



IRISH CRUISING CLUB 2016 ANNUAL

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Front Cover: the peace of Annabel J in a tranquil anchorage at sunset. Photo: Máire Breathnach

Back Cover: *Shelduck* in Red Bay, Labrador. Photo: Neil Hegarty

Frontispiece: From Cap Heogh looking over *Séafra* at anchor, Sandbach Halvo, East Greenland. Photo: Brian Black

Submissions for the 2017 Annual

To reach the Honorary Editor, Máire Breathnach, 1 Castle Keep, Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Email: annual@irishcruisingclub.com or deise@criostal.com Tel. 00 44 1590 678770, Mob. 00 353 87 6956226, by

Friday 19th October 2017. Logs received after that date will not be considered for an award and may not be included

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 or use Dropbox or similar. 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 indent paragraphs. 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, 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.

ISSN No. 0791-6132

Irish Cruising Club Annual 2015



From Cap Heogh looking over *Séafra* at anchor in Sandbach Halvo, East Greenland. Photo: Brian Black

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Honorary Secretary's Report 2016

2016 was another very busy year for our Club.

The Election Committee took place on January 15th in the Royal Irish Yacht Club and 24 new members were elected for 2016. This brought the total membership for the Club to 531, excluding honorary members.

Regrettably, the deaths of 7 members took place during the year, including three of the Club's longest standing members: former Commodore Joe Fitzgerald, a member since 1944; Michael D'Alton and Dr. Raymond Fielding, who were both elected in 1956.

The Annual General Meeting was held on February 19th in Howth Yacht Club, with 106 members in attendance and apologies from a further 59. The Commodore in his report reviewed the highlights of 2015 and thanked outgoing Committee members Tom Foote and Robert Fowler and Flag Officers Dan Cross and Stanton Adair for their contribution and support over the many years they were on the Committee. Three new committee members were elected, John Banim, (West), Grainne Fitzgerald (East) and Bruce Fennell (South).

The Honorary Treasurer reported that the Club accounts were in a healthy position, with reserves of €227,387 at the end of September 2015.

Immediately after the AGM, Hilary Keatinge presented the excellent review of the logs that she adjudicated and the Commodore thanked Hilary for taking on the task of award adjudicator. He also thanked Ann Woulfe-Flanagan for managing the various awards and ensuring that they are returned on time to be awarded to new recipients.

Publications continue to be a major activity of the club and in March the new edition of the South and West Sailing Direction was published. A copy was sent to every member following a decision to do this for each new edition of either of the books. This is an excellent publication and our thanks go to Norman and Geraldine Kean, who keep the Sailing Directions updated through their extensive research and writing.

The Annual Dinner, which was organised by Robert and Rose Michael, was held in the Grand Hotel in Malahide. As usual, it was a lively affair with a wide range of activities over the weekend to ensure that everyone's interests were catered for. The dinner was attended by 233 members and friends.

The main event for 2016 was a joint rally with the Clyde Cruising Club to Scotland, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Even though it did rain a lot during the week, this in no way diminished the fun and on the bright side, the rain kept the midges at bay. The event was well attended by 22 ICC boats and crews, joining the 12 boats from Scotland.

The regions ran a very busy programme of events both on the water and onshore. The North and East regions held a joint rally at Drogheda over the June bank holiday weekend. The Harbour Authority made us most welcome, as they were very happy to promote Drogheda as a destination for visiting yachts. The weather for the weekend was excellent and, following a drinks reception on the Commodore's boat, we had a great evening in the Westcourt Hotel on Saturday. We were then treated to an excellent sail home on the Sunday. Unfortunately, the weather gods conspired against the Western Group and their Spring Rally to Inishbofin was cancelled.

In September, there was a rally to Ardglass, with Dinner in the local Golf Club, while the Eastern Region headed to Dublin Port, and an excellent Dinner on the historic MV *Cill Áirne*. Owing to unfavourable weather, the Southern region abandoned their plans for an Autumn rally and opted instead for dinner in Royal Cork Yacht Club

Onshore activities continued during the year with a number of regional lunches. It is encouraging to see that members have started to attend lunches in other regions. At the end of October, 94 people attended the East Region lunch, with 18 members attending from the North and 4 members from the West. A further lunch is planned for November in the North and it is expected that about 20 members from the East Region will take advantage of free travel and attend the lunch in the Reform Club.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and another great sailing year in 2017.

Alan Markey
Honorary Secretary

Membership Changes 2016

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED JANUARY 2016

Paul Taylor (re-elected) (S)	Barbara Fennell (S)
John Wolfe (re-elected) (E)	Terry Giles (E)
Michael Cotter (E)	James Houston (E)
Desmond Brown (N)	Judy Houston (E)
Julie Chambers (N)	Joseph K Lane (S)
Anne Craig (E)	John E McAleer (S)
Jenny Crebbin (E)	Jean Mitton (E)
Malcolm Crichton (N)	Clare Morrissey (S)
Brian T Cronin (S), resident in Spain	Fiona Newport (E)
Michael R Dwyer (S)	Paul Newport (E)
Tom Dwyer (S)	Meta Tucker (S)
Bill Walsh (E)	

DECEASED MEMBERS IN 2016

Raymond Fielding, Jennifer Guinness, Michael d'Alton, Robert Barr, Joe Fitzgerald, Ian Wylie, Paul Clandillon. In addition, Derek Luke, one of our longest standing members, died in 2014

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 2016-2017

Commodore:	Peter Killen (East)	Year 3
Vice Commodore:	Peter Fernie (West)	Year 1
Rear Commodore:	Derek White (North)	Year 1
Rear Commodore:	Richard Cudmore (South)	Year 1
Hon. Treasurer:	Robert Barker	Year 4
Hon. Secretary:	Alan Markey	Year 2

North	South	East	West
Graham Chambers yr 6	Bruce Fennell yr 1	Tom Fitzpatrick yr 4	David Beattie yr 2
Lynn Johnston yr 4	Tom Kirby yr 4	Grainne Fitzgerald yr 7	John O'Donnell yr 4
Tony Weston yr 5	Philip McAuliffe yr 4	Robert Michael yr 2	John Banim yr 1
Peter Mullan yr 2	Lonan Lardner yr 2	Richard Lovegrove yr 6	

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

NON-COMMITTEE ROLES

Editor Sailing Directions: Norman Kean	Club Accessories: Cliff Hilliard
Editor Newsletter: Peter Fernie	Club Trophies: Ann Woulfe-Flanagan
Editor Annual, retiring: Ed Wheeler	Distribution of Annual: Stanton Adair
Editor Annual, incoming: Máire Breathnach	Archives: Barbara McHenry
Treasurer- Subscriptions: Tony Weston	Hon. Admissions Officer: Richard Lovegrove

Challenge Cup Awards

Cormac McHenry

Having filled most of the Clubs formal positions over many years and having settled comfortably into retirement, I was asked by the Commodore to adjudicate on the logs for the 2016 Annual. I was delighted to be still considered to be sufficiently *compos mentis* to fill the role. As the months went on I realised that there was a lot more involved than just reading the logs at my leisure. I would have to make “decisions”. But I consoled myself that there was no appeal mechanism and apart from “blaming” the Commodore for his choice, there was nothing the members could do!

Ed Wheeler got in touch and after a brief discussion realised that he would have to provide me with extensive support, explaining in words of one syllable what a “Drop Box” is and how it would get the logs to me as they arrived. Commodore you really need to apologise to Ed for inflicting such an out of date adjudicator on him.

Twenty-five logs presented for the Awards, mostly covering the usual area around the British Isles and adjacent Continent.



THE FAULKNER CUP

One log stands out. It covers the last year of a five year cruise of 25,000 miles in the Pacific starting from a home port of Victoria in Western Canada, down to Mexico and Central America and back home. The homeward leg was 7,858NM covered in just under nine months. Many problems were experienced during the cruise, including shortage of battery power (in spite of a new solar panel layout installed before they set out), rigging failures and minor tussles with bureaucracy in some of the many countries checked into on their way home. But they coped with them all and the changes of crew were planned, not forced! This log qualified for many of the Challenge Cup Awards but I have no hesitation in awarding **Daragh Nagle** in *Chantey V*, a new member since 2015 with the Club's Premier Award, the Faulkner Cup.

PERRY GREER BOWL

For this most unusual First Log I also award **Daragh Nangle's** log the Perry Greer Bowl.

THE STRANGFORD CUP

The Strangford Cup for an alternative Best Cruise goes to **Seamus O'Connor** for his cruise in his new HR42e *Sli Eile* from Lagos out to the Azores, with up to date detail of almost all the islands gleaned over the three weeks of the cruise spent there. The cruise concluded with another 1,000 mile run back to Spain to leave his boat positioned for the 2017 Galicia cruise.

THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

The Atlantic Trophy goes to **Neil Hegarty** for his voyage in returning *Shelduck* home after eight years away. He started from Maine, then went around Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, finally choosing Lewisporte as the departure port for the Transatlantic Crossing. In addition to Anne Kenny there were two younger people on board. Shortly after leaving they encountered the F8 winds which had been forecast. All sat out the gale down below, continued under storm jib and tied up in Baltimore after over 2,000 miles. His routing and weather comments showed the care with which this voyage was prepared.

THE FORTNIGHT CUP

I award the Fortnight Cup to **Adrian and Maeve Bell** in *Oisin Ban* who changed their original cruise plans, hoping to avoid the rains which might fall in Scotland and instead returned to the Baltic. They sailed through the canals rather than round the coast and provided much detail of the numerous locks encountered by them, the restrictions on Mast Height etc. With their previous experience of Sweden and of other canals they felt “nothing can go wrong”, a phrase often used before the inevitable crunch! On arriving home after their cruise and hearing that three weeks of unrelenting rain had passed while they were away they were delighted at how well their changed cruise plans had worked.

THE ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

The Round Ireland Navigation Cup I award to **Donal Walsh** who after many years of extensive sailing of *Lady Kate* replaced her with a bigger aluminium hulled Ovni, named her *Lady Belle* and in this her first season sailed round Ireland and visited St Kilda and the Scilly Isles. Considerable use was made of an old wet suit both in clearing a large net they had picked up and removing a crop of barnacles on the hull which the previous owner had assured Donal was perfectly clean. During his cruise he visited 12 harbours which were new to him. Apart from the net and other diving jobs, a trip up the mast to fix the anemometer included the dictum that a sharp knife be carried at all times.

THE FINGAL CUP

The Fingal Cup goes to **Peter Fernie** in *Mystic* for a well written log of a short cruise around Ireland achieved in spite of attempts by “Murphy” to cause disruption with a few visits. He was, Peter wrote, vanquished several times. A warning that while stocks of whiskey appeared to be available round the coast, care needs to be taken to avoid letting the Gin run out. (Not clear from the log how many bottles were required for the cruise). “Murphy” also ensured the fresh water hose was just too short, but was not successful in snaring them in Teelin Harbour where locals arrived just in time to free them from the cat’s cradle he had woven around their mooring line. Finally an excellent sail down the Irish Sea into Howth and eventually, with increasingly poor weather they weathered the Mizen and returned to their home port after what they felt had been a most enjoyable cruise of 1,228 miles.

THE WYBRANTS CUP

The Wybrants Cup is awarded to **Robin and Denise Wright** in *Geronimo*. A visit to Derry for the start of a leg of the Clipper Race was slightly delayed by a pot buoy attaching itself to their prop. With the water cold for the clearing operation, they then headed for the Sound of Harris. A weather window opened up so St Kilda was on. They were one of a few ICC yachts to make St Kilda this season, all reported a derelict town, abandoned since the base there was closed down. Their cruise extended from early July to the end of August with St Kilda almost a distraction. They met many cruising friends and conveyed a newly chosen bride’s dress safely home in time for the ceremony. This was a fully relaxed cruise which coped with the difficulties which are part of the cruising life.

THE WILD GOOSE CUP

Brian Black has written a log in such a smooth and unassuming style that, while detailing the difficulties and dangers of cruising such difficulties, they may almost be shrugged off. That is not the intention of this log, written so well that I award it the Wild Goose Cup as a log of Literary Merit. He was “just heading” north with a first stop in the Outer Hebrides, where anchorages abound to the Faroes then to Iceland. Just like that! He noted that the trend of ice melt continues its remorseless course. Careful attention to Grib charts enabled *Séafra* to be safely tied up when major Atlantic blows came in. His style of writing might suggest to the unwary that a cruise of 3,500NM allegedly in a boat unprepared for the Arctic was just a doddle. This is another of Brian’s voyages presented in his understated way.

THE MARIE TROPHY

The Marie Trophy goes to **Conor O’Byrne** for his cruise in *Calico Jack* southwest from Galway, calling at Valentia Island, Portmagee, Lawrence Cove, Dingle etc. This was a leisurely cruise well logged by a relatively new member (2013) and involving family (as shown in the accompanying photographs). One of the advantages of such leisurely cruises is that there are many opportunities for crew changes and, of course, assessment of the hostelries for the benefit of members who plan to cruise our beautiful coast in future.

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

The Glengarriff Trophy is awarded to **Máire Breathnach**, not for confirming that our diesel engines do not run on a mixture of orange and tomato juice, but for the satisfaction she and her husband expressed in this log of preparing, refitting and managing their new 55 foot steel boat. Handling such a vessel, displacing 38 tons, 66 ft overall, particularly when the engine objected to the orange juice at a critical moment, required cool heads. After an extensive refit, a number of short cruises should be undertaken before setting out on anything ambitious. All in all their three month cruise Waterford to Waterford left them very satisfied that as a couple they could handle and sail their new purchase, *Annabel J*.

Club Awards 2016

THE JOHN B. KEARNEY CUP: Not awarded this year.

THE WRIGHT SALVER: Awarded by the Northern Committee to Ed Wheeler for his exceptional contribution to ICC Publications and production of a very professional Irish Cruising Club Annual. Ed has been Honorary Editor since 2013 and Chairman of ICC publications for ten years. (*I did not write thised*)

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY: Awarded by the Western Committee to **David Whitehead** for his continued cruising enthusiasm, including a cruise to Scotland and a circumnavigation of Ireland this year in the face of a challenging medical history.

THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP: Awarded by the Southern Committee to **Neil Hegarty**. Last August Neil sailed his 34' Dufour, *Shelduck*, from Newfoundland to Baltimore, a passage that took 16 days and during which he experienced two severe gales.

THE DONEGAN MEMORIAL TROPHY: Awarded by the Eastern Committee to **Ian French**. Ian comes from a well known DunLaoghaire sailing family. He had a very successful racing career and now owns *Teal*, a Jeanneau Sun 10.7m, which he has cruised extensively.

Eight years ago, Ian established a branch of Sailability Ireland, the National sailing organisation for people with physical and sensory disabilities, which is based in the Dun Laoghaire yacht clubs, and he has actively run this group ever since. He arranged for the clubs to acquire Hanse 303 dinghies, which are designed and built specifically for use by disabled sailors and more recently he organised the acquisition of two International 2.4 metre single-handed keel boats which have brought the achievements of the group to a different level. Although he is based in Dun Laoghaire, and Sailability Dun Laoghaire now has more than 25 active participants between the ages of 8 and 17, his influence in the field of disabled sailing extends throughout the country and Ian is to be found working and helping at every sailing event at which disabled sailors are competing.

THE DUNN'S DITTY SALVER: Awarded by the Annual Editor to **Dick Lovegrove** for his amusing account of barge cruising on the Thames.

THE FASTNET TROPHY: The Fastnet Trophy is awarded to a person or persons inside or outside the Club for outstanding achievements in sailing anywhere in the world. This year, it has been awarded to **Nikolai Litau** for his achievement in skippering *Northabout* in a complete circumpolar transit in one season.

Editor's Remarks

Old Editor's valedictory comments:

This year's Annual has been a joint production. The logs and Dunn's Ditties were sent to me and I forwarded them to Máire Breathnach, the incoming Editor, who read and edited them. Máire and I then worked together on the typesetting and layout, so that she could learn on the job, so to speak. Next year and thereafter, she will be the sole Editor. I am immensely grateful to her for taking on this task, which I am certain she will carry out with great energy and efficiency. As usual, John Clementson has taken the maps and other route information and turned them into standardised, easily-understood track charts where appropriate. He has agreed to continue doing this in the future and we are both most grateful to him.

In welcoming Máire to the role of Hon. Editor, I would appeal once again to people submitting logs and ditties to follow the guidelines on the inside cover of this Annual. If you do, it will make her job very much easier and reduce the total time required to produce the Annual. Since the final submission date is the end of the third week of October and the turn-round in the printing and proofing process is nearly four weeks as a rule, the time-frame for the whole project is very tight if the Annual is to be in members' hands before Christmas. It would help very much if members could have their logs proof-read by a literate friend or family member before submission.

Finally, I have enjoyed the challenge of preparing the Annual and I would like to express my thanks to everyone who has submitted material for it and to all who have helped me by proof-reading and in many other ways.

Incoming Editor's remarks:

I have been a member of the Irish Cruising Club since 1997 and have always enjoyed reading fellow members' logs. It is therefore a great privilege to take on the role of editor. I am sure everyone will agree that Ed Wheeler has produced annuals of the highest quality over the last few years. He will be a hard act to follow. Nevertheless I am very much looking forward to reading members' logs and compiling the 2017 annual. Máire Breathnach

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.

Oisín Bán returns to the Baltic

Adrian & Maeve Bell



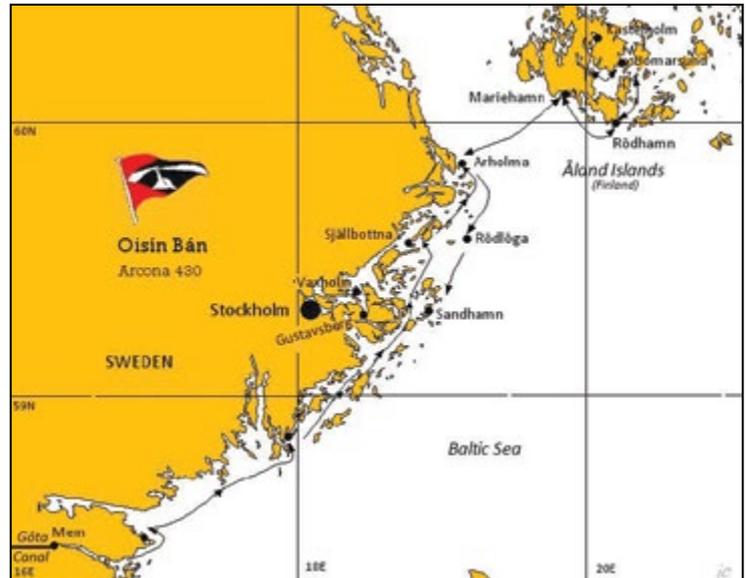
During last winter we had a change of heart. It wasn't just the prospect of rain in Scotland although that had something to do with it. So while we had sailed our Arcona 430, *Oisín Bán*, from the Baltic to Kungshamn on the west coast of Sweden in August 2015 with the intention of returning home this year to join the rally to the Hebrides, by springtime we had decided to 'reverse route' in electronic navigation parlance and return to the Baltic. This time however, rather than sail around the coast, we would traverse the Göta Canal.

On Monday 4th July we mustered in Kungshamn with Brenda Branigan and Brian and Anne Craig (all ICC), checked out the boat, visited the supermarket for dry stores and the System Bolaget for liquid refreshment before heading south in the late afternoon. A less-than-peaceful night anchored off the marine research station at Fiskebäckskil meant we were disinclined to tackle a 50 mile beat in fresh conditions to Gothenburg; instead we enjoyed motor-sailing through the narrow leads and channels of the rocky west coast archipelago with its traditional colourful fishing villages, now mostly holiday homes, and a plethora of historic navigation marks.

The Langedrag marina at the mouth of the estuary was convenient for an overnight stop followed by an early start on day two towards the centre of Gothenburg city; here we encountered the Gotaalvbrun road bridge and then a railway bridge before entering the Trollhatten Canal. The road bridge has a clearance of 18m, too low to accommodate *Oisín Bán's* 21.5m mast. Imagine the sense of power when, after one short call on the VHF, the traffic on the main artery of the city was halted and the massive arms lifted just for us.

The Route

We had been referring to the entire route as the Göta Canal but, to get from one side of Sweden to the other, there are actually two canals, the Trollhatten which is a major commercial waterway and the much smaller, shallower Göta, two major lakes - the Vänern which is the largest lake in the EU and the thin finger-like Vättern - and at least three smaller lakes. There are 64 locks, several railway bridges, and numerous road bridges, occasionally with a clearance of 22m but many at ground level, some of which lifted while others retracted or swung to one side or in one case went up and down vertically between two towers. Most were controlled remotely from a lock situated some miles away. Not only was our mast at almost maximum height but our keel at 2.3m was not too far off maximum depth. Given the short recreational season, the Göta Canal is mostly staffed by college students who control the lock gates but give no other help. We were



Anne and Brian in the Trollhatten Canal

sanguine; we were five up, had lots of experience in the Caledonian Canal and, in Brian and Anne's case, the Shannon. What could go wrong?

The first lock as we headed north looked like a massive cavern, huge and so deep that the warps had to be shifted three times between the bottom and the top of the lock. Although a voice answered on the VHF, we never saw a lock-keeper and, from their vantage point high up above us, we must have resembled a beetle in a bath. The first night in the canal was spent at Lilla Edet and the second in the marina at Vänersborg just short of the entrance to Lake Vänern. A half day sail took us to a picturesque anchorage in Lackö Slott below a romantic castle. A further half day brought us to Sjötorp on the eastern side of the lake. Entering the canal the brisk westerly wind which had given us a romping sail across the lake was now directly astern making life difficult (think windage given 21.5m of mast plus rigging) as we had to jill about waiting for a malfunctioning bridge to open. By now well behind normal operating hours, we approached our over-night stop of Lyrestad to find the canal occupied by the back-markers in the swimming stage of a local triathlon. It brought to mind the Mock Turtle's song: "Will you walk a little faster?" said the whiting to the snail'.

Töreboda was our destination the following day as, sadly, Brenda had to leave to get to Stockholm before flying home to Dublin. Having got some local advice,

it seemed the best plan was to take a taxi to the next town up the railway line where she could catch a direct train and avoid the need for a time-consuming change. We waved her off on a rather damp Monday morning and put our minds to completing the course in time to explore some of the Stockholm archipelago.

Another two days took us first to Karlsborg at the entrance to Lake Vättern and then across the lake to Motola and into the longest, most rural section of canal where the gently rolling countryside was dotted with crimson wooden farm buildings, fields of ripening crops spread themselves up to the wooded ridges, and cattle shaded themselves along the tree-lined banks.

An incident –packed day

The tranquillity of the countryside lulled us into thinking it would be a doddle. But early on Thursday morning the young lock keeper warned us that the *Juno* was approaching from the opposite direction and that we must keep out of her way as, due to her depth, she had to occupy the middle of the channel. Having been built in 1874, the *Juno* is the world’s oldest registered ship with passenger accommodation; she runs posh excursions between Stockholm and Gothenburg which cost about £1200 for the four day trip. The size of this grand old lady and her sister ship, the *Wilhelm Tham* which was built some years later in 1912, pushes the limits of the Canal; each ship fills a lock with mere inches to spare and the official depth of the Canal at 2.7m is only maintained by them acting as surrogate dredgers.



Not much room to pass



Complex grounding signals in operation to comply with Swedish regulations

This raised the interesting question of how exactly both the *Juno* and *Oisín Bán* would fit in the same small, relatively shallow stretch of water. Adrian started to practice keeping well to the starboard side. At first all was well. We gained in confidence as the depth sounder continued to show about 0.2 under our keel. Then without warning there was a gentle thud. Hard astern. Nothing happened. Next the spinnaker pole was deployed as a barge pole with the guys heaving and the girls hanging out over the side. Lots of revs but still no movement. The *Juno* hove into view, there were shouted explanations to her bridge high above us, and she slowly edged past churning the bottom into a brown slurry. Once she was past, the dinghy was inflated and Adrian and Brian motored out to lay the kedge attached to the longest warp well astern in the middle of the Canal. A combination of winch grinding and engine eventually extracted us from what we came to the conclusion was a protective mound over an underwater cable.

By midday we were jilling around again waiting with several other craft for a small bridge to open at Vanneberga when the lock keeper announced that the *Wilhelm Tham* was approaching. Crikey, both in one day! He gave instructions for all of us to tie alongside the waiting pontoon to make room for her to pass. We almost made it but squelched softly to a halt a couple of metres short. There was nowhere else to go: time for some creativity. Hoisting our anchor ball and three black circular table mats taped to the boat hook, we concocted the official signal to show we were aground. The impasse was solved by the master of the *Whelm Tham* finding just enough room to halt below the bridge while the yachts and motorboats crept past. It was a relief to get tied up in Söderköping for the night without any further incidents.

Back in the Baltic

From Söderköping there were just two more locks to negotiate before we reached the basin at Mem; by 12.30 we had exited the sea lock into the Baltic and started to motor northwards, open waters at last after nine days in the canal system. That night we anchored just off the marked channel near Arkösund and enjoyed a beautiful sunset while making plans for the rest of the holiday.

A moderate south westerly wind next morning saw us return to being a yacht; five hours took us Landsort, the skinny peninsula which marks the southern end of the Stockholm archipelago, and a further two to Maskaren, a secluded anchorage near Nynäshamn. It felt good to have covered over 50 miles under sail for a change rather than 10 or 20 under engine.

The large marina in Nynäshamn just north of our anchorage operated an excellent system whereby mooring was free up to 16.00 each day so, paying just 12.50SEK each for a shower, there was lots of time not only to load up in the supermarket and investigate the offerings in the traditional fish smoke-house but also to have lunch on one of the small waterfront cafes.

Having entered the archipelago, the Skärgård, at the southern end, it seemed like a good idea to continue to what is recognised as its northern limit, the island of Arholma. Over the next two warm sunny days we covered about 35 miles a day before anchoring in Österhamn on the eastern side of Arholma. Not only was the jetty absolutely packed with yachts but finding a slot to anchor in this large, well-sheltered bay took a bit of manoeuvring, a



Anchorage at Arholma

reminder that we were in the peak summer holiday period in Sweden when everyone who owns a boat is afloat. But it was well worth it and we had an enjoyable walk ashore to the northern end where we scrambled up to the Båk, the traditional stone tower which since 1768 has served as the day mark for entering the channel to Stockholm.

For several days the weather had been summery and settled, just the right conditions to venture south east into the wilder skerries of the outer skärgård to tie up to a rock for the night. These mini-archipelagos with challenging approaches and often minimal depth are much favoured by the Swedes but, to anyone not brought up locally, they look inhospitable at best and dangerous at worst. We decided on Sundskär, one of the least scary-looking. Our course took us close to Rödlöga, a good place for a lunch stop we thought but to our amazement it was already packed with boats. The hiatus caused us to re-check the forecast only to find the wind was to blow up and shift to the north. We retreated west towards the main archipelago and found a well-sheltered anchorage in Sjöllbotna for the night. Some might think us wimps; we call it prudence!

Two lovely sailing days followed in which we threaded our way south through the islands before berthing at the Arcona yard in Gustavsberg on the evening of Friday 22nd July to fly home the following morning.

Off to the Åland Islands

Just over a week later accompanied by John Taggart (ICC) we flew back to Stockholm where we met Paul Bryans (ICC) who was eager to put his toe in the Baltic for the first time. The plan was to explore the Åland Islands which lie on the edge of the huge archipelago to the west of the Finnish mainland. While small with just 29,000 inhabitants, Åland is full of apparent contradictions: it belongs to Finland but is highly autonomous and its inhabitants speak Swedish. Just the sort of place where four sailors from the north of Ireland could feel at home!

Heading north, we took a couple of days so that Paul could experience the charm of the skärgård on our way to Arholma, the prime spot for a passage across to Åland. Unusually for early August when Baltic weather is mostly very settled, there had been heavy rain and strong winds overnight and, despite waiting until almost midday, it turned out to be one of those bumpy, uncomfortable sails with a cross chop on top of the left-over swell. The fresh breeze from almost dead astern quickly piped up to over 30 knots. Two reefs in the main with part of the jib poled out and skilful helming had us in the sailing club marina at Mariehamn by 17.30. Within an hour of our arrival there was a knock and we were surprised and delighted to see Ralph Sjöholm, a Mariehamn resident and ex-Optimist international measurer whom we had met two years earlier.

That evening, Thursday 4 August, we studied the charts and the forecast and tried to square the circle. We wanted to make a clockwise circumnavigation of the main islands exploring the relatively deserted north coast before entering the Lumparn, an almost landlocked sea somewhat resembling Lough Neagh which is thought to have been caused by a meteorite strike 1000 million years ago, and arriving back in Mariehamn in time for Paul's flight the following Wednesday. It is often said that if you don't like one forecast keep searching till you find one that you do like. But they were all in agreement that persistent strong to gale force winds were going to arrive no later than the start of the week. Reluctantly we decided to skip the northern shores and go south-about to Lumparn.

One of the bonuses of sailing in Swedish waters for the past few seasons is that we are now less fazed by the rarity of unobstructed clear water. Without this practice, the waters round the Åland Islands could result in melt-down as one is confronted with narrow channels, rocks and shallows strewn at random, and lots of ferries, large and small, all of which have right of way. The RCC pilot book warns that if a ferry skipper has the option of hitting a yacht under sail or endangering his passengers by taking avoiding action it doesn't take him long to decide on the lesser of the two evils!

Bomarsund

All such hazards were negotiated safely as we covered the 35 miles to Bomarsund at the northern end of the Lumparn Sea where we found a secluded rush-lined bay in which to anchor for a peaceful night.

Bomarsund was chosen as we wanted to explore the ruins of its huge Russian fort. Having defeated the Swedes in the early 1800s, the Åland Islands became the most western part of the Russian empire and Bomarsund was built to protect an important overland route through Finland to St Petersburg; the strategy assumed any attack would be overland since enemy warships under sail would be unable to approach because of the torturous navigation required. But by 1854 in the midst of the Crimean War, the British navy had steamships and was anxious to attack Russia's northern front. Once French troops arrived on the ground to support the warships, Bomarsund only lasted a matter of days.



At anchor near Bomarsund

After a successful morning's exploration, a few hours sailing brought us across the northern part of the Lumparn and up the wooded estuary towards Kastleholm; the final section leading to the small marina tucked under the towering walls of the castle was too shallow so we anchored in a pool adjacent to one of the tees of the local golf club. Keen golfers, John and Paul headed ashore to suss out the possibility of a game; this didn't work but they eventually returned with various goodies from the pro shop.

Looming black thunder clouds to the north the following morning encouraged us on our way immediately after breakfast. One option was to exit the Lumparn Sea through a minuscule canal at the southern end which led directly to the eastern side of Mariehamn; we knew from friends that the channel leading to the canal was marginal for our depth plus the pilot book warned of cables with a clearance of only 21m. Prudence again prevailed and we retraced our route enjoying an excellent sail southwards in comparatively light airs. As a member of the Royal Institute of Navigation, Paul was astonished by the challenges presented by number, variety and idiosyncrasies of the navigation marks; his camera battery nearly ran out as he clicked away.

Picking up a mooring buoy in Rödhamn, we congratulated ourselves on a good decision. The thunder clouds still lurked to the north but we had a warm sunny afternoon in which to explore the small island which, as a result of its key position south of the main channel leading to Mariehamn, has over the centuries been the site for a pilot station and more recently an early telegraph station. Leaving ourselves only a dozen or so miles to cover on the Monday morning also turned out to have been a good decision as, despite being in sheltered waters, two reefs were required. *Oisín Bán* was securely moored at Mariehamn by lunchtime; during the afternoon and through the following morning almost every berth was filled as yachts piled in for shelter.

There are much worse places to be gale-bound. We passed our time visiting the famous windjammer, the *Pommern*, and the maritime museum, hiring a car to visit the north west part of the island, meeting Ralph, and drinking coffee in a delightful cafe he had shown us. On Wednesday Paul headed for the tiny airport and home while we studied the GRIB files searching for a weather window to enable us to return to Sweden in a degree of comfort.

More exploration of the Skärgård

The forecast promised both a change of direction and some moderation for the following day. We motored down



the channel mid-morning on Thursday and lurked near the entrance for a couple of hours waiting for the angry, grey Baltic seas to flatten out. Patience was rewarded and we enjoyed a fast and relatively comfortable passage back to Arholma.

An invitation to visit our Swedish friends Pelle and Ulla at their home on an island near Vaxholm the following Tuesday dictated our movements around the archipelago for the next couple of days as we visited favourite anchorages interspersed with new discoveries. An unexpected bonus was encountering a classic yacht race as we neared Sandhamn; there was an impressive fleet including the 150 square metre *Beatrice Aurora* and a variety of other long, low, traditional metre boats, their varnished topsides gleaming and not a life-line in sight.

To our surprise and chagrin, the forecast for much of our final week was for strong winds and unsettled weather so, after a very enjoyable evening with our friends, sightseeing in Stockholm for a couple of days looked to be the best option. We were able to secure a sheltered berth in the Wasahamn on the edge of the Djurgården close to the centre of the city and within walking distance of many of the attractions including the exceptional Wasa Museum. By Friday the wind and rain had gone through giving us a final couple of days to cram in some of our favourite routes and anchorages before heading for the yard at Gustavsberg where *Oisín Bán* is over-wintering.

Catching the plane on Sunday we considered that we had been unlucky with the weather but, on arriving home and hearing accounts of three unremitting weeks of rain during the rally to Scotland, the decision to return to the Baltic seemed fortuitous after all.

Brenda Kelliher writes of a delivery trip from Antigua to Annapolis

I was part of the May delivery of *Alpaire*, a Hallberg Rassy 48 sloop (Cummins, Dix, Pearson) from Antigua to Annapolis, Maryland USA, with sundry crew and Dermot Bremner (R. St. G. YC) as skipper.

We stopped at Tortola, Soper's Hole, to allow two European crew to ferry to St Johns USVI using the Visa Waiver system, and returned aboard in the same day. That allowed individuals from Visa Waiver countries 90 days of travelling in and out of the USA without fresh major formalities. Otherwise, entering the USA on a non-commercial craft requires full formal visas.

Delightful balmy passage, *route directe*, few flying fish or birdlife. Unusually calm at the last and we motored for the last 72 hours to the entrance of the Chesapeake Bay and onwards to Annapolis. Normal in May is a mix of major cold fronts crossing the Plains (tornados included), intensifying on reaching the ocean and the Gulf Stream. These storms can be deadly for delivery crews bringing boats north from the Caribbean. A Plan B (divert to Bermuda) is vital, and I have used one several times on this route.

I had a good summer thereafter sailing *Lark*, my Alberg Ensign classic. The last days of Indian summer were bliss-

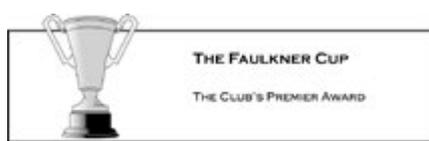


Brenda with a Chesapeake evening (L) and Chesapeake sunset (R)



El Salvador to Canada via Hawaii on *Chantey V*

Daragh Nagle



Ring in the New Year of 2016 was a quiet event for my wife Catherine and me in the Immigration line up at Mexico City Airport. Sure, the dings and chirps of incoming celebratory texts and emails broke the tedium, but most people focussed on shuffling forward and not missing their turn with the Customs man. Our flight from Canada had a plane change here for our final destination of San Salvador. *Chantey V* was on a mooring in the Bahia del Sol, El Salvador, while the 2015 Hurricane season passed by. Santos Marine had taken good care of the boat for the previous seven months with regular bottom cleaning, as well as a cockpit teak sole replacement that had turned out very well.

Boat Woes

Our Perkins 4-108 started immediately but a slight change in the sound after a few minutes turned out to be due to overheating. Upon investigation the raw water pump impeller had failed – not too surprising after 600 service hours and the extended lay-up. The spare impeller installed easily enough but there was still a significant drip of raw water from the shaft seal. Fortunately Bill from the local El Salvador Rally organization had a spare seal and installed it very efficiently. When checking the house batteries I noticed that the normal clearance above them seemed to have disappeared. Further investigation revealed that the floor of the battery compartment had swollen upwards about 3 inches. The mystery was



solved when I discovered that there were steel punchings used as levelling ballast below the floor. These had been infiltrated by spilled battery acid over the years and were now expanding. I removed all this, cleaned it and then reinstalled it, soaking it in fibre glass resin to stabilize it. I found some marine plywood and glassed this over top to reinstate the floor. Finally we were now ready to leave for the trip north to Puerto Madero, Mexico. We were joined by fellow Irishman Turlough Cott, who had flown in from his winter home in Antigua for the passage. Turlough has sailed with us in the past including a trip from Isla Mujeres, Mexico to Havana, Cuba, back in 2014. We might have been ready to go but the Bar crossing was not – the lowish tides in effect combined with some large offshore based swells had created short steep waves on the bar that were impassable. After waiting a couple of days on standby for an opening we gave up and decided to do an inland trip to the old Colonial town of Sucitoto. This is situated on the old Camino Royale trail and was a delightful diversion for a few days stay-

ing at the Los Almendros Hotel.

Back to Mexico

Sure enough the conditions had moderated when we got back to the boat and we were able to set out on the double overnighter to Puerto Madero, Mexico. Winds were light out of the north so it was a motor sail most of the way. *Chantey V*'s systems all worked well after the layup and it was a pleasant reintroduction to life back aboard. 41 hours later found us entering the familiar Marina Chiapas which was much more developed from our previous stay on the trip down the Pacific coast in 2012. The staff here spoke excellent English and helpfully gave us a ride to officialdom in Puerto Madero to complete Immigration formalities. Mexico very generously allows 10 year Temporary Importation of foreign boats, so our permit from 2011 was still valid.

Gulf of Tehuantepec

We began to look at the weather forecasts for the next leg of the trip which involved crossing the notorious Gulf of Tehuantepec. Huatulco is about 250 NM to the North and winds frequently blow in excess of 40 kts for weeks at a time. Over the years I have come to rely on Grib files – certainly for the initial assessment of potential weather win-



dows for passages. The following week-end looked promising and we tentatively planned our transit. We discussed our plan with the locals and were advised to expect a lot of fishing boat traffic that would be leaving at the same time having been penned in for the last week or so. Turlough became ill and was unable to stay on for the passage. It turned out to be an excellent crossing allowing us to sail directly on the rhumb line and avoid the prudent but tedious “one foot on the shore” route that most sailors use. We were surprised out of the blue on the second day to be approached by 3 rough looking fishermen in a small panga looking for water. This is not uncommon except that we were 80 miles offshore in all directions. The concern is that it might be a ruse often used by pirates to assess a boat for potential robbery. It turned out that they were quite sincere and we were happy to give them our lunch and a few beers along with a few gallons of water, which they gratefully accepted. We arrived at Marina Chacue, Huatulco in the early morning with a total of 48 hours for the passage.

Huatulco is a very enjoyable Mexican town and attracts both international and Mexican tourists. The Marina is a Mexican Government operation and quite well maintained with a variety of restaurants and the usual fishing and diving outfits based there. I found a supplier of solar panels there and decided to double my array from 180 to 380 watts. I was always a little underpowered and now that I had decided to sail back to Canada via Hawaii I knew the increase in capacity would be very helpful. It was a little difficult to source the related cables and parts but one week later it was complete. It has made a huge difference and has resulted in much reduced need to run our engine for battery charging.

Our next destination was Acapulco some 250 NM to the north. Once again we could not leave due to weather conditions; in this instance the harbour access was closed by the Coastguard due to the fierce conditions raging on the Gulf of Tehuantepec. After a couple of days we appealed to the authorities for an exemption based on the fact that we were northbound and a following wind in the 30 kts range was well within the capability of ourselves and our boat. They agreed and we set out next morning. It was pretty rough for the first half a day but conditions eased and we had a very peaceful sail arriving at the classy Club de Yates, Acapulco for a total of 50 hours for the passage. This is a reciprocal club to our Royal Victoria Yacht Club and we were granted temporary membership cards along with a free day of moorage. It is very well appointed facility with an excellent restaurant and we really enjoyed a little luxury Mexican style. Acapulco itself is a large city dominated by American tourists and much of their culture has migrated there as well.

Wedding bells in Zihuatanejo

Much refreshed we set out for Zihuatanejo a mere 120 NM to the north. This distance was more our style and we were pleased to drop anchor next day in the beautiful crescent shaped bay. This is our favourite Mexican town and a place we are sure to return to again in the future (by plane of course). It is stunningly picturesque and is an ideal size, large enough to have affordable international flights service yet small enough to have retained that delightful Mexican charm. The beach dinghy landing is very manageable, especially as the boat boys wade out to assist and watch your boat for the day for a modest “*propina*” of a couple of dollars. We are now encountering sailing cruisers from our previous visit and recognized boat names on the morning VHF “net”. So it came that we were invited to the beach wedding of Canadian cruising friends Kirk and Charlene of *SV Freedom Kirkland*.

We carried on up the Mexican coastline with anchorage stops at Los Hades and Enseada Carrizal en route to the lagoon at Barra de Navidad, which is a popular destination for cruisers. The entrance channel here can be tricky owing to silting and irregular, if any, dredging. Once in though, it is a very secure anchorage providing much appreciated relief from the Pacific swells. A highlight here is the daily visits of the French Baker with fresh baguettes and pastries delivered right to the boats. The Lagoon is also well served by the local water taxis, making it easy to stay out late for dinner if desired. This contrasts with the challenges of making beach dinghy landings in the surf that is characteristic of cruising Pacific Mexico.

After a pleasant few days here we sailed on up to Tenecatita and dropped our anchor close to the white sand beach and our Alaskan friends John and Nikki on *SV Seychelles*. This was a reunion after 4 years and there were many stories to exchange over the next week. We did a couple of day trips to the nearby town of La Manzanilla for provisioning and also got a new cooling fan installed on my navigation laptop. We monitored the weather daily in hopes of getting a fair sailing wind to take us to La Cruz in Banderas Bay. The prevailing wind is out of the North and this season was no exception. After a week here we had to settle for wind abatement such that we could at least motor sail the 120 NM distance. We made a pleasant anchor stop at Chamela to wait out the afternoon blow and swam ashore for a visit and dinner. The beach seafood restaurant very kindly gave us a ride back to the boat in their panga afterwards. The engine got a good workout on this passage as we pushed into a strong headwind and seas. We cleared the notorious Cabo Corrientes at dawn, which is the ideal timing to minimise the rough seas here. The course change allowed us sail the rest of the trip and we arrived into the La Cruz Marina just before noon.

More boat woes

I noticed more fluid than normal under the engine bilge which turned out to be diesel fuel. This was traced to a leak at the fuel injection pump and, although the engine was running perfectly, the fix required the pump to be rebuilt. We asked advice on the morning cruisers net and by the end of the day we had located a pump rebuilding shop as well as a diesel mechanic to do the removal and reinstallation. We had planned to spend a week in the Banderas Bay area anyway so the timing of this setback was good at least. La Cruz is another favourite for us with a good selection of restaurants

with live music most nights of the week. We made several day trips into nearby Puerto Vallarta and also to visit friends who live in the surfing town of Sayulita to the north. After 10 days here, it was time to press on to Mazatlan, where our friend Kelly Campbell flew in to spend a week on the boat with us. Once again, the prevailing northerly wind meant a lot of motor sailing to get there. The engine was running fine after the pump rebuild, thank goodness. We stayed at the fancy El Cid Marina and Resort, which is on the north side of Old Mazatlan. We had a great time here, swimming most days while sampling the luxury resort lifestyle. It got a bit noisy as it was Easter week (*Santa Semana*) which is celebrated very enthusiastically all over Mexico. We made a day trip with the boat to Stone Island, a very beautiful white beach on the south side of Mazatlan. We anchored here for a day of swimming and relaxing. We had some great meals in Old Mazatlan and this is another city worthy of a return visit in the future.



El Chepe to Copper Canyon

Sea of Cortez

Our next destination was Topolobampo in the Sea of Cortez, some 220 NM to the north. We got a good sailing wind for a change and averaged over 6 ½ knots all the way. We docked at the Marina Palmira, which is a secure and well run facility. Our plan was to visit the Copper Canyon, which is an all day “El Chepe” train ride into the mountains. The scenery was spectacular as the train wound its way 8,500 ft up the mountain, finally stopping at the frontier-style town of Creel. We stayed one night here and the next day took a bus to the Mirador Hotel, which is perched on the edge of the Copper Canyon itself. We rode the Gondola across the canyon, which was a truly amazing experience. Even though this Canyon is 4 times larger than the Grand Canyon, not many people have even heard of it. It was a long slow trip back on the train but at least there was a dining car serving tolerable food and wine to pass the time after dark.

This was our last stop on the East side of the Sea of Cortez

and we set out the next day for Isla Carmen on the Baja California side. When we arrived we were delighted to see our friends Bill and Michelle on *MV Adagio* and we anchored nearby. We had a lovely day touring the abandoned salt ponds, with the rusting remains of machinery frozen in time. We went snorkelling in the belly of a shipwreck in the bay and marvelled at the sea life making their home in it. We finished the day with a delicious shrimp dinner on board *MV Adagio*. Michelle took a nice picture of us which eventually made the front cover of this summer’s *Moody Compass* magazine!

Next morning we bade adieu to Bill and Michelle and made the short trip to Puerto Escondido. This is another very sheltered bay much in favour with the cruising community. We recognized some familiar names on the morning radio net and soon were visiting with friends Dick and Anne of *SV Full and Bye* whom we had not seen for 4 years. We did a day trip to Loreto, which is a very charming town about 20 miles to the north. We experienced our first rain in 3 months here and stayed an extra day to wait for better weather before heading south. It was good to be able to sail again now that the northerly winds were always favourable. Our next destination was La Paz, with overnight anchor stops at San Evaristo and San Francisco Bay on the way. We buddy-boated with our friends Doug and Lynn on *SV Miramar* for part of the passage and were able to exchange photos of each other’s boats under full sail, with the Sea of Cortez in the background. Making good time, we arrived at the Palmar Boatyard late afternoon Sunday and tied up beside the hoist for a lift out next morning.

While here we had the bottom faired, painted and exchanged our fixed prop for our feathering Kiwi prop in preparation for the upcoming passage to Hawaii. I noticed some play in our cutlass bearing and the folks at Palmar installed a new one very efficiently with the prop shaft still in place. This is a good boatyard and we relaunched 3 days later as scheduled. We moved on to the Marina Palmira and enjoyed a dinner out with Doug and Lynn in La Paz. I had the standing rigging checked and tuned, again to be well prepared for the 3 week passage to Hawaii. La Paz is very popular with the cruising community and here are many resources to support them here. English is very prevalent and it’s easy to see why so many cruisers “swallow the anchor” here and make this their permanent home.

We were now ready to move around the tip of the Baja Peninsula to San José del Cabo, where we planned our provi-



Cathy and Daragh on Chantey V in the Sea of Cortez



sioning and crew change for the 2,500 NM Hawaii trip. We made overnight stops at Los Muertos and Los Frailes along the way and met up with our musical cruiser friends Chris and Liz on *SV Espiritu*. On our last night we had a BBQ on the beach with a sing a long and jam session. The water is perfectly clear here and wonderful for snorkelling.

We found a good slip at the San José del Cabo Marina and were joined by John Duggan ICC and Al Kitchen BCA, both of whom had flown in to Mexico for the voyage to Hawaii. Catherine treated the boys to a fine meal at the Tequila Restaurant and wished us all a “*Buen Viaje*” as she sensibly headed for the airport to Westjet her way back to our home in Victoria, British Columbia. Job one for the new crew was to provision for the 21 (or more?) day trip to Hilo, Hawaii. It took two trips to the supermarket plus side trips to stock up on water. Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was pasted on the water record-keeping book as a grim reminder of what running out looked like. Amazingly we found places to store all the food, with the aft cabin doubling as a “*bodega*” for the fruit and veg. in baskets. We departed heavily laden for a mini shakedown cruise to Cabo san Lucas - and of course the final night out on land for a long time to come. We had an excellent meal at the Brazilian restaurant La Maderia, along with enough wine to sooth any lingering doubts about the voyage at hand. John Duggan takes up the narrative here having generously taken on the additional role of ship’s scribe for the voyage.

Mexico to Hawaii

Daragh and I had not set eyes on each other since leaving school some four and a half decades ago. We had emigrated to opposite ends of the earth but made contact again through the modern miracle of Facebook, when Daragh was already on his epic circumnavigation (almost) of the North American continent, from his base in Victoria, British Columbia. Rash promises were made over a dinner in Portugal, resulting in my joining him in November 2014 for a brisk passage from Bermuda to St Martin, aboard the good ship *Chantey V*. This went so well that, when Daragh mentioned that he was planning a passage from Mexico to Hawaii, en route to Victoria, I eagerly put myself forward.

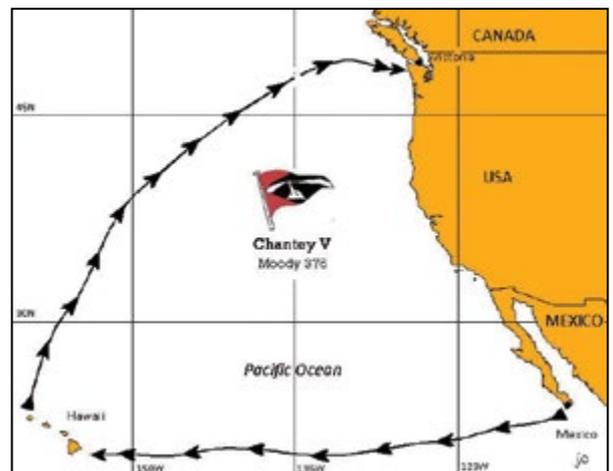
So it was that I found myself in late April 2016 alighting at San José del Cabo airport, on the southern tip of Baja California, the big peninsula that droops down the west coast of Mexico. *Chantey V* was safely moored in the secure hurricane-proof marina, its big and solid pontoons a reproach to the pathetic lollipop sticks that we so often suffer in Europe. Here I met Daragh’s wife Catherine, his valiant crew for much of his ambitious itinerary; Catherine was not staying aboard for the trip to Hawaii and we were joined by Al Kitchen, also from Victoria and a veteran of several lengthy passages in the Pacific. We enjoyed a pleasant if hectic few days, sorting out pre-departure bits and pieces and getting our mind around the challenge of victualling and stowage for a three week passage. The many excellent restaurants in the area were a welcome distraction but, after a final steak dinner in the bustling tourism and game fishing town of Cabo San Lucas, we set off on Saturday 30th April into a surprisingly chilly north westerly force 4-5.

On passage

Progress was slow for the first few days and no-one was feeling particularly chirpy in the lumpy conditions, with the prospect of some 2500 miles still to go. Nonetheless, all meals were prepared, served and eaten – in my own case, thanks to Stugeron, despite its usual side effects of dry mouth, cold and drowsiness. The current, which had been setting us south and even a little east, started to become more cooperative, as did the wind, which settled into something more or less out of the north.

Unaffected by the conditions were the other members of the dramatis personae, Otto the Autopilot, Helga the Hydrovane and Waldo the (Walder) boom brake, all of which were to give sterling service in the coming weeks. Other valuable onboard technology included the ham radio, which repaid Daragh’s attentions with regular and useful weather forecasts, and the InReach Delorme tracker, a great low-cost solution to the challenge of keeping the folks at home informed of progress, while also allowing short messages to be sent and received by satellite.

One piece of kit which had been jettisoned since my previous voyage was the water maker, which was no longer rewarding the expense and effort lavished on it, so strict water rationing was enforced throughout the voyage – two litres per person for personal consumption and hygiene, plus four litres per day for cooking and general use.



It doesn't sound like much but, with extensive use of sea water for washing, boiling spuds etc, we got by surprisingly well, although this opinion may not have been shared by anyone meeting us before we hit the showers in Hawaii.

By Thursday, we passed our first virtual milestone, as the GPS counted us down past 2000 miles to go and the first chinks started to appear in the skipper's hitherto ironbound rules about liquor on board, a celebratory tot following the solitary glass of wine with dinner. To be fair, this austere regime also provided for a beer or cocktail in Captain's Hour at 16.00, accompanied by whatever snacks resulted from inspiration in the galley. Despite the challenging limits on fridge, freezer and general stowage, we enjoyed a great variety of meals and nibbles, taking advantage of the excellent tomatoes, avocados, limes, chillies etc available in Mexico, and we had little repetition throughout the three weeks of the voyage.

Emergency!

By Friday, the wind started to pick up again from the north and we put in two reefs in the main and some rolls in the Genoa, to make life easier for Helga, who was saving a valuable two amps compared with the autopilot, while steering well in the messy 2 metre sea. The wind died down overnight but the seas were still all over the place and in the light of day, we discovered the lower shrouds slack and the babystay hanging on by only a few strands. The mast was wobbling distressingly so we rolled up the Genoa while working out a plan. Daragh was hauled aloft to put a strop around the roots of the lower spreader, from which an old main halyard was led to a block at the stemhead and back to a Genoa winch. This got the mast back in column but the babystay was in sad condition, with signs of corrosion around the upper swage. The rigging is only five years old but, to be fair, has seen many thousands of miles in that time, and it seems that the shorter stays are the most likely to let go, as they have less capacity to absorb shock than the longer ones. Much communication followed over the coming days, to make sure a replacement stay was available to meet us in Hawaii.

The rigging drama was followed by a failure of the boom vang - a reminder of the need for constant checking of everything on a long voyage - but this was quickly sorted out. The skipper's brochure had portrayed weeks on end of sunshine, following seas and steady trade winds but the reality was rather different. Overcast skies were the rule rather than the exception and the wind frequently went around to the north, even with a bit of west, while big weather systems away to the north of us sent vigorous swells to mix with our trade wind wave pattern. We were glad to have the protection of the full enclosure of the Moody's centre cockpit when being swept by 30 knot squalls laden with rain. When we arrived in Hawaii, we met 2 sailors who had been sailing pretty much in parallel with us during our voyage and whose autopilot had failed after 3 days; steering by hand for three weeks in an unprotected cockpit, their relationship had become, let us say, strained and, once again, we gave thanks for the assistance of Helga and Otto, each of whom proved their worth in making our voyage relatively painless.

When the sun did appear, however, we had some glorious days of sailing and at night we had spectacular views of the Milky Way, planets Saturn and Mars, and the Southern Cross wheeling majestically over the southern horizon. We had all this very much to ourselves and we saw astonishingly little sign of life on the voyage - a few dolphins, some pretty white birds which followed us for a week, and some suicidal flying fish thudding into the hull at night. We saw a solitary vessel, a container ship en route to Taiwan, whose captain exchanged pleasantries with us and gave us a useful weather forecast.

Despite limited freezer space, we had enough fresh meat to do us for the voyage and it was fortunate that we were not dependent on fishing for our survival. Days of trailing lures of various shapes and sizes resulted in a solitary Mahi Mahi, which did provide delicious *ceviche* during Captain's Hour and tasty fried fillets for dinner. I was secretly pleased that we didn't catch more, as my conviction that we should be able to confront the reality of catching and killing our food does not stand up very well in practice to the reality of extinguishing the life of a beautiful creature.

Managing battery power became an obsession, especially after discovering a dead cell in one of the batteries, which drastically reduced our storage capacity. Despite attempts to desulphate it, we never got back to full capacity so the engine got more of a workout than we anticipated. Fortunately, the wind kept up to a respectable velocity and we found ourselves running either with main and cruising chute or with poled out Genoa and storm jib. The latter doesn't sound like much but it actually pushed us along a decent rate close to hull speed with a well balanced helm.

Our last full day was one of the best, with bright sunshine, easy seas and a fine 18 knot breeze. Overnight, though, the weather closed in and we got our first sight of Hawaii when only some five miles out. We were under some pressure

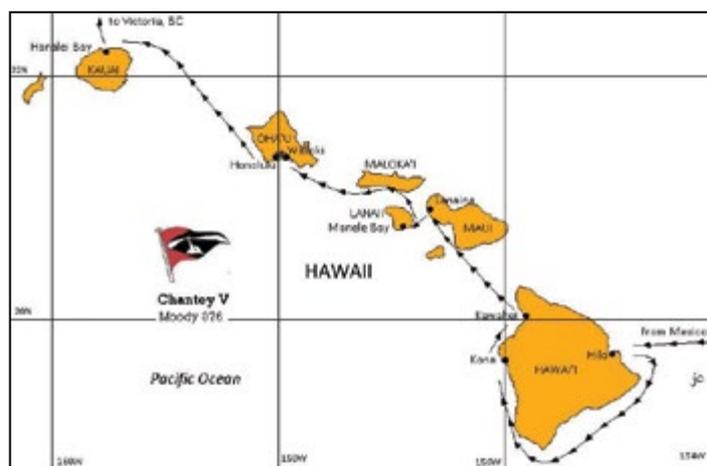


Daragh jury rigs mast

to get a move on, as we had learned that US Customs at Hilo close at 1400 on Saturdays and we didn't fancy spending the weekend on a mooring until Monday morning. All worked out for the best, however, as we squeaked in before the deadline and helpful Agent Foss from Homeland Security picked us up in his paddy wagon, saving us a long trek around the container terminal to get to the Customs Office. Formalities were completed fairly easily and we were soon free to enjoy a long anticipated shower and sample the very good choice of restaurants in the faded tropical charm of Hilo.

The Hawaiian Islands

(Daragh resumes the narrative): We were now stern tied in Radio Bay, Hilo, some 21 days after the departure from Cabo san Lucas, Mexico. I reluctantly bade farewell to John and Al, and prepared the boat for the return of Catherine with my daughter Kim. Radio Bay is a rather rough and ready container port but gave us our first access to these amazing volcanic islands. We visited Volcanoes National Park and the active Kilauea Caldera, which regularly spews steam and molten lava over The Big Island of Hawaii. We also traversed a lava tube, which is actually an enormous long cave that once contained smoldering magma. Very spooky, but also very cool to see! The next day we plunked our shade umbrella down at Hapuna Beach, noted in the guide book as the #1 beach in the USA. We travelled inland afterwards and the sun was setting as we arrived at the top of Mona Kea Observatory, the highest volcanic mountain in the world at 33,000 feet from the ocean floor to the summit! The icy cold air hit us with a blast and apparently it was snowing at the summit a short distance above!



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It was now time to sail north up the leeward coast of Hawaii towards Kona. Unfortunately, we hooked two very large rusty anchors as we lifted ours from the bay and spent the next hour extricating ourselves from the jumble of chain and rode. Next day we made a brief stop at Captain Cook Bay (Kealahou), to pay respects at the monument to the great mariner and take a dip in the ocean before heading

for Kona. At last we arrived at the Honohuhau Harbour which presented a rather impractical Tahiti -moor system of docking at the marina. Kim bravely 'volunteered' to swim out and lasso the forward mooring ball, which had neither pick up line or eye, and hook it over the bow. As a reward we treated her to the Kailua Kona Village Resort Hotel for a pleasant dinner and view over lovely Kona Harbour.



Lahaina dinghy surfing

Trade winds in the channels

A few days later we set off early for Nishimura Bay to get in position to cross the notorious Alenuihaha Channel to



Maui. Unbeknownst to us, a cauldron of trade winds was brewing under the shadow of the Mona Kea volcano. As we sailed north the whitecaps started to break over the seas and suddenly the wind forecast of 15-20 knots climbed to 30-35 knots. With the wind on the nose combined with adverse current we were barely making 2 knots and things were getting ugly quickly. I made a call into the harbour master at Kawaihae container port and we made a quick about face and tucked into the sheltered harbour to wait out the fierce trade wind. We monitored the wind speeds all evening, finally seeing some moderation after midnight. At 01.30 we slipped out in the dark and continued another 12 hours across the channel, with high winds and following seas, sailing all the way to lovely Lahaina.

Marvellous Maui

Lahaina is an old whaling village turned into a tourist Mecca. But it somehow it has retained its mellow ambiance whilst accommodating its many visiting surfers. We got a Lahaina Yacht Club mooring ball on the way in and braved

the fierce surf in our dinghy to tie up near the enormous Banyan tree that sends dappled light over a shady central courtyard. The small Lahaina harbor is very centrally located for touring the town. It was now time to check in with Stacie, Carlos and the friendly folks at the Lahaina Yacht Club. This famous Yacht Club sits right on the edge of the boardwalk overlooking the bay, but due to heavy surge has no slips attached - just a handful of moorings in the bay. The atmosphere inside however is a bustling hive of activity as the kids plunge into the surf and swim out to catch their tiny O'pen BIC sailing dinghies. After a shower we were ready to go explore. First up was Fleetwood's bar and restaurant, named for Mick Fleetwood and his famous band. The music was rockin' and the view from the rooftop patio breathtaking. At dusk the bagpipes play as the sun sets and the music echoes into the evening.

A tour of Maui along the hair-raising winding Hana Highway brought us to Hookipa Bay. Suddenly the rocks began to creep along the beach. It was a pod of 'Honu' turtles, basking in the sun and enjoying the occasional swim in the sea. Kim was on her way homeward so we ended the day at Wailuku's, The Mill House, an old sugar plantation with a magnificent vista of evergreen peaks and the valley beyond, before saying fond farewells at the airport. A few days later sister Teresa, Ted and nephew Sean arrived at Kannipali Beach for some overdue rest and relaxation Hawaiian style.

Lanai and Molokai Islands

Early next morning we set sail for Lanai, a small dormant volcanic island off the coast of Maui. The trade winds were up as the day unfolded, but we entered the tiny, sheltered harbour of Manele Bay and tied to the dock, luckily scoring the only empty slip nearby. We spent the day in Lanai City, a quaint village really, started by the Dole Company. This entire island was, up until recently, an enormous pineapple plantation. The industry eventually could not be supported as the cost of labour rose and relocated to other countries. Mr. Dole gave all his employees the opportunity to retrain in the new tourist industry and the result has been an overwhelming success for Lanai. A short walk from the marina is the scenic Hulopoe surf beach and the very grand Four Seasons Hotel, which we checked out briefly but skipped the \$30 lunch. Surf was definitely 'up' with a wicked undertow so a swim was out of the question. Next stop Molokai.

Molokai is a sleepy, lozenge-shaped island noted for being an isolated Leper colony during the American colonization period. It was a sad chapter in the lives of those individuals who were banished and lived there, including Father Damien, who was only this year canonized as a Hawaiian saint by Pope Francis. One of the most interesting gastronomic finds is the prevalence of SPAM. Hawaii residents consume the most of this canned meat per capita in the entire USA. In fact there is a whole festival called Spam-Jam dedicated to everything SPAM! The passage between these islands can be rather boisterous, with steady winds of 25 knots plus, and big seas as the afternoon trade winds pick up. After a 9 hour ride at 6-7 knots we finally spotted the prominent headland of Diamond Head looming in the distance, and sailed briskly into Mamala Bay, Oahu.

Waikiki on Oahu

The imposing vista of skyscrapers off Waikiki was a welcome sight as we dropped sail and headed into the calm waters of the Ala Wai Boat Harbour. We checked in with the Waikiki Yacht Club and a day later we moved to a quiet slip at the Ala Wai Marina on X Dock with all of Waikiki as a backdrop. We spent a few days on the inevitable boat repairs, laundry, cleaning and provisioning for the new crew, while awaiting the arrival of our pals Michelle and Patrick from Canada. Waikiki is a vast menagerie of deluxe resorts, hotels, restaurants, high-end shopping centres and fine sand beaches, visited by a host of nationalities. Japanese come to tie the knot along with a plethora of Pacific Rim countries. Hawaii is a harmonious blend of many peoples, including the native Hawaiians, Polynesians, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Portuguese and Italians. With Patrick and Michelle alongside, we played tourists and enjoyed drinks poolside, lounging by the lagoon, swimming, and boogie-boarding in the surf at Waikiki Beach. Music abounds everywhere and we even danced on the beach at the famous Duke's Bar to a live band. Our friends stayed at the Ilikai Resort Hotel. Once the grandest resort on Waikiki, it has hosted the likes of Debbie Reynolds, Elvis Presley, and President Kennedy in the 60s, and a myriad of stars such as Michael Jackson and Beyoncé in recent years.

The Ali Wai Marina is enormous and proved to be a good place to catch up on some boat maintenance. Art Nelson stitched up the sails, Rich McCreedy tuned the rigging and local cruisers Dave and Sarah fixed a pesky window leak over our navigation station. Surfing is big here and I learned to ride the waves with a lesson at one of the many beach surfboard rental outfits. A tour of the island of Oahu led us past the incredible scenery of the west shore with soaring, lush mountain peaks and wild blue-green waters with crashing surf beaches. The north shore brought us to the elegant Turtle Bay Resort for luncheon and more dramatic scenery. The week flew by and before long we were saying '*Mahalo*' at the airport and planning for the next crew change and the long journey home. *Chantey V* is in top shape but Hurricane Celia and Darby reminded us who's boss when it came to departure dates.

Hawaii to Canada

Royal Victoria Yacht Club and Turkey Head Sailing Association sailors Gerry Morrison and Paul Jenkins flew in to Honolulu to join *Chantey V* for the voyage to Kauai and onwards to Victoria, BC. We again bid adieu to Catherine, who still prefers to go to weather by jet. We allowed a few days to take in the sights, provision for the three weeks or more voyage and get familiar with the boat. The weather picture was looking uncertain with a succession of tropical lows coming from Mexico every week.

Hurricane season already!

Darby, now diminished to a Tropical Storm, did in fact pass by Waikiki so we delayed departure to Kauai for 2 days. This allowed for a little more socializing at Hawaii and Waikiki Yacht Clubs and a visit to the Sunday music session on the beach at Dukes. A fierce squall hit while we were there and flooded the stage, which had to be abandoned. We sought refuge in the grandeur of the nearby Moana Surf rider Hotel and waited for the torrential downpour to end. The water was up to the doors on cars on the taxi ride home.

Next morning we were thrilled to see our RVYC Vic-Maui competitor *SV Westerly* on the Hawaii Yacht Club docks. We dinghied over for a visit and Lance and Clay gave us a tour and related the highlights of their record breaking race. We finished the provisioning with the fruit and vegetable run and were under way for Kauai by noon. We stopped for fuel at the Ko Olina marina and carried on the overnigher to Hanalei Bay. By following closely behind *TS Darby*, we got a rare south wind to start with. It reverted to the usual easterly trade winds by next morning, which carried us the rest of the way.

Hanalei Bay is as beautiful as advertised and we anchored in the crystal clear water. This was ideal for our next task which was to dive and clean the hull in readiness for the big trip home. Next we dinghied ashore and found dinner at the Calypso Grill in this delightful little town. We went ashore again next morning with plans to rent a car for the day but alas none were available. We resorted to touring the East coast down to Lihue by bus, which turned out to be just as good - and a lot cheaper. We discovered another Dukes bar on the water in Lihue and the Happy Hour was up to their usual high standard complete with a live band. It was a full day and the light was fading as we launched back into the surf from the beach. Next stop....Victoria!

We settled into our 3 on 6 off watch rotation in strong trade-winds and rough seas. By nightfall we had 3 reefs in the main and 50% of the Genoa rolled up and were still exceeding 8 knots at times. Pretty uncomfortable though, so we eased west to improve the ride and be kinder to the boat...we had a long way to go. Three days out our batteries needed recharging so we ran the engine for one watch. This slowed us a lot, as we couldn't run it with an extreme heel angle, and had to bear off.

Gerry and Paul are both excellent sailors with lots of racing experience and kept the sails trimmed optimally at all times. Initially hand steering was in vogue but after a couple of days....we deployed "Helga" our trusty Hydrovane self steering and it did well in the strong wind. "Otto" our Raymarine autopilot did an even better job when the going got really rough in big quartering seas, never missing a beat. Cooking was difficult with the heeling and constant lurching but hunger is a great motivator in the galley. The conditions improved after the first five days and the cuisine improved accordingly. Seven days out we were approaching the Pacific Northern High and we pondered our tactics to get around it. We got great shore support from Connie and Al, our BCA Fleet coordinators, who kept a watchful eye on us the entire trip. We also had success downloading weather and Grib files from Ham radio station KL7EDK in Fairbanks, Alaska as well as NOAA Radiofaxes from Point Reyes, California on our SSB radio. At this point we noticed some stitching failures in our Genoa at the leech. We dropped the sail and the sewing bee was on. The sun had been getting through the UV cover and damaged the thread. Gerry sewed it up handily and 2 hours later it was flying again.

That pesky high

Winds continued to ease and day 8 had us flying our Spinnaker. We gradually curved ENE around the high trying to stay in wind. We got too close once and had to run the engine to hunt for wind, and gave the batteries a much needed boost. We downloaded the latest weather daily and the high kept moving east with us and blocking our path. Going north over the top would add hundreds of miles without any guarantee of conditions being better when we got there; not to mention the potential encounter with a nasty low sweeping down from Alaska.

So we learned to be patient and stayed on our planned route. With only 4 days worth of fuel left we needed to preserve this for crossing the centre of the high when we finally got to it. The high persisted, tracking eastward and finally formed a ridge almost touching Vancouver Island. By now many of the returning Vic-Maui race boats were getting close to us but we did not sight any. We tried our luck fishing in the calm periods without any success. We were probably too far north for tuna and 7 Kts is trolling too fast for salmon. The final week had us changing sails and trim regularly. We set up our storm jib in anticipation of gale force winds off the BC coast.

One morning Paul heard a bolt fall from our boom vang and saved it from going over the side. The need for daily rig inspection on long passages was confirmed once again. Finally the wind dropped completely and we motored for 2 days across the centre of the high. Twelve hours later we were shortening sail down to 3 reefs again along with the storm jib. This proved to be too slow



Chantey V arrives at RVYC

so up went the Genoa again. The gale took a day to transit followed by the wind dying abruptly over the Swiftsure bank and we were motoring again. Next morning we were in thick fog at the Juan de Fuca strait entrance fighting a 2 knot adverse current. By 1100 hours the tide had changed and soon we were motor sailing fast to get to Race Passage before it turned again.

We were delighted to encounter the spectacle of the RVC Wednesday night racing fleet as we sailed into Cadboro Bay, Victoria, where our families and friends were waiting to greet us. We had sailed the 2,800 NM from Hawaii in 20 1/2 days which was better than our most optimistic estimate. The total for the 2016 season from El Salvador to Victoria was 7,858 NM in just under nine months.

This concluded the *Chantey V* Pan American cruise that began here in Victoria on August 1st, 2011 just over 5 years ago. We have sailed close to 25,000 NM, visited over 30 countries and were joined by 33 friends and family along the way. Our Moody 376 has proven to be a fine offshore capable yacht with a good balance of live aboard comfort and sailing speed. Overall it has been a wonderful experience and the best part is the realization that our home in Victoria BC is the best place in all of the Americas.

Jonathan Virden recalls how the Dunn's Ditty came about and writes of *Twayblade* in the West Country

I met Aidan Dunn in St Mary's, Scilly Isles around 1968. He was Hon Secretary of the ICC at that time. I was returning from my first cruise to Brittany from Dún Laoghaire. As far as I can remember, he mooted the idea of the ditties during a long and infernally wet evening. It was an obvious winner. Memories are wonderfully creative but I also think that I was not a member of the ICC then. My election to that August institution was arranged very shortly after my account had been published in the journal.

For 2016, *Twayblade* had a simple year. After launch in May, we joined the RCC at Salcombe for some of their cruise-in-company. After Salcombe and a very rough passage through the seas off Bolt Head, we sailed with them to a pontoon in the Yealm river. The whole of this harbour is now so crowded with moorings that it is very difficult to turn between moored yachts if there is any tide flowing. The next place was Cargreen, our home port, where a splendid barbecue was arranged. We followed the fleet by motor car to Fowey for a wonderful reception at the castle overlooking the estuary and supper at the Fowey Gallants Yacht Club.

Next, we had a week to introduce people to cruising who had not done this before. Dr Jules Ralph, our son-in-law, brought Harry, our grandson aged four years and eight months, for a trial run. The first day was wet. It poured rain all day and we walked along the river bank becoming very wet ourselves. We motored down the Tamar river to Plymouth Sound. For the rest of the week we sailed for short periods of simple sailing to a new destination each night. We only left the bay for a brief visit through thick fog to Newton Ferrers. Beaches, ice cream, pubs and anchorages followed a very happy pattern until we returned to Cargreen to leave *Twayblade* and go home.

After a three week pause at home in Kent, England, spent mostly gardening and visiting friends, we went back to *Twayblade* at Cargreen on 25th July. We spent four days motoring against light winds to Fowey, Falmouth (two nights), and Mousehole and also to St Martins, Scilly Isles. A friend at Cargreen suggested Mousehole which proved to be a very good place to anchor for a night. One had to be wary of an unmarked track through the anchorage claimed, as if personal property, by one rather aggressive fishing boat.

The Scilly Isles were their usual delightful selves. We walked over much of St Martins, St Agnes and Tresco and visited Hughtown on St Marys. The weather was not kind. Although mostly dry the cold wind never stopped. It was F4-5 westnorthwest to northnorthwest and blew almost all the time. This made the anchorages at Hughtown and Tresco very uncomfortable. We celebrated Joy's birthday with an excellent dinner at Juliette's Garden restaurant. From Hughtown we returned to Plymouth stopping at Mousehole and Looe. We used the sails going east and the last day provided a lovely gentle reach, the only day of really good cruising sailing in 2016.

A Voyage to The Whisky Isle

Paul Newport

At the start of the season Fiona and I usually head north for a cruise to Scotland. Last year was wet, windy and cold, so things could only improve for this summer's voyage. We had set as our goal a cruise to Eriskay if the weather was kind to us, and a circuit around the Isle of Skye was included in the plan.

Departure from Howth on the 28th of May in a cool NE breeze had us motor sailing our first leg to Ardglass. With light northerlies forecast for the first of our three weeks, it was essential to keep our fuel tank topped up. *Puffin eile*, our Najad 332, has a relatively small fuel tank at 90 litres, so we took two 20 litre jerry cans on deck. As it was early in the season, the little marina was very quiet, but it was nice to see Fred, who tirelessly keeps the show on the road, come down to greet us. Day two saw more light winds from the north and our destination Glenarm. The diesel was back in action for an easy motor sail. As often happens, we encountered poor visibility crossing Belfast Lough, reducing to 100 metres at times. Listening out on Belfast harbour VHF, with eyes glued to the radar and AIS, ensured that we were kept busy for the remainder of the leg. Arrival into fog bound Glenarm was confirmed by the sound of Sunday bikers blasting down the coast road.

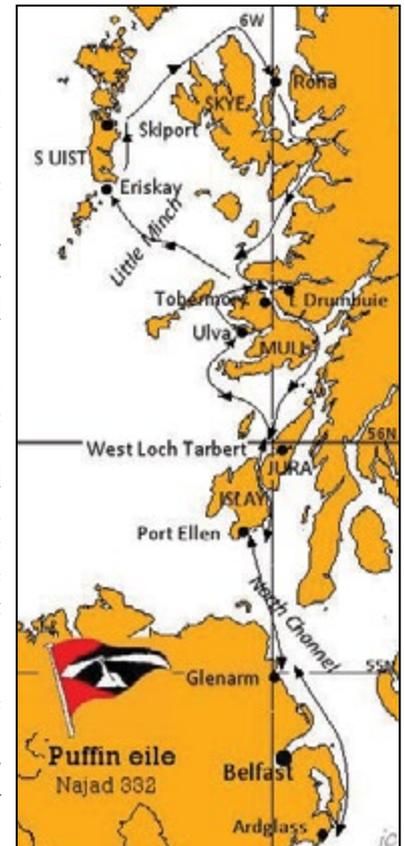


Puffin eile in Acauseid Mhór, Eriskay

Glenarm had no fuel, but the harbourmaster kindly offered a lift to nearby Carnlough and we refilled our jerry cans. Having had a 04.15 departure from Ardglass, we hit the hay early in preparation for the next leg to Port Ellen. Wind at last, a northwesterly force three, gave us about three hours of sailing as we set out towards Islay. We could see a wall of fog stretched from the north coast of Ireland to the Mull of Kintyre and it was not long before the radar and AIS were being monitored yet again for traffic. After crossing the TSS, the fog lifted and Islay appeared out of the gloom. We slowed to let the Calmac ferry pass and scanned the small marina for a free berth. Port Ellen always signifies our arrival in Scotland, the welcoming plume from the distillery stacks and that lovely vista of the traditional white cottages dotted around the harbour say it all. Now the cruise could really begin.

The last day of May, high pressure over Scotland, and the fair weather continued. However the forecast for the outer islands did not look good until the end of the week, so the plan was tweaked to visit Loch Tarbert Jura, then Coll. Departing Port Ellen we flew through The Sound of Islay, reaching 10kts ground speed at times. The wind became quite fresh from the north west, so motor sailing into the headwind was necessary. Loch Tarbert was majestic as always, with the Paps of Jura standing out in the bright sunshine (for a change.) The anchor was dropped just to the SW of Aird Reamhar, on the north side of the Loch, with good shelter from the NW wind. Not long after settling and firing up the barbecue, the wind swung round to the SW, which made for some tricky cooking and a possible move. However the wind-shift was temporary, and we enjoyed a peaceful night in an idyllic anchorage.

The first of June dawned with a forecast NE F4 to 5 increasing F6. A passage to Coll was in the balance. On reaching Iona following an early departure, the seas were building and the thought of motor-sailing all the way to Coll into a freshening wind was not appealing. We decided that a change of tack was required. Over the years we had heard many good reports about Ulva, on the west coast of Mull and this now seemed the perfect time to visit. Good protection from a fresh NE wind made the anchorage at Craigaig Bay a sound option. We were not disappointed; the anchorage is one of the most scenic and peaceful we have ever stayed in. On arrival there were two yachts at anchor, so plenty of space to drop the hook and settle in for a few days of exploration. The next morning we set out for Ulva Ferry, a one hour thirty minute walk from the anchorage, which passes the deserted village of Craigaig, a lovely watermill ruin and the monument dedicated to General Lachlan Mac Quarie - said to be the founder of Australia and born on Ulva. (A great spot by the way for a photograph of this spectacular anchorage). The Boathouse restaurant at Ulva Ferry was doing a roaring trade with day trippers from Mull.





Into the sun: the anchorage at Craigaig Bay, Ulva with Staffa and Bac Mhór (Dutchman's Cap) beyond.

June 3rd, and the weather was now shaping up for a trip to the outer islands, but first a visit to Tobermory for a fuel and provision top up was required. Extracting the anchor from the muddy bottom we were on our way. Again not much wind but we managed a few short sails to relieve the sound of the trusty diesel. A pod of large dolphins joined us off Caliach Point, including what looked like an albino, which was a first for us. The pontoons at Tobermory were full of tales of a dreadful night of rocking and rolling, due to the swell caused by the NE wind. Craigaig had been bliss by comparison.

Following two nights in Tobermory we were ready for another secluded anchorage. At just over 50 nm, our passage to Eriskay was nine hours of motor sailing in very light winds.



Puffin eile in Acarsaid Mhór, Eriskay

Could this really be the west coast of Scotland in early summer? It was sunshine all the way as we nosed into beautiful Acarsaid Mhór, carefully following the directions in the Clyde Cruising Club guide. We had arrived quite close to low water so were concerned about the rock at the second perch (we were soon to discover that one of the yachts in the anchorage had connected with same). The guide put us off anchoring, due to a potentially foul bottom, so reluctantly we secured to one of the two visitor moorings. As it happened quite a few arrivals anchored, so I'm sure it was not an issue. One of the anchored yachts invited us on board for drinks (past commodore of the Highland cruising club) which rounded off a perfect day.

In 1941 the steamship *SS Politician* foundered in the Sound of Eriskay. Amongst her cargo were a quarter of a million bottles of whisky. This was the inspiration for Compton Mackenzie's 'Whisky Galore'. A visit to the island's only pub, the *SS Politician*, is compulsory. A short walk to the village of Haun on the north of the island is rewarded with lovely views of the amazing beaches on the west coast. Azure blue water and white sand give the impression of a Caribbean island. A quick swim confirmed that the water temperature did not match. There is a great little shop at Haun where most essential supplies are at hand, plus pretty good coffee into the bargain. We loved this island. Sadly after two days it was time to move on, and set course for Loch Skipport on South Uist.

June 7th, another windless day in the Outer Hebrides, and more motoring as

our cruise took us the 20nm to The Wizard Pool. Entry to the anchorage requires strict adherence to the CCC guide directions. Arriving at half tide the pool was empty, however we were soon joined by *Mariena* from Strangford. She gleamed in the late evening sun. The pool is beautiful with great holding and well worth a visit.

Once the early morning fog lifted, it was time to extract the anchor from the muddy bottom and ease out of the pool. Destination Loch Bay, Isle of Skye. We last visited Loch Bay twenty five years ago in our old MGB, having had a great meal in the small restaurant at Stein. It was time for a return visit. Once secured to a visitor mooring, we rowed ashore, only to find the restaurant fully booked. Sadly, fish and chips in the pub next door had to suffice. On our way again the next day, more fuel burnt but a



The Wizard Pool, Loch Skipton, South Uist.

nice passage to Rona. Stunning scenery as we passed the northern tip of Skye, the tranquility broken by some low flying Tornado jets pulling up into spectacular steep climbs as they passed the boat. Arriving at Aarseid Mhor on Rona, half tide gave us a good look at the approach hazards and we settled in an area between the two reefs in the NW corner of the anchorage. This lovely natural harbour soon became quite busy, but there was plenty of space for all. The warden was very welcoming, giving us a rundown on all the wildlife to be seen in the area. The lodge has WiFi and local venison available to purchase. With Passage Weather giving more light winds for the following week, this voyage was becoming 'a motor round the Hebrides'.

On the 10th of June *Puffin eile* departed through Caol Rona for the inner passage to Kyleakin and the Skye bridge. The inner sound is an area of intense military underwater testing. A call to Applecross range control confirmed it was safe to transit the area. We had a nice sail down to the bridge, and arrival at the Narrows of Kylerhea had us whizzing through on a fair tide. The first rain in two weeks reduced the visibility, so sadly much of the scenery was missed. We motored out past the southern tip of Skye towards Eigg and Muck, and decided to press on for Loch Drumbuie NE of Tobermory. The tide was in our favour but visibility deteriorated as we approached Ardnamurchan Point, and reduced to about 300 metres. Finally, the entrance to the Loch appeared, and we ghosted into our favoured spot just to the south of the entrance. It was a long day, and a Bruichladdich beckoned. Following a good nights rest it was back to Tobermory, down the sound of Mull and a night at the pontoons in Loch Aline.

On our route home, we had hoped to revisit Oronsay and anchor off the boathouse, but fresh southeasterly winds of 20 to 25 knots would have made this lovely bay untenable, so a course was set from Loch Aline towards Loch Tarbert on Jura. This time the middle Loch looked to have the best shelter, and with the help of the excellent CCC guide, the narrow gap was negotiated and the anchor set in Cairidh Mhor, on the southern shore. Dramatic scenery, great protection, and no down draughts, make the slightly complex pilotage worth the effort to get there.

June 14th. Wind at last. Even though we were homeward bound. A nice sail down the Sound of Islay, wing on wing, and managed to hold the breeze all the way to Port Ellen. The marina was busy, but we managed to secure a berth and enjoyed one last night in Scotland before returning to Irish waters. We left Port Ellen the following morning with some adverse tide, but this ensured we picked up the best of the stream off Rathlin en route to Glenarm. With a combination of sailing and motoring, the passage took seven hours, arriving in time for sundowners.

The next day a northwesterly F4/5 gave us a great run down to Ardglass, with some choppy seas just south of Mew being the only hardship. Howth member Paul McLernon, in company with his father, arrived shortly after us, on board his newly acquired Sadler 26 *Blathin*. Celebratory drinks were called for, Stewart from the Clyde, on his yacht *Beyond* also joined us for a dram or two.

On 17th June, the last day of our cruise, and with another good following wind we had a lovely fast sail home to Howth, the 56nm leg completed in just under 8hrs.(our fastest time to date on this leg). The weather Gods were definitely on our side this summer, and despite the lack of wind we had a wonderful cruise, with most goals achieved. We covered 680nm and burned 190 litres of fuel.

Mullins's Musings, Memories and Mutterings

A Reminiscence by Peter Mullins

It was Mark Twain who said "Never let the truth get in the way of a good story". These days, as a Relief Master on superyachts, I spend a lot of time on the bridge reminiscing about incidents of ICC members past. Crew often ask me what is so amusing as I chuckle to myself and I then regale them with stories. It was their suggestion that I should write them down some day, so here are a few.

I was elected to the Club in 1971, proposed by Dr. Ninian Falkiner and seconded by Dr. Rory O'Hanlon. I was invited to become a member on the strength of a cruise in company to the Lofoten Islands in 1970 on Dr. Ninian's 38 foot Charles Nicholson-designed and Berthon-built sloop *Felise*, and Dr. Rory's S&S-designed Clare Lallow-built 41' sloop *Clarion of Wight*. I was a young and enthusiastic crew member on *Felise* along with Andrew Curtin ICC, the late Michael D'Alton and Stanley Dyke, who were alternating as sailing masters and navigators. Also on board was the late Gerald Fitzgerald, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Alfred Yacht Club.

Although it is now over 46 years ago I remember very clearly several amusing incidents involving both yachts and the crew.



Whitsun Rally in Dunmore East with, from left, P.M., Rory O'Hanlon, Georgina Nixon and John Henry McConnell

Prior to departure Mickey D'Alton comes on board with a splendid battered old Gladstone bag which he referred to as his 'at the ready bag' from which emerged his sextant, tables and an assortment of rusty tools including a hand operated drill, whereupon he set about drilling holes in the chart table to fix some blocks of wood to stop his 'at the ready bag' from sliding off! It was a most successful cruise and we had a crew change arranged in Bodo. Dr. Ninian and the others flew out from the Lofotens and Mickey and I sailed *Felise* over to Bodo. Approaching the dock, Mickey decided to come alongside under sail. I handed the jib and prepared the lines for a mighty throw, because, if you don't know, there is some rise and fall in these parts. *Felise* was quite a heavy boat and not that handy in stays but I managed to get a line ashore which was caught by a friendly Norwegian. *Felise* was making good way and the more I eased out the bow line, the more the friendly Norwegian took up the slack until I was at the bitter end. I can still see and hear Mickey screaming at the top of his voice through

a big wooly beard, at the dockhand. "Surge away damn you, surge away". The Norwegian, not having served in the RNVR during the Second World War, nor probably understanding much English, simply shrugged his shoulders and threw the line back on board, where upon we promptly rammed the trawler ahead of us and came to an abrupt stop.

It was in the Lofoten Islands when *Felise* and *Clarion* were rafted alongside each other in Solvær that Roger Aplin ICC and I witnessed something quite strange and unexpected. As I said both yachts were rafted up with *Felise* wearing the defaced blue of Royal Irish Yacht Club with the Commodore's broad pennant aloft. These were the days when all large yachts in Ireland were British registered. Rory on the other hand would change ensigns as the mood suited him and the mood of the day was the Irish tricolor. A Norwegian looked down at the Irish flag and spat saying "Italian". Roger, jumping to our defense, said "No, no, Ireland" whereupon the Norwegian spat again saying "Ireland". It was just the start of the sectarian violence in the North and Norwegians were and are, I believe, very pro-British and he apparently had not forgotten the 1941 Commando raid in Operation Claymore. Which brings me on to another change I witnessed at this time in Irish sailing.

On our return to Dún Laoghaire I was in The Irish, in what was then The Members Bar, with Dr. Ninian and some members of the committee to witness the lowering of the RIYC defaced blue ensign at sunset for the last time. It had been decided, because of the troubles in the North and an earlier attempt to blow up the flag staff, that it would now be prudent to discontinue the tradition colours. I was elected as a member of the RIYC in the late sixties and again was proposed by Dr. Ninian Falkiner and seconded by Peter Odium. The Royal Irish was then one of the last bastions of male chauvinism. The membership was probably less than 400 and I don't believe in a very sound financial position.



Ninian Falkiner's *Felise* and a Dublin Bay 24

As was the custom in those days, election to the membership was by the Black Ball method and, once elected, it was expected that, as a new member, you attended lunch and introduced yourself to the other lunching members at the round

table. But first I had to go and have made a club reefer jacket. For this one I went to Jack O'Rourke, the tailor. Jack sailed out of Clontarf Yacht and Boat Club, otherwise known as the Yacht and Bottle. These reefer jackets were something akin to a horse blanket and made of heavy serge and it was said by a well know wag that "First prize at a Clontarf Regatta was a Reefer Jacket made by Jack O'Rourke and second prize were two Reefer Jackets made by Jack O'Rourke".

Well, I appeared at the members' table looking a bit like Buttons from a pantomime and introduced myself to the table. The other diners grunted and continued with their conversation not giving this little pipsqueak a second glance nor acknowledging my presence, and I truly wondered what I had let myself in for. The topic of the conversation was the dire financial position of the club and the upcoming AGM where it was proposed to increase the annual subscription. It was hardly surprising that the sub should be increased as lunch at the members table was heavily subsidized in those days and cost just 10/6 old money. That is a little over 50 pence, for which you got, a glass of sherry, either medium or dry, soup, "tick or tin", a main course, with cheese and a glass of club port and coffee to finish. One member of long standing was proposing that "if we let the ladies in as Associate Members, the club would be used more and we would not be in the financial mess we are in now." This was pooh poohed by the rest of the table, whereupon this member said "Well if we don't let the ladies in we will jolly well have to let the Romans in". I kid you not. I just wanted to slide under the table and disappear. Oh how times have changed.

Dr. Ninian was a great sport and one day we were returning from an ICC rally at Lambay Island. Stanley Dyke was helming us home across Dublin Bay and Ninian went to use the head which was just forward of the mast opposite the galley. A member of the Irish called Eustace Dockery was bugging Stanley to allow him to take the helm and give him some instruction as he had never helmed with a wheel before as he owned a Mermaid. There was a good easterly blowing and we were running a bit by the "Reggie" as in Lee. Well poor old Eustace gybes her all standing, the door of the head flies open and Dr. Ninian goes head first into the galley with his long johns around his ankles. Stanley, quite unaware of what was going on, gybes her back and Dr. Ninian disappears back into the head. This happens again by which time Dr. Ninian appears in the companionway puce in the face with rage and tells Eustace he is a fool and Stanley was a bigger one for letting him steer and told me to take the helm and that was the first time for me to steer a vessel with a wheel and I was petrified.

And this takes me nicely on to Mungo Park. Mungo, as many will recall, lived on The Baily and at the time of this story he owned *Vandra*, the Dublin Bay 24. Now the story goes that Mungo kept *Vandra* in Howth and would partake in their Wednesday evening races and then on Thursdays afternoon he would sail her over to Dún Laoghaire and join the other 24's for their DBSC races. Well Mungo invited a client to join him to sail over the bay where they would be joined by the rest of the race crew. Again there was an easterly breeze and Mungo went forward to set the spinnaker. Somehow Mungo got flicked over the side but had the forethought to hang onto the sheet and was being dragged down past the cockpit where he shouts "put the helm down" whereupon the client, who had never sailed before, puts his hands in the air and says 'I am not touching it'.

Mungo could tell a wonderful story. He invited me to sail a lot on *Kitugani* and then on the Chance 37 *Tam O'Shanter* where we represented Ireland and the ICC in the Admirals Cup in 1973 and, if memory serves me correctly, won the Gull Salver as best placed Irish boat. What fun we had in those days prior to professionalism, where we all had our own bunk, sat down to dinner and when we kedged in the channel we all went over the side for a memorable bathe. I can still remember the crew who consisted of Michael Spring-Rice, whose relative was on *Asgard* with Erskine Childers when they ran guns into Howth in 1915. Also on board were John Burke ICC, Billy Lacey ICC and Dr. Gary Tracey.



Mungo Park's *Tam O'Shanter* in 1973

I believe we beat Ted Heath in Morning Cloud, but the pièce de résistance must surely be our contretemps with HMS *Bacchante*. We were sailing hard on the wind for the finishing line off The Squadron and Mungo called ready about as it looked like we would not make the outer end of the line. I saw a puff and a lift coming and called "hold the tack skipper, lift coming you will make the line". HMS *Bacchante* was the guard ship anchored to leeward. We got our lift alright but we heeled over and the top of the mast made contact with the jack staff on the guard ship, which snapped like a carrot and fell by the board, Union Jack and all dangling by the its flag halyard, all in full view of the Squadron. Amazingly enough our mast stayed in her and all it did was bend the windy works somewhat, which was easily fixed. Mungo, who was a member of The Squadron, was convinced he might cause an international incident. With much aplomb he swiftly summoned the Squadron launch and sent over a few bottles of Jameson, one to the captain and one for the Chippy to repair the damage. That evening we all went to a cocktail party in The Squadron attended by HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. I am sure I bent on the same reefer jacket and a pair of the ubiquitous "I've been to Cowes" red trousers. HRH was introduced to Mungo, whose war wound was more pronounced as ever, I noticed. He said "you know some of the old buggers here thought you did that on purpose. How could they think you could possibly do that and not lose your rig? No damage? Luck of the Irish"

Sea Dancer-A gentle and lazy waltz along the East and South Coast

Harry Whelehan

This being our 10th season with *Sea Dancer* we decided not to plan a specific itinerary for our annual cruise, but



rather set out from Howth and pick our way gently towards Mizen Head. As we had about three weeks, we might, if the Gods favoured us, get to Dingle where we could leave the boat, collect her later in the season and so, keep open the possibility of coming home northabout and thereby complete an “unplanned circumnavigation”. Since none of our regular crew was available in June there would just be Liz and myself on board, therefore we would have to “take it handy”. I was anxious to visit as many of the old haunts as possible, and also to call to places not previously visited.

With the 21 days, and an open mind, we left Howth on 2 June at 08.40, and had a cracking sail to Arklow, the wind was from the north east gusting force 6. With the Main and Jib well reefed we reached Arklow in just six hours, and tied up on the recently installed pontoons in the old basin (with shore power and water available). Unfortunately on the passage, just off Wicklow Head, one of the windows in our spray hood blew out, so the afternoon was spent with the palm and

needle stitching it back in place. We were very impressed by the new facility in the basin and it will make Arklow a more agreeable stopping place especially when the planned shore facilities are put in place.

The next morning we left at 07.00, to take the ebb south, the wind having moderated to force 3 but still in the north east. We had another delightful sail arriving in Kilmore Quay at 15.30. Please note that at Carnsore Point we had a few near misses as we weaved our way past length after length of floating ropes attached to lobster pots. There were two boats about a half mile ahead of us, one of which got entangled, but by the time we reached him he had, with the assistance of the accompanying boat sorted himself out. Later as we negotiated the harbour entrance at Kilmore Quay we had to squeeze through the entrance past Ivan Sutton ICC who was taking his beloved *Muscadet* for a canter to the Saltee Islands. That night we resisted the charms of the Silver Fox restaurant and dined aboard.

Next morning at around noon we topped up the fuel at the 24-hour self-service fuel berth (a great addition to this harbour). Our destination was the anchorage at Helvick, north of Mine Head. Our course took well inshore along the



Kilmore Quay can be very crowded

Copper coast which showed itself in all its beauty, with clear sky and a flat sea; we carried a good breeze, though it faded as we approached Helvick Head. The anchorage outside the harbour was calm and inviting. We dropped the anchor and had an idyllic night looking north across the Bay towards Dungarvan. It was far too pleasant on board to even think

of launching the dinghy and rowing ashore, in any event we had some haddock on board which needed eating.



Memorial Garden, Kilmore Quay, Saltees to seaward.

We were now in the vicinity of the famed Cliff House Hotel in Ardmore which has an array of international awards for its restaurant. It would be our wedding anniversary the next day, and since the hotel maintains a number of visitors’ moorings, and further since we had eaten aboard in the previous two nights, we could not pass up the opportunity of a serious gastronomic experience. Next morning we ‘nudged’ our way around Helvick Head and Mine Head into Ardmore Bay and picked up one of the hotel’s moorings. We enjoyed lunch aboard watching the lunching guests on the hotel terrace, as they watched us, envy flowing in both directions. While Ardmore is an exposed anchorage in most conditions, on this occasion it was palpably hospitable so we



Sea Dancer on the hotel mooring, Ardmore Bay

had no qualms about leaving the boat on the mooring and booking accommodation ashore, so that we could properly 'salute' the hotel restaurant and celebrate our wedding anniversary. We enjoyed a spectacularly good meal, and have no difficulty in confirming that the restaurant's strong reputation and many awards are well deserved. Of course we had one of those 'it's a small world moments' when we bumped into some old friends (one a Waterford man whom Liz had met in Armenia), we ended up having to 'tack' on foot along the street to our onshore accommodation.

Next morning we cast off at 10.50 for Kinsale, where we tied up at the Castlepark marina and refuelled. We had a most warm welcome and enjoyed a walk to James Fort, which is every way as impressive as the more visited Charles Fort across the water. We finished our day by having a shower and a pint ashore followed by dinner aboard. Our next target was Courtmacsherry, which I was visiting for the first time, and we were well rewarded, for, as we came into that the bay a basking shark appeared which was, I reckoned, about 20 feet long. We had left Kinsale at 10.30 intending to get over the bar on the rising tide. We had a faster passage than I anticipated and went aground well inside where the bar was supposed to be: when I checked the tides I discovered that I tried to enter just before low water. There was no choice but to launch the dinghy and shoot the kedge. While we waited for the flood, we enjoyed a peaceful lunch 'at the bar' as we tried, by our demeanour, to convey to those watching from the shore that nothing was amiss. Later after we tied up at the pontoon we had a most enjoyable ramble through the village and the walks around this very pretty place and we were showered by very friendly greetings from the villagers who were, in numbers, actively engaged in aggressive 'tidy town' activity.

the lovely family run Courtmacsherry Hotel overlooking the land so we decided to head for Baltimore; I took no chances about going aground on our exit leaving at 10.00. Alas as we approached Glandore Bay the wind went ahead of us, but thankfully dropped off so we motored to Baltimore where we tied up on the pontoon at 15.30. We had a typical night in Baltimore with the usual quota of pints outside Bushes in untypical weather – high temperatures late in the evening and sunshine. Since we were very comfortable on the pontoon we decided to leave the boat there and take the ferry to Cape Clear as I was not sure about the state of the harbour redevelopment on the Island. I thoroughly enjoyed the ferry journey, which took us via the sound between Shark Island and Spanish Island, an intricate piece of pilotage. We had a fine challenging walk along the east side of Cape Clear and around to South Harbour. On our way back to the harbour we came to the pub, where we happened upon a seaweed/sea kale buffet which had been set up by the vegetarian chef from Kinsale. She was preparing (practising) to cater

We paid for our berth at the Pier House pub, as advised by a notice at the pontoon, where we had a pint before going to dinner outdoors in the garden of the



North Harbour, Cape Clear



The Fastnet Rock looms out of the mist

for a group of biodiversity visitors who were coming to the Island later in the week for a conference. Our curiosity got the better of our apprehension, and we nervously subjected ourselves to a most unusual feast which was exciting and delicious. Sea weed and sea kale has been used in all the dishes on offer from butter to mussels to dessert. We suffered only the most desirable after-effects. After lunch the island bus driver agreed to take ourselves and another family on a motoring tour of the parts of the island that we had not visited on our walk, filling us in on historical and current events and features on the island: this tour rounded off a memorable visit to Cape Clear. The harbour development is almost complete and it seems there will be depth and space for a few yachts to tie up when the development has been completed (the ferry out for Baltimore left at 10.30 and the return ferry left the island at 16.30) We stayed the next



Mark, left, and Harry

night in Baltimore to link up with Liz's cousin, her husband and their daughter where we had a very good meal ashore in the pizzeria.

Since Liz had never rounded the Fastnet, we decided to incorporate that into our next leg to Crookhaven. With a benign forecast of light south-easterly winds we headed to sea again motoring south of Cape Clear where we looked into South Harbour briefly. As we headed for the Fastnet, visibility closed in, and the rock which had earlier been clearly visible, disappeared. This added a little drama to the 'rounding' for now, like so many sailors racing from Cowes, we first had to find the dam thing. Our mission was more easily accomplished, on this occasion having earlier established a course by line of sight, and as we approached the Rock we enjoyed the added drama of a school of porpoises to guide us

to, and past the rock. We were delighted with ourselves. However further excitement was imminent, just as we were half way to Crookhaven, the water pump fan belt gave up. The tide was now setting us towards the Mizen. I had to urgently replace the fan belt, during which exercise I managed to shear the alternator bolt which tensions the fan belt. Luckily I managed to get some tension on the new belt, and this enabled us to, just about, limp in to Crookhaven. We were grateful to take one of the visitors mooring laid by O'Sullivan's pub. Now I urgently needed a mechanic - at 18.00 on a Friday on the south-west corner of Ireland that seemed a forlorn prospect. Mercifully Mr O'Sullivan of the pub put me in touch with Doonie Toomey who obligingly came and sorted us out with an ingenious improvised repair, which allowed us to continue with our cruise, and ultimately saw us home.

By now we had used up half of our time and a decision had to be made whether to turn homewards or head round the Mizen towards Dingle and keep alive the possibility of a staggered circumnavigation. Since our engine repair was 'ad hoc' and the wind was blowing strong from the west and forecast to continue so doing it was a sad but easy enough decision to head for home, at a leisurely pace, with the objective of visiting places that we had not visited on our outward journey.

On 11 June at mid-day we left Crookhaven for Schull. It was a wet and unpleasant sail, though with the fair wind. We entered Schull via the Goats sound. The anchorage was, by far, the most crowded we visited, and I couldn't find a convenient spot to drop anchor. I elected to take a visitors mooring which was about half a mile east of the harbour. It was wet and unpleasant on the mooring so we decided to go ashore, have lunch and watch Ireland play South Africa in the first of their three match rugby tour of South Africa. But having rowed, ashore, to our alarm, we discovered that there was no Sky TV available in Schull. Luckily we bumped into Tom Kirby ICC who was on the same mission as ourselves so we hurriedly shared a taxi to Ballydehob and saw the second half of the game in Rosie's pub, in company with many locals and holidaying luminaries. We cheered on a spectacular victory and forgot about the grim weather outside. When we finally got back to Schull we had a few pints with a colleague in Newmans, followed by an excellent pizza in the unpretentious New Haven restaurant, before undertaking the long haul back to the boat.

Our next stop was to be Glandore/Union Hall. We left Schull at 08.40 in wet and lumpy conditions but made a respectable 5 knots under jib alone, arriving to Glandore at 13.00, by which time the wind had dropped and the sun had come through. The anchorage in Glandore was chock-a-block, and ashore there was festive bunting. It was evident that the village was hosting a rowing Regatta with contestants from all of the neighbouring towns of West Cork and Kerry, in many age groups and categories. There was commentary of the races over loudspeakers, and large crowds on the shore noisily urging the contestants on. The atmosphere both on the water and ashore was exciting and frantic. Judging by the level of enthusiasm and commitment of the crews, I can well understand how our Olympian Donovan brothers emerged from this hotbed of competitive rowing to win a silver medal in Rio de Janeiro.

Having savoured the goings-on from the water we motored across to Union Hall which was basking in sunshine and calm. The fishing fleet, being tied up for Sunday provided an inviting berth and direct access to the shore. We walked to Casey's, had "fish of the day" (and a glass of wine since it was Sunday.) We did our respective Sunday afternoon trick, Liz did the Sunday papers, and I had a snooze. While I was worrying about being disturbed in the early hours of Monday by the fishing boats inside me leaving to go fishing, a man in a rib came across from Glandore, and I asked him if there might be a moorings to which I could move for the night. To cut a long story short his name was Mick Scully, a friend of Hal Sisk ICC, and he assured me that I could use Hal's mooring for the night, he showed me the mooring and all was well I have not yet had the opportunity of buying a pint for Hal. (*And he won't, for Hal is teetotal Ed*).

The next challenge was to 'link up with' two boats that were cruising in company, one from the Quoile in Strangford Lough and the other from the Clyde. We had been in touch with them as they were heading west and we were heading back

east. We wanted the rendezvous to take place, but we didn't want to interrupt whatever momentum we had, proceeding as we were in opposite directions. The two boats had been held up on the east coast in both Arklow and Greystones and were behind schedule. We had hoped to meet in Kinsale but after consultation we elected for Crosshaven two days later. We decided to move on to Kinsale and left at 06.00 in order to get ahead of the forecast south westerly force 5/7. We had a cracking sail in force 3/4 westerly with the mainsail fully reefed and the engine idling just to help control the boat in the following sea. We arrived in Kinsale at midday and had fun negotiating the estuary as the National Geographic cruise ship *Orion* was anchoring in our path, just off Charles's Fort. We duly tied up at the Kinsale YC



Liz at the helm, leaving Youghal

pontoon and enjoyed the hospitality of this most friendly and well refurbished club. It happened there were two Swedish boats close by in the marina, later ashore, this led to a lively couple of hours in the club as we watched Ireland play Sweden at soccer over a few pints, the result, a draw, left all unhappy but still 'the best of friends'. We adjourned to Jimmy Edwards and had a most pleasant dinner. Next morning the forecast was for force 7, as our rendezvous at Crosshaven was for the next day, we decided to stay in Kinsale. We walked to Charles Fort along the beautiful sylvan waterside path that leads from the town and spent a very enjoyable hour in the fort with the stunning views from the battlements, and the historical summary of the history of the fort, given by one of the guides on the site.

While on this very strategic fort, I saw a boat round the Old Head, half its spinnaker flying from the masthead ahead of the boat, the lower half having carried away as she hardened up, to reach in towards the Bullman. I was riveted watching the drama as the crew tried to lower the spinnaker and harden up to fetch into the estuary. The wind was now blowing force 5/6 from the west. They carried the mainsail and motored with the spinnaker jammed aloft at the masthead flogging away to leeward. We watched helplessly to see how matters would unfold. As the boat approached Charles Fort assistance was offered by the crew of a large rib, but declined. However, they manoeuvred their boat into the lee of James's Fort just across the estuary and then winched a man up the mast, after about 15 minutes he managed to free the head of the spinnaker, which was expertly retrieved from the water. It was very impressive exercise by the crew in 'hairy conditions'. We were exhausted having watched this performance, so we had a light lunch in Charles Fort to recover, before returning on foot to the boat.

The next morning we motored across to the Castlepark marina to fuel up before heading at 11.30 for Crosshaven: again we were favoured with a fresh westerly breeze and sailed most of the way under genoa alone. We arrived just in time to take the lines from our friends Jimmy and Gillian Dinsmore and Katie Christie all of Clyde CC on *Lintie*, and Simon and Jane Healy on *Maggie Mae* from the Quoil. As happens on these occasions we had a pleasant convivial night in the Royal Cork YC and shared our stories of our respective cruises to date and our aspirations for the remainder of the summer. The others were little battle weary having been held up by fog in the early part of the cruise on the east coast and having battled westerly winds since they rounded Carnsore Point, so they decided to 'dally' a few days and charge their batteries.

By now our cruise had turned into an exercise in 'poking around' so we decided to visit Youghal, which I had visited by sea only once, many years ago. On 16th of June we left Crosshaven at 09.40 on a fresh northerly breeze having said goodbye to our friends. By the time we came abeam of Cable Island the wind had freshened to a northerly force 5, leaving us with a nasty beat into the Youghal estuary. For the two of us it was a challenging entry with a very lumpy sea, caused by a strong tide against a fresh breeze. When we were within the harbour, even though the water was smooth, the tide and wind, being in opposition to each other, made controlling the boat quite eerie. While looking for a place to anchor, two men in a moored sea angling boat hailed us and pointed to a mooring which they said we could take. This was a relief, though we had more fun than was funny, trying to hook the mooring buoy due to the tide versus wind situation. It was very disappointing that the wind continued to funnel from the north, as this made it too risky to go ashore. This was a great disappointment to us both, the main purpose of our visit was to visit and explore this historic town.

Continuing with the 'poking about' theme we decided to skip Dunmore East and head up the River to Waterford city, still keeping open the possibility of visiting New Ross. We left Youghal at 07.15 and once clear of the bay we had a full force 5 on the nose, we were however able to fetch inside the Hook with a fully reefed main and well rolled jib. Of course once we rounded into Waterford Harbour the wind bent ahead of us, and we were very glad that we had the flood tide to take us up the river past Duncannon. I phoned ahead to the pontoons, and was assured of a very warm welcome and, in due course, we tied up head to wind, in downtown Waterford city. We were now within easy reach of bus and rail links with Dublin, so it was easy to persuade my nephew Mark Tierney to join us for the rest of the passage home to Howth (having had only our own company on board for two and a half weeks a "peace keeper" seemed like good idea).

We spent two wonderful days on the pontoon in Waterford and visited many historic sites, the most impressive of which was the Mediæval Museum where we had a sparkling guided tour conducted by Derek. A visit to this Museum is a must, the exhibits are cleverly displayed, well interpreted and explained, recounting the history of the port as a trading centre and the extraordinary rivalry between Waterford and New Ross in seeking to become the dominant port in this area. It was extremely pleasant, and convenient to have one's boat moored downtown in this historic city, and to have the opportunity of living on board, at the same time having the city on our doorstep.

Mark duly joined us and on the 19th June we departed at 06.30 to take the ebb down the river, still keeping open the possibility of going to New Ross, but also keeping an eye on the weather (strong winds being forecast). I did not want to be trapped inland since our time was running out. The wind was ahead of us and building, as we proceeded downriver, it was misty and unpleasant and we decided to head for Kilmore Quay and leave New Ross for another trip. We tied up in Kilmore at 11.30 on a really foul day, wet and tired after a relatively short sail. We couldn't wait to get off the boat; we had brunch at a café just off the harbour. Liz and Mark went back on board but I attended an ecumenical religious commemoration organised by the Coastguard and the RNLI in memory of all those lost at sea off the coast. It was a very moving well attended liturgy at which the Government was represented by the Minister for Defence, and the Naval service was represented by Commodore Hugh Tully (the service was to have been at the beautiful shore side Memorial Garden 'to those lost at sea'), alas, due to the bad weather, it had to be rearranged indoors at the Church. Meanwhile the wind was piping up, requiring urgent attention to warps and fenders, a southerly force 7 having come in as predicted. This put in doubt our plan to leave at 03.30 the following morning, though the forecast did say the wind would moderate and go into the west keeping open the possibility of sticking to our plan.

As we waited out the storm the harbour literally filled to capacity with massive trawlers squeezing in for shelter, I began to wonder if we would have enough room to leave the pontoon if the weather moderated, if some of these trawlers did not go to sea before us. We dined on board in a state of uncertainty about the morrow, the wind had moderated by the time we turned in, so we decided to 'sniff the air' at 03.00 and make a decision about our departure. The late-night forecast was for the wind to go into the west. However when we woke it was still blowing hard from the south, so decided to postpone our departure for 12 hours.

On 20th June, the wind is gradually dropped and veered to the west as predicted, and we had the morning in Kilmore waiting for the tide. It was a clear morning strong sunshine and a pleasant temperature, we walked to the Memorial Garden for 'those lost at sea', nearby the harbour, and around the coast, the clear visibility gave us a magic panorama of this corner of Ireland from Hook Head right around the Saltee Islands and Carnsore Point, the 'sunny southeast' living up to its reputation. Once again I marvelled at the extraordinary weather changes that can occur, within hours, on the Irish coast, from a wet miserable southerly gale to a fine clear day with moderate westerly breeze, all in a matter of hours.

We returned to the boat and had an appropriate summer salad lunch in the cockpit, leaving us well fortified for our departure for Arklow, with a moderate westerly forecast we had nothing to worry about except the dreaded lobster pot situation at Carnsore. We did see many, with long floating ropes on the surface, but we saw them in good time and had room to avoid them. On reflection, it would have very unwise to have attempted this passage, as had been intended, in the early hours of the morning when visibility would not have enabled us to spot and pick our way through, what seems to be a permanent hazard at this corner. We got into Arklow at 22.30 (still with some midsummer daylight) having had a spectacularly pleasant passage with a fair breeze off the land, presenting this stretch of coastline (usually regarded as uninteresting) looking magnificent and colourful, even welcoming. We finished the day with a late spectacular improvised dinner prepared by Liz and washed down by a bottle of Barolo, courtesy of Mark. The tide dictated a departure from Arklow at 06.00 and we had a lovely morning at sea, arriving at our home berth in Howth at 11.30. We managed to clock up 515 miles, and visit thirteen different anchorages, and we were still talking to each other.

It has been pleasant to reflect on this cruise, the weather, the company, the encounters along the way, but also the places visited were greatly improved in terms of facilities both ashore and afloat. It is also worth noting that we only visited thirteen different destinations, while we by passed many attractive options e.g. Greystones, Wicklow, Dunmore East, New Ross, Dungarvan, Ballycotton, Cork Harbour, Oysterhaven, Glandore, Castlehaven and Barlogue just to mention some of the other worthy anchorages along this stretch of coast, all of which offer alternative shelter and sociability. For me, the old myth that you need to get west of Kinsale before you hit proper cruising ground, no longer stands up.

Marina-Hopping from Torrevieja to Canet-en Roussillon and back

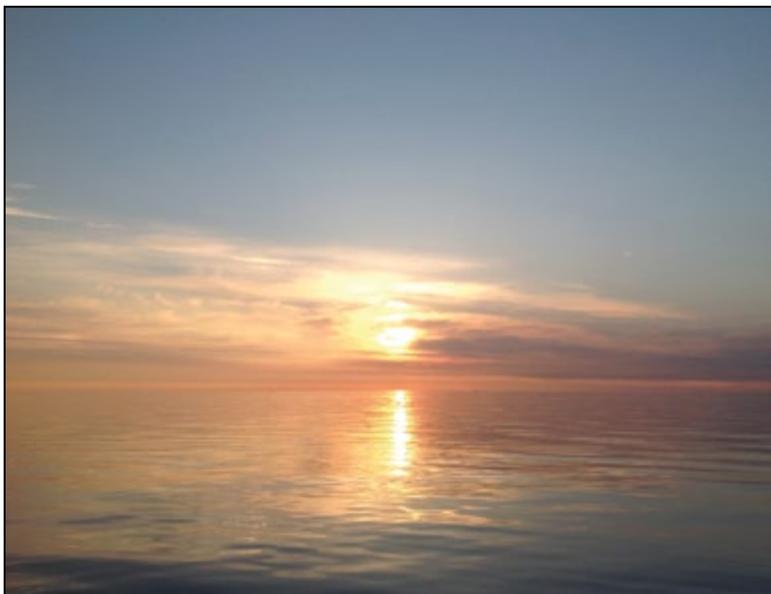
Ken and Carmel Kavanagh

At the end of April we returned to *La Lumière of Howth* in her new home at the Real Club Nautico in Torrevieja. As we planned to spend ten weeks aboard, we had plenty of time to undertake a reasonably lengthy but what would hopefully be a pleasant and leisurely cruise. We decided to travel north as far as the Golfe de Lion and visit some friends who live near Canet - en – Roussillon, approximately 425nm from Torrevieja. We also wanted to call into as many marinas as possible along the way so that in future they would not be ‘terra incognita’.

First some important parameters had to be agreed upon with the skippers as follows: There would be no night passages, no heroic feats of sailing, no gunk-holing up remote estuaries, and only quiet storms would be allowed. Terms and conditions were finally agreed and off we set on Wednesday 11th May, returning on Friday 24th June, 44 days later after covering a distance of some 850nm during a most enjoyable cruise.

The Marinas we visited.

During the course of the 850nm, we visited a total of 19 different marinas. On the Costa Blanca, Torrevieja itself, Alicante, Altea and Calpe then on the Costa del Azahar we called into Dénia, Gandia, Valencia, Canet d'en Berenguer, Castellón de la Plana and Benicarló. Of the marinas on the Costa Dorada, we visited Sant Carles de la Ràpita, Cambrils, Puerto de Vilanova i la Geltrú, Port Ginesta and Puerto Olímpico (Barcelona) and finally on the Costa Brava we overnighted in Blanes, Palamós and L'Escala, finally crossing the Spanish/French border into Canet-en-Roussillon in the Golfe du Lion where we spent twelve wonderful days with our friends, Marion and Francois Lamiaud and we were joined by our daughter Susan for a six day visit.



Sunrise over Canet-en-Roussillon

Some interesting road trips on the side.

As Susan is a non-sailor, we hired a car and visited some wonderful beauty spots in the area including nearby Argeles and Collioure. Further into the Pyrenees we discovered Eus which is one of the most beautiful villages in France. We spent another pleasant day visiting the fortress village of Villefranche and Thuir which is home to the great Cave de Byrrh, the biggest vineyard in the region. On Susan's last day we visited Castelnou, a very quaint artists' commune nestling on the side of a mountain. Needless to say our road trips were interspersed with some very fine wining and dining in this area which is famed for its great food and wonderful wines.



Quaint art gallery at Castelnou

A word about the marinas:

The most expensive and worst marina in our opinion was Palamós on the Costa Brava. It is privately owned, not in very good repair and charged €56 per night. Valencia, an excellent marina but rather a long way from civilisation, charged a mere €12 in May, going up to a High Season price of €15 in June. The average price overall worked out at about €30 per night with the exception of Canet-en-Roussillon which has a flat charge all year round and for our 36 footer it was €24 per night.



Entrance to Canet d'en Berenguer



We prefer to call it the Transom.....

The marina with the best facilities was without doubt our favourite was Sant Carles de la Ràpita, located in the delta of the river Ebro. It is an excellent marina run by the British company MDL. We were pretty familiar with it as we had spent some time there on our former boat *Safari of Howth*. However, it must be said that the facilities in the Real Club Nautico of Torrevieja would also be in contention for that 1st prize. We really enjoyed the time spent in Alicante where the Club Nautico is right in the centre of things. Cambrils and Blanes were very pleasant holiday resorts as were Canet d'en Berenguer and Altea although the marina entrance into Canet d'en Berenguer is not for the faint-hearted. Located as it is just a short distance from the beach, the breaking waves make for an exciting entry even in extremely calm conditions. In Alicante, we qualified to spend 2 nights free of charge because they have a reciprocal arrangement with the Real Club Nautico de Torrevieja. Irish marinas, please copy.

Berthing can be a stressful experience.

It goes without saying that we were delighted to acquaint ourselves with so many different marinas in our new cruising ground and we noted many things of interest to us which will make return visits much less stressful. Take for instance the height of the pontoons. If low then we must berth stern-to, if high we have the option of berthing bow-to, which we prefer. We noted those which had fingers rather than lines tailed to the quay and the actual lay-out of a pontoon can be a big issue. All this information is essential knowledge when entering a marina and helps no end to reduce blood-pressure levels on board while berthing.

For example to be informed to go to berth D (Delta) 396 upon arrival is of little help when you are totally unfamiliar with the lay-out of the marina and using a Cruising Guide which is very much out of date. This can naturally give rise to some hearty exchanges between skipper and crew and, indeed at times, with the on-shore dock-masters as well. But to be fair, in all cases, even in the smallest of the clubs, there was always a dock-master on hand to take the lines which is an enormous help when there are only two not so agile OAPs on board.

Wind and Weather.

Going north to France, the weather was surprisingly cold for May with absolutely no question of sailing in shorts and T-shirts. Jeans and warm fleeces were required with the wet gear always near to hand. The weather on the way back was much more what one would expect in the Med - so working on the suntan was somewhat delayed.

The wind follows quite predictable patterns in this area - no wind in the very early hours, then generally starting from NW, freshening and going to SE by the afternoon and dying off again in the evening. Naturally there are occasions when this does not happen and when unexpected strong winds appear from equally unexpected directions.

We tended to depart in the late morning in the hope of having a decent afternoon sail, arriving in the early evening when the wind had abated, thus making berthing a whole lot easier. Mostly we motor-sailed but on a number of memorable occasions we enjoyed some wonderful passages under sail. We sailed most of the way up to Alicante on the first day moving smoothly along at 6 knots. Then from Alicante to Calpe we enjoyed another pleasant few hours sailing. Having passed Capo de Nao, and Denía (which we visited on the return leg) we sailed on to Valencia. After that it was mostly motor-sailing in light airs, or against northerlies and quite often into both wind and swell.

On the return trip it was a very different story. We had to have departed our berths by 07.00 each morning to arrive at that day's destination by 13.00 in order to avoid endless motoring into moderate to strong south-westerlies. As it happened there was rarely any wind around in the early hours and so we motored most of the way from Canet-en-Roussillon to Torrevieja.

Highlights, lowlights and silly incidents.

We were tempting fate by specifying 'quiet storms only'. We were caught out twice – the first time was upon our arrival into Sant Carles de la Ràpita which is notorious for sudden gusts of very strong winds blowing down from the high hills on either side of the Delta. Towards the end of that day's sailing, the weather took a turn for the worst. An hour of torrential rain was followed by dense fog which eventually lifted only to be in turn followed by one hell of a squall as we entered the marina. We were unable to approach the berth allocated by the marina. Given that we were registering 40 knots, we were forgiven for going into the first safe berth we encountered in a section of the marina normally reserved for Mega yachts and catamarans.

The second occasion was upon our arrival in Canet-en-Roussillon, which is in the notorious Golfe de Lion, from where all the challenging Tramontanes (north-westerly storms) emanate. Just after pulling away from the waiting pon-

toon in the marina, a massive wind blew up from nowhere and we just had to pull into the first available berth where we spent a most uncomfortable night. However, that was quickly rectified the following morning when things had calmed down and we were moved to a more sheltered berth for the remaining eleven days.

Is that a lobster pot I see?

The silliest thing that happened to us involved me – what’s new on this boat? We always kept a vigilant eye out for lobster pots which tended to appear in clusters with the occasional loner to keep us on our toes. While passing the Islote de Benidorm on the passage north, and fondly remembering a Kavanagh family holiday spent there in the early 70’s, a rather large round lobster pot mark appeared directly behind the boat which we had obviously just run over but without any thump or bump. While considering this conundrum, I suddenly realised that the lobster pot was in fact one of our two large ‘ball’ fenders which had untied itself and fallen off the stern. A quick unscheduled man overboard exercise ensued and the fender was ‘rescued’. It’s hard to believe I could have been so careless given the many thousand fenders I have tied on in my day.

An unexpected delay.

The total enjoyment of the cruise was somewhat marred when Ken became ill on the return journey. We had an unscheduled five-day stopover in Canet d’en Berenguer between Castellón de la Plana and Valencia when Ken developed a heavy cold and nasty cough accompanied by a high temperature. Although a small marina somewhat off the beaten track and with a rather dramatic entrance, the berth was a wonderful finger berth, the staff in the marina were very supportive and helpful as was the local hospital. Once the skipper made a full recovery and we were able to continue on our journey, albeit in short stages, until we arrived back safely in Torrevieja on Friday 24th June.

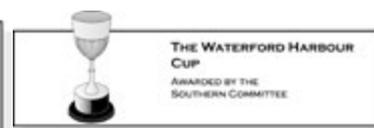
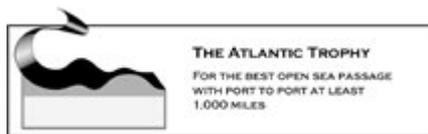
We achieved what we had set out to do – enjoy an interesting but leisurely cruise and become more familiar with the area which has now become our home cruising ground.



Amazing sand sculptures at Castellón de la Plana

Shelduck: Southwest Harbour, Maine to Cork

Neil Hegarty



When I phoned Anne Kenny ICC and first invited her to join me on *Shelduck* for a short cruise from Cascais to Sines in September 2009, she said 'OK but not more than 30 miles a day'. I was a little surprised, after her recent courageous 800 mile passage from Lagos to Ponta Delgada Azores for the rally there, but agreed. The following year, she gained confidence in *Shelduck* and trust in the skipper, and having considered her 150 mile passages from Crookhaven to the Scilly Isles with her late husband Brian on *Tam O'Shanter*, she was happy to do an overnight with me and increase *Shelduck's* passages to 150 miles. Two years later we made a 500 mile passage from Caherciveen to Île de Groix to attend the ICC Brittany rally. Since then our passages have increased significantly and on our first Atlantic crossing we logged 2000 miles. Anne's preference seems to be a 2000 mile passage length and this was a major influence on my decision, when returning *Shelduck* home after eight years away, to sail back across the North Atlantic, via Newfoundland.

Maine and Mistake Harbour

At the end of May we returned to Southwest Harbour, Maine. We had four 23kg bags, one of which contained the new mainsail for *Shelduck*. We also had a 2 metre plastic tube of sail battens which the airline accepted as hand luggage. *Shelduck* was afloat at the Hinckley Boatyard with a few jobs remaining. For much of the next two weeks Maine was shrouded in thick fog, which allowed us enjoy time with our friends John and Mary Treanor CCA while rigging and provisioning *Shelduck* without the pressure of good weather conditions to leave. On Friday 10th I settled my account with Hinckley's, and over the weekend Anne and I toured around the area enjoying a fine lunch in Northeast Harbour. On Monday *Shelduck* moved from the marina to Treanor's pontoon where we did more provisioning at the excellent supermarket in Bar Harbour. On Tuesday, the Treanors joined us on board *Shelduck* to sail due east to Mistake Harbour, one of their favourite anchorages and just 37 miles away.



Mistake was beautiful and the sunset special. Next morning we relaxed until noon enjoying the noise of seals talking to one another around us. Our passage to Cutler was 21 miles against the tide and upwind, though very light, so we motored and set anchor in the late afternoon. Cutler is a small but busy fishing harbour with great holding in mud. The landscape nearby looks like something from a science-fiction movie having dozens of radio tower masts making up a grid for communications with U.S. submarines operating over the North Atlantic and Arctic. Just one other yacht was at anchor for the night.

New Brunswick and Reversing Falls

Next morning we departed at 0400 to catch the tide. *Shelduck* was now nearing the Bay of Fundy, where tides rise and fall 40 feet and can, in places, reach 6 knots on the flood and 8 knots on the ebb. On the way, we stopped at Eastport, Passamaquoddy Bay. In his book 'Baddeck and that Sort of Thing', first published in 1874, Charles Dudley Warner wrote of Eastport 'It is doubtless a very enterprising and deserving city, but its aspect that morning was of cheapness, newness, and stagnation, with no compensating picturesqueness' Eastport did not seem too inviting to us also so we decided to leave the U.S., pressed on to St. Andrews, and entered Canada where we picked up a town mooring at 14.05. Shortly afterwards *Shelduck* had a visit from Steve the Harbour Master who escorted us to a floating pontoon on the pier and I called Canadian customs from there. They took our details over the phone but had no one available to come and stamp our passports, so we arranged to check in again in St. John, New Brunswick.

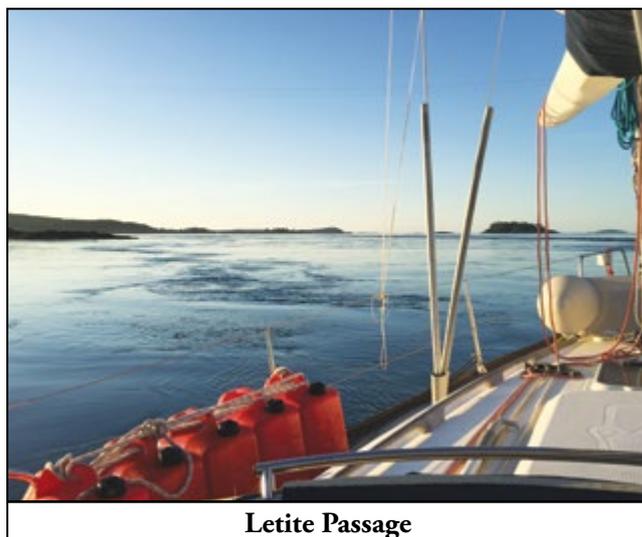
The previous week, I had been in contact with St. Andrews Yacht Club and Anne and I were invited to join club members to a lobster supper at the club. We were made very welcome. After the meal we walked the town, with its spacious lawns and comfortable houses. Some houses dating from just after the American Revolution were carried over from Castine Maine on rafts, when the loyalists who built them discovered that the international boundary left them on the wrong side. Many in Canada still move their



Anne ready for cold weather

houses, some across frozen waters in winter, when they accept the substantial Government funds to move from islands to the mainland.

At dawn, on Saturday 18th of June, *Shelduck* departed to enable her arrive at the Letite Passage near low tide, where the flood can reach 5 knots and makes swirls, eddies and boils. I probably should have departed an hour earlier, in the dark, as after just half an hour of flood the waters were already boiling. *Shelduck* was able to make just 2 knots at 3000 revs, and she was thrown around. Anne kept her cool, as usual, by taking photographs. As requested by them I called customs at 08.00 and reported that we had left St. Andrews and that our ETA in St. John would be about 13.30. I was asked to call again at noon. On arrival at St. John at 13.45, we tied up at the customs pontoon in the city centre under the Hilton Hotel. Thirty minutes later two officers arrived and stamped our passports for a six month entry. *Shelduck* had made good time in a 10/15 knot south westerly because the coast allowed us turn north east shortly after Letite Passage and the tide was then with us.



Letite Passage

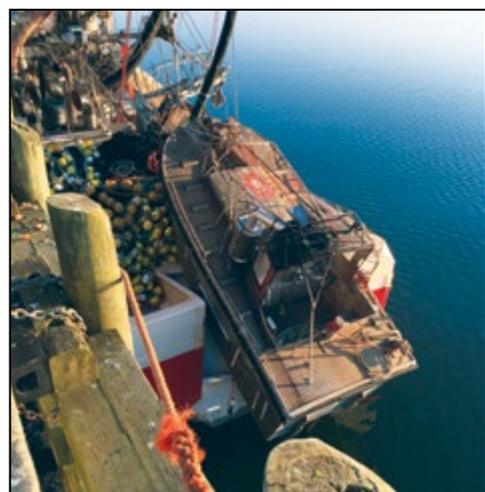
We decided to stay at the pontoon overnight because the Royal Kennebecasis Yacht Club was hosting a charity regatta and could not accommodate us until the following day. Anne and I had little sleep that night. It was very uncomfortable there and at high tide, little waves were coming in on the beam giving *Shelduck* a hard time. We also stayed there because I wanted to take on the Reversing Falls in the St. John River in daylight. The falls are produced by the narrow rocky gorge, through which the St. John River flows into St. John Harbour. At low tide the volume of water flowing out produces a very strong current with turbulence greater than most yachts are designed to navigate. As the tide rises back, pressure gradually tames the torrent. Entry and exit is at about half tide and gives a twenty minute window to traverse the falls.

Next morning *Shelduck* left the pontoon for the nearby falls and had an easy passage in fine weather to the RKYC. It was just 5 miles to the club and on arrival we met Dr. Kathy Keith who offered to take Anne to do some shopping and laundry. Other club members too were very helpful, offering charts of the extensive St. John River, a favourite of Cruising Club of America and so many others. We really did not have the time available to do the area justice.

Nova Scotia

On June 24th *Shelduck* departed the RKYC in darkness for the one hour passage to the Reversing Falls. She then cleared St. John Harbour doing 6.5 knots on the ebb. The sail to Westport soon turned into a long beat and a total passage time of nearly sixteen hours. Westport is situated on Brier Island, the outermost of the islands, which extend south westerly from Digby Neck. It is separated from adjacent Long Island by a straight known as Grand Passage. The tide runs at not less than 5 knots, sometimes more, through this passage. Westport is also notable as having been the boyhood home of Captain Joshua Slocum, the first man to sail single-handedly round the world.

On entering this fully protected harbour, *Shelduck* tied to a ferry, which itself was tied outside a fishing boat, where we had an undisturbed night. We had another early start to catch the tide leaving Westport and *Shelduck* had soon reached 9.7 knots in the swirling waters of the Grand Passage. This was followed by a gentle sail to Yarmouth. We berthed at Killam Marina and decided to stay two nights to get some rest after days of early starts. The Killam family started what came to be a famous shipping company in the early 1800's and it survived to the death of Robert Killam in 1991. For five generations they played a major role in Yarmouth's financial growth. Their office building is now a museum on the history of the business and also houses the marina manager's office.



Yarmouth herring trawler

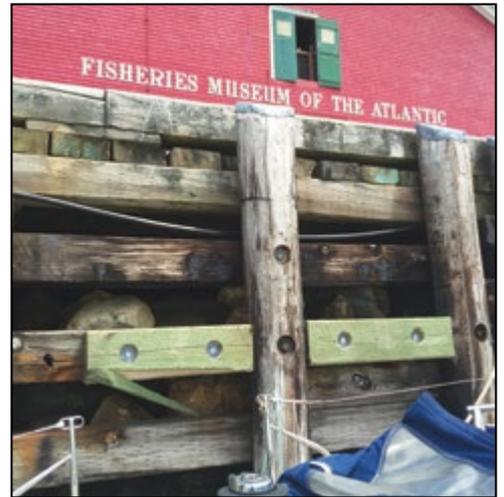
Yarmouth is one of Canada's most important fishing ports, with trawlers fishing for herring using a tender, which is pulled up the trawler's stern for easy deployment and recovery. This tender holds one end of the huge net and helps the trawler encircle the herrings. Yarmouth is also the destination for a large catamaran ferry to and from Portland Maine. After an early dinner and short sleep we cast *Shelduck* off from the marina at 01.00 to catch slack water at Cape Sable, the Cape Horn of Nova Scotia. The passage down river was challenging in darkness and there were many rocks and ledges to be avoided on the inside passage round the Cape. At 07.30 and soon after rounding Cape Sable we experienced foul tide for a short time, followed by the flood helping us on towards Shelburne. The entry to this harbour is easy enough, provided one avoids the large fish farming areas. I called the Shelburne Yacht Club on arrival and there were three people on the dock to help us, as we berthed at 14.00. Anne and I were both very tired and slept for afternoon.

The next morning, with a fresh southerly forecast, we decided to press on to Brooklyn. It was a nine hour passage, with wind at times gusting 20/25 knots. On arrival at the Brooklyn Yacht Club we had help to dock at the visitors pontoon, which is somewhat exposed to the south. We met some of the members after their monthly meeting and again the following morning. Brooklyn marina is a private non-profit club, fully funded by membership fees and supported by volunteer labour. Visitor fees of just 25 Canadian dollars per night help to maintain facilities. Brooklyn is just across the River Mersey from Liverpool NS. That evening, June 28th, my birthday, we dined on lobster in Liverpool. I have managed to reach three score years and eighteen and was realising my luck to be cruising this beautiful area with Anne. We remained at this marina for four days due to foggy wet weather.

On Friday July 1st, Canada Day, *Shelduck* sailed from Brooklyn up the LaHave River to the La Have Yacht Club. Here Anne and I joined members to celebrate their national day with a barbeque on the front lawn. We met George Pike of the Fisheries Museum at Lunenburg, who arranged a berth for *Shelduck* in the town centre off the museum. Next day, with rain forecast, we decided to stay put and were visited aboard by club member Noel Murphy. Noel was born in Cobh and was keen for news of home. He kindly offered to drive us around the local area for the afternoon which was very enjoyable. On Sunday 3rd, the passage to Lunenburg was very fresh and we cast off early to arrive at noon as this was the time that George Pike was available to help us dock. *Shelduck* had the first use of her new fender board purchased in Maine. George had advised that we berth in the lee of the trawler, *Cape Sable*, for protection from the strong wind, and what good advice that was in the conditions. We could not have come alongside without his help. He also brought an extra fender board for us to protect *Shelduck's* topsides against the quay wall. The *Cape Sable*, which gave us great protection, was built in 1962 and fished until 1982. It is now one of the museum exhibits.

Lunenburg is a most beautiful town and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was founded in 1753 by mainly German-speaking Lutherans with a strong work ethic, who survived and then thrived, moving from the fields to the sea. The streetscapes are stunning and the architecture captures the story of changing times. On Monday July 4th, we had a gentle 32 mile passage to anchor on the west side of the north tip of Purcell Island, in Prospect Bay. On first entering this bay I took *Shelduck* through the very narrow gap into Rogue's Roost, which the Cruising Guide to the Nova Scotia Coast considers is one of the most beautiful of anchorages in Nova Scotia. We felt it was too restricted to anchor in safety so we pressed on up the bay to where our Rocna anchor would be more comfortable, in mud. Many Canadians we have met suggested that Nova Scotia is like Scotland or Ireland, but this bay again confirmed to us that it is much more like Scandinavia.

Tuesday 5th of July dawned a beautiful day and we had a pleasant passage from Prospect Bay to Dartmouth, Halifax. During this passage *Shelduck* received a small bump on the starboard side, just below the water level. We had sailed past many basking sharks and think it must have been one of them. Halifax Harbour is big and it is 20 miles from the entrance to Dartmouth Yacht Club at the northern end of the harbour.



I had been in contact with Belfast born, Mike Savage, Mayor of Halifax. Mike's late mother Margaret was one of seven, three of whom holiday in Baltimore Co. Cork, the late Bernadette Perry, Cecelia Woods and Bernard McCartan. Mike had invited us to the Royal Nova Scotia Tattoo the following evening. He had also invited us to a VIP reception before the show where we met his wife Darlene, Darlene's mother Miriam and her business partner Hugh Vincent. Our seats were in a prime location, we were immediately behind the Generals, Admirals and senior politicians including the Premier of Nova Scotia, a post that Mike's father, the late John had held. It was a great show, which included Canadian, American, German, British and Swiss service men and women. Also entertaining us were acrobats from Germany and Africa and dancers of Scottish and Irish origin. The excitement of the marching bands, kilts and bagpipes sent Anne back to her Scottish roots and she sang God Save the Queen with great gusto.



Anne, Darlene Savage, Mike Savage, Neil

Peter Clarke, who had already done three cruises on *Shelduck* during her eight years away, was joining for the cruise from Halifax to Lewisporte. He arrived early on Thursday morning. Friday and Saturday were spent relaxing and chatting in poor foggy weather. Sunday was forecast as miserably wet so I decided to move *Shelduck* to the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron to make for a speedier departure from Halifax Harbour. Mike and Darlene joined us aboard for Sunday lunch where we enjoyed a chat, among many other things, about the 'McCartan gals' as he called them. In the evening we were joined by club member Hugh Vincent, for a wonderful roast rib dinner in the clubhouse.

Hugh had cruised Ireland and when there had visited the Royal Cork Yacht Club. *Shelduck* departed the RNSYS on Tuesday 12th of July and I set a course for George's Spot off Pope's Harbour. As we approached the waypoint she seemed to go aground in 15 meters of water. She had stopped from 5 knots as you would in soft mud. After a short time we were free and up behind appeared a large, probably very sore, basking shark who may have been feeding in this relatively shallow patch. A little shaken we carried on to Molly's Cove also known as Shelter Harbour and anchored in this beautiful hurricane hole. The chart shows just one foot of water at the entrance and inside but in fact there is 5 meters as pointed out in the RNSYS/CCA pilot.

Cape Breton Island

On Wednesday we weighed anchor and managed to sail 74 miles in a south westerly to anchor off the pier in Marshall Cove, Whitehead Harbour. The following day strong winds were forecast but an early start allowed *Shelduck* to round Louse Head and to bear off for St. Peter's Canal, Cape Breton Island, before the wind had piped up to a force 6. Our transit through the canal was efficiently organised by the staff there. It was followed by a lovely sail through St. Peter's Inlet and a downwind blast across Bras d'Or Lake, through the opening bridge in the Grand Narrows and into the Great Bras d'Or which was crossed at speed to pick up a mooring at Baddeck in the lee of Kidston Island.

The next day, at noon *Shelduck* took a prearranged berth at Baddeck Marine marina. Immediately, another generous, French/Canadian, on a boat in a berth nearby offered me his 4X4 pickup for us to drive for provisions. It was very large and looked almost new so I nominated Anne as the driver. After the shopping, Peter and I went to the excellent Alexander Graham Bell Museum, while Anne decided to do some laundry. That evening, after a visit to the Yacht Club, where the usual Canadian Friday night gathering was in full swing, we dined nearby.

On Saturday 16th, the tide suited our 05.30 departure to take the ebb from the lake through the 20 mile narrow passage to St. Ann's Bay and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The first two hours was in thick fog. *Shelduck* just made it out of the passage as the tide turned against her to slow her progress. We passed Neil Harbour, Neil Head, and rounded Long Point into Dingwall. This is another beautiful anchorage and hurricane hole. The entrance is shallow with shifting sands and needs to be dredged; the buoys marking the present channel are paramount.

West Newfoundland and Bay of Islands

Leaving Cape Breton Island on Sunday 17th there was no wind so we motored towards St. Paul Island and slowed for 10 minutes to let a ship cross. This ship reminded me that I was last in these waters 53 years ago on honeymoon with my late wife Angela, on the small liner Arcadia on the Cherbourg/Southampton/Cork/Quebec/Montreal route. As *Shelduck* crossed the northern Cabot Strait traffic separation zone I decided to press on overnight to the Bay of Islands. We rounded Cape Cormorant at midnight, which is 25 miles out from the mainland, a little like the Old Head of Kinsale but with no light. We rounded South Head into the Bay of Islands at 10.15 and then left Woods Island to port and berthed at the Bay of Islands Yacht Club. I came to the club to get a signal to upload the blog but more importantly to get treated water for our tanks and diesel. All three are in short supply in West Newfoundland. On Monday, 18th of July, as I walked to the Bay of Islands Yacht Club clubhouse I was pleased to see a diesel truck filling a large boat. On enquiring about a fill the driver told me he could not oblige. On the way back to *Shelduck* I met two men on the pontoon and talked about the reason the driver might have refused me diesel. It seems he would have only marked diesel which is illegal to sell to yachts. One of these men offered to drive me to fill our diesel containers. I discovered his name was Byron Caines, of Byron Electronics, whom I had in my diary as one of the rare Raymarine technicians in Newfoundland, small world. The Yacht Club, like many in Canada, is run by volunteers. Members have keys and one of them opened the door to the showers for us and we enjoyed the hot water. Laundry facilities are also available and the marina itself is well protected and quiet.

Shelduck departed at 15.15 on the 19th and beat the 14 miles to the harbour at Woods Island under headsail in a fresh breeze. This entry is tricky but well described in the CCA Pilot, 'Cruising Guide to Newfoundland'. We found the pontoon, which is owned by the Bay of Islands Yacht Club, with just one boat on it, a Crystal Waters Boat Tours vessel. This gave us confidence to go in, where we were helped to dock. After dinner, at about 21.00 there was a knock on the hull and I invited the two men there aboard. They had seen the Irish flag and were curious. They were native to the island and cousins but had been relocated to the mainland as were all inhabitants after the burning of a church and a schoolhouse. They introduced themselves as Reg and Gord Hackett of Irish ancestry but they did not know from where in Ireland. I suggested maybe Waterford and told them the story of the Sack of Baltimore and the Waterford Hackett who had guided the Algerians in there in 1631. They were now retired and so were able to live in the old home for about six months of the year, from



Anne, Reg Hackett and Gord Hackett

spring to autumn. We all enjoyed a glass of wine and a chat. At 22.00 they invited us to their house for cards but because of our 05.30 start next day we reluctantly refused.

This beautiful bay had lived up to our expectations but we needed to press on and had a good run in 15/20 knots of wind to Crow Head. This harbour is well protected with nice timber covered walls, and no fender boards are required. We had an early start the following morning, with an exhilarating broad reach of 56 miles in 20 knots to Port aux Choux, which many trawlers use as their base. It was difficult to find a place to tie up, but the Coast Guard allowed us berth at their floating dock for the night. We dined ashore at the Anchor Cafe and finished off with the local dessert, Figgy-Duff. Anne and Peter shared one and were not impressed. It consists of black and white small cubes of sponge covered with vanilla custard. After dinner we walked to a memorial to people who settled here 3000 to 5000 years ago.

Labrador and Red Bay

The 21st produced a light wind so we motor sailed across the Strait of Belle Isle to Red Bay Labrador. We saw one whale making its way southwest, three whales going northeast and many dolphins followed us as *Shelduck* crossed the traffic separation zone. As she approached Red Bay fog came down and I found myself slightly on the wrong side of a port mark, green of course. Having the fog lying on the water and the near land above on view was confusing. We docked at



Red Bay, Labrador. This photograph epitomises the conditions often encountered in Newfoundland and Labrador

the government wharf in a hurricane proof spot, tucked inside the south end. That night, I had to adjust fenders when the wind came up. There was also very heavy rain throughout the night. The water is crystal clear here; you can see 6 metres down. Next day we had breakfast in the Whaler Restaurant, which was good with excellent sausages. Red Bay is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

There was a thriving whale fishery there for about 70 years beginning in the 1530's. Whalers from the Basque region of Spain and France used the harbour of Red Bay as a seasonal base for hunting whales and processing whale oil. Four 16th century whaling vessels have been found in the harbour, along with several smaller boats used by the whalers. In one building, a nearly complete eight-metre chalupa, which the whalers used as a platform to harpoon is exhibited. It was found under the remains of the San Juan, a galleon which was lost in a storm at Red Bay in the autumn of 1565. It was another foggy day but thankfully dry as we enjoyed the walk between the exhibition sites. We napped in the afternoon, and awoke to more rain and fog.

Tilting, Lewisporte and North Newfoundland

On Sunday 24th of July we departed Red Bay Labrador, with thankfully no fog or rain, just another cloudy grey day. Having crossed the Belle Isle traffic separation zone, *Shelduck* rounded Cape Norman, Cape Onion, continued on to Sacred Bay and Medee bay to berth at the pontoon of the isolated Viking Museum at L'Anse Aux Meadows. Reconstructed sod huts there let you experience the warm smoky atmosphere of the Viking's buildings. We also enjoyed chatting with the costumed Viking re-enactors. As *Shelduck* was leaving the berth she touched and as the weather was calm and the tide falling, we decided to stay at the pontoon overnight and sail directly to Lewisporte, our departure point

for the Atlantic crossing. An hour after leaving L'Anse, Peter and I saw our first iceberg. Anne had first seen icebergs in Patagonia in 2003. As we sailed between the White islands and Partridge Point, near Quirpon Island, there were so many whales feeding near *Shelduck* that I began to worry for her safety. However, she had no contact with them. During the 30 hour passage on to Lewisporte we sighted a further ten icebergs. The night was clear and they looked so beautiful in the moonlight.

On 26th July at 13.00 we arrived at Lewisporte Marina, the largest marina in Atlantic Canada. It is an excellent facility close to all services. I decided to use the available hoist to lift *Shelduck* out to check everything on the hull before another Atlantic crossing. Captain Peter Watkins, whom we met soon after arrival, arranged with his friend, Rick Small to let us have the use of a Grand Cherokee Jeep. We had planned to hire a car but did not need to do so because of Rick's



generosity. Peter is the most experienced sailor in Lewisporte and the prime mover in the publication of the 'Cruising Guide of Notre Dame Bay'. On Friday 29th we drove to Musgrave Harbour to meet Dwayne Berry, the nearest installer of marine equipment. I also thought we might meet some relations of Cork's Musgraves, but to no avail. Nearby we visited the Park and Interpretation Centre dedicated to Sir Frederick Banting, a co-discoverer of insulin. He died in a plane crash on February 20th 1941 just outside Musgrave Harbour. Both a replica and the original wreckage of the Hudson Bomber are on display.

Next we visited Fogo Island where I enquired about the location of the Irish community and was told "turn right at the school." Tilting, which is on the eastern end of the island was founded by the French in the early 17th century. Permanent settlement followed in the 1720's and by the 1770's it had become a predominantly Irish community. While continuing to evolve, this community contains an unusually complete range of vernacular building types. The arrangements and inter relationships of traditional building types and spaces have largely been maintained. It is still inhabited by descendants of its early families. Tilting survives as a rare example of a once common Irish-Newfoundland cultural landscape and is well worth a visit. We went into the Dwyer House, a cultural center and the Lane House, a museum and finally discovered the famous Foley's Shed, where we had a warm welcome from Phillip and Maureen Foley. There were pictures of a visit of Northabout with Jarlath Cunnane, Mike Alexander and Paddy Barry featuring. None of *Shelduck's* crew offered to sing, but Maureen entertained us with her guitar. The Shed was flying the Green, White and Pink, the flag of the pre 1949 Republic of Newfoundland. I first thought it was a faded flag of the Republic of Ireland. On Sunday 31st we visited nearby Twillingate, a fishing harbour complete with Masonic Hall and Orange Hall and carried on to view Crow Head. Next day our visit was to Botwood, the base for the world's first transatlantic flights to and from Foynes in Ireland. We enjoyed the Heritage Museum, the Flying boat Museum and the crowds who were celebrating Botwood Day. The remainder of the week was spent aboard continuing our preparation for the crossing.

On Saturday 6th August, Peter Clarke left by bus for St. John's and his flight back to Dublin while Anne and I entertained Peter Watkins, Carolyn, Rick Small and Marie aboard *Shelduck* for dinner. On Sunday there was a Pot Luck Dinner in the Clubhouse. Those whose surnames began with the letter K had to bring a main course. Anne got great praise for her offering of roast chicken and roast potatoes with steamed turnip. Later as darkness fell there was a Parade of Sail with beautifully lit boats followed by a very good fireworks display. I took the opportunity to present my paper charts of Newfoundland to Peter Watkins for the use of club members.

Atlantic Crossing

For both Atlantic crossing passages I invited two younger people aboard to join Anne and me. For this one we had my son Paul ICC, in charge of communication by satellite phone to download GRIB files and be in contact with his brother Tom at home for weather routing, and Charlie Kavanagh. I choose Thursday 11th of August as departure day. We were aware that August can be a hurricane month and that icebergs might still be around. Don Street does not include wind conditions for January, February, March and August on the back of his North Atlantic Ocean Passage Chart as it seems he does not think them suitable months to make a crossing. We also realised that the northern part of the North Atlantic can be one of the most dangerous places in the world to sail. I was however encouraged by other ICC passages made at this time including *Pure Magic's* last year and *Mollyhawk's Shadow's* in 2014, both from Greenland as well as others from Newfoundland.

We departed Lewisporte at 13.30 on the 11th August as planned, in a light south westerly with Anne and I taking the first watch. At 19.00 *Shelduck* was able to head eastwards for the Fastnet Rock. We were just north of Gull Island between two shallow patches the 23 foot Old Harry to port and 112 foot Young Harry to starboard. I was very surprised to find the names of ICC founder members, Old and Young Harry Donegan, and their famous yacht Gull, side by side on the chart of Newfoundland. Just a coincidence, I am sure.

The next day, about 100 miles from land an immature goshawk visited *Shelduck* and first attempted to land on the top of the mast breaking the active radar reflector. On the bird's second attempt it broke the Windex and on the third attempt damaged the VHF aerial which reduced our AIS warning of shipping from 15 miles to 4 miles. It then tried to settle on a cross tree and eventually dropped to the deck and stayed for about two hours. Charlie tried to feed it but it refused the food. Later we learned it was almost certainly from America. It was fledged sometime during this summer from a nest probably in the great coniferous north woods of Canada. These birds normally move south in autumn, but young ones like this often get blown off course by storms, or simply just get disorientated and fly out to sea by mistake. It would have been desperate and the mast would have been the best available place to land. After leaving *Shelduck* it should have flown west, but surprisingly American goshawks have quite regularly been recorded in western Europe, including Ireland. We deployed our backup EchoMax inflatable radar reflector.



Visiting Goshawk 100 miles from land

On Saturday I was expecting a north westerly force 4/6 but by 13.00 it was force 7/8. Earlier at 11.45 a big sea dislodged two diesel cans on deck which Paul and Charlie reattached. We decided to heave to with the inner forestay No.4 and three reefs in the main. We should perhaps have been down to the 4th reef and storm jib and because of being over canvassed, suffered a small hole in the new main, which was unreinforced at the cross tree. We also had our first display from pilot whales enjoying the waves around *Shelduck*, and seemed to be looking after her. The skipper and crew stayed below for the storm continuing our regular watches including quarter hourly lookouts for possible shipping in the area. We estimated the breaking waves at 6 metres, some of which hit so hard it was like banging *Shelduck* off a wall. They worked over the deck and pushed *Shelduck* sideways so that water was then driven back onto the deck on the lee side. We were still in the Labrador Current and in the twenty-four hours hove to *Shelduck* drifted 71 miles south east at 3 knots. By 14.00 on Sunday the wind speed had reduced to 25/30 knots so we sailed with the No.4 only, which we carried into Monday. At 15.00 I noticed that the speed over the ground was slower than the speedometer in the cockpit, which meant *Shelduck* was in an area of counter current of the Labrador Current. By 15.00 the wind had gone very light so the engine was started. These conditions continued on to Wednesday 17th with the wind light easterly.

That afternoon, our call to Tom informed us that another low was forming 200 miles south of Newfoundland. It was forecast to track from there to Scotland and that if we were lucky we could expect to be in the eye of this storm by midday Friday but we needed to head southward. Tom suggested that we head for Biarritz, France. Paul downloaded a GRIB file and then I decided that to get into the eye we needed to head for Pico in the Azores. *Shelduck* was broad reaching in a smooth sea sailing over 7 knots at times. On Friday at 17.00 we changed to the storm jib and for the first time put the fourth reef in the main. Soon after we were in the centre of the weather system and later again hove to for six hours in a south easterly. Our course alteration to the south had been successful as we managed to avoid the very strong easterlies at the top of the system.

The following day at 05.30 we motor sailed east at 4.5 knots in dense fog. On Sunday 21st the north westerly filled in and with storm jib only Paul experienced the strongest winds, at the tail of the system, which reached the bottom of force 9 on his watch. The auto helm behaved very well in the 5 meter seas with *Shelduck* only broaching in gusts three times in three hours and each time was brought back on track by the autohelm without Paul's assistance. During the early afternoon about 30 pilot whales appeared, enjoying the waves and stayed with us for about six hours while many

videos were taken from *Shelduck*. Elderly ones, some with large wounds on their heads, which may have been from ship's propellers, made me nervous as they dived near the rudder. 04.30 on Monday brought a strong squall and a broach. We took down the main and sailed on a broad reach towards the Fastnet Rock, now 649 miles away, with storm jib only. On Tuesday 23rd the low had slowed off Ireland and left *Shelduck* in a fresh north westerly.

On Wednesday at 21.50 the EPIRB activated in torrential rain and we reset and dried it. We phoned Tom on the satellite phone and asked him to call the MRCC and say it was a false alarm. The wonderful fresh north westerly continued until Friday 26th when land was sighted, The Bull off Dursey Head, at 19.30. Wind then went south east and so I altered course to come in north of Cape Clear Island. At 07.30 on Saturday 27th, near the Mealbeg off Turk Head, *Shelduck* met Paul Rankin's punt. On board were Paul, his wife Nuala, their three children, my daughter Patricia, brother-in-law Fergus to welcome us home. *Shelduck* berthed at the village pontoon in Baltimore Harbour at 08.00 where we opened a couple of bottles of Prosecco. After breakfast Charlie left for home and next day Anne was collected by her daughter Heather and returned to Tralee.

The passage from Lewisporte to Baltimore was 2032 miles. If I was making it again in a 34 footer, which I won't be, I would head for the Azores after leaving Newfoundland until I was south of 47° north, to help avoid storms developing south of the Grand Banks. I would then head east until conditions suited a north east passage for Ireland. I had earlier decided not to depart from St. Johns, to the south, having read of the unsuitable conditions there for a small yacht.

After just one night sleeping ashore I slept aboard again on Sunday 28th. My daughter Patricia and Paul's children, Daniel, aged 14, and Francis, aged 11, also slept aboard. We were out of our bunks at 05.15 the following morning for the passage to the Royal Cork Yacht Club, Crosshaven. This gave the children the experience of sailing in the darkness and seeing the lights, including the Fastnet Rock. *Shelduck* berthed at the RCYC marina at 16.00 with Daniel steering most of the way.

This year's cruise from Southwest Harbour Maine USA to Crosshaven Ireland was 3,436 miles. Our Atlantic Circuit from Cascais to Cork 2013-2016 was 11,568 miles.

The highlights of this cruise were:

The welcoming, very helpful and interesting people we met during our many visits to Canadian yacht clubs.

Shelduck herself is a Dufour 34 which I bought off the plans in 2003 at the London Boat Show from Donal McClement (ICC), of Crosshaven Boat Yard. She was designed by Umberto Felci and Patrick Roséo and has a European Recreational Craft Directive certificate for category A, unlimited ocean use. I have not had a moment of anxiety from her in over 20,000 miles of sailing.

I ordered a mechanical linear drive autopilot, suitable for 40/45 feet LOA rather than a wheel drive normal for 34 footers. Upsizing meant it had plenty in reserve and never skipped a beat on any point of sailing no matter what the Atlantic threw at it. Anne had encouraged me to fit an autopilot soon after I met her.

The Facnor inner forestay roller reefing system. This allowed us to change easily and quickly from the No. 4 to the storm jib and back again in heavy weather. The ability to attach and remove rolled up sails which are not flapping in the wind is a great advantage. The halyard and bolt rope of the sails is low stretch rope.

Anne and I have been very lucky since becoming widow and widower, on the deaths of our spouses Angela and Brian in 2008. We met at the ICC/RCC meet in the Azores after lunch in Santa Maria. Since then we have cruised together over 22,500 miles in *Tam O'Shanter* and *Shelduck* round the 5,500 mile imaginary line from St Petersburg in the north to Grenada in the Caribbean to the south. We don't intend to hang up our sea boots, just yet, and plan to continue to cruise both yachts for as long as we can.

**Welcome home
sunset on arrival
at RCYC marina.**



Reiver - Wine run to west Brittany

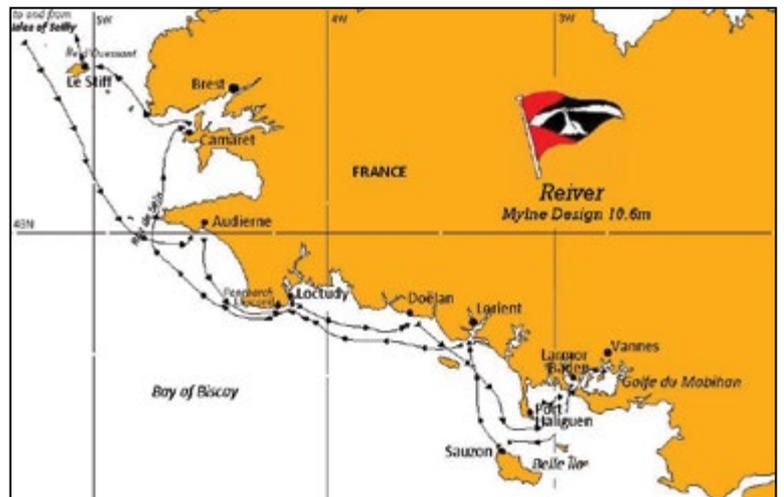
David Williams

With our crew of David Williams, George Wylie and Brian Williams (no relation), *Reiver* set off from Whiterock very early on Tuesday 7th June bound for West Brittany and motored all day in the rain, eventually reaching Howth late in the evening. We slipped at 03.00 hours next morning to take advantage of the south going tide and were motoring in quite thick fog when at about 07.30 hours we snagged a pot buoy near India South buoy off Wicklow Head. My heart sank yet again as I thought would this be the third cruise in a row to be severely marred by mechanical problems? We hooked the heavy pot buoy lines round a cleat and while George held onto the loose end we put the prop in reverse, some line was freed but we were still caught by the tail. I could see that we could not get out of this on our own and called on the VHF asking for assistance. Eventually after some delay Wicklow Head Coast Guard answered and asked for our position etc. The VHF reception was broken and difficult but soon the Coast Guard said in a surprised voice 'Oh I can see you on AIS. After a short delay an Irish Naval Service RIB appeared out of the fog, its mother ship was audible but still concealed in the murk. The Navy cut some of the ropes and tried grappling the line, then they motored us into the 2.5 knot tide and by sheer luck the line fell away. By this time the RNLI lifeboat was standing by to tow us if necessary. We put the prop in forward and reverse and all seemed well so we thanked all concerned and went on our way greatly relieved. We proceeded southwards in thickening fog inside Long Bank towards Rosslare and the only mark that we saw since Codling Bank was the North Long cardinal. As we approached Rosslare a motor boat warned us about the many pot buoys in the bay and advised going as far west as possible before we anchored at 20.00 hours. That evening we held the opening round of the 2016 Ballymena/Biscay Whist World Championship which was won by George.

Next day, Thursday, we sailed at 13.40 hours in patchy fog taking the south going tide at the Tusker (which we did not see at all). Through Friday (Brian's birthday) we motored and sailed in light conditions. We were joined at dawn by a large pod of small dolphins. However an idiot in an Irish yacht nearly ran into us then turned and went the opposite way. We eventually arrived at New Grimsby Sound, Scilly at 16.30 hours in continuing fog. Saturday was a rest day during which we went round Tresco gardens, had dinner at the New Inn, Tresco (after sussing out the Hell



Cargo



Foul of a pot near Wicklow and being assisted by a RIB from an Irish Naval vessel, with RNLI standing by

Bay Hotel, Bryher which was snooty and unaccommodating) and managed three more games of Ballymena Whist.

On Sunday at 10.00 hours we slipped our mooring and headed across Tresco Flats and were clear of Spanish Ledge in Saint Mary's Sound by 11.00 hours. Visibility was not great but we had a super fast reach most of the way south through the night past Ushant (Île d'Ouessant) with the wind only disappearing as we approached the west side of Île de Sein. We then motored across to Audierne and picked up a mooring at 12.30 hours on Monday. We snoozed in the afternoon and held rounds five and six of Ballymena Whist in the evening.

On Tuesday 14th June we had was a gentle sail/motor of 30 miles round the many rocks on the Pointe de Penmarch



David in the Isles of Scilly

to Loctudy marina where we had to pay for our berth for the first time on this cruise. We had broken our boat hook end in Audierne so went to the chandler for a replacement, not knowing what to ask for and eventually found a 'Croc(het) de Gaffe'. It was raining by now, so we trudged round to the fishing port to the poissonnerie and bought 1.50 kg of langoustines which were cooked for us on the spot. We asked the attendant, Gourvan, where the supermarché was located. He said 'It is 30 minutes walk, take my car!' George and I set off in the fishy two seater to the shop where we procured the first of our wine cargo (maximum price paid was €4.10 for a bottle).

Next morning we took on fuel (€1.34/litre) and water before sailing at midday in sunshine along the coast to Doëlan. The inner visitors' moorings were fore and aft joined by lines which were very awkward to pick up in the swell (the pilot book said the moorings were large round buoys). Doëlan is rather exposed and is not a great place to visit. We extricated ourselves by reconnecting

the buoy joining line on the other side of *Reiver* to allow us to drift free into the constricted river. We headed off on a beautiful sunny morning with a good wind towards the Quiberon peninsula, when near Île de Groix we were diverted by the military and made to go southwards in a square. There was no sign of any military exercises. After weaving our way through the tortuous channel at Quiberon we arrived at Port Haliguen marina where we were squeezed into an overflow berth, as there was an event for the disabled being held. We immediately met an elderly English couple on a scruffy yacht

who offered to give us a lift to the supermarket in their equally ancient van which was emblazoned with 'Vote Leave' (not a way to endear themselves to the French), another opportunity to take on more cargo. Many large craft had assembled for the '25 Ans' event including *Pen Duick* and one, contrary to the Colregs, had a flashing masthead white light on all night inside the marina.

At 14.00 hours on Friday we left Port Haliguen in a strong westerly with only half the jib up to catch the flood tide for the Golfe du Morbihan 10 miles away. We were swept past Port du Crouesty through the entrance in the swirling tide which we carried all the way up the final channel to Vannes. We had to wait a short while before the swing bridge opened at 18.00 hours, allowing up the canal into the town. The bridge operator shouted to us and instructed that we proceed all the way up to the Capitainerie building, just before the floating bridge in the heart of the town. Chef's night off at L'Atlantique restaurant. Next morning,

we lost George as we went through the market in the medieval town centre. Eventually we met up with him and went for lunch and then to the supermarket for more wine and stores. Mid afternoon we headed for the 17.00 hours bridge opening, and after passing through with quite a number of boats behind us were severely obstructed in the narrow channel by British yacht *Allegro* coming upstream which did not even try to get out of the way of the downstream traffic which should have had priority. The skipper directed a number of expletives at a totally unapologetic *Allegro*. We eventually got past and slipped down tide towards the entrance to the Morbihan, picking up a tranquil mooring at Larmor-Baden and after some more games of whist had a quiet night.

We slipped the mooring at 08.45 hours to take the ebb out through the huge tide swirls (like a big Strangford Lough) at a SOG of 10 knots and had a lovely sail in rare sunshine across to Belle Île where we picked up fore and aft moorings in Sauzon. We were amused to see a moored fishing craft painted in orange and purple with LOL written across its bow. It looked as if the Orange Lodge navy was on exercise in Brittany. We woke next morning to wind and rain and had a wet fast reach with three slabs in the main and half jib across to Lorient. We made our way through the harbour, past the German submarine pens, right up the river into the town and got a good berth in front of the Gendarmerie launch. The rain kept on falling all afternoon. Later we checked in with the Capitainerie and walked to the nearest supermarket. On



Canal at Vannes

we lost George as we went through the market in the medieval



Sauzon

entering the shop we were asked if we were from a boat and they offered a lift back so lots more wine was purchased. On return we utilised the showers in the Capitainerie which were the best we have ever come across, large self contained cubicles with shower, wash hand basin, mirror and racking for clothes and bags, superb. In the evening we made our way across the bridge towards the sleepy town centre to L'Avenue bistro, where we had an excellent meal. We met a French sailing couple who said that France did not want the UK to leave Europe. We returned to the boat for the whist final as George was going home next morning. George won the series by one game. Early next morning George left to make his way by train to Nantes as his two week pass had expired. Brian and I left to head for home at 09.15 hours and motored down the channel in thick fog. An incoming large ferry showed up on AIS and passed close by. Eventually the fog cleared as we made our way past Îles de Glénan to Lesconil on the Penmarch peninsula and were pleasantly surprised to find that many finger pontoons had been installed. That evening we went to a pub to see Northern Ireland beaten by Germany in the Euro 2016 football accompanied by some very stoic Germans.



Traditional craft of Camaret

On our way again at 07.00 hours in more fog, thanks to the chartplotter and AIS we were able to go through the Raz de Sein in the early afternoon without seeing anything at all except a few boats. The fog cleared revealing an oily sea and we motored the rest of the way to Camaret. Brian and I played some games of whist, a very different game than that with three or four people. The results with three people were George 7, Brian 6, and David 4. We left at 12.00 hours next day in rain to be at the Chenal du Four at slack water and rejoiced to be able to see further than a cable. We made our way through the Chenal de la Helle to Île d'Ouessant where we picked up a mooring at Le Stiff. It was most uncomfortable in the swell but we were well positioned to head across the English Channel. The resident dolphin splashed about in the bay as usual. We sailed next morning at 03.00 hours to take the north going tide on a close reach in the north westerly breeze. Brian and I took an hour on and an hour off which worked well giving us enough rest and not too long on watch to get bored. Thankfully there were very few ships in the Traffic Separation Zone. We eventually picked up a mooring at 21.45 hours in Hugh Town, St Mary's, Scilly and it was even more uncomfortable than usual in the increasing northerly (other moorings were not an option at that time of evening). We rested and went ashore next day and visited the Star Castle. The ICC yacht *Aisha* came in during the day. The forecast was for northwest or west force 3 to 4 occasionally 5 next day and then to be stronger from the north for the rest of the week so we had to leave on Sunday or be stuck.

On Sunday again we set off at 03.00 hours and motored clear of Scilly's many rocks until 06.00 hours when we were able to douse the engine and set sail on a close reach with two slabs in the main and full jib (this setup was to remain for the next 280 miles). We continued the one hour watches and as things were going well, kept going through the next night and passed the Tusker in the early hours of Monday with a fair tide.

We had covered 1,106 miles in three weeks and realized that we would not have got very far in the frequent thick fog without the wonderful aids of the chartplotter and the AIS transceiver. About 50% of the cruising yachts that we met had AIS transceivers. The tide was right to get into Strangford when we reached the narrows at 02.00 hours on Tuesday and picked up our mooring at Whiterock in full daylight at 04.30 hours. We slept until 07.00 hours; then went into the pontoon to discharge our cargo.



New Grimsby Sound, Isles of Scilly

THE RUSSIAN VOYAGE

Fergus Quinlan

Saturday 14th May 2016: Katherine and I slipped *Pylades* off its mooring at midday and motored west from Kinvara. The sea was quiet in the bay, a limpid calmness which extended out beyond the shelter of the Aran Islands. Dolphins accompanied *Pylades* south. Where one pod left off, another joined. In the translucent seas they were clearly having fun under a blue sky as they bellied up beneath the bows in a high speed sex romp. Basket Sound with its restless water has many faces but on our first morning underway, it was shrouded in a slow fog. Its islands and their outliers were but ghostly images, imparting an air of deep melancholy. By contrast, Dursey Sound, a few hours later, was a blaze of bright sunshine with figures who waved us through from both shores.



The Fastnet Rock emerged from a flat ocean in whispers of wind. Reflecting on a previous storm, we motored on our way. The calm allowed the easy sighting of many whales and myriads of dolphins. A waypoint was set for the Seven Stones Light Vessel; it was a cold night on our 3 hour watches. The plotter showing our position and that of other vessels from AIS was for us a fairly new experience. We noticed some of the AIS screen images becoming static. An object query revealed that their transmissions were old and thus we had discovered 'ghost ships'.

Adding to the night's interest, the galley sink refused to drain; grease was the likely culprit. Hot water and chemicals did not sort the problem. Neither did poking with wire. Presses were emptied, the seacock closed, the pipework dismantled and, while removing the final connection, the bronze flange of the seacock sheared off. Gingerly opening the seacock, the skipper found only the tiniest trickle and plunged a screw driver down the open valve, resulting in the ejection of an impressive lump of grease, followed by a 38mm diameter column of solid Atlantic. Thankfully the seacock closed to await a new fitting.

17th May: 06.20 abeam Lizard Point and dodging real ships. Entering Plymouth Harbour, we crossed the 'bridge' and anchored in the pool west of Drakes Island. Next morning, *Pylades* moved to the sixty euro a night Queen Anne Battery Marina. In the adjacent Marine Bazaar, a tail for the sink outlet seacock was located and full flow restored. At 13.00, we left, bound west. 'Passage Weather' forecast wind F2 to 3 fair, the Met Office coastal F4-5 occasionally 6, with rain. The latter was correct and we had a rotten night at sea, compounded by ghost ships and AIS images approaching at 33 knots, which subsequently materialised as Motor Torpedo Boats. Later the skipper misjudged a trawler and was forced to gybe. Nevertheless, with wind aplenty, great progress was made under a double reefed main and half a headsail.

20th May: Portland Bill Light 6 miles to port appeared through a clearing mist, as did the moon and reefs were shaken out. Diverting to Poole Harbour we recollected the near miss of Hilaire Belloc's yacht *Jersey* at the adjacent Anvil Point. A mathematical error by Katherine and *Pylades* almost followed suit – reduced wine rations. At 10.30 we picked a free mooring. Over the next two days we sheltered, worked on boat bits, sipped wine and watched the passing parade. Diversion came at night with a wind blowing against the strange tides of Poole. We became tide-rotted, overriding the mooring buoy which dragged itself back and forth under the bow with alarming noises. We had a restless sleep, occasionally altering the chafing points on the lines.

22nd May: With tidal gates calculated, we sailed for the Needles, the west entrance to the Solent. The Cardinal buoy approached with an alarming bow wave and we passed within a hair's breadth. Choppy swirling currents carried *Pylades* to the home of English 'yachting', the Solent, filled with boats of all descriptions. We saw more boats in the next hours than in the previous ten years. Following in the path of the Howth Gun Runners we put in to Cowes. A pleasant place, not overly expensive. While Katherine did not search for a yachting cap as did Mary Spring Rice in July of 1914, we went in search of the Royal Marine Hotel where the crew of *Asgard* supped as they waited the arrival of the *Kelpie*. We were miss-informed that the hotel was now the clubhouse of the Royal London Yacht Club. Following consultation with the

club records, we were introduced to Mr John Power of whiskey making fame. He was a repository of knowledge regarding the events surrounding the *Asgard*. To an expanding circle in the club, we explained our quest regarding the relative benefits to the Irish people of the 1916 rising and the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. A club member exclaimed it was the most interesting discussion in the club for many a year. We were invited to give a talk on our return. However, we explained that our route home was to be via Scotland. Our idea for a drink in the Royal Marine Hotel did not materialise: it had been demolished. As promised, a copy of the skipper's book 'The Republic of Reason & The Poverty Philosophy' was delivered; not sure what The Royal London YC made of that.

23rd May: We took on fuel, exited Cowes at 12.00. As we left the sheltered waters of the Solent, we heard the roar of a low flying Spitfire out of the blue. Displaying its unmistakable profile, it banked at mast height around *Pylades*, linking us back to wars and guns. Its electrifying scream brought back boyhood memories of the passionate desire to fly that ultimate air machine.

24th May: 05.00 We passed Dungeness Point nuclear power station and a light wind built on the nose. We motored on and tied at a very quiet Dover Marina. Anne Korff from Kinvara arrived for a nostalgic passage to her origins, Germany. We took the aft fitting off the boom to free a jammed reef, topped up the tanks and ensured all was well for the channel crossing. Next morning, exiting with perfect timing, we caught a favourable tide. Likewise, with perfect timing the plotter screen went black. It left dozens of moving AIS images but showed neither the chart nor *Pylades* position. Improvisation was in order. Katherine repeatedly transferred our position from the GPS to the plotter; at least we knew which ship was going to run us down. The procedure kept us busy and worked. Considering the amount of information those on board the *Asgard* and *Kelpie* had at their disposal in 1914, we could not complain.

From a position south east of the Goodwin sands, *Pylades* proceeded on the requisite 90 degree crossing of the lanes. We had a few nervous hours in poor visibility dodging ships approaching from the northeast and then the southwest. At the same time, the favourable flood tide swept us sideways down on the Ruytingen SW Buoy. This we assumed was the station of the Ruytingen lightship in 1914, the rendezvous for the yachts *Asgard*, *Kelpie* and the German Tug *Gladiator* out of Hamburg. Through the fog of time and history, we imagined the racing hearts of the young men and women aboard those yachts on that 12th July as 1,500 guns and heavy ammunition boxes were transferred. How could they foretell what glory, what blood, what disaster, these instruments of death would bring? Reflecting on these rich moments of history we were swept in to the deserted Dunkerque marina at 18.45.



Ghostly bridges in the Netherlands



Dawn on the Ijsselmeer

26th May: It appeared that we could not escape from the shadows of war. Heavy black smoke poured across the town and beaches of Dunkerque and another Spitfire screamed overhead. Vintage warships filled the bay and hundreds of soldiers in WW2 fatigues swarmed in the surf. Film making was underway. It was the 76th anniversary of the Dunkerque evacuation when 338,000 English, French and Belgian soldiers were snatched by a medley of boats, including yachts, from the approaching fascist army. Reflecting on the divisions of nationalism and competitive greed, forces which still destroy countries and people, the skipper worked on the reef block, which had jammed yet again.

27th May: Through a light fog and past the dissipating warships, we pushed along the coast to Ostend, where we were greeted by the marina manager, Patrick, and his dog, Shifty, who promptly bit the skipper. No blood was drawn but might have been if he had had one of the Mausers from the *Asgard*. An easterly wind and kept us in Ostend on walkabouts and doing odd jobs for four days.

1st June: 06.00 As we left Ostend harbour entrance, a fishing boat trailing side nets lunged at us out of the fog. We spun *Pylades* on its length and headed out to sea. It was a stressful passage, particularly without the AIS. We were constantly transiting between the cockpit and the radar. The alternator failed, the radar was now draining the batteries. Thankfully the fog had dissipated by the time we arrived in the Netherlands and tied at Breskins Marina. After much testing and fiddling, we sought professional assistance. An electrical wizard wired in a bigger bulb at the control panel and

explained in detail why this would solve the problem. The skipper, now short €268, pretended he fully understood. In the meantime, Katherine was working her way through every facet of the computer to restore AIS and the Open CPN charts, to no avail. Northeast winds were forecast to blow firmly for the next week, which would greatly impede progress towards the Frisian Islands. The marina manager suggested we travel inland north through the Netherlands. Brilliant, we concurred and bought a copy of the 'Staande Mastroute', an astonishing amount of information for €20.

3rd June: Fog and ripping tides heralded our passage through the lock gates at Vlissingen into the calm and amazing canal system of the Netherlands. Motoring through swirling fog, ghostly traffic lights flashed their signals to proceed or pause as spectral bridges swung or lifted before us. The infrastructure for the passage of *Pylades* was a feast of beautiful engineering and was provided as a vast state funded service. That evening we anchored in a pool off the 'Jachtsluis'. We sipped wine, the cuckoo's call echoed along the waterways while thunder rumbled in the distance.

5th June: Commencing at 05.30, the day was travelled at 5 knots, looking into a thousand back gardens, gliding over motorways, steering our ship level with house roofs, bridges tilting and turning and children jumping into the canal. In the village of Woubrugge, we paid €13.00 and rested there. Next morning at 05.00, it was cold under a clear blue sky. After two further days of canal gliding, we arrived at the outskirts of Amsterdam. Heavy rail and road city traffic dictated a night passage. At midnight, to the sound of bells and flashing lights, four huge bridges, two rail and two motorways opened. We were ready when the lights went green and a loud voice from the dark shouted 'Go, Go' We slammed the throttle to the floor. *Pylades* achieved a standing start from zero to 7 knots in seconds. A minute later the bridges closed and trains and trucks resumed their voyages; our hearts were pounding. Over the next few hours, we passed twelve bridges and two sluices, during which a man on a high-nelly bike with coat tails flapping shouted encouragement as he whizzed past. It was he who opened each bridge as we passed. Suddenly, white lights and a bow wave filled the canal from wall to wall as two full-size commercial barges, one pushing the other, bore down. Panic ensued. The yacht in front slowed. If we followed suit, *Pylades* would lose steerage and be sucked into the barge path. We throttled up, passed the yacht at speed and charged. The steel barge-walls slid by a fender width to port. Exiting into the Amstel river at 03.00, we were shattered and bewildered by lights and ships. Thankfully, the accompanying yacht suggested that we go back into the canal and tie for the night. We gratefully did and fell into a fitful sleep.

7th June: Anne Korff left to fly home, and we crossed to Amsterdam marina for fuel. By 14.00 we were sailing close hauled across the Markermeer. After a choppy approach into Lelystad, we celebrated our progress with a bottle of bubbly. Head winds on the shoal waters of IJsselmeer forced the use of full mainsail and engine to batter our way to the calm waters of Lemmer in Friesland. Next day we grounded twice as we passed a growing concentration of locks and bridges and had further close encounters with commercial barges.

Entering the pretty town of Leeuwarden, a lockkeeper swung a clog on a fishing line to collect a €7.00 toll. For the service we were getting, one could hardly complain. Unfortunately in the rush a sterling coin ended up amongst the Euros. For this crime we were blocked at the next lock by the only keeper in Holland who couldn't speak English. We grounded the boat into the canal bank to have an animated discussion and passers-by joined in to translate and placate. Everyone was astonishingly friendly and helpful. *Pylades* was waved through and we tied to the canal bank further on. Here we watched an air display and observed a jet-fighter stalling, which didn't recover. Thankfully the pilot had ejected and landed with cuts, bruises and a few broken bones in a glass house. The jet hit another glasshouse and destroyed its tomato crop.

10th June: On the approaches to the Lauwersmeer in centre of a well-marked channel we ran hard aground. No amount of engine would get us off. We opened the full Genoa but the wind was insufficient to help. Just when we needed a big motorboat, there are none about. Two yachts eventually approached, from the north a traditional lee boarder and one from the south. They combined forces with our engine and got us off. Their shouted instructions were to stay close to the red marks away from the centre channel. Every day we got a little more confused. In Yachthaven Lauwersmeer, the chilled bottle in our fridge exploded and we went for pints in the bar. Here we met the only Irish-flagged boat of our journey, a Drascombe lugger on its way to sail in the wake of *Dulcibella*, the yacht in 'The Riddle of the Sands'. by Erskine Childers, whose real life adventures in running rifles from the Ruytingen Lightship back to Howth we were following.

The following day we passed the final lock and into the Waddenzee. Adjusting to a more solitary life, *Pylades* pushed northwest between the Friesian islands of Ameland and Schiermonnikoog. We grew apprehensive; one of the buoyed routes shown on our chart had disappeared, another, the one we were following, headed out into the North Sea and did not correspond with what we had. Proceeding further, our soundings decreased and higher grew the sea. Many miles out from the shore where we could barely see the islands were sandbanks and breaking seas. Just when despair was about to consume us, the soundings went from 3 to a more tolerable 10 metres. For a crew used to the generous depths of the west coast, the experience was to say the least, stressful.

An easterly wind and tidal calculations decided that we should return to shoal water and land at the German Island of Borkum. The entrance channel was surrounded by ribbons of banks with erratically breaking seas, it was indeed, a riddle of the sands. We were trying to imagine the difficulties without GPS. It would have been tricky to get accurate bearings on the low islands. An ill designed pilot launch passed very close at speed and buried us in its wash; one of its crew ran to its stern waving an apology. In the still harbour of Borkum we lay alongside a friendly German yacht.

12th June: We took a bus into a fairly dull holiday resort town, a German version of Butlin's Holiday Camp. At noon

next day we headed for deep water. With the wind on the nose we motor tacked and battered our way 80 miles overnight to the river Elbe and Brunsbüttel. During the darkest hours we saw a bank of lights stretching miles across our track. It was an anchor field. Like an ant amongst the elephants, we threaded our way through 18 anchored, light-festooned vessels. At 03.00 on this wet grey morning, we left the German Bight and were sucked by the tide into the Elbe. Sticking to the starboard edge of the channel, a chain of grey ships with frothing bows overtook on their way to Hamburg. We found a gap in the procession and, gunning the engine, skidded across the river to the gates of the Kiel Canal. By 09.00 we were in the first lock with a ship and a scattering of small boats which had materialised out of the rain. This 60 mile short cut into the Baltic was built primarily to facilitate German Naval power prior to the First World War. It is so wide and straight that much of the passage could be on auto-pilot. Halfway along the canal, we tied to the rain soaked marina at Rendsburg, an interesting medieval town.

15th June: 12.30 transiting the final lock, we entered the Baltic. Canal fees, to our delight had been abolished. The marina at Kiel was fairly full, but after much manoeuvring, we found a slot for €20 per night. The morning brought fair weather and, having hired a pair of high bikes, we whizzed along the myriad of cycle lanes in a city where bicycles and pedestrians seem to have priority. Our new transport system shuffled oil, laundry, shopping and finally a new chemical toilet for the confined waters of the Baltic and canals. The toilet on Katherine's bike combined with a tricky back-pedal brake caused her to crash, thankfully without damage to either to rider or goods.

17th June: It was Kiel Week, the biggest sailing festival in the world, with 2,000 boats partaking in all sorts of events. To make space, we exited for the fairly bleak and shallow marina at Wendtorf. Next morning found us underway to the island of Bornholm, Denmark. A Sécurité call from German warship *Rothwild* warned of an underwater explosion at 12.45. The position given was about seven miles off. The warning was repeated every fifteen minutes and there was a final countdown over channel 16 in which the whole bridge of the warship participated. A few seconds after the zero there was a mighty dull double thump followed by an eerie silence. The skipper would regret for life not having called to ascertain that all was well on the warship. He would have liked to wished them well and hoped that they would enjoy the large fish supper. The westerly wind picked up and we flew along under two reefs and some Genoa, cheered by a red sunset and under a full moon. Ships lights slid by in all directions. The next morning, with more luck than ability, the skipper cracked the electronic glitch and the AIS, GPS and the electronic charts were finally brought back together, bliss.

19th June: The following sea grew boisterous and the water shoaled as we approached Ronne harbour in Bornholm. Calling the harbour for advice, they said 'you will probably be OK'. Apprehension peaked when there was no entrance green buoy as shown on the chart. As we rounded into the harbour, the layout had changed from the chart. We tied up and spent a day shopping, walking and fixing the staysail.

21st June: Mid-summer's Day was cold and the rain poured. Hope springs eternal, and the barometer was 1011 and rising. Behind schedule, we skipped Poland and headed to Lithuania. With one reef in the main and a poled-out Genoa, we ran east. An urgent call on the VHF stated that we had entered a prohibited area and a large tug escorted us away, only a minor course deviation. Air pollution in the Baltic on a clear day showed a brown mist on all horizons. At night only the glow of the main stars penetrated, and of the milky way there was no trace. At dawn on the 23rd we entered the extensive harbour of Klaipeda, found a deserted yacht harbour and slept. A few hours later a gentle knocking and a kind face asked us to move to Castle Harbour. 'Not a bother' we replied. Passing through an intriguing hand operated swing bridge, we tied at a picturesque marina. The harbour master said they 'maybe' never had an Irish boat, as he unfurled an Irish flag. We thanked him, even if it looked Italian.

24th June: A warm day was spent walking the attractive town, sipping coffee in sidewalk cafes and people watching. Observing the almost complete absence of advertising and women wearing high heels, we developed an opinion, imagined or otherwise, that in the former countries of the USSR women walked as though they were about to go on stage. Was it all that socialist gym and ballet? The next day, calm and under a blue sky, we pushed north. To starboard we saw an interminable ribbon of sand that comprised the coasts of Lithuania and Latvia backed by a pine forest, and its perfume washed over us. At 21.00, the idle offshore breeze got bored and dumped a squall with 35 knots of wind, thunder and lightning on us. The sea built and died quickly.

26th June: 07.00 We arrived at Ventpils in Latvia and tied bow-on with stern buoy. The only boat in the marina, we received a warm welcome. We visited the Castle of the Livonian Order, basically an armed gang from the 1230s involved in various power grabs, while enforcing the dominant superstitions of the era as a cover. Next morning, we went for a plunge off the nudist beach, but the grey morning did not invite a long stay. At 18.00 we exited into a fine night with a light westerly. A few 'cities of light' liners passed on their way to and from Riga. In the calm morning, we entered the three-mile approach to Kuressaare on the island of Saaremaa, Estonia. It is narrow and only 2.7 metres deep and there were birds standing on shingle beaches at both sides of the boat. We were the second Irish boat in 12 years and in our honour, the tricolour was hoisted on the marina's yardarm. There were 132 spaces in the marina with six boats.

We hired a 49cc scooter with helmets, both squeezed on to the tiny bike and roared off into town. Katherine shouted from aft to keep the speed down, the skipper retorted that we were doing just over 20 mph and were at full power. We got a camping gaz cylinder filled €5.00, shopped, did the sights and rode into town for beers. Our nightmare would have been a line of 1000cc 'angel' bikes in front of the pub. Thankfully there were none, and our image and self-esteem were maintained! Next morning after a swim in murky tepid water, Katherine attempted wheelies on the scooter before

we handed it back.

30th June: At dawn we pushed north through the shoal channels between Hiiumaa and Vormsi and out into the Gulf of Finland, seeing only two yachts. Next day we entered the guest harbour of Piritä, built for the Moscow Olympics of 1980, and now 'down at heel'. The bus took about 15 minutes to the mediæval city of Tallinn. It was fascinating, with winding narrow streets and myriads of little bars and restaurants. We had an evening of splendid wine, food and ambiance in 'Franks Bar'. More exploration followed the next day, soaking up Tallinn's history and architecture. We examined a spacious church which, having been used as a centre for dance during the socialist period, was gloomily being restored for worship.

3rd July: At 0300 it dawned red and thundery with a light wind astern and falling barometer. There were warning of gales as we crossed the Gulf of Finland bound for Haapasaari, Finland. Some ships were transiting the gulf, but no other yachts were sighted. Closing the Russian border, the GPS position of *Pylades* went wild, jumping a mile back west, then east, then north, it took about 15 minutes to settle down. In the meantime, the skipper was transferring 'old type' compass fixes on to a chart. With binoculars we picked out the leading channel buoys. Later we asked the Finnish Border Guard who might be responsible. 'impossible to really know' was the answer, the Russians, the Americans or NATO. We entered the tiny landlocked harbour and tied at a timber pier, unfortunately on top of a rock, where, in a rising gale we bumped through the night. Next morning at the diesel dock, Sonia the all-round shopkeeper, dock and diesel master, switched on the pump whilst instructing that if the dock pump did not work, 'tickle it with your finger, my pump I think she is a woman'. As the rain lashed and the wind howled, we fuelled up and wandered the beautiful island. Costs were €10.00 per night.

An islander knocked on the boat and invited us to the community centre where an exhibition of historical photographs was on display, then to his house to meet his father. We learned about Haapasaari and its history. There are 70 houses on the island. During the winter only about 10 are occupied. Each house has a flagpole. When occupied they hoist a long-tail version of the national flag to inform all that help or company is available. This custom seems to prevail throughout Finland and Sweden. He warned us that the island has ticks, some of which carry a risk of infection and advised against walking on the grass barefoot, adding that his brother was infected, resulting in brain damage.

6th July: The gales eased, the barometer was 995 and rising and at 13.30 we checked out with the Finnish border guard and at set course for Russia. At 15.35 crossing the border, we contacted the Russian Coast Guard. A deep gravelly voice bade us proceed. Hours later they called us. 'Yacht *Pylades*, confirm that you are eight cables south of Somers Island'. Having responded, we were advised to proceed. By 03.00 the following morning, the westerly wind and sea had increased. While the marked shipping lane is dredged to accommodate cruise liners, the approach to Kronstadt had the feel of shoal water. During the final mile, the waves became very confused, bouncing back from the fort walls, and we hand steered. Through the entrance the lights were blinding. We approached the dock and a woman in a Soviet-looking uniform boomed 'tie here'. The skipper leapt ashore and shook hands. She almost smiled and instructed regarding passports and papers. A thin uniform with a moustache arrived. He searched the ship and pulled out all our wine bottles. We believed that wine would be exorbitant in Sweden and Finland and loaded in Germany for the voyage. He photographed the hoard and left. Customs arrived and explained that we were only allowed four bottles each. Much rancour and debate followed, but they had superior firepower so we lost about 45 bottles. The whole procedure had taken six hours, with resolute stoicism we rehoisted sail and scudded east before the rain and wind.

On our final approach, the thudding beat of Shostakovich's 7th 'The Leningrad symphony' filled the cockpit. It had been first performed when the city was under siege by the German and Finnish armies, the most lethal siege in history. Over 900-days one and a half million people died from bombardment and starvation. Hitler commanded that it be erased. The musicians who played at that heroic première were starving and three died during rehearsals. To silence German forces, a Soviet military offensive was launched just prior to the performance, which was broadcast live to the city and German lines by loudspeakers. This première was considered by music critics to be one of the most important artistic performances of the war. Its psychological and political effects triumphed over the soulless Nazi war machine. The concert prompted an hour-long ovation, one that still echoes.

High speed hydrofoil ferries darting past in all directions concentrated the mind. We kept our cool and maintained



Fergus and Katherine at the Kremlin

slow, steady, progress along the starboard edge of the channel. We then lost our cool when we saw a bridge under construction across our course to the marina. It was not shown on our chart. We steered for the unfinished gap; (later we were informed that our air draft of 15 metres would not have been a problem anywhere under the bridge). The buoyage at the other side was missing, so we gingerly sounded our way into the Central Yacht Club Marina. There, to our delight, through the rain, we saw the unmistakable Vladimir Ivankiv, waving. After handshakes and hugs we realised that we had reached the Russian Federation and the end of our journey east.

8th July: In need of exercise, we walked to the centre of Petersburg, the city slowly opened before us with all its waterways and magnificent architecture, even if somewhat gaudy to west European eyes. Soaking ourselves in its ambience, we had a delightful lunch in town and travelled back to base on the amazing metro. After another day exploring the city, we caught a train to Moscow on Sunday morning, travelling at up to 150 miles per hour, the Sapsan Express covered the 400 miles in under four hours. At €75 per night for two including breakfast, the hotel was excellent, how large the bed seemed after our boat bunk? The rest of the day was devoted to sightseeing. When Katherine was a young girl, she dreamed she would dance in Red Square. That evening at Kremlin's wall, we danced by the light of the moon.

13th July: We met with representatives of the Moscow Museum of Architecture as part of our quest to bring an exhibition of VKhuTEMAS to Ireland, but that is another story. Our return to *Pylades* was via the romantic overnight sleeper train, all booked by Vladimir, our amazing OCC port officer. We wandered Petersburg again, unfortunately two places on our visiting list, the battleship *Aurora* had been removed and the Museum on Siege of Leningrad was shut and looking neglected. (The *Aurora* has been refurbished and is now back on station).

Time to leave, bidding farewell to Vladimir we presented him with the skipper's book, took some photos and headed for the Kronstadt. We checked out without incident although the customs officer looked distinctly sheepish. Outside, the westerly wind was throwing up a nasty sea, progress was slow and the engine, being in high gear was complaining bitterly. We had to run off downwind to change the pitch of the Gori propeller, turning up with higher revolutions, we hoisted the mainsail and for six hours battered our way west. At 17.00 the wind had eased and we reset the propeller pitch, eventually the wind died completely and the sea went silky smooth. Crossing from Russian to Finnish waters washed with the light of a spectacular sunrise, Sibelius's 'Finlandia' filled the air.

15th July: 04.00 tied at the Custom dock in Haapasaari and slept for five hours. By 09.45 we were cleared and on our way. The wind was east 20 to 30 knots giving exhilarating sailing through the archipelago, due to their twisting nature most of the passages required hand steering and this was to hold true until departing Sweden. *Pylades* is set up with its plotter at the navigation table, waypoints being transferred to a simple above deck pointer, no problem for long distance, but the more common arrangement of an aft wheel and instruments would be handier in these waters. Our arrival in Lovisa was entertaining for the crowds gathered for the traditional boat festival. In the fresh breeze the skippers boat handling went pear-shaped, but an able seaman boarded to bring us to a different berth, and we ran aground. Eventually we got off, got in, tied and settled. The town was pleasant, immaculately clean, built on a strict grid pattern. We visited the cathedral; the caretaker described its history explaining that the town has 8000 inhabitants and this church had services every day and two on Sunday. Now they have just one on Sunday with about 25 to 30 people in attendance. The building is extensively used for music recitals.

17th July: Strong wind warnings persist in the gulf but we got used to its complexities and its swell free sheltered waters. It was cold and grey as we sailed west, by 16.00 we were in Helsinki, the marina was €25.00 a night, excellent showers and in the centre of a magnificent city, we loved it. For two days we luxuriated in the reflected ambience of one of the world's most egalitarian and advanced societies. We sat at a sidewalk bar and shared an excellent bottle of cava for €15.00, counted our blessings and deliberated on how one might develop such a society back home.

19th July: A calm summers day motoring until 17.00 we anchored off the fairway near Barósund, an idyllic location. The following morning at 05.30 we were under way, the water a mirror giving a perfect double take on this land of a thousand islands. In the city of Hanko, we caught up on our laundry and fixed the persistent leak in the pumped water system by replacing the accumulator tank with a new length of pipe. In this sociable harbour, *Pylades* being steel and grey with wind vane self-steering and solar panels, sparked discussions on boats and sailing grounds. More than a few expressed reservations about sailing in the tides and swell off the Atlantic seaboard, perhaps they had a point!

22nd July: 05.30 tricky exit as we were boxed in with stern lines, but get away without disturbing the natives. On these early mornings we seldom met other boats in the channels, by 10.00 Finnish and Swedish flotillas were passing in all directions until about 17.00 when all quietened. Later in the day we entered the archipelago of Åland, anchoring near Kökar. We have never used the engine as much but with calms, contrary winds and twisting channels one had little choice. On the afternoon of the 23rd July we tied at Marieholm, capital of the Åland Islands, a port busy with cruise liners, ferries and the last of their splendid old sail trading ships. We walked the woods to town and slept well. A troop of Irish scouts cruising on a tall ship paid us a visit, it was refreshing to see such a fine bunch of boys and girls.

25th July: The wind vane came out of hibernation, even though the passage to Sweden had only 25 miles of open water. There were ferries and even a few boats on passage, we anchored off Söderfladen and changed courtesy flag and timepieces. Next morning, we were away at 04.30 inhaling the wonderful pine fresh air of Sweden. By 13.00 everywhere one looked there were pleasure boats and ferries of all sizes. Entering the marina at Nynäshamns in a stiff breeze, our effort to get an instant bowline around the stern buoy went wrong and we tied it around the runner attachment. The wind put

tons of pressure on the knot and we had to cut our way out. Hoping no one was watching, we went for an easier berth.

The marina had an excellent shower area, a shoe rack at the entrance, a spacious undressing room, an even larger open shower room, then a sauna where in searing heat one looked at boats through large triple glazed windows. A delightful ritual, even down to the dousing of coals to envelop the naked in steam. This homage to the body has a humanist feeling, perhaps a replacement to a declining theist beliefs. But maybe the explanation is more mundane, with few decent pubs, where else to spend long Nordic nights.

An expensive day: engine oil and gearbox ATF were changed and the Göta Canal booked on line for €718.00. We went to the 'Systembolaget'. These are a chain of state-owned shops for selling any alcohol over 4% proof. The prices were not as bad as we were led to believe- not as cheap as Germany- but definitely not worth the effort of stocking there and losing it at the Kronstadt. The shops were elegant, well stocked and the staff most helpful. A staff member explained that they are a state monopoly. They search the world for excellent wines, 'our minimum purchase is 50,000 bottles, so we get quality wine at good prices for our people'.

29 July: Our navigation had been pretty good to-date; we were good at dodging trees, but that day we were heading into the wrong woods, a quick turn from the inlet leading to Norrköping to the correct one to Mem. We tied at Arkösund and uncovered the main Swedish fetish: it's not sex or saunas, it is ice cream. Everywhere, queues for ice-cream. The ground shook as a motorcycle gang rode into town, studded jackets, tattoos, rings everywhere, the menacing formation pulled up in line and kick dirt as they sauntered into - an ice-cream parlour. Lutheran-bikers we concluded, the type who roar into town, fix things, pick up litter and roar off.

In the upper reaches of the Slätbaken inlet, the scenery became rural, cattle in the fields, deciduous trees, and we eased our way out of the Baltic. At 12.00 we checked in to the Göta Canal. It was efficient and friendly, and before we realised it we had passed through the first three locks to Soderköping. Next day, ten more locks and the crossing of Lake Asplängen. It was solid work for two, particularly Katherine, who jumped off before each lock, carried the bow line forward and picked up the stern line with a boat hook. For ascending locks, the stern line was secured tight and a line from the bow fairlead run to a winch where the skipper ground the slack as the boat rose. Each lock had its own complication. The staff were very friendly; they were not supposed to help with lines, but some did.

1st August: *Pylades* and a Swan 46 touched in a lock, leaving a mark about the size of a small postage stamp on the hull of the Swan. The German owner went ballistic and started shouting about how the boat would have to be polished. During the altercation, the skipper of *Pylades* suggested that perhaps the skipper of the Swan should take up golf. That didn't help. Everyone else in the lock went quietly about their business. By 11.30 we were crossing choppy Lake Roxen, as we progressed through the day most other boats tied along the way and we found ourselves alone in the last bank of locks. We relaxed in Ljungsbro.

3rd August: Vattern was choppy, wind still on the nose but it was only 15 miles across. After a few more locks, we rose to the highest point *Pylades* reached in Sweden, 93 metres over sea-level on stunningly beautiful Lake Viken. It fairly took our breath away on that fine morning, a place of magic, conducive to the birth of fairies and trolls. At the end of the lake, we dashed through some bridges and tied at Töreboda. From then on it was downhill all the way and much easier. We finally left the Gota Canal at Sjötorp onto the vast Lake Vänern, cold and rough and again the wind blew from our destination. Thirteen hours later we called the rail bridge at Vänersborg. The polite reply said 'come'. Lights changed and a huge rail bridge reached for the sky. It was a lovely town to roam. Our next stop, Trollhättan, was also very beautiful and we stayed a few nights before descending its flights of locks to the Göta älv. Heading downstream, the river current gave us an additional 1.5 knots. However, the wind gusting 35 knots on the nose was churning the water. Seeing a slot in the Gothenburg marina, we executed a hairy manoeuvre, and got away with it. At €51.00 per night, it's was not the place to hang about, but we were not for moving. Through the night our rigging screamed and so also did the adjacent marina sign as it shredded. Next morning in a lull, we moved further back and sheltered behind the opera house. It's a great walkabout city and we celebrated our arrival with a meal out at an excellent 'Tapas' bar.

10th August: Discovering to our amazement that there was no diesel outlet in the city, we headed off searching in driving cold rain. We were directed to a marina five miles downstream, where we wandered through thousands of vacant boats, finally locating the card pay pump, it did not work. The skipper's expletives are unprintable. A helpful fisherman arrived and offered to fill for free, but his tank was empty. We found a berth and reckoned that if we had tried to pay we



Rising lock water on the Göta Canal

would be still there. Ten miles north the next day in Bjorko, we bought fuel from a real live woman who persuaded us to stay on this gorgeous island, and the sun came out. We walked in the woods and loved it. Later, three fully costumed Vikings with beer cans came aboard and sang songs of dead communists!

Next morning exiting Sweden, the southwest wind hardened and we close hauled in an exhilarating 45 mile sail across the Kattegat, holding the course to Skagen, Denmark. It was a vibrant town with many examples of Danish design and a reputation for art and artists. If the art was current, the artists might be 'helping police with their enquiries'. We visited art galleries and museums. Over the next few days we hired bikes and cycled out to the lighthouse at Grenen beach, where the seas of the Skagerrak and Kattegat skirmish. Conscious of the impending North Sea crossing, we watched weather patterns. Yachts waiting many weeks in Norway to cross had turned south to seek a favourable passage. A miracle, the weather began to shift. The original plan, to get to the westernmost point of Norway and wait, was abandoned.

15th August: At 11.30 with the barometer at 1020, we sailed west. The swell faded, a red sunset and rising moon heralded a splendid night at sea. In the morning a light westerly returned. We motored all day and through the cold night, the sea glassy. Next day, oil fields. Steel behemoths sucking the residue of long dead microscopic plants and animals. Their stored energy pushing *Pylades* over their grave. A whale slid by and a pod of white beaked dolphins visited. There was a stunning sunset as 'Turner' reds to the north blended with muted blues and greys to the south, Then Scotland's version of 'Tierra del Fuego' came to life and the huge flares of the rigs welcomed *Pylades*. Towards dawn, a southeast wind picked up and we were sailing. Later as the wind touched 30 knots, we passed into the relative shelter of the Moray Firth. The wind increased further and, hugging the windward south shore, we jogged happily along all night under a scrap of head-sail.

19th August: At dawn we entered the snug marina at Inverness, the warm welcome offsetting the slightly shabby town; but perhaps we had become used to Nordic habitats. Next day we paid £233.00 and entered the Caledonian Canal, magnificent 200-years-old engineering working perfectly. One of the lock keepers remarked, 'I have the nicest job in the fairest surroundings one could get'. They helped with the lines and engaged in great discussions on 'Brexit' and much else. Lough Ness is long, narrow and deep and it funnels the wind on the nose. By 16.00, we walked Fort Augustus, where the battle cries of Culloden still echo. The next day by Loch Lochy's shore, a golden eagle held position in a westerly breeze and we caught our first sight of Ben Nevis.

23rd August: A busy morning descending Neptune's Staircase to the fine stone basin at Corpach. To the south, the magnificent bulk of Ben Nevis brought great memories of a day spent on its airy ridges. The following morning, we were at sea rushing south on a fair tide through the Corran Narrows. Oban Marina was almost deserted. We ferried to town and stocked up. The water at the marina was not recommended but a kindly occupant of Kerrera Island insisted we take 20 litres of bottled water. 04.00 next morning, with the light not yet in the sky we were underway. There was a cold autumnal feel to the air as a light wind freshened from the southeast. In a rollicking sail, Islay faded as Malin Head materialised to the south. Seven miles from the entrance to Lough Swilly, the wind veered to the southwest and freshened considerably, squalling to 35 knots. We battered our way to the calmer waters of the lough and in darkness and rain felt our way in to Port Saloon. Assisted by a howling wind, we bedded our anchor at 23.15. The morning was fine but blowing hard from the southwest. A lazy day was passed swinging to our anchor, doing odd jobs, plotting our jumps home and topping up the diesel tank from cans.

26th August: 06.00 underway in a light south-easterly, the forecast was sympathetic for only a few days, so with regret we passed Tory Island. Donegal Bay was deserted, except for two Spanish trawlers, who, just north of Eagle Rock appeared intent on running us down. With a poled out Genoa, we ran south in splendid conditions discussing the magnificent headlands and Islands of our coastline. 19.30 on the 28th August, we tied up in Kilronan and strolled to Tí Joe Mac, for a contemplative pint. After a late breakfast with a fry up, we resolved to do little all day but slowly walk the beaches and make sandcastles.

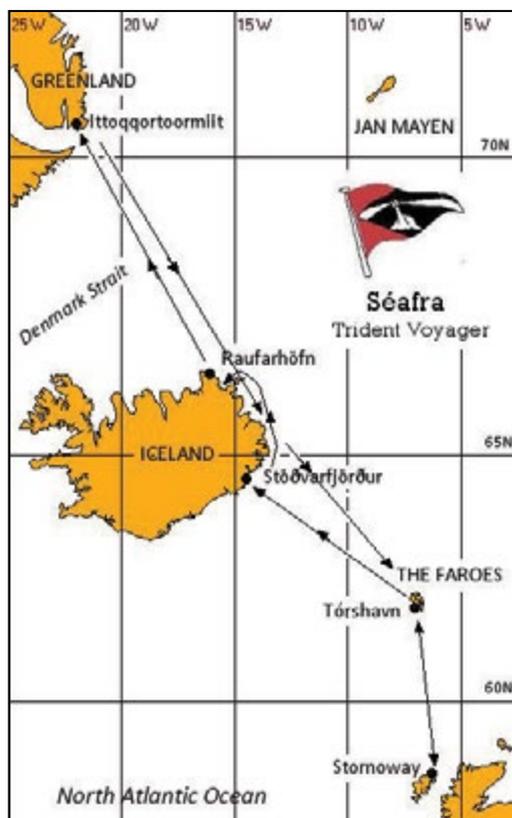
Tuesday 30th August: Over canvassed and with mixed feelings, we had a fast reach east to Kinvara bay and picked up our mooring at Parkmore. The 3,800 mile, 109-day voyage to Russia had concluded. We loaded the dingy, outboard and gear into our van. Ashore, we looked out at *Pylades*, alone on its mooring and with a tear in our eye, drove slowly home.



Pylades in the Caledonian Canal, Loch Ness behind

Greenland by default

Brian Black



By rights, Greenland should not have happened this year at all – I had not prepared for it. *Séafra* wasn't really ready for an Arctic cruise, we were short-handed and as usual I had told family and interested parties that Greenland wasn't on the agenda and I'd tell them where we'd been when I got back. So when my companion of many a cruise, Eric Degerland, who should have known better, signed on in June we left these shores bound for somewhere north. Our first stop of any note was the outer bit of the Outer Hebrides. I had long planned another crack at St Kilda but after a brief spell in Loch Maddy, it became obvious that the weather was not going to allow this so we settled for an examination in depth of Loch Roag and the surrounding area.

This is a truly wonderful cruising ground for those who enjoy remoteness and a scarcity of fleshpots and watering holes. The scenery is magical with mountains and breathtaking sandy beaches such as Luskentyre with Beinn Dubh providing the perfect Hebridean backdrop. Anchorages abound and in sheltered waters, it's really a matter of choosing your spot. Additional attractions include the magnificent archaeology of the Carloway Broch and the standing stones at Callanish.

With the weather closing in and thoughts of onward progress in mind we went on round the Butt of Lewis and into Stornoway for provisions and a 'think'. Thinking done we headed on for the Faroes, putting in at Tvøroyri on Suðuroy as the first port of call. We lay alongside the fish dock which gave perfect shelter and convenient access to the local supermarket and swimming pool. Although not a port of entry, we cleared customs by contacting the resident police. The town itself was an inspired choice as it coincided with a gig racing festival in nearby Vágur which attracted competing crews from many of the islands in the Faroes group. Just watching the event was exhausting,

this was serious competition with the pride of every island resting on the broad backs and arm muscles of the racing crews.

Later that day we hitched a ride back to Tvøroyri on *Tórshavn*, a lovely old schooner, painstakingly restored by traditional sail-boat enthusiasts from the town. Some walking and superb local hospitality and we were ready to move on. We reached Tórshavn after a miscalculation of the Red Scare Book which had us going backwards for four hours instead of forward progress at six to ten knots on a favourable tide. In fairness to the navigator – myself – I did take the trouble to ask for local advice. This amounted to much head scratching as the almanac was consulted along with numerous columns of incomprehensible figures. (NB. The Red Scare book is much easier to interpret and the tides are based on Dover)

Another festival, this time in Tórshavn, the capital city of the Faroes with a population of around twenty thousand, which works out at about half the number of sheep on the islands. Traditional boats had gathered for a rally with music, dancing and singing along with more Faroese hospitality which eventually raised the notion of pressing on for Iceland.

We left by going north along Sundini, a long narrow fjord that ends at Eidi where there is a pontoon with water but precious little else. This time I had double checked the tides and sought advice from the skipper of the *Nordlsid*, a charter schooner working the islands. We got it right and went under the bridge at the pinch-point of the fjord at slack water, a good plan as the flow can reach twelve knots at times in the frighteningly narrow channel.

This was a familiar route although usually we do it in reverse on our way back from Green-



Gig racing at Vágur in the Faroes



Séafra alongside at Stöðvarfjörður, East Iceland

land using Sedjysfjörður in Iceland as the jump off for the two hundred and fifty mile crossing. However just to give it variety, we thought a spell in the East Fjords just south of Sedjysfjörður might be justified. Indeed it was. Our port of arrival was Stöðvarfjörður which gave great access to spectacular country, superb walking, few visiting boats and a sense of emptiness. Customs formalities were carried out by the police in the nearby port of Nordfjörður. So now we were in Iceland and evidently no pressure to return home for domestic duties. The downside was that this coincided with Brexit and suddenly our currency lost its value and shop prices became prohibitive.

Soon came the question of 'where next?'. The answer was simple, Greenland of course. Favourable conditions were expected for the next couple of days which meant we could round Langanes at the extreme north east corner of Iceland before the next weather front arrived and that

would put us in a good position for the jump to Scoresbysund about two hundred and fifty miles distant. Icelandic forecasts are generally quite accurate and sure enough, as we put in to Raufarhöfn a sharp depression came in from the north east. The wind and rain did nothing to reduce the overall gloom of Raufarhöfn, one of the less appealing although strategically useful Icelandic ports. The wind eventually went round to the south west and away we went on a course of due north. Brisk sailing to begin with then just as we crossed the Arctic Circle and approached the Denmark Strait the wind fell away, the fog came down and we motored all the way to Scoresbysund. Last season, pack-ice clogged the coast, this year it was clear and apart from a few bergs and some polar bears, we had a clear run into Ittoqqortoormiit. The variation in sea-ice conditions is consistent with the perturbations of climate change and while there was a huge contrast between this year and last, the trend of ice melt continues its remorseless course. The polar ice is thinner, more expanses of open ocean are appearing and the glaciers are melting at an unprecedented rate.

Of more immediate concern was our food supply. By good fortune, we had plenty of tins on board, providential planning as it turned out because the supply ship had not yet reached Ittoqqortoormiit this season and the store was full of empty shelves. Re-fuelling though wasn't a problem. That done and after checking grib files at the weather station which had the only internet reception at the settlement, it was back out to sea and on up the Liverpool Land coast where Eric wanted to take some photographs from a hill at Sandbach Halvó, (70°43'n 02135'w) which gives a panorama of mountains and fjords that in a visual sense spelt 'Greenland'.

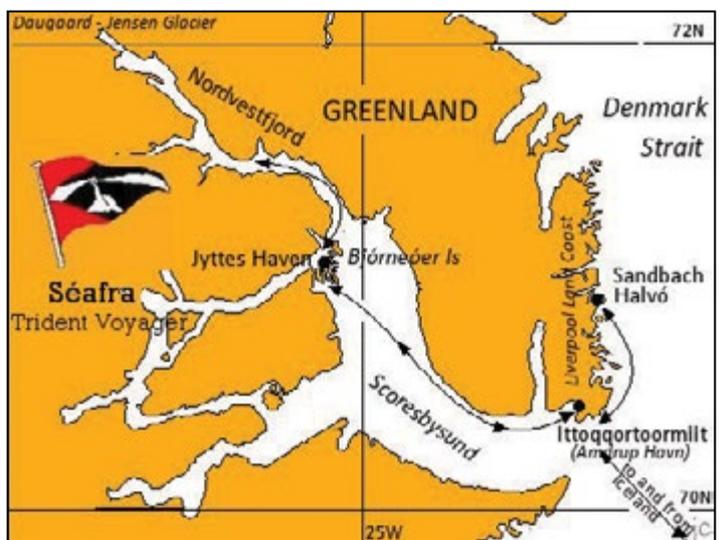
The polar anti-cyclone was well established by this stage and while at first we had superb visibility, it eventually clagged up and in grey and photographically flat conditions we decided to retrace our route and head up Scoresbysund where I expected clearer skies and some unfinished business.

While in Ittoqqortoormiit we had struck up a friendship with two Canadian kayakers, both called Don. We'd told them about the wonders of the Bjórneøer group of islands at the top end of Scoresbysund and such was their enthusiasm to go there, when the weather closed in at Sandbach Halvo, we went back for a rendezvous.

They were striking camp and dealing with a polar bear as we arrived. Eventually, two Canadians, a sixteen foot kayak and enough provisions to see them through the summer, were stowed aboard *Séafra* and off we went. Twenty four hours later we dropped them off and the two Dons behaved as though they'd died and gone to heaven. I had taken them to Jyttes Havn probably the most beautiful anchorage I can think of in the Arctic, well worth any slog up Scoresbysund as we had done in 2012 with Ed Wheeler on board.

However, the bold Eric and myself – prudently equipped with the thermals and the extra rations we had brought just in case – had other thoughts in mind and after a couple of days, headed off again intending to collect the two Dons on our return.

I had long held a sneaking ambition to penetrate Nordvestfjord leading to the Daugaard-Jensen glacier which displaces the huge bergs that eventually make their way along Scoresbysund and out to sea. The temptation to do this was for the worst of reasons – everyone we had spoken to had advised against it, foolhardy and dangerous was the general opinion - how could we resist? Exercising caution I decided to do a recce by nibbling into the fjord then withdrawing to the lee of a small island (71° 17'n 024°59'w) for an anchor-



age that would give protection from the endless succession of bergs heading for the ocean. The fog came down and in a whiteout we listened to the crash and roar of breaking and tumbling ice along the far side of the island. By next afternoon the fog had lifted and in perfect conditions, up Nordvestfjord we went. Five miles, ten then a few more, between amazing accumulations of ice-bergs crowding the fjord up to the almost vertical sides of the Stauning Alps that lined the north side with the mountains of Renland to the west, sunlight bursting through the returning fog some-



Eric, left, and Brian, in Indiana Jones mode

times illuminating huge peaks that seemed to overhang us, sometimes shining like a searchlight to catch a channel through the ice field. After thirty miles of this and with still another fifty to go to the glacier I gave way to the advice we had received earlier, this was indeed foolhardy and dangerous. So the Nordvestfjord remains unclaimed, I wish any mariner who wants to put his name to it the best of luck, it's not for me.

The two Dons, veterans of kayaking most of the big Canadian rivers, had had the time of their adventurous



Stowing a kayak, gear and food for the (short) summer for two Canadian adventurers, both called Don



Ice, fog, a narrow channel: time to turn around! Up the Nordvestfjord and conditions becoming marginal.

lives in and around the islands. We got them back aboard and with their gear stowed began the long haul back to Ittoqqortoormiit. Calm initially but soon a fjord wind developed, slowing the boat and in short steep seas we cross tacked Scoresbysund for what seemed like an age before anchoring in Amdrup Havn. With the whiskey out and sleep approaching my main memory of that anchorage was the gravelly voice of Don Zeiman reciting, word perfect, 'The Cremation of Sam McGee' by Robert Service. I gave the crew a rendition of 'The Ould Irish French Letter' which had everyone asleep in next to no time.

Next day Eric was on his way up to the weather station for an update when a katabatic wind sprang up. I looked out from the shore appalled as *Séafra* broke her anchor and began heading out to sea. Fortunately my dinghy was at the pier and with the outboard at full throttle I overtook the boat and climbed on board. Pushing hard against a screaming wind I nosed *Séafra* up to the pier which allowed Eric to grab the pulpit and leap aboard. By the time we had re-anchored the wind had gone and the boat lay in perfect peace ready for the haul back to Iceland.

Our return was in general, back the way we had come. The winds were kind allowing us to keep going in easy state to make a landfall back in Nordfjörður. Over a relaxing coffee in the local internet café we opened a grib forecast on an Ipad to discover that a major Atlantic low was heading our way with the prospect of several days on disturbed weather in its wake. It was a rush back to the boat, making a quick stop for provisions on the way and back out to sea with the intention of reaching safe harbour in the Faroes before the bad weather closed in. We were well tucked up in Torshavn when it blew – there is something really satisfying about making a good weather call and even better when the last of the bonded stores filled our glasses as the wind howled, the rain slashed at the pilot house windows and conversation turned to the voyage that was nearly over. With almost three thousand five hundred miles under the keel in nine weeks, some great sailing, plenty of motoring and a sense of satisfaction that we were still talking to each other, surely a sign of true friendship despite the stresses and confined quarters for an extended period. Thanks to occasional internet connections for weather information, conditions were generally acceptable and on the return leg we managed to avoid most of the depressions that are a feature of early Autumn in the North Atlantic. We may have reached Greenland by default but as a largely unplanned cruise, it will take some beating.



Jyttes Havn, Brian Black's favourite Arctic anchorage

Ocean Gypsy -South to the Vendée and beyond

Jennifer Crebbin

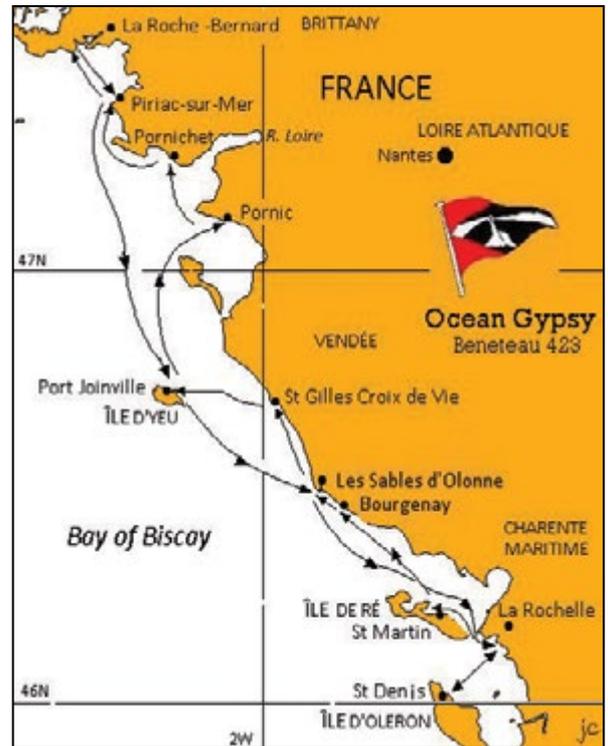
This year's cruise was my first sail since having a knee replacement, so was conducted accordingly. We keep *Ocean Gypsy*, our Bénéteau 423, in La Roche-Bernard on the Villaine river, south Brittany. We had cruised north the previous two years and decided that this year we would go south for more sunshine.

Friday 3rd June : At 14.00 close to high water John and I locked out of Arzal. In very light airs we exited the estuary and set course for Piriac sur Mer, 20 miles away. Piriac is entered over a lifting cill that operates at 1.2m, so tidal calculations are required. There are waiting buoys outside but we were in plenty of time, berthing at 16.45. It is a very picturesque holiday town with good facilities for shopping and eating out and a market two or three times a week, depending on the season. A bus runs to the local walled town Guerande, where we enjoyed a mediæval festival, music, dancing, old world amusements and a very good equine group performing acrobatics - not a safety helmet in sight. John bought an oyster knife and the following day successfully opened a dozen oysters. We repeated this treat several times and he never cut his hand.

Monday 6th June: We cast off at 08.30 and set course for Port Joinville, Île d'Yeu some 38 miles away. There was no wind and we motorsailed arriving at one of our favourite marinas at 15.00. It is so popular that one needs to arrive early if a finger berth is required. In season they have several boat boys and girls to show you to a berth but as is the case in many places they close for lunch for two hours. So far the new knee hadn't been put to any strain. We enjoyed several days here meeting up with friends old and new. The facilities in the marina are good, with new washrooms this year and two washing machines and dryers. The town is good for stores and has an excellent fish shop. The local clam, which is called Patagos, is a must. In a waterfront restaurant we met up with Miranda Delmar-Morgan RCC and her husband Edward, who told us there were no moules and sure enough the restaurants had signs up 'Rupture de Moules'. The local moules had died for some unknown reason, and the restaurants had to get their stock from other places. On Wednesday we hired bikes as this island, like many others, has good cycle tracks. We explored old and new haunts, had coffee in St-Sauveur, on to Pointe des Corbeaux before lunch at Port de la Meule and on along the west coast. Unfortunately some of the tracks were very rough and the "old knee" took umbrage, necessitating a trip to the fish shop for ice.

Thursday 9th June: We cast off at 1040 bound for Les Sables d'Olonne 28 miles away, again with no wind. We took a berth on the first pontoon of Quai Garnier marina, which turned out to be a mistake. We had a very disturbed night with a ship unloading and trawlers passing. The next day we moved to an excellent berth beside the Capitainerie. This marina is close to restaurants, shops and a daily market. There is a ferry across to the Port Olona side, where the original marina and chandleries are located. The New York Vendée Race was finishing while we were there and we walked up to see the boats which were just amazing. The weather had turned very damp so some socialising was called for with drinks on two UK boats and all back for dinner on ours.

Sunday 12th June: We left for La Rochelle with a good WSW wind and sailed all the way- our first real sail. We went under Île de Ré bridge and in to Les Minimes marina. This has been extended since our last visit and is now apparently the biggest marina in Europe. We berthed with difficulty on pontoon 3, the fairway being only the same width as *Ocean Gypsy's* length and the new knee having to do some strenuous fending off through the pulpit. However all ended well and more friends, but no enemies, were made during the berthing. The wind came up to gale force over the next few days, and we took the bus to La Flotte on Île de Ré a small boat harbour where work was in



Classic boat rally at La Rochelle

progress fitting a cill. That evening we were invited to dinner on Miranda and Edward's boat *Polar Bear*, the entertainment of the evening being provided by one of the guests riding his bike off the pontoon while trying to avoid a woman carrying a pizza.

Wednesday 15th June: We were visited by arrangement by a 'girl' and her husband. I had shared a flat with the 'girl' in London in the 60's, and her husband was my helm at the Firefly national championships in Weymouth in 1964. They were on a cycling holiday in the area. I hadn't seen her for over twenty years nor him for nearly fifty. A great day was had, which included watching the Green Army who were based in La Rochelle for the football. The weather was still inclement and the tides not right for our next port, so we decided on another bus trip to Île de Ré. We visited Ars en Ré, an interesting place, but a co-efficient of 80 would be required to get *Ocean Gypsy* with her 2.1m draught in-and out again- no good with our neap tides.

Friday 17th June: We left Les Minimés for St Denis d'Oléron—our first new port. We had a fresh wind almost on the nose so we motor-sailed to make the tidal constraint. St Denis has a fixed cill so we wanted to be sure of plenty of water. We arrived at 14.30 and managed to get a finger berth. Most visitor berths are on a long pontoon with boats rafting. As we planned to stay a few days we did not want to raft. It was very busy with boats leaving and arriving a couple of hours either side of high water and two very efficient boatmen. We walked round the harbour to the office and then up to the town which was ten minutes away. The daily market had finished so we visited the very adequate little supermarket. You could hire bikes at the Capitainerie and there was a 'Little Train' out to the lighthouse. We thought it a lovely place. Our neighbours were from the Isle of Wight and very keen to discuss the forthcoming Brexit. We had yet more rain and stayed on board for dinner. Saturday saw us at the washing machines again. Ashore in the port later we had good coffee and saw a lovely patchwork exhibition. Having watched the many arrivals and departures from the cockpit we went ashore for dinner to La Fleure de Thyme which was excellent. There was a very good outdoor folk gig but it was so cold we only stayed half an hour. On Sunday we walked up to the market with its good stalls, found a lovely boulangerie, and a quirky bar/coffee shop was in the market square - very good for people watching. Later we rode the 'Little Train' out to the lighthouse and its gardens. St Denis is a good starting off point for a bike tour as there was no public transport.

Tuesday 21st June: Departing at 0820 in very damp conditions we sailed back to La Rochelle in increasingly poor visibility, avoiding a good few moored ships, and went straight to pontoon 3. This time there was more room, thank goodness. We had friends on board for drinks and all went up to Le Cargo restaurant for a €12.50 three course menu. No complaints there. During the night the summer arrived and we awoke to a scorching day. We visited the Maritime Museum which has a fantastic collection of classic boats afloat in the dock and also the retired French weather ship that used to be on station in the Atlantic. This was a most interesting exhibit, as were the onshore halls with many old photographs of famous French sailors and of fishing boats. The air conditioning was very welcome too. Later we walked up to watch Northern Ireland play in the 'Euro Foot' as the French called it. We had wind gusting 30knots for a short time during the night and had to get up to retrieve cushions and things from the cockpit.



Sealock at the entrance to Ars en Ré

Thursday 23rd June: The tides were right for us to make the short passage to St-Martin-de-Ré, which is a locked basin. We cast off at 14.00 and had a fresh NW wind all the way. We arrived before the gate was open but it was too rough to pick up a buoy. At 16.45 we entered the basin and were directed to an alongside visitors' berth, no fingers being available. We soon had 2 boats outside us and expected more. WIFI had been poor in most places but here it was non-existent, as the island had given the service to the Spanish football team, who were based there during the championship. This was the day of the Brexit vote and the many UK boats awaited the result. Friday morning brought the EXIT and the first Englishman I spoke to thought it was great. We couldn't agree. However life went on in St Martin, a hugely popular holiday destination. A good market and small supermarket are close by, accompanied by many restaurants and a huge ice cream stall. Next day we took the bus to les Ports-en-Ré at the northern end of the island. We had the dearest coffee in France amongst the "beautiful people" and enjoyed walking the area before an excellent lunch at Coleurs Kfé. By now we had travelled the whole island and it was time to move on. We had 5 boats outside us now and we told them we were leaving at 09.00 the following day.

Sunday 26th June: We left at 09.05, which we thought was pretty good. Everyone was most cooperative and the boat boy helped a few people to manoeuvre. We tried to sail in a very light NNE breeze but there just wasn't enough, so on with the iron topsail again, berthing in Port Bourgenay at 12.20. We had overnighted there about 10 years ago with Brian and Anne Craig ICC, but it was very early season and very closed. Our lines were taken on the long visitors' pon-



Silted river at the entrance to Pornic, where *Ocean Gypsy* took the ground.

toon by a South African who lives in Northern Ireland. At 14.00 the most helpful Capitainerie gave us a finger berth following our earlier phone call. Later we joined the Northern Ireland boat to watch Ireland lose to France in the 'Euro Foot'. Contrary to what we had been told, we found several shops and a Tabac serving excellent coffee within a short walk. There were a few restaurants around the port and we enjoyed a good meal on Monday, followed by more football.

Wednesday 29th June: We sailed the 6 mile passage back to Les Sables d'Olonne in a very light SSW breeze. We berthed again at Quai Garnier and ate ashore at 'La Marée', which was excellent. By this time we were dodging a Vendée Regatta that was doing a circuit, so spent Thursday in port, visited the market again and bought some good halibut.

Friday 1st July: We cast off at 11.15 for St-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie, where you need to arrive towards high water, as there is a strong flow. We had a fresh north westerly but were able to free off after La Petite Barge and the lighthouse

and had a good sail. A heavy rain squall as we were going up the estuary made visibility difficult, but we berthed safely on the long visitors' pontoon and treated ourselves to an ice cream ashore. Saturday morning we walked across the bridge hoping to find a market. We walked on to Super U, which is elusive but beside the big water tower. We returned across the bridge in the evening for Tapas and more football. Sunday was market day - we had lovely scallops on board and more football. We don't even like football.

Monday 4th July: We left at 08.05 for Port Joinville, Île d'Yeu, still avoiding the regatta. We saw the fleet of 80 plus in the distance. Our first dolphins of the trip appeared but they were on passage too and didn't stay to play. There were plenty of berths, as the regatta fleet had just left and quite a few familiar faces had already moored up. A few days were spent enjoying this lovely island and giving *Ocean Gypsy* a clean and polish and some repairs to the hood. A boat from Courtown came in, and also one from DMYC, but we saw very few Irish boats this trip.

Thursday 7th July: Our wedding anniversary. We cast off at 10.05 bound for Pornic and met a survey ship showing very poor signals and not on AIS. They were towing a very long cable and avoiding action had to be taken. We arrived at Pornic entrance at 15.30, an hour after low water - and went firmly aground. A shoal forms where the river crosses the marina entrance. Despite dredging equipment permanently in situ, it seems that nothing is being done about this hazard. Eventually we floated off and berthed with difficulty on a hammerhead, as there was a strong flow up the harbour. Ashore for a very good Anniversary dinner at 'Cote de Plaisance' - then more football. The next day we walked up the river to the town, where you had to be very quick to catch the shops open.

Sat 9th July: At 09.00 we left for Pornichet, which would be our second new port. We crossed the Loire close to the entrance and went inside Grande Charpentier and Little Charpentier with good depths at HW-2. We got a fine berth at Pornichet and, having called to the Capitainerie, visited the chandlery. We ate dinner on board in the evening sunshine.

Sunday 10th July: We cleared the marina at 0900 in 12 knots of WSW Breeze. We sailed slowly as far as Pt du Castelli then had to motor to make Piriac with enough water on the cill. We met a lovely Irish family and had drinks on their Bénéteau 36CC. We went ashore to Crêperie Lacomère for good food and more football- the final at last. Monday was market day and later we took a walk around the narrow lanes of the town.

Tuesday 12th July: Away at 08.40 in time to catch the 11.00 lock at Arzal and then 5 miles upriver to La Roche-Bernard and our berth and car (which sadly had a flat battery). La Roche -Bernard is a good destination, with an extensive marina, boatyard with crane, small chandlery and an option of dry sailing. As well as a weekly market on Thursday, the town offers boulangeries, supermarkets, a fish shop, a range of bars, coffee shops and restaurants.

La Roche- Bernard has an active Port Users Association and as many of the members are English speaking, the committee hosted a wonderful barbecue lunch for about 40 people on 13th, and then on 14th July of course we celebrated Bastille Day with music, *moules frites*, fireworks and the odd glass of wine. Although we stayed on board for another week this was the end of our cruise and the new knee stayed the course.

We found the Wifi provided at most marinas very poor, sometimes only allowing one iPad or phone access at a time. Some offered services you could pay for but it was cheaper to turn on roaming on the phone with the reduced EU charges. We never failed to get a berth at our chosen marina but we do always plan to arrive early and it was still only June and early July. The main cruising time for the French seems now to be the second two weeks of July and maybe three weeks in August. Having said that, there were a great many French boats cruising with us.

As a footnote, in September we cruised from La Roche-Bernard in to the Morbihan berthing first at the pontoons

at Île aux Moines which offer water, electricity and a water taxi ashore to the new facilities and the Capitainerie. This is a lovely island for a walk or to hire bikes. It has a small supermarket, a boulangerie and a few tourist shops plus plenty of small restaurants. We then went on to Vannes, where the bridge is now open as they have built a tunnel. You still have to arrive when the cill is open which is approximately 2 hours either side of high water and during working hours. As we approached there was a flashing green light indicating we could enter, and a marina berthing master gave instructions from the tower for berthing in the basin. Neighbouring ports would be displaying the opening hours and a photograph on your phone is very handy. We ate ashore one night at Brasserie L'Atlantique which was as good as ever. Vannes has a daily indoor market, as well as a full range of shops. There is an outdoor market on Wednesday and Friday.

Distances:

La Roche-Bernard- Arzal- Piriac- sur- mer	20miles	
Piriac - Île d'Yeu	38miles	
Isle d'Yeu- Les Sables d'Olonne	28miles	
Les Sables d'Olonne- La Rochelle	30miles	
La Rochelle- St Denis- D'Oléron	11miles	
St Denis- La Rochelle	11miles	
La Rochelle- St Martin de Re	16miles	
St Martin - Bourgenay	20miles	
Bourgenay - Les Sables d'Olonne	6miles	
Les Sables d'Olonne- St Gilles-Croix-de-Vie	18miles	
St-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie Île d'Yeu	17miles	
Île d'Yeu - Pornic	31miles	
Pornic- Pornichet	16miles	
Pornichet- Piriac	17miles	Total distance: 299 miles
Piriac- La Roche Bernard	20miles	Total days: 40



Ocean Gypsy approaching the cill at Pirac-Sur-Mer

Paddy Barry writes of *Ar Seachrán*'s cruise to Asturias and Galicia

Ah! Coruña.

After wintering *Ar Seachrán* in Waterford and having a couple of weeks aboard around West Cork, on June 4th we left Baltimore, making an uneventful 3 ½ day passage to Gijón on the north coast of Spain.

There, with boat as 'basecamp, for a week and a half, we tramped the hills of Cordillera Cantábrica and, more demanding, the Picos de Europa. The weather was alternately good and not good-at-all.

For a week then we mooched westward, calling to Cudillero, Luarca, Viveiro and Ares—there to meet our first Fiesta, it being June 23rd, the Eve of St. John's Day. The UK voted 52% for Brexit. We sailed southward to Sada and thence on, passing the Tower of Hercules, into the central marina of Real Club Nautica De La Coruña—or A Coruña, if you're in the local Gallego language.

It was while Ruadhri and Liam Ó Muirthile were walking from here back out to the Tower and Oldest Lighthouse in Europe (from where the Milesian Breogan saw Ireland), that Liam was distracted from such matters by a most shapely apparition. He paused to write:

Múnla dlúth
A tóna
In Ah ! Coruña.
Which he 'englished' as:

Her tight
Spanish ass
Tangoes cheekily
As we pass.

The big event in Coruña / Santiago De Compostela was the completion of the 3 year Camino by Sea of our friends The Currachmen of west Kerry. Indeed a notable achievement; for 5 weeks each year they rowed / sailed their Currach from Dublin to Brittany in 2014, down the coast of France to the Basque country in 2015 and this year across the north coast of Spain. Up the steps of the Cathedral we helped to carry the currach, celebrating within—and later, without.

I went home for a fortnight's domesticity, then Mike Alexander and myself then for three weeks moseyed southwards. We called to Corme, Muxía, Camariñas, Finisterre, Corcubión and Muros—there to be joined for a week by Conor Holmes and Wally McGuirk. We overnighted at a delightful anchorage off Aguieira, south of Portosin. Thence round into Villa Nova in Ria Arosa before checking out the boatyard in Xufre (On Donal Morrissey ICC advice). Thence to the old town of Combarro in Ria Pontevedra, anchored off the busy touristy Sanxen and to the central Vigo marina of Real Club Nautico. Checked out the yard in Astillero Lagos --“Welcome to the Past”-- and to Cangas, Port Adrian and Moaña. In Moaña we delighted in the music of Galician 50-person Son De Sea followed by some awful Irish music, technically brilliant but untuneful. Isla Sálvore, off Arousa, is a 'must', but not as we did, anchoring off the northern end which is a nature reserve—with much bird 'squaking'.

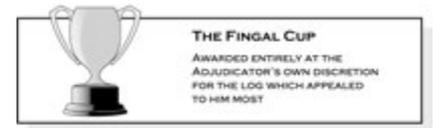
In September I was out again, with new Meathmen friends, Seamus McAleese, David Yeates and Seamus O Byrne, for more of the same; leaving the boat for the winter lifted out in Xufre.

Postscript. I've been finding the management and maintenance of *Ar Seachrán* increasingly more of a handful and so have her for sale. And have bought a delightful timber 27 foot gaff gleeiteóg which will be based in Roundstone—this 'to see me out!'

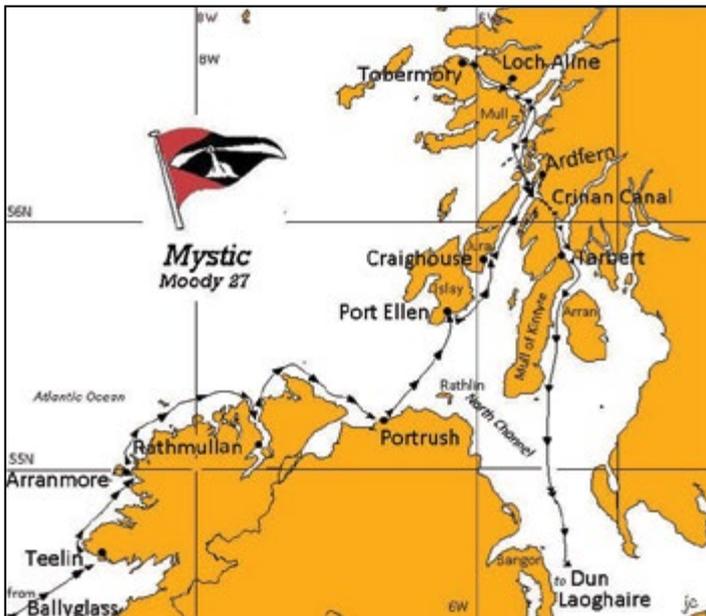


Mystical adventures to and from the Hebrides

Peter Fernie



Some of the older members may recall a 1960s columnist in the Observer newspaper who created and frequently reported on the philosophy of 'Residentialism'. This philosophy could be summed up by the propensity of a piece of toast to fall marmalade side down in direct proportion to the nature of the floor covering. Hence it would always fall marmalade side down onto carpet and marmalade side up onto a cleanable hard floor. We, of course, now know this better as 'Murphys Law'. I am pleased to be able to report that it pervades all aspects of our life with *Mystic*, a 1984 vintage Moody 27.



The cruise to Scotland to participate in the joint ICC/CCC Rally had been long planned with a departure date of 25 June in our diaries for several months. The broad outline was to leave our mooring in Renville the Friday before and cross to the marina in Galway Docks so as to facilitate provisioning, fuelling and watering. One week before our departure, we became aware of a newly inaugurated Galway Challenge triathlon and that hundreds, if not thousands of lycra-clad participants would be descending on Galway that very weekend. The local press had assured them that there would be a funky 'Rock the Docks' party in the vicinity on the Friday in question. We thought that we might be better off giving the docks a miss and revictual in the relative quietude of Renville quay. Murphy had also conspired against us here. Overnight, a caravanserai of marquees, campervans, portaloos, advanced dressing and rehydration stations had sprung up, with a 500-meter red carpet stretching down the road. We assumed that this had little to do with our leave taking of Renville the next morning. We managed to load up before an impenetrable ring of interlocking metal

barriers was installed and settled down to await the high tide in the morning when we could depart this frenetic activity. Trapped in the ring of steel, we mused that, over the weekend, some hardy and possibly deranged souls would have to swim 3.8 km, run 42km and cycle 180km – and pay €500 for the privilege!

We were three on board – John Bourke (ICC), David Whitehead (ICC) and myself. We awoke at 06.30 to the sound of more red carpet laying and orange flashing lights. We were nearly afloat and were able to drop lines at 07.40, on a dank, dreary, drizzly morning with a northwesterly force 2-3. For the moment Murphy was in abeyance. We motor sailed into a grumpy Galway Bay; the wind backed to the west; the sun appeared hesitantly; the drizzle abated. We rounded the familiar Golam Head in the early afternoon and cracked off sails as we went up the spectacular Inner Passage, which never fails to excite. The sea state became light, the wind dropped, the sun became more permanent. We notched off for John, who was new to sailing these parts, St. Macdara's Island, Croaghnaकेela and the magnificently named, Wild and Sunk Bellows. The swell and wind were slight, the north going tide just about right. Conditions for Joyce's Pass don't get much better and it was a first for John, Peter and *Mystic*.

Anyone who says a landfall in Inishbofin is less than dramatic is seriously lacking in imagination. The deepening dusk made the leading marks difficult to distinguish but the directional port entry had us safely in past the storm demolished Gun island light beacon and around Cromwell's Barracks. Surely this is one of the most theatrical entrances to any of our islands. Once inside, we rafted at the end of the old quay, alongside two yachts from Mayo Sailing Club, south bound for WIORA in Kilrush. Pints in Days Hotel, and a promise from the boat inside us that they would sort our lines out on their early departure was a felicitous end to the first day.

The morning was excessively damp. Rivulets of water trickled down the bright green weed on the wall of the pier. Our neighbours had disappeared quietly in the early hours.



Conditions for Joyce's Pass could not have been better

Otherwise it was not an auspicious start to the day. Our hosepipe was two meters short to the tap on the quay; our boat-hook had dematerialised and the fog made it difficult to make out the exit from the harbour.

We negotiated our way around the south coast of Inishbofin and Inishlyon. Davillaun was invisible half a mile east of us. Rusheen Bay and East village (where my sister-in law and her 86 year old mother and great grandmother to boot, had scandalously gone skinny-dipping) were barely visible. We never saw Inishturk to the east. With a freshening westsouthwest force 3 and having cleared Inishbofin, a course was set, with main and jib for Achill Head. The visibility improved and with an increasingly lucid sun, Clare Island appeared some 5 miles to the east. We rounded Achill Head, another of the great western headlands early in the afternoon. Despite the lumpy sea, the indifferent weather and the lack of facilities, the wild Atlantic seaway is not short of magnificent scenery. By teatime, (I must apologise to those who expect more precise times – many of the events that I recall are all related to breakfast, lunch, teatime and dinner - the official cruising log is available for inspection if required), we were through the narrow sound between Eagle Island lighthouse and the mainland. This lighthouse has the reputation of being the most storm-damaged of any Irish lighthouse in its 181-year history and storm waves have extinguished the 67 meter high lantern on several occasions. The most violent storm flooded the tower and holes had to be drilled in the door to allow it to be opened.

We rounded Erris Head shortly before pre-prandial drinks were served and had picked up the remaining Mayo county council mooring located north of Ballycastle pier at 19.30. The other two were occupied by visiting British boats. The pasta and sauce were cooking. No longer did we compete to inflate the punt and race ashore to the pub. Individually we had assessed the cost/benefit ratio and found it wanting. The wind, which since the afternoon had been veering to the northwest presaged a bouncy night with the send into Broadhaven Bay. In the event the wind backed west again and we slept peacefully.

We awoke and breakfasted to a forecast of westerly force 5 or 6 and a small craft warning. It had rained heavily an hour earlier and now was only drizzly, grey and cold. What wind there was, was not force 5 or 6. Had we not had places to get to, we might have taken the easy option and pulled the sleeping bags back over our heads. We decided to poke our noses out into Broadhaven Bay and reassess. The big seas were not unusual for the Atlantic coast. The wind was west, 12 knots and we set a course across Donegal Bay with soldiers' wind on our port quarter. The white things worked well, we had sunshine in abundance even if it was cold sunshine and we had help with the steering from Ernie (our electronic pilot) and Bartholomew our wind vane. The only fly in the ointment was that the hitherto reliable Volvo died on a couple of occasions and lost revs on two others. As we left the Stags of Broadhaven behind, we noticed that one of the British boats had also ventured out despite the small craft warning. The sea and sky were blue. We ate and yarned our way across Donegal Bay making for Teelin Harbour. The harbour is difficult to distinguish, as the entrance remains closed until you are virtually on top of it. From 4 or 5 miles away, the 590-meter Slieve League cliffs are easily discerned and to the east is the conical hill of Croaghmuckross. Heading for the left-hand flank of the latter takes you right up to the entrance of the harbour. There are moorings in the harbour and an idiosyncratic private pontoon for disabled access to fishing and tripper boats. As long as you ask nicely and promise to be away by 08.30 you may be permitted to go alongside the pontoon.

Murphy was much in evidence the following morning. A veritable nexus of warps and mooring lines criss-crosses the inner harbour. Despite the helmsman paying serious attention, we snagged a line or it may have been two or three as we attempted to depart at 09.00. We became conjoined to several fishermen's dinghies by the rudder or the keel or the propeller or possibly all three. Thoughts of an early departure evaporated. Nothing we did seemed to work. The writer considered a bread knife. Wiser council wondered how long it would take to get a diver from Killybegs. The writer decided not to mention he had a wetsuit, mask and snorkel in the forepeak. Fortuitously two locals arrived on the quay and summed the situation up immediately. Knowing how the cats cradle worked they pulled on one warp and released another - and lo and behold! - we were free and only 30 minutes behind schedule.



David Whitehead and Eagle Island

The passage to Arranmore was somewhat of an anticlimax after the high drama of our entrapment. We had a stiff beat out into a southwesterly force 5 and rough seas back-washing from the Slieve League cliffs before tacking into Rathlin O'Beirne Sound. Two further tacks had us past Rossan Point and after lunch we were off Dawros Point. The rain had stopped. The sun had come out and the wind was at our backs. Fortified by multifarious refreshments, including a date and walnut cake donated to our expedition by Louise, we were in the North Sound of Aran by 17.00. At this point the rain gods decided to let us know they hadn't gone away and liberally doused us in cold downpour of monsoon proportions as we approached Ballagh Rocks.

We needed provisions – with the shop closing at 18.00 and 15 minutes from the ferry pier. We were approaching at almost low water. Be sure to give the port hand black



Old buffers solving the world's problems. John Bourke and David Whitehead ignoring the swell in Donegal Bay

rock beacon a good 50 meters offing to port before heading for the head of the pier – better still follow the ferry in. The pier is not suitable for lying alongside even for a short period – the wash and swell from the ferry makes it nigh impossible. It is better to drop someone off at the stairs and collect them later – as we did. The shop sells all the usual provisions including tonic and wine and whiskey – but not gin. Maybe I am hypersensitive but I felt certain frostiness on asking for gin to go with the tonic. Make sure you have enough gin to get around Donegal. We spent a comfortable night on the Donegal county council moorings south of Calf Island.

The morning of the penultimate day of June was clear, fresh and cold. Our last GRIB forecast was talking about southerly then westerly force 4-5. We departed with a reefed main and jib heading for Owey

Island. We did briefly discuss a transit of Owey Sound but in view of the southwesterly force 4 and the big seas, left it at that. Once past Owey, we gybed for Bloody Foreland, the last headland in the S & W Sailing Directions.

Morning coffee time saw Bloody Foreland a mile south; we had left the west coast. We easily resisted the charms of Tory Island for lunch, recalling our last gastronomic adventures there some years previously. John was leaving us hereabouts to participate in a music festival in Bantry. We considered a number of locations where he might stand a reasonable chance of connecting with the Bus Eireann network. We decided on Rathmullen in Lough Swilly. Whilst it was a few miles off our rhumb line, the pleasures of Rathmullen House Hotel seduced us, after our days of relative privation. The pontoon was empty save for a tripper boat. A cold wind funnelled down the Lough. The Harbour Master was exceedingly solicitous and seemed glad of someone to break his monotony.

In no time at all we had transport fixed for John on the morrow; we had made ourselves sufficiently presentable for the Hotel and were sitting down in front of an unseasonable but nonetheless desirable fire, nursing a gin and tonic and reviewing the menu. Our cups indeed did runneth over.

The last day of June was far removed from the benign weather of the early days of the month. A cold south westerly followed us back up the Lough. John was safely ensconced in his warm coach whisking him to Dublin. At least the seas were small. After the foul tide out of Lough Swilly, we had the tide right for Malin Head and subsequently all the way to Portrush. A lone sail appeared from the west and followed us around the headland and went into Lough Foyle. In 6 days on the north and west coasts of Ireland we had seen two yachts sailing and five in total. One hopes that the predictions of the “CooL Route” are not overly optimistic.

The approach to Portrush was exciting. The cold front caught us as we approached Inishowen. The wind veered to the northwest and strengthened to force 5. Seven, eight, nine knots, if our instrumentation is to be believed. The front passed leaving lumpy seas and poor visibility as we tried to discern the entrance to the harbour. We had checked that space was available on the pontoon with the Harbour Master and as we approached, his assistant came down in the teeming rain to take our lines. The first phase of the expedition was completed. The pontoon and facilities in Portrush harbour are good. The showers, toilets, laundry and ice machine are all newly installed, and restaurants and the Yacht club are close by. Diesel is available on the pontoon. The facilities demonstrate what can be done at a relatively modest cost and could become a template for other locations between Galway and Lough Swilly. The only downside is that a swell penetrates the harbour and the pontoon undulates incessantly. We had to dig out rarely used snubber lines from the bottom of a locker to ensure a peaceful night's sleep.

Otherwise Portrush was a blaze of flower baskets, tubs and window boxes having played host to HRH Queen Elizabeth earlier in the week. The town also boasts a hardware shop of quality with staff who actually know what they are talking about. A request for a 3.2mm jobber drill bit did not elicit the blank uncomprehending stare often found in DIY supermarkets from youths on job experience schemes; a man in a brown warehouse coat scrambled up a ladder returning with an anonymous cardboard box full of the requisite items. Visit Portrush Home and Hardware on Dunluce Avenue before it is lost to progress - even if you have no need. It has that old hardwarey shop smell that will in no time induce you to buy something essential.

An interlude now followed where we attended to maintenance, housekeeping, laundry and the 150th Anniversary lunch at the RUYC. Portrush to Bangor by trains, which wound through the byways of Antrim and Down cost all of £7.00 return for a round trip journey time of seven hours.

Monday 4 July was a frustrating day with Murphy much in attendance. The high specification American fuel prefilter and water trap installed at great cost last year was full of what appeared to be a primeval goo and was presumably responsible for the engine hiccups observed earlier. We carried no spare filter and a search for a replacement was unsuccessful. In the short interludes between torrential rain showers, we bypassed the high specification prefilter and hoped for

the best for the rest of the cruise. We were authoritatively told later that older versions of the Volvo Penta would happily run on diesel soaked rags. We were not sure whether this was a good or bad prognosis.

We departed at 14.10 for Islay in yet another rain deluge with a forecast wind of north easterly backing northwest, force 4-5. Over the course of the afternoon and evening the wind backed and veered around northwest and northeast. Despite the maxim that 'Gentlemen don't beat', our progress across the chart had all the appearance of a drunken sailors' meanderings as we attempted to capitalise on the wind coming from all the wrong directions. Eventually at 23.00 we approached the lights of Carraig Fhada at the entrance to Port Ellen. Or at least we didn't. The light seemingly was extinguished. The Laird of Islay who built the lighthouse in 1832 in memory of his wife, Ellenor, would be disturbed. *'Ye who mid storms and tempests stray in dangers midnight hour./Behold where shines this friendly ray and/hail its guardian tower.'* Instead we happened on a rather more prosaic east cardinal mark that we had not anticipated. Nevertheless there was light enough in these latitudes to find a berth in the marina and by 23.30 we were tied up and enjoying a welcome bowl of malt. (The Laird's poem goes on at some length and finishes *'So may sweet virtue lead your way that when life's voyage is o'er/Secure like her with you may attain the heavily shore.'*)

The morning in Port Ellen dawned bright and warm – a welcome respite. We had noticed the previous evening that David's former boat, *Joyster* was in the marina and took the opportunity to call on the new owner Des Brown (ICC) and wife Mo, who were out for a long weekend from Londonderry. For once we were in no rush as a tide did not run in our favour until after 12.30 and even then we had only a modest distance of 25 miles to cover to our next stop in Craighouse. We dispensed with oilskins for the first time since Galway and regretfully sailed past the distilleries of Laphroaig, Ardbeg and Lagavulin – so many distilleries – so little time. A north west wind on the beam, blue skies, fair tide and small seas – this was the story we had signed up for. By lunchtime Ardmore Point was abeam. We had little time for afternoon tea and cake as we made the final tack into the mooring in Craighouse. The latter was almost Caribbean – palm trees, blue skies and azure seas. All the moorings were taken – Bruce and Barbara Fennell took pity on us and we moored alongside *Beezneeze*.

The visitors most likely outnumbered the local population that evening. Nary? an additional table could be squeezed into the community hall. A venison stew that had begun life in the hills behind Craighouse, served with tatties and neeps, forebode a monumental evening. The advertised ceilidh band was unable to make the gig. No matter – we improvised in true ICC/CCC fashion. The evening expired with the majority of the company taking part in a Hebridean rendition of a well-loved ceilidh reel, Strip the Willow. The locals knew what they were supposed to be doing. The visitors less so. I think that the locals won. Perhaps the kindest thing to say is that the set ended in the same way that sets from Rosmuc to An Cheathrú Rua have, in my limited experience, all ended – that is, in a state of exhausted joyful confusion.

The next morning was, as the locals say, dreich. Truthfully it was dreich in spades. Those who had opted for a distillery tour were thankful to be warm and dry and tasting whisky, hoping that the day might improve. It didn't. We dropped the mooring at 13.15 with a fair tide for the Sound of Jura and Ardfern at the top of Loch Craignish. The village of Ardfern shows what can be done when a community is determined to survive. Despite its isolated location, the population is growing and the school is thriving. We were fortunate to get the last berth in the marina – and that only because we were small enough to be shoehorned into a vacant corner. The Galley of Lorne pub is about 0.5km from the marina and on a warm dry summer evening would be a pleasant stroll. In full oilskins and cascading rain the walk has less to recommend it.

July 7: At least the rain had stopped. We topped up with diesel and water and motor sailed down the loch to Craignish Point and the Dorus Mor. The tide was with us and we were squirted up through Scarba Sound at 9 or 10 knots, skirting the fearsome Gulf of Corryvreckan (which despite the eerie overfalls in the sound, did not look or



***Mystic* well-reefed in the Sound of Jura. The Vice Commodore's burgee is an impressive size**

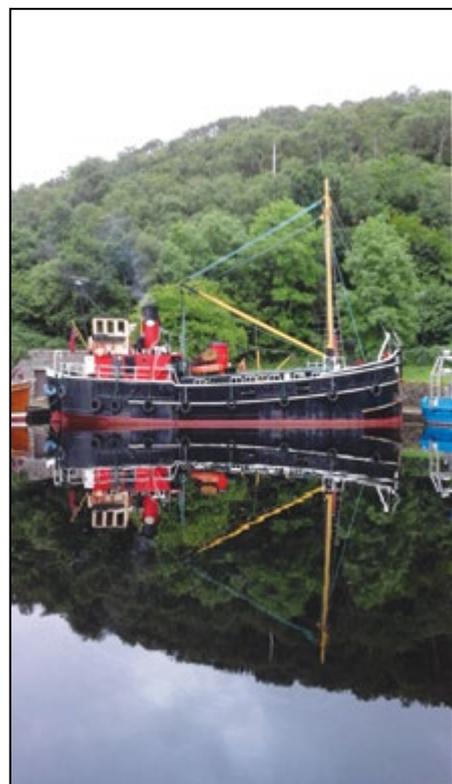
sound as fearsome on that day). By 1500 Fladda lighthouse was on the beam and our SOG was in excess of 10 knots. We had considered spending a night in the Oban Yacht Marina in Kerrera but the general opinion was that the facility was currently up for sale and somewhat lacking. We sailed past Kerrera; the sun appeared in a black-grey sky. The impressive Duart Castle, an ancestral home of the Clan Mclean appeared out of the mist on the port bow. Once around the point and with a favourable south westerly we set a course up the Sound of Mull for Loch Aline, set in the hills of the mainland of Morvern. The jetty and pontoons on the west side of the loch are close to the silica sand mine, and looked crowded with an industrial mien. We opted to anchor east of the entrance in about 4 meters. Serendipitously, our mooring buddies in Craighouse were anchored 50 meters away and the Fennells and the Ranalows entertained us on board *Beezneeze* with wine and cheese later that evening. The rain sluiced down as we rowed back to *Mystic* – we contemplated the design of a suitable cockpit enclosure for *Mystic* in these climes.

Friday morning (8 July) was dry. We anticipated a gentle sail to Tobermory. *Beezneeze* had departed. We had a leisurely breakfast. Ernie, our electronic tiller pilot had given up the ghost during yesterday's sail down Loch Craignish. It was an ideal morning for investigating his innards yet again. There appeared to be nothing obvious that had caused his demise. He was reassembled and given a good talking to. He worked again - such are the caprices of marine electronics. We hauled the anchor after an early lunch and took a quick look around the north end of the loch. Sadly we had no time to visit Ardtornish House and its famed gardens – it would have been a perfect day for a tour.

With a wind funnelling down the Sound of Mull, we spent an enjoyable few hours tacking up towards Tobermory. Things were about to change. According to my mobile phone log, at 15.17 I received a call from the Commodore advising us of an informal drinks gathering later that afternoon on the pontoon in Tobermory. By 15.48, a time and distance calculation suggested our ETA would miss the party. By 16.05 we had furled the jib and by 18.01, with considerable assistance from Mr. Volvo were alongside *Pure Magic*. The sun stayed out for the party and Tobermory looked her best. The parties continued at various locations until the early hours.

Dreich had returned the following morning. The brightly coloured houses on the seafront made a brave attempt to dispel the drizzle and mist. The showers in the marina were investigated. For £2 one is entitled to a 15-minute shower – *yes 15 minutes* – a CCC member observed that he would have been happy to pay only £1 for 7.5 minutes. One wonders what Tobermoryans do in a showers that continues for 15 minutes – other than coming out, pale, steaming and shrivelled. Perhaps they also do their laundry. As the day wore on the weather improved - as usual. By 19.15, we assembled at the Western Isles Hotel for the final party of the Rally. The hotel had just about managed to squeeze the bulk of us into the conservatory overlooking Tobermory Bay. Mindful that many planned to move onwards or backwards the following day the party dispersed at a seemly hour.

We had decided that rather than venture further north, as had been our original plan we would return to Galway the long way round and optimistically perhaps encounter more favourable weather. We were also conscious of the aphorism that the place where optimism most flourishes is the lunatic asylum. The reinvigorated Ernie did a sterling job as we motor sailed through inundating rain, and swirling mists back down through the Sound of Mull to Crinan. By 1400 with a southgoing tide we swept through the Sound of Luing at 10 knots ; by 1500 we were again around Craignish Point and through the Dorus Mor. An hour and half later we were locked into the Crinan Canal and tied up alongside and underneath dripping trees. A surreal contrast of locations from the overfalls of the Sound of Luing to the sylvan peace of a canal all in the space of 90 minutes.



The restored puffer *Vic 32* with steam up in Crinan Basin

Crinan was quiet. We watched the European Cup final in company with two taciturn Englishmen. It was dispiriting. The match, that is, and not particularly the Englishmen. We considered the paucity of scores in 120 minutes of football; suggestions for improving the game included increasing the teams to 15 each and changing the shape of the ball. We had agreed our transit plan for the Canal with a German motor cruiser from Hamburg, *Nordlicht*, with whom we had locked into the canal basin the previous evening. They were two; we were two. Together we were through to Ardrishaig and exiting the final sea lock at 15.00. *Nordlicht* had planned to spend the night in Ardrishaig – we suggested Tarbert would be a better overnight. We had a soldiers wind down Loch Fyne and despite a foul tide, which had worried our German friends, the sail to Tarbert was one of the memorable ones – small seas, a favourable wind and that precious of commodities, sunshine.

It was but a fleeting visit to Tarbert – our German friends came aboard to ask advice about their plans for continuing down the east coast of Ireland and to Wales and so back to Hamburg. We mused that the Skaggerakslacht or Battle of Jutland had taken place just over 100 years ago. We shared a bottle of fizz and toasted our good fortune that it was not 100 years or even 75 years ago.

We departed Tarbert Marina at 06.35 the following morning with a a south-westerly force 4 and worked our way down Loch Fyne. West coast sailors are con-

stantly in awe of flat seas and the absence of a lee shore. We had discussed various landfalls in Ireland. After 12 hours passage we had sailed a creditable 64 miles and Larne was some 10 miles to starboard. By the time we had reached the Copeland Islands at 20.30 we had a flat calm, a black sky, a spectacular double rainbow to the east and were motoring. Ernie, we surmised had finally departed this world and had gone to the great WEEE site from which no electronics returns. Scrabo monument could be made out 10 miles away just before sunset.

Despite the lack of Ernie, it was all going so well, we thought we would perhaps continue on to Howth. The night was benign. The wind returned and we sailed with steering assistance from Bartholemew and a ingenious cats-cradle of bungees constructed by David during the dark hours. After 24 hours we had Carlingford some 15 miles to the west and 141 miles covered. The last three hour reach from Rockabill inside Lambay and into Howth, as so often happens, was some of the best sailing we had had since leaving Galway two and a half weeks ago.

Safely on the pontoon in Howth we welcomed Mr. Nixon on board and gave him a taster of our travellers' tales. David and myself had a yearning for a fish supper – our attempts to catch fish on the passage down were singularly hopeless. The Nixon imprimatur of the Brass Monkey restaurant on the quay could not have been bettered and serendipitously we had, as an added bonus, the delightful company of Clayton Love Jnr. and Barbara McGonagle. And we still had sufficient remnant of our Jura whisky for a final nightcap. The sail across Dublin Bay the next morning, despite its brevity was significant. This was the only passage during the last 684 miles during which it had not rained and we had not at some stage worn full oilskins.

The remainder of the circumnavigation of Ireland was done in stages consistent with necessary domestic duties and the forecast of reasonable weather windows. The journey resumed on 6 August with a new crewmember, Peter Mason, a recently retired master mariner with a fund of new stories and anecdotes to help us on our way. The passages to Arklow and Kilmore Quay were without incident with favourable winds and tides. We crossed off the penultimate corner of Ireland. The projected plan was to make a single leg from Kilmore Quay to Kinsale. Events conspired against this. Our latest GRIB and Passage Weather forecasts gave us a northwesterly force 3 or 4; ideal for the passage. Met Eireann trumped this with a west/southwest 5/6 and a small craft warning for all of Ireland to boot. With hindsight we think Met Eireann was being run by holiday interns that particular day and that they confused the northern half of the country with the southern half. Regrettably we took Met Eireann's advice. This was a bad call. We abandoned our passage to Kinsale and, as Conor O'Brien aptly put it, 'we made an amusement out of a necessity'. We had a river trip to Waterford and Dunmore East instead.

Then the southwesterlies actually did materialise and we spent a long lumpy night off Helvick harbour with all our anchor chain out and the anchor drag alarms set. The reported moorings were nowhere to be seen. Murphy enlivened the night with the piercing screech of dual gas alarms going off in the early hours. We were half expecting anchor drag alarms and the gas alarms had us responding with some alacrity, not being sure whether we were about to run aground or blow up. A corroded can of spray paint leaking into the bilges was the culprit and once this was removed on deck, blessed silence prevailed. After that, the journey to Kinsale, Glandore and Baltimore seemed remarkably pedestrian with light southerly winds and sunshine.

We had thought to locate *Mystic* in Baltimore for two weeks or so to soak up the west Cork ambience; we soaked up rather a lot of rain in the process. David Whitehead and myself resumed our journey to the north finally on 5th September after two false starts postponed by a mocking series of Atlantic depressions. The auguries were less than auspicious. Visibility was down to 100 meters in the harbour. We carefully negotiated through the north channel with most of the dangers invisible. Clear Island was somewhere to the south as we motored through a confused sea to Crookhaven. Having picked up a mooring in an unseasonably early dusk, we considered going alongside for refreshment in O'Sullivan's. Trouble was, we could not even see O'Sullivan's in the stygian gloom – as it became even darker we had reservations about finding the mooring again after O'Sullivan hospitality.

By 06.30 the next morning the visibility had much improved; we could see the yacht on the neighbouring mooring and the faint outline of the village. Updates of the weather forecasts were not encouraging. Our anticipated gentle progression up the west coast had taken an ominous turn. The depression somewhere out to the west of buoy M3 was now speeding up and heading directly for us and the west coast. Leisurely stops in Derrynane, Valentia, and Ventry faded like



Mystic in sylvan splendour, Crinan Canal

mirages; we considered the likely bolt-holes on the route. We decided on a non-stop overnight passage to Galway.

We rounded the Mizen with little wind, a foul tide and an uncomfortable sea. Visibility was 200 meters or less. At least we were now heading north for the first time since Tobermory. We saw no land between Mizen Head and the entrance to the Dursey Sound. Murphy had reared his head again; a bight of main halyard had looped itself around the radar reflector. We naively thought it might unloop itself. As we all know, life isn't like that. A journey up the mast was going to be the only solution. The prospect was not attractive in the two meter Atlantic swell. The water in the Dursey Sound was calm enough for the manoeuvre. The cable car went back and forth several times. We wondered what they thought of the boat motoring in circles below with somebody hanging from the spreaders. And yes, Murphy decided on one last throw; the safety line holding me up the mast jammed. With only two on board there was only one solution – and the lockspike knife I bought in the long departed O.M.Watts emporium 35 years ago and never seriously used in anger – was serendipitously in my pocket.

From the Dursey to the Blaskets, we saw little of the magnificence of the coast and islands. Bray Head appeared momentarily and vanished. We observed the waves breaking on the eastern shore of Great Blasket only when 3 cables away. We gave thanks for electronics.

As happens, north of the Blasket Sound was another world. The cloud and fog rolled away leaving a blue sky. Headlands appeared. The Atlantic swell lessened and we had some favourable wind from the southeast. A course was set for Finis Rock 65 miles away. A brilliant crescent moon and starlit sky accompanied us well past Loop Head. With minimal light pollution I observed the Milky Way and the Pleiades for the first time in Ireland.

We rounded Black Head at the entrance to Galway Bay at 06.35 and were now back in our home waters. We had a celebratory breakfast of bacon sandwiches and the remnants of the gin. By 09.13 we had tied up at Renville Quay, from where we had departed nearly eleven weeks ago. The log said we had covered 1,226 miles; but that was incidental. The weather might have been better; the shorts came out one afternoon only. The cabin heater was at times invaluable. Murphy had been vanquished on several occasions. I need to buy new oilskins and we might invest in a cockpit 'Hen house'. It was a thoroughly enjoyable adventure.



New Beginnings

Julie Chambers

The Prologue.

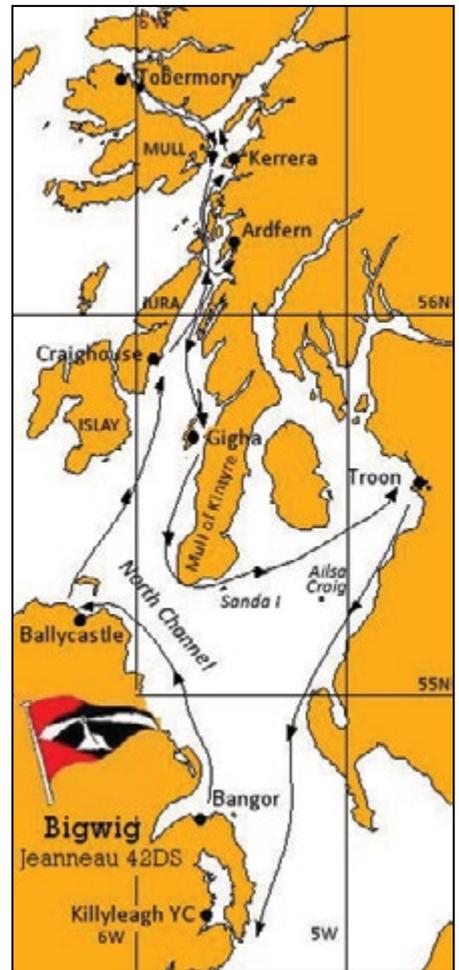
In January I became a member of the ICC and Graham retired in April. In May, *Bigwig* cruised to Drogheda, thanks again to Tom Fitzpatrick for another great joint Eastern and Northern cruise. June saw me take early retirement and fly off to meet our daughter Hannah, who was on her homeward bound circumnavigation of the planet. We met in Bali and spent 2 glorious weeks there swimming in Indian Ocean, sightseeing and relaxing before heading to Dubai and then finally landing back in Dublin on 1st July.

Bigwig and *Madfish* departed Strangford Lough on Saturday 2nd July, bound for Bangor Marina. The plans was for the remainder of the crews to join up at the joint ICC, CCC lunch on Sunday 3rd July for 150th RUYC celebrations.

Scottish ICC & CCC Cruise.

Bigwig left Bangor marina Monday morning 4th July bound for Ballycastle marina. *Bigwig's* female cruise crew arrived later in afternoon and Heather's special birthday celebrations commenced. Dinner onboard *Bigwig* and plans for coming days were finalised.

Tuesday 5th July: Following early morning duties of some important retail therapy and *Madfish* ladies' hair salon appointments, lines were cast off and the cruise began in earnest at 11.15. This was Bridie's maiden sailing voyage across the Irish Sea. We motor-sailed initially and then sailed with head sail only with a good breeze at times. 27 knots off Islay along with blue sky and sunshine were the order of the day. We were fortunate enough to see puffins off Rathlin. Our boat speed was a steady 8-10 knots. We motored into Craighouse at 16.30 and dropped anchor and waited arrival of *Madfish*. Once all the nautical jobs were completed, drinks and nibbles followed before we all donned our wet weather gear and stepped into the rubber ducks to head ashore. Great laughter rang out as we spluttered to the shore to join everyone in the village hall. We were made very welcome by the villagers and we had a most warming meal of top class local venison. A chorus of 'Happy Birthday' was sung to Helen Markey with birthday cake for all. A joint CCC and ICC musical entertainment followed, with music by Bing Crosby on guitar, Derek White on his infamous squeeze box, CCC members on bagpipes, recitation by Peter Fernie, and energetic solo by our commodore Peter Killen. Sadly, night was drawing in, farewells were said and with wet gear back on we all made our way to the boats.



Wednesday 6th July: More celebrations this morning. Our crew Liam and Bridie were celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary. 'Bubbly juice' and breakfast followed. Sadly, they then had to leave to get a bus and ferry from Islay to Ballycastle owing to family illness. The weather had not improved and was much the same- dismal rain, poor visibility and more rain. Captain Lindsay from *Madfish* had arranged a private bus tour of Jura for those who had decided to stay for the day. It certainly was an experience. A stag and sea otter were spotted. A late lunch was had in Craighouse hotel, where we met Paul McSorley and his two daughters, who were cruising back to their home port of Derry. They had just heard that *Derry/Londonderry Clipper* had arrived in with unofficial time of winning the New York to Derry leg. Our men then availed of the Jura whisky tour, with a little sampling along the way. The rain continued all day into early evening and so we concluded our day with supper and wine onboard *Madfish* before retiring to *Bigwig*.

Thursday 7th July: Thankfully the rain had ceased by morning - spirits were lifted and preparations were made for our next voyage. I still had not managed to get a photo of the three Paps of Jura visible together. Weather forecast was SW F4-5 gusting 6, Dunstaffnage marina was the destination. *Madfish* and *Bigwig* set sail at 12.10 (wind speed 18 knots, boat speed 5-6 knots, course 030°) and there was actually some blue sky overhead. On *Bigwig* there was just the two of us now; with lunch of pizza and rosé wine a la Graham, we continued to sail northwards. The wind had become SSW 18 knots and we were getting a steady 7 knots, which was unfortunately too fast for me to try the new fishing tackle which I had purchased that morning in Jura. We were at Corryvreckan at 15.15 and, owing to the wind decreasing, our faithful engine was turned on. Following several phone contacts, we were informed that there were no spaces in the marina, so we decided to pick up a swinging mooring off Oban sailing club, where we had been many times before. We had just completed this when we were informed that the mooring was not suitable. Alan Markey onboard *Crackerjack* had also just motored by and Graham had directed him to Kerrera. We then followed suit as the wind was steadily increasing and the rain had started. We travelled 44.5 miles to Kerrera marina, which was a little bleak, with no shore power, no ferry to

mainland and the torrential rain had started before we could get the 'conservatory' up. Action to lift dampened spirits was needed. *Bigwig* obliged, with our fellow ICC friends, seventeen in total, all down below for an evening of craic and song. Our youngest cruise member, Hugo Guenebaut (Brian and Eleanor Cudmore's grandson), performed 'Marilyn Monroe' with interesting hand actions, and the video is classified!

Friday 8th July: *Madfish* and *Bigwig* slipped quietly out of the marina at 07.00, weather murky with rain at times, wind F4-5 with occasional gusts of 6. By 09.00, the weather was improving, with blue sky and sunshine as we arrived in Tobermory at 11.00 (distance covered 26.7 miles). Tobermory looked just as I had remembered, with multicoloured houses and dwellings along the water edge and there was a definite buzz about the place. We were fortunate after a short wait on a swinging mooring to get a berth on the marina alongside *Madfish*, with *Oysterbay* and *Mandolin Wind* across the pontoon. A very enjoyable leisurely lunch was had in Cafe Fish restaurant, followed by a walk along the front, some restocking of supplies and sprucing up before we joined fellow ICC members on board *Pure Magic* for a most enjoyable reception by Peter and Beverly. The weather was most favourable and a good time was had by all.

Saturday 9th July: It was to be the last day of our joint cruise. A new raincoat with hood was purchased in hope that it would not be needed. This was wishful thinking, as sadly the weather had taken a downward turn and rain was in full flow again. *Oysterbay* crew Peter, Brian and myself set off mid afternoon to explore the waterfalls. Two and a half hours and twelve kilometres later, we returned to the boats muddy and wet, having seen some spectacular scenery. Later that evening all the CCC and ICC crews assembled at the Western Isles Hotel, where an enjoyable dinner was had before concluding with our commodore Peter presenting gifts to crew members who had celebrated notable birthdays and anniversaries during the cruise. A final stop off in the Mishnish for some crews took place before retiring to bed.

Sunday 10th July: The marina was very busy with farewells being said, some crew leaving and going home by various methods of transport and other yachts departing on their homeward southerly voyages, while others were heading further north. *Bigwig* and *Madfish* planned to head for Ardfern, with *Oysterbay* going to Oban for a crew change before heading down the Crinan canal to rendezvous with us in Troon later in the week. We slipped warps at 11.00, taking a small detour down past the waterfall before motoring out past the large cruise ship that had anchored overnight. The weather forecast was for heavy rain showers with a southerly F4-5 and poor visibility at times. Motoring was the order of the day as the wind was dead on the nose. There was a steady stream of yachts heading south and also many passed us going north. Duart castle was clouded in mist as we motored past. Throughout the day, we both commented on the lack of sea-life we had seen, with only one sighting of porpoises and a flock of geese as we motored up Loch Craignish towards Ardfern late in the afternoon. We were safely berthed at Ardfern marina at 17.10, having logged 44.6 miles. Thankfully the "conservatory" was erected just before another downpour arrived. Celebratory drinks for absent friends were taken before walking to Ardfern hotel for dinner, which was an entertaining experience.

Monday 11th July: Another damp dismal morning with a very low grey mist over the land. Breakfast, a walk ashore followed by a strategy planning meeting was the order and a decision was made to sail to Gigha. Both yachts left marina at 11.45, with *Madfish* stopping for fuel and *Bigwig* just ahead. Our course was set at 208° from Ardfern down Loch Craignish, (with SOG of 6.9-7.0 noted - Graham giving me lessons). At 12.15 we rolled out the headsail and turned off the engine, our SOG being a steady 6.8 knots. The wind speed was 16-18 knots. It was great to be sailing and not to have the friendly clunk clunk of the engine on. We sailed across Crinan bay at 8.5 knots (with 9.6 knots being recorded for short periods - we did have some tide with us). We had several sightings of porpoises and also the old 'Puffer' boat heading up into Tayvallich with her famous black smoke swirling up into the sky. (I must make sure I cook some more recipes from her book, which we purchased several years ago). We sailed on down to Gigha with patches of blue sky increasing and sunshine. We moored up in Ardminish bay at 16.15. Gigha had excelled again with her weather. There were several other ICC yachts already here, Alan Markey, Charles Blandford, Peter Killen, Tom Fitzpatrick and the boys on *Blue Squirrel*. *Madfish* motored in shortly after us and went alongside the new pontoon, which certainly adds to the accessibility of this treasured anchorage. We launched the dinghy and joined them on shore, where we walked up to the village shop and met Baby Martha (who was now 3 years old). What a delightful little character. The islanders are all so friendly and we even got fresh mint from their garden to dress Heather's cocktails. Dinner was duly booked for the Boathouse, where we had a wonderful meal.

Tuesday 12th July: We woke to tranquillity, sunshine and clear blue skies - as always Gigha had not let me down. It was a perfect day for 'showing the island off' to Heather and Lindsay as we toured around on rented bicycles. What an adventure we had. We paddled like children on the Twin Beach Beach (Queen's beach), and had a 2C lunch (Chowder and Chablis) outside the Gigha Hotel, overlooking some fine yachts in the bay. After lunch we visited Achamore Gardens and ate 'Whisky and Bramble' homemade ice-cream. Childhood memories were relived as we free-wheeled down the hills to see the 'South Pole and Penguins 16,000 miles' sign, before heading back onboard for some sunbathing and rest. Dinner was on board *Madfish* and what a culinary extravagance. Bing had cooked scallops with black pudding, smoked halibut (from Tobermory), along with our own home grown potatoes accompanied by cauliflower cheese. Cheese and biscuits along with a night cap were served on deck, a perfect end to a wonderful day.

Wednesday 13th July: Sadly it was time to leave this special place once again. We cast off and set sail for Troon with an ETA of 19.30. The forecast was NW F3-4 with gusts of 5, some showers with mixed visibility. We motor-sailed at a steady 8 knots and rounded the Mull of Kintyre at 13.00. We sailed past Sanda and had lunch on deck listening to David

Cameron's last speech as Prime Minister. Ailsa Craig was silhouetted in the background over Sanda. Shortly afterwards the captain informed me that the main sail needed hoisting, as we 20 knots of wind on the beam. We scampered along at a steady 10 knots and, as we sailed past Plabba lighthouse, Hannah phoned to say she was waiting to board her flight to Glasgow and would meet us in Troon the following day. We were safely tied up in Troon marina at 18.45 ahead of our ETA and had logged 72 miles. *Madfish* was just behind us, and *Oysterbay*, who had had a good passage down the Crinan Canal, was expected the following evening.

Thursday 14th and Friday 15th July: What a contrast in 2 days. Blistering sunshine on 14th which *Madfish* and *Salpara* (QYC) crews enjoyed to the full at 'The Open' and then downpours on 15th. *Oysterbay* and *Bigwig* crew tested their wet weather gear to the full. However great craic, fun and friendship were had by us all.

Saturday 16th July: Homeward plans were all put in place following the overnight gale. Taxi, bus and ferry for some, another day in Troon for others awaiting better conditions. The forecast was for sea conditions to improve, with winds dropping to steady F5. *Bigwig* and crew were ready to set sail for home and Hannah and I had already taken sea sickness tablets. Bing waved us off at 09.30. We motored towards home with lumpy seas of peaks and troughs for the first 2 hours, bracing to say the least, but *Bigwig* took it all in her stride and stood tall like her character from 'Watership Down'. As the day progressed, the sea state and wind decreased and we were at the bar mouth of Strangford Lough shortly after 18.00. With views of Scrabo Tower in the distance, Hannah remarked 'home' and by 20.30, with *Bigwig* safe on her mooring at Killyleagh YC, we stepped ashore having logged 92 miles.

Epilogue.

I look forward to the next chapter and adventures with friends old and new. Let there be fair winds to all our nautical friends at home and abroad.

Derek White brews up Tobermory Cockalecky Soup

Inspired by this year's ICC/CCC cruise in Company.

Can be made on any day of a three week Scottish cruising holiday

Wait for a suitable F5 from the direction that you are heading

Drain a half gallon of rainwater from the boom: this should only take about five minutes

If there is a bit of thunder and lightning about, the water may be already heated or iced with large hailstones

Prepare a small chicken bought from a Tobermory supermarket -you might get change from £10

Add a selection of soup vegetables well past their sell by date - if they could use seaweed and sell it they would.

Proceed to add all ingredients into a large pot, making sure that the gimbals are free

Cook at extreme angles as long as it is safe to do so

Serve with blue bread reluctantly sold to you at an exorbitant price a couple of days before by the exclusive bakery

This soup always has a twang of diesel, as a lot of it is used on these trips - can be neutralised by a glass of malt on the side

Hold on and enjoy

Scots whae hae and all that crap

Written in a pea souper stuck in Easdale waiting for it to lift and the rain to stop - maybe October

Lady Belle's Celtic Circuit

Donal Walsh



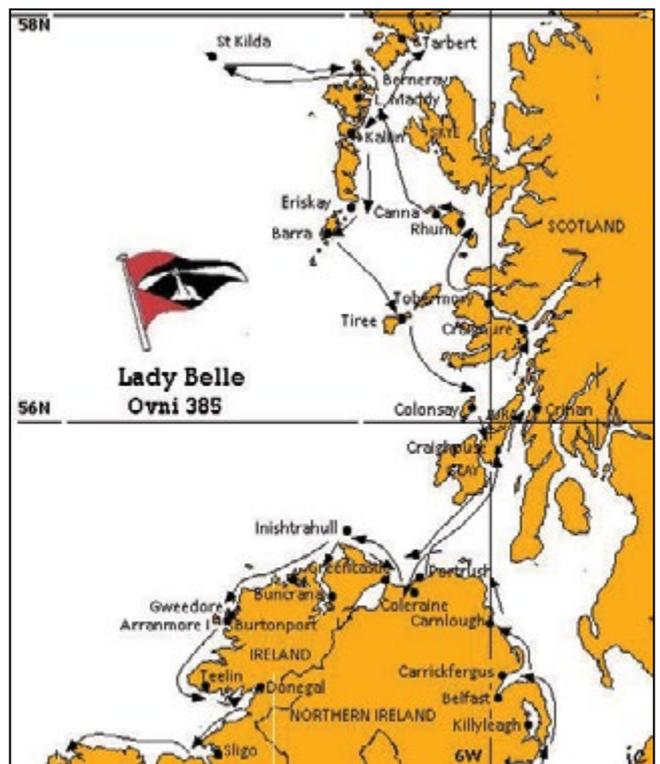
Our cruise to Norway in 2015 put me thinking that it might be time to look at changing our boat. *Lady Kate* was brilliant for me, because I could sail her singlehanded if needs be, and also her bilge keels allowed her to dry out on her Dungarvan mooring without problems. A bigger boat would allow us to cruise further in greater comfort and travel faster thus covering more ground. There was also a desire to cruise more extensively in northern waters, suggesting a steel or aluminium hull. Coupled to this was the requirement that she could take the bottom on her mooring at low water in Dungarvan.

During the winter I looked at several designs, eventually deciding on the French built aluminium Ovni which has a centreboard and lifting rudder. I took over *Lady Belle* on St Patrick's Day at Port de Crouesty near Vannes. We had a very experienced delivery crew comprising Clare Morrissey ICC, Máire Breathnach ICC, Andrew Wilkes and myself. The previous owner and the broker spent a full and worthwhile day with us on the handover, which proved to be of great benefit and saved me having to discover for myself how the equipment on board worked. We took a chance that the weather would be good enough to make the passage back to Ireland so early in the year, and we were very lucky. Sailing north along the French coast we made great speed in a favourable westerly wind. Overnight stops in Le Guilvenec and L'Abert Ildut placed us well for the crossing to Ireland. I had hoped to make an early season stop at the Scillies, but as we approached, the wind fell calm, and with the promise of further freshening winds, we opted to carry on for home. On watch at 03.00, some 40 miles north of Scilly, motoring in flat calm the engine stopped. I immediately cursed the Frenchman, thinking that it was a mechanical fault which I hadn't spotted. However looking astern, I saw a huge section of net in our wake – we were well caught. This was going to be a big job and could not be tackled until daylight came. I was pleased that I had thought to pack a wet suit, and that Andrew (my brother in law) was aboard, a much younger man than I - and being a Sasanach, he was expendable! (*No!, not so, he is my husband...New Ed*). After a full twenty minutes in the water, he had cleared a major portion of the net but there was still a sizeable amount remaining. Now it was my turn. I picked the short straw – the wet suit was wet and cold, which wasn't the best start but I managed to devise an apparatus from a piece of hose which enabled me to work without surfacing and clear the remaining portion of net. There was such a vast quantity of net that we had to recover it on board and bring it home, as I reckoned it would be a hazard to anything other than a very large vessel. Of course once we had dealt with the problem the wind picked up and we made good speed to Dungarvan.

The next few weeks were spent working up the ship and familiarising ourselves with the equipment on board. During this period I applied to have her registered at Waterford in the name *Lady Belle*. My previous boats have all had the Lady prefix: *Lady Sarah*, *Lady Kate*, and now *Lady Belle*. Despite having to deregister the vessel in France, apply for a name change and have a tonnage survey, the registration process was seamless and completed very efficiently in a few weeks by the Registrar of Shipping in Waterford. I had heard horror stories of delays of over a year to get Irish registration for yachts. I felt it might be unwise to undertake a major cruise in our first year and we would do well to familiarize ourselves with the vessel during the 2016 sailing season. A simple plan was devised. We would take *Lady Belle* round Ireland, concentrating on calling to places that I had not been to before, and also visit the Outer Hebrides area of Scotland as this for the most part was new territory to me. I left Dungarvan on June 3rd accompanied by friends Alex and Alban. Despite the



Dungarvan Harbour Sailing Club pontoon, with section of net removed from propeller



light winds we made Rosslare on our first day out. An early start to catch the north going stream put us off Wicklow Head by the time the stream changed and we motor-sailed in the light winds and got into Dublin for the night. Alban left next morning and we were joined by my son Brendan and his friend Brian who came along for the sail to Malahide. Our AIS picked up some ICC yachts returning from the Drogheda Meet at anchor in a cove at Lambay Island. We diverted to say hello – or should it be ahoy – but the party broke up before we got there. Later we overnighted at anchor in Skerries.

A long, calm, motoring day brought us to Carlingford, where we went alongside the east pier, which dries. This would not be a problem, as the centreboard and rudder would be raised before we took the bottom. However as we came alongside, while using the bow thruster a stray line got wrapped in the thruster propeller – again there was only one solution – another dive job! Before leaving Dungarvan, I resurrected the remains of my antiquated dive gear and stored it on board in anticipation of picking up a line or other under-hull problems. It was simple to clear the foul on the thruster, but the overload from the rope wrap caused the isolating switch feeding the unit to melt and the melted plastic insulated the poles on the switch, preventing continuity under load. This took ages to sort, as it was all unfamiliar territory. The dive also revealed another problem: the bottom was badly fouled, with a coating of barnacles. The Frenchman assured me that the boat had been recently antifouled - he was cursed again- but the conditions in Carlingford dictated that this job went on the long finger for the moment. Our anemometer at the top of the mast was seized and I wanted to sort this before Alex left for home. While working at the top of the mast, the bosun's chair got twisted and jammed the aerosol tin open, covering me in easing oil.

In poor visibility and light winds, Brendan and I carried on to Strangford Lough next day. We anchored off Killyleagh and later enjoyed the company of some sailing folk we met in a delightful pub in the town. Belfast next, and an alongside berth at Abercorn dock. The new facilities here are wonderful and well located for someone visiting the city by boat. Clare joined us and we headed north in light winds. I made a brief stop in Carrigfergus to pick up a new VHF aerial, which solved a problem we were having with the AIS transmitter. We encountered some serious fog as we approached Carnlough but we able to enter using our radar and went alongside a fishing vessel. By morning the fog was still very thick and did not clear until we rounded Fair Head. Later that evening we entered the River Bann and went alongside at Coleraine Marina. This was a disaster as neither the showers nor the toilets were working. Several people we met in Coleraine suggested that we hire a taxi and go to Portrush or Portstewart for the evening. I couldn't understand this as I could have gone into either of those harbours as we passed. We wanted to see Coleraine, and walked into town, found an interesting pub and had an enjoyable evening. Heading



Lady Belle at the jetty in Inishtrahull, above, and alongside a fishing vessel in Malin Harbour, below

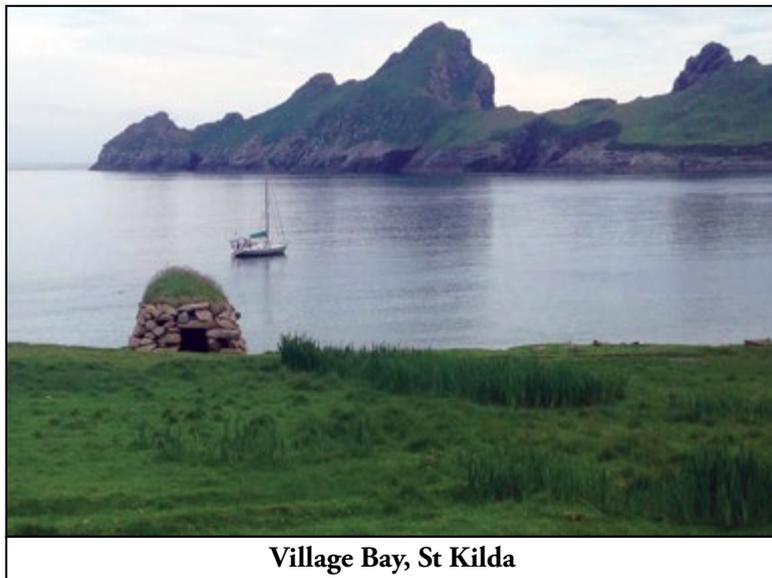


Donal and Brendan meet Yoda

for Malin next day, the settled conditions tempted us to visit Inishtrahull. It was so calm that we were able to get alongside the pier at Portmore. Ashore, it was weird to wander through the ruins of the deserted village and wonder how people survived here in such a forlorn outpost. We circled the Tor rocks further north before heading to Malin harbour for the evening. We received a warm welcome from the fishermen and the boats on the inside berths did not disturb us as they manoeuvred in the harbour. Before setting out

from Dungarvan, I had wanted to visit harbours and ports that I had not been to before. With this in mind, we rounded Malin Head and entered Lough Swilly. Here we would try for Letterkenny Town Quay. I had read of the small Dutch coasters entering and discharging cargo here and thought it might be an interesting piece of pilotage. On a falling tide it was not possible to make it all the way to Port Ballyraine; we got as far as Thorn Pier, about 1.5 miles short of our objective. The upper reaches of Lough Swilly are not particularly scenic, so we headed seaward again and spent the night alongside at Buncrana. The new Shannon class lifeboat was out on exercise and when she returned and berthed next to us we were invited aboard and shown around.

Brendan's time was running short, freshening winds were forecast and we headed east again round Malin to Greencastle. It was extremely difficult to get alongside the new pontoons here owing to a combination of wind and tide. Alongside, the berth offered very little by way of shelter or comfort – I don't think I ever deployed as many shorelines on any boat as we did that night. What a pity that the proposed breakwater was not built; in fact without it one could not consider this a safe berth in a fresh breeze. Brendan was away early and Clare and I took *Lady Belle* into the harbour, where we took on fuel from a dockside pump. By now the wind had freshened considerably and we thought it unwise to return to the pontoon berth. Our options were the River Bann (again), Derry City (too far upstream) or Portrush. We choose the latter, as it would make a good jumping off point for Scotland. The weather held us in Portrush for 2 days, during which time we took the train to Derry and visited the sights.



Village Bay, St Kilda

It was very lumpy when we did get away but once we cleared the coast the sea settled and we made good progress. Originally we headed for Port Ellen on Islay but by the time we approached, it was too early to stop and so we continued on to Craighouse on Jura. Here we met some Irish building workers who are renovating an old estate house and constructing a golf course for an Australian hedge fund millionaire. Our anchor was covered in weed when it broke surface as we prepared to leave. Next came the engine overheat alarm. Having re-anchored we set about clearing a blockage in the sea water intake pipe. This was a much more difficult task than I expected as the entire pipe was full of long bootlace-type weed. Once the problem was resolved, we set a course north through the Sound of Jura. It rained heavily all afternoon and we were glad to anchor off Crinan. Here we encountered another Ovni owned by a Dutchman and spent some time exchanging ideas and experiences. Clare enjoys open water swimming and the clear water provided an opportunity to get her swim. I also took advantage of the clear visibility, donned the dive gear and cleared the barnacles from the hull. I was forced to abandon the job half way through, as I tore the skin from my knuckles on the rough surface of the hull. Two days from the Brexit referendum and we did our bit for Europe by flying our very large EU flag in support. In Scotland, as the result showed, we were preaching to the converted. After stops and swims (Clare) on the Isle of Mull at Craignure and Tobermory, we planned to visit Muck. In the prevailing wind, the anchorage at Port Mhór was exposed and untenable and we had little choice but to carry on to Rhum, where we anchored off Kinloch Castle. While Britain voted on its future in Europe, we made the short hop from Rhum to Canna. By morning it was flat calm and we motored to Loch Maddy on Uist, listening to the reaction and analysis of the result on the radio. There is a new marina at Loch Maddy – ironically funded by EU grant aid – this was an enjoyable and welcome stop.

The forecast looked good so we took the opportunity to head west through the Sound of Harris and made a passage to St Kilda. We anchored in Village Bay on Hirta, went ashore and explored the deserted village and abandoned cottages. Despite the fine evening, it was an uncomfortable night in the anchorage. By morning the wind had freshened so much we had to head back to Uist. It was a fast passage, somewhat spoiled by the miserable wet conditions. It was tortuous pilotage into Bays Loch at Berneray, where we anchored off the harbour. A hop to the north brought us to Tarbert on Harris. Here our anchor fouled an old rope on

an opportunity to get her swim. I also took advantage of the clear visibility, donned the dive gear and cleared the barnacles from the hull. I was forced to abandon the job half way through, as I tore the skin from my knuckles on the rough surface of the hull. Two days from the Brexit referendum and we did our bit for Europe by flying our very large EU flag in support. In Scotland, as the result showed, we were preaching to the converted. After stops and swims (Clare) on the Isle of Mull at Craignure and Tobermory, we planned to visit Muck. In the prevailing wind, the anchorage at Port Mhór was exposed and untenable and we had little choice but to carry on to Rhum, where we anchored off Kinloch Castle. While Britain voted on its future in Europe, we made the short hop from Rhum to Canna. By morning it was flat calm and we motored to Loch Maddy on Uist, listening to the reaction and analysis of the result on the radio. There is a new marina at Loch Maddy – ironically funded by EU grant aid – this was an enjoyable and welcome stop.



Clare at Castle Bay, Barra

the bottom; this took an age to clear but I managed it without having to go over the side. It was surprising how much swell was entering the bay and, even at the limit of navigation, the anchorage was uncomfortable. It was time to head south again and by evening we were alongside at Kallin on Grimsay. Fishermen here were very welcoming, helped us to tie up and obligingly made space for us to lie alongside. Kallin is very remote and other than a quay wall there are no shore facilities.

It was a tough slog south along the east coast of Uist. Later we entered Acairseid Mhór on Eriskay and anchored in the well-sheltered cove. This is the island where the film Whisky Galore was set and the local pub is called Am Politician, after the ship which carried the cargo of whisky. There was a bottle of coloured water on display for the benefit of tourists but little other memorabilia. From Eriskay we made the relatively short hop south to Castle Bay on Barra. En route we diverted to view the famous beach airport. Castle Bay was great and we felt genuinely welcome there. We stopped briefly at Vatersay where Clare swam in the crystal clear water. Much too cold for Donal! In fresh conditions we headed for Tiree, transiting Gunna Sound, and set our anchor in Gott Bay. On passage from Tiree to Colonsay, I was surprised by the extent of the foul ground southwest of the Ross of Mull, with lots of broken water around the West Reef. Shortly after we anchored off Scalasaig, the ferry port for the Island, the harbour master called us to advise that we would obstruct the ferry manoeuvring into the quay and invited us to use the alongside berth. I couldn't see how we would cause any problem where we were but in the event we moved further from the pier. Later we encountered a Norwegian yachtsman who had tied alongside the pier but had been charged £20. He was raging at the lack of facilities and felt ripped off.

The CCC and ICC cruise in company was to be in Craighouse next day and although we had not intended participating, being so close we thought we would overnight there also. A favourable tide swept us through the sound of Islay and by mid-afternoon we were anchored in Craighouse. There was a splendid turnout of boats and it was great to meet our fellow sailors from both clubs. There could be no delay and while the revellers nursed their sore heads, we were away and headed for Ireland. We had chosen to return to Greencastle and resume our circumnavigation from there. It was an uneventful passage but on arrival there was a big chop in the water alongside the pontoons. There was also a strong counter current. This, together with the prevailing wind, made for very difficult berthing conditions. All berths were occupied and we would have to raft up. As luck would have it, there was a sail training yacht with lots of hands aboard and, fearful of doing damage, I made about seven approaches before finally going alongside. We were fortunate to have so much help. Some sort of breakwater is badly needed here as these pontoons are exposed in anything other than very settled conditions and slack water.

There was a promise of strong westerly winds and I wanted to be west of Bloody Foreland before they materialized. By evening we were at anchor in Fanny's Bay in Mulroy but didn't hang around and next day, once we altered southwards at Bloody Foreland, we opted for the inshore passage between Innishirrer Island and the mainland. The approach to this sound is marked by a pair of transit beacons almost impossible to identify, all for the want of a coat of paint! Just after low water we passed inside Inishmeane and the young flood carried us across the Innishinny Bar at the entrance to Gweedore. Norman cautions about a starboard-hand buoy marking the sand spit, and rightly so. It is really off station. The spit has extended to the northeast and the deepest water here is now close up in an east-west direction along the south side of Inishcoole Rock. Just carrying steerage way with centerboard and rudder in the up position, we smelt our way along. When we touched, the rising tide kept pushing us onto the spit. Then we had an overheat engine alarm - the sea water intake was only barely clear of the seabed and sand was sucked into the cooling system. Anchor out, engine off, then dismantle seawater filter to find that the intake pipe is compacted solid with fine sharp sand. This was an ordeal and much worse than the blockage experienced in Craighouse. It took a couple of hours to rid the system of sand and get everything shipshape again. Lesson learned, Ovnis do not take the bottom with the engine running; from now on we treat this boat as if she has a fixed keel and draws 2.3M. The quayside at Bunbeg was tight and, although we might have squeezed alongside, we chose to anchor just south of the entrance. The tide runs strong here and it is advisable to be sure the anchor is holding before leaving the boat. Going ashore in the inflatable, we made poor progress against the tide and without an outboard this would be a difficult if not impossible task.

Next morning the promised gale was beginning to materialise. Once clear of the bar, we took Carnboy Channel into Inishfree Bay, then through Owey Sound (again the beacons here are in need of paint) and headed for Burtonport. The alongside berth here was very exposed and I was reluctant to lie alongside the piled structure in these conditions. Back west again we anchored at Aran Road in the lee of Aranmore Island. There are some visitors' moorings here but as there was no way of knowing what state of repair they were in, anchoring seemed like a safer option. It really is time that the people who maintain these moorings attach a dated tag advising that an inspection has taken place. Ashore was chaos, there was some kind of music festival taking place and the pubs were uncomfortable. By morning the wind had gone round to the North but was still too fresh to venture to sea. The shift afforded us the option of returning to Burtonport, going alongside, and sitting out the gale in more favourable conditions. Here we were embarrassed to see Waterford being annihilated by Tipperary in the Munster Hurling Final. There was a big roll in the water when we got clear of the South Sound of Aran. It was an uneventful passage which brought us through Rathlin O'Birne Sound, after which we anchored in Teelin. (Interestingly I had never been to Teelin before, but Clare had spent an entire week weather-bound there on a previous circumnavigation).

Nearby Donegal Town attracted me. The approach leads close to the bar but the channel is well marked. In favour-



Donegal Town pontoon

able conditions there is a good anchorage off Salt Quay and there is good water all the way to Green Island, east of which is another attractive anchorage. Our mission was different; we were 2½ hours before low water and still showing good depth. We crossed a few charted drying patches and I figured we could make it alongside. A waterbus operates from here and has its own private pontoon. As we prepared to go alongside the quay wall, the manager invited us to use the pontoon and its facilities. There was good water here even at low water and I think there is a least depth of 1M all the way in the channel. The skipper of the passenger vessel recommended keeping the two red perches in transit from Rossylongon point inwards, as this keeps one in the deepest water. We learned that it had been a long time since any sizeable vessel had visited here. We were an object of curiosity and lots of people called by and reminisced about the old days when Donegal was a busy working port. What a delight to be off the beaten track and away from a modern marina! Making our way to sea again on a rising tide was

relatively simple. The wind had freshened and there was lots of broken water on Murvagh Spit on the outer reaches of the bar. This is a place to treat with respect in onshore winds. A planned visit to Innismurray was shelved as conditions would not permit a landing and we carried on to Sligo anchoring between Rosses Point and Oyster Island. By now the wind had really freshened and, combined with the strong current, I was fearful of going ashore should our anchor drag. A compromise solution was decided upon - we would go ashore and keep anchor watch from a shoreside pub. All calm again by morning and we put to sea bound west for Ballina. A period of some day's gales was forecast and we would sit it out alongside at Crocketstown Quay at the limit of navigation. We had visited previously in *Lady Kate* but this time I felt that the outer bar was shallower than before. It is difficult to determine where to cross the bar and there was lots of conflicting local advice on this matter when we raised the subject ashore. Once inside the bar, the channel is well marked with red and green ball-shaped buoys but the message is easily understood. I made a quick visit home to Dungarvan from here while Clare stayed aboard and looked after the boat. When we put to sea again there was a big swell running after the recent gales. It was a scary experience crossing the bar and we had very little to spare in some of the troughs.

The north coast of Mayo was majestic and we enjoyed sailing past the wonderful scenery. When we reached Ballyglass it was too early to finish for the day, so – and the tide was just right – we headed for Belmullet. The channel is well buoyed but dries completely in the inner reaches. We made it to the Quayside at Belmullet but didn't delay. I had no idea what the bottom was like to dry on and the tide time next day would be awkward for departure. Back in Ballyglass we anchored for the night near the pier. Clear of Erris Head, we took the familiar route inside Eagle and Inisglora Islands, through Iniskea Sound, round Achill Head, and on to Achill Sound. En route, I searched on the internet for a fuel supplier in Achill. Tom Manion agreed to meet us at 15.00 at the quay near the lifeboat station. There is a useful pontoon here, unfortunately arranged in a square rather than a rectangle, which would provide more berths. We were just tied up when along came Tom in his tanker truck, dead on time. Later he gave us a lift to Achill Sound, where we were able to pick up stores and replenish our gas bottle at the hardware shop by the bridge. An uneventful passage brought us south again and we made our way through Aughrus Passage between Cartrickculloo Island and Aughrus Point. Now we headed for Clifden but it was very roly in the anchorage and we choose to spend the night nearby in well-sheltered Ardbear Bay, which proved to be a delight.

It was too rough for Joyce's Pass and, for the first time in many years, we took the longer, safer route outside Slyne Head. From here we headed for Roundstone and anchored off the pier. Next day was the start of the annual regatta and we encountered lots of traditional craft making their way to Roundstone for the festivities. We entered Casheen Bay and anchored in the upper reaches at Coonawilleen Bay. I had enjoyed a previous visit and it was worthwhile to come back again. Then we made the obligatory visit to Aran, anchoring off Kilronan near more untagged visitors' moorings! Through Gregory Sound, we headed for the Mouth of the Shannon and, not wanting to waste time going upriver, we anchored at Kilbaha. We had been here before but this time it wasn't so well sheltered. It was a tolerable but somewhat uncomfortable night. *Annabel J* with Andrew and Máire on board, was in Valentia making her way north, A rendezvous was proposed for the next day at Smerwick harbour. We arrived first, there had been a big long running sea from the west all day and there was little shelter in the usual anchorage off Baile na nGall. To the west side of the harbour, we found better shelter in somewhat poorish holding. A decent local fisherman offered the use of his mooring and recited the spec of the ground tackle. *Annabel J* anchored nearby. Máire and Andrew came aboard and great splicing was done. In the Basket Sound we meandered along the island shoreline taking in the scenery, then headed for Douglas Bay, crossed the bar between Beginish and Laght Point and entered Valentia River. There was a brief stop in Cahersiveen for stores, after which we returned to Knightstown and went alongside the pontoons. Leaving Valentia, we made a passage between Valentia and Beginish Islands, then skirted Skellig Michael, but were too short-handed to make a landing. There were thoughts

of anchoring in Ballinskelligs Bay but, as we approached, it became obvious that it would be very uncomfortable there, so we altered for Derrynane Harbour. There was lots of broken water on the rocks at the entrance but once inside it was very snug. There is a nasty rock in the anchorage and next morning a departing yacht drove straight up onto it, giving it a right wallop. Fortunately she sustained no damage and carried on her way.

From Derrynane, we had a lively spin across the entrance to Kenmare River and it was exciting enough as we passed through Dursey Sound. We headed east again and made a passage inside Bere Island and on through Berehaven. At Adrigole we found the holding poor and were surprised and delighted to see that the visitors' moorings were tagged, advising that they had been serviced recently. This was a great relief, as we could use the facility knowing that the ground tackle was in good condition. Ashore it was a dangerous walk along a busy road to the local pub. Out of Adrigole we headed for Bantry, anchoring off a pontoon near Reenrour Point. Later that evening we motored to Whiddy Island. Although there is a pontoon here, it was busy and we chose to anchor. This took a few attempts as the holding was not great. Whiddy was new to me and it was my first time landing there. It was years since I had been to Dunmanus Bay and as we left Bantry Bay we rounded Sheep head close up and made our way to Kitchen Cove. In Ahakista we called to the Tin house Pub and I got the surprise of my life when my son Brendan unexpectedly walked in the door. The wind fell light as we rounded Three Castle and Mizzen Heads and later it was so calm that we decided that we would go round the Fastnet and take some pictures. On arrival, Clare announced that she would swim around the rock. I accompanied her in *Lady Belle* acting as mothership. Not wishing to be outdone, I then took the inflatable to the landing place and was successful in making a landing there. I had tried to land here years ago and remember being admonished by an old man in the pub on Cape Clear. His words still stick in my mind 'Ní bíonn mórán lá sa bhliain a bhaighfá dul i dtír ar an gCarraig Aonair'. Delighted to have ticked the boxes, we headed for Schull, where we met up with some friends from Dungarvan. It blew stink with lots of rain next day and it was so bad we thought we might not get ashore at all. The following day in better conditions we relaxed in the cockpit, when along came the customs cutter *Fáire* and their boarding boat came alongside. Our friend Peter jumped on board to catch up over a cup of coffee. Of course everyone else in the anchorage thought we were being "done" and wondered why "they" were spending so long with us! We left Schull and crossed to Cape Clear, where we put our nose inside to have a look at the harbour development works taking place there. Then on through the north entrance to Baltimore and east again before bringing up for the night at Union Hall. The wind increased and we had to spend two nights waiting for the gale to moderate.

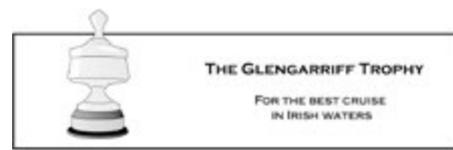


Sailing gently past the Fastnet Rock

Now on the home stretch, we carried on east in a light breeze and anchored off Ballycotton. Arriving at Dungarvan as usual at dead low water, we managed to ignominiously put ourselves aground and had to sit it out and wait for the tide. We had come home a bit sooner than expected and two days later decided to head off again bound for Scilly. Clare and I made the passage, mostly motor-sailing in light winds, in 24 hours. Since I last visited, the islands have been peppered with moorings, mostly laid by private operators and charging as much as £20 per night. At Port Cressa, we found space and anchored between them. We visited the off islands and anchored at the Cove between St. Agnes and Gugh. At Old Grimsby Harbour on the north east of Treviso, the roll was unbearable and we had to relocate to St Helen's Pool, which was delightful. Another wonderful night was spent off the south west corner of St Martin's. Fearful of an impending gale, we set off for Dungarvan and had a brisk sail all the way home. Closing the Irish coast, thick fog set in and we were fortunate to have radar to help avoid other traffic. A visual sighting of the Helvick buoy was made and I measured a distance of 150 metres, which gives an idea of how dense the fog was. Once inside Dungarvan Bay, the fog lifted and we made our way to our mooring in the Town Quay. 2016 was an eventful year - we got a new boat- sailed 2,500 miles, made a passage from France, sailed round Ireland, visited St Kilda and the Hebrides and spent a few days cruising the Scilly Isles. I got to call to twelve harbours on the Irish Coast that I had never been to before. It was exciting to land on Inishtrahull, St Kilda, and Fastnet, and to make it to the limit of navigation at Letterkenny, Donegal, Ballina and Belmullet.

Annabel J Sails the Wild Atlantic Way

Máire Breathnach



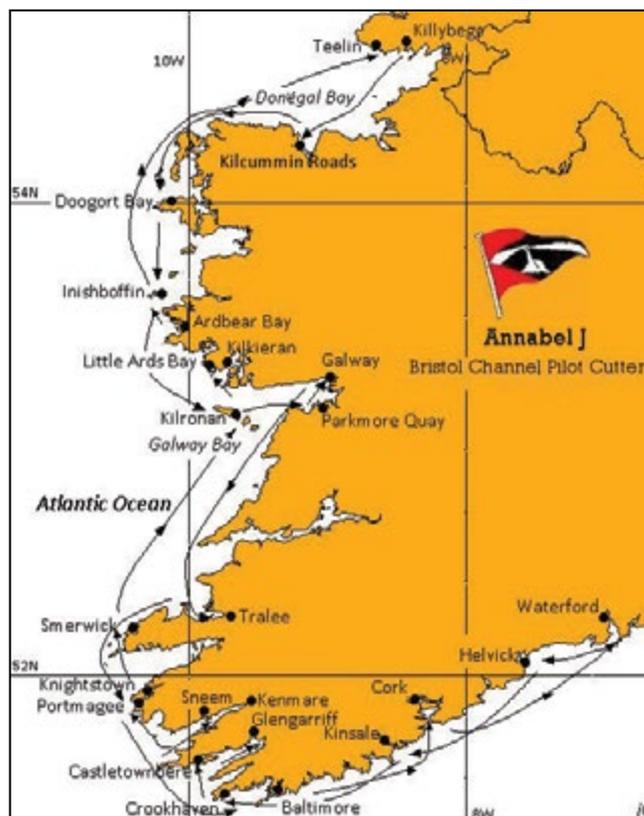
Anchored off Helvick

Motoring down the river Suir from *Annabel J*'s winter berth in Waterford City Marina, I was feeling very excited. It was early June and Andrew Wilkes (my husband) and I were looking forward to spending time sailing our new boat. New to us that is, and getting to know the ropes. *Annabel J* is a steel replica Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter. She is 54' 10" on deck, 66' overall and displaces 38 tons. She was built in Falmouth in 1995. Her first owner Dick Hicton commissioned her to be drawn along similar lines to the 1893 'Marguerite T', which was reputed to be the fastest cutter of her time. We had spent three weeks on board in 2015 when we sailed her from the Hamble River to Waterford, enough time to help us plan her refit ashore at New Ross boatyard. She had been sailed as a charter vessel in recent years and needed quite some work. We fitted electric sheet winches on deck and port holes in the companion way. We made several improvements below including a chart table makeover, fitting a new plotter/radar, revamping the galley with new joinery, cooker and sink, fitting a Reflex stove in the saloon, re-upholstering the cushions, installing a new generator, renewing all the seacocks and finally painting and varnishing the entire interior. We were delighted with the results and *Annabel J* now looks much more ship-shape and Bristol fashion.

Our first night was spent at anchor off Helvick where we watched the sun go down over my home port of Dungarvan. We had visits from Clare Morrissey ICC on board *Millie* and the local RNLi boat returning from an exercise. Next day, as we motored across Ballycotton Bay in a flat calm, the engine stopped. We suspected that our problem was fuel related as the diesel looked like a mixture of tomato sauce and orange juice. We decided to anchor as we were drifting towards the shore. When a light breeze came up, we set a scandalized main sail but soon realised that the anchor was fouled. Whilst trying to weigh the stuck anchor, we damaged the windlass. We winched up the chain using the sheet winches and managed to break three lines in the process. Eventually we got off and set the jib and staysail. We spent a day and two nights tacking along the coast in a gentle southerly zephyr which alternated with calm spells. Despite all our problems, we had a very pleasant sail to Kinsale. Without an engine and unable to anchor, we were happy to be towed to the KYC pontoon.

Over the next fortnight, we were kept very busy sorting out our problems. Over 500 litres of contaminated diesel was transferred from the main tank to jerry cans and transported to Dungarvan. Unfortunately the spare part for the anchor windlass that arrived from Scotland was not enough to get it up and working again. In the end we fitted a new anchor windlass, not an easy task as the replacement had a different footprint with the older one. Andrew erected a tarpaulin over the work area on the foredeck. Many trips were made to steel workshops in Cork and Dungarvan. We worked hard but made a point of finding time to swim in nearby Garretstown or Sandycove almost every day. We watched many yachts come and go and we were anxious to be on our way also. French yacht *Manevais* skippered by Eric Abadie (whom we had previously met in Iceland and Greenland) made a stopover in Kinsale before their passage to Greenland and successful transit of the North West Passage. The crew of *Manevais* were not the only arctic sailors to call into Kinsale. Michael Brogan and Jarlath Cunnane arrived on the *MacDuach*. On board with them were Áranach Ben Mc Donough, Cárna man Séamus Breathnach and the very fine box player Andrew Gillespie.

On July 4th we went alongside FV *Mary Kate* at the Harbour Master's pontoon to refuel and were given a bucket of crab claws by her skipper, Helvick man Michael Mylor. Mid-morning had us motoring past the Bulman into a SSW Force 6. Not long afterwards the engine failed. The staysail was set and we sailed back to



Kinsale and anchored. The rest of the day was spent trying to trace air locks in the fuel supply, eventually running the engine for 3 hours. The following morning we hoisted the main (scandalised), weighed anchor and departed Kinsale once again with a forecast for southwesterlies Force 2/3. The engine failed three times on passage to Crookhaven and had to be bled on each occasion. We were very quickly learning to sail *Annabel J* into harbours. At the entrance to Castletownbere, we made a contingency plan in the event of engine failure in the narrows of Piper Sound. It was just as well we did as, once again, it stopped bang in the middle of the narrows. More engine checks and sea trials followed between Bere Island and Glengarriff, until we were sure that we had a working engine. We anchored in Glengarriff for lunch and on the way back wondered what it would be like to live in the lightkeeper's house on Roanarraigmore Island in the middle of winter. The island had just come on the market for €130k.



Under way in a fresh breeze

On July 14 at 07.30 we set the main scandalized, and weighed anchor. Our procedure for hoisting the sail worked well: I used the electric winch at the foot of the mast for the throat halyard while Andrew raised the peak by hand. We had a great sail in light to moderate south-southeasterlies and southerlies through Dursey Sound and into Kenmare Bay, before bringing up off Dinish Island in the upper reaches of the bay mid afternoon. The forecast talked of rain, drizzle, fog and strong southwest winds, so we remained at our snug anchorage and walked into Kenmare. We returned via the Beara Way, which was much more enjoyable than the busy and dangerous Kenmare-Lauragh road.

On Saturday 16th, we anchored off the Oysterbed Pier near Sneem to visit my cousin Don Keogh. Very sadly Don's wife Máire, who had been quite ill, died that night (RIP). Don spent the next day with us on board *Annabel J* anchored off the Oysterbed Pier. A landlubber, he commented afterwards how he found great peace and sanctuary on the boat. After the funeral, we left Sneem under main and jib and enjoyed tacking out of the Kenmare River in light winds. We anchored for the night in the middle of the Portmagee Channel, Valentia and the following morning moved *Annabel J* from the anchorage to the pontoon at Knightstown. My Auntie Kathleen came on board that evening with her family and we celebrated her 90th birthday. Next day we climbed to the highest point on Valentia Island, where we enjoyed stunning views of Dingle Bay. On our return, we bailed out a sinking RIB with our deck pump and were invited to dinner ashore that evening by owners Gerry and Kay.

We had moderate southerlies and carried a fair tide through the Blasket Sound. There is an old tradition that, in order to ensure a safe passage, one should give the Old woman of the Sound a pinch of snuff. Not being suitably supplied, we poured a drop of whiskey over the side.. Andrew didn't think it was right to let the sean bhean bhoicht drink on her own so we also shared a tot. *Lady Belle* had already arrived in Dún an Óir, Smerwick and her skipper, my brother Donal, came over in the dinghy as we anchored and began to drop the sail. He clearly was not happy



Exiting Joyce's Pass

'You are supposed to do all that (hand and stow the sails) on the way in... we are losing valuable pub time' In the event we didn't bother to go ashore and, after pre dinner drinks on board *Annabel J*, we joined Donal and Clare on *Lady Belle* for a very good curry.

The visibility was poor when we set off into a sloppy sea bound for Aran. The rain poured and as the south westerly wind freshened, we put our first reef of the season in the main. Having anchored in Killronan, the Reflex stove was lit, allowing us to get dry and warm up. Summer returned the next day, so we hired bikes and joined hundreds of others cycling around Aran Mór whilst 'doing the Wild Atlantic Way'. A short hop brought us to Kilkieran, where we saw a few nice traditional boats (a leathbháid, a gleoiteóg and a púcán) alongside the quay. From there we tacked along the coast of Connemara, dipped the peak three times to St Macdara and anchored in Little Ards Bay. It is a beautiful anchorage and we decided to stay a second night. While I took the dinghy to Cárna, Andrew worked on the rig making ratlines.

On the last day of July we transited Joyce's Pass and I have to say that even in good conditions it is always very scary! The forecast was terrible and we opted for Ardbear Bay which has been described as the safest anchorage in Ireland. As we searched for somewhere to land the dinghy, I recalled a previous



Blessing of the Fleet, Killybegs

Bay to anchor in Killybegs shortly before midnight. The wind increased during the night and, for the second time this summer we remained weatherbound at anchor. Ashore we attended a Mass for fisherman and their families which was held in the spotless fish Auction Hall on the landing pier. I imagined that the atmosphere would be quite different on the return of the pelagic fishing vessels. When the wind abated we came alongside to refuel and then sailed to Teelin, where we spent two nights. The forecast on Thursday August 11th talked again of west- southwest winds Force 5-7, backing south-south west in the evening, then increasing Force 8 overnight. Teelin is open to the south and so we returned to Killybegs.

Michael Brogan contacted us and invited us to Kinvara for Criunniú na mBád. We were delighted and made plans to head south again. We got away on Saturday and had a great sail in a westerly F4-5 to Kilcummin Roads, where we were pleasantly surprised with the shelter we found there. The north coast of Mayo is beautiful and we enjoyed the passage past Downpatrick Head. Attempts were made to swing the fluxgate compass in the smooth water. The wind had backed southerly, and having passed Erris Head we changed our plans, as southeasterlies were forecast overnight. Leaving Inishkea North to starboard, we passed through Duvillaun Beg Sound and anchored in 10 m off Pollawaddy Beach at Doogort Bay, Achill. On the VHF we listened to the Coastguard as they coordinated a search for a missing person at Achill Head. It turned out to be a false alarm. I had a very nice swim the next morning while we waited for the midday forecast. The southeast wind was still fresh and there were strong gusts coming off Achill Head. We were very surprised to see a small open speed boat under the cliffs. As we had no auto helm we took it in turns to steer an hour at a time. Much as we would have loved to visit Turk again, we knew that it would not be tenable with an easterly wind and so continued on to Cleggan. We spent another night at Boffin when the wind went into the northwest and Andrew hammered me for the third time at Scrabble.

The log records that I made a top coffee cake as we rounded Slyne Head in a F5 . It certainly was not a day for Joyce's Pass. We were bound for Kinvara, as was *MacDuach* and we rendezvoused in Killronan. Great monkfish on board *MacDuach* was followed with too much porter in Joe Macs. We motor-sailed in company with *MacDuach* next morning to Black Head where we stopped the engine and set the top-sail and jib topsail. That afternoon we anchored off Parkmore Quay and *MacDuach* continued on to Kinvara Quay. At 23.00, a southwest-southeast F8 gale warning was issued for all Irish coasts. The barometer was 979 and falling so at 15.00 on Friday we decided to seek better shelter at Galway Docks.

We had a southeasterly F7 as we crossed Galway Bay and on arrival were asked to await for a ship to depart. We berthed alongside Tomás Ó Cionnaola's fishing boat *Ocean Harvester*, and were given a huge monkfish. It was a very sociable place to be and we had many visitors over the next few days. Peter Connolly gave us a tour of the Chicago hooker *Bairbre* and showed us a new gleoiteóg being built by Joe Joyce. We got the bus to Kinvara

visit here years ago. I had left the dinghy in a field and on my return found it occupied by a curious cow! Bikes were hired in Clifden and we toured the area. Unbeknownst to us at the time however, one of the previous owners of *Annabel J* now lives in Bunowen Quay. We had a top meal at the Ardagh Hotel overlooking our anchorage in the setting sun.

The gale arrived during the night and we were glad to be snug at anchor. We remained on board all the following day in a southwesterly gale Force 8 gusting 9. We hadn't visited Inisboffin for a few years and found that the new sector lights at the entrance very tight. It was difficult to keep in the white sector and we alternated between green, white and red as we made our way through this exciting entrance.

With another southwesterly gale forecast, we made an early start and sailed north in a moderate westerly. Just past the Stags of Broadhaven, the auto helm failed. A front appeared to the west, two reefs were put in the main and we sailed across Donegal



***Annabel J* and *Mac Duach* in Killronan**

for the Criunniú and marvelled at the boat handling skills of the hooker skippers and their crews. My nephew Gearóid and girlfriend Laura arrived for the weekend and Fr Billy Deasy, a friend and fellow Dungarvan man, joined us on board for dinner.

We slipped our berth in Galway Docks soon after 08.00 on Tuesday 23 August. Ceann Bóirne was rounded and we sailed close inshore in order to view the Cliffs of Moher. There must have been more than a thousand visitors on the cliffs. We considered anchoring in Brandon Bay but reckoned that it might be subject to swell. Instead we chose an unusual anchorage in the west of Tralee Bay about a mile south of Rough Point. The Magharees looked very interesting and we would liked to have spent more time in this area. Next morning we sailed through the exciting Maharee Passage and between Brandon Head and the dramatic headland of Ceann Sibéal waters we saw pods of dolphins, a breaching whale and lots of birdlife. Once again we toasted the old woman of the Blasket Sound and had a safe passage through and on to Knightstown. It was cloudy the following day as we weighed anchor just west of the Foot but the sun broke through as we sailed past Sceilig Mór. In Kenmare Bay we anchored in Killmacillogue and visited O Sullivan's Bar before making the short hop across the bay to the Oysterbed Pier. Swimming here is great. The water temperature had increased since our last visit in July, making it, in our opinion, one of the best places to swim on the Wild Atlantic Way.

On August 28 we carried a fair northerly through Dursey Sound, set the topsail and sailed in great style around the Mizen. In Crookhaven we were visited by Ed and Megan Clay RCC and crew-member Ben from *Flycatcher*, who had completed an Atlantic circuit. They returned our charts of Greenland, along with a nice bottle of wine all the way from Nova Scotia. There are many more dolphins and whales in Roaringwater Bay than I had seen here in the past. In Baltimore Harbour there were more yachts in our anchorage off Dunalong Castle, Sherkin than we had seen anywhere on the west coast. From here we sailed past the old familiar landmarks of Galley Head, Seven Heads and Old Head. On entering Cork Harbour, we dropped the sails north of Haulbowline Island and requested permission to proceed to the heart of Cork city, where we berthed at Cork City Marina. Cork is my old stomping ground and for the next few days we caught up with friends, heard some good music, saw a great play about Michael Collins in the Everyman Theatre and swam in the Clarions leisure centre.

On the last day of our cruise we carried the ebb down the river Lee, and arrived off Dunmore East to carry the flood up the river Suir to Waterford city Marina. We left Waterford in May uncertain about *Annabel J* and returned three months later delighted with our new boat and confident in our ability to sail her.



Annabel J sailing in light airs off Black Head. Photo: Michael Brogan

Rupert and his/her pals' nostalgic return to Scotland

Richard Lovegrove

Any readers of previous logs of *Rupert's* cruises will know that I always like to have someone to blame, and this time, I have no hesitation in blaming Jimmy and Judy Houston (both ICC), who turned up on my doorstep one day and very kindly presented me with a copy of a book called "Calum's Road" by Roger Hutchinson. This book tells the true story of Calum MacLeod, a crofter from the north end of the island of Raasay, who, frustrated by bureaucracy and inaction, took his home-made barrow, a pick, shovel and axe and built a road for two miles across bog and rock to give vehicular access to his home. The work took twenty years, culminating in 1982, and having read the book, I thought that it would be fun to visit Raasay and to walk on Calum's road. It was serendipity that our visit should coincide with the ICC/CCC rally to Tobermory and also the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club.

The good news was that, having retired since my last cruise in *Rupert*, the Sigma 33 which I share with my son Philip, I could devote three weeks to the project, and the bad news was that Heather said that it didn't matter if I took three months, she wouldn't be coming with me! Over the years, she has evolved a rule which says that in order for her to come cruising with me, the accommodation must be such that she can shut a door behind her before she gets in to bed and there is some difference of opinion between us as to whether *Rupert* complies with this. Truth to tell, she was probably also influenced by a previous occasion when I took her cruising in Scotland in my Ruffian 23 and the wind didn't drop below F 7 for almost a week. In any event, road or no road, she didn't feel inclined to repeat the Scottish experience!

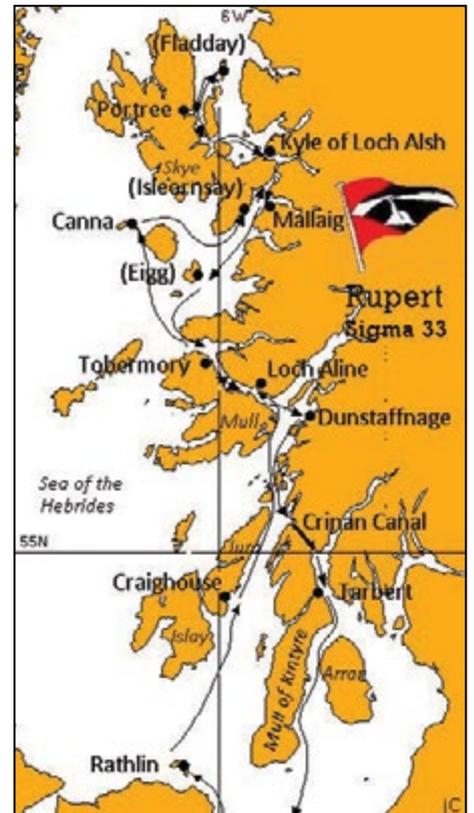
Philip and I continued to race *Rupert* until the Saturday before departure and then there were a few hectic days converting her to cruising mode, which included the purchase of a Rocna anchor as recommended by Alex Blackwell (ICC) in his book on the subject. I suppose that like many people who have recently retired, I have become aware of feeling my age (not that advanced by ICC standards) and the pressure of preparation and trying to plan for every eventuality got between me and my sleep for a night or two. But, in accordance with custom, on the night of Thursday 30th June, Heather and I, together with Gillie Fletcher (ICC) and long standing sailing friend Nigel Brinn, had dinner in the Royal St George Yacht Club, and after dinner Gillie, Nigel and I said good-bye to Heather and slept on board. We were joined early the following morning by Gary Matthews who is part of the regular racing crew and who was coming as far as Bangor, and then we were off.

I intend to skip fairly quickly over the first week of the cruise because I am sure it will be fully covered by others also attending the rally. Suffice it to say that our passage to Ardglass was pretty uneventful except for the fact that *Rupert's* second best racing mainsail was reduced to tatters when we were laid flat by a 33 knot squall some miles to seaward of Carlingford Lough. Luckily Heather and Gary's wife, Maeve, were going to join us for the sesquicentennial luncheon in the Royal Ulster on Sunday, so when we berthed at Ardglass, I was able to phone her and ask her to have a look in the shed and see if she could find another mainsail there.

I would, however, like to say how much we enjoyed the various social functions which were the highlights of the rally. The lunch at The Royal Ulster Yacht Club was excellent. By chance, we shared a table with Johnny Watson and the crew of the Scottish Maxi 1300 *Texa*, who were great company. Johnny is the Admiral of the Mudhook Yacht Club and when it became apparent that he was the brother of the Doctor Watson who had sold *Rupert* to Paddy Varian and me nearly twenty years ago, it was necessary to celebrate this anniversary also. These celebrations may, in part, explain why it took us so long, after lunch, to bend on the replacement mainsail and reeve the reefing lines!

We spent Monday night comfortably at Rathlin, and Tuesday saw us heading across the North Channel in the company of ICC boats *Crackerjack*, (Alan Markey), *Sojourn* (Charles Blandford) and *Pure Magic* (Commodore Peter and Bev Killen) bound for the next party at Craighouse on the island of Jura. This was the best sail of the cruise so far, and the sun even came out, if only for a short time. Not surprisingly all the moorings were occupied when we arrived and we lay to the new Rocna anchor for the first time. Despite a reputation for weed and poor holding we had no problems, but whether this was down to our luck in finding a patch of clean sand or to the superior holding power of the Rocna, we will never know! However, there can be no doubt that the craic at the party in the Village Hall that night was entirely down to good music, good food and good company. A vigorous version of "The Gay Gordons" was followed by the Commodore's rousing rendition of "The Black Velvet Band" to the tune of "Ghost Riders in the Sky", an hilarious version of "Albert and the Lion" by Peter Fernie and more great music from various artists including Peter White and two pipers from the CCC. It really was a great fun night, with full participation by all.

Two nights later found us on the small marina in Loch Aline. We had chosen Loch Aline because I had not



been there before and because of its proximity to Tobermory which was to be the venue for the final party of the rally. It is a very attractive loch, and the facilities at the marina are first class, but the next time I'm there, unless I have a booking in the celebrated Whitehouse Restaurant, I will probably anchor in one of the more remote corners of the loch, far away from the ferry port and the commercial dock which handles silica sand and which is a bit noisy.

The Saturday night dinner in the hotel overlooking the bay at Tobermory was every bit as enjoyable as the two previous functions. There was a great buzz in the air and despite the indifferent weather, the rally was agreed to have been a huge success. In fact, if anything, the weather had added to the readiness of the participants to relax ashore, and of course Tobermory is a most attractive town and always a good place for a party. The sincere thanks of the crew of *Rupert* go to all the organisers from both clubs.

Tobermory, is really the hub of this part of the west coast of Scotland, and it is impossible to think of cruising in this vicinity without stopping there. Now, it is even a destination for small cruise liners, but it remains a pleasant place for yachts to visit. We availed of all the facilities including the ferry services which link it to the railway on the mainland and by means of which, sadly, we lost Nigel. However happily, we gained another of the regular racing crew, John Daly, and also a *Rupert* "old boy", Derek Osmond, who had flown all the way from America, at least in part to be with us. And so, refreshed, replenished, and even clean, on the morning of Sunday 10th July, we set out on the next phase of our venture. It was another dull day but the rain was only intermittent and there was a good sailing breeze from the south. We rounded Ardnamurchan Point at high speed and in high spirits in the knowledge that we had at least got far enough to wear the heather on our bow, and leaving the islands of Muck, Eigg and Rum to starboard, we headed for Canna, the most north westerly of the Small Isles.

I had never been to Canna before, but it had been well recommended to me and as the harbour at the south east corner came in to view, the first impression was favourable. There are ten visitors moorings arranged in a circle around the bay with room in the centre for anchoring and when we arrived, there were three other yachts already in residence. In due course, we rowed ashore (the venerable Yamaha 2hp 2 stroke had temporarily given up the ghost despite the sturdy efforts



of each of the crew in turn) and we went for a delightful walk along the road by the shore until we reached a well-stocked shop which was run entirely without staff on the basis of trust. We put our £10 for the mooring in the box provided, paid for some postcards and stamps and moved on to the café next door, which, unexpectedly, we found to be serving evening meals and also drink. It was doing brisk business and we were lucky to get a reservation for 20.00, which gave us one and a half hours for a most enjoyable walk to a couple of local hilltops. The meal itself was excellent with tasty soup, fresh local prawns, haddock and some excellent beer from the brewery on Skye. Just what this crew of wandering yachties wanted, and we ambled back to the dinghy at 23.00, still in daylight, with the distinct feeling that all was well with the world and the western islands of Scotland in particular, a feeling

Leaving Canna. Dick in pensive mood. Photo: John Daly

which even the noisy and nightlong singing of a nearby party of seals couldn't dispel.

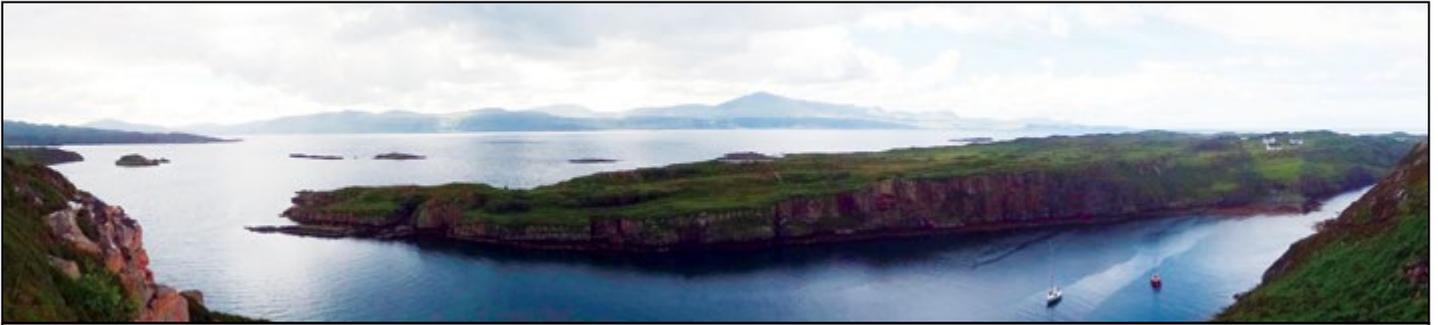
The next morning, like most of its predecessors, was damp and misty but there was a good brisk breeze from the north-west which would be useful. Before departure, we encountered a problem which was to re-occur from time to time and that was a difficulty in obtaining weather forecasts. Wifi was almost non-existent, but more surprisingly, we were often unable to receive a VHF signal from Stornaway Coastguard and in the course of the morning we learnt that we were not the only ones. We dropped the mooring at about 10.45 and screamed off, dead down wind, in the direction of the Sound of Sleat. Under main and jib we touched 7.5 knots, which wasn't always comfortable, indeed, at times it was positively hairy, but we were certainly covering the ground. From the radio we learnt of a rescue operation which was ongoing on the island of Muck. Apparently a 15 year old boy had gone missing overnight, and a helicopter, some kayakers and a fishing boat were searching for him. In time, we were relieved to hear that the boy had been found very cold and a little confused but otherwise none the worse for his adventures, but the interesting thing was that the searchers, including



Tobermory. Photo: John Daly

the helicopter, were having difficulty communicating with Stornaway, and were working through a relay.

Lunchtime found us hauling our wind off the Point of Sleat and heading in to the more sheltered waters of the Sound of Sleat. When we left Canna we had not decided on a definite destination for that night, but having made such good time, we now determined that we should press on through Kyle Rhea and spend the night somewhere in Loch Alsh. Unfortunately, the eight knot tides in Kyle Rhea would not turn in our favour until 1830, so the decision was made to stop for lunch and we pulled in to the delightful anchorage of Isleornsay, where we spent a very pleasant hour or so. About 17.15, we hoisted sail again and close hauled under main and jib, passed through Kyle Rhea without difficulty before heading west to the Kyle of Loch Alsh, where we spent the night on the small marina. Since our edition of the Clyde Cruising Club guide was published it seems that the management of this marina has been transferred to a local community group, and our enquiries lead us to Hugh (Tel: 0044 7768 980924), who, as good as his word, held a berth for us and was there to take our lines. The pontoons might be a little exposed in a westerly blow, but there are good toilets and showers, as well as shopping facilities nearby and we spent a very pleasant night there at a cost of £20.



Fladday Harbour, looking across to Skye from a vantage point to work up a thirst. Photo: John Daly

Tuesday 12th of July was to be the day. We had intended to make an early start, but a friendly Dutchman insisted that I visit his most impressive Atlantic 43 which was berthed next door so that I could avail of his Navtex to take down the forecast and while this was very helpful and his yacht was genuinely fascinating with an original and thoughtful layout below, it was nearly 11.00 by the time we cast off and motored under the Skye Bridge. Never mind. We weren't really in a hurry. The wind was southwest F3 or 4 and we had a very pleasant passage in dry and nearly sunny (!) conditions north of Scalpay and northwards up the Sound of Raasay before sailing across Loch Anish and finally motoring very carefully in to Fladday Harbour. This was the focus point of the holiday. We crept in to the little inlet between Eilean Fladday and Raasay and dropped anchor just short of the shingle bank, across which, as told in the book, the children of Fladday had to make their way at low tide before walking 3km. to get to the school run by Calum's wife.

We dinghied ashore (Derek had successfully "breathed" on the engine) and quickly picked up the narrow cliff path which the children must have followed through the rugged and spectacular, if surprisingly lush, landscape. To some of us older folk, it seemed like a long 3km and as we clambered up a small hill, we were just on the point of giving up and turning back when we heard a strange sound. From the top, we saw two small windmills, which were working overtime and were responsible for the noise, as well as a tarmac road, and a small car. In the car the local post lady was giving a driving lesson to her teenage son and she confirmed that the road had indeed been made by Calum and pointed out the track to his croft which is still owned by his daughter. Success! Mission accomplished! Not that it was a very ambitious mission but it had given us a minor purpose for our trip and having visited the croft, we walked back along the cliff path with a spring in our step and a thirst in our throats. It was nearly 18.00 by the time we were back on board *Rupert* and we hadn't even had lunch! Gillie got to work in the galley, the decision was made to make for Portree on Skye for the night and on a falling tide we left Fladday Harbour even more carefully than we had entered. It had been a fascinating little adventure and above all...great fun.

We reached Portree at about 19.30 and the decision was made to go ashore in search of supper although, in truth, having only just had lunch, none of us was very hungry. I had not been to Portree before either, but it seems to be an



Fladday Harbour again; *Rupert* and a resident.

attractive and bustling little town with an active fishing fleet and a lot of visitors. There are eighteen visitors' moorings and a pontoon providing temporary berthing for yachts and a landing place for dinghies. Diesel is also available but, understandably, we were advised that priority would be given to fishing and tour boats. Nevertheless, we did take on thirty litres in jerry cans the following morning. In the town, a pipe and drum band were performing in the square and we listened to them for a while before our thirst overcame us. While searching for sanctuary, John noticed above the entrance to the Portree Hotel, a plaque commemorating a speech given by Michael Davitt, founder of the Irish Land League, in 1887. He had addressed the crofters of Skye from the balcony above and advised them "...not to

be satisfied with half measures of change, but to go in for what is your just and your natural right.....”, concepts of which Calum MacLeod would surely have approved and was still fighting for almost a century later. As for us, we gave in quickly and settled in a pleasant modern pub which served some good local beers and a wide range of whisky. We were there for quite a while before we remembered that we were hungry and we headed off to one of the many restaurants on the water front where we had a most enjoyable fish meal. All in all, a pleasant stopping place offering good shelter and facilities.

It seemed that the weather had finally taken a turn for the better, just as it was time for us to be making tracks for home. The next day, we motored out of Portree in a light breeze and flat calm sea and we had a most relaxed passage retracing our tracks. Our only excitement was meeting *Mystique of Malahide* (Robert and Rose Michael, both ICC) coming in the opposite direction as we were approaching the Skye Bridge! We caught the first of the tide going southwards through Kyle Rhea and then had to decide where we would head for. Each of the last two days had been long and I was tired, so, although we needed to make progress, we opted to spend the night in Mallaig and we were tied up at the marina there by 17.30.

Mallaig is worth a few words. It is a busy fishing and ferry port and it had the reputation of being unfriendly to yachts. However, a couple of years ago, the new fifty berth marina was completed at the head of the bay, away from the commercial docks, and that changes everything. At the outer end of the ferry pier there are three vertical red lights and if these are on, a ferry is moving and the harbour is temporarily closed to small craft. As required, on approach, we called the harbour office on Channel 9 and we were told to proceed. The marina itself has power and water on the pontoons and is very well sheltered. The shower and toilet facilities are excellent, the staff were friendly and helpful and the charge for *Rupert* was £22.80, which is only slightly more than we paid in other places with much less to offer. At the top of the ramp from the pontoons, we found trollies and large jerry cans which we used to collect diesel from the chandlery which is a short walk away. We also bought a gas cylinder. All in all we found it a comfortable and pleasant place to stop, and because it is very well connected to Glasgow by road and rail it would make a handy place to leave a yacht for a week or two or for a change of crew.

The forecast for Thursday 14th July was for the weather to remain sunny for that day, but it did warn that the good weather wouldn't last. We had a lovely sail in a light westerly to the island of Eigg and, saints be praised, the sun actually shone. In 2011, when *Rupert* last visited Eigg, we had an awful night at anchor and we eventually cut our losses and left at 05.00 without going ashore at all. This time, we stood off for a while to allow the ferry to berth at the new jetty and then we picked up a mooring off the old pier and went ashore for a delightful walk. Just like Canna, there was a very positive feeling about the place. There is a café/restaurant at the head of the slip, and when we came ashore it was busy with a lot of young people obviously enjoying an activity holiday. As we walked we came across a couple of “glamping” centres with small wooden huts and there was also evidence of a number of small holdings growing fruit and vegetables. It was most attractive and we were reluctant to leave, but the forecast had made it clear that this was a ridge day only and that we needed to find shelter before the next Atlantic low took charge, so we made the best of it and enjoyed our sail back around Ardnamurchan and into Tobermory again.

Obviously, we weren't the only ones to hear the forecast and we found the anchorage crowded, and both the moorings and the small marina fully occupied. Eventually, on the basis that it was closed for the night, we tied up at the fuel berth, which was a good call because several yachts left early the following morning in an effort to get home ahead of the weather and we were able to move in to a vacant berth and stay there for the next twenty four hours. And the weather was miserable. The wind, from the southwest, may not have been quite as strong as the F8 or 9 that had been forecast, but then, Tobermory is very sheltered. It did, however, rain pretty continuously and we were very glad of our over-boom tent. At the outset of this cruise, I had decided to build in a couple of lay days and this day fulfilled that function. We showered, went to the laundry, had a walk up to the hotel where the ICC party had been held, and bought some presents. All in all we made the best of the day and we indulged in the universal pleasure of watching other people make their decisions as yachts of every size and shape came and went.

The worst of it was over by Saturday morning, although the forecast was still for west or southwest F5 or 6 with rain and showers! This was to be the day when we lost John and Gillie who had been great company and who I would miss. I intended to head on in the direction of Oban, but in case we were delayed and they missed their connection, they sensibly opted to leave *Rupert* in Tobermory and catch a ferry. They cast *Rupert* off and under reefed main and No 3, Derek and I had another very fast and pleasant passage down the Sound of Mull albeit under grey skies. As we crossed the Firth of Lorn, the wind increased and the heavens opened so we decide to head for the greater shelter of the marina at Dunstaffnage, which, like Tobermory, was full, but we managed to get a berth on the outer breakwater. In the afternoon we were



Gilly, John, Derek and the Skye Bridge



Rupert in the Crinan Canal, descending towards Ardrishaig

joined by Garvan O'Toole, another of Rupert's racing crew, and, with the rain still coming down in buckets, that night we opted for the convenience of the Wide Mouthed Frog Restaurant in the marina buildings.

We were now definitely homeward bound and we had used one of our lay days so, although Sunday morning brought no improvement in the weather, we motored out of Dunstaffnage into driving rain and with the wind on the nose. In search of calmer seas, we went inside Kerrera and we did find some respite there until we emerged at the south end of the Sound. There was nothing for it but to keep on going and, eventually, our perseverance was rewarded. A brighter sky appeared on the horizon and slowly it came towards us. As we approached the north end of the Sound of Luing, it stopped raining and, as planned, the tide

turned in our favour and we were off on a sleighride. We touched eleven knots over the ground at times, down through the Sound of Luing, through the Dorus Mor and in to Crinan. It would be an exaggeration to say that the sun came out, but the combined effects of being relatively dry and making such exhilarating progress did a lot to improve our humour.

I had last been through the Crinan Canal in 1968 in Brendan Bradley's and Eric Hill's DBSC 24' *Fenestra*. On that occasion, given the vagaries of the Stuart Turner petrol engine and an overdose of youthful enthusiasm, we had sailed through the canal under the classic rig of spinnaker and bucket and I had happy memories of it. Now, I had a nostalgic notion to go through again in a more mundane fashion. We had actually heard some pretty negative comments about the canal and I doubt that we would have considered taking this option if it hadn't been for my happy memories and another dodgy weather forecast. Indeed, initial appearances seemed to confirm these comments. We had the latest editions of all the relevant cruising guides on board but even so it was hard to establish the opening hours of the sea lock. As we approached, I tried to contact the canal office both on the designated VHF channel and by phone but got no reply. When we arrived off the sea lock we were hailed by the skipper of the *Polly Agatha*, a beautiful replica of a Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter, who said that he had heard us on the radio, that he had encountered a similar problem, and that he had sent someone ashore to investigate. In due course, the news came back that the lock would be opened shortly and *Polly Agatha* and *Rupert* locked through together in what turned out to be the last lock of the day. The basin was full of boats and midges but we soon found ourselves a berth outside two other vessels, the one a fishing boat with a friendly crew and the other a yacht crewed by some helpful and chatty yachties. In fact, when I visited the canal office, the staff could not have been more helpful or efficient either. The fee for Rupert was £117 which sounds a bit on the steep side, but actually is quite reasonable when you realise that it allows you to stay in the canal for up to four days and covers all mooring and lock fees as well as access to all of the excellent toilet and shower facilities. It also includes useful maps and information sheets. But, the visit to the office also disclosed another piece of contrary information in one of the cruising guides, which states as follows: "...assistance is now provided by Scottish Canal Staff at all locks and bridges. Though help from boat's crew is appreciated it is no longer essential and single handed passage through the canal is perfectly feasible...". In fact, I was informed by the canal staff that while there are staff along the canal, they are instructed not to help with lines or locking except in an emergency. The lesson to be learned from these glitches is that it is inevitable that every guide is out of date as soon as it is published. The arrangements for the Crinan Canal change from year to year and it is essential to check directly with the canal authorities before committing to a passage and the guides do recommend this. With all formalities completed, we had a couple of very welcome pints and a really delicious fish stew in the Crinan Hotel and agreed that from a pretty miserable start this had turned in to another good day.

Our night in the basin at Crinan was accompanied by the sort of torrential rain normally associated with Humphrey Bogart films. Interestingly, although we didn't have the washboards in, no rain came below because it was falling absolutely vertically. This was lucky for me, because the washboards were at the after end of the cockpit and I was in my pyjamas! It did eventually stop about 08.00 on Monday, but its effect was to raise the water in the canal to dangerous levels, and all through traffic was prohibited. We had been scheduled to be one of the first boats through when the gates opened at 08.30, but we were delayed by two hours while the canal staffed racked huge volumes of water down to the sea.

We were three up and I am familiar with canal work, so my first thought was that working the locks would not be a problem, however, three or four people to whom we spoke, including the folk on the yacht inside *Rupert*, said that they had retained the services of a firm called "The Yot Spot" (theyotspot.com, Tel. 01546602777) and that the fee paid to it was money very well spent. This firm appears to be staffed by energetic students on vacation from college and the big advantage is that they cycle ahead of you along the tow path to ensure that the next lock or bridge is set in your favour. They will then take your lines as you approach, help you through the lock, and reset the gates after you, before cycling on. With their help it is possible to transit the canal in about six hours, but without it, to reach salt water at the other end could easily take more than a day. The fee for a single boat is £60 but the trick is to team up with another boat(s) travelling at the same time as you, in which case the fee reduces to £42 per boat. We became the latest on their list of satisfied

customers, and there is no doubt that our £42 was well spent. Time was important to us and with the assistance of the lad and the lassie from The Yot Spot, we duly made it to Ardrishaig in six hours and the passage was a pleasure. Parts of the canal are staggeringly beautiful. As we negotiated the lock at Cairnbaan where there is a very hospitable pub, the sun came out, and as we descended to Ardrishaig we saw the surrounding scenery in all its glory. By choice, many people, take two days to traverse the eight nautical miles and fifteen locks and the next time that I pass that way, I will do the same. Even as it was, I thoroughly enjoyed our trip on this inland waterway which provided variety, a chance to chat to people on other boats and was every bit as much fun as I remembered. But when we arrived at Ardrishaig, it was business as usual and we went straight through the sea lock and headed south to East Loch Tarbert for the night.



The anchorage at East Loch Tarbert

Moving on quickly, our passage the following day down Loch Fyne, across Inchmarnock Water, down Kilbrannan Sound and from Sanda Island across the North Channel could not have been easier. The sun shone, there was no wind and all we had to do was listen to the thrum of the engine and admire the scenery. As we passed Loch Ranza however, I felt obliged to tell the crew about the night, many years ago, which Heather, Tim McCormick and myself had spent there, at anchor, in my Ruffian 23 *Ruffino* with no dinghy (long story!) and with a westerly F8 increasing to northwesterly F10 forecast. We were rescued by two passing saints in a dinghy, who first laid out our second anchor for us and then suggested that they should ferry us to the pub, the lights of which were beckoning from the shore. We accepted eagerly, but unfortunately, shortly after arriving, and as we were settling in by the fire, our rescuers revealed that they never had more than two halves and it was time to return to our boats. Oh well, such are the ways of saints! There were no such deprivations on this occasion. 19.30 saw us tied up in Glenarm marina, which is a favourite spot of mine, with a G&T in hand and Garvan working at the stove to produce a mighty spirally pasta bolognese for supper. Later we welcomed David Keane, another of the racing crew, who was to join us for the rest of the trip home, and we remained in the comfortable pub on the corner in the village for as long as we wanted.

The next night, Wednesday 20th July, saw us in Ardglass again. Over supper, we debated what to do with the second lay day which we had kept in hand in case of bad weather and which we hadn't used. An amiable forecast persuaded us to divert to the Isle of Man and the following morning found us setting sail for Port St Mary. Nostalgia on my part also had a part to play in this. Many years ago, as the "boy" on Jack McKeown's S & S 34 *Korsar* and with John Bourke (ICC) as the sailing master we had won the annual overnight race from Howth to Port St Mary which in those days was organised by the ICC. As we approached the finish, looking at the harbour wall, we could see that there were already two masts tied up inside. One was tall and we guessed that we must have saved our time on any yacht with a mast that size, but the other was much shorter and we feared the worst. Imagine our excitement when we rounded the end of the breakwater and saw that Perry Greer's fine yawl *Helen of Howth* was the only other finisher! This was one of many trips to Port St Mary in a variety of boats, but I hadn't been there for a long while. Truth to tell, it hasn't changed very much. By modern standards the facilities for yachts are a bit primitive, but three moorings have been laid for visiting yachts and a section of the pier has been designated for their exclusive use. Our visit was enhanced by the discovery of the Albert Hotel, which had been voted the I.O.M. pub of the year for 2016 and which was a definite find. The bar was comfortable, the barman was helpful and friendly and it served a number of very pleasant craft ales, all of which we sampled. Again, nostalgia was rewarded and we enjoyed our stay.

The final passage back to Dún Laoghaire on the following day, like several before it on this trip, got better as the day went on and we ended up romping down the Irish Sea and across Dublin Bay with a fine free wind and a spring ebb tide under us. It had been a wonderful cruise. Certainly, our oilskins had never been dry, particularly in the first ten days, but we had not been at sea in anything more than F.6 and we had visited some truly beautiful places, many of which were new to me. We had even walked on Calum's Road! Scotland remains one of my favourite cruising grounds and perhaps the answer, as I grow older, is to charter from the firm which I had recently read about and which bases its yachts at Armadale on the Sound of Sleat. Now, I wonder if their yachts have doors on the cabins!

My thanks to each of the crew who made it all possible as well as great fun, to all those in the ICC and CCC responsible for laying on such great fare ashore, and, of course to Jimmy and Judy, for sowing the seed.

Summer Cruise to the Costa del ¿What?

Alex and Daria Blackwell

It was almost two years ago that we, along with other OCC/ICC members, were invited to participate in the 80th anniversary Astillero Lagos Spanish Rias Cruise in August 2015. We accepted by return email – we may possibly have been the very first.

All our plans for the following summer revolved around this one event. This included fitting in an emergency yacht delivery from the Azores to Cork in July 2015: A good friend of ours had had a rudder failure in his 1920's Aage Nielson-designed sloop *Solution* during the Newport US to Cowes UK transatlantic race. He had diverted to Horta and his crew had jumped ship to attend the party in Cowes. We contacted Duncan Spencer, Mid Atlantic Yacht Services, in Horta, and through his wonderful help our friend's yacht was lifted onto the hard the day they arrived. Workmen were brought in from neighbouring islands. Temporary repairs to the rudder using stainless steel bands were completed within three days and the yacht was back in the water by the time I arrived.



Solution in Horta

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We had a lovely sail northwards to Ireland. The wind direction was perfect the whole time we were underway and we made good time. The sun even shone the first and last days. Otherwise it rained and the winds reached gale force on several occasions. The boat handled the conditions well and we pressed on. One evening, shortly before my watch, I was below in the aft cabin, which I shared with the owner, wiping water off the chart table. A wave abruptly lifted the stern of the boat sending me flying to one side – straight into my berth. The berths all have high fiddles to keep the occupant and mattress in place while underway. This is what my body impacted with, breaking four ribs (it was later

determined), with a, to me, loud audible crunch.

The next five days at sea were, shall we say, interesting. The weather did improve somewhat, and standing, or rather sitting, watch was bearable thanks to a constant supply of pain killers. Lying down and attempting to sleep in a pitching boat was less so. We arrived in Cork a day or two ahead of my original personal schedule allowing plenty of time to get home and get our own boat ready for sailing to Spain. However, a visit to Cork University Hospital confirmed the damage. Not wanting to inflict a bus ride on me, Daria arrived in Cork that evening to drive me back home. Our trip to Spain was duly cancelled (along with any further sailing that summer) and we sent a note of apologies to Alfredo and Alberto Lagos.

Fast forward to 2016

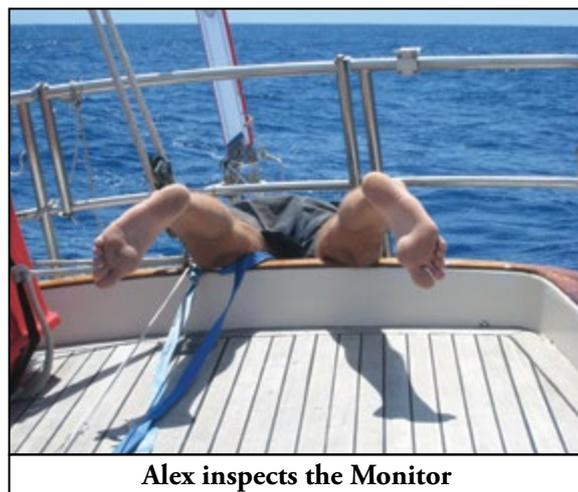
So, this summer we headed off aboard our Bowman 57 cutter rigged ketch *Aleria* to Spain to make up for last year's debacle. We had found a lovely family to sit our house, mind our cats and mow the lawn. We researched our itinerary and provisioned. We were more than ready to go. As we had already been to the Rias in 2009, working our way from Finisterre to Lisbon, we had a pretty good idea of where we wanted to go and what we wanted to see. One item high on the list along with finishing up at Astilleros Lagos (where we would overwinter *Aleria* and have a few jobs done), was to cycle to Santiago de Compostella. With the boat fuelled, watered and once again well stocked, we set off with the tide on a beautiful evening. We dropped *Aleria's* hook off Clare Island for the night, went ashore briefly for a cocktail, and then spent a blissful first night aboard.

The next day we had brisk south-westerlies, that brought us all the way to Kilronan on Inis Mór Island in amazing time. Our next stop was Tralee. About half way there our Raymarine autopilot decided it was time for a prolonged holiday, and stated flatly that it had "No Data". No bother, we gladly switched to our trusted Monitor wind vane steering system that had seen us through many passages, covering tens of thousands of miles. On we sailed, marvelling at how much better our silent crew member 'Jolly Mon' steered to windward than we would ever be able to, sparing us an expected tack half way down the coast of Clare. We even had to fall off a few degrees towards the end. From Tralee we sailed around to Dingle, where we were met by OCC Port Officer Harvey Kenny, with whom we had a very enjoyable evening and impromptu send-off party. Harvey had been a judge in Mayo, and he recounted stories I remembered reading in the paper, the subjects of some of which were close personal friends.

With the weather outlook showing that we would have possibly four days of perfect westerlies, we had a weather window that one dreamed of. We set off early in the morning. *Aleria* made great time on a beam reach doing nine to ten knots. Our ETA in Finisterre grew closer than anticipated. Her rig was perfectly balanced with almost zero pressure on the helm. We did have to deal with about 2-4 metre seas, which gave our 'Jolly Mon' a bit to contend with, but 'he' has

dealt with far more than that over the years.

Somewhat over 50 miles south of Fastnet, our course started drifting ever so slowly to windward. I disconnected the self-steering, got us back on course, adjusted the control strings, and returned the helm to 'Jolly Mon'. I thought nothing more of the incident. Again and again this happened; and when I say it was slowly, each time it was 15-20 minutes before I even noticed something was happening. So, well over an hour after the first time our course started changing, I went aft to investigate. There I found the steering paddle trailing behind *Aleria*. Daria arrived on deck as I looked forlornly and said, 'I think it broke.' As the paddle was securely tied on, I easily retrieved it and was able to survey the damage. The Monitor has a sacrificial tube that is meant to snap if the pressure is too great; this had already happened a few times on previous passages. Scanmar provided spare tubes, and we have had more made in the meanwhile. This time, however, it was the pivot shaft – an internal part that is not supposed to break. An onboard repair was not feasible. We had a brief discussion about our 'situation'. Hand steering for three to four days was indeed an option. However, it was just the two of us. This was supposed to be a holiday, and the prospect held no joy for either of us.



Alex inspects the Monitor

Our trip to Spain was thus, once again, not to happen. We turned around and sailed back north, dejected, deflated, and instantly tired. Late that same night, we arrived in Bantry Bay. It was raining heavily and we had virtually no visibility. We dropped anchor at midnight well outside the shipping channel on the way to Castletownbere trusting our radar and chart-plotter for our position. The spot we picked was adjacent to a lovely cove described in the Sailing Directions. In the morning we saw we had picked the perfect spot to anchor. The only downside was that it was in an oyster fishery, which a dredger made us pointedly aware of.

We communicated our problems with as much detail as we had respectively to Scanmar (manufacturer of the Monitor) and Raymarine. Mike Scheck from Scanmar replied almost immediately from sea that he would take care of things right away. Minutes later an email arrived from his office that a replacement part was being prepared and would be shipped off to us. (We purchased the Monitor self-steering back in 2008.) Their only request was for us to ship the broken pieces to their UK office – but only after we have repaired our Monitor – otherwise no cost. Raymarine responded slightly differently. We were given a list of things to measure. If these did not come up to specs, we would have to send the unit to the UK for evaluation and repair. We had previously had problems with the course computer, which we purchased in 2013, and after weeks of emails and diagnosis they determined that it was the giro. They then quoted me an amount for the evaluation and repair that nearly came to the price of a new course computer. After some more correspondence they replaced a giro that had failed – at no cost. This had also failed in a friend's unit, who anecdotally told me that this was a known problem. When I now mooted that the company should do the right thing and just replace the presumably, once again, faulty, controller (having done the measurements), they stated that the unit was 'out of warranty'.

Cruising on in Cork, we spent a lovely afternoon with ICC member Flor and Brenda Long, who are also OCC Port Officers. We met, or at least saw, a number of other ICC members. Some of these hurriedly grabbed a burgee or ensign and waved it from their cockpit as we sailed by with our burgee and ensign hoisted for all to see. Others we bumped into on the street – in Schull or in Lawrence Cove. A few times we spent an extra day anchored or tied up to wait out a gale that inevitably tracked further north. So we had ample opportunity to bring out our bicycles and explore. As one friend of ours quipped when we lamented our failure to reach Spain, 'Welcome to the Costa del Cork!'

Something of particular note, that members may not yet have seen are the Ewe Gardens just outside of Glengarriff. For us it was a pleasant 5k hike from the harbour. Described as a fusion of sculpture and nature, it is astonishing, astounding, and wonderful all at the same time. As you walk along the trail through the woods, created by the artist and her husband, you discover sculptures among the trees that are sometimes huge while others are miniscule. All are indeed part of the landscape. These are accompanied by poetry and messages about the environment. Our only advice: allow for some extra time. You will not regret it.

For us, coming from the west coast, sailing in Cork was indeed a wonderful cruising experience. The west might be more spectacular, more rugged, wilder, and quite void of other boats, but Cork is indeed lovely and quite civilised. It was also nice and warm most of the time we were there – T-shirts and shorts weather. The winds were often favourable, though on some of the longer passages, we did have to motor for lengthy periods. And the rain did hold off – well most of the time.

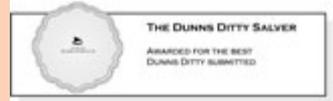
Sailing the south coast and discovering some new coves and harbours thanks to the ICC books was a great alternative to the planned cruise to Spain. We certainly enjoyed the Costa del Cork, and it will keep that name in our minds for some time to come. We made many notes for a future edition of our book, 'Cruising the Wild Atlantic Way', as well as for the ICC Sailing Directions. Spain, on the other hand, is still in our sights. An ICC Rally is planned for 2017, and we have already signed up. Next year it's: 'Spain or Bust'.

Octopus

Pilot information says – Dating back to a more turbulent time, this tunnel bears the hallmark of an ideal nautical hideaway for small to medium size vessels. Day trippers note: a broom should be brought in your picnic basket due to significant dust accumulation on the platforms. Depth on entry to tunnel is about 2.5m

Dick Lovegrove has a Thames Tickle

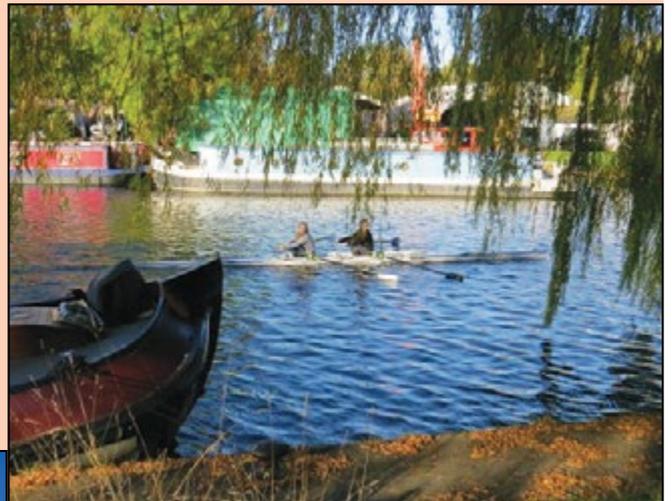
Heather and I jumped at the offer from Jimmy and Judy Houston (both ICC) to join them for a few days autumnal pottering on the River Thames on board their lovely original Dutch sailing barge *Vrouwe Maria Louise*. (Is she a Tjalk or is she a Skutsje?). And even if, as septuagenarians, we didn't get very high off the ground, I hope that the levels of energy and enthusiasm we showed were properly in keeping with the other levels of activity and fitness on display on the water.



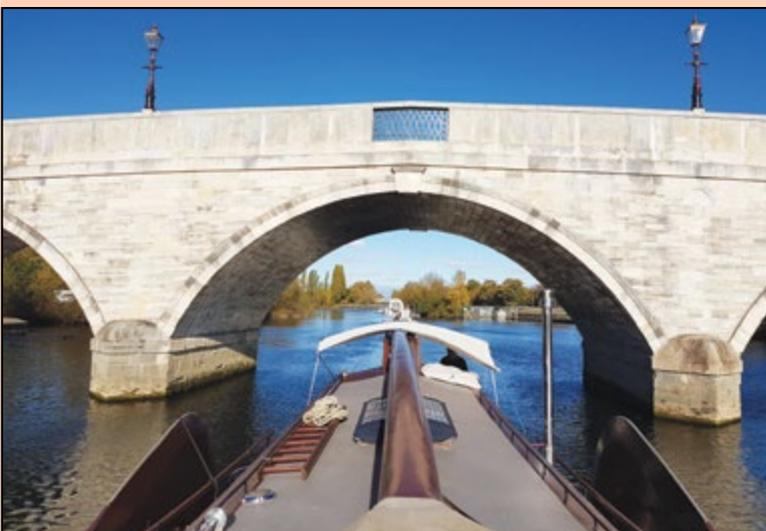
The *Vrouwe Maria Louise*

By the time it gets to Kingston, where Jimmy and Judy keep the *Vrouwe Maria Louise*, the Thames is a substantial waterway flowing (albeit slowly) through a densely populated part of the land and of course that population, together with a sense of familiarity and easiness with water which I am not sure if we, in Ireland, have ever really achieved, is the reason for the phenomenal usage, to which the river is put. Boats of every size and shape (how did the big ones get there and do they ever move?) are moored, often two or three deep, along every inch of the banks. There are innumerable sailing clubs (we even saw the graceful sterns of some of the famous Thames A Raters peeping from their winter quarters). There are huge areas of reservoir. There are fishermen galore and remarkable birdlife. There are canoers and kayakers. There are floating houses some of which must have belonged to Steptoe & Son (and one of which was being pulled through a lock by hand) and others, which were so mind blowing in their conception and construction, that one expected Kevin McLeod and the crew of the

Grand Designs TV programme to appear on the balcony. There is Hampton Court Palace and wonderful pubs which front on to the river and where we stopped for lunches or evening meals with good beer. But above all else there are rowers. From early morning to long after dark (complete with tiny navigation lights) there were single and double sculls, coxed and coxless fours and the supremely sleek eights leaving hardly a ripple as they sped over the water. There were athletes in training, and coaches in close pursuit, but the ones who really appealed to me were the hundreds of others who were simply "out for a row". There were people, long past the first flush of youth, nonchalantly skimming past us, with only a couple of inches of freeboard between them and a dip, and I particularly remember two middle aged and perfectly synchronised ladies who were chatting animatedly on



Effortless rowing, effortless talking



How nice to have your mast in a tabernacle

some obviously fascinating topic as they effortlessly overtook us.

Just in case I have given the wrong impression – we loved it! In glorious but cold winter sunshine, we covered the river from Kingston to Laleham and back over four days and it was delightful. Yes, it is busy, but it is also stunningly beautiful and the energy which comes from all the activity is most attractive. The variety of the environment is fascinating and it confirmed for me something which I have thought for some time: the Irish inland waterways, on which a lot of money has been spent, must be further developed and utilised if they are to be viable and survive. Our grateful thanks to Jimmy and Judy.

Tidal Dancer in Croatia

David Jones

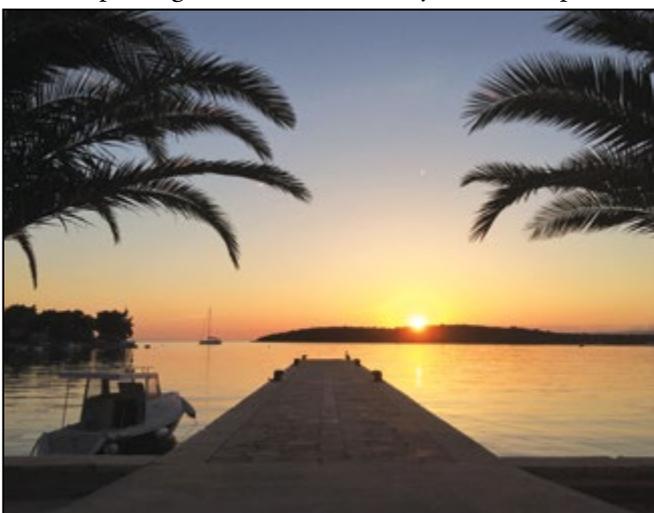
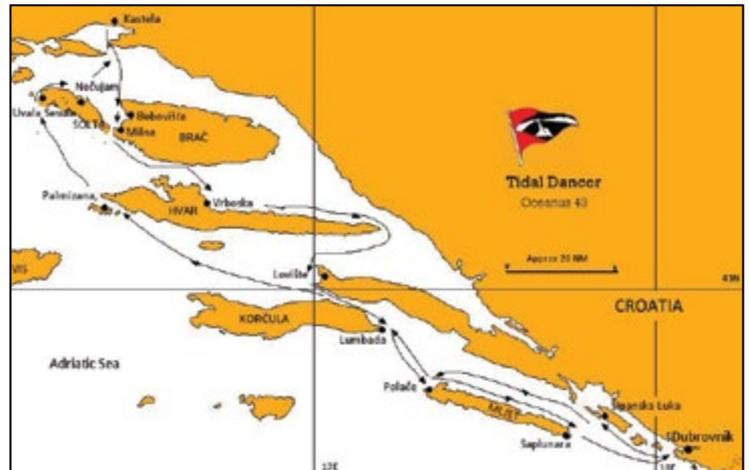
This is the first year that *Tidal Dancer* has had a home base since we left Howth in May 2011, having wintered and summered in different ports since then. We chose Marina Kastela near Split for a number of reasons, but mainly price, it being a number of thousand Euro cheaper than other marinas we had investigated. The marina is new and very sheltered from high seas due to being in an enclosed bay, but it does get its fair share of strong winds. The staff are friendly and efficient and we had good service from the adjacent boatyard. Split Airport is very close and the bus from Split to Trogir and the airport routes past the marina. It is located pretty much in the middle of the Croatian Coast so from a cruising point of view you can head Southeast towards Dubrovnik or Northwest towards Istria, both being within reach of a typical two week cruise.

Trish and I went there in mid April and stayed in one of the apartments owned by the marina. Unfortunately, they are about 2kms away, so a bike or car would have been useful. It is always a concern when returning to the boat after six months of winter weather. We need not have worried as *Tidal Dancer* was in perfect condition. Our main problem was trying to release the warps from the cleats, which had become incredibly tight with the strain of the strong winds; this we eventually managed to do, so on Monday 18th April we motored out of the marina and into the adjacent service harbour, which is in fact the original, much smaller marina. The wind was blowing quite hard but we reversed into the travel lift bay without too much of a problem. She was hauled for her annual hull polish and antifoul. The yard were doing the big jobs so I had only a few small ones to do, like servicing the Kiwi Prop. We used the next few days doing some exploring, which included meeting Pete and Gillie Adams (ICC) for a lovely lunch in Restaurant Bonaca, Skradin. They were getting their boat ready in Murter, so Scradin, about midway between the two was a convenient place to meet. We also took the opportunity to drive to the Plitvice National Park and walk around the stunning waterfalls. The park is situated between Zadar and Zagreb and is quite a drive from Kastela but well worth the trip. The weather had been very mixed, cold with some spells of heavy rain and very windy. Lying in bed at night listening to the wind howling round the apartment, I was getting increasingly worried that we might not be able to launch her and get back to the berth. Thursday morning however started bright, sunny and calm, so *Tidal Dancer* was put back in the water looking pristine and brought back to her berth without incident. Trish and I then set off for home.

Accompanied by Derek Bothwell (ICC), we returned on the 25th May. The usual jobs for getting her back into cruising trim were completed over the next few days including a visit to Split to purchase a new Vignette and visit a chandlery. Our plan for this cruise was to head down to Dubrovnik to be joined by Derek's wife, Gaye. We had rushed through this part of the cruise last year to make a rendezvous with Pete and Gillie in Korcula, so we wanted to visit some of the places we missed.

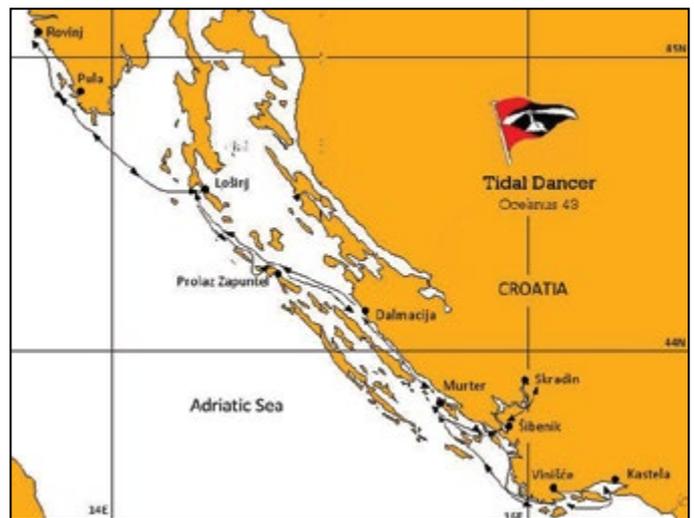
Departing Kastela on Saturday 28th, we spent a night on a mooring in Bobovisce and in Milna marina, both on Brac Island and having been visited last year. New to us was the lovely little marina at Vrboska on the north coast of Hvar. We had toured Dugi Rat en route, which is a sand spit on the south coast of Brac and is featured in many of the tourist brochures for Croatia, owing to its fine sand and turquoise water. Next were two familiar places, Lovisce anchorage on the tip of the Peljesac peninsula and Lumbarda marina close to Korcula. Owing to bad weather, we spent a couple of nights there and used the time to polish the coachroof and cockpit areas; hard work but it does save some money during the pre-season works.

It was now the 3rd June and as the weather improved, we departed Lumbarda after lunch for the 15M trip to Polace on the western end of Mljet. This part of the island is a national park and Polace is a large very well protected anchorage with a good selection of pontoons owned by a variety of restaurants. With the weather still changeable, we chose to berth at the part of the old harbour by the ruined castle run by Restaurant Antika; there



Sunset over Lovisce

is no charge if you eat at the restaurant, which we duly did that evening and we were not disappointed. Next day with little or no wind, we motored along the north coast of Mljet to Uvala Saplunara, which is on the southeast tip of the island, picking up a restaurant mooring. We wanted to eat on board so we persuaded them to allow us in for a couple of drinks and then back to the boat for dinner on board. That was ok so no charge for the mooring. True to form, there was little or no wind next day so we motored to Dubrovnik. On the way we passed the Elaphite Islands, making a tour of Sipanska Luka and Sudurad on Otok Sipan and then anchoring in Uvala Sunj on Otok Lopud for lunch and a swim. We weighed anchor after lunch and motored on past Otok Koločep, under the highway bridge at Gruz, up the river to the ACI marina, Dubrovnik. After a visit to the fuelling pontoon, where I managed to drop the fuel cap overboard (needless to say it went straight to the bottom), we berthed at 17:45.



Next day, 6th June, was spent doing laundry, supermarket plus other jobs including buying a new filler cap. Gaye Bothwell joined us at lunchtime and that evening we dined in Restaurant Vimbula, a couple of hundred metres upriver of the marina. Dubrovnik marina is rather expensive so we were keen to get on our way. For information, a new ACI marina has opened in Slano, about 15M by sea north west of the present one, which should take some of the pressure off it. Our plan was to cruise back to Kastela, first stop Sipanska Luka after lunch and a swim at anchor in Uvala Sunj once more. We had booked a mooring belonging to Restaurant Cod Marko as they only have four and the restaurant had been highly recommended. Owing to quite a strong wind, we had great difficulty in securing the mooring, as it was not possible to pull it far enough out of the water. We lost and retrieved a boathook in the process. Launching the dinghy solved the problem. The outdoor part of the restaurant is over the water and with the strong wind was rather exposed and cold so we moved inside, pity.

No wind again the next morning, so it was the Iron Spinnaker all the way to Luka Polace, where we dropped anchor for a lovely evening swimming, kayaking and then drinks and dinner on board. The national park is a 'must visit' so we took the dinghy ashore and got a bus to the park. There we hired bikes and cycled round the famous salt lake, also taking the boat trip to the St Marija Monastery. Thunderstorms were forecast so Trish suggested we move the boat to the pier at Restaurant Antika, a very wise move as it turned out. While there, we were treated to the spectacle of a truck with a large piece of cargo on board, which turned out to be a hut for the national park. It was obvious there was no way it would fit through the low narrow arch which was part of the castle. Along came a mobile crane which lifted the hut on to a castored pallet, hardboard was put on the road and the whole lot was manhandled through the arch with millimetres to spare to great applause from the many onlookers. Once through the arch, followed by the truck and crane, the hut was loaded back onto the truck and off they went. The whole process took a couple of hours, completely blocking the road in the meantime. A Peca is a traditional Dalmatian dish baked in a pot buried in burning embers. It takes about two hours and has to be pre ordered. This was our dinner in Antika that evening and it was delicious. During the night the mother and father of all thunderstorms arrived. Some of the flashes and following thunder had virtually no time delay, meaning they were right overhead, very nerve wracking considering the long piece of aluminium pointing straight up to the sky. Three of us got very little sleep but Derek, who would sleep through a nuclear war, was unperturbed. The storms lasted till



A tight squeeze at Restaurant Antika

lunchtime and were accompanied by torrential rain. We were very glad to be firmly tied to a pier and not at anchor. I saw lightning strike the water just behind a yacht that was making its way to the harbour, scary stuff. After the storms had passed we departed Polace mid afternoon of the 10th June and motor-sailed to Lumbarda, followed next day by Palmizana in the Pakleni Islands opposite Hvar town. Normally we would use one of the anchorages on the southern part of the islands but southeast winds were forecast, so they would become uncomfortable, a lesson we had learned last year. Palmizana marina is run by ACI and is very nice, well sheltered but rather expensive. Unsettled weather returned so next day we took the water taxi to Hvar and climbed up to the fort, descending back to the town in the rain and catching the water taxi back to the marina later in the afternoon. About a five minute walk over the hill to the anchorage south of Palmizana are a number of beach restaurants. We went to one of them to escape the noise in the marina, as a large flotilla of 'The Yacht Week' (I think) full of young people having

a great time had arrived, must be getting old.

Departing next morning, we managed to get a number of hours pure sailing while on route to Uvala Sesula on the southwest corner of Otok Solta. Once again we picked up a restaurant mooring, this one being Sismis. Uvala Sesula is a lovely deep sheltered inlet and the restaurant, which is a bit of a climb, has wonderful views and good food. Lovely weather next day, so we walked into the pretty port town of Maslinika. Departing after lunch and motorsailing clockwise round Otok Solta, we anchored, on the third attempt, in Uvala Necujam on the north coast. This is another well sheltered deep inlet and is very popular, so can be full in high season.

Our cruise was nearly over, so it was back to Kastela next day to do the closedown jobs before departing for our high summer break. We were happy to be securely tied up as we recorded 45kts on our windex during the afternoon of 16th. With all jobs complete, we departed for home via Dubrovnik three days later. Normally we stay till early July but this year we needed to be back in time to take my Howth 17 Footer *Rosemary* up to Bangor (by road) to join six other Seventeens, there to join the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the RUYC. More important for the Seventeens was the 150th anniversary of Hilditch's Boatyard in Carrickfergus, where the first five were built in 1898.

After another rather disappointing summer weatherwise at home, I returned to the warmth and sunshine of the Adriatic on 31st August. Trish was not able to come for this cruise so for the moment I was alone. Quite hard work putting the boat back into cruising trim on your own but that was all completed and on Saturday 3rd September at 13:40 I set off on my first solo sail in Tidal Dancer. The wind was F4 on the nose so it was motoring all the way to Vinisce, where I anchored for the night. I had been to Vinisce a number of times last year, a deep well sheltered bay with a large area of reasonably shallow water and an ideal safe anchorage. The small town is quiet and has a number of small restaurants. One of them sent a RIB out to collect me, which saved me the job of launching and retrieving the dinghy, outboard etc. Calm next morning, so after breakfast and a swim I motored the 25M to Marina Mandalina near Sibenik. Late that evening I was joined by Derek Bothwell after a very long bus journey from Dubrovnik. The weather was due to deteriorate, so first thing in the morning we set off for Murter, berthing at Hramina Marina. Pete and Gillie Adams invited us to join them for lunchtime drinks, where we met their friends David and Anne plus a number of the marina residents. We had hoped to catch up with them during our early summer cruise but we kept just missing each other. We all had a couple of enjoyable drinks watching the wind blowing and the rain pouring down.

The next day was spent provisioning, doing odd jobs etc, as the Bora was still blowing. Our plan was to head for Istria. We had tried last autumn but were beaten by the Bora, which then had lasted for a week. Thankfully this was not the case now so, after refuelling, we set off in a N to NE'y F3-5 along the sheltered coastline to Marina Dalmacija near Zadar. Morning dawned calm and clear so first thing we headed off on the 52M passage to Mali Losinj. The wind did increase but as usual on the nose; we used to paraphrase it to OTFN, I'll let your imagination work out what that stands for. Like many Croatian Islands, Otok Losinj is long and narrow, running NW-SE. Luka Losinj is a 3M long inlet also running NW-SE and is normally accessed at the northwestern end but can also be approached from the other side via a short canal and a lifting bridge which opens twice a day at 09:00 and 18:00. Mali Losinj is the pretty town at the head of the inlet, which has a small marina.

While preparing the boat in Kastela I had managed to get a splinter in the base of one of my fingers, which had become very swollen and painful. In spite of some cream from a chemist in Murter and probing operations carried out by Derek, the pain had become so intense that I couldn't sleep without painkillers. I was worried about possible sepsis so went off to the little local hospital where I was promptly attended to by a female nurse and doctor. The nurse was particularly intrigued that I had come to Croatia all the way from Ireland. I was prescribed some antibiotics and sent on my way. Thankfully after a few days the swelling started to go down. The hospital visit had been so quick that we decided to continue northwards; the forecast was N-NE 15-20kts. About half an hour after exiting Luka Losinj, the wind was increasing above 25kts with a very confused sea. About then a wave came green into the cockpit. We looked at each other silently asking whether we wanted to do another six hours of this. Both being in our late 60s, the answer was 'No', so we returned to Mali Losinj for a good pizza and beer lunch. We would try again tomorrow.



Forecast the next day was still brisk NE'y, so we decided to sail on other side of Otok Male Srakane, which should be more sheltered. I think the strong wind we had encountered yesterday was because the wind was squeezed between it and Otok Losinj. As we headed out into the open sea, we did some very pleasant sailing all the way to abeam Cape Kamenjac on the southern tip of Istria, continuing up the western coast to Marina Veruda, just to the south of Pula. It isn't the prettiest marina in the world but is well sheltered and much cheaper than Pula. Our ultimate destination was Rovinj, berthing there at 16:05 next day, Sunday

11th. Rovinj is a classic old Venetian walled town dominated by the Basilica of St Euphemia, whose bell tower resembles St Marks in Venice. It is a beautiful town to spend some time in, with lots of bars, cafes and restaurants, a fact also known to the many visiting tourists. The weather had by now settled down and was beautiful, great for drying the pile of laundry that had built up after nearly two weeks.

The time had now arrived to start the journey back to Kastela, as we had to be in Zadar in time for the 'surprise', so two days later we departed Rosinj heading south to Pula. The trip was a pleasant motorsail and included a swim off the Brijuni Islands national park just to the north of Pula. We berthed at the ACI Marina, which is right beside the Roman Amphitheatre. Pula itself is not a particularly nice town but does include a number of Roman remains, including the amphitheatre, one of the six largest in the world, and a scattering of arches. The area round the Forum is nice with a square and some old narrow streets and is the area to go eating and drinking. Late that evening we were joined by Neil Inglis who had flown in from Dublin.

Our return to Kastela was going to be basically the same as the outbound with a few exceptions. First stop was Losinj, where we were treated to a late evening concert by two brilliant guitarists beside a small bar in a little square. Their repertoire included a Pink Floyd set, all instrumental including many other pieces till well after midnight. Needless to say the wind, thankfully light, had moved into the southeast which of course was our direction of travel. Prolaz Zapuntal, our next port of call is in a channel between Otoks Molat and Ist. There are two anchorages, one to the north and one to the south so all wind directions are catered for. We used the southern one which has mooring buoys, small charge, and a small hamlet with a restaurant. The menu is pretty limited and the food was only average.

Derek was approaching his 70th birthday and his family and I had organised a 'surprise' under the guise that Trish was going to join us in Zadar. In fact his whole family were coming down unbeknown to him. To avoid the chance that we could accidentally meet them on the streets of Zadar I changed our destination to Dalmacija, which is in fact closer to the airport. On arrival at the marina, we were greeted by a mass of charter boats queuing for the fuelling dock, which was just inside the entrance, design fault; it was changeover day. It took us about 20 mins to squeeze past and head for the private boats section. The flight from Dublin does not arrive till very late, so back on the boat I told Derek that Trish would be very disappointed if he was in bed when she arrived. Neil was in on the ruse. As Derek emerged from the boat he was greeted, not by Trish, but instead by his wife Gaye and daughters Amanda, Karen and Sarah. Derek is pretty cute and not easy to fool but we got him fair and square. *Tidal Dancer* had not slept seven before and with the mix of old men and young, well relatively, girls some changes were necessary. The three girls slept in the aft cabin, cosy. I joined Neil in the saloon and Gaye joined Derek in the fore cabin.

Unfortunately the weather was forecast to deteriorate for the weekend the girls would be with us but Saturday dawned bright and clear with a light NW'ly breeze. We enjoyed a nice motorsail down the Pasman Kanal, which included stops for a couple of swims, to Hramina marina, Murter. To keep the element of surprise we were unable to provision the boat in advance for the arrival of the girls so they were duly dispatched to the supermarket. That evening we all enjoyed a nice meal in town. Sunday was grey with rain from time to time. We motored in calm to light winds to Sibenik and up the Krka River to Skradin. Just as we berthed the Bothwell family lept off the boat and high tailed it to catch the 15:00 ferry to the Krka Falls. They just made it. Trish and I had been to Skradin and the Falls a number of times last year but Derek and Neil, had not been with us. Later that evening we all went to Restaurant Bonaca for a great birthday dinner. Sarah departed next morning via Split, followed by Karen after lunch via Zadar, at which point we set off downriver to Marina Mandalina. Gaye and Amanda were staying with us for the rest of the cruise. There is a water taxi service from the marina to Sibenik which we used. After a short tour of the old town we dined in a restaurant known to Trish and me from last year. Thankfully the rain held off as we were outside.

Strong N-NE winds were forecast for the next day but we were heading south so we departed at 12:10. Just as I turned into the wind after exiting the marina, a wasp flew down my shirt and stung me twice, not very pleasant. On leaving the Krka river, we turned south, rolled out the jib and had a stonking good sail almost to Vinisce, where the wind dropped. By now it was a lovely clear evening with light winds so, after anchoring, we enjoyed a swim and then went ashore in the dinghy to another favourite restaurant of ours from last year, Konoba Vinisce for a great seafood meal. The new day dawned bright and clear. It was the 21st September and was Derek's real birthday, 70. We motored into a moderate headwind, arriving in Marina Kastela at 12:50. After lunch we commenced the winterisation process which was to last for the next few days. The girls were excused so that they could visit Trogir. The boys followed by bus a few hours later. Trogir is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and has a huge selection of restaurants, so is a fitting place to celebrate a significant birthday.

Amanda departed next day followed by the three of us on Saturday 24th. Normally I would remain till early October but we had friends from NZ coming to visit us in Dublin so just like the early summer cruise I had to cut it short.

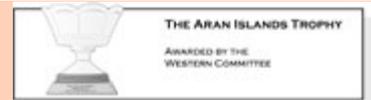
We bought *Tidal Dancer* in Scotland in 2009 and planned a five year project to cruise from Scotland via a year in Howth to the Med. We have now completed year seven so sadly *Tidal Dancer* is for sale.

Total log for 2016 was 671M

Note 1. Most Croatian names have accents which can considerably alter their pronunciation.

Note 2. Otok means Island, Uvala and Luka mean Bay or Inlet.

David Whitehead writes about *Goblin's* Junk Rig



Goblin is a 16 foot Chesapeake Bay sharpie modified for micro cruising in Galway Bay and exploring other sheltered coastal and inland waters. She was originally rigged as a cat yawl with a gaff main and leg-o'-mutton mizzen but I converted the mainsail to a fully battened balance lug with lazy jacks and a multiple part mainsheet. Usually this set-up is referred to as a 'junk' rigged sail—but is better described a Hasler/McLeod sail. It was designed using the prescriptions in their book 'Practical Junk Rig'.

My first sail with the new rig showed that I had rigged the halyard, yard hauling parrel and lazy jack fall on the wrong side of the mast, where they prevented the sail from swinging fully out on the starboard gybe.

The mooring strop also needed more thought to enable the mooring to be dropped and picked up from the cockpit. The bow is accessible via a small forehatch or, when moored, by sidling forward along the narrow side deck. However I cannot reach the mooring buoy in the water, the use of a boathook is impractical and it is too time consuming to get to the hatch to pick up and drop the mooring.

I re-rigged the strop, which has a quick release hook so it ran from the cockpit forward and through an eye on the stemmed with a line leading back to the cockpit so the fitting can be pulled aft or forward from the cockpit. The hook is clipped onto the buoy at the stem head and the mooring dropped, leaving the boat riding to the buoy rope. Then, after setting the sails, the buoy is pulled aft to the cockpit and cast off. When picking up the mooring the process is reversed, the hook is clipped on to buoy rope from the cockpit and pulled forward to the stem.



Goblin in Kinvara Bay

Reefing is simply done by easing the halliard so that the lowest batten drops down onto the boom, guided by the lazy jacks, and then the sheet and the yard-hauling parrel are adjusted to take up the slack. The lazy jacks must not foul on the protruding end of a batten or the sail cannot drop cleanly - all lines aloft must run freely.

The books say that beating with a light wind is the weakest point of sailing of a junk rig—but *Goblin* tacks through about 100°. As with any cat yawl, the mizzen is used to balance the boat, and the main sheet must be eased to see the boat through the wind when it is light. On the new tack, the boat falls off the wind until the speed picks up and the centreboard generates lift; then she can be brought up to close-hauled. Off the wind, the boat really picks up her skirts and the only thing to watch out for is not to get tangled up in the main sheet and its spans when gybing.

An interesting micro cruise is a tour of the quays and anchorages in Kinvara Bay, which encloses about ten miles of shore line between Doorus and Rincarna points. On the east shore are Tarea, Poltagh, a small unnamed quay and Brandy Harbour - which is a mile long east/west creek with the village of Killeenaran at its head. On the west shore there is Crushoa harbour, a mile long drying creek running west to the causeway at Bridge Lough, Parkmore Quay and a small bay with a lovely sandy beach just south of Doorus Point.

Tara is used by mussel farmers and it is somewhat 'industrialised'. Brandy Harbour is narrow and rock encumbered and dries 2.7m off the the village of Killeenaran. A visit must be made in the last two hours of a tide of more than 4.0m with high water around midday - so neap tides or a few days after springs. These tides also permit visits to Crushoa, Doorus Bay and Brandy Harbour and Killeenaran which must be quit before high water. Leaving the mooring two hours after low water neaps Poltagh Quay can be visited before the tide falls too far. But Bridge Lough Creek, which reaches the causeway ponding an old tide mill pool requires a tide higher than 4.0m, so needs a separate visit.

Another mini expedition is a visit to Eddy Island, which lies across the northern entrance of Kinvara bay. Now uninhabited, it once was home to several families, as the derelict houses in the small village on the north side of the island attest. If the boat is beached with a stern anchor near the derelict village before low water, the island can be explored and the boat regained before she floats off. This 'gunkholing' is fascinating but requires careful working of the tides and the right combination of tide and wind. There remains much to see within a day-sail radius of my mooring and I hope to make further explorations as wind and tide permit!

Around Ireland in 8 hours and 10 minutes.

Kevin Dwyer

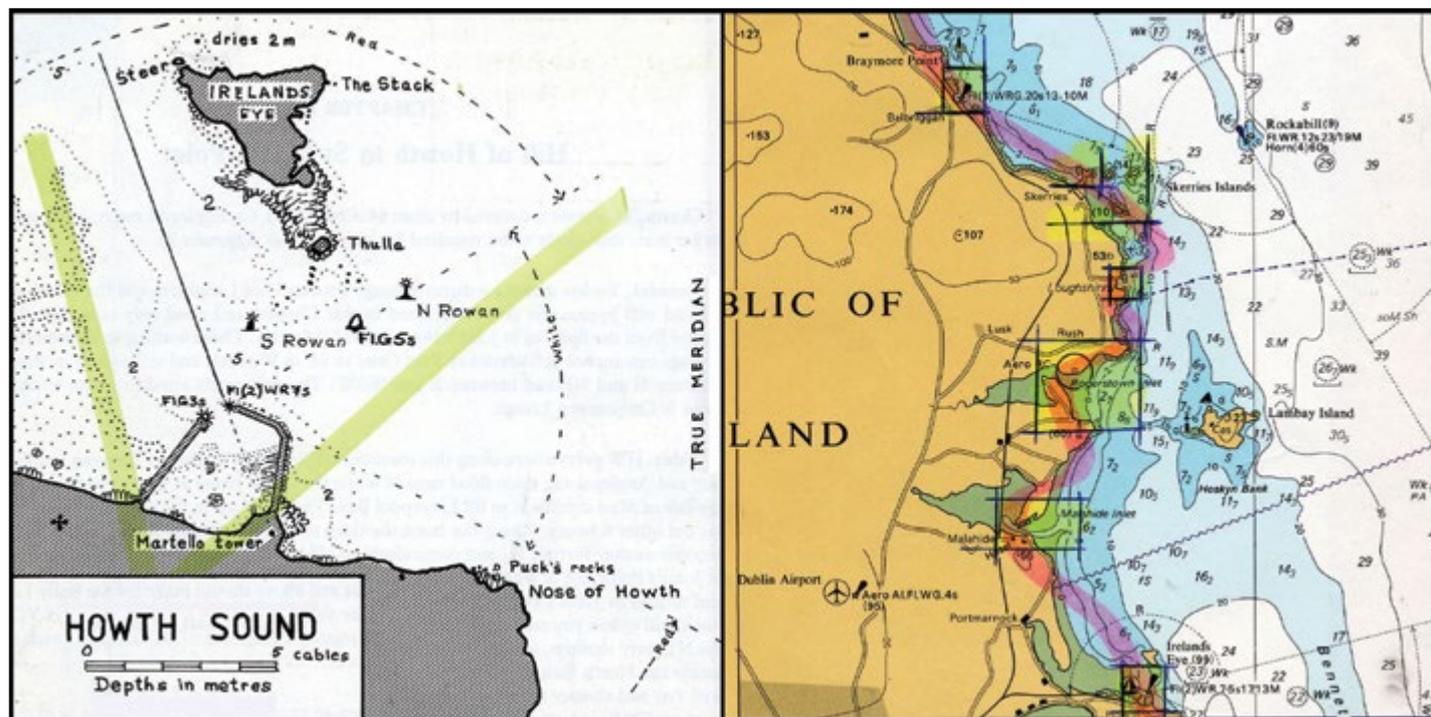
This log is almost a voyage through time, starting fifty years ago the year I joined the ICC. In the 1966 Annual, Conor Doyle wrote in his log 'A Fortnight in Brittany' that 'Kevin, a regular crew member for the last three years, was on his first cruise in *Elsa*. By his boundless spirit and energy, he soon gained official recognition as tonic in chief for flagging energy or spirits'. Oh, to be that young man again!

I write this, so that it can accompany and explain all of the work and flight planning that went into my own enhanced version of the Seventh Edition of the Sailing Directions for the East and North Coasts of Ireland, which I wish to present to the ICC for its archive. My commercial photographic career commenced in 1987 and literally took off a couple of years later through aerial photography. This led to my being asked by the ICC if I had any aerial photographs of anchorages and harbours around the coastline. I replied in the negative, but that if the ICC paid for the flying machine, I would take photographs for the club as a member, on the basis that I would hold copyright.

In 1992, I was given a list of places to be photographed for the next edition of the South and West Coast Sailing Directions. For flight planning, I was familiar with the coast from Kilmore Quay to Fenit. The rest of the west coast was easy enough to work out, with the exception of the inlets and islands between Rossaveal and Roundstone, which all looked the same! The Eighth edition of these directions were published in 1993 with a full set of aerial photographs.

In 1994, Arthur Orr, then compiler of the East and North Sailing Directions, faxed me a wish list of his preferred locations for photography, which caused me huge problems, as I had no knowledge whatsoever of the coast between Howth and Tory Island and the many locations needing to be photographed in between. It took three months to totally work out, memorise and arrange the flight plan, bearing in mind that the pilot had no knowledge of what is being photographed, just a general idea of where he is heading.

At 11:20 on 27 July 1994, with all flight clearances and everything in place, I took off from Cork with my pilot friend Batt Coleman in Cessna 172 EI CGD. Our photographic assignment was to commence at Rosslare with a number of easy to locate targets between there and Dún Laoghaire. I had sailed this coast, so I was quite familiar with it. To visualise what was required and using Howth as an example, I had to start with the chartlet from the old directions, which needed to be brought to life photographically. The outline of the area to be photographed had to be drawn on a chart, as well as the actual flight path. This was done in pink. See illustration.



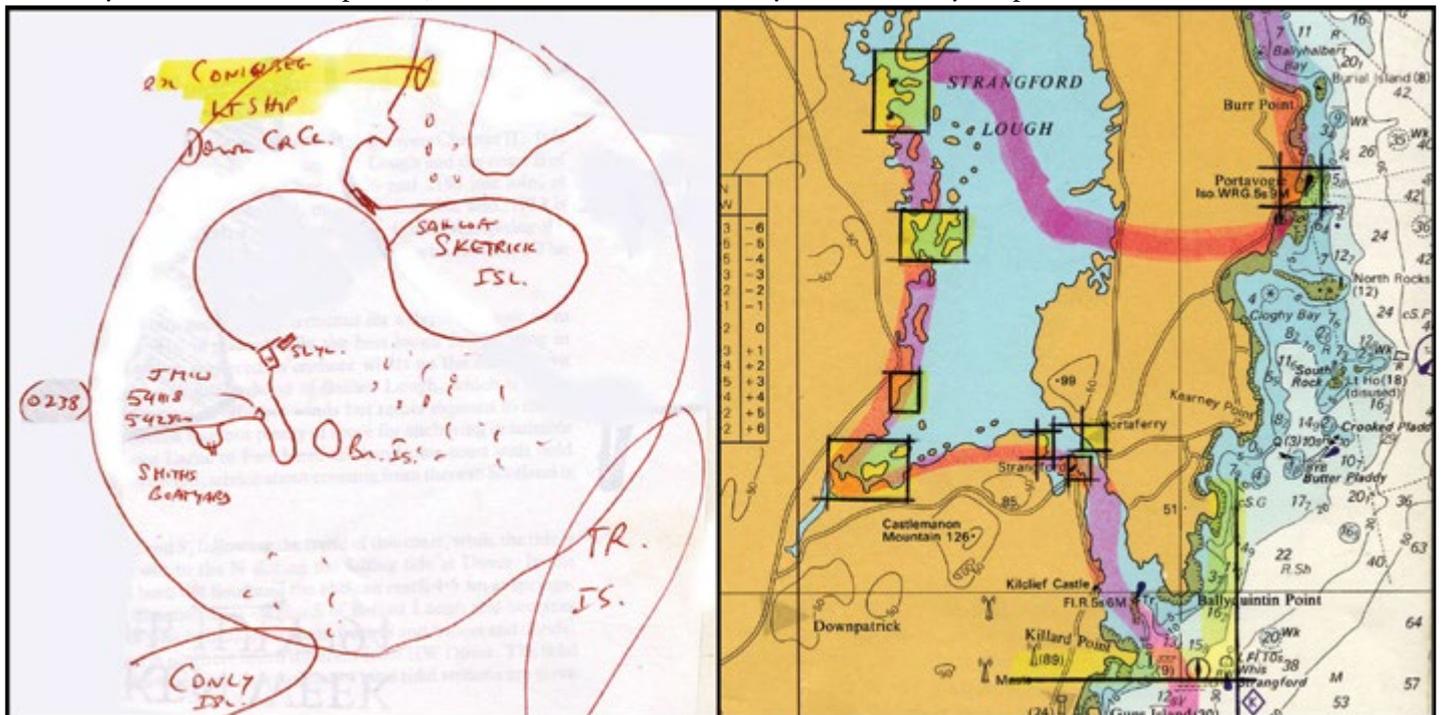
Most of us have enjoyed looking down on Howth Harbour as we approach Dublin Airport. However here was my next problem. Not only was Howth directly on the flight path into Dublin Airport, but the subsequent locations of Malahide, Rogerstown, Lough Shinney, Skerries and Balbriggan were not only in the controlled air space of Dublin Airport, but also within the footprint of Gormanstown Aerodrome.

The aeronautical chart shows the flight restricted zones covering eight of the required targets. On that day, the Air

Traffic Controllers at Dublin Airport could not have been more helpful and Batt Coleman had done a great job filing his flight plan and we ended up with a fine photograph of Howth.



The next part of our flight north was straightforward enough with Carlingford Lough looking well. We then flew along the coast of County Down photographing Kilkeel, Annalong and Ardglass. I was really concerned about what was expected of me with regarding the photography of Strangford Lough; there was very little visual information available in the old directions. To be photographed was the approach towards Strangford Narrows, Portaferry, Strangford Creek, Quoile, Killyleagh, Ringahaddy and Whiterock. The old directions had no chartlets within Strangford Lough. I was extremely fortunate to bump into John McWilliam, who kindly created a very helpful hand-drawn chart of the area



around Whiterock. I drew the outline of this and other targets, as well as a flight path on a chart of Strangford Lough. En route around Strangford Lough, we flew to the south west corner, with the chart showing the targets of both Quoile and Killyleagh and the resultant photograph of Quoile.

Finally there is the aeronautical chart which not only shows that Strangford Lough is on the main flight path to Belfast Aldergrove airport, but also highlights the fact that the targets of Bangor and Carrickfergus are on the flight path for Belfast City airport! A nice photograph was acquired for Whiterock. Having photographed Strangford, we flew out to

Portavogie, Ballywalter and Donaghadee. We then headed for the aerodrome at Newtownards, where we landed at 14:40 to refuel. The engine had hardly stopped when we were approached by two members of Special Branch who said ‘Mr



Coleman and Mr Dwyer?’ We were expected. Batt had again done his flight planning properly.

We took off from Newtownards at 15:55 with a flight plan to Sligo via Rathlin and Tory Islands. Air Traffic Controllers had again been superb and helpful. The marinas at Bangor and Carrickfergus were impressive; we then photographed the port of Larne and had a glimpse of the Mull of Kintyre.

We photographed the small harbour at Carnlough before heading out to Church Bay on Rathlin Island, then flew west past Portballintrae, Portrush and Portstewart. We were a bit concerned about the No Fly Zone around HM Prison Magilligan, which we kept well clear of and took a fairly far-out photo of the entrance to Lough Foyle.

Over Donegal we flew down Lough Swilly, up Mulroy Bay capturing on film harbours, anchorages, inland waterways, beautiful beaches and everything in between. Finally we flew out to Tory Island, which was looking a bit bleak with the late evening light, then around Bloody Foreland and on to Sligo where we landed at 18:40 and stayed the night.

The following morning we took off from Sligo airport at 10:25 with a grand north westerly breeze behind us. We landed at Cork airport at 12:30. Our flight around Ireland had taken us eight hours and ten minutes.

Three Clippers and a wedding.

Robin and Denise Wright



We left Ringhaddy on Thursday 7th July on board our Sun Odyssey 40 *Geronimo*, doffing our cap to the ‘never start a cruise on a Friday’ rule and bound for our third Clipper festival in Derry. This year favourable conditions meant that the Clipper fleet had been quick to cross the North Atlantic such that the organisers weren’t ready for them. Race control then decided to extend the race by 500 miles and send the fleet (with Derry 20 miles in lead) round Tory Island, out to Rockall and back to Rathlin before heading west again to the finish at the entrance to Lough Foyle. Derry’s upwind performance reduced their lead on the beat to Rockall and then as they rounded Rue Point fate decided that the correct decision to stay close to Rathlin wasn’t necessarily the right decision. After 1,200 miles of all out racing they were beaten by LMAX Exchange, their huge rivals, by 35 minutes and a distance of some 5 miles. Who says ocean racing isn’t exciting. Bitter, bitter disappointment for the Derry crew.

As we motored past Strangford and the now de-commissioned SeaGen tidal generator my mind returned to the passage out of the lough and I realised that we were early for the tide, the ebb had still an hour to go and through binoculars I could see huge standing waves past Angus Rock. We turned and motored into the 5 knot tide watching as the schooner, *Soteria*, ventured out into the surf and stood on her end. I was happy to wait. After 45 minutes we turned and slowly made our way to Angus Rock and by the time we reached the Bar Pladdy the sea was flat and our exit was horizontal and comfortable.

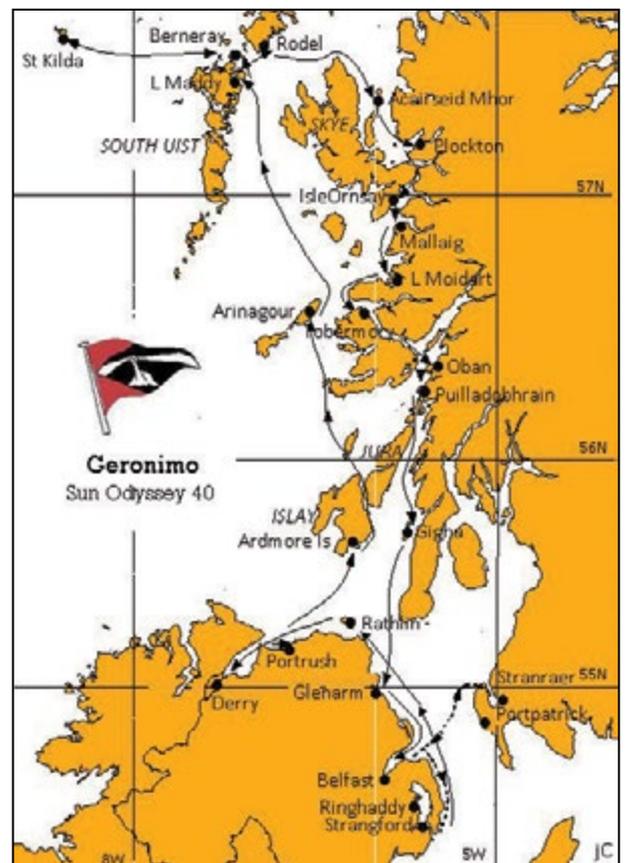
We headed for Rathlin – the weather was good with a light warm southerly and once past Donaghadee we would have fair tide taking us north. We have a soft spot for Rathlin and have spent many an entertaining night there. One evening after fine tapas in what was the old bar at the end of the Manor House we were treated to an evening with the Black family. Frances and all the family were gathered together in the hotel lounge and each had to perform their party piece. And as the old Barclaycard ad said, ‘priceless’. Unfortunately the bar has closed but the Manor House has just undergone a £700,000 refurbishment program and is to be re-opened as a boutique style hotel – we wish it well.

Next day our run to Derry was pleasant but the light wind made for a frustrating sail. A pod of dolphins on our approach to the Tuns buoy was a bonus and with the wind now on our beam we made good speed down the Foyle, reaching Derry’s marina a little after dinner where we ferry glided nicely into a raft position alongside a Beneteau belonging to Gary Barr who had done the South Atlantic leg of the Clipper race.

Our arrival was heralded by shouts of ‘Where’s the drama?’ from Jim Brown and David Meeke and their respective crews from *Trininga* and *Serenity*. They were having a few drinks on *Trininga* berthed on the other side of the pontoon and unbeknownst to us they had a grandstand seat for Gary coming alongside and then us coming alongside Gary and were watching intently in the hope that one of us would provide the evening’s ‘entertainment’. Thankfully there was no drama. After tidying up we were invited for a drink on board *Trininga* and as it would have been rude not to, we duly obliged. It was good to catch up and hear of the homecoming festival’s activities so far.

Late on Saturday afternoon our friends, Neil and Joanne, rafted up to us in *Spirit of Zara*. They were heading north for their summer cruise and, after testing their new Rocna anchor in Red Bay the night before, had decided to stop in Derry for a few days. Neil had sailed the southern ocean leg and the Sydney Hobart during the 13/14 Clipper race and was keen to see the yachts again. As we had spent the 13/14 homecoming festival together on *Geronimo*, and enjoyed the hospitality that Derry has to offer, I was delighted that he had decided to visit. Another friend, Beverly, came up to stay with us for the weekend. She had sailed the leg from Seattle to New York on the Derry boat and was eager to meet up with some of her crew friends. After dinner we all spent a very good night in Bennigan’s jazz bar eating tapas and listening to fine music.

We were in Derry until race start the following Sunday and whilst Denise was on leave during July I had to go back to work for three days. Our daughter Amy was getting married in August and during this time one of the most pressing issues of any wedding was resolved, that of the mother of the bride dress. Having discounted a few local contenders Denise decided that Dublin was the place to shop and so after a four hour bus ride from Derry, the dress was identified, trialled, purchased and transported on another four hour bus ride back to Derry and hung in an aft cabin on *Geronimo*. Said dress



then accompanied us on our cruise as we would not be home until nearer the wedding. Beverly came back the following weekend for the fireworks on the Foyle and my Mum and Dad joined us on Sunday morning to come with us out to the race start at Greencastle. No Red Arrows this year but still an exciting start to the race to Dan Helder with *Derry* in the lead as they rounded the first mark. As the fleet headed north we made our way to Portrush for the night arriving just as the heavens opened. A meal in Coast sorted out any 'hangry' issues and it was back to *Geronimo* for a night cap with family and friends.

Monday, and, having said goodbye to Mum, Dad and Beverly we left Portrush with a light wind behind us and bright blue skies above us. Five miles out, motor-sailing with main and genoa, I nipped down to put the kettle on and came up to see a pot buoy 50 metres ahead on our starboard bow. It looked odd, floating slightly on its side, so I put the engine into neutral and when I saw the inevitable floating rope ahead of us, turned hard to port to avoid going over the top of it. Unfortunately as we went parallel to it our slowly spinning prop (we have a fixed three bladed prop) must have caught the rope because as we headed south again I could see the pot buoy come towards us. We were caught. Thankfully at this point the wind died completely and the sea was flat calm. *Geronimo* settled stern to the rope going to the pots on the bottom and, using the boat hook. I managed to pull enough up to get a turn on the mooring cleat. That relieved any pressure on the prop shaft and meant we weren't going anywhere. I cut the rope leading to the buoy and tried without success to free it so in the end I had to drop our tender (also known as the wide-mouthed frog) from its davits, strip off and climb down the swim ladder into the water to see how we were entangled. The rope was wrapped loosely around the prop and I was able to use the boat hook again to free it. Back in the cockpit I brought the rope and buoy on board, tied the two ends of the rope together, took it off the cleat and slowly fed it back into the water watching it sink as we drifted away. Finally the pot buoy went over the stern and we were free. A cup of tea never tasted so good. Paranoid about pots, we motor-sailed on towards Islay and dropped our Rocna in behind the Ardmore Islands for our first night at anchor. We barbecued and reflected on the day's events. Note to self: next time this happens kill the engine to lock the prop and drop the sails. Thankfully no damage was sustained and it was a timely reminder to be extra vigilant when we see pot buoys.



Sunset at the Ardmore Islands

Next morning was bright and calm and as our plan was to head north to Harris we left the peace of the Ardmore Islands and motor-sailed up the Sound of Islay heading for Coll. As we neared the exit of the Sound the wind increased to a good force 5 and we had a great reach towards Oransay. Thankfully as we rounded the island's southern tip the wind eased a little and this allowed us to continue to carry full sail on a broad reach heading north. It was an exceptionally hot day (my sunshine magnet was working overtime) and as morning morphed into afternoon the wind eased further but still provided enough power for us to reach Iona where we sighted a large Minke whale off our starboard quarter. Just past Iona the wind died completely and we motored into the bay at Arinagour where we dropped anchor, got the barbecue going and watched the sun go down. Late evening and the smell of rain was in the air. It was hard to tell if the oncoming darkness was as a consequence of the sun going down or the charcoal black thunderous clouds making their way north towards us. I sat in the shelter of the cockpit as the rain announced its arrival and watched the charcoal clouds turn ash white as Thor, Zeus and all the other gods of thunder fought with respective foes.

Part of the reason for stopping in Coll was the propensity for basking sharks to gather at its northern tip and we weighed anchor bound north to Rum, expectant of our first sighting of a shark. Not one to be seen, although we did see a large pod of common dolphins heading south but unfortunately they showed no interest in us. It was a grey day with poor visibility and little wind. As we passed between Rum and Eigg the clouds parted to leave what looked like a scene from Jurassic Park with the sun shining over Rum and dark clouds all around. Anchoring in Loch Scresort, we went ashore for a walk around Kinloch Castle and then to the otter hide at the entrance to the Loch. Seeing nothing other than an Oystercatcher we returned to *Geronimo*, put up the cockpit tent and barbecued.

Thursday was to be our day for crossing the Minch to Loch Maddy where we hoped to get a weather window to make a crossing to St Kilda, our main goal this cruise. This turned out to be a frustrating day with 12 knots of breeze and a choppy sea on our port quarter. This chop only served to knock out whatever breeze filled our sails and I ended up rigging a makeshift preventer more to stop the kick back of the boom caused by the chop than to prevent an uncontrolled gybe. As we arrived into Loch Maddy we motored up to the ferry terminal to have a look at the new pontoons before making our way back to Ardmaddy Bay where we anchored for the night. A large stag and a sea eagle provided points of interest in an otherwise damp background.

The forecast for the following day was southerly force 5, increasing to force 6 later in the afternoon, so we decided to head north to Berneray to investigate the beautiful white beach on its western shore. Access to the harbour on Berneray is



Berneray, West Beach

via a narrow channel used by the ferry from Leverburgh and as such requires a good deal of care and attention. Rather than crossing the shallow stretch of water from the channel to the harbour on a falling tide, we anchored just off the ferry terminal behind the causeway that now connects Berneray to North Uist. Prince Charles lived on Berneray for a week back in 1987 learning the ways of a crofter and returned in 1999 at the islanders' request to officially open the causeway. The causeway and the new road equivalent tariff (RET) which has been applied to the Leverburgh/Berenray route has seen traffic numbers increase substantially over the last few years, something which seems to be broadly welcomed. It was the last day of Berneray Week and after a walk and a tour of the extremely informative local museum, we found a sign inviting us to view Berneray's boat building project. Here we found a skiff that had been bought as a kit and

was being constructed in a small tin shed. Coffee and cake was accompanied by conversation with some of the builders (most of whom were not from Berneray) and we discovered that it had taken a year for them to sell a boat to raise the money to buy the kit, a year to take delivery of the kit and six months to get to the stage they were at now, two planks attached to the frame. Evidently the pace of life is slow on Berneray. We then walked over the western coastal plain or machair, to the three mile stretch of white sand which is Berneray's famous West Beach, a photograph of which had turned up in an advertisement for a Thailand holiday resort. With the sun glinting off the azure blue Atlantic and the pure white talcum powder sand it wasn't hard to see why.



Building a skiff on Berneray

Saturday's forecast wasn't great but the nearby Rodel Harbour was on our bucket list as the anchorage is a deep pool and the extremely narrow and challenging entrance to it dries at low water. There are three visitor moorings and a hotel where we could dine if we fancied it, though we were later to discover that the hotel had closed the week before due to illness. We made our way back through the ferry channel towards the Minch and north to Loch Rodel with a single reef in the main and a tissue of a genoa. As the wind strengthened we headed into the Loch with a concern that the swell might make the narrow shallow passage into the harbour impossible. As we went past the entrance it proved to be flat calm, being sheltered by its high rocky sides. We turned head to wind, dropped the sails and motored back to and through the narrow entrance with my Antares Charts



Rodel Harbour, entrance behind the yachts

ably assisting on the cockpit table. There was one other yacht in the pool and it was on the more sheltered mooring that I had been advised to take if the wind was in the south (which it was). We took the one beside it and set about getting some breakfast and readying ourselves for the walk to Leverburgh to get some provisions and hopefully a forecast.

It was another grey day and, as we walked along the single track road, Denise thanked me for bringing her to a place where, in the middle of July, the cars had their lights on at midday. We had lunch near the ferry terminal, then shopped in the local Harris co-op before walking the three miles back to *Geronimo*. When we returned the tide was out and we had just enough water to row back to the boat. Our neighbours arrived back at the same time having taken the coastal path from Leverburgh. They had returned from St Kilda the previous day. So with an offer of a drink they came aboard to be interrogated.

Nigel had bought *Quaterwave* from his old friend Mike Balmforth and was full of information and enthusiasm for our trip. He did, however, focus too much on our bolt on keel and spade rudder for my liking.

The forecast for the next two days was good, southerly force 3 to force 4 with fair weather so it was 'a go' for the trip to St Kilda. We had a leisurely start at 10.00 as we could only leave when the sea was breaking on half tide rock (a rock in the entrance with red fish crate on top). We made our way into the Sound of Harris, where we carried the tide up the Stanton Channel and out beyond the island of Pabbay heading west for the St Kilda archipelago. Wind was on the beam and we were making 6 knots over the ground. I have to admit I was quite nervous as this was our first proper offshore adventure and it was as if *Geronimo* echoed that apprehension because she felt like she was making way through treacle. There was still a bit of swell and, as we



Approaching the St. Kilda group

progressed, the wind died so we had to motor-sail the remaining 50 miles to St Kilda. As we got closer the islands of Hirta and Boreray gradually came into view, a welcome sight. As we closed Village Bay on Hirta the rain came in and Denise went below to put the heating on, or so she thought. Code 033 – a blower fault. Sod's law, our fridge had been temperamental over the last few days and now when we needed a bit of heat in the damp of a July evening our Eberspacher had decided to throw a weird fault. One other yacht was anchored in the south west of the bay so we picked a spot half way between them and the substantial pier that the MOD had constructed and dropped the Rocna, paying out a good 55 metres of chain. We went ashore in the 'wide-mouth frog' and had a walk around a damp village with its only street (known as the Street). We stopped in the museum to learn how the population had survived on birds and eggs complemented with some subsistence agriculture and how that, during the early 20th century, life had become so hard they decided that they wanted to be evacuated to the mainland in 1930.



Village Bay, Hirta, St. Kilda

All that can be seen of the population's existence are mostly derelict blackhouses with entrances facing the Street. Some have newer zinc roofs as a consequence of a severe gale in 1860. Scattered across the hill behind are dozens of stone cleits used to store food and animals. Given the weather all sensible life was indoors except that was for the tiny Soay sheep that wander round the village. The MOD established a monitoring station here during the First World War in 1917 which became a permanent fixture in 1957 when a base was incorporated into the missile tracking range on Benbecula. The base is now run by a QinitiQ, a civilian defense company, and according to one of the squaddies we

met on the pier, was a desirable posting as the work was light and the food and drink in the Puff Inn was good. Back to *Geronimo*, we had some supper and an early night to avoid the dampness. I consoled myself with the fact that many souls had been here before without a cold beer and a warm comfortable cabin and enjoyed my warm bunk.

Next morning there was hardly a cloud in the sky and we debated long and hard about going ashore again. The original plan was to head back to North Uist because a southerly force 6 was forecast for the following day and I didn't really want to head home in that. We stuck to the plan but as the weather was so good we headed to the sea stacks off Boreray. Words cannot do justice to the scale and size of Stac Lee



Boreray



Acarseid Mhór, South Rona

and Stac An Armin, both island Marilyns and the tallest sea stacks in the British Isles (172 and 196 metres respectively). An estimated 30% of the world's population of gannets live in this group of islands and it seemed that every nook and cranny was occupied by a gannet. Bore-ray itself with its cloak of mist could easily have been straight out of Lord of the Rings. Passing a sunfish with its pectoral fin flopping from side to side, we decided to stick with the plan and headed back to the Sound of Harris. *Geronimo*, as if sensing we were heading home, seemed to glide effortlessly over the slight swell and as if there was some sort of Bermuda Triangle thing going on with St Kilda, the fridge started to chill again and when I tried the heating it worked too. At 17.00 we passed through the Sound of Shillay and reached the western end of the

Outer Stromay Channel just as the tide had turned and we sailed past Leverbrugh and south to Loch Maddy where we picked up a visitor mooring for the night.

We spent two days in Loch Maddy, Denise taking the time to do some washing and me filling the water tanks (we carry two 25 litre drums to negate the need to go onto a pontoon). We also did some walking and had a good meal in Hamersay House, the exterior belying its warmth and character within. We bought some cod and scallops from the fish van in the terminal car park and discovered that all fish caught on the west coast goes to Peterhead before being transported back to the Hebrides. He also gave us some local oak smoked salmon samples that later proved to be delicious. We also met the McKays, an Australian couple who were working their way round the world and this season had come up from their winter stop, Barcelona, in their steel hulled Van de Stadt Tasman 48 pilot saloon, *Diomedea*. An afternoon of conversation with them, fresh coffee, my mum's fruit cake and a dram or two of Bunnahabhain was most enjoyable.

After achieving our St Kilda goal, it was time to head south, but not before making amends for our mooring fiasco of last year; we would visit Bill Cowie again on South Rona. Another motor-sail across the Minch where I spied a few Rizzo dolphins passing astern of us (tall dorsal fin but very shy) and a large rather sleek grey hulled super yacht heading south. Rounding Ruhba Hunish on the north end of Skye the wind died and the feathers were deposited in the clear sea. A few minutes later we had three shiny mackerel that Denise used to make a creamy pate later that evening.

This year we knew what to expect and had texted Bill to book his mooring. Entering Acarseid Mhor by the north entrance, we duly picked up the mooring without any drama despite there being an audience of day-trippers on the pontoon. After a long walk to the south end of the island we stopped at the house to pay our dues and to get some venison fillets, burgers and sausages. A long discussion then ensued about the frustrations associated with how to get 'yachties' to come ashore and spend some money (Bill is currently building a house so that he can free up the lodge for other ventures and this expense seems to have concentrated the mind on the sustainability of island life). A recent article by Libby Purves in Yachting Monthly bemoaning the increase in Scottish anchorages festooned with pontoons and visitor moorings and a hankering after the past where one's only option was to drop the hook had only served to accentuate this dialogue. I wonder what Princess Anne, a regular to Rona on *Ballochbuie*, would think of his idea of a string of visitor moorings.

The next day we left Big Harbour south of Eilean Garbh and headed for Plockton. Another fine day but light winds from the north made it feel cool. As we passed Eilean na Ba at the entrance to Caolas Mor we saw a pair of white tailed sea eagles on the rocks and as we adjusted our course and shut off the engine for a closer look these enormous birds of prey launched themselves into the air. The number of breeding pairs in the area around Skye is apparently increasing which given that they are at the top of the food chain must mean that food is not in short supply.

We picked up a visitor mooring in Plockton and went ashore for a walk. Last time we were here it was wet and we took the train to Kyle but with the day's bright sunshine we decided to head to Duncraig Castle taking the path along the shore. For some reason I had thought it was a National Trust property but when we arrived in the grounds the house was closed for renovation and chatting to a builder working on some beautiful stone garages, discovered that it had been bought back in 2009 by an English girl called Suzanne Haseldine whose partner has a paintball empire and was being refurbished as an upmarket B&B. We would have to wait for that cup of tea that I thought we would get at the castle!

After a quiet night aboard, we made our way south to pick up our daughter Amy who was coming to stay with us for the last week of our cruise. We left Plockton on a particularly drizzly morning but with 12 knots of breeze we were able to beat our way to the Skye bridge. Here we decided to go onto the pontoons at Kyle to stock up on some provisions at the Co-op which overlooks the bridge. This also allowed us to wait for the tide to take us though Kyle Rhea, as our plan was to anchor at Isle Ornsay and go ashore for dinner in the Eilean Iarmain Hotel at the harbour there. The sun came out in the afternoon and we headed south through the strait and past the *Glenachulish*, the seasonal ferry that offers an

alternative and more interesting vehicular route to Skye.

We anchored in the bay a distance from the harbour as there are private but no visitor moorings and the bay is shallow some way out. Ashore we found a most charming inn serving evening meals in its Birlinn restaurant and pub grub in the Am Praban bar. We opted for the bar and perused the specials board where in bold letters was the option for squat lobster for £12. Amy was joining us the next day and the logical pick up location was Mallaig. After a late breakfast we lifted the anchor and headed out into the Sound of Sleat with 15 knots from the southwest (with thankfully a bit more west than south) and had a pleasant close reach across to a visitor mooring in Mallaig harbour. Beside us on a visitor mooring was one of David and Maureen Greenhalgh's previous yachts, *Freemew*, a Nicholson Jolina in which they had cruised the West of Scotland for 17 years. She was looking very smart with a recently painted dark blue hull and black spars. From Mallaig, we chose to visit Loch Moidart and have lunch in sight of Castle Tioram before making our way back to Glenuig Bay where we had had a wonderful meal the year before. Another fine sunny day with light wind made for another motor-sail but the pace was easy and it was good to spend some time with Amy before her wedding in late August. We saw another, or perhaps the same pair of white tailed sea eagles atop a high pine tree in Loch Moidart and a beautiful blue-hulled *Discovery 55, Jacaranda*, making her way out through the tricky passage towards the Small Isles. Picking up one of Glenuig Inn's visitor moorings in late afternoon sunshine gave us time to relax and catch some rays.

An early start the next day, with a poor forecast for the afternoon but sunshine and light winds first thing dictated a motor-sail to Ardnamurchan Point. Here the wind picked up and we sailed to the foot of the picturesque Glengorm Castle before tacking back towards the Sound of Mull. The southerly wind was strengthening all the time so we decided to put sail away and head straight to Tobermory to get settled on a mooring before the weather deteriorated any further. The forecast was right and the rest of the afternoon was a rather wet and windy affair with a walk through the town and a drink in the Mishnish our only venture out.

The following day was another 'wee rain' day, drizzle and not much wind. We motored to Oban passing a few dozen racing yachts getting ready for a race as part of West Highland Week and on to Puilladobhain for the afternoon.

Gigha was to be our final Scottish island on this year's cruise. I was keen to see the new pontoons that had been installed in Ardmish Bay and we had booked a table at the Boathouse restaurant for that evening. Tides through the Sound of Luing favoured another early start and we exited the anchorage of Puilladobhain at 06.00 with a north easterly force 4 to force 5 forecast for later in the morning, ideal for the run south. This forecast again proved to be accurate and we had our best sail of the cruise, speeding past the island of Scarba and averaging 8 knots over the ground. We were able to sail the rest of the passage at good speed, only dropping below four knots when going between the MacCormac Isles, as there seems to be a slight counter current there. By the time we had reached Gigha we had an almost cloudless sky and nearly 20 knots of breeze. We were tied up on a visitor mooring at 12.30, a fast passage under sail with which I was most pleased. We were able to barbecue for lunch and then enjoy the rest of the day in the sun before heading to the hotel for a pre-dinner drink.

Leaving Gigha at 07.00, it was an overcast and windless morning, though half way across the North Channel the southerly breeze increased and the sun threatened to make an appearance. In the end we had enough breeze to take us into Glenarm Bay averaging around five knots during the last half of our passage. Tied up on the hammerhead in the marina at 13.00, we had a very pleasant afternoon having coffee and a chat with the couple who had taken our lines when we arrived. The sun did eventually come out and after a walk into town to see Patricia, one of Jim and Eddie's favourite landladies, we barbecued and sat in the cockpit watching whatever world goes by in the Glens of Antrim.

Our final leg home was uneventful. In bright sunshine we left Glenarm in the hope of a homecoming sail but the lack of wind meant that we had to motor south to and along Belfast Lough. We arrived in the Abercorn Basin to find that it was full and we had to raft up, which made removing things from the boat a bit more difficult. As the storm that eventually blew the Transocean Winner onto Lewis made its presence felt we enjoyed the afternoon sunshine and when Tom came down to visit and collect his Isle of Rona whisky we ordered dinner from the local take-away and ate on board. On Sunday we were able to get an alongside berth and used the day to tidy up and take things home.

Denise and I had a great summer with lots of fun at the Clipper festival again. This year was Derry's third and final Clipper Race and it will be sad if there were no Irish stopover in the 17/18 race. As yet there is no confirmation of the stopovers on the final homecoming leg, so here's hoping. *Geronimo* left Ringhaddy on the 7th July and returned on the 27th August. We were away from home for most of July and for every weekend in August. During our three weeks on Scotland's west coast we spent eight nights at anchor and ten on visitor moorings, barbecued 12 nights and dined out five, logged almost 1000 miles and put another 136 hours on the engine. Our weather was mostly kind and our wind favourable though at times it was cool and wet. We motor-sailed a lot but yet we had some of our best passages under sail. We had the most spectacular thunderstorm and we had some fabulous sunsets with stunning backdrops.

Some of our friends think that what we do for our summer holiday is not a holiday at all. Maybe so, but as another friend says 'It's a sure way to make a memory' and that's fine with me. Here's to many more.

Peter Mullan asks: How mini can a mini cruise be?

The chain saw was buzzing, my boots filling with sawdust. My wife Paddy and I were cutting the small logs we use to light the wood burning stove. By three o'clock we were finished and ready for a good hot shower.

A grey Saturday morning had dried up and there was just a very light easterly breeze with a forecast of a sunny Sunday morning. 'lets go to the Portaferry hotel for tea'. Decision made, we set off down to the Quoile. We left the yacht club at 15.45 on a mild, still grey, afternoon. We had started the process of clearing the boat for the end of season. A double duvet and two pillows had been left, 'Justin Casey'. We had packed some simple provisions. The tide was all wrong, going against the worst of the flood, but we went anyway. Off Killyleagh, the junior sailors were drifting very slowly around their course. We were motoring for the first time in ages with no sail up. Across the bottom of the lough, we had only one sail for company. With the tide against us it would take a good hour to get round. At least it was dry as we headed for the windmill above Portaferry. By 16.45 we were coming alongside the pontoon in Strangford village, tying up just astern of Derek White's *Ballyclaire*. A big thank you is due to Derek and the rest of the guys who made this pontoon happen. It is for us a great alternative to Portaferry marina. A leisurely walk up to the Cuan pub in the square to pay the berthing fees gets the gate code. £2 per metre per night and you can buy electricity cards.

The brand new ferry boat *Strangford 2* had arrived that afternoon and was tied up at the end of the pier. It looks great with its brand new paint, so new it is not even in service yet. We went over on the old boat *Portaferry* free with our bus pass. I noticed that only bus passes issued in Northern Ireland are valid for free travel, a bit unsporting but not my call. Ten minutes takes you across the narrows with a wonderful view of both Strangford and Portaferry villages. Strangford has a history going back to Norman times, Portaferry is newer and nearly always sunny. At the top of the ferry slip is a little café that does a very good breakfast when you are staying in Portaferry marina. Beside it is the Portaferry hotel. Newly refurbished by new owners, the staff are friendly and my steak and Paddy's lobster were both grand. We took the ferry back and were the only passengers. As we stood up on the high deck, the lights shone from both villages in the darkness, a romantic moment with the breeze on our faces. A loud hum woke me in the middle of the night. The topping lift was too tight. I got up and slackened it until peace reigned again. I woke again at six like most boys my age and found it was still dark. Usually at 6am, the sun is up and I want to slip my warps and be off and away to our next stop. (I got that from Derek White also). Instead, it was back to sleep until nearer nine. It was quiet on Sunday morning.

The early morning sun shines into Strangford village which is like a mini Tobermory. A seagull sat on the bow of a dory moored in the harbour. A heron came and bullied it away and took over its perch. Our many herons in the lough are more pushy now. They used to be very timid birds. No sign of the guillemots in their nesting boxes at the bottom of John Hutchison's lawn. They add a great splash of colour to the harbour wall in the summer. We came out past Old Court and Peter and Sian Maxwell's beautiful yacht *Watercolour*. There were a few clouds in the sky. These made patches of sunlight, highlighting patches of shoreline. The new Portaferry lifeboat station with its green copper clamshell roof gleamed in one patch of sun. The hotel, centre of the village hospitality for years was quiet. As you come out of the narrows, to port is Castleward bay with the grand house and Audley's Castle. This is Winterfell castle from the 'Game of Thrones' TV series so there are usually tourists dressed in long robes and carrying swords!

The ebb tide is strong between the villages and we needed a lot more revs than usual. For much of this season, I had a wisp of white smoke or steam from my exhaust over 2500 revs. I thought it might have been dodgy fuel. My friends asked if I was running on chip oil! It turned out to be caused by a faulty water pump impeller. Two of the blades were broken and one was lodged in the outlet from the pump casing. Now this is fixed, we can motor at full revs with no problem. Even with full revs, we only managed just over 2kn past the beacon into Castleward Bay. Once there, we were able to dodge the tide and get speed up to 4 kn. Past Chapel Island and its pretty anchorage, the ebb tide is much less and cruising revs give us 6 knots again. It was Sunday morning and not another boat was to be seen on the lough. The sunshine was wonderful and reminded us of the ICC weekend on Lough Ree last October. Killyleagh, with its magical Disney castle and Ballymorey with its colourful houses, were both quiet. Most of the boats were ashore. Graham Chambers *Big Wig* came out the day before to be prepared for the rally to Galicia in the summer. My boat *Oyster Bay* would come out the following week so this would almost be the last trip. My daughter Maria with bump, husband, son and mother in law would come out that afternoon for the very last trip of the year. With Maria due in a week or so, a very very gentle trip was planned....*Oyster Bay* arrived back at Quoile at 10.10, mini cruise complete.

In answer to the question in the title of this, our Rear Commodore's boat passed ahead of us as we approached the club. She was having a micro cruise, nearly a quarter of a mile from the pontoon to a mooring in the sunshine behind Gibbs Island, while her cradle waited for the tide to rise at the bottom of the slip.

A moment of reflection on the new boat at the end of her first season. She arrived wrapped in swaddling Jeanneau polythene at MGM at Easter. In deference to my age, she came with an electric winch, bow-thruster and huge cockpit. John McDonald of MGM boats calls this the grandfather specification. The electric winch makes short work of the main halliard and also the furling of the genoa. The bow-thruster is great for elderly limbs that do not do quick jumps ashore. The huge cockpit has space to take lots of grandchildren sailing. Our cruise north to the ICC/CCC rally showed the hull with a chine works well. Paddy and I are happy bunnies. As she posted on Facebook, "this is my kind of cruising".

Hecuba Up the creek near Lisbon

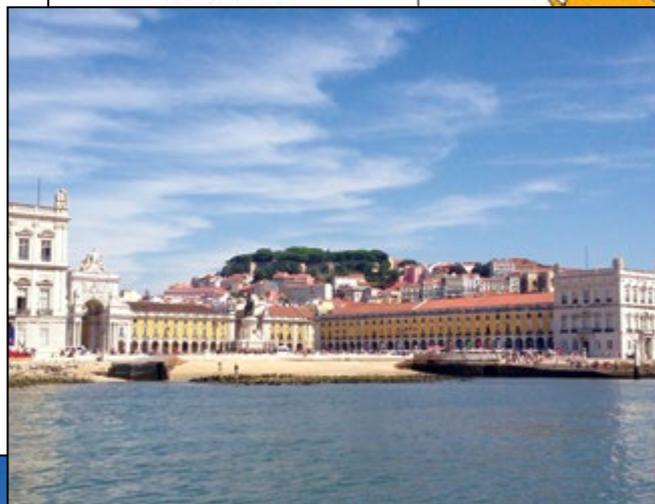
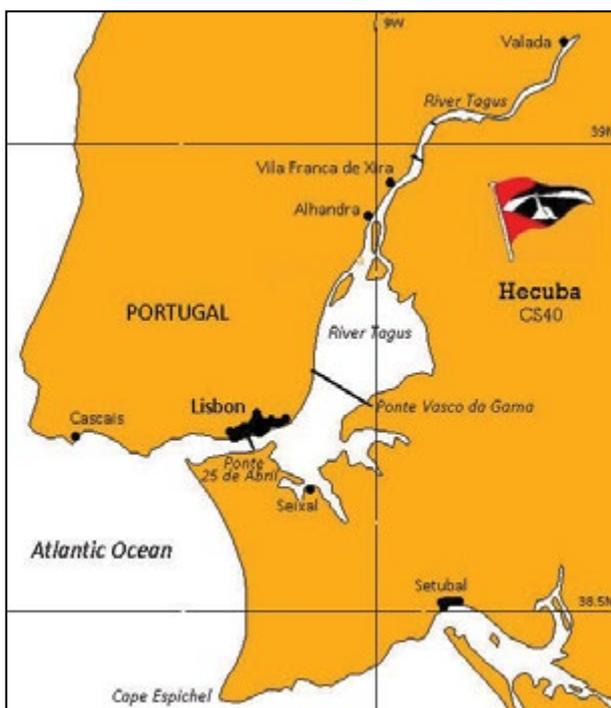
John Duggan

Lisbon and its outlying resort town of Cascais are frequent stopping off points between Northern Europe and the Mediterranean, and for transatlantic boats making their way to the Canaries or Cape Verde. While the Lisbon region offers fantastic options for the tourist, not many yachtsmen take the time to explore the Tagus estuary or that of the Sado River, some 30 miles south of Lisbon.

Having satisfied my appetite for ocean crossings with a voyage from Mexico to Hawaii in May 2016, I set aside a week in early September for a spot of gentle reconnaissance, starting from my base in Cascais. On board *Hecuba* (CS40, built Canada 1989) were old friends Ailbe and Tansey Millerick, and a modest amount of provisioning - it seemed strange not to be victualling for an extended cruise, as in earlier years, and I had to hold myself back when doing the rounds of the shops.

After a spell of hot weather, temperatures were in the comfortable mid 20s when we left Cascais on 7th September and with a moderate northerly wind sped past the imposing Fort of St Julian at the mouth of the Tagus, along the attractive shoreline of Lisbon and into the heart of the city. The 70 metre clearance under the 25th April Bridge was no worry to us and it was, as ever, an experience to pass under this imposing close cousin of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, with cars, trucks and trains thundering overhead. We had a strong current against us. This was because we had been warned that the port office at our first stop, Alhandra, would close early so we had had to set out before the planned departure time.

The Tagus is deep and fast flowing west of Lisbon but it gets progressively shallower upstream and broadens into a large and confusing mass of water and sandbanks. Navigation is straightforward as far as the Vasco de Gama road bridge but the official charts above this point are not up to date and the main channel is not always where it is supposed to be. I had managed to get hold of copies of the out of print Cruising Guides to both Tagus and Sado rivers and the instructions there proved most useful. A summary of the bearings, waypoints and distances from Vasco

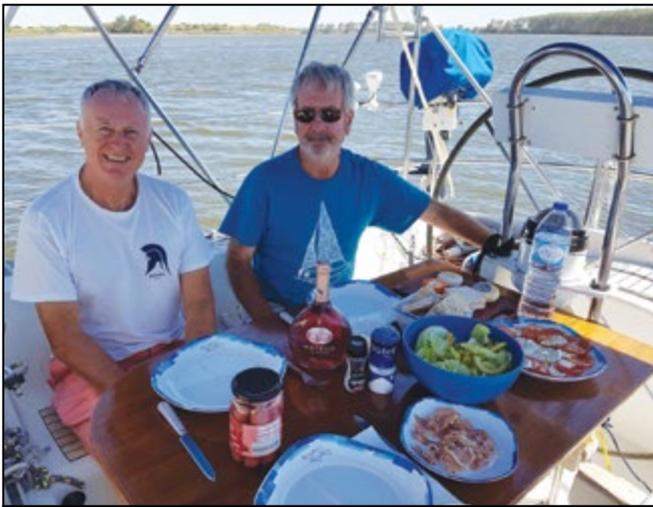


Centre of Lisbon (above); leaving Alhandra (left)



de Gama Bridge to Vila Franca de Xira is given at the end of this article; we followed them meticulously when returning downstream and always had at least 4 metres of water at half-tide neaps.

Above Lisbon The west bank of the river, above Lisbon, is quite industrial but, once you get over the idea that this is not a pastoral idyll, it makes for interesting viewing. Rural isolation is to be found behind some of the islands which dot the route but beware of shallow soundings – and mosquitoes! The town of Alhandra (pronounced Alyandra) is typical of the many places in the Lisbon estuary which have suffered from de-industrialization. Its modest prosperity was based on a long established brick industry but little



John and Ailbe lunching on the Tagus

remains of this, beyond what is to be found in the small civic museum. It's a sleepy little place, with a pleasant waterfront, where we received great assistance from the people at the Clube Náutico, who administer the pontoons, which have electricity and water. There was no charge for the two nights we spent there but we left behind a donation to the sailing school.

Armed with local knowledge and charts, we made our way up the river past Vila Franca da Xira (where there is a larger marina), under the two road bridges, which have enough headroom to clear our 19 metre air draught but not so much as to leave us relaxed about the process, and upriver to Valada. Here, inspected by numerous varieties of wild birds and the occasional herd of horses (for this region is at the center of Portugal's horse breeding industry), we left most of the signs of industrialization behind us and could easily have spent a few days pottering around with the dinghy – Valada is the practical limit for a sailboat. A day trip was all we had budgeted for, however, so we anchored for a pleasant picnic lunch before making our way back

to Alhandra under sail.

Oil and Water don't mix

En route, we discovered that the fresh water tap had run dry and that the bilge was full of warm water. It was not the first time this had happened, so I knew that the outlet hose from the water heater had come adrift, a minor problem to fix. Job duly done, the only thing left was to fill the drained water tank. Strangely, however, while I could hear the water running, there seemed to be no change in the level in the tank, so I went on deck to discover the problem. Moments later, I was looking stupefied at the water hose, inserted into the filler of the diesel tank, flabbergasted at the enormity of my error and unable to find anyone else to blame for the situation. There was a good fifty litres of water in the fuel tank, under some hundred litres of fuel and an unpleasant syphoning exercise lay before us – a poor welcome for my friend Yahya Jaboori, who had just joined us. A fuel takeoff for the diesel powered cabin heater provided access for a hose into the tank and we were able to get most of the water out this way. The tank is flat bottomed, however, and it was difficult to get the last of the water out, so running the engine required constant monitoring of the glass pre-filter, to check for contamination. Diesel-tinged breaths were cured by an excellent and reasonably priced meal in the nearby town of Alverca, before we retired for the evening, to sleep on the problem.

Gingerly, we made our way out into the river, with occasional draining of the pre-filter, and had a delightful sail, on the ebb, back towards Lisbon and across the estuary to Seixal. Nervous about the reliability of the engine, we used it only for the final moments of the approach and arrived safely at a secure pontoon, with water and electricity.

Seixal was a significant river port, in the days before the construction of the 25th April Bridge (named as the Salazar Bridge, before the 1974 revolution), when Lisbon was supplied by hundreds of sailing barges and fishing boats with goods from the hinterland. Today, it is picturesque but rather run-down, with a couple of decent local restaurants, although a major rehabilitation programme is under way and promises to restore some prosperity. Here we found a length of stainless steel pipe, which enabled us to winkle out a few more litres of water from the fuel tank, before setting out for the 45 mile trip to Sesimbra.

Handbagged!

We were able to set sail soon after leaving the channel to Seixal, but were hit by some strong gusts on leaving the Tagus Estuary and had a brisk sail down the coast in bright sunshine. Worth noting, when following the south bank of the river, is the way the channel narrows deceptively downstream and it is easy, especially with a wind out of the north and an ebb tide, to find oneself the wrong side of the sand banks inside the No7 starboard hand buoy. There is a channel to the east of the Bugio light but this is strictly for use with local knowledge. Respectful of the freshening wind, we dropped the mainsail before gybing around Cape Espichel, which can be a wild enough corner. The scenery along the coast, past Sesimbra (with its very secure marina) is large-scale and impressive, and we had another cracking sail along here, the wind dropping only as we approached the entrance markers for the channel to Setubal.

Starting the motor, however, resulted in a cacophony of



Evening at Seixal

clattering from below, followed by a hasty shut-down. Examination of the engine compartment revealed the tattered remnants of Tansey's handbag, which had fallen through the open inspection panel as we heeled to the gusts earlier in the day, and had destroyed the seawater inlet filter while twirling itself to oblivion around the propshaft. We connected the inlet hose directly to the engine and were able to continue safely to the mooring buoy owned by the Clube Naval de Setubal, in a delightful and sheltered bay, some half a mile before the city proper. Hope was expressed, over stiff gin and tonics, that this third episode would mark the end of our string of misfortunes.

Here we were met by The O'Neill, to wit, the genial Hugo of that ilk, whose family has been prominent in Setubal since the early 18th century and who labours tirelessly for the recovery of a city which was a fine seaport since the time of the Phoenicians but which has recently fallen on hard times. Over a wonderful fish dinner, in one of the many excellent restaurants in the city, he told of his dream of a marina in the city, which has much charm and has the potential to be a great base and stopover for sailors.

The east side of the Sado estuary is industrialised but the west side is marked by the Troia peninsula, with miles of sandy beaches and pine forests. Hugo and Carmen, his wife, joined us for a day out and a long lunch at anchor was further enlivened by the premature announcement of my birthday, my disorientation resulting from the excitement of the previous days' misadventures. Plans for further exploration of the Sado and a stopover at Sesimbra were foiled by a forecast of heavy rain and a freshening wind from the north, so we took advantage of the remaining good weather to advance our departure from Setubal. The heavy morning fog of 12 September lifted by late morning and a handy westerly Force 3 gave us a fine sail back to Cascais. Our cruise was brief but was enough to confirm that the Tagus and Sado estuaries are a worthwhile diversion on Portugal's west coast.

Directions for navigation upriver of Vasco da Gama Bridge

The following directions were validated in September 2016. However, the Tagus River is subject to frequent changes of sandbars and shallows, and up to date information should be sought when navigating in this area. Significant variations from official charts were noticed, as regards the positions of shallows and navigation aids:

From Buoy at Perch No4, immediately upriver of the bridge, steer 030° T for 1.2 miles to

Perch No6 at 38°48'297 N 009°04'834 W

From Perch No6, steer 028°T for 1.1 miles to

Perch No8 at 38°48'774 N 009°03'156 W

From Perch No8 steer 030°T for 1.6 miles to

East Cardinal at 38°50'646 N 009°02'173 W

From East Cardinal steer 020°T for 2.1 miles to

Buoy No5 at 38°52'600 N 009°01'253 W

From Buoy No5 steer 010°T for 0.9 miles to

Perch No10 at 38°53'518 N 009°01'087 W

From Perch No10 follow the north shore at a distance of at least 100 metres to Alhandra or Vila Franca da Xira



Lunch on the Sado: The O'Neill, Ailbe, John, Carmen O'Neill

Reziki's Scottish Cruise

Ralph Mc Cutcheon

I left Bangor single-handed on Sunday 4th July for Glenarm, where I was to pick up my last minute stand-in crew Adrian O'Neill, after Ian Morrow (ICC) found himself immersed in moving home. The tide dictated a night passage, which followed the memorable 150th Anniversary lunch at the RUYC, to which ICC members, going on the Craighouse rally, had been invited. It was a quiet motor-sail northwards, with the lights of Stanton Adair's new boat *Grand Cru* following station a mile or so behind. He carried on overnight to Craighouse, but I arrived in Glenarm at 02.00 and rafted alongside as silently as possible.

Adrian arrived on schedule at 13.30 on Monday 5th and we quickly loaded a car full of provisions. We were on our way by 14.00, motoring into a murky and heavily overcast afternoon, with a 7 knot sou'westerly hardly filling the sails. We had the usual stop off the Mull of Kintyre, but then the wind filled in and we decided to reach across to Islay. We enjoyed a good sail, arriving in Lagavulin at 21.00. This is a very sheltered and picturesque little anchorage, and we were fortunate that the mooring there was vacant. The weather had cleared and we enjoyed a fast walk along to Ardbeg Distillery and back, finding an owl sitting calmly in a gateway looking at us. We wondered if it was injured, but it had disappeared on our way back, so hopefully it was OK.

Tuesday dawned calm and bright, but soon a 17-knot breeze filled in and we had a very fast sail for the 18.6 miles to Craighouse, where we were lucky enough to get the last available buoy. The evening meal and *ceilidh* was definitely the highlight of the cruise. The village hall was packed to capacity. We were joined at our table by the Commodore of the CCC and his crew, and we feasted on local venison and brick-sized chunks of sticky toffee pudding. All this was worked off on the chaotic dance floor as the very merry sailors attempted the Gay Gordons, etc, to the sound of bagpipes. Fortunately all the arthritic hips and knees made it back to the moored fleet unscathed, the chill night air having sobered us up somewhat.

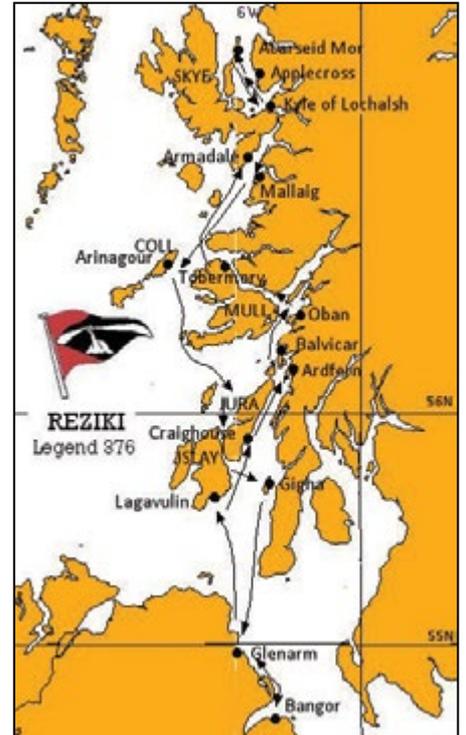
Our old outboard had given up the ghost in Craighouse and we decided that we needed one for this trip, so we left for Ardfern at 11.10 next morning, arriving there after a terrific run up the Sound of Jura in rain and mist with a 18-20 knots southerly. We arrived at the marina at 15.30 - a 27.6 miles run. A new 3.5hp Mariner was purchased, and we showered and headed ashore to the hotel for a great bar meal and an early night. On the way back through the yard we examined a row of large yachts which had had their keels detached following groundings and which were undergoing some very extensive - and expensive - repairs. Very sobering!

On Thursday 8th I decided to modify the Morse control on the binnacle, which was working in reverse. This entailed grinding off a part of an actuating arm. The angle grinder jammed in the metal, jumped and landed on my thumb. This was not a pretty sight, but fortunately the cutting disc did not quite hit the bone, and I was able to explore the total inadequacy of my first aid kit and make do with what I had until we were able to get to a chemist in Oban.

We left Ardfern in calm conditions at 12.40 and had a gentle sail past the Cuan Sound to Balvicar, a little known spot on the island of Seil. We went ashore at the boatyard, which provided us with a mooring, and had a hilarious visit to the local shop/post office, which was run by an English lady. She charged us air mail rates to send post cards to Belfast, and said it was because of the weight! We were obviously 'foreigners'

The tide dictated a departure from Balvicar at 13.10, and we drifted down to take the first of the stream through Cuan Sound and then had a splendid sail up to Oban. A memorable meal was had on the ferry pier, sitting outside the fish stall eating a seafood platter. So fresh, it needed no dressing or seasonings, just melted in the mouth. Ever greedy, we still went on to enjoy another dinner at the North Pier, in a new Italian restaurant. We called in to Nancy Black's chandlery and replaced the very useful Moorfast gadget which had somehow disappeared off the deck a couple of years ago.

Saturday 9th July was the day of the ICC/CCC meet in Tobermory, so we set off for the Sound of Mull at 07.00 - in a flat



Reziki

calm. By 08.00 the wind filled in and the iron topsail was furled. We managed to carry the wind practically all the way to Tobermory through the rain, arriving at 10.50 and being surprised to be able to take our choice of morning buoys, though the pontoons were overflowing.

After a pleasant day in Tobermory we dressed for dinner and went ashore, tackling the steep Back Brae on foot as the minibus took the less able up to the Lord of the Isles Hotel. How we all packed in I am not quite sure, but we had a splendid meal, looking out over the harbour from the ageing but perfectly placed conservatory. We tried the Mishnish on the way back to the boat, but it seemed too full to even get in the door, so that 'rite of passage' was left for another day.

Sunday dawned overcast and calm, but by the time we left harbour and set sail at 08.20, the wind started to fill in and we were able to sail most of the way past Ardnamurchan to Armadale without the engine, through banks of cloud and mist, but also some warm rays of sunshine. A buoy was available so we went walking ashore on our first Skye land-fall, finding the nearby Clan MacDonald headquarters and having an excellent afternoon tea there. The McCutcheons originate from the Clan MacDonald, so it was interesting for me to connect with the clan heritage. And so on, with the beginnings of the flood, to Kyle of Lochalsh, where the harbour master recommended a modest little first floor restaurant up the street. We went, and the owner, a Dutch lady called Ankh, made us an absolutely wonderful meal.

Monday was still overcast when we cast off, passing under the Skye bridge and veering to starboard for a short stop at Plockton which was not very inviting in the rain and then on for lunch at the much recommended Inn at Applecross. We had no difficulty finding good holding off the slip east of the village.

Rona beckoned, and so after a good reach in a force three, we arrived in Acairseid Mor (big harbour) just in time to catch the local resident, Bill Cowie, who was about to close the island shop. We got some frozen fish and beef, he poured some of the local whisky, and we saw closing time come and go very pleasantly. Then a stiff walk over the island, and down to the 'drying harbour' to admire the new stone built holiday homes he had built there.

Tuesday was again calm and damp, and we drifted slowly down the Sound of Raasey, admiring the scenery when the cloud lifted, until we were back in Kyle of Lochalsh for some water and groceries before taking the tide to Mallaig. Our last arrival in Mallaig had been in the teeth of a force nine. Fortunately we were able to approach in a more civilised manner this time, and slip into a berth in the nice new marina. The sound and smell of a steam train drew us into town, where we watched the evening departure for Fort William.

Wednesday gave us a comfortable motor sail south and on to Coll, where we moored in Arinagour Harbour in time for lunch in the hotel. Had an amusing moment in the 'High Street' when a sheep frantically baa'ed for its mum, which suddenly ran out of one of the cottages, followed by the lady of the house. She brought a packet of biscuits and the sheep gobbled them up.

Next day we had a gentle broad reach down the rocky west coast of Colonsay, and across to Loch Tarbert on Jura, but as we entered the wind freshened behind us and we decided not to risk getting trapped in there, as we wanted to make tracks for home. Adrian had a deadline to meet. So we pressed on down the Sound of Islay at great speed and reached across to Gigha, where we met a couple of yachties on the jetty and invited them aboard for dinner. That was a splendid night, we cooked, drank and talked long into the night.

Yet another early start saw us motor sailing down the Mull until past Machrihanish when the wind piped up severely. Adrian was overcome with seasickness - not like him at all - and I reefed and managed the boat through severe gusts until we got to Glenarm, when calmer waters did their work and I had a crew again. Glenarm was wilting under the weight of heavy rains, though the festival somehow continued.

The alarm had to be set for 05.30 as my new crew was arriving at 06.00 and Adrian had to collect his car and make his way home by road. Jane duly arrived very punctually and Adrian, having been introduced to a fellow O'Neill, reluctantly cast us off and we motored out of the marina before hoisting sail and having a very enjoyable reach down the coast, bringing Jane up to speed after over thirty years away from yachts. She was a natural, however, and I had no worries.

And so to our home port of Bangor, where we arrived at midday. A thoroughly enjoyable cruise but, I discovered, one not without consequences. The new outboard must have been a bit too heavy, or perhaps I had winched too enthusiastically, but I discovered a hernia had appeared. Fortunately it was attended to within a month, but it was a most unexpected side effect of an otherwise brilliant two-week cruise.

Harold Cudmore's Tasters:

- A Week in Northern Ionian with brother Ron (ICC) on friends Jeanneau 50' - Corfu, Saviota and several harbours on Paxos
- Cowes to La Rochelle on a friend's Oyster 62' with stops LABer'wach, last visit 55yrs ago, and Camaret.
- A couple of weekends in Devon and Cornwall coast on a friend's Grand Soleil 50'

(Perhaps there should be a prize for the shortest Dunn's Ditty. This one would win hands down.... Ed)

Calico Jack in West Cork and Kerry

Conor O'Byrne



Having turned north when we sailed out of Galway Bay last year we decided to go south this season. My brother was coming home from France with his two boys and they were going to be based in Valentia, Co. Kerry so I thought we'd try and combine a cruise with a visit to see them. I didn't have crew for the first leg from Galway, but with light winds forecast from the WSW I was happy to sail solo down to Kerry. The plan was then to have a leisurely cruise over the next two weeks as far as Bantry bay and back to Galway.

To get an early start on Monday 18th July, I stayed on-board on Sunday night, with *Calico Jack* (Sadler 26) swinging on her mooring at Rinville. Then on a murky morning with a west south westerly F3 breeze we made



Sunset with dolphins off Loop Head

our way out towards Black Head, that guardian of the south westerly entrance to Galway Bay. At noon the sun finally won through and the wind got lighter as we beat slowly towards the Aran Islands. At 15.00, we motored through Foul Sound between Inisheer and Inishmaan and then set a course for the Blaskets. In glorious sunshine, we were visited by several pods of dolphins during the afternoon as we motored along past Hags Head and then Loop Head. That evening as the sun set, a full moon rose above Loop Head and at 2300 a light easterly breeze filled in, allowing us to sail during the night towards Blasket Sound. As we approached the sound, the full moon hanging over Mount Brandon was a lovely sight. The sky was getting lighter as we passed Sybil Head and then we passed through the sound at 05.40. There was plenty wind in Dingle Bay, now east south easterly F4-5. A close reach took us across to Doulus Head and then into the narrow channel between Cromwell Point on Valentia Island and Beginish Island. Then at 09.00 on the 19th July, after a 27 h passage, we berthed at the pontoon at Knightstown on Valentia Island.

The day was spent catching up with family on Valentia Island, which included a short trip out the harbour to catch some mackerel and finished with a family BBQ back at my parents' cottage, 'The Fishery'. On the 21st July, a leisurely morning was followed with a short afternoon sail to Portmagee with my brother Myles. The new pontoon there, mostly used to accommodate the Skelligs' day-trip boats, has an outside berth allocated to visitors. This gives excellent access to the pubs and restaurants of this picture postcard village. On the following morning my father Walter and I set off for Castletownbere at 08.50. The wind was a light north westerly F2-3, so we made slow progress, not reaching Dursey Sound until 14.30. The sun was shining as we entered Bantry bay and we carried the spinnaker for a while as we headed towards Bere Island. In a very light breeze we motored the final mile or so into Castletownbere harbour, where we came alongside a friendly fishing trawler. We refreshed ourselves that evening in Murphy's Bistro and McCarthy's bar, both worth the visit.

The following day we had a run up to Glengarriff with the genoa poled out. There we had a crew change. My father was departing for Valentia and I was joined by a classmate from college days, Liz Dooley, who had never been sailing before but was keen to give it a go. I was slightly apprehensive because we had a beat back out to Lawrence Cove on Bere Island and that could easily induce seasickness in the uninitiated. But she was well up to the challenge and thoroughly enjoyed the sail. We arrived into Lawrence Cove at 19.25 and were delighted to see Brendan O'Callaghan ICC on the pontoon waiting to take our lines. Brendan was sailing with Pat Lyons ICC and his family aboard *Stardancer*, their Dufour 385. The proprietors of the marina, Patrick and Rachel, showed phenomenal hospitality by lending us their car to drive to the only restaurant open at that time of the evening, 'The Look Out' at Derrycreeveen pier. Later we re-joined Brendan and Pat in the bar at Lawrence Cove for a very entertaining evening. Liz was due home the following evening so we motored at a leisurely pace up to Castletownbere, where she had parked her car. For her first time sailing she had coped very well with all the 'charms' of a small boat, such as they are. And she swore that she would be back for more next season, so I think we'll count her as a convert. After a quick drop-off I departed for Derrynane, where I was due to meet my wife, Áine. With a fresh westerly F5, gusting 6 we beat out to Crow Head and then entered Dursey Sound. Then we had a fast reach across the entrance to Kenmare River to reach the narrow entrance to Derrynane. Although it was my second time entering this spectacular natural harbour, the conditions were a little more challenging on this occasion and I admit to giving a sigh of relief when I was safely inside.

On 25th July we departed at 10.15 bound for Knightstown. We motored out to Bolus Head in a westerly F4 and then hoisted all sail and bore away onto a course to clear Puffin Island. The sun appeared and we made good progress



Aine and Conor O'Byrne, Skelligs in the background

ing marina in Knightstown. In any case my niece and nephews enjoyed the short spin up the estuary to Caherciveen – just so long as the crisps and lemonade kept coming!

On 27th July my uncle Mylo O'Byrne and I sailed across to Dingle in very light airs. We lolled about at the entrance to the harbour, where some of the locals seemed to be having some success fishing. Mylo fancies himself as a bit of a Santiago (of Hemingway's 'Old Man and the Sea' fame), and in fairness within 30 minutes or so he had caught 4 decent sized mackerel. Once berthed on the marina, these went straight on the pan and, accompanied by some floury new potatoes and Albariño wine, we had a feast fit for kings. This was followed by a visit to Kennedy's bar in Dingle, but we retired early as we were making for the Aran Islands early the next day. The final addition to the crew arrived late that evening, Colm Tuohy, with whom I have sailed for many years in Galway. The forecast was for a F4-5 westerly the following morning, which meant an 8 mile slog out to the Sleá Head at the entrance to the Blasket Sound. We had toyed with the idea of sailing to Fenit but with the wind due to go northerly in two days' time we decided that a quick run up to the Aran Islands with a favourable breeze was a better option. We left at 07.30 on the 28th July and motored as far as the sound in damp and foggy conditions. Then the gods smiled and we got lovely blue skies as we sailed north east through the Sound towards Sybil Point, enjoying spectacular views of the Blaskets and the cliffs of Clogher Head. Then we had a fast 65 NM reach up to Gregory Sound between Inish Mor and Inishmaan.

It was Colm's first long sail of the season and unfortunately he was green for much of this leg. Still, he showed a remarkable recovery when we berthed in the new harbour on Inishmaan at 22.55 (making it a 15h passage from Dingle). In fact he led the charge up to Teach Ósta to see if we could make last orders. After a long day Mylo declined the offer to make the uphill hike to this lovely bar. Our luck was in and we enjoyed excellent local hospitality, which included a lift back to the pier after closing. On the final day of the cruise, July 29th, we had a fantastically refreshing swim on the deserted beach by the harbour on Inishmaan. The sun was shining and the wind was F2-3 west north westerly, perfect for a downwind sail back to our mooring in Rinville. So after a hearty breakfast we departed at 12.30. The spinnaker went up at 14.00 and with Sinbad (the Simrad tiller pilot) doing all the work we lounged in the cockpit while enjoying a good lunch. We picked up our mooring at 18.55. Colm pulled some strings and arranged to have a car waiting for us at Rinville pier, which made the logistics of getting home very smooth. This memorable cruise was topped off by pints and seafood pie in Clarinbridge – thanks Mylo.

around Bray Head at the south western end of Valentia Island. Conditions were excellent for sailing but there was a big swell running. A yacht behind was travelling in the same direction as ourselves and combined with the big swells and Skellig Michael in the distance it was a spectacular sight. My wife, being a keen photographer, spent 20 minutes or so trying to capture this and unfortunately paid the price as she then suffered a dose of *mal de mer*. However she did get some very nice shots of *Wind Whispers*, a Nicolson 31, with Skellig Michael in the background. After an enjoyable night on Valentia with family we went up to my wife's home town of Caherciveen for a visit. The marina there is a good sheltered facility with helpful staff, but it is suffering from the fact that free berths are available at the neighbour-



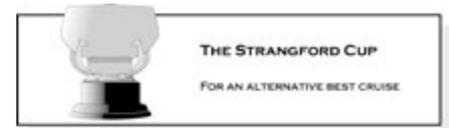
Wind Whispers's mast, Skellig Michael beyond



Sailing north east through Blasket Sound with Colm Tuohy and Mylo O'Byrne at the helm.

A Triangular Route to the Azores

Séamus O'Connor



This was to be my first 'blue water' cruise as skipper on *Slí Eile*, our HR 42e. I had skippered many a coastal trip, and had participated in ARC 2011 as crew. But this was to be a challenge well outside my comfort zone. In the course of passage planning, I realized that to go from Lagos, Portugal, to Madeira and then on to the Azores would split the out bound cruise into two reasonable legs and hopefully enjoy some good wind slants. I jumped at the opportunity to gain experience and confidence with the shorter legs.

Pre-Passage Planning

But first to the preparations of *Slí Eile* for the cruise. It had three distinct stages, cruise 1 from Lagos, via Porto Santo and then the Azores, consisting 410m and 550m legs. Then an inter island cruise for 3 weeks and finally an 850m leg back to NW Spain. Apart from the usual concerns re victualling, diesel and water our main focus was on what risks we would encounter. These were identified as MOB, a medical emergency, and lack of weather forecast data. To mitigate these risks, we developed a methodology for clipping in and rerouting the jackstays more towards the centre of the boat. We fitted the lifejackets with AIS MOB finders and tested them. Dan kindly reviewed and updated our first aid kit as well as recommending the appropriate medications to have on board. Finally we decided to back up the NAVTEX with a satellite phone for the purposes of receiving up to date forecasts and letting family know our location daily.

Cruise 1 Lagos, Portugal to Porto Santo and Azores

Dan Murphy and Adrian Woods joined me on this leg; both are boat owners and experienced skippers much more used to solo sailing than crewing. We departed Lagos Marina at 17.00 on May 31 and sailed the 17m west to Cape St. Vincent (CSV) in a terrific broad reach for a short night at anchor in Enseada de Sagres. Thus we were ready for a dawn start and a daylight crossing of the very busy traffic separation zone of CSV.

Seas were very lumpy off CSV and for about 30m or so south; then we got a more regular and pleasant pattern. Initially the wind was light, max F2 N so we needed to motor-sail to maintain reasonable progress across the shipping lanes. By 17.00 the wind was building, still from the north and our course was 240°. The engine was off and the sailing conditions great. Days were bright and sunny, some amazing sea life in the form of dolphins and then a school of tuna leaping out of the water as they chased smaller fish which might have been sardines.

We arrived early morning on Saturday 4th at Porto Santo after a very brisk run down from CSV. Our travel time was 3 days and 5 hours and distance covered was 450m. Thus we had an average speed of 6kts and sailed most of the way. We enjoyed N F4 to 5 wind much of the time but in the last day this dropped to a N F2 to 3. Porto Santo marina is very small and seems to be occupied almost entirely by 'live-aboards'; they were welcoming and helped us berth.



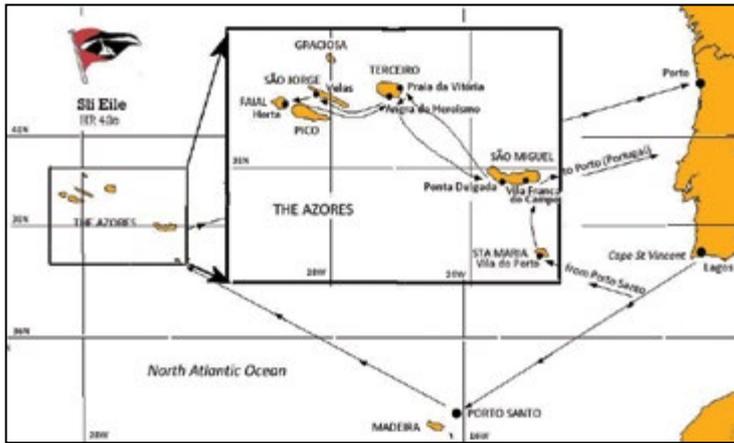
Porto Santo Marina



Adrian Woods, Séamus and Dan Murphy

In Porto Santo, we took a wonderful tour of the volcanic island and saw a basalt formation similar to the Giants Causeway. It is a surprisingly barren landscape with dramatic scenery; apparently the mountains are not high enough to cause rain. It's a quiet and lovely island, which is both well kept and presented beautifully, it has no major hotel development and all low rise buildings. In all it was a delightful and restful visit and we availed of the marina wifi to update our weather forecasts.

We departed Porto Santo on 6th at 07.00 with an ETA at Azores late 10th or early 11th. The forecast was promising light variable winds and a hope of catching the fringe of a low that would propel us towards the Azores on day 2. However as it turned out we motor-sailed all day of the first day and all morning of our second day, our course was 307°. We picked up the forecasted SW F3, which steadily built up through the day and over night, peaking in a squall at F6. Our speed was spectacular; however we found ourselves over-pressed and needed to reef. But



not before the boom vang line parted and the boom was free to lift at will. Order was quickly restored, and a reef in both main and headsail saw us travel in a more upright and controlled fashion. The wind slowly disappeared on the afternoon of day three, so we motor-sailed in a lumpy grey sea and featureless sky. The night sights were spectacular under the stars, with the Milky Way as clear as the name suggests. Mars was distinctively 'red' and with a crescent moon there was little to spoil the show. Light airs continued to be our companion, as did the Volvo Penta with its steady and reassuring sound. However all pleasures have a cost and we got increasingly concerned with the light air forecast and the dwindling supply of the amber nectar, our affectionate name for diesel. Thus at midday on day 3 the course was altered for the nearest

port, Vila do Porto on the island of Santa Maria.

By now the weather had picked up and we were sailing again and enjoyed a beautiful sunset. We found excellent navigation lights. Ponta do Castelo on Santa Maria has 25m range, and Vila do Porto provided an easy entry at 05.00. In all just 2 hrs short of 4 days at sea and a distance logged of 508m. Marine life was missing most of this leg of the trip, as were ships, whales and mermaids. We saw a large number of 'sailing' jellyfish.

The meals on passage were just short of gourmet. Adrian is a pizza aficionado, but can turn his hand to a really decent curry when pushed. Dan is inventive in meal preparation, and served 'gambas al la plancha' as well as melt-in-your-mouth beef dishes.

Mike on *Tuppence* kindly kept us abreast of the weather forecasts via the satellite phone; this was beneficial and backed up our NAVTEX information. Unfortunately we had time only to refuel in Santa Maria as one of the crew had a flight to catch from Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel. We departed Santa Maria on Friday 10th June for Ponta Delgada on Sao Miguel. This was a journey of 56m and was accomplished in great sailing style in a broad reach in a F3 to 4. The sailing time was 10 hours, the day was bright and the sky blue, hurray for lovely sunny weather sailing. But as it got dark and we closed on the island, we noticed visibility deteriorating and the forecast warned of poor visibility in the vicinity of the island. We were to experience the first of many days dominated by sea fog. Finally Ponta Delgada appeared where expected when we were just 5m off.

Ponta Delgada has a very large marina as well as being a large and busy port, so container ships and ferries arrive both day and night. The marina suffers from scend and can be quite uncomfortable; we learned that tucked into the NE corner was best. Facilities are good and local shops and restaurants are plenty. Beaches are not a real feature of the island but bathing is great in rock pools created naturally out of solidified lava flows. Sao Miguel is the largest of the 9 islands of the archipelago and has a population of about 170,000, and Ponta Delgada is the capital of the Azores Autonomous Region. The Azores has a total population of about 250,000. We remained at Sao Miguel for a week and in this time we walked and explored Sete Cidades, the extraordinary beautiful and fertile volcanic area to the NW of the island, we sailed to Vila Franca do Campo and stayed two nights there (very small marina and few, if any, visitor berths), and of course the city of Ponta Delgada. Dan then took his leave; he was great company and equally at home exploring on sea and on land.

Cruise 2: Inter Island Cruise Sao Miguel to Terceira and onwards via Sao Jorge to Faial and Horta

My crew for the inter island was primarily my wife Patricia and daughter Grainne. We explored the island, had great shore meals and we were delighted to catch up with our OCC friends Bruce and Pam on *Osprey*. On Thursday 24th we departed Ponta Delgada for Praia da Vitoria on Terceira, a distance of about 90m, which required an overnight passage. The forecast was NE 10 to 15 kts. We got a little more at times, especially as we approached Terceira, which could have been a local effect. Patricia was very brave and remained on board as we cast off at 15.00 with Bruce's encouraging words about calm seas and favourable winds. And indeed Bruce was correct: in the 16 hr journey time we sailed almost all of it, again on a broad reach with full sails. It was a clear night, with the only excitement a ferry doing 22 knots and on a reciprocal course to us. A quick call on the VHF radio confirmed that he had seen us and was altering course, phew....

After the obligatory rest day, we took on Praia da Vitoria, a delightful small city with a busy ferry port and the airport nearby. The weather was disappointing for our visit and low



Sunset south of Santa Maria



The marina at Praia da Vitoria

wide; about 9,000 live on this island. The main city is Velas, with its marina expertly run by its ebullient manager José. We radioed well before arrival, to be told they were full but he would find a place for us, and that he did. Even though it was now 19.00, he took our lines and gave us the low-down, including an invitation to join the festival in the square. We enjoyed the mingling and the spontaneity; we were to discover that each island had its festival and Saints' day, a gathering for the islanders and their diaspora, who focus their visit home on these festive occasions.

Saó Jorge is remarkable in that the centre is a high plateau of extinct volcanoes about 1,000m high and with extraordinary steep slopes to the sea; the land then flattens to the fertile fejas. Dairying and cheese-making predominate – the cheese was so good I thought we were home in West Cork. Here also we discovered the white wine from Pico called Fref Gigante, a wonderful blend of arinto, verdelho and the local Azorean grape Terrantez. It was one of the treasured discoveries of the cruise.

From Velas the next island to visit was Faial and its capital Horta, a short sail of 22m. The forecast was for light winds and the Azores high was well established. Horta is the mecca of sailing yachts, particularly those making eastbound from the Caribbean or US. We were looking forward to it and the visit to that iconic hostelry 'Peter Café Sports'. Horta marina is big and was full to overflowing; we were fortunate to be



The bay and marina at Angra do Heroismo

cloud marred the visibility of the high ground, we toured in a rental car but persistent fog was our companion. However the Gruta do Algar do Carvão, which are volcano caverns were not affected and well worth the visit. As in Sao Miguel, farming and beautiful landscape were the theme; there are no houses above the 200m contour so no electrical poles or phone poles to blot the land. My two sisters, Geraldine and Caitriona who had arrived by ferry from Ponta Delgada, joined us. We had a gentle sail, accompanied by dolphins, around the south end of the island towards Angra do Heroismo, the capital of Terceira. This is an extraordinary city of a most appealing architecture and a deep naval history. A life size sculpture of Vasco da Gamo greets you as you arrive ashore. The fortifications were many and awe-inspiring. The marina at Angra is small and suffers from swell.

This was also a good starting point for our next sail to Saó Jorge and its capital Velas, a distance of about 53m, of which about 22m is exposed. The passage, on July 1st, was a combination of light airs, then super sailing on a broad reach and then calm, all influenced by the island's central high ridge.

Saó Jorge is a long and narrow island of 35km long x 7km



Caitriona, Grainne, Geraldine and Patricia

able to raft up to a sail-training vessel that had a non-operational week. The marina shower facilities were tired and needed a revamp.

The ladies departed from Horta and my nephew Séamus O'Riain joined me. From Horta we retraced our route to Angra do Heroismo, sailing past the island of Pico, and magically Pico itself appeared above the clouds. The channel between Pico and Saó Jorge provided an abundance of wild life, including pilot whales, dolphins and sea birds. This was a trip of 70m; the wind was fluky and we struggled to sail but the sea was calm. Next day we had a favourable forecast for the 95m overnight trip to Ponta Delgada.

We managed to sail for 12 hours but for the last 3 hours, in the lee of Saó Miguel, we had to motor.

So overall the Azores are very impressive, the landscapes and sheer variety are stunning, the roads are lined with flowering scrubs, in particular hydrangeas. The people are extraordinarily helpful and friendly; prices are low even though we are on islands far out in the Atlantic. Surge or swell in the harbours are an issue, 'springs' or rubber shock absorbers would be a great help on the mooring warps, and of course the fenders take a hammering. With the predominant northerly winds, we enjoyed great sailing conditions and our motoring was minimal. We met only one Irish boat while in the Azores, Paraig and Myra Reid out of Kinsale YC. *Saol Eile* was on her way home after a 7 year circumnavigation. When we met them they had just arrived in from Recife, Brazil after a 22-day passage.

Cruise 3: Cruise to NW Spain

Our crew of Pat Gallagher ICC and Mike Jones arrived at Ponta Delgada on the 10th, so we were to be four for the trip home. We departed Sao Miguel and Ponta Delgada in the afternoon of the 13th July with a forecast that suggested light airs for 2 days and then we would expect northerly of about F3 to 4. Our hoped for landfall was A Coruna in NW Galicia, on a course of 70°. For 2 days we coaxed the main to fill. The wind was NE F2 at best and we had to use the engine to make progress. Day 1 run was 126m and day 2 run was 112m

Marine life was scarce but we did spot one whale in the distance and a leatherback turtle near by us. The occasional dolphin checked us out but for real interaction with the dolphins the boat needs to be sailing with gusto and the engine in stop mode. On day 3 the wind slowly arrived as forecast we thought, but no, it was from the NE, so in order to sail we altered course 95° instead of our desired 70°. However the engine was off and the boat was sailing; the days run was 105m. Nephew Seamus's keen eye spotted a large Dorado heading west at speed.

Our wind held and for day 4 our run was 135m and we were making progress but the track was about 100° and 'looking' at Lisbon or there about. Skies continued to be bright and the air warm and very humid. Our shift system was 3 hours on and single watch unless help was needed with the sails (we wished it was!). Day started at 08.00 and night at 22.00; the shift system rotated so that we on in different time slots. The dawn shift was the most popular starting at 05.00.

On day 5 the wind disappeared and with it our forecast for northerly winds, so we motored and tried the sails at the first stirrings or sight of wavelets on the water, but try and try again the sails stayed slack and the engine droned on and on. We managed 112m for the 24 hours. About midnight of day 5 our main fuel tank was empty and the auxiliary was transferred to the main. We now had just 147 litres of fuel left and we were about 300m west of the coast of Portugal with slack winds forecast. The engine used 4 l of fuel per hour at 1,800 RPM, which maintained a SOG of 5 knots.

Day 6 was much like day 5, where was the wind? How could the Azorean high stretch so far from the Azores? Were we bringing it with us? We droned on and by now diesel was becoming a major concern. Day 6 run was 112m. Who would have imagined that the challenge would become one of fuel management with slack sloppy seas and windless skies? A Coruna was not a possible land fall due to lack of wind and now fuel so we changed our target landfall to Porto. By 17.00 on day 6 we were able to get sailing again, The wind was NW F2 and we averaged 3 knots for the next 12 hours.

It was now Day 7 and the winds finally arrived, NNW and F 3 to 4; *Sli Eile* took all advantage and our speed improved. The day 7 run was 108m. At about 010° west we met the very busy shipping lanes and the liner Queen Elisabeth passed close by moving at 22kts and heading for Southampton (all of this information courtesy of the AIS).

Day 8 and we were just under 50m from Porto, the shipping traffic was now behind us and the fishing pots appeared in abundance, so diligence and course alterations were in demand. The land was covered in haze and we finally sighted it when were 15m off. As we arrived it was dusk and a big orange ball of a moon rose from behind the city. It was a magical landfall.

We arrived safely into Porto and had covered 847m in 7days and 7 hours. So no speed records broken.

Mike and Pat then prepared to depart; we had a great crew, good fun, sorted the world and got along great. We lacked any challenging winds but we learned to make the best of every puff. It was great for me to have the benefit of both Mike and Pat's extensive sailing experience available and as skippers in their own right, they were gracious to indulge me in my ways. Thanks to them both.

Main meals were gourmet, thanks to Séamus Og and porridge was the breakfast of choice, with everything from dates, figs, and almond nuts, pineapple and peach being mixed in, sometimes with a drop of brandy.

Séamus and I decided to get north immediately as we had a bad forecast so we left Porto in the late afternoon and had a pleasant 90m run north to Combarro in Rias Pontevedra. *Sli Eile* will winter there, conveniently located for the ICC Cruise in Galicia in 2017.

At Combarro we were delighted to catch up with Vera Quinlan (ICC) and family on *Danu*.

The summary statistics are as follows: -

Overall distance covered:	2,260m
Days-Hours at sea:	20 - 4
Total time on the cruise:	51days

Joe Fitzgerald 1922-2016: an Obituary

Winkie Nixon

Joe Fitzgerald of Cork went from among us in September at the age of 94. His was a well-lived life afloat and ashore, enhancing our understanding of just how completely land and sea can become happily intertwined around Cork Harbour and city.

Despite his small stature - it's thought that it was his longtime friend Stanley Roche who first called him "The Tiny Tailor - Joe was a tower of strength around boats and he first acquired his sailing skills through spending his boyhood summers with an uncle who had a Brixham trawler converted to a sailing cruiser, based in Crosshaven. The Second World War curtailed sailing, even in neutral Ireland.

But by 1943 the waters around Ireland were less directly affected by the war, and the Irish Cruising Club organized a race from Crosshaven around the Fastnet.

Among the boats taking part was the famous *Gull* from Crosshaven, one of the seven participants in the first international Fastnet Race of 1925, and the key vessel in the flotilla of five yachts which founded the Irish Cruising Club at Glengarriff in 1929. Although her legendary skipper Harry Donegan had died in 1940, his son Harry Jnr continued the family ownership of *Gull*, and for that race of 1943, he included the young Joe Fitzgerald in the crew. As a result, Joe Fitzgerald was elected a member of the Irish Cruising Club in 1944 and today the Fitzgerald ICC membership of 72 years has the air of the eternal record to it.

In addition to sailing for sport, Joe Fitzgerald in the 1940s joined the Maritime Inscription, continuing with the voluntary naval reserve which was re-formed as *An Slua Muiri* after the war. He recalled that his commissioning papers were signed by Eamon de Valera himself, and his career with the force went on for 39 years. Joe retired from his many years of service knowing that he had been the youngest Commanding Officer of any region in Ireland.

He was way ahead of his time in keeping himself fit. His health regime - which he continued to the end of his days - included a cycling machine in a spare room in the house, and a programme of exercises which saw regular press-ups until well into his nineties.

But it was in the Irish Cruising Club that the light-touch Fitzgerald management style proved most congenial. For many years he was on the Committee, by 1982 he was Vice Commodore, and he was then elected Commodore by acclamation from 1984 to 1986, heading the club with his calming presence at a time of rapid development.

Meanwhile his boat sizes had gently increased, and they reflected the reality of the needs of a sailor who continued in and around his boats afloat on a virtually year round basis. He moved up to a Moody 33 from his Trapper 28, and when we happened to drop into Youghal of a Saturday night in 1986 on our way to Cork Week in a 30-footer, there was the Commodore ICC in fine form for a bit of a party, which duly took place.

That's the way it was with Joe Fitzgerald. He made the best of the hand that life dealt him.

It is impossible to do full justice to Joe Fitzgerald in ordinary words. The world has been a much more interesting place for his having been in it.



From left: Denis Doyle, Joe Fitzgerald & Douglas Heard
at the ICC Shannon Rally, 1977. Photo: W M Nixon

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'Keeffe
 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
 2016 Peter Fernie

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. Ralalow
 2012 P. Courtney
 2014 Stanton Adair
 Frank Ranelow
 2015 Peter Fernie
 Stanton Adair
 2016 Richard Cudmore
 Derek White

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. Morck
 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>Thalassa</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>
2006	Mike Alexander	<i>Katielok II</i>

Year	Winner	Yacht
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>Svretta</i>
2014	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>
2015	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
2016	Daragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</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	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2016	Seamus O'Connor	<i>Sli Eile</i>
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>Saoise</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>Svretta</i>
2014	John Coyne	<i>Lir</i>
2015	Peter Killen	<i>Pure Magic</i>
2016	No Award	
ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP		
1941	E.J. Odum	
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'Ceallaigh	<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>

Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht	Year	Winner	Yacht
1996	Michael McKee	<i>Isobel</i>	2005	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>	1987	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>
1997	No Award		2006	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>	1988	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>
1998	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>	2007	Pat Lyons	<i>Stardancer</i>	1989	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
1999	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>	2008	David & Grainne		1990	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
2000	Harry Byrne	<i>Alphida of Howth</i>		FitzGerald	<i>Ajay</i>	1991	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>
2001	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	2009	Patrick Dorgan	<i>Verdi III</i>	1992	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
2002	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>	2010	Derek White	<i>Ballyclaire</i>	1993	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2003	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Brandon Rose</i>	2011	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>	1994	James Cahill	<i>Ricjak</i>
2004	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>	2012	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>	1995	Paul Butler	<i>Red Velvet</i>
2005	No Award		2013	Nigel & Heleen		1996	Brian Black	<i>Cuillin</i>
2006	John Delap	<i>Sceolaing</i>		Lindsay-Fynn	<i>Eleanda</i>	1997	James Nixon	<i>Ardnagee</i>
2007	Brendan Bradley	<i>Afar VI</i>	2014	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>	1998	Peter & Evie Ronaldson	<i>Scotch Mist</i>
2008	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>	2015	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>	1999	No Award	
2009	No Award		2016	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Oisin Ban</i>	2000	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2010	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>	THE WYBRANTS CUP			2001	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2011	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1933	J. B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2002	Paget McCormack	<i>Saki</i>
2012	Paul Butler	<i>Muglins</i>	1934	Dr. L.G. Gunn	<i>Albatross</i>	2003	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2013	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1935	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2004	Norman Kean	<i>Xanadu</i>
2014	No Award		1936	Leslie Chance	<i>Britannia</i>	2005	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2015	No Award		1937	A.W. Mooney	<i>Aideen</i>	2006	Harold & Vivienne Boyle	<i>Gentle Spirit</i>
2016	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Belle</i>	1938	Dr. O.P. Chance & R. Storey	<i>Sapphire</i>	2007	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Eala Ban</i>
THE FORTNIGHT CUP			1939	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2008	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>
1958	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>	1940	K.McFerran & Dr. O'Brien	<i>Huzure</i>	2009	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>	1941	D. Keating & R. O'Hanlon	<i>Evora</i>	2010	John Crebbin	<i>Ocean Gypsy</i>
1961	J.W.D. McCormick	<i>Diane</i>	1942	J.B. Cotterell & J.F. McMullan	<i>Minx</i>	2011	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
1963	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>	1943/45	No Award		2012	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
1964	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>	1946	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>	2013	Joe & Trish Phelan	<i>Lydia</i>
1965	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>	1947	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>	2014	Matthew Wright	<i>Thor</i>
1966	H.W.S. Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>	1948	Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon	<i>Evora</i>	2015	Derek & Viv White	<i>Ballyclaire</i>
1967	Miss E. Leonard	<i>Lamita</i>	1949	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>	2016	Robin & Denise Wright	<i>Geronimo</i>
1968	P. Dineen	<i>Huntress</i>	1950	A.W. Mooney	<i>Evora</i>	THE FINGAL CUP		
1969	R.C.A. Hall	<i>Roane</i>	1951	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>	1981	Robert Barr	<i>Condor</i>
1970	N. St. J. Hennessy	<i>Asling</i>	1952	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>	1982	W. Walsh	<i>Carrigdown</i>
1971	J.R. Olver	<i>Vandara</i>	1953	No Award		1983	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1972	C. Green	<i>Helen</i>	1954	T. Crosby	<i>If</i>	1984	R.M. Slater	<i>Tandara</i>
1973	M. Tomlinson	<i>Pellegrina</i>	1955	R.P. Campbell	<i>Alata</i>	1985	P. Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1974	J. Wolfe	<i>Gay Gannet</i>	1956	S.F. Thompson	<i>Second Ethuriel</i>	1986	B. Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1975	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>	1957	Col. W.S. Knox-Gore	<i>Arandora</i>	1987	Frank McCarthy	<i>Scilly Goose</i>
1976	A. Morton	<i>Sung Foon</i>	1958	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	1988	Robert Barr	<i>Joliba</i>
1978	R. Dixon	<i>Oberon</i>	1959	G. Kimber	<i>Astrophel</i>	1989	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1979	B.J. Law	<i>Sai See</i>	1960	J.C. Butler	<i>Happy Morning</i>	1990	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1980	R. Paul Campbell	<i>Verve</i>	1961	S. O'Mara	<i>Fenestra</i>	1991	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>
1981	S. Orr	<i>Den Arent</i>	1962	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>	1992	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1982	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>	1963	Lt. Com. T. Sheppard	<i>Greylag of Arklow</i>	1993	Stephen Malone	<i>Symphonie</i>
1983	C.P. McHenry	<i>Ring of Kerry</i>	1964	T.F. Doyle	<i>Elsa</i>	1994	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1984	B.H.C. Corbally	<i>Puffin</i>	1965	S. O'Mara	<i>Oisin</i>	1995	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft</i>
1985	R. Barr	<i>Joliba</i>	1966	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	1996	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Shalini</i>
1986	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>	1967	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>	1997	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
1987	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>	1968	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	1999	Peter Killen	<i>Black Pepper</i>
1988	John Ryan	<i>Saki</i>	1969	R.I. Morrison	<i>Querida</i>	1999	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
1989	Brian Hegarty	<i>Safari of Howth</i>	1970	Hugh Coveney	<i>Dalcassian</i>	2000	Tony Clarke	<i>Velella</i>
1990	Seamus Lantry	<i>William Tell of Uri</i>	1971	J.A. McKeown	<i>Korsar</i>	2001	Michael Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
1991	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>	1972	J.C. Love	<i>Fionnuala</i>	2002	Dianne Andrews	<i>Great Escape</i>
1992	Clive Martin	<i>Lindos</i>	1973/77	No Award		2003	Grainne FitzGerald	<i>Mountain Mist</i>
1993	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>	From 1978 onwards the Wybrants Cup was awarded for the best Scottish cruise.			2004	Michael & Alison Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
1994	Frank Larkin	<i>Elusive</i>	1978	Chris Green	<i>Norella</i>	2005	Clive Martin	<i>Beowulf</i>
1995	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Hobo V</i>	1979	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>	2006	Peter Haden	<i>Papageno</i>
1996	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>	1980	D.A. McMillan	<i>Goosander</i>	2007	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>
1997	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>	1981	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>	2008	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>
1998	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>	1982	Ronan Beirne	<i>Givusa Kuddle</i>	2009	Michael Brogan	<i>Mac Duach</i>
1999	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>	1983	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>	2010	Eddie Nicholson	<i>Mollihawk's Shadow</i>
2000	No Award		1984	R. Barr	<i>Condor</i>	2011	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2001	Gary Villiers-Stuart	<i>Winefreda of Greenisland</i>	1985	B. Hegarty	<i>Freebird</i>	2012	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara (Capriole)</i>
2002	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>	1986	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>	2013	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2003	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>				2014	Ian Stevenson	<i>Raptor</i>
2004	Roy Waters	<i>Sundowner of Beaulieu</i>						

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>Luw 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	<i>Ilen's</i> 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 S & W 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	
2016	Neil Hegarty	Trans Atlantic in <i>Shelduck</i>	

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
2016	Ed Wheeler	Editor, Annual & Chairman, ICCPL

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

Year	Yacht	Recipient	Race
1967	<i>Moonduster</i>	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
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>Assiduus</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>Joggermout</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>Finndabar of Howth</i>	P. Jameson	Round Ireland

From 1993 Awarded by the Eastern Area Committee

Year	Recipient
1993	P. Hogan
1994	Brendan Bradley
1995	Barbara Fox-Mills
1996	Evelyn O'Gallagher
1998	Bruce Lyster
1999	Susan & Peter Gray
2000	Arthur Orr
2001	Mungo Park
2002	Cormac McHenry
2003	Susan & Peter Gray
2004	Bill Rea
2005	Hal Sisk
2006	Grainne FitzGerald
2007	Michael Holland
2008	Cormac McHenry
2009	Terry Johnson
2010	Ruth Heard
2011	John P. Bourke
2012	Sean Flood
2013	Winkie Nixon
2014	Kieran Jameson
2015	Alan Rountree
2016	Ian French

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

Awarded by the Western Area Committee

Year	Winner	Year	Winner
1993	Dave FitzGerald	2006	Peter Haden
1994	Brian Lynch	2007	Seamus Salmon
1995	Paddy O'Sullivan	2008	Michael Craughwell
1996	Jarlath Cunnane	2009	Anne Kenny & Paddy O'Sullivan
1997	Pat Lavelle		
1998	Brendan Travers	2010	Fergus Quinlan
1999	John Cunningham	2011	Fergus Quinlan
2000	Jack McCann	2012	Brian Sheridan
2001	Roger Bourke	2013	Anne Kenny
2002	Dave FitzGerald	2014	John Coyne
2003	Frank Larkin	2015	Justin McDonagh
2004	Dick Scott	2016	David Whitehead
2005	David FitzGerald		

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>
2016	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	2010	David Whitehead
2002	Wallace Clark	2011	James Nixon
2003	John Bourke	2012	Alan Leonard
2004	Fergus Quinlan	2013	Raymond Fielding
2005	Eleanor Cudmore	2014	Norman Kean's Hat (by Derek White)
2006	Dan Cross	2015	Jarlath Cunnane
2007	Wallace Clark	2016	Dick Lovegrove
2008	Hugh Barry		
2009	Diana Gleadhill		

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
2016	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	McGettigan, Alan
Casey, Noel	McHenry, Cormac
Chapman, Colin	Mullins, Peter
Clementson, John	Nicholson, David
Coffey, Jack	Nicholson, Eddie
Coleman, Michael	O'Farrell, Kevin
Corbally, Bernard	O'Farrell, Vincent
Cudmore, Ronald	O'Flaherty, Michael
Cunnane, Jarlath	Osborne, James
Davis, Sam	Osmundsvaag, Arve
Drew, Bob	Petch, John
Espey, Fred	du Plessis, Hugo
Glaser, Otto	Prendeville, Neil
Gore-Grimes, John	Quinlan, Fergus
Gray, Peter	Smullen, Brian
Gray, Susan	Smyth, William
Greer, Perry	Snell, Michael
Hegarty, Neil	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 PERRY GREER BOWL

FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG



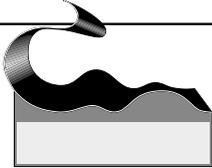
THE STRANGFORD CUP

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE BEST CRUISE



THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

FOR THE BEST CRUISE
IN IRISH WATERS



THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

FOR THE BEST OPEN SEA PASSAGE
WITH PORT TO PORT AT LEAST
1,000 MILES



THE JOHN B KEARNEY CUP

FOR AN OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION
TO IRISH SAILING



THE FORTNIGHT CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE UNDERTAKEN
IN A MAXIMUM OF 16 DAYS



THE WRIGHT SALVER

AWARDED BY THE
NORTHERN COMMITTEE



THE ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

FOR THE BEST CIRCUMNAVIGATION
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
NAVIGATIONAL AND PILOTAGE CONTENT



THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP

AWARDED BY THE
SOUTHERN COMMITTEE



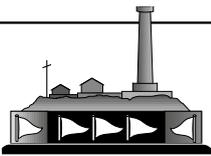
THE FINGAL CUP

AWARDED ENTIRELY AT THE
ADJUDICATOR'S OWN DISCRETION
FOR THE LOG WHICH APPEALED
TO HIM MOST



THE DONEGAN MEMORIAL CUP

AWARDED BY THE
EASTERN COMMITTEE



THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

FOR A CRUISE WHICH INVOLVES AN
EXCEPTIONAL FEAT OF NAVIGATION
AND/OR SEAMANSHIP



THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

AWARDED BY THE
WESTERN COMMITTEE



THE WYBRANTS CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE IN
SCOTTISH WATERS



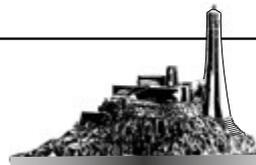
THE GULL SALVER

FOR THE HIGHEST PLACED IRISH YACHT
IN THE RORC FASTNET RACE



THE WILD GOOSE CUP

AT THE ADJUDICATOR'S DISCRETION
FOR A LOG OF LITERARY MERIT



THE FASTNET AWARD

FOR AN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT
IN SAILING BY A PERSON OR PERSONS
FROM ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD



THE MARIE TROPHY

FOR THE BEST CRUISE FOR A
YACHT UNDER 30' LOA



THE DUNN'S DITTY SALVER

AWARDED FOR THE BEST
DUNN'S DITTY SUBMITTED