937	D. Tidmarsh	<i>Foam</i>
1938	H.P. Donegan	<i>Gull</i>
1939	Miss D. French	<i>Embla</i>
1947	A.W. Mooney	<i>Aideen</i>
1949	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>
1950	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>
1951	Wallace Clark	<i>Zamorin</i>
1952	P. O'Keefe	<i>Mavis</i>
1953	Wallace Clark	<i>Caru</i>
1954	B.C. Maguire	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
1955	C. Love	<i>Galcador</i>
1956	N. Falkiner	<i>Euphanzel</i>
1957	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Harmony</i>
1958	R.P. Campbell	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
1959	P.H. Greer	<i>Ann Gail</i>
1960	R.D. Heard	<i>Huff of Arklow</i>
1961	N. Falkiner	<i>Euphanzel</i>
1962	R.D. Heard	<i>Huff of Arklow</i>
1963	T.H. Roche	<i>Neon Tetra</i>
1964	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Tjaldur</i>
1965	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>
1966	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Tjaldur</i>
1967	R.P. Campbell	<i>Verve</i>
1968	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Tjaldur</i>
1969	J. Virden	<i>Sharavogue</i>
1970	J. Virden	<i>Sharavogue</i>
1971	R. Sewell	<i>Talassa</i>
1972	J. Virden	<i>Sharavogue</i>
1973	A. Leonard	<i>Wishbone</i>
1974	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1975	J. Eves	<i>Aeolus</i>
1976	G. Leonard	<i>Wishbone</i>
1977	B. Law	<i>Sai See</i>
1978	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1979	M.P. O'Flaherty	<i>Cuilaun of Kinsale</i>
1980	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1981	J.F. Coffey	<i>Meg of Muglins</i>
1982	E.P.E. Byrne	<i>Beaver</i>
1983	R. Cudmore	<i>Morgana</i>
1984	O. Glaser	<i>Verna</i>
1985	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1986	B. Bramwell	<i>Tor</i>
1987	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1988	Terence Kennedy	<i>Icarus of Cuan</i>
1989	Cormac McHenry	<i>Ring of Kerry</i>
1990	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1991	Peter Bunting	<i>Gulkarna II</i>
1992	Michael Coleman	<i>Stella Maris</i>
1993	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1994	Michael Coleman	<i>Stella Maris</i>
1995	Peter Killen	<i>Black Pepper</i>
1996	Hugo du Plessis	<i>Samharcin an Lar</i>
1997	Cormac McHenry	<i>Erquy</i>
1998	John Waddell	<i>Heather of Mourne</i>
1999	Brian Black	<i>Caelan</i>
2000	John Gore-Grimes	<i>Arctic Fern</i>
2001	Paddy Barry & Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Northabout</i>
2002	John & Ann Clementson	<i>Faustina II</i>
2003	John Gore-Grimes	<i>Arctic Fern</i>
2004	Máire Breathnach	<i>King of Hearts</i>
2005	Peter Killen	<i>Pure Magic</i>

Year	Winner	Yacht
2006	Mike Alexander	<i>Katielok II</i>
2007	Michael Holland	<i>Celtic Spirit</i>
2008	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2009	Trevor Lusty	<i>Seafever of Cuan</i>
2010	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2011	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2012	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>
2014	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>
2015	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
THE STRANGFORD CUP		
1970	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Clarion</i>
1971	M. Park	<i>Kitugani</i>
1972	R. Gomes	<i>Ainmara</i>
1973	J. Beckett	<i>Dara</i>
1974	J. Guinness	<i>Sule Skerry</i>
1975	G. Leonard	<i>Wishbone</i>
1976	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1977	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
1978	J. Villiers Stuart	<i>Vinter</i>
1979	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1980	M. Villiers Stuart	<i>Winifreda</i>
1981	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>
1982	W.A. Smyth	<i>Velma</i>
1983	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
1984	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1985	A. Morton	<i>Sung Foon</i>
1986	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1987	Brian Dalton	<i>Boru</i>
1988	Hugo du Plessis	<i>Samharcin an Lar</i>
1989	David Nicholson	<i>Black Shadow</i>
1990	Tommy O'Keefe	<i>Tir na nOg</i>
1991	David FitzGerald	<i>Peigin Eile</i>
1992	Cormac McHenry	<i>Ring of Kerry</i>
1993	W. M. Nixon & E. Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>
1994	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1995	Bernard Corbally	<i>Rionnag</i>
1996	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1997	Brian Black	<i>Cuillin</i>
1998	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1999	Peter Mullins	<i>Cuilaun</i>
2000	Michael Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
2001	Bernard Corbally	<i>Beowulf</i>
2002	David FitzGerald	<i>White Heather</i>
2003	E & B Cudmore	<i>Ann Again</i>
2004	James Nixon	<i>Scilla Verna</i>
2005	B & E Cudmore	<i>Ann Again</i>
2006	James Nixon	<i>Scilla Verna</i>
2007	Bernard Corbally and Ann Woulfe-Flanagan	<i>Beowulf</i>
2008	Michael Coleman	<i>Oyster Cove</i>
2009	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2010	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2011	Stephen Hyde	<i>A Lady</i>
2012	Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Northabout</i>
2013	John Duggan	<i>Hecuba</i>
2014	E.Nicholson & P.Dorgan	<i>Mollyhawk's Shadow</i>
2015		
THE ATLANTIC TROPHY		
1978	R. Cudmore	<i>Morgana</i>
1979	A. Doherty	<i>Bali Hai</i>
1980	David Nicholson	<i>Black Shadow</i>
1981	M.H. Snell	<i>Golden Harvest</i>
1982	David Nicholson	<i>Black Shadow</i>
1983	J.F. Coffey	<i>Meg of Muglins</i>
1984	J.F. Coffey	<i>Meg of Muglins</i>
1985	J.F. Coffey	<i>Meg of Muglins</i>
1986	Hugo du Plessis	<i>Samharcin an Lar</i>

Year	Winner	Yacht
1987	James Cahill	<i>Ricjak</i>
1988	Brian Smullen	<i>Cuilaun</i>
1989	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>
1990	Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Lir</i>
1991	Ronnie Slater	<i>Tandara</i>
1992	David McBride	<i>Deerhound</i>
1993	Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Lir</i>
1994	Jonathan Virden	<i>Twayblade</i>
1995	Henry Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>
1996	Cormac McHenry	<i>Erquy</i>
1997	Brendan Bradley	<i>Shalini</i>
1998	Adrian Spence	<i>Madcap</i>
1999	Bernard Corbally	<i>Rionnag</i>
2000	Henry & Ivy Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>
2001	Susan & Peter Gray	<i>Waxwing</i>
2002	Peter Killen	<i>White Magic</i>
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	<i>Waxwing</i>
2004	Noel Casey	<i>Kish</i>
2005	Marilyn Kenworthy	<i>Flica</i>
2006	Peter Killen	<i>Pure Magic</i>
2007	Seamus Salmon	<i>Saoirse</i>
2008	Máire Breathnach	<i>Arctic Tern</i>
2009	Frank Ranalow	<i>Shady Maid</i>
2010	Michael Coleman	<i>Oyster Cove</i>
2011	Stephen Hyde	<i>A Lady</i>
2012	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>
2014	John Coyne	<i>Lir</i>
2015	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP		
1941	E.J. Odlum	
1951	Brendan Maguire	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
From 1954 the Navigation Cup was awarded for the best cruise around Ireland.		
1954	Wallace Clark	<i>Caru</i>
1955	Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon	<i>Ancora</i>
1956	R.C. Arnold	<i>Maid of York</i>
1957	R.P. Campbell	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
1961	C. O'Cealligh	<i>Julia</i>
1963	W. & B. Smyth	<i>Wynalda</i>
1964	N. Falkiner	<i>Euphanzel</i>
1965	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>
1967	C.H. Green	<i>Helen</i>
1968	J.D. Beckett	<i>Dara</i>
1969	R.E. Mollard	<i>Osina</i>
1871	M. Tomlinson	<i>Pellegrina</i>
1973	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1974	R.P. Campbell	<i>Verve</i>
1975	J.B. Law	<i>Sai See</i>
1977	G. Leonard	<i>Wishbone</i>
1978	R.P. Campbell & J.R. Osborne	<i>Verve</i>
1979	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
1980	P. Gray	<i>Korsar</i>
1981	Ronan Beirne	<i>Rila</i>
1982	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1983	A. Doherty	<i>Svegala</i>
1984	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
1985	T. O'Keefe	<i>Orion</i>
1986	B. Hegarty	<i>Freebird</i>
1987	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1988	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1989	Tony Morton	<i>Lamorna III</i>
1990	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1991	Robert Barr	<i>Ar Men</i>
1992	No Award	
1993	G. Nairn & M. D. Whelan	<i>Lola</i>
1994	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
1995	Cormac McHenry	<i>Erquy</i>
1996	Michael McKee	<i>Isobel</i>

Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht
1997	No Award		2007	Pat Lyons	<i>Stardancer</i>	1989	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
1998	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>	2008	David & Grainne		1990	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
1999	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>		FitzGerald	<i>Ajay</i>	1991	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>
2000	Harry Byrne	<i>Alphida of Howth</i>	2009	Patrick Dorgan	<i>Verdi III</i>	1992	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
2001	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	2010	Derek White	<i>Ballyclaire</i>	1993	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2002	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>	2011	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>	1994	James Cahill	<i>Ricjak</i>
2003	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Brandon Rose</i>	2012	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>	1995	Paul Butler	<i>Red Velvet</i>
2004	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>	2013	Nigel & Heleen		1996	Brian Black	<i>Cuillin</i>
2005	No Award			Lindsay-Fynn	<i>Eleanda</i>	1997	James Nixon	<i>Ardnagee</i>
2006	John Delap	<i>Sceolaing</i>	2014	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>	1998	Peter &	<i>Scotch Mist</i>
2007	Brendan Bradley	<i>Afar VI</i>	2015	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>		Evie Ronaldson	
2008	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>				1999	No Award	
2009	No Award		THE WYBRANTS CUP			2000	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2010	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>	1933	J. B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2001	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2011	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1934	Dr. L.G. Gunn	<i>Albatross</i>	2002	Paget McCormack	<i>Saki</i>
2012	Paul Butler	<i>Muglins</i>	1935	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2003	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2013	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1936	Leslie Chance	<i>Britannia</i>	2004	Norman Kean	<i>Xanadu</i>
2014	No Award		1937	A.W. Mooney	<i>Aideen</i>	2005	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2015	No Award		1938	Dr. O.P. Chance &	<i>Saphire</i>	2006	Harold &	
				R. Storey			Vivienne Boyle	<i>Gentle Spirit</i>
THE FORTNIGHT CUP			1939	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2007	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Eala Ban</i>
1958	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>	1940	K.McFerran &	<i>Huzure</i>	2008	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>		Dr. O'Brien		2009	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
1961	J.W.D. McCormick	<i>Diane</i>	1941	D. Keating &	<i>Evora</i>	2010	John Crebbin	<i>Ocean Gypsy</i>
1963	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>		R. O'Hanlon		2011	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
1964	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>	1942	J.B. Cotterell &	<i>Minx</i>	2012	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
1965	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>		J.F. McMullan		2013	Joe & Trish Phelan	<i>Lydia</i>
1966	H.W.S. Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>	1943/45	No Award		2014	Matthew Wright	<i>Thor</i>
1967	Miss E. Leonard	<i>Lamita</i>	1946	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2015	Derek & Viv White	<i>Ballyclaire</i>
1968	P. Dineen	<i>Huntress</i>	1947	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>			
1969	R.C.A. Hall	<i>Roane</i>	1948	Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon	<i>Evora</i>	THE FINGAL CUP		
1970	N. St. J. Hennessy	<i>Asling</i>	1949	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>	1981	Robert Barr	<i>Condor</i>
1971	J.R. Olver	<i>Vandara</i>	1950	A.W. Mooney	<i>Evora</i>	1982	W. Walsh	<i>Carrigdown</i>
1972	C. Green	<i>Helen</i>	1951	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>	1983	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1973	M. Tomlinson	<i>Pellegrina</i>	1952	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>	1984	R.M. Slater	<i>Tandara</i>
1974	J. Wolfe	<i>Gay Gannet</i>	1953	No Award		1985	P. Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1975	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>	1954	T. Crosby	<i>If</i>	1986	B. Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1976	A. Morton	<i>Sung Foon</i>	1955	R.P. Campbell	<i>Alata</i>	1987	Frank McCarthy	<i>Silly Goose</i>
1978	R. Dixon	<i>Oberon</i>	1956	S.F. Thompson	<i>Second Ethuriel</i>	1988	Robert Barr	<i>Joliba</i>
1979	B.J. Law	<i>Sai See</i>	1957	Col. W.S. Knox-Gore	<i>Arandora</i>	1989	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1980	R. Paul Campbell	<i>Verve</i>	1958	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	1990	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1981	S. Orr	<i>Den Arent</i>	1959	G. Kimber	<i>Astrophel</i>	1991	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>
1982	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>	1960	J.C. Butler	<i>Happy</i>	1992	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1983	C.P. McHenry	<i>Ring of Kerry</i>				1993	Stephen Malone	<i>Symphonie</i>
1984	B.H.C. Corbally	<i>Puffin</i>	1961	S. O'Mara	<i>Morning</i>	1994	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1985	R. Barr	<i>Joliba</i>	1962	D.N. Doyle	<i>Fenestra</i>	1995	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft</i>
1986	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>	1963	Lt. Com. T. Sheppard	<i>Greylag of Arklow</i>	1996	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Shalimi</i>
1987	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>	1964	T.F. Doyle	<i>Elsa</i>	1997	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
1988	John Ryan	<i>Saki</i>	1965	S. O'Mara	<i>Oisin</i>	1999	Peter Killen	<i>Black Pepper</i>
1989	Brian Hegarty	<i>Safari of Howth</i>	1966	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	1999	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1990	Seamus Lantry	<i>William Tell of Uri</i>	1967	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>	2000	Tony Clarke	<i>Veella</i>
1991	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>	1968	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	2001	Michael Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
1992	Clive Martin	<i>Lindos</i>	1969	R.I. Morrison	<i>Querida</i>	2002	Dianne Andrews	<i>Great Escape</i>
1993	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>	1970	Hugh Coveney	<i>Dalcassian</i>	2003	Grainne FitzGerald	<i>Mountain Mist</i>
1994	Frank Larkin	<i>Elusive</i>	1971	J.A. McKeown	<i>Korsar</i>	2004	Michael & Alison	
1995	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Hobo V</i>	1972	J.C. Love	<i>Fionnuala</i>		Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
1996	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1973/77	No Award		2005	Clive Martin	<i>Beowulf</i>
1997	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>				2006	Peter Haden	<i>Papageno</i>
1998	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>				2007	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>
1999	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>	1978	Chris Green	<i>Norella</i>	2008	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>
2000	No Award		1979	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>	2009	Michael Brogan	<i>Mac Duach</i>
2001	Gary Villiers-Stuart	<i>Winefreda of Greenisland</i>	1980	D.A. McMillan	<i>Goosander</i>	2010	Eddie Nicholson	<i>Mollihawk's Shadow</i>
			1981	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>			
2002	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>	1982	Ronan Beirne	<i>Givusa Kuddle</i>	2011	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2003	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>	1983	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>	2012	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara (Capriole)</i>
			1984	R. Barr	<i>Condor</i>	2013	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2004	Roy Waters	<i>Sundowner of Beaulieu</i>	1985	B. Hegarty	<i>Freebird</i>	2014	Ian Stevenson	<i>Raptor</i>
			1986	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>	2015	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2005	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>	1987	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>			
2006	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>	1988	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>			

Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht
THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY			From 1985 the Rockabill Trophy was for 'A Feat of Exceptional Navigation/Seamanship.'			From 2007 it reverted to its first designation.		
This Waterford Glass trophy is awarded by the adjudicator for the best cruise in Irish waters.								
1993	James Nixon	<i>Sea Pie</i>	1985	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>	2007	Ger O'Rourke	<i>Chieftain</i>
1994	Robert Barr	<i>Pen Men</i>	1986	John Olver	<i>Moody Blue</i>	2008	No award	
1995	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>	1987	J.B. Law	<i>Redwing/ Spirit of Shell</i>	2009	Mick Cotter	<i>Whisper</i>
1996	Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>	1988	No Award		2010	No award	
1997	Máire Breathnach	<i>Romist</i>	1989	Colin Chapman	<i>Deerhound</i>	2011	Bruce Douglas	<i>Spirit of Jacana</i>
1998	Brendan Travers	<i>Sea Maiden</i>	1990	Colin Chapman	<i>Deerhound</i>	2012	No award	
1999	Máire Breathnach	<i>SeaDance</i>	1991	Wallace Clark	<i>Aileach</i>	2013	Martin Breen	<i>Discover Ireland</i>
2000	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>	1992	Peter Bunting	<i>Gulkarna II</i>	2014	No award	
2001	No Award		1993	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>	2105	No award	
2002	Brendan Travers	<i>Seodin</i>	1994	Peter Hogan	<i>Molly B</i>	THE PERRY GREER BOWL		
2003	No Award		1995	Brian Smullen	<i>Zaberdest</i>	Awarded for the best first ICC log		
2004	David Beattie	<i>Schollevar</i>	1996	Tom Foote	<i>White Heather</i>	1995	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
2005	No Award		1997	P Barry/ J Cunnane	<i>Tom Crean</i>	1996	Jimmy Conlon	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
2006	Alan Markey	<i>Crackerjack</i>	1998	No Award		1997	Hilary Keatinge	<i>Kilpatrick</i>
2007	Sal & Jeffrey O'Riordan	<i>Adrigole</i>	1999	Donal Lynch	<i>Laroha</i>	1998	No Award	
2008	Harry Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>	2000	Susan & Peter Grey	<i>Waxwing</i>	1999	Jack McCann	<i>Mary Lee</i>
2009	David Whitehead	<i>Joyster</i>	2002	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Arctic Fern</i>	2000	David Beattie	<i>Aeolus</i>
2010	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>	2003	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>	2001	Noel Casey	Chartered
2011	Mick Delap	<i>North Star</i>	2004	Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Northabout</i>	2002	No Award	
2012	A & M Bell	<i>Oisin Ban</i>	2005	Brian Black	<i>Caelan</i>	2003	Paddy McGlade	<i>Sabrone</i>
2013	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>	2006	John Clementson	<i>Faustina II</i>	2004	Sean Fergus	<i>Estrellita</i>
2014	B. O'Callaghan	<i>Katlin</i>	2007	No Award		2005	Robert Barker	<i>Alchemist</i>
2015	Paul McSorley	<i>Wild Cat</i>	2008	Paul Bryans	<i>Odysseus</i>	2006	Ian Stevenson	<i>Raptor</i>
ROCKABILL TROPHY			2009	Wallace Clark	<i>Agivey</i>	2007	Nigel Lindsay-Finn	<i>Eleanda</i>
1959	P.H. Green	<i>Ann Gail</i>	2010	Tom Foote	<i>Picnic</i>	2008	Patrick Dorgan	<i>Verdi III</i>
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>	2011	Norman Kean	<i>Xanadu</i>	2009	Declan Connolly	<i>Khepri</i>
1961	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Harmony</i>	2012	Brian Black	<i>Séafra</i>	2010	Anne Kenny	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>
1962/63	No Award		2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>	2011	David Jones	<i>Tidal Dancer</i>
1964	J.D. Faulkner	<i>Angelique</i>	2014	Norman Kean	<i>Aircín</i>	2012	Ann Lyons	<i>Stardancer</i>
1965	J.H. Guinness	<i>Sharavogue</i>	2015	Paul Cooper	<i>Drumbeat</i>	2013	Peter Mullan	<i>Sancerre</i>
1966	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>	THE GULL SALVER			2014	Justin McDonagh	<i>Selkie</i>
1967	No Award		Highest placed Irish boat in the Fastnet Race.			2015	Michael & Anne Madsen	<i>Gabelle</i>
1968	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>	1971	Otto Glaser	<i>Triitsch-Tratsch</i>	THE WILD GOOSE CUP		
1969	No Award		1973	Mungo Park	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	Awarded for a log of literary merit		
1970	J.P. Jameson	<i>Ganiamore</i>	1975	Otto Glaser	<i>Triitsch-Tratsch II</i>	1995	Robert Barr	<i>Pen Men</i>
1971	R. Courtney	<i>Bandersnatch</i>	1977	Otto Glaser	<i>Red Rock III</i>	1996	James Nixon	<i>Ardnagee</i>
1972/73	No Award		1991	Donal Morrissey	<i>Joggernaut</i>	1997	D & J Nicholson	<i>White Shadow</i>
1974	J.P. Bourke	<i>Korsar</i>	1995	Donal Morrissey	<i>Joggernaut</i>	1998	No Award	
1975/78	No Award		2001	Denis Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	1999	Ray O'Toole	<i>Lotophagi</i>
1979	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>	2003	D & T Andrews	<i>Amethyst</i>	2000	Bill & Hilary Keatinge	<i>Rafiki</i>
1980	J. Wolfe	<i>Deerhound</i>	From 2004-2006 this Trophy was awarded for distinction in an international event by a member sailing his/her own boat.			2001	Robert Barr	<i>Oyster River</i>
1981	No Award		2005	Brian Smullen	<i>Cuilaun</i>	2002	Peter Fernie	
1983	K. & C. Martin	<i>Estrellita</i>	2006	No Award		2003	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
1984	No Award					2004	Peter Fernie	

JOHN B. KEARNEY CUP

1983	P. Campbell: Compiler of ICC Directions
1984	J. Moore: Skipper of S.T.Y. <i>Graine</i>
1985	Jennifer Guinness: <i>ICC Publications Officer</i>
1986	Harold Cudmore Junior: Yachtsman
1987	Cap. G.F. 'Eric' Healy: Captain of S.T.Y. <i>Asgard II</i>
1988	Capt. Tom McCarthy: Captain of S.T.Y. <i>Asgard II</i>
1989	Sail Ireland Project: Round the World Race in <i>NCB Ireland</i> .
1990	Ursula Maguire: Secretary of Irish Yachting Association
1991	The Southern Cross Team Winners: H. Cudmore, J. English & J. Maguire
1992	Denis Doyle: Yachtsman
1993	Arthur S. P. Orr: Compiler of ICC Directions
1994	Daphne French: Yachtsperson
1995	Ronan Beirne, Editor Annual
1996	No Award
1997	'South Aris' team. Shackleton escape from Antarctica
1998	Malachi & Evelyn O'Gallagher. Sailing directions

1999	No Award
2000	David Burrows: Olympic performance
2001	Carmel Winkelmann. Services to Junior Sailing
2002	Tom McSweeney. Services to Maritime Ireland
2003	The <i>Jeanie Johnston</i> Project
2004	David Tucker – 75th Anniversary Cruise
2005	Paddy Barry – 10 years as Honorary Editor of the Annual
2006	No Award
2007	William M. Nixon – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2008	Norman Kean – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2009	John Killeen – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2010	The Irish 'Commodore Cup' winning team
2011	Jerry Smith – for rescue of crew of <i>Rambler 100</i>
2012	Annalise Murphy, Con Murphy and Cathy McAleavy
2013	Brian Craig - organisation of Irish Sailing, etc
2014	Joe English, posthumously - for outstanding sailing career
2015	Justin Slattery - for excellence in offshore racing

THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP

Year	Recipient	Yacht	Race
1950	R.A. Hall	<i>Flica</i>	
1951	R.A. Hall	<i>Flica</i>	Islands Race
1956	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	Islands Race
1957	S.F. Thompson	<i>Ibhuriel</i>	
1958	J. Ronan	<i>Wye</i>	Islands Race
1959	J. Butler	<i>Happy Morning</i>	Pollock Race
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>	
1961	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	
1962	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	
1964	A.E. Pope	<i>Susette</i>	
1965	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1966	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1967	S.F. Thompson	<i>Wye</i>	
1968	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1969	F. Cudmore	<i>Setanta</i>	
1970	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1971	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1972	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1973	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1974	G. Radley	<i>Cecille</i>	
1976	J.C. Butler	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	
1977	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1978	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1979	B. Cudmore	<i>Anna Petrea</i>	
1980	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1981	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1982	C. Love Jnr	<i>Rebel County</i>	
1983	S. Mansfield	<i>Luv Is</i>	
1984	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1985	J. Donegan	<i>White Rooster</i>	
1987	T.E. Crosbie	<i>Senta</i>	
	C.J. Fitzgerald	<i>Mandalay</i>	
1988	J. Donegan	<i>White Rooster</i>	
1989	B. Cudmore	<i>Anna Petrea</i>	
1992	Michael Coleman	<i>Stella Maris</i>	

From 1993 awarded by the Southern Area Committee:

1993	Kevin Dwyer	S. and W. Coast Aerial Photography	
1995	Arthur Baker	S.W. Coast Rally Organiser	
1996	Donal Brazil	Services to ICC as Hon. Treasurer	
1998	Gary McMahon	Ilen's return from Falkland Islands	
1999	Vincent O'Farrell	<i>Fastnet Dancer</i>	
2000	Clayton Love Jnr.	Services to sailing	
2001	Andrew Curtain & Gerry Sheridan	Channel Cruise	
2002	Donal McClement	Services to Irish sailing	
2004	Colin Chapman		
2005	Bill Walsh		
2006	John Petch	Compiler South & West Sailing Directions	
2007	Joe & Mary Woodward		
2008	Paul Bryans	Outstanding seamanship	
2009	Neil Prendeville	Two transatlantic crossings back-to-back in one season	
2010	Donal Lynch	Contribution to maritime culture and community sailing	
2011	Dan Cross	Organising of Brittany Rally 2011	
2012	Norman Kean	Co-authorship of <i>Cruising Ireland</i> and ICC Sailing Directions	
2013	RNLI Kinsale	Rescue of crew of STV Astrid	
2014	Eddie Nicholson	Circumnavigation of N Atlantic	
2015	Justin McDonagh	Norway, Arctic, Round Britain	

WRIGHT MEMORIAL SALVER

Presented to the Irish Cruising Club by H.J. Wright in memory of H.M. Wright, *Eolanda* (15 tons), Commodore 1929-1942.

Year	Race	Yacht	Recipient
1943	Whit	<i>Marama</i>	H. Osterberg
1945	Whit	<i>Mavis</i>	J. B. Kearney
1949	Whit	<i>Evora</i>	A.W. Mooney
1950	Whit	<i>John Dory</i>	P. O'Keefe
1951	Whit	<i>Alata</i>	R.P. Campbell
1952	Whit	<i>Setanta</i>	F. Cudmore
1954	Whit	<i>Euphanzel</i>	N. Falkiner
1955	Whit	<i>Suzette</i>	A.E. Pope

Year	Race	Yacht	Recipient
1956	I.O.M.	<i>Zephyra</i>	S. Cresswell
1957	Cork-Schull	<i>Severn II</i>	D.N. Doyle
1959	Cork-Schull	<i>Happy Morning</i>	J.C. Butler
1960	I.O.M.	<i>Harmony</i>	R.H. O'Hanlon
1961	Cork-Schull	<i>Severn II</i>	D.N. Doyle
1962	Howth-Port St. Mary	<i>Cu-na-Mara</i>	D. Barnes
1963	Cork-Fastnet-Schull	<i>Happy Morning</i>	J.C. Butler
1964	Dun Laoghaire-H/head	<i>Twayblade</i>	E. Tweedy
1965	Cork-Fastnet-Schull	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle
1966	Dun Laoghaire-H/head	<i>Fionnuala</i>	R. Courtney
1969	Cork-Fastnet-Castletownshend	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle
1972	Dun Laoghaire-Arklow	<i>Tryphena</i>	F. Ryan
1973	Cork-Fastnet-Schull	<i>Cecille</i>	G. Radley
1974	-	<i>Korsar</i>	J.P. Bourke
1976	ICC	<i>Querida of Howth</i>	I.R. Morrison
1977	Crosshaven-Fastnet-Baltimore	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	J.C. Butler
1978	Howth-Strangford	<i>Leemara</i>	W.R. Cuffe-Smith
1979	-	<i>Four Seasons</i>	L.G.F. Heath
1980	-	<i>Deerhound</i>	J.H. Guinness
1981	-	<i>Korsar</i>	R.E. Mollard
1982	-	<i>Tritsch Tratsch IV</i>	Dr. O. Glaser
1983	-	<i>Deerhound</i>	J.H. Guinness
1984	-	<i>Beaver</i>	E.P.E. Byrne
1986	-	<i>Misty</i>	M.W. Knatchbull

From 1993 Awarded by the Northern Area Committee

Year	Recipient	
1993	J. Russell	Service to Sailing
1995	Adrian Spence	
1998	Adrian Spence	Greenland cruise
1999	Brian Black	Greenland cruise
2000	Roy Waters	
2001	John & Ann Clementson	Caribbean Cruise
2002	David Park	Atlantic Islands
2003	James Nixon	Round Ireland
2004	Wallace Clark	Ireland West Coast & The Hebrides
2005	Brian Black	Greenland Cruise
2006	James Nixon	
2007	Andy McCarter	
2008	Hugh Kennedy	Services to Irish Cruising Club
2009	Trevor Lusty	
2010	Derek White	Organising Club events
2011	Sam Davis	Single-handed voyage from Strangford Lough to Puerto Montt
2012	Mike Balmforth	Co-authorship of <i>Cruising Ireland</i>
2013	John Clementson	Webmaster and Green Book author
2014	Brian Black	Arctic Cruising and Exploration
2015	Robin & Denise Wright	Cruise in Scottish Waters

DONEGAN MEMORIAL TROPHY 1940

Year	Yacht	Recipient	Race
1945	<i>Evora</i>	R.H. & D.M. O'Hanlon	
1946	<i>Mavis</i>	J.B. Kearney	Kingstown/Cork
1947	No Award		
1948	<i>Aideen</i>	A.W. Mooney	Kingstown/Clyde
1949	<i>Evora</i>	A.W. Mooney	Kingstown/Clyde
1950	<i>Sonia</i>	D.J. & P.M. Purcell	Clyde Race
1951	<i>Minx of Malham</i>	B. Maguire	Clyde Race
1952	<i>Viking O</i>	Col Hollwey	Clyde Race
1953	<i>Flying Fox</i>	F.W. Brownlee	Beaumaris-Week
1954	<i>Flying Fox</i>	F.W. Brownlee	Clyde Race
1955	<i>Glance</i>	F.C. Hopkirk	Puffin Sound Race
1957	<i>Severn II</i>	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1958	<i>Vanja IV</i>	I. Morrison	Dun Laoire/Cork
1959	<i>Severn II</i>	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1960	<i>Severn II</i>	D.N. Doyle	Dun Laoire-Cork
1961	<i>Cu na Mara</i>	D. Barnes	Irish Sea Race
1962	<i>Vanja IV</i>	I. Morrison	Irish Sea Race
1963	<i>Fenestra</i>	S. O'Mara	Morecambe Bay
1964	<i>Susanna</i>	J.C. McConnell	Irish Sea Race
1965	<i>Cu na Mara</i>	D. Barnes	Morecambe Bay
1966	<i>Orana</i>	P.D. Pearson	Irish Sea Race
1967	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay

Year	Yacht	Recipient	Race
1968	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1969	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1970	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Cowes/Cork Race
1971	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1972	<i>Tritsch-Tratsch</i>	O. Glaser	Irish Sea Race
1973	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1974	<i>Assiduous</i>	C. Love	(1st ICC Boat)
1975	<i>Dictator</i>	D.M. Irwin	Morecambe Bay
1976	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	J.C. Butler	Irish Sea Race
1977	<i>Red Rock III</i>	O. Glaser	Morecambe Bay
1978	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1979	<i>Korsar</i>	R.E. Mollard	Morecambe Bay
1980	<i>Standfast</i>	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1981	<i>Bandersnatch of Howth</i>	R. Courtney	Morecambe Bay
1982	<i>Joggernaut</i>	D.J. Morrissey	Irish Sea Race
1983	<i>Imp</i>	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1984	<i>Little Egypt</i>	R.B. Lovegrove	Irish Sea Race
1985	<i>Demelza</i>	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1986	<i>Rob Roy</i>	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1987	<i>Demelza</i>	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1988	<i>Red Velvet</i>	M. O'Rahilly	Irish Sea Race
1989	<i>Comanche Raider</i>	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1990	<i>Woodchester Challenge</i>	H.R. Gomes	Round Ireland
1991	<i>Finnabair of Howth</i>	P. Jameson	Round Ireland

From 1993 Awarded by the Eastern Area Committee

Year	Recipient	Description
1993	P. Hogan	Circumnavigation of the Globe
1994	Brendan Bradley	Brittany Rally Organiser
1995	Barbara Fox-Mills	Distributor of Publications
1996	Evelyn O'Gallagher	Sailing Directions
1998	Bruce Lyster	Tall Ships Committee Chairman
1999	Susan & Peter Gray	Pacific cruising
2000	Arthur Orr	ICC Publications
2001	Mungo Park	Sailing into his 80s
2002	Cormac McHenry	Holland to Dun Laoghaire
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	Capetown to Dun Laoghaire
2004	Bill Rea	Trophy & Annual distribution
2005	Hal Sisk	Restoration of a Classic Yacht, <i>Peggy Bawn</i>
2006	Grainne FitzGerald	Cruise organisation
2007	Michael Holland	Cruise from Arctic to Antarctic
2008	Cormac McHenry	Spain to the Canaries
2009	Terry Johnson	for his contribution to the RNLI & Irish Lights over 21 years
2010	Ruth Heard	Services to sailing and boating and to Inland Waterways Association.
2011	John P. Bourke	Contribution to Irish and international sailing
2012	Sean Flood	Support for youth sail training
2013	Winkie Nixon	50 years of Annual contributions
2014	Kieran Jameson	Many years of outstanding achievements
2015	Alan Rountree	Significant cruising exploits

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

Awarded by the Western Area Committee

Year	Winner	Year	Winner
1993	Dave FitzGerald	2005	David FitzGerald
1994	Brian Lynch	2006	Peter Haden
1995	Paddy O'Sullivan	2007	Seamus Salmon
1996	Jarlath Cunnane	2008	Michael Craughwell
1997	Pat Lavelle	2009	Anne Kenny & Paddy O'Sullivan
1998	Brendan Travers		
1999	John Cunningham	2010	Fergus Quinlan
2000	Jack McCann	2011	Fergus Quinlan
2001	Roger Bourke	2012	Brian Sheridan
2002	Dave FitzGerald	2013	Anne Kenny
2003	Frank Larkin	2014	John Coyne
2004	Dick Scott	2015	Justin McDonagh

THE MARIE TROPHY

Awarded for the best cruise in a yacht up to 30ft overall

Year	Winner	Yacht
2008	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2009	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>
2010	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>

2011	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2012	Mick Delap	<i>North Star</i>
2013	Mick Delap	<i>North Star</i>
2014	Peter Fernie	<i>Mystic</i>
2015	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>

DUNN'S DITTY SALVER

Awarded by the Editor of the Annual for the best Dunn's Ditty

2001	Brendan Travers	2009	Diana Gleadhill
2002	Wallace Clark	2010	David Whitehead
2003	John Bourke	2011	James Nixon
2004	Fergus Quinlan	2012	Alan Leonard
2005	Eleanor Cudmore	2013	Raymond Fielding
2006	Dan Cross	2014	Norman Kean's Hat (by Derek White)
2007	Wallace Clark		
2008	Hugh Barry		

THE FASTNET AWARD

Awarded for an outstanding achievement in sailing by a person or persons from anywhere in the world

Year	Recipient
2005	Paddy Barry & Jarlath Cunnane
2006	Willy Ker
2007	Robin Knox-Johnston
2008	No Award
2009	Bill King
2010	Killian Bush
2011	No Award
2012	No Award
2013	No Award
2014	Maire Breathnach and Andrew Wilkes
2015	No Award

TRANS OCEANIC PENNANT

Awarded by the Committee

Auchincloss, Les	Kenworthy, Marilyn
Barnes, Sean	Killen, Peter
Barnwell, Henry	King, Heather
Barry, Paddy	Lindsay-Finn, Nigel
Bradley, Brendan	Leonard, Alan
Bramwell, Barry	Lusty, Trevor
Bunting, Peter	McBride, Davy
Cahill, Bernie	McClement, Donal
Cahill, James	McHenry, Cormac
Casey, Noel	Mullins, Peter
Chapman, Colin	Nicholson, David
Clementson, John	Nicholson, Eddie
Coffey, Jack	O'Farrell, Kevin
Coleman, Michael	O'Farrell, Vincent
Corbally, Bernard	O'Flaherty, Michael
Cudmore, Ronald	Osborne, James
Cunnane, Jarlath	Osmundsvaag, Arve
Davis, Sam	Petch, John
Drew, Bob	du Plessis, Hugo
Espey, Fred	Prendeville, Neil
Glaser, Otto	Quinlan, Fergus
Gore-Grimes, John	Smullen, Brian
Gray, Peter	Smyth, William
Gray, Susan	Snell, Michael
Greer, Perry	Virden, Jonathan
Hogan, Peter	Whelan, Michael J.
Hyde, Stephen	Whelan, Pat
Kean, Norman	White, Lawrence

The Challenge Cup Awards

Every year the Flag Officers appoint an Adjudicator to award the Challenge Cup Awards.

The following are the Challenge Cup Awards:



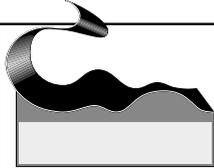
THE FAULKNER CUP

THE CLUB'S PREMIER AWARD



THE STRANGFORD CUP

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE BEST CRUISE



THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

FOR THE BEST OPEN SEA PASSAGE
WITH PORT TO PORT AT LEAST
1,000 MILES



THE FORTNIGHT CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE UNDERTAKEN
IN A MAXIMUM OF 16 DAYS



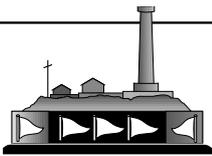
THE ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

FOR THE BEST CIRCUMNAVIGATION
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
NAVIGATIONAL AND PILOTAGE CONTENT



THE FINGAL CUP

AWARDED ENTIRELY AT THE
ADJUDICATOR'S OWN DISCRETION
FOR THE LOG WHICH APPEALED
TO HIM MOST



THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

FOR A CRUISE WHICH INVOLVES AN
EXCEPTIONAL FEAT OF NAVIGATION
AND/OR SEAMANSHIP



THE WYBRANTS CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE IN
SCOTTISH WATERS



THE WILD GOOSE CUP

AT THE ADJUDICATOR'S DISCRETION
FOR A LOG OF LITERARY MERIT



THE MARIE TROPHY

FOR THE BEST CRUISE FOR A
YACHT UNDER 30' LOA



THE PERRY GREER BOWL

FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG



THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

FOR THE BEST CRUISE
IN IRISH WATERS



THE JOHN B KEARNEY CUP

FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
TO IRISH SAILING



THE WRIGHT SALVER

AWARDED BY THE
NORTHERN COMMITTEE



THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP

AWARDED BY THE
SOUTHERN COMMITTEE



THE DONEGAN MEMORIAL CUP

AWARDED BY THE
EASTERN COMMITTEE



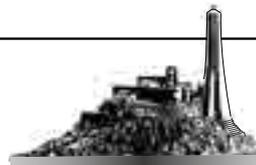
THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

AWARDED BY THE
WESTERN COMMITTEE



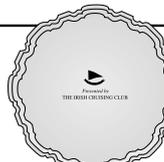
THE GULL SALVER

FOR THE HIGHEST PLACED IRISH YACHT
IN THE RORC FASTNET RACE



THE FASTNET AWARD

FOR AN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
IN SAILING BY A PERSON OR PERSONS
FROM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD



THE DUNN'S DITTY SALVER

AWARDED FOR THE BEST
DUNN'S DITTY SUBMITTED