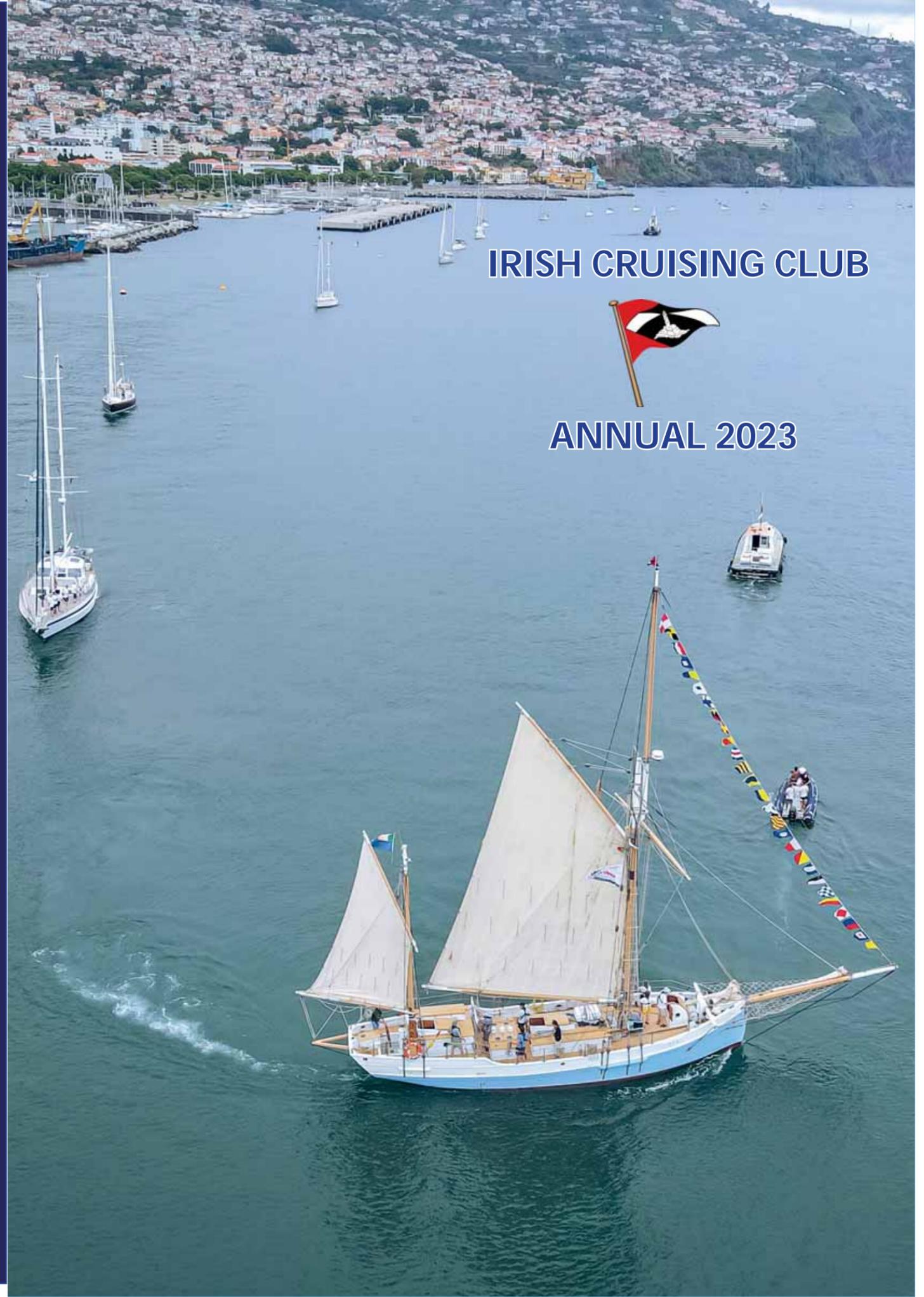




IRISH CRUISING CLUB

2023 ANNUAL



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Front Cover: *Ilen* leads the fleet into Funchal. Photo by CNF

Back Cover: Ed Wheeler - He never thought he'd be a Cover Boy. Photo by crew of *Witchcraft of Howth*

Frontispiece: *Ilen* at the RIYC. Photo by Miguel Walker

Inside Back Cover: Irish Cruising Club Photographic Plate

Submissions for the 2024 Annual

To reach the Honorary Editor, Máire Breathnach, annual@irishcruisingclub.com by Friday 18 October 2024. Logs received after that date will not be considered for an award and may not be included in the Annual.

Notes for Contributors

All contributions should be in digital format, submitted by email in Microsoft Word or Text format only. Please don't send a pdf.

Logs should typically be of 1,000 to 4,000 words, or for major cruises up to 5,000. They should interest, entertain and inform, and should be accompanied by:

- A sketch map and a chronological list of ports and anchorages visited, to facilitate the drawing of the track charts
- A summary, including start and finish dates, area cruised, crew list and overall distance (principally for the use of the Adjudicator)
- At least ten high resolution (minimum 800kB) photographs in jpeg format. Large files should be sent by WeTransfer. A list of captions should be appended to your log. It should be absolutely clear which captions refer to which photographs. Photographs which illustrate the places visited, in a manner useful to other members, are appreciated. Pictures of crew are welcome but please provide names (in order and correctly spelt) in the captions. Do not embed photographs or graphics in logs.

Please note the following:

- Portrait format photos of members' yachts, ideally flying the ICC burgee and under sail, will be considered for the Annual cover
- All logs will be entered for Awards, unless requested otherwise
- Photographs will be considered for the award of the Photographic Plate
- If your log contains observations and/or photographs relevant to the Sailing Directions, please send these also directly and as soon as possible to the Directions editor Norman Kean, sales@iccsailingbooks.com.
- Subjective opinions are welcome provided these are not derogatory of individuals. It is made clear that opinions in the Annual are those of the author and not necessarily of the Irish Cruising Club.

Dunn's Ditties may be 200 to 1,000 words, anecdotal of cruise highlights (or lowlights), with one or two photographs. Other **Articles** of particular merit and of up to 4,000 words will be considered for inclusion. The above requirements apply.

In writing your log please try to be considerate of the Editor and the limited time available to compile many disparate contributions into a readable, attractive and accurate publication. Do not exceed word count limits as above. Humour is welcome. A 'log' of this type is not a catalogue of daily events. Excessive and tedious day-to-day details (such as menus enjoyed or every sail change carried out) are of little interest to the reader and of no value to the record, and will be edited out. Please ensure logs are correctly and consistently spelt. This applies particularly to personal and place names, and to accented letters in languages other than English. It is very useful, and a courtesy to the Editor, to have your log checked and proofread by an observant (and preferably pedantic) friend before submission.

Text Formats

- Use standard fonts. Do not indent paragraphs. Do not insert extra spaces.
- Dates should be written in the format 25 May 2024. Times in 24 hour clock, as in 0530, not (for example) 05.30hrs
- Wind speeds in Beaufort scale should be written F4, F5, F2-3 and so on. Omit the F if the direction is given: SW 4, not SW F4
- Numbers less than 11 should be written in words. Try to avoid starting a sentence with a number in numerical format.
- Use italics for yacht and ship names.
- Abbreviations - kn for knots, M for nautical miles, m for metres.

The Irish Cruising Club Photographic Plate

The Photographic Competition

The Irish Cruising Club Plate is a great prize to win and any member or crew on an ICC yacht can enter. The photo, which should have been taken in the current cruising year can be submitted to the Club as a contribution to the website, newsletter or Annual. It should be of a maritime or littoral subject. The ICC Plate is presented to the winner at the Annual Dinner.

Photographic Competition 2022

In 2022 the adjudicators were John Clementson, Gillian Fletcher and Alex Blackwell.

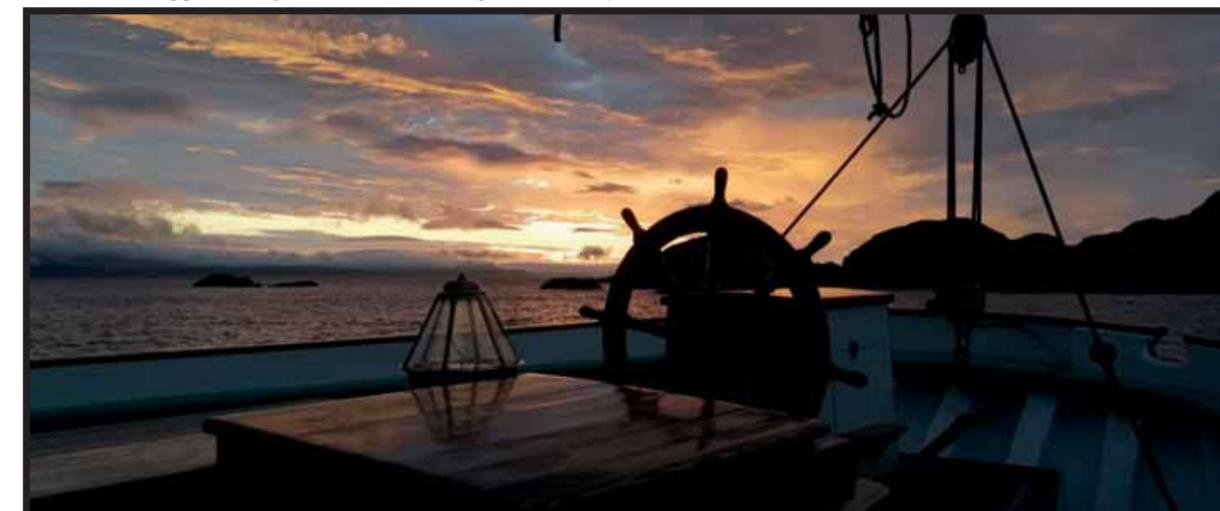
WINNER *After dark at the Quoile by Ross Boyd*



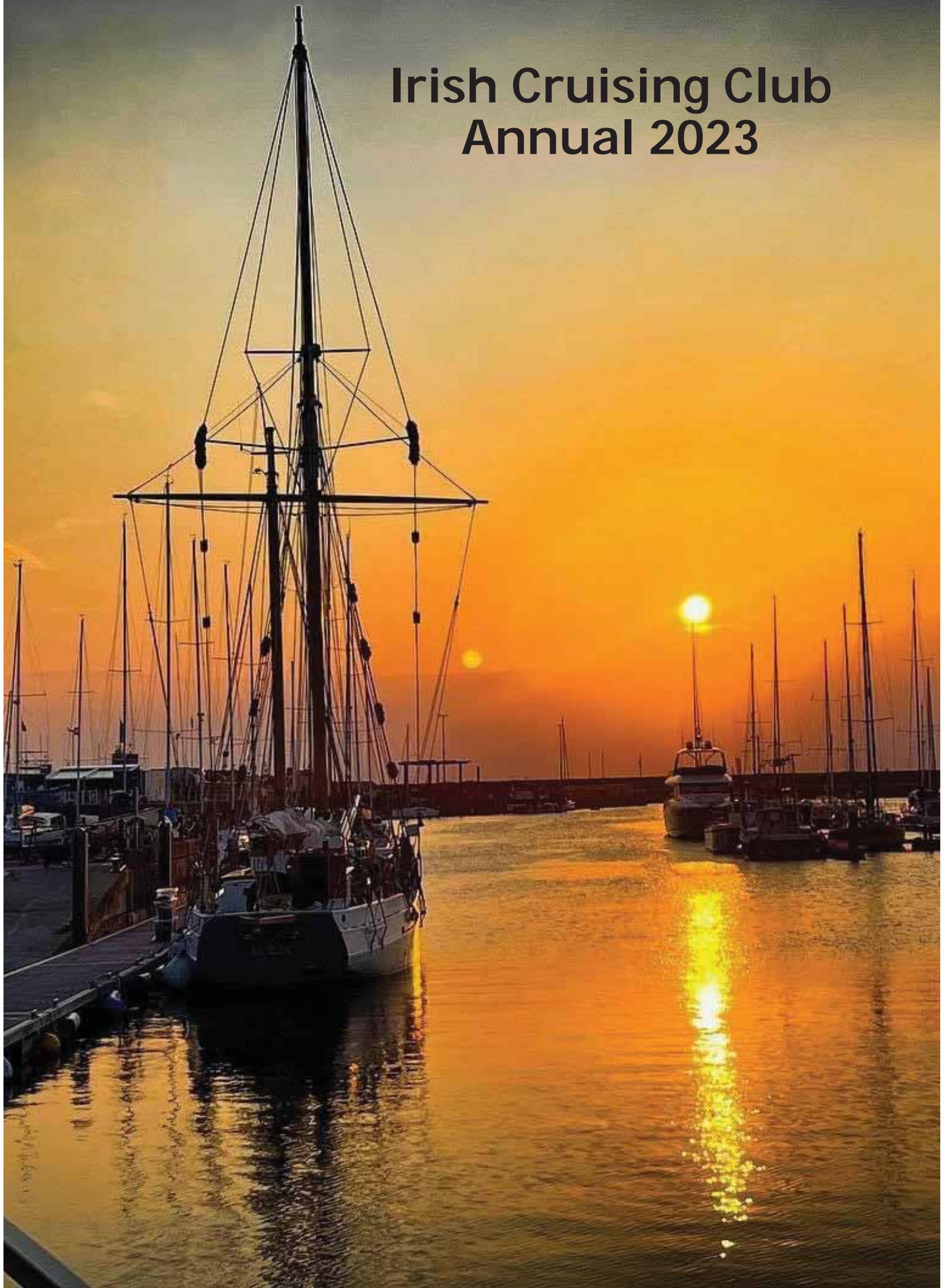
SECOND *Sundance, Sassy and Tucana lying in early morning peace by John Houston*



THIRD *Snugged away as the sun sets by Mick Delap*



Irish Cruising Club Annual 2023



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Commodore's Letter by David Beattie



December 2023

Dear Reader,

This Annual records the cruising activities of our members in this our 94th season and the results of the adjudication of the logs submitted for publication. It demonstrates the wide scope of the Club's and its members' activities and several important events, especially the Saoirse Rally to Madeira. Peter Fernie has adjudicated the logs submitted in a style befitting a founder member of the ICC Lotophagi (see previous annuals).

Sincere thanks to Máire Breathnach our editor who has produced yet another tour de force, including painstaking work producing the track charts, to Séamus O'Connor for arranging the distribution and to Peter Fernie for undertaking the adjudication.

As I write, Aoife and I are looking forward to meeting as many members as possible at the regional Christmas events. The annual dinner weekend will take place in Cork on 22 - 24 March. Full details of that weekend will issue before the end of this year via email and I urge you to watch out for that communication and to book early.

I hope that you enjoy reading the exploits of our members and wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas, a peaceful New Year and fair winds and following seas for next year.

Warm regards,

David

Honorary Secretary's Report by Donal Gallagher

We emerge into a time of significant milestones for the Club starting in this year gone by with the centenary of the commencement of Conor O'Brien's historic circumnavigation in 1923. The commemoration of the first leg of this historic voyage to Madeira was led by our Commodore David Beattie with lunch at the Royal Irish Yacht Club at the same hour on the 17 of June as O'Brien a century earlier. The highlight was a reprise of the leg from Dun Laoghaire to Funchal by the *Ilen*, with an ICC crew on board. Our rally to welcome her there represented a significant successful undertaking organised by our Rear Commodore South, Séamus O'Connor. The Centenary was also marked by the republication of 'Across Three Oceans', an effort led on behalf of the ICC by Alex Blackwell. The era of centenaries will continue until 2029, marking the founding of the Club in Glengarriff, an event for which preparations have already started under the aegis of Derek White and the centenary committee. In addition to the centenary events the Club jointly hosted a rally in the Western Isles with the Clyde Cruising Club and very successful regional rallies in the East, North and South, a wet July and August notwithstanding.

The January committee meeting was held in the National Yacht Club on 6th January preceded by the Election Committee Meeting at which 12 new members were elected to the Club.

The February committee meeting, AGM and EGM were held on 17 February with thanks to the Royal St. George Yacht Club. Seventy-four members were present for the AGM and over 100 members and guests stayed for dinner, full capacity for the dining room.

In addition to the normal business of the AGM which was conducted without dissent, the Commodore led warm tributes and praise for the Officers and Committee members standing down having guided the club through the challenging years of the pandemic. Ann Lyons and Derek White standing down as Rear Commodore and Vice Commodore respectively were thanked for the many years of service to the club and their regions. Harry Whelehan standing down as Honorary Secretary was thanked in particular for his wise counsel during challenging times. John Clementson as Web Editor having been persuaded to stay on many times stood down after 20 years of service. Peter Mullan, Grainne Fitzgerald, Des Moran and Bruce Fennell stood down from the Committee and were thanked for their many years of service. The following elections where duly proposed, seconded and unanimously approved: Julie Chambers as Rear Commodore North, Séamus O'Connor as Rear Commodore South, Donal Gallagher as Honorary Secretary, Paul Mc Sorley, David Meeke, Harry Whelehan, Jim O'Meara, John McAleer and John Coyne as Committee Members.

Following several years of research by the Hon. Treasurer into the difficulties in procuring insurance for events organised outside UK and Irish Waters, a solution has been found that shields the Club from liability. To this end an EGM was called to amend rule 19 of the Club as follows: 'Rule 19(2) The Committee may appoint such independent company as it may choose to organize such events as it may from time to time decide.' The motion was proposed, seconded and carried. The EGM concluded and members retired to dinner.

The Annual Dinner was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Sligo with 238 attendees including the Commodores of the Cruising Club of America, the Royal Cruising Club and the Rear Commodore of the Clyde Cruising Club. The committee were keenly aware of the need to re-establish a close relationship with our sister clubs following the recent disruption and the presence of so many and their kind words left us reassured of a healthy future. The event was organised flawlessly by the Commodore and Aoife Nolan Beattie and the attention to detail was evident to all who attended an uplifting event. The Fastnet Trophy was awarded to W. M. (Winkie) Nixon in recognition of his exceptional contribution to Irish Cruising over a long and distinguished career. There were tears (of laughter) in the room when Winkie made his acceptance speech.

At the Annual Dinner, the Commodore of the Cruising Club of America, Chris Otorowski, rose and made an extraordinary gift of the 'Friendship Cup' to mark the long association between our two clubs. The cup is a sterling silver cup crafted by Weir and Sons in 1927 and the associated deed of gift states that the cup is to be awarded to members or their spouses who exemplify the highest values of the ICC. The way in which this will be administered has been proposed by the committee and an invitation to nominate potential recipients is set out on page xiii of the Introductory pages.

The October committee meeting, held on 14 October in Newcastle, Co. Down afforded the newly elected committee the opportunity to review the events of the year gone by and the plans for 2024 which include a rally to Brittany led by Vice Commodore Alan Markey and a return to Galicia for Encuentro Náutico 24.

January of 2024 will see the Committee meet on the 5th in the National Yacht Club followed on February 16th by the AGM before dinner in Howth Yacht Club.

2024 is a year of promise with rallies in Brittany and Galicia in addition to our regional events and a centenary lunch to mark Conor O'Brien's rounding of Cape Horn in the Royal Irish Yacht Club on 6th December 2024. On a personal note, I would like to thank Harry Whelehan for his assistance in easing the transition to this new role, for his sage advice and his friendship.



Donal Gallagher. Leaving Kinsale on a misty summer morning

Membership Changes 2023

New Members elected January 2023

Aedan Coffey, Conor English, David MacDonald, John Ritchie, Ken Cunnane, Leszek Wolnik, Mark Sweetnam, Paddy Judge, Pat Hartigan, Pat O'Shea, Peter Bowring, Robert Kilkelly.

Deceased members in 2023

John Forde, Hugh Morrison, Tony Walsh, Leonard Sheil, Sue Sommerville, Adrian Stokes, David Dwyer, Seán Flood, Michael O'Neill, Alex Booth, Jonathan Virden, Ernest Devenney, Brennie Connor.

Officers and Committee, 2023

Commodore:	David Beattie (West)	4th year
Vice Commodore:	Alan Markey	1st year
Rear Commodore:	Julie Chambers	1st year
Rear Commodore:	Séamus O'Connor (South)	1st year
Hon. Secretary:	Donal Gallagher	1st year
Hon. Treasurer:	Patrick Blaney	2nd year

North	South	East	West
Maeve Bell (7th yr)	Peter Cudmore (5th yr)	Seán Fergus (6th yr)	Alex Blackwell (5th yr)
Des Brown (4th yr)	Bruce Fennell (7th yr)	Grainne Fitzgerald (7th yr)	Des Moran (4th yr)
David Meeke (1st yr)	Séamus O'Connor (5th yr)	Tony Linehan (3rd yr)	James Cahill (1st yr)
Paul McSorley (1st yr)	Paul Taylor (3rd yr)	Robert Michael (8th yr)	

Ex Officio:

John Clementson (Web Editor)

Ed Wheeler (Chairman Irish Cruising Club Publications CLG)

Non-Committee Roles:

Editor Annual	Máire Breathnach	Club Accessories	Viv White
Editor Sailing Directions	Norman Kean	Club Trophies	Gillian Fletcher
Editor Newsletter	Alex Blackwell	Distribution of Annual	Séamus O'Connor
Treasurer - Subscriptions	Peter Mullan	Archive	Seán Fergus

Editor's Remarks

Once again it has been my pleasure to edit and compile this Annual.

The Club's activities this year have been dominated by the Saoirse Rally which was so ably organised by Séamus O'Connor. Séamus has written a report on the Rally and Ed Wheeler, Tony Linehan, John Crebbin, Cormac O' Carroll and John O'Connor have contributed logs of their voyages to and from Madeira. We also have logs ranging from a circumnavigation of Whiddy Island to a cruise on the Columbia River, Oregon.

To keep the Annual within reasonable size limits

I have to edit the logs. I hope contributors will forgive me if I have omitted parts they thought were important. If you intend to contribute to the 2024 Annual please read the guidelines for contributors inside the front cover. Thank you to all the contributors who have had such interesting cruises and who have put in so much time, thought and effort to write logs, cruising articles and Dunn's Ditties.

Very many thanks to Norman Kean and Andrew Wilkes for proofreading.

Máire Breathnach

Challenge Trophy Awards

Peter Fernie

I was unprepared for the call from the Commodore early in the year to ask me to adjudicate the logs for the Challenge Trophy Awards. In my naïveté I had always assumed that if I submitted a log early enough, then I would be protected against having to do this daunting task. Of course, it is a great honour to be asked, but I approach it with trepidation, being cognisant of the illustrious contributors and adjudicators over the last 92 years of the Annual's history. Indeed when I researched the various prologues from Adjudicators over the recent past the word trepidation seems to crop up regularly. At least I had a summer in Spain to cogitate over what makes a log worthy of one of the Challenge Trophy Awards.

There are, of course, some objective criteria. A seventeen metre yacht cannot expect to be awarded the Marie Trophy for sub 30 foot yachts and those cruising in the Eastern Mediterranean cannot expect to be considered for awards restricted to cruises in Scotland or Ireland. The Editor also provides helpful notes and advice for contributors which generally seem to be more honoured in the breach than the observance. That is the easy bit. Having taken the objective aspect into account one is left with the realisation that one's choice is bound to be subjective and possibly considered by others to be eccentric. So be it. I apologise in advance to all those who disagree with my choices.

What constitutes a good log? I am guided by those sailing accounts or books that I keep by the bunk or bed, that I can go back to and read again and again. Tales that transport you to the planning, the difficulties, the exhilaration, the fear and the hardships as well as the undoubted joy at a cruise successfully ended, the new locations discovered and visited. As well as the practicalities, I like to read what the author thinks, sees, feels and hears. I want to get the quintessence of a cruise – not read a telephone directory.

Only fourteen logs were received by the deadline. Two logs were received late but were still considered as they were both worthy contributions. Five of the logs had a Madeira - Saoirse dimension. Only one log covered a cruise solely in Ireland. There was no circumnavigation of Ireland. There were two Scottish logs. There was one high latitude cruise. Mechanical and electronic problems proliferated in many logs. The weather blighted many plans this year especially in northern latitudes. However a copy of a communication that appeared in the 1932 Annual suggests that a poor summer in these waters is not that unusual.

To ye Honble Samuel Pepys,
Secretary to ye Navy.

Hyleck Roads
neere Leverpole,
Ye 22nd August, 1689.

Hond. Sir,
After busking uppe and downe ye Irish Coast We arrived this morning at Hyleck [Hoylake] I have noe more to say but pray that itte may not be our station this wynter to cruise in ye Irishe Sea itte being ye worst place imaginable for Tempestuous Cold Wether. Wee having hadde this yeere noe Summer to speeke of but Wyynds and Raines and Crewel seas
I remain your duty full son [godson]
Saml St. Michel

All logs which are submitted by the deadline are considered for the awards although of course not all can be awarded a trophy. Nevertheless, they are all included in the Annual if space permits. As part of my adjudication process, I have referred back to the some of earliest copies of the Annual time and time again, and, in consequence, have probably spent longer idly browsing when I should have been getting on with judging. Our archives are a wonderful resource. I am more convinced than ever that the ICC Annual is a quite remarkable publication which can take a rightful place amongst the historical narratives of Slocum, McMullen and Smeeton. We can all be extremely proud of it and **everyone** who contributes is part of that.



The Faulkner Perpetual Challenge Cup.

There were a number of logs that were possible contenders for this award. However, I award it to Ed Wheeler in *Witchcraft of Howth* for his cruise from Strangford Lough to Madeira and back, in fact, the only ICC boat to sail from Ireland for the Saoirse rally. *Witchcraft of Howth* first appeared in these pages 32 years ago and since then has had many adventures. The author is conscious of the increasing decrepitude of both the boat and the Skipper and decides to see just how bad things are. The boat needs work. Crew lists are complicated and members are drawn from far and wide, some of whom have never sailed overnight before. One crewmember is the Skipper's 'nephew's friend's girlfriend's girlfriend's boyfriend - Ruiri, a plumber from Leitrim' who subsequently sleeps overnight in a field whilst waiting for a flight in the Azores. He seems like a handy guy to have around. From the off, the difficulties are manifest. Whilst *Witchcraft* retains the ascetic simplicity of her 1976 design, without such home comforts as showers, hot water or a refrigerator (I approve), they are still in sight of the Tuskar Rock as a troubling bilge leak is discovered, the rudder makes an alarming clunk and the masthead lights have failed. Undaunted they press on to Galicia, Portugal, Madeira and return to Ballydorn via the Azores. They heave to in a Force 7 to eat supper, eventually fix all the boat niggles and the Skipper returns both 1/2 stone lighter and fitter. This log is wryly amusing, informative, self deprecating and documents an excellent cruise. It ticks all the boxes in my opinion and is a worthy recipient of the Faulkner Cup.

The Strangford Cup for an alternative best cruise

From leaving New Ross where *Annabel J* had been laid up for two years, Máire Breathnach together with husband, Andrew Wilkes embarked on an 80 day cruise that was constantly plagued by bad weather and gales. Up the west coast of Ireland to the Hebrides, they dodged from one safe harbour to another. From Stornoway they found a fair weather corridor for the passage to Iceland which they made in four days. A circumnavigation of Iceland followed. Part of the reason for the cruise was to obtain drone photographs for a revised edition of 'Arctic and Northern Waters', which Andrew edits. In a cruise of over 3,000 miles perhaps the greatest calamity was that Andrew managed to crash his new toy. Returning via the Faroe Islands to Stornoway, they had to sit out even more storms and eventually decided to leave *Annabel J* in Ardrossan for the winter. I have no charts or knowledge of Iceland whatsoever but I enjoyed following the circumnavigation and cruise on my old version of CM93. Máire just missed out on the Faulkner Cup but is a worthy recipient for the alternative best cruise.

The Fortnight Cup

There were but a few cruises that qualified for this award. Those cruises also qualified for other awards. After much deliberation I award the Fortnight Cup to Alan Leonard for a thoroughly entertaining narrative of returning *Ariadne* from Stornoway back to Sketrick Island in Strangford Lough. A cruise of merely 10 days and 350 miles manages numerous locations and a surprising amount of benign weather considering the year. He even enters the confessional (I will leave you to read about it) and welcomes the humility such events engender.

The Round Ireland Navigation Cup

Not awarded this year

The Wybrants Cup

The Leonards, both Colin and Alan could equally have won the Wybrants Cup but I award it to Colin as, being a member of the working population, he is ever cognisant of the amount of time available. Again it was a wet and windy cruise from Strangford to Stornoway but suffused with an overabundance of oatcakes, he and his wife even went swimming. Passage planning took the form of 'somewhere in that direction and we shall see'. Colin had brought a book on cloud formations and their weather significance but became over-reliant on multifarious electronic forecasting all of which seemed universally incorrect. A passage to St.Kilda is spontaneously agreed the previous night and the weather gods smile on them. It is a well described account of a 450 miles cruise with an abundance of what many would call 'rock hopping'. I hope that my choice does not lead to familial discord and award the Wybrants Cup to Colin Leonard.

The Fingal Cup

The adjudication for this trophy has caused me the most difficulty, like so many of my predecessors. I could have awarded this trophy for many of the cruises. In the end I shortlisted the cruises of Robert Barker to Montenegro and Darragh Nagle in *Chantey V* on the Columbia River, both areas of which I was totally unfamiliar. Robert's cruise in *Kir Royale* is a mine of information for ICC members planning to cruise

Montenegro, despite the obvious governmental bureaucratic hurdles. I had no charts of Darragh's cruising area from Victoria up the Columbia River but with my old CM93 vector charts I was able to plot the passages and stops. He sailed 200 miles to the mouth of the river and nearly as much again up the river to The Dalles. For those interested, the river goes on for another 1,100 miles. He ends up sailing through a desert landscape and visiting a neon sign exhibition before returning back to Victoria in double quick time. Daragh and his various crews enjoyed themselves without doubt and I am pleased to award him and *Chantey V* the Fingal Cup.

The Rockabill Trophy

As Paul Conway and Gillie Fletcher observe, quoting Muhammad Ali 'No plan survives the first punch'. The plan was to complete the final part of a three year extended cruise to the Baltic on his Contessa 32 *Cevantes*, with a gentle meander through the Dutch canals and a cruise to Brittany before returning to Ireland. A succession of named storms necessitated a change of plan and the south coast of England seemed a more prudent option. Even then they were constantly storm bound and by day 37 of the cruise they had endured 21 days being battened down in some safe haven or other. A truck and trailer option was considered before a weather window allowed then to reach Kilmore Quay. Then they had to leave the boat to attend to long overdue domestic matters and only completed the sail to Greystones some weeks later. Whilst many logs describe inclement weather this year *Cevantes* seemed to get it the worst. Many was the time, storm bound that they yearned for a faster and more spacious boat but they never doubted the seaworthiness of their vessel. As Paul and Gillie end their log with 'It was very much a case of dreaming to sail on a bigger boat or sailing the dream on a Contessa 32'. This, I feel is the essence of the Rockabill Trophy.

The Glengarriff Trophy

The Glengarriff Trophy is for the best cruise in Irish waters. Remarkably there was only one cruise in Irish waters this year, although Paddy Barry, in his recently acquired Drascombe lugger made numerous sorties around the country in various locations from Clifden to Dungarvan. Thus, despite the log from Conor O'Byrne sailing his 26 foot Sadler, *Calico Jack* being the only contender, this in no way diminishes an enjoyable account of what the author himself calls a 'not very ambitious objective' of sailing from Galway to Bantry Bay and back with a circumnavigation of Whiddy Ireland. As an adjudicator I had a rule of thumb which I call my 'waffle index'. This is the number of lines in a log account before any actual sailing happens. Conor's account started sailing by line five. Well done. However he did score badly on the excessive exclamation mark index. This was counterbalanced by two solo passages from Cahersiveen to Castletownbere and from Lawrence Cove back to Galway and makes this a worthy winner of the Glengarriff Trophy.

The Atlantic Trophy

There were 4 logs which qualified for the Atlantic Trophy. Two of them were passages between Ireland and Madeira on the *Ilen*, one was *Ocean Blue* with Frank Cassidy and the fourth was Ed Wheeler on *Witchcraft*. *Ocean Blue* was a close contender with a lyrical description of a cruise from Kinsale to Flores, but more of that later. What particularly impressed me about *Witchcraft's* passage, was that Ed and his indomitable 'newbie' crew, since leaving Santa Maria in the Azores and, having survived gales, broken fan belts and the rearranging of the Skipper's manly features, made landfall off Galley Head and proceeded promptly onward to Strangford, eschewing the delights of various west Cork and south coast fleshpots. Having successfully navigated the SE corner of Ireland, they had the misfortune to hook a floating line off Greystones and still they went on, finally coming alongside the lightship in Ballydorn after 12 days and 1,377 miles. As a tribute to their resolute doggedness, I am pleased to award the Atlantic Trophy to Ed Wheeler and *Witchcraft of Howth*.

The Perry Greer Bowl

The Perry Greer Bowl is for the best first log. We only had one first log, that of Tony Linehan and *Sea Witch*. However lest you think that Tony won this merely by default, that is far from the case. He could have won several awards. Had he not won anything else, I would have requested that the ICC create a trophy just for him, called 'The Adversity Cup'. *Sea Witch* had sat on the the hard in an unforgiving Greece for two years, as a result of Covid and received a lightning strike which corrupted all things electronic. Subsequent insurance inspections then disclosed rigging failures. Tony had planned prudently with a 6 week buffer period to bring *Sea Witch* across the Mediterranean and eventually to Madeira and the Saoirse Rally with various choreographed sets of crew changes. His Odyssey began in Mid April. Greek lassitude combined with bureaucracy delayed the launch. Post launch, mysterious fluids appeared under the engine with equally mysterious noises from it. Jib furlers and halyards are jammed and require professional assistance. Crew dispositions and flights are rearranged and keep the Skipper (and reader) in a state of continual exhaustion. Gales and orcas are avoided before the boom disconnects from the mast when they are close to Madeira.

With all these misfortunes I would not have been unduly surprised if the Skipper had reported a plague of frogs and locusts. Yet despite all the trials and tribulations, *Sea Witch* is eventually brought safely to her new home in Galicia. Lesser skippers might have decided that perhaps tennis or fishing is a preferable and less stressful pastime. However after three months on board and 3,000 miles the skipper is 'exhausted but happy' A commendable first log and winner of the Perry Greer Bowl.

The Wild Goose Cup

Starting a log with a quotation from the Bard of Stratford and then in the first paragraph to quote something that may or may not be from Ralph Waldo Emerson is certainly one way for the author to endear himself to this Adjudicator. At first sight, a cruise from Vigo to Lisbon is no great shakes – just a few miles down the coast. The author then reveals that much work has to be done over the winter to *Ocean Blue* and this is better done in Ireland. After a winter of sanding and shopping and the expenditure of much in the way of green folding stuff, *Ocean Blue* sets out from Kinsale. Tramping down to the Azores, there is a 'Magical moon and starry skies', an 'orange waxing gibbous orb' interspersed with more workaday observations such as 'fraying on headsail reefing line'. The intemperate weather abates and at last two courses can be served for dinner with an issue of grog. The latter brings on serious lyricism 'A sky reminiscent of old World War Two movies. At times, there is a spotlight round pool of moonbeam in the distance – my kind of sailing'. Ruby, the reliable Hydrovane, gets them safely to Flores which is populated by a race of seemingly 'university educated sea gypsies living a slow chilled dream'. Grace, the Skipper's Generation Z daughter, loses her mobile phone overboard and spends over seven days without social media or looking at a phone screen. Surely a record. She becomes infected with the skipper's mellifluousness, writes her own entry in the log and decides that 'maybe being without a phone isn't all bad'. Frank Cassidy has produced a rhapsodic account of a modern 3,000 mile cruise as it might have been written by our own Wallace Clark and is a most worthy winner of the Wild Goose Cup.

The Marie Trophy

Since this trophy was first awarded fifteen years ago it has been the preserve of only six different boats, some of which have won it multiple times. Yet the Members' yachts lists fifty five boats under the 9.14 metre threshold. It has always seemed strange to me that there is not much more competition for this elegant trophy dedicated to encouraging modest cruises in smaller vessels without all the mod cons and comforts. Paddy Barry, who is no stranger to these pages with his high latitude exploits among others, is another ICC member who is conscious of approaching decrepitude (cf. *Witchcraft*). Part of his Five Year Plan involves a 19 foot (or 5.7m) Drascombe Lugger, drawing 10 inches, as yet unnamed or listed in the Members' boat list. Gunkholing cruises around Clifden, Waterford, Kerry and Galway capture the ethos and spirit of earlier times in the ICC. Inadequate boom tents, deflating air beds, rain, sleepless nights and incipient pneumonia all are added to the mix. My deceased erstwhile co-owner and sailing companion David Whitehead always asserted 'the smaller the boat the greater the fun'. I hope the award of the Marie Trophy to Paddy Barry and his Drascombe will encourage other members with smaller boats to embark on gunkholing cruises around the coast and elsewhere. But please not on Lake Baikal.

The Dunn's Ditty Salver

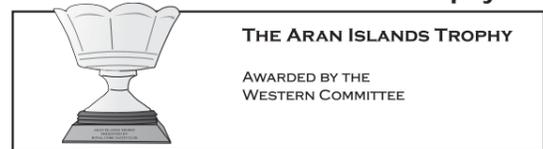
Awarded by the Annual Editor, Máire Breathnach to Brian Law.

RIGHT: Peter Fernie's Mystic in the Sound of Jura



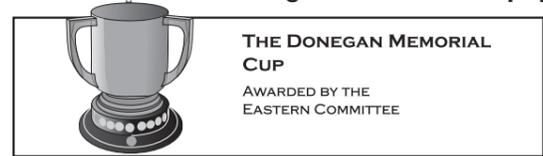
Club Awards

The Aran Island's Trophy



Tom Foote is awarded the Aran Islands Trophy by the Western Committee for his long and outstanding cruising career and contribution, including being the eldest participant in Saoirse Rally this year

The Donegan Memorial Trophy



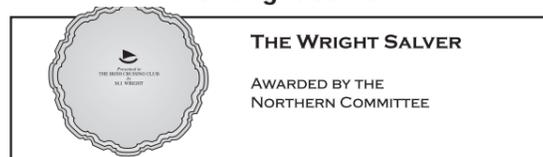
The East Region Committee has decided to award Tony Linehan the Donegan Trophy for a 'meticulously planned and executed cruise to Madeira'.

The Waterford Harbour Cup



The Southern Committee is delighted to nominate Tom Kirby for the Waterford Harbour Cup in recognition of his service to ICC, sailing and indeed racing. Tom joined ICC in 1971 and over the years has cruised with Richard and Ron Cudmore, Brendan O Callaghan, Pat and Ann Lyons. He sailed *Yami-Yami* extensively with his family and also chartered yachts to partake in rallies in Scotland and the Basque Country. Tom and Sean Norris, (co owners of *Raffles*) have competed in many racing events - ICRA championships in 2017, RCYC October League in 2018 and Calves Week. Tom has also been race officer for Calves Week. Tom's enthusiasm for the ICC is well known. He was a Committee member from 2013 to 2017, ICC Honorary Treasurer from 2019 to 2021 and Log Adjudicator for in 2022.

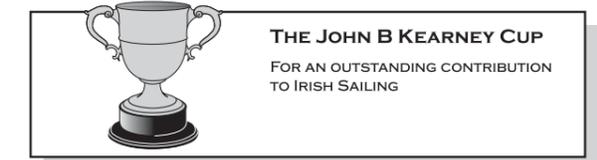
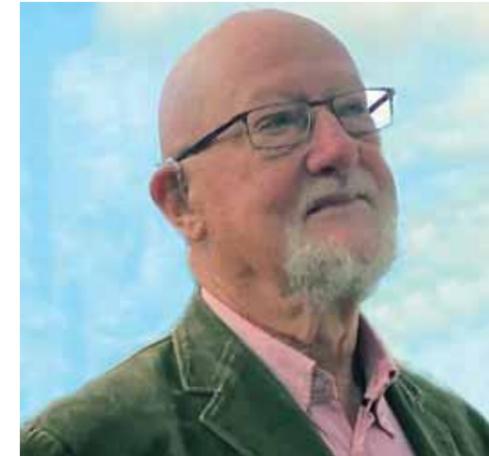
The Wright Salver



The Wright Salver awarded by the Northern Committee is to Adrian & Maeve Bell. They have sailed together for over 40 years starting in racing dinghies including *Enterprises* and *Fireballs*. They competed in Regional, National and World Championships. In later years they have cruised extensively in Scandinavian waters. Both Adrian & Maeve have been involved with RYANI with Maeve being a former Chairperson and earlier this year inducted into the RYANI Hall of Fame for services to sailing.

The John B Kearney Cup

Ed Wheeler



The John B Kearney Cup is awarded to Ed Wheeler in recognition of his outstanding cruising adventures and his service to the ICC and the sailing fraternity generally. Ed has been a member since 1975 during which time he has been noted for his adventurous sailing receiving many awards for his logs. He won the Faulkner Cup, our premier award, in 2008 for a voyage of over 7,000 miles from Madeira to West Africa and home again, sailing mostly two up but single-handed for the passage from the Canaries to the Azores.

He has twice won the Round Ireland Navigation Cup, in 1999 and 2022, and was of course part of other award-winning cruises on board with Winkie Nixon. He won the Glengariff Trophy in 2010 and the Fingal Cup in 2018. In 2003 he was awarded the Rockabill Trophy for 'a feat of exceptional navigation/seamanship' whilst the Northern Committee awarded him the Wright Salver in 2016 for services to the Club. This summer he sailed *Witchcraft*, now a venerable 47 year old *Contessa 35*, to Madeira and back on the occasion of the Saoirse Rally this year.

In addition to his cruising achievements, he has been the chair of the ICC publications company for many years and edited the ICC Annual for four years from 2013 to 2016.

Ed has been a long-standing member of the Royal Ulster Yacht Club in Bangor, its Rear Commodore in 2017 and 2018 and its top position of Vice Commodore for the past two years. While in office, membership has increased and the RUYC has held several notable sailing events including a revitalised Bangor Week. His outstanding contribution to the RUYC is perhaps his being the author of the book 'Royal Ulster Yacht Club - A Pictorial History'.

BELOW: *Witchcraft* off the RUYC



The Friendship Cup



Members will be aware from the Newsletter that the Friendship Cup was presented to the Club at the annual dinner in Sligo this year by the Cruising Club of America. The presentation is documented in a Deed of Gift as follows:

"Deed of Gift "Friendship Cup" March 25, 2023

By All Presents Known:

The Cruising Club of America and the Irish Cruising Club have a long standing and close relationship founded on their shared love of challenging the elements, cruising the world's oceans and sharing seafaring experiences. A foundation of both clubs is the mutual respect, friendship and camaraderie of their shipmates.

In recognition of the relationship of both clubs, the "Friendship Cup" is hereby deeded, in perpetuity, to the Irish Cruising Club to be awarded annually by the ICC, in its sole discretion, to members or their spouses, who exemplify the highest values of the ICC."

Respectfully and on behalf of the CCA,

**Christopher L. Otorowski
Commodore
Cruising Club of America**

Members of the Club to make Nominations for Award of the Cup

The committee invites each member of the Club to nominate a potential recipient for the Cup annually. Nominations should be in writing and sent to the Hon. Secretary, Donal Gallagher at 4 Thormanby Hill, Howth, Dublin 13 D13 C9 W6 or by email to donal.a.gallagher@gmail.com.

The nomination letter or email should set out the reasons why the person nominated is worthy of the award and should emphasise:

- cruising background whether adventurous, taking place over many years, ranging across many craft, and/or seamanlike approach and
 - provide evidence of their camaraderie and friendship which should focus on the involvement of others and being active in support of the Club and its members and the Club's relationship with its sister clubs
- Nominations must be received by no later than 31st January.

Announcement of Winner

The nominations will be reviewed by the Committee which will choose the winner who will be announced at the AGM. Presentation of the Cup will take place at the Annual Dinner.



The Saoirse Rally Madeira 2023



Commemorating the centenary of Conor O'Brien's circumnavigation

Séamus O'Connor

Development of the Rally Concept

The rally was organised to commemorate the centenary of Conor O'Brien's commencement of his circumnavigation of the world via the three great Capes. He left Dun Laoghaire on the 17 June 1923 and his first port of call was Funchal in Madeira where arrived on the 3 July 1923. Conor O'Brien was the first person to be awarded Honorary Membership of the ICC in recognition of his outstanding achievement.

Ilen leads the fleet into Funchal. Photo by CNF

The ICC decided to commemorate the occasion with a rally arriving in Funchal on the 3 July 2023. We had hopes that the 'new' *Saoirse* would be ready to take part in the rally, but this was not to be. However, the subcommittee was delighted that the AK *Ilen* was able to take part and her voyage to the rally is relayed elsewhere in this annual. From early on we engaged with relatives of Conor O'Brien,

particularly grandnieces Silvia, Charlotte and Iseult who were very supportive and both Charlotte and her son Alex Delamer as well as Iseult participated in the rally.

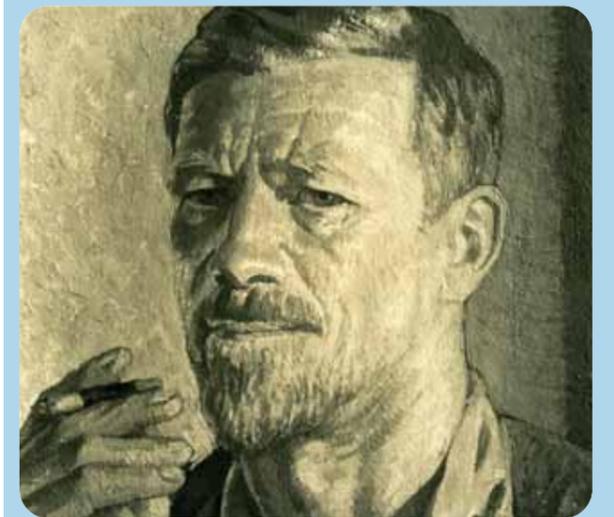
Organisation

At the February 2022 ICC Committee meeting a subcommittee was established consisting of **Séamus O'Connor** as chair, together with **Tony Linehan**

Historical Background

'Sailing was his first love and he designed and had built a yacht, *Saoirse*, to circumnavigate the globe. *Saoirse* (Freedom) was a 20 ton, 42 foot ketch built in 1922 in Baltimore, Co. Cork. He made the famous circumnavigation between 1923 and 1925 – the first recorded by an amateur skipper from west to east. His account of the voyage – "Across Three Oceans" (1927), became one of the classics of maritime literature. Given that the independent state of Ireland had only been established in 1922, he was certainly the first person to carry the new flag of the Irish Republic around the world'.
O'Brien also designed the *Ilen*, a 56-foot auxiliary ketch based on *Saoirse*. He personally supervised the construction in Baltimore on behalf of the Falklands Island Company and undertook to deliver the vessel to the Falklands. The *Ilen* subsequently plied the waters of the Falklands profitably for nearly 60 years. It was brought back to Ireland and restored by Gary McMahon (ICC) in Hegarty's Boatyard near Baltimore.

Jim McAdam, 'CONOR O'BRIEN: IRISH PATRIOT, SAILOR AND ADVENTURER'



'Ireland's Conor O'Brien was the first amateur skipper to circumnavigate the globe by the classic sailing ship route south of the great Capes, running down his easting in the big winds of the Great Southern Ocean which blow unhindered round the globe. But although his 42ft ketch *Saoirse* – which he'd designed himself – was often described as a "little ship", she was tiny by comparison with the enormous square-riggers which regularly plied this route'.
W M Nixon, *Afloat* magazine

Conor O'Brien sailed under the burgee of the Royal Cruising Club (it was before the foundation of the ICC) and his ensign was the tri-colour of the Irish Free State and that was a first in every respect. Conor O'Brien designed the 56' AK *Ilen* as a larger sister of *Saoirse*. This he did in January 1927 with the assistance of crew Denis Cadogan and Con Cadogan of Cape Clear Island.

and **Paul Taylor**. A short time later **John Duggan**, who is based in Cascais, was invited to join the subcommittee. The subcommittee conducted all its meetings using Zoom and minutes were issued to keep track of items and actions. John Duggan made an exploratory visit to Funchal in May 2022 and a further detailed visit in April 2023 was undertaken by Séamus O'Connor and John Duggan.

Preparations

Three winter lectures were organised by Tony Linehan to 'whet the appetite' for O'Brien, the Rally and Madeira.

Jim McAdam - Conor O'Brien, his boats *Saoirse* and *Ilen*, and his ground breaking voyage around the world.
John Leahy - Cruising Weather and forecasting.
John Duggan and Séamus O'Connor - Sailing to Madeira, possible harbours, programme of events, and information.

Letters were issued to intended participants which included useful information about Madeira, flights, hotel lists, vessel and crew entry requirements and the rally programme.

Planning the Rally

Peter Haden suggested getting in contact with **Cátia Carvalho Esteves**, Port Officer OCC, Madeira and by a fortuitous coincidence John Duggan is the OCC PO at Cascais. John contacted Cátia and communicated the ICC proposal and the intended dates. Cátia played a pivotal role in establishing and nurturing the contacts with CNF and the other local entities. Cátia was wonderful in every respect and opened many a door for us. We are indebted to her for all she did to help us.

We had agreements in place with all the key stakeholders in Madeira, namely,
APRAM: Administração dos Portos da Região Autónoma da Madeira, S.A. the regional Port administrators for Funchal and Porto Santo
CNF: The Clube Naval do Funchal - the principal sailing club based in Funchal, they were to act as the sponsoring club for the rally. They have the main influence over the use of the special berthing area known as the Events Basin. They put all the arrangements in place for berthing the yachts in the Events Basin and they set up the 'Tented Village' close by. They also arranged for some yachts to be accommodated in Funchal Marina as the Events Basin capacity was circa 18 yachts. They also arranged the musical entertainment each evening.
DTRM: Direção Regional de Turismo da Madeira; the Regional Tourism Authority for Madeira. They were the main sponsors of the rally and covered the costs of installing the temporary moorings, the tented village, nightly musical entertainment, plus the wine and beer hour.
The DTRM 'quid pro quo' was that the rally would provide appropriate publicity in Ireland and across

the yachting press that Madeira is a desirable tourism and sailing destination. To meet this request the subcommittee invited Leszek Wolnik to assist us as he had PR experience. We also contracted a professional PR Consultant Stacy Williams. For the subcommittee and indeed for the Commodore the PR aspects represented a huge challenge. However with Leszek's tenacity and Stacy's enthusiasm and professionalism a very good outcome was achieved for Madeira, the AK *Ilen* and her charities, the AK *Ilen* Trust and 'Sailing into Wellness'. Alex Delamer was our star billing especially as he crewed on the AK *Ilen* on the voyage to Madeira.

Storm Oscar hit Madeira in early June and the ensuing heavy rain caused widespread mud slides which blocked the marina entrance. Frantic efforts were put in place to have the entrance dredged so that some access could be provided. On arrival in Funchal on the 3 July only HW access was available thus some of our fleet had to anchor and enter the marina the following day.

The Rally

30 June to 2 July

The fleet gathered at Porto Santo mainly at anchor with some marina berths made available by rafting up. In all 22 yachts made it to Porto Santo A 'beach' BBQ on Sunday night 1 July, was attended by approximately 70 people and was an excellent opening event.

3 July

A dawn departure from Porto Santo was necessary to arrive in Funchal in the afternoon. Nautical stop to assemble fleet for sail-past before docking in Event Basin. The nautical parade was led by the AK *Ilen*. By then the fleet had grown to 28 yachts. A BBQ and reception with musical entertainment and a bar was held in the 'Tented Village' next to the Events Basin. About 110 people attended the BBQ.

4 to 7 July

Rally participants had free time to engage in various activities – golf, guided hill-walking, levada walks, learn about Madeira history, people, culture, and sample Madeira wine etc. There was an organised bus tour of the island and a visit to Ilhas Desertas with guides from the National Park Nature Reserve. Every evening from 1830 to 2030 the CNF organised music entertainment and a drinks reception in the 'tented village'. The prizegiving for the schools Art Competition winners were presented with on Wednesday 5th.

8 July

Closing Dinner In the tented village – this was hosted by CNF and in all 150 people attended including the Irish Ambassador to Portugal HE Ralph Victory and Louisa Blandy Moreau Hon Consul of UK in Madeira. Dinner was followed by music and a spectacular display of fireworks.

Attendees

Invitations were issued to all ICC members and our associated clubs, RCC, CCC, OCC and CCA. The Commodore also issued an invitation to members of the Associação Nacional de Cruzeiros (ANC) in Lisbon. ANC is the Portuguese equivalent to ICC.

The Fleet

Rih Malti Cutter 49 ft Bestevaer Patric Piret

Ilen Traditional Yacht Conall Morrison

Sail La Vie Dufour 360 Grand Large Tomas Barradas

Njord Phino 37 Leonardo Quintela da Fonseca

Pendragon Jeanneau Sun Odissey 49 J.Falcao Neves

Fengshui Dufour 325GL Rui Carvalho

High Flight Contest 38S Salvador Ulrich

Maibar Amel SuperMaramu Luis Correia

Lés a Lés Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 40.3 Miguel Simas

Azygos Jeanneau SunCharm 39 Antonio Carvalho

Radical III X-Yachts 119 Miguel Mourão

Orchestra Jongert 20 Michael Craughwell

Seascape Warrior 40 Ian Redsell

Sea Witch Jeanneau SO 409 Tony Linehan

Xanadu X-46 Richard O'Toole

Saol Nua Amel Mango James Cahill

Freya Gladiateur 33 Lorne Byatt

Fluid Thrill Beneteau Oceanis 43 Dan Counihan

Witchcraft of Howth Contessa 35 Ed Wheeler

Jane Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 42 John O' Connor

Encore Beneteau First 40.7 Dermot Cronin

Chardonnay of Solent Northshore Vancouver 36
Martin Smith

Pemandia Malo 40 Peter Fabricius

Radiance II Hallberg Rassy 43 Peter Maher

Embla Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45 Paul French

Tara Alden 54 Robert Stewart

Wodan Jeanneau 32 Brody Sweeney

Sli Eile Hallberg Rassy 42 James (Séamus) O'Connor

More about Madeira

Madeira represents a significant island in the context of the 'Era of Discovery' for Portugal; Madeira was its first discovery in 1419. Madeira consists of the main island with the capital Funchal, to the NE is the island of Porto Santo. It is a delightful island to visit. To the SE are the Ilhas Desertas, made up of three islands, which are an uninhabited (except for wardens) nature reserve with some anchorages.

Madeira itself is very historic with delightful architecture and interesting botanic gardens to visit, as well as exploring the bodegas for the famous Madeira wine. There are numerous restaurants. Of special interest to walkers are the stunning levadas. These are irrigation channels, all with a narrow footpath beside them, that encircle the south of the island at various levels offering wonderful, if sometime quite vertiginous, easy walks through varied countryside and villages. Tourism is the main source of income for the Island. It also has a thriving wine industry as well as a growing banana business.

The RCC Pilotage Foundation 'Atlantic Islands' now in its 7th Ed. (September 2021), provides comprehensive information for visiting the islands. Weatherwise temperatures are mild throughout the year, averaging 24°C in summer while sea temperatures are on average 22°C. North to northeasterly winds prevail for about 60% of the year but with local variations particularly on the south side of the island.

Summary

The Saoirse Rally was a great success for all involved. It was a fitting celebration of Conor O'Brien's magnificent achievement both in terms of yacht design and sailing prowess. ICC members and their guests were treated to a veritable cornucopia of Madeiran food and culture and of course hospitality. We established links with Madeira and the ANC which we hope to build on in future years. The selection of photographs below is just a snapshot of all the fun and activities we enjoyed.

And finally, a big thank you to all who worked so hard to make it possible, our subcommittee of Séamus O'Connor, John Duggan, Tony Linehan and Paul Taylor. We are extremely grateful to CNF, APRAM and the Tourist Board DTRM and individually to **Cátia Carvalho Esteves**, Port Officer OCC, and CNF key personnel of **Antonio Cunha, Carlota Duarte, Marco Gamelas** and **Jaime Camacho**. Their unstinting help was always available to us. Muito Obrigado.

(Photographs of the Saoirse Rally (pages 5 - 16) by John Clementson, Aoife Nolan Beattie, Patricia O'Connor, Leszek Wolnik and CNF. Editor)

Porto Santo 30 June - 2 July



The port and marina, Porto Santo



On the picos - Henry Rooke, Peter Williams, Conall Morrison, Mirjam Schierscher and John Crebbin



ABOVE: Paul Taylor, (ICC), Paddy O'Keeffe, Séamus O'Connor, (ICC), and Gráinne O'Connor, on board Slí Eile on passage to Porto Santo



ABOVE: The Ilen crew after an early arrival in Porto Santo

PORTO SANTO



ABOVE: Dinner at Porto Santo - Paddy O'Keeffe, Julie O'Keeffe, Gráinne O'Connor, Adam Landowne, Lorne Byatt, Paul Taylor, (ICC), Fred Gibson, Séamus O'Connor, (ICC), Patricia O'Connor

BELOW: Jack McCann, (ICC), and Patricia O'Connor in Porto Santo



ABOVE: A run ashore Porto Santo. L to R Pauline Jordan, Henry Rooke, Gráinne Fitzgerald, (ICC), and Peter Williams, (ICC).

BELOW: Ilen alongside in Porto Santo



ABOVE: Ilen crew in front of memorial plaque Porto Santo. BACK L - R: Aodh Ó Duinn, Mirjam Schierscher, Henry Rooke, John Crebbin, Conall Morrison, FRONT L - R: Alex Delamer, Pauline Jordan, Olga Scully, Gráinne Fitzgerald

BELOW: Ilen crew at BBQ Dinner in Porto Santo





Funchal
3 - 8 July



The fleet arrives





ABOVE: Entrance to the Tented Village, Funchal

BELOW: Left, Séamus O'Connor: Right James Cahill and Aoife Nolan Beattie: Peter Bowring in background



BELOW: Commodore David Beattie



BELOW: Bruce and Barbara Fennell with Yvonne Randalow



ABOVE: L - R, John Banim, Jan Wheeler, Ann Clementson, John Clementson and Ed Wheeler



ABOVE: Levada walks and a visit to the botanical gardens

ABOVE: Exchange of Club burgees. Commodore David Beattie, Antonio Bessa de Carvalho, president ANC, and Livramento Silva, Vice president of CNF.

BELOW: Crew of Fenshi with skipper Rui Carvalho also crew of Pendragon with skipper Joao Falcao Neves



BELOW: Award ceremony for Madeira Schools Art competition run in conjunction with the rally. L - R : Dr Maria Livramento Silva, vice president CNF, Aoife Nolan-Beattie, School mistress of winning school, Dr Marco Gomes and Jen Crebbin.





ABOVE: Final dinner 8 July. L - R : Marco Gomales, CNF, Commodore David Beattie, HE Ralph Victory, Irish Ambassador to Portugal, Dra. Clara Noronha do Gabonese, Regional Director of Tourism, Maria Livramento Silva, vice president of CNF and the British Honorary Consul Ms Louisa Blaney Moreau.



ABOVE: Carlotta Duarte - Head of marketing CNF and Geraldine Linehan



ABOVE: Commodore David Beattie and Maria Livramento Silva



ABOVE L - R: Charlotte Delamer, Ralph Victory, David and Aoife Beattie



ABOVE: Entertainment from Grupo de Foclore do Centro Cultural de Santo António

BELOW: Final dinner

BELOW: Folk dancing at the final dinner - Geraldine Linehan, Frank Ranalow, John Clementson, Mike Alexander and others.



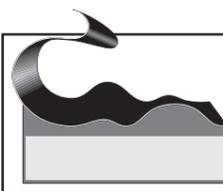
Round trip to the Saoirse Rally

Ed Wheeler



THE FAULKNER CUP

THE CLUB'S PREMIER AWARD



THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

FOR THE BEST OPEN SEA PASSAGE
WITH PORT TO PORT AT LEAST
1,000 MILES



Getting Ready

A hundred years ago, Conor O'Brien started his renowned circumnavigation in *Saoirse* and made his first stop in Madeira. This centennial was marked by a gathering there of ICC yachts and other invited clubs, organised by Rear Commodore Séamus O'Connor and his team. I decided that this would make a great excuse for another extended open-water cruise. It would also be a reprise of the same voyage in the same boat in 2003, when I was a mere boy of 61. Descent into decrepitude can take place slowly and nearly imperceptibly, so I was interested to find out in a practical way just how far down the tubes both *Witchcraft* and I had gone.

For those who do not know her, *Witchcraft of Howth* is a 1976 Contessa 35, a One-Ton Cup design by Doug Peterson. She is a sister-ship to Erik Aanderaa's *Tessie* (check out his You-Tube channel for videos of his solo voyages around the Norwegian sea and Iceland in all weathers) and hence capable of taking most of what the North Atlantic can throw at her (in summer, anyway). The boat was in need of TLC, so I drew up a list of essential, urgent and desirable jobs to do over the winter. The list was long and the corresponding ticks few by the date of launching in mid May.

One of the difficulties of undertaking a 3,500-plus mile cruise is that one is very unlikely to find a crew with time to complete the whole voyage. I therefore had three different sets of people sailing with me over the next eight weeks. My initial crew was my nephew Keith Gadd, who had been inconsiderate enough to father another child, due in early August, and therefore could only come as far as Arklow, and Johnny Ritchie (ICC), who was between boats and could come for a couple of weeks. My daughter Helen, who had sailed a bit with me but had never done an overnight passage, would join in Arklow. Thereafter, I had my son James and his girlfriend from southern Portugal to Madeira, and from there to the Azores and home, Keith's friend Marcus, a Cavan man. We would be joined in the Azores by Marcus's girlfriend's girlfriend's boyfriend Ruiiri, a plumber from Leitrim, for the passage home. (Well, who ever said these things were simple?). Neither Marcus nor Ruiiri had done any serious cruising but both travelled across the continent of Ireland to help me out with a furious final day's redding-up and antifouling and then had plenty of time to contemplate what they were letting themselves in for.

However, most things seemed to be working and I had invested in a new EPIRB, PLB, liferaft and other bits and pieces. One additional item I did ship aboard: a 25kg bag of builder's sand, as I'd read that the sonar system of orcas could be disrupted by sprinkling sand over the side, and there had already been orca attacks in southern Spain this year. Home comforts in *Witchcraft* are few, with no

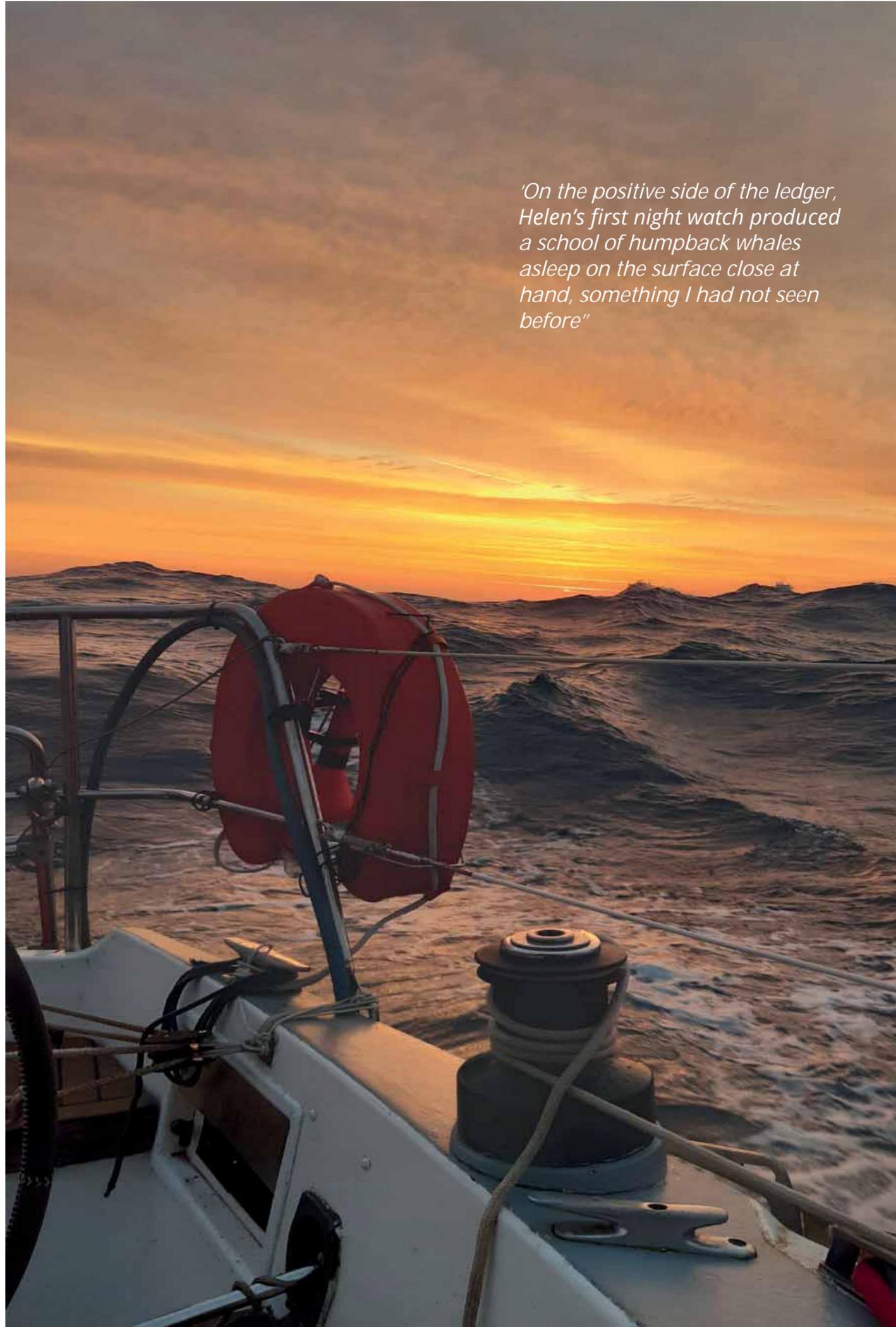
shower, hot water or fridge. My friend Pete, who has a large Oyster, talks about replacing his 'white goods' every so often. He means freezer, washing machine, microwave, etc, etc. This is one problem I do not have.

Heading South

Johnny, Keith and I set off in calm, fair weather from Ballydorn on Saturday 3 June. We had to motor most of the way to Arklow, where we embarked Helen and Keith left. By then a good NE breeze had set in so we sailed within an hour (Sunday lunchtime), not wishing to waste a fair wind. We took our departure for the Biscay passage from the Tuskar, goosewinged in a NE 3 to 4, pushing a foul tide. My initial euphoria at the functional state of the various onboard systems had taken a severe knock by now. The navigation lights failed, the steering gear gave out an alarming clunk each time the rudder passed the amidships position, there was a serious leak into the bilge, which I tracked down to a bolt holding the lower rudder bearing in place, and the oven when lit burnt like the gas flare from an oil rig. I couldn't fix any of these things at sea – I did trace the power as far as the wires going up the mast, so the lighting problem had to be something up top. The leak was the most annoying thing, as the flat bilge means that even a small amount of water sloshed over the cabin sole, creating greasy, slippery, squalid conditions in the sort of roly conditions we were getting.

Over the next couple of days, the wind stayed in the east and freshened gradually until, by the time we were a hundred miles or so west of Ushant on Tuesday, we had three reefs in and the genoa part rolled. Despite having no lights, we had traversed the traffic zones without incident. I wasn't particularly worried, as I am convinced that merchant and fishing vessels do not keep a proper visual look-out, relying on radar and AIS to avoid collisions. We have no AIS transponder but do have a receiver as part of the VHF, which is very useful for tracking nearby vessels. Previously, trying to work out whether a bearing was changing in a seaway was rather tricky. The Aries windvane steering gear, very Heath Robinson-looking but ingenious and beautifully built, was working well. It uses a servo rudder which amplifies the force from the wind vane and drives the main rudder via steering lines led through blocks to a drum clamped to the wheel. With a fin keel such as ours, it works best either with the wind forward of the beam or running or broad reaching in strong enough conditions to maintain a good apparent wind. This is best achieved with a twin headsail configuration, which I have not got, but *Witchcraft* is so easily driven that, with F 5 or more, I can hand the main and still get 6 or 7 knots boat speed.

It was good to have Johnny aboard. I have always found that experienced skippers make the best crew. Also, by the fourth day out, Helen had gained



'On the positive side of the ledger, Helen's first night watch produced a school of humpback whales asleep on the surface close at hand, something I had not seen before'

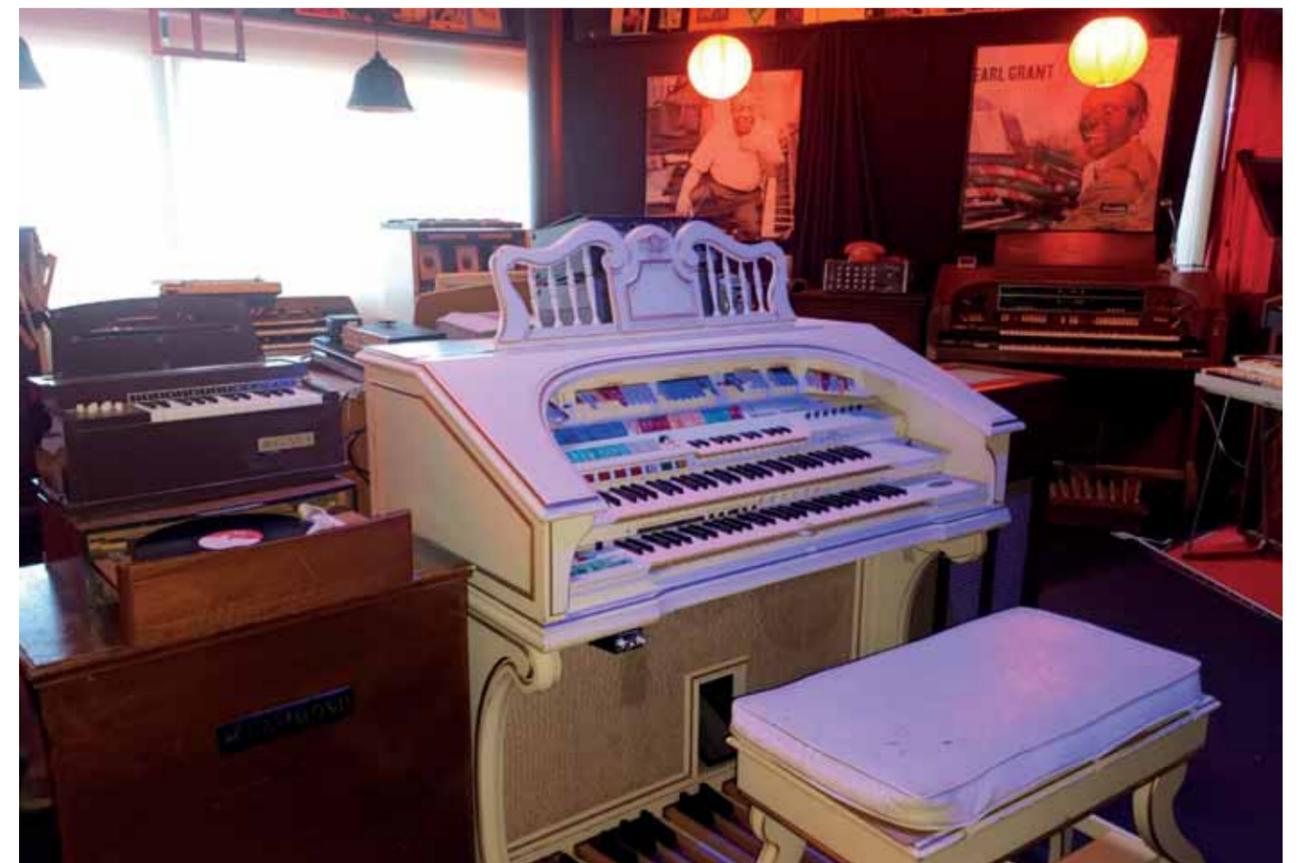
the confidence to stand a watch. We carried our soldier's breeze until the evening of that day, when it fell light and went ahead. The iron topsail was called into service. Rain overnight found a couple of new annoying deck leaks. A generator belt broke and had to be replaced, a frequent occurrence with us and probably due to some misalignment of pulleys. Another woe was the seizure of the starboard genoa sheet winch. On the positive side of the ledger, Helen's first night watch produced a school of humpback whales asleep on the surface close at hand, something I had not seen before. It also was becoming noticeably warmer. An ESE breeze came up in the morning and later we made landfall on Cabo Vilán and slipped into Camariñas in the rain at midnight with strong southerly winds forecast. Camariñas is slightly off the beaten track, being on the 'wrong' side of Finisterre. The marina is friendly, inexpensive and slightly well-worn, but with all the facilities one might require. The manager was a live-aboard Swede called Pedro, very helpful, and only charged us for one night. We met a Norwegian in a Naiad 391 who had lost his rudder to an orca attack. He was dubious about the sand. Also there were James Shepherd, (RCC), and Bee in the Contessa 32 *Laurán*, making their way south in leisurely fashion.

Iberian Coast

Our stay in Galicia was necessarily brief as there were crew-changes and flight deadlines looming. However, we popped into Muros on Saturday 10

June, motoring round Finisterre most of the way in heavy rain showers. The manager there was also called Pedro, but he wasn't Swedish. Our next and final stop in Galicia was San Vicente, or Piedras Negras, very definitely a tourist destination with lots of fancy apartments and a small but well-run marina. The weather had picked up and our passage through the Canal de Sagres and Paso del Carreiro was guided in the new edition of Henry Buchanan's 'Atlantic Spain and Portugal' by directions and photos supplied by our very own Norman Kean and Geraldine Hennigan, so all was very clear. At San Vicente, the walk round to Punta Miranda along a boardwalk past numerous gorgeous little beaches among enormous smooth round boulders (Piedras Negras) was stunning. Helen went on to work her way past the guns of the Zona Militar at the point and I went back. She rang later in some excitement summoning us up to an establishment called, with a certain lack of imagination, Piedras Negras. This is nominally a bar, so I plunged in gasping, for it was a warm day, to find the owner was quite uninterested in serving beer but was most insistent on showing us round his museum. Museum it was, of keyboards, organs, pianos, every kind of keyboard instrument dating back to spinets and harpsichords and forward to a couple of Mighty Wurlitzer cinema organs, remembered of my childhood. The owner's name is Julian Maeso and he is a highly successful song writer and rock musician who seems to prefer his eclectic museum to the bright lights. Well worth a visit.

BELOW: Keyboard museum, San Vicente





ABOVE: Julian and Helen

BELOW: Witchcraft in Viano de Castelo



We put our clocks back onto BST next day and headed south across the Portuguese border in very light variable winds. No sign yet of the Nortada. We left the much-indented Galician coast and coasted along the straighter shores of northern Portugal. Resisting the temptation to go into the Rio Minho because, once in, one may not get out again for some time in onshore winds, we rounded the breakwater at Viana do Castelo and called the marina for instructions. Since the latest edition of 'Atlantic Spain and Portugal', visitors are now told to go into the old fish dock in the northern arm of the harbour. This is both an easier entrance, with no run of tide, and is also right in the middle of the attractive old town. Berthing is on a pontoon opposite the retired white hospital ship *Gil Eannes*. Here, Helen was able to engage the friendly restaurant staff in what seemed to me to be fluent Portuguese but probably wasn't. She did this everywhere and it certainly broke the ice.

The following day, Tuesday 13 June, we at last got a fair breeze from the northwest and averaged over 6 knots under full sail to Leixoes, the port serving Porto. We unwisely followed local advice and took a bus into Porto. This took what seemed decades and rattled through every dismal suburb, eventually disgorging us on a hill above the port. Nevertheless, Porto is well worth visiting and now has a marina in the river opposite the city. If visiting from Leixoes, take a taxi. They are cheap. There was no fuel available in Leixoes, which is not a particularly attractive marina or vicinity. The next leg, to Lisbon, needed an overnight sail. By now, the predominant wind was northerly and much less use was made of the engine from here on. There is nothing of particular interest along this coast except for the extraordinary underwater cañon running close offshore of Nazaré. This provides shelter in

the approach to that harbour but also generates the most enormous waves at Praia do Norte north of Nazaré. These are the largest onshore waves in Europe if not in the world and attract surfers with a death wish from all parts.

We were now nearing one of our flight deadlines and had to get Johnny in a position to catch a plane on 16th from Faro. On Thursday 15 June, we went into the marina in Oeiras just outside the Douro bar, where we were able to top up with diesel. Oeiras has all the charm of Basingstoke on Sea but we did manage to find a good simple local restaurant tucked away among the high rise apartment blocks. Here we were joined for the evening by John Duggan, (ICC), who lives nearby in Cascais. John had joined me on my last visit to Lisbon to sail to Lagos, but was rather preoccupied this time. His life has become quite complicated but I gather that he had to fly to Helsinki the next morning to deliver a cat. Don't ask.

Johnny left us here to make his way to Faro. We stayed over for a day because I wanted to go up the Rio Tejo (Tagus) to Parque da Nações and they couldn't give us a berth until Saturday. I arranged for son James and his girlfriend to join us there, travelling up from Seville, which is apparently where you arrive from Rome, where they live. More complication. Anyway, Helen and I had a leisurely motor-sail up the Tejo and past the city. Parque da Nações marina is one of six or seven marinas inside the river entrance but the others seem to be permanently full. Parque da Nações is 7 miles upstream from the city centre, just below the Vasco da Gama bridge; however, it is easy to get into the city by bus or inexpensive taxi. The marina is in a modernist development built for Expo '98 and has the best aquarium I have seen nearby.

James and his German girlfriend Nöelle arrived and we found a Fado restaurant in Lisbon, where Helen excelled herself in international relations once again. Sadly, she had to leave and we departed on Tuesday 20th June with a warm sun and a WSW wind. Nöelle had had a bicycle accident shortly before leaving to join us and had stitches in her ankle. These had to be taken out within the next few days, so we decided to go to Lagos to have this done and take our departure for Madeira from there.

Not wanting to give Nöelle, who was new to sailing, an inaugural night at sea, we reached down the coast to Cabo Espichel and turned up towards Barra do Setúbal. The sailing directions were dubious about the chances of getting a berth in Sesimbra so I thought I would try a hole-in-the-cliffs anchorage a few miles to the east, just east of Cabo de Ares. Making our way in here, we were very nearly run down by a fishing vessel, one of a fleet, heading at high speed towards Sesimbra and keeping no kind of a lookout at all. We were stand-on vessel but had to take violent evasive action. When we did anchor, we had an uneasy night with a roll and strong catabatic winds off the cliffs. The next day brought a mixture of fair weather and rain and winds around the clock. When we went into Sines, we found that the marina was closed to visitors because of some unspecified hazard, so we anchored off the beach. Sines is a very busy port but also an attractive old town with a long maritime history. Vasco da Gama was born in the castle there.

Heading south from Sines, we had gradually increasing northerly winds until, by the time we rounded Cape St Vincent, it is fair to say that the Nortada had now set in. It was a bit late to press

Fada Restaurant, Lisbon





Harbour at Sines

on to Lagos, so I decided to anchor in Enseada de Sagres, a large sandy bay sheltered by the Ponta de Sagres. This is a pretty enough place, with good holding but the wind acceleration was phenomenal and we struggled to motor against near-gale force wind to the head of the bay. Rather than falling away in the evening, the strong winds persisted all night. Next day, Friday 23 June, we weighed anchor and cleared out under genoa only heading for Lagos. Halfway there, I noticed a split seam in the genoa two panels down from the head. Something else to keep me busy in Lagos. When we got to the marina, we found a couple of other boats on their way to the Madeira rally, including Séamus O'Connor, (ICC Rear Commodore), and Peter Fabricius, (RCC), who

Nöelle and James

had sailed down single-handed. Two days of make and mend in the heat of Lagos followed. We found an excellent inexpensive fish restaurant down at the fish dock, patronised by local dock workers and fishermen, which restored the tissues wonderfully. I stitched and fixed various things and overhauled and greased the winches but the yard was much too busy to get anything done about the leak, so we had to put up with that. I swapped to the No 3 genoa, not trusting my sewing all that much.

Passage to Madeira

After storing and refueling, we left Lagos in hot calm weather on 25 June. Reports suggested that we were just ahead of the orcas, reported the day before in



Portimão heading west. By the time we were 25 miles out, the Nortada had filled in and we had two reefs in the main. By Monday morning, we had handed the mainsail and were storming along at over 7 knots with just the small genoa, 'Arry Aries doing his stuff a treat. Sadly, this was not the best introduction to passage making for poor Nöelle, as a big lumpy sea built up and she was also suffering from sea sickness. She put up with it all very bravely but I could tell that for her this was an experience to be enjoyed rather in the retrospective than in the moment. However, if nothing else, we made the best passage of the cruise, averaging over 6 knots from Lagos to Porto Santo. We made landfall on Wednesday 28 June in a dying breeze, having to motor the last 20 miles or so. As we

came past Ilheu de Cima towards the harbour, the wind picked up and blew hard in our faces. There was no room alongside, so we anchored in the harbour along with many other boats. Strong winds persisted for most of our five day stay. Porto Santo island is very dry and has four desalination plants to cater for the influx of tourists from the much-enlarged airport.

The ICC rally started here, the festivities beginning with a barbecue on 1 July, my birthday, the day Nöelle left to return to Rome. It was all very well organised by Séamus O'Connor and his committee and I'm sure the rally is fully described elsewhere in the Annual. We had fairly well exhausted the possibilities of Porto Santo by the 3 July, when the whole fleet left to sail

'Arry Aries doing his thing





Porto Santo

to Funchal, 43 nm away. There wasn't much wind that day and everybody had to muster for a sail-past round Funchal harbour, led by the restored trading ketch *Ilen* (designed by Conor O'Brien for use around the Falkland Islands). Numerous dignitaries and local alickadoos were there to review the fleet, after which we made our way into a commercial basin which had additional pontoons installed to accommodate the 28 yachts there for the rally. Funchal marina itself had been badly damaged in floods a few weeks previously and was only partially accessible. It is also undergoing extensive redevelopment, so the facilities are pretty basic. We occupied ourselves with various parties and sightseeing trips over the next few days.

It was 16 years since I'd last been there and it seemed to me that it had become very overdeveloped, at least on the south coast. Tourism has always of course been important to Madeira, the famous Reid's Palace Hotel having opened in 1891. It co-existed with agriculture and viticulture but has now become predominant, with the small terraced fields on the hillsides now either overgrown or built on. Even the famous levadas, which delivered water from the high-rainfall north side of the island along the contours to irrigate the little fields are now largely used as tourist walking trails.

My wife Jan and sister Diana had taken a hotel room for a week while we were there and, given the paucity of marina facilities, their room was pressed into much use for showers. James departed on 8th and, on the evening of Sunday 9 July, Marcus Mundy flew in to join me. Marcus had done a bit of sailing but no overnight passage, so I was interested to find out how he would shape up. I need not have worried. Marcus learned quickly and was always willing and able to carry out any job aboard. The first one was to put the bag of sand ashore. Several other boats had done the same and the pontoon looked like a builder's yard. We set off on 10 July, sailing along the south coast of Madeira and admiring the many concrete apartment blocks which adorned

the landscape, all the way to Ponta do Pargo, the western point of the island, from which we took our departure for the Azores.

Madeira to the Azores

For the first two days, the winds were variable in strength and direction, the weather largely fair and we had a mixture of motoring and sailing. This was to be expected in the Azores high pressure system and gave Marcus a good chance to get to know the boat and become accustomed to nights at sea on watch-and-watch. The Whitlock steering gear now started showing alarming symptoms. As well as the clunk and partial jamming when the rudder went past amidships, the top of the steering pedestal started leaking copious quantities of grease, which ran down the pedestal and across the cockpit sole. There was little I could do about it at sea, so we just carried on. The wind then freshened from the west and we had to reef. We were making for Terceira to pick up Ruiiri but the wind gradually veered and we ended up beating, so I changed our destination to Santa Maria. The visibility was poor and just after we sighted the prominent headland of Ponta do Castelo, the latest crisis struck. I had been perturbed by the increasing frequency with which the automatic bilge pump was cutting in and ascribed this to a worsening of the leak. However, when I opened the cockpit locker to get something out, I found what looked like a small waterfall cascading through it. My first thought was that we had been holed and were in danger of sinking. It then turned out that the bilge pump line, which connects inside the locker to a skin fitting, had torn loose and was re-circulating the water through the locker and back into the bilge. This was annoying, as all the contents of the locker were now coated in oily mess but a definite relief, considering the alternative. Marcus hopped bodily into the locker, made a temporary repair and we got into the marina at Vila do Porto around noon on Friday 14th July.

The last time I had been in Vila do Porto, in 2008, the marina was brand new and almost totally

unoccupied. Now it was full up and we were lucky to get a berth. We had managed to time our arrival to coincide with a giant blues festival, which had drawn visitors from all arts and parts, including many yachts. Among these were Lorne Byatt (RCC) in *Freya* and Patrick from Belgium in his splendid aluminium cutter *Rih Malti*. Patrick, who is based in Vila do Porto, has filled his vessel with innumerable ingenious gadgets and wrinkles and is a wealth of help and information for visiting sailors. There were also another five or so Portuguese yachts from the Saoirse rally, but they had little to say for themselves. There is now a local yard in Vila, with a big boatlift and all workshop facilities. I had hoped to get the steering sorted there and the leak fixed, but they were so busy that this would have entailed weeks of waiting. I was able to lift out but not until the following Tuesday, so we spent four days in Santa Maria. Ruiiri, our Leitrim plumber, arrived first thing on Saturday morning, having flown from Terceira to Ponta Delgada, slept in a field outside the airport there and caught a very early flight to Santa Maria, so he arrived in good time for an early breakfast. Being stuck in Santa Maria is no hardship at all, as it is a splendid island with lots of interesting walks and a nice town above the marina. The steep walk up the hill to the town stimulates the appetite for the several restaurants there. For those of a more sedentary disposition, the Clube Naval at the marina has a good restaurant. Marcus and Ruiiri yomped across the island, covering many miles over the hilly terrain. In between, Marcus went up the mast and found and repaired a loose wire, so we had our running lights back.

Homeward Bound

On Tuesday 18 July we lifted out and within an hour had drawn and re-sealed the bolts in the lower rudder bearing, the source of our persistent leak. Marcus did sterling work, upside down in the cockpit locker to reach the nuts. We watered and stored the ship and departed for home at 1415. The boys had to get home for work, so there was no time for further Azorean exploration. Again we had light winds or calms for the first two days but by the morning of 20 July the wind freshened from the WNW to Force 5, then veered into the northeast to bring us hard on the wind. Ruiiri settled in well and proved to be a strong and willing shipmate. Not having a satellite phone, I had downloaded a 'Windy' forecast for the next eight days on leaving, and this was fairly accurate for the first four days. After that, it was back to the barometer and a keen windward eye to sniff out what was going to happen. My cynicism regarding the 'watches' kept by merchant ships, visual or electronic, was confirmed when I tried to get a forecast from a passing ship, using DSC Call from an AIS target. No response after two attempts. I decided to keep my westing, hoping for a good slant from the incoming systems predicted at long range by Windy. Sure enough, by Sunday 23rd, it was blowing fresh to strong from the NNW and we were making good progress on the port tack. However, it had built up a nasty cross-sea, so we hove to for dinner that evening, a peaceful interlude. Over the next few days the wind varied from WNW to NW and gradually increased in strength until by Wednesday 26 July it was F 6 - 7. The weather also deteriorated,

Steering Pedestal leaking grease



Witchcraft and Ilen, Funchal



Witchcraft of Howth

Contessa 35



with heavy overcast and rain. The same day, the glass fell by 13 points in 16 hours, so we were obviously going through a warm front. However, the expected gale did not materialize and conditions eased, with a freer wind. However, this meant that the point of sailing did not suit 'Arry Aries', so we had to use the Autohelm. The batteries ran down so quickly that I realised we had a serious earth leakage. We also broke another fanbelt while charging. One other

misfortune befell me: I had hoped to arrive home unscarred so as not to alarm Jan and smooth any suggestion for future adventures but, while halfway up the companion ladder for my midnight watch, the boat lurched off a sea into a trough and I shot out of the hatch horizontally, rotated on my right-hand grip on the sprayhood frame and brought up short face-first against the upper guard rail. No great harm was done but the finely-chiselled features were slightly and temporarily remodelled.



Ruiri, Ed and Marcus

On Friday 28th we made landfall at Galley Head and started to receive weather forecasts from coast stations. The fair winds held up and we ran along the South coast of Ireland, rounding Carnsore Point by lunchtime Saturday and finally getting out of the swell. There were still a couple of stings in the tail: just after dusk, broad reaching past Greystones, we brought up all standing with a loud bang. I knew the place was infested with lobster pots, for we had threaded our way through many that evening, but I had hoped that we could slide over any we missed in the dark. This particular example, like most of them, had two buoys connected by a floating line. This caught our rudder and held us as if we were anchored by the stern. Marcus managed to snag it with the boathook so that Ruiri could cut it from the

stern ladder. If we had been motoring, we would probably still be there. Then, through the night the offshore wind freshened until it was blowing a near gale. The boat was uncontrollable with triple reefed main and we had to hand it and sail under reduced genoa, still down 7 + knots. This got us to Strangford bar in good time to catch the last of the flood into the lough and we were alongside the Lightship at Ballydorn by 1045 after a 12 day passage averaging just 5 knots.

I completed the voyage considerably fitter and ½ stone lighter than when I started. That's a result, anyway. There were 28 boats attending the Saoirse Rally. I think that, apart from Ilen, *Witchcraft* may have been the only Irish or UK-based yacht to do the round trip in one season.

Witchcraft 2023 Statistics							
Passage	Start Date	Arr. Date	Distance	Duration Hrs	Av. Speed	Engine Hrs	Lat/Long
Ballydorn							N54°29'.3, W5°38'.2
Ballydorn - Arklow	3-Jun	4-Jun	108.00	21.00	5.14	19.00	N52°47'.7, W6°08'.1
Arklow - Camariñas	4-Jun	8-Jun	598.00	107.25	5.58	24.00	N43°07'.5, W09°10'.7
Camariñas - Muros	10-Jun	10-Jun	36.00	8.20	4.39	8.20	N42°46'.3, W09°03'.2
Muros - San Vicente	11-Jun	11-Jun	26.00	5.00	5.20	4.00	N42°27'.5, W08°55'.1
San Vicente - Viana do Castelo	12-Jun	12-Jun	49.40	9.00	5.49	9.00	N41°40'.3, W08°50'.4
Viana do Castelo - Leixoes	13-Jun	13-Jun	33.00	5.50	6.00	0.50	N41°10'.2, W08°42'.4
Leixoes - Oeiras	14-Jun	15-Jun	167.50	30.00	5.58	2.50	N38°40'.6, W09°18'.8
Oeiras - Parque das Nacoes	16-Jun	16-Jun	12.00	2.25	5.33	1.50	N38°45'.2, W09°05'.3
Parque das Nacoes - Cabo de Ares	20-Jun	20-Jun	39.00	8.00	4.88	4.00	N38°26'.3, W09°03'.6
Cabo de Ares - Sines	21-Jun	21-Jun	33.00	7.00	4.71	3.50	N37°56'.0, W08°52'.7
Sines - Enseada de Sagres	22-Jun	22-Jun	61.00	10.50	5.81	3.50	N37°00'.1, W08°56'.2
Enseada de Sagres - Lagos	23-Jun	23-Jun	16.00	3.00	5.33	2.00	N37°05'.9, W08°39'.7
Lagos - Porto Santo	25-Jun	28-Jun	452.00	73.00	6.19	6.50	N33°03'.5, W16°18'.7
Porto Santo - Funchal	3-Jul	3-Jul	43.00	8.50	5.06	6.00	N32°38'.7, W16°54'.5
Funchal - Vila do Porto, Sta Maria	10-Jul	14-Jul	485.00	99.00	4.90	40.00	N36°56'.6, W25°08'.9
Vila do Porto - Ballydorn	18-Jul	30-Jul	1377.00	273.50	5.03	41.00	N54°29'.3, W5°38'.2
Totals			3535.90	670.70	5.27	175.20	
Nights at sea: 24							



OPPOSITE : Peter Williams, Henry Rooke and John Crebbin

Ilen Cruise In the wake of OBrien

John Crebbin

Our last yacht *Ocean Gypsy* was sold in 2022, thus ending 50 years of boat ownership. A gap had opened up in our lives. How to fill it? Well it was to be filled by virtue of celebrating one of the most decorated members of the ICC. What follows is by way of background and how our ultimate voyage progressed from planning to accomplishment. On 20 June 1923, Edward Conor Marshall O'Brien (who forsook his apostrophe) left his moorings at the Royal Irish Yacht Club in the 42 foot yacht *Saoirse* with the intention of sailing around the world via all the great capes. His first port of call was Funchal, on the island of Madeira.

Thus in June 2023 the ICC commemorated the centenary of O'Brien's achievement by holding a rally to Madeira, including sailing the restored *Ilen* to Madeira. The idea of sailing *Ilen* was hatched by Commodore David Beattie and announced in an email to the membership in November 2022. David Beattie's letter did not quite echo that of yachtsman and climber, Bill Tilman - 'Hands wanted for long voyage in small boat. No pay, no prospects, not much pleasure'. He may have added 'outcome uncertain' However David's letter did offer the temptation to sail on a traditionally rigged boat tempered by the need

for all participants to hand, reef and steer, together with a commitment to fund their own passage.

Tilman's kind of sailing stories delight me with their minimalism. The simple sailor's world of creaking timbers, caulked seams, gaff sails, tarred rigging and slower passages seems somewhat closer to mine than some of those spaceship-racing yachts aboard which races are often lost the moment their hulls inadvertently touch water. Tilman told his fellow climbers, 'Inaction in the face of fleeting opportunity is a crime.'

So here was a chance to get back afloat in 2023 and not to miss that fleeting opportunity. David received my request for a berth soon after I received his email. It was quickly established that there would effectively be two legs to the cruise, outward from Dun Laoghaire to Madeira and homeward from Madeira to Kinsale via the Azores. I opted for the outward, for is it not better to sail towards the sun?

The first steps were to gather crews for both legs and then to get to know *Ilen*. It turned out that many ICC members were already committed to either sailing their own yachts on the cruise to Madeira, or crewing with other members. The upshot was that although

we had a core number of members available for the voyages, berths remained to be filled. The Commodore and I split the duty of recruiting the remainder from amongst our friends and other recommended acquaintances. We accomplished this in time for an orientation day in Kinsale which was very necessary as we would be largely unknown to each other and *Ilen* to us. We gathered at the office of Sovereign Sailing on 6 May 2023 when we were met by James Lyons and Aodh Ó Duinn who would skipper *Ilen* on the outward voyage. It was explained that we would have three professional crew outwards and that our skipper Aodh Ó Duinn would be backed up by First Mate Conall Morrison and Second Mate Mirjam Schierscher. All three being very experienced in sailing tall ships. It must be recorded at this stage that Aodh proved to be a most excellent skipper in true West Cork fashion. He was ever alert and could turn his hand to fixing all eventualities.

The gathering consisted of ICC members David Beattie, Cormac O'Carroll, Peter Bowering, Peter Crowley, Gráinne Fitzgerald, Peter Williams, Lorraine Scully (later replaced by Olga Scully) and John Crebbin. Remaining crew were Aoife Nolan Beattie, Pauline Jordan, Alex Delamer (great grand-nephew of O'Brien), Henry Rooke, Tom Sanders and Roger Hadfield.

Ilen was moored on the fisherman's pontoon, just beyond the Trident Hotel and she made for a lovely sight as we walked down to her. Once on board the size of all the spars and running rigging were immediately impressive. Right from the start Skipper Aodh impressed on us the need for vigilance, particularly in regard to the swing of the main boom. I was immediately reminded of a talk given some years back by W M Nixon addressing the subject of different yacht designs when he pronounced the boom on a Galway Hooker to be not merely a widow maker but in fact capable of ethnic cleansing.

Off we went to sea on a rather light wind day. First impressions were that she handled well but there was too little wind to assess her sailing capabilities, not that ocean greyhound performance was expected! We tried some pully-hauling raising the mainsail and a jib. All required a good deal of effort and coordination. The gear is heavy with hard wood dead eyes on the jibs serving as a block for the doubled sheets. Real killers if a head got in their way. Our attention then turned to the accommodation. Bearing in mind that *Ilen* was originally conceived as a cargo vessel the layout is now somewhat changed to incorporate a sizable engine room and a saloon / galley. Right aft is a chart house with all the instrumentation and two crew bunks. Then the engine room housing a formidable walk around Gardner 6 LXB and a Fischer Panda generator - more of which later. Next is the saloon / galley where the cargo hold would have been full of sheep, wool and other cargoes in the Falklands. Fortunately no



Aodh Ó Duinn, skipper

traces remained. There is a rudimentary heads compartment in one corner with the toilet positioned under the side deck. We were to find out that one could accidentally achieve a brain stunning billiards like cannon shot with the head if one dethroned too quickly thus banging the head on the beam shelf, reflexively ducking back and with a roll of the ship, being projected into the adjacent bulkhead. The compartment contained a hand shower which was only for looking at as our water capacity of 730l amounted to only 5l per head per day over 14 days and would limit its use to cooking, drinking, hand washing and rinsing dishes after a salt water wash. Going forward and ducking low under the partners of the mainmast is the main accommodation. Firstly a four berth cabin which, until we discovered a light switch, seemed of Stygian gloom. It was previously named by Paddy Barry as 'Middle Earth'. This contained two lower fixed bunks each side and above them pipe cots. Adjacent to the mast is a large double bin for the anchor rodes. Forward is the fore cabin with four permanent berths. This became the Ladies boudoir for Mirjam, Pauline, Gráinne and Olga. Forward and contiguous with the boudoir is the forepeak storing all the foresails, the square sail and everything miscellaneous. If one thing was obvious, it was that space for stores and personal belongings was at a premium. On arriving home I constructed a canvas bag, with multiple pockets, which hung at the hull side by my bunk during the trip. Voyage clothing was to be minimal. Judging by the low freeboard full oilies would be essential. Overall our impression was that *Ilen* was a very sturdy ship which assured great confidence.



Boudoir

O'Brien reckoned to carry three months of stores for three people. The log of the *Saoirse* declares that they ate 'extravagantly well'. Meat came from a harness cask - when it had not gone too far off. It was far from a harness cask that the coming crew were brought up, so a solution had to be found. Hence commenced the vitting program. My First Mate and wife Jennifer, ICC, is a wizard at catering and vitting. We anticipated a voyage of up to fourteen days, so given a crew of ten requiring three meals each per day, we needed to cater for up to 420 meals. Some undertaking. Fortunately the restored *Ilen* has a small top loading freezer of just about 35 litres capacity.

Pre departure lunch RIYC, L - R, John Crebbin, Jennifer Crebbin, Olga Scully, Peter Williams, Conall Morrison, Pauline Jordan, Gráinne Fitzgerald, Mirjam Schierscher, Aodh Ó Duinn. (Henry Rooke on a different table).



Jennifer has a cash and carry card for a quality outlet at which we discovered a sumptuous choice of ready cooked frozen meals in aluminium containers. We would have two vegetarians on the crew, so we needed ordinary meals for eight, plus suitable veggie dishes. *Miraculum miraculorum esse!* The frozen meals were the ideal size for eight and exactly fitted the dimensions of the freezer. In all we managed tightly packing nine days worth of frozen main meals into the freezer. Several trips were required to the cash and carry, not least because the bulk was considerable. On one occasion requiring two cars. I mentioned the limitations of the water supply and we felt that we would be very vulnerable offshore with only one potable water tank. We decided that we should carry a reasonable quantity of drinking water and purchased 38 plastic containers of 3l each. Another bulk item was UHT milk and we carried 40l. These two items were stored under the forward berths. This helped slightly to adjust the trim as we were somewhat down by the stern. The days before departure arrived and *Ilen* was brought up to Dun Laoghaire during the course of her charter operations. Aodh and crew from Sailing Into Wellness carried out sterling work on general refurbishments and essential maintenance. Aodh was destined to spend a considerable time trying to get the recalcitrant generator to behave. Of course this was very important in the light of the imminent arrival of the frozen meals. With the assistance of Peter Bowring, ICC, the beast came back to life.

Saturday 17 June 2023

On 20 June 1923 O'Brien sailed from the Royal Irish YC at 1630 following lunch with well wishers. Although not exactly on the anniversary it was decided that the nearest Saturday would be our day of departure and that, following O'Brien's example we would have lunch. Both outward and homeward crews were invited to the lunch. We were made very



Charlotte and Alex Delamer aboard Ilen, niece and grand-nephew of Conor O'Brien. Photo by Leszek Wolnik



ABOVE: Leader and Brian Ború escort Ilen to sea. Photo by Leszek Wolnik

BELOW: Commodore and Aoife bid farewell to Ilen at RIYC. Photo by Leszek Wolnik



welcome in the Royal Irish YC, the *Ilen* crew being dressed in our uniform shirts depicting the rally logo and the name *Ilen*. We had been informed by Commodore David that uniform shirts would be acceptable dining room attire but that shorts would give members attacks of apoplexy. The excellent lunch was followed by speeches. Not the least of them being delivered by W M Nixon, ICC. He pithily declared that his experience was more of people sailing out of rather than into wellness!

The outwardbound crew were John Crebbin, Alex Delamer, Gráinne Fitzgerald, Pauline Jordan, Conal Morrison, Aodh Ó Duinn, Henry Rooke, Olga Scully, Mirjam Schierscher and Peter Williams. At 1630 we left harbour accompanied by a flotilla, including the *Brian Boru*, *Leader*, *Tritish-Tratch*, *Terra Nova* and *Concerto* on which Jennifer was bidding me farewell. The weather was very misty and we very quickly lost sight of the land and our well wishers. We immediately set three watches of 'three-on, six-off'. The three professional crew were designated as watch leaders. The Mizzen Watch being myself, Olga and Conall. Safety drills were conducted for MOB, fire and flooding. By 1900 we were off the Kish, still in very poor visibility with the wind light S'y - motoring. Hot dogs in buns for dinner, a light meal to settle stomachs. 2100 - on watch wearing full oilies and everything else, surprisingly cold considering it was mid-summer. Wind light S'y. Watching AIS and looking out for pots.

SUNDAY 18 June

Noisy in the night - needed to bowse up some loose blocks attached to the deck. Sorting of gear - stowage very tight. My bunk side bag with zip pocket for documents and pockets for readily available items proved to be very useful, particularly when searching in the dark for what one might classify as age related items such as glasses, pills and hearing aids. It was Father's Day and I had cards to open from my children, Rachel and Daniel. Jennifer included one as well. Woke at 0545 for 0600 watch. Engine still on and still poor visibility. Lumpy and still light S'y. Two pigeons had arrived, one in the cockpit, the other clamped on the the main peak halyard. I doubt that I have made an offshore passage without some class of a bird taking a ride. Some crew finding sea legs but none were too bad. Frequent dolphin visits and later the pigeons were gone. We had our first proper cooked meal - Chicken a la King. The cooker proved a challenge as it is mounted athwartships and therefore could not be gimbaled. 1500 - 1800 watch. Wind 4 S'y with a moderate swell. This was not at all what we wanted as the ideal would have been to make our westing from the Tuskar. Our course drifted eastwards.

Monday 19 June

0000 - 0300 Starry night. Little traffic. Motor sailing at 155°T. *Ilen* possesses a powerful autohelm, so there was little to do. 0545 I was woken to news that we were just approaching Round Island, Isles Of Scilly. Rushed up on watch 0600 - 0900. I was very sad to be passing IOS without stopping. We had visited these magical islands many times and have very fond memories of them. As compensation, I obtained cell coverage and reported in to HQ. The mainsail was hoisted while I was resting and there was surprisingly little noise due to wooden decks and no winches. By this stage the crew were getting into the routine of watches. I found that I had a remarkable propensity for sleep. John Leahy's weather reports were obtained while we were in cell coverage and they proved to be of great service. John advised us not to go into the mouth of the English Channel due to strong tides but to head as best we could for C. Finisterre. I was chatting on watch with Olga who had many tales of the Dublin Bay 21s and 24s. I had last seen *Arandora* in Brittany awaiting further restoration and I believe that nothing has happened since. Wind still S'y 10 - 15 kts. NO GOOD! Mr Gardner's engine doing great work running easily at about 850 rpm.

Tuesday 20 June

0300 - 0600 watch - my first 'graveyard' watch. Sun up at 0500. Clouds to NE but a clear horizon. W'y swell. Made porridge which was popular. The off watch was responsible for galley clean up, etc. Now aiming for about 40nm W of Finisterre. 0900 - Appx 140 nm W of Île de Sein. Morning watch started to set all F&A sails, inc topsail. Wind 10 - 15 kts SSW. 1200 - ENGINE OFF. Made 3.5 - 5.5 kts but course varied from 095° - 170°. We needed 220°. The starboard tack made for an incident with the fridge while prepping dinner. The fridge is mounted along the hull, where the cooker ought to be, opening

Henry Rooke writing his journal



the door resulted in an avalanche. Called for a luff up. Top'sl taken down for dinner. Roast pork fillet, apple sauce, butternut squash, Lyonnaise potatoes and green beans proved popular. 1900 - ENGINE ON - too slow

Wednesday 21 June MID SUMMER and my half birthday

0600 - 0900 watch. 300nm to abeam of C. Finistere, 900nm to Porto Santo. Conal was keen to manage the gash situation before it was allowed to build up. He organised the sorting of gash into categories and introduced The Plastic Brick. Simply put, this was an empty three litre water container into which all plastic trash was inserted, having firstly been cut into very small pieces. Amazingly, by the time we reached the end of the voyage, this container had taken all of our plastic gash and weighed a surprising amount. 1200 - Mainsail dropped. Glassy sea, White flesh started to appear on deck. A fin whale was sighted. Aodh stopped the engine to see if the whale would come closer. Immediately a swim was declared and there were frolics in about 3,000m of quite warm water. 1730 - Engine back on. Grainne on galley duty cooking pasta with sauce. Fruit salad was served with squirty cream from a pressurised can. This cream was very popular and appeared on several subsequent desserts. The planning of the vitting and attention to organised stowage was starting to be of benefit. The 1500 - 1800 watch being responsible for cooking and the next watch for the washing up.

Henry stows the flying jib



Thursday 22 June

0000 - 0300 watch. An oily calm. One ship seen. A good sleep afterwards. 0900 - 1200 watch. Cat's paws from SE. Aodh was working on deck to free the anchor winch. This is an antediluvian monster which is designed to be driven by hand pumping two levers, somewhat in the fashion of one of those self propelled railway trucks seen in wild west movies, or by means of an even slower electric motor. It would be grand on land and housed in a shed as the bearings are not salt water proof. I changed into shorts having made 10° of lat to south. A shark was spotted as well as more dolphins. Pauline cooked burgers, beans and potatoes. Lidl cheesecake followed. 1800 - 2100 watch. Aodh finding more jobs to do.

Friday 23 June

0300 - 0600 watch - warm and starry night. Sunrise at 0530. Phosphorescing dolphins at the bow. 0930. WIND. The watch on deck put on all plain sail and squaresail, without me waking up. Made bread which was not too successful on this first attempt due to incorrect setting of the oven. Multiseed was voted the best. 1200 - 1500 watch. Wind NNW 3-4. Speed 4 - 4.5kts. Dinner, Cottage Pie, peaches and squirty cream. 2100 - 2400 watch. Squaresail down. Quiet watch.

Saturday 24 June

It was a very roly night with poor sleep due to being on the starboard and unfortunately no leechcloths. 0600 - 0900 watch. Wind NNW 4 - 5, sea mod. 4.5. - 5kts. Course 200°M. Mainsail and squaresail. Now we were going in the right direction. Porridge for breakfast. Aviero, Portugal about 140 nm to E



First light view Porto Santo

1500 - 1800 watch. NNW 4 - 5 Still mainsail only. Steering became difficult for less experienced hands. Best hint was to listen for the rising note from the free running propeller indicating that she is luffing in the puffs. Henry had a firehose wash. Gráinne cooked lamb tagine with cous-cous, spinach. Tinned pears dessert. Altogether a lovely downwind day watching the waves roll up and hiss past us.

Sunday 25 June

000 - 0300 watch. Wind NNW 4 - 5 Mod sea state. The binnacle light was out so steering was by digital compass, not an intuitive thing to do. Shooting stars made for night watch entertainment. Good sleep until 0800. 0900 - 1200 watch Good speeds of 6kts and over. Afternoon, another bread baking session. Much better now that the oven dial setting had been worked out. Aodh down the engine hole dealing with another problem with the generator. Thought to be a poor battery connection. At the end of the voyage it was found that the Panda Fischer generator problems had been down to a frequent need to bleed the fuel system. Aodh eventually discovered a hidden menu page on the command console that cured the problem. No marks for the manufacturers information to users. Passed the 1,000 nm run mark. We tried to track over a sea mount that rises from about 3,000m to 25m. I recalled a similar exercise decades ago while in the Merchant Navy. 1800 - 2100 watch Wind steady NNE 4 - 5 Steering 205°M. Watch below cooked Chicken Korma and rice. A fruit cake with custard was devoured as dessert. Jennifer meant it to be daintily sliced with afternoon tea! The best plans crumble when gannets descend on the galley.

Monday 26th June

0300 - 0600 graveyard watch. Wind veered to ENE 5 - 6. Running a'lee 240°M Wild run. Steering needed a lot of concentration so glad to get in the bunk. A flying fish and a squid landed on deck but were found by a veggie. Not kept for the pan. Next watch gybed on to port. Much better for us sleeping on the starboard side. Our turn not to cling on in the starboard berths. Slept until 1030. 1200 - 1500 watch Still v fresh. Took one sea knee deep in the cockpit. 2nd reef put in during 1500 - 1800 watch. Failure to loosen the topper head block bousing line, before heaving up the topper, resulted in the port pin rail being cracked. This proved to be the only mishap of the voyage. Dinner Jumbo sausages and veggies. 2100 - 2400 watch. Fresh and rough.

Tuesday 27 June

0600 - 0900 watch. Weather moderated. Steering for a waypoint 6nm E of Porto Santo. Hoping not to have to gybe in rough water. 100l fresh water left. We all smell the same. 1500 - 1800 watch. Shook out the mainsail reef. Lasagne for dinner. The last of our excellent frozen meals. Thanks Jen and Musgraves. Peter opened a new wine box to celebrate. 50nm to the waypoint, so expecting to be in Porto Santo just after first light.

Wednesday 28 June

0000 - 0300 watch. Calming. One vessel going north. Slept a little then woke as engine fired at 0530. Nearly one solid week of sailing. First impression of Porto Santo from seaward were of lots of lights and impressive picos. 0700 Entered Porto Santo Harbour and berthed on the fisherman's quay. Logged 1,388 nm. Alongside were Séamus O'Connor, *Sli Eile*, Michael

Craughwell on *Orchestra*, Ed Wheeler on *Witchcraft of Howth* and Richard O'Toole, *Xanadu*.

Aodh and Henry went up with the paperwork - not too long thanks to our pre declarations. Foresails off and covers on the main and mizzen with a general tidy up on deck. A run ashore was very welcome for showers. Lunch at the harbour cafe bar of dried cod salad, pretty good. Beers. Evening run ashore to restaurant Tabura Rasa. Treated the crew. Something for everybody's tastes. Personally enjoyed green lipped mussels followed by deliciously tender octopus. We didn't hold back on wines and beers. A little digestif at the marina bar. Zzz.

Thursday 29 June

I was first up at 1000 and helped Alex clean and tidy the saloon. At 1200 walked into the town en masse passing Pingo Dolce an excellent supermarket. The fresh fruit counter was very popular. Alex was ahead of us and organised tickets for the open top tour bus. A light lunch at a delightful waterfront cafe for myself Gráinne and Olga, then off to find the bus. It was an early-ish model that must have done many kilometres on the main island of Madeira. The tour went round much of the perimeter of the island where we viewed the many coves and beaches plus the airport (very long runway) then up some roads that you would never think that a bus would travel up. At one precipitous viewing point most of the passengers disembarked, along with the driver, a shout went up from the remaining passengers as the bus was moving backwards by itself. The driver, who was more built for comfort, showed a remarkable turn of speed in returning to his seat! We finally arrived at a lovely viewing point from where we could look up at the lofty picos and down into the harbour where *Ilen* looked very small indeed. Later an early

Stowing sails on the approach to Porto Santo



Alex Delamer on the helm

dinner was enjoyed back at the very good value Tabura Rasa of the previous night. On arrival back to *Ilen* we found that *Wodan*, Brodie Sweeney, OCC had come alongside. A nightcap was taken at the harbour bar.

Friday 30 June

A swell coming into the harbour combined with *Wodan's* comparatively thin springs made for a noisy night. A deep clean of the boat was declared with all hands sending anything removable ashore and all surfaces, bilges, etc were thoroughly washed. Mirjam was particularly assiduous in ensuring that everyone obeyed. Swiss efficiency. Afterwards a stroll into the town with lunch at a beach side café. A quiet evening ensued for me, but not for everyone. I just chilled and sat in the cafe bar talking to Ed Wheeler over a beer or two.

Saturday 1 July

Very ragged start. Last night's shoreside run into town had taken its toll. I was joined by Olga for Pastel de Nata and coffee in the harbour bar. I inspected the huge desalination plant which was one of four on the island as Porto Santo has virtually no rainfall nor vegetation to catch the damp westerlies. Hundreds of bubbling filter stacks were an amazing site. 1900 - Skippers briefing for the parade of sail into Funchal we were all to enter and berth by bow number, we would see. 2000 - Buses to the Hotel Torre Paraia for the opening BBQ which was a buffet dinner. It was great to see the first assembly of rally participants. A fair ration of wine was consumed. Fantastic chocolate mousse dessert. As the buses returned and disgorged by the harbour bar the manager lady firmly shut the door for the night. I didn't blame her.

Sunday 2 July

Another ragged start.

The anchor winch was tested again with less hammering this time. Coffee, then a walk into town where we had a really nice lunch at a restaurant on the church square above the town. Taxis back were an indication of laziness setting in. Having showered and cleaned up we were in good condition for eating. It was voted that we go to what turned out to be an excellent Pizzeria. It seemed that the Friday night restaurant/bar/nightclub gang (they were rejected from the latter) were returning to a previous haunt. More taxis back for just €4 per cab.

Monday 3 - July SAILING DAY

0700 - Up and ashore for the crew photo taken under the traditional wall art painted by Conal Morrison.

0800 Cast off followed by other yachts in the fleet. 42 nm to Funchal.

N'ly wind 10-15 kts but fickle. Main up then square sail and outer jib. Motor sailing a first.

Al fresco breakfast mainly finishing the giant Pizzas from the previous night.

Finally we enjoyed one of the best sails of the voyage until we reached Ponta de Garajau 3nm short of Funchal where the wind spun round to be dead on the nose.

The planned parade of sail got underway in the harbour with a tug as flagship and a yellow turning mark up the harbour. All proceeded more or less to plan with *Ilen* proudly leading the fleet. The numerical priority berthing system then fell apart as the berthing master in his RIB was required to become our bow thruster enabling us to get into a very awkward berth. Aodh did a fine job of berthing us stern to without incident. We had completed our voyage.



On arrival in Funchal OBrien wrote to his sister Kate saying, 'We have had a very enjoyable, though rather slow passage, thus far'. Our passage was slow as well when compared to a modern cruising yacht. However for a heavy gaff rigged vessel originally designed to carry cargo and now just having transported ten sailors safely and in relative comfort, it was not bad at all.

Family members were on the pontoon to greet several of us and there were hugs and kisses all round. Charlotte Delamer was particularly ecstatic to be reunited with Alex, representing the young generation of OBrien descendants. Of course it was great to see Jennifer again and to report on the success of her catering arrangements.

I hastened to our hotel that Jennifer had carefully selected for its proximity to the marina. There I enjoyed a blissful shower and a G&T. The Hotel Madeira is to be recommended and we stayed there for a further two weeks.

Shortly after arrival there was a buffet dinner at the tented village. We enjoyed good traditional Madeiran catering, entertainment and copious amounts of beer and wine. Several days festivities followed and a good time was had. This was a very different but excellent cruise in the best of company. I would not hesitate to go to sea again with any one of the crew. Many thanks to everyone for unflinching good humour and companionship.





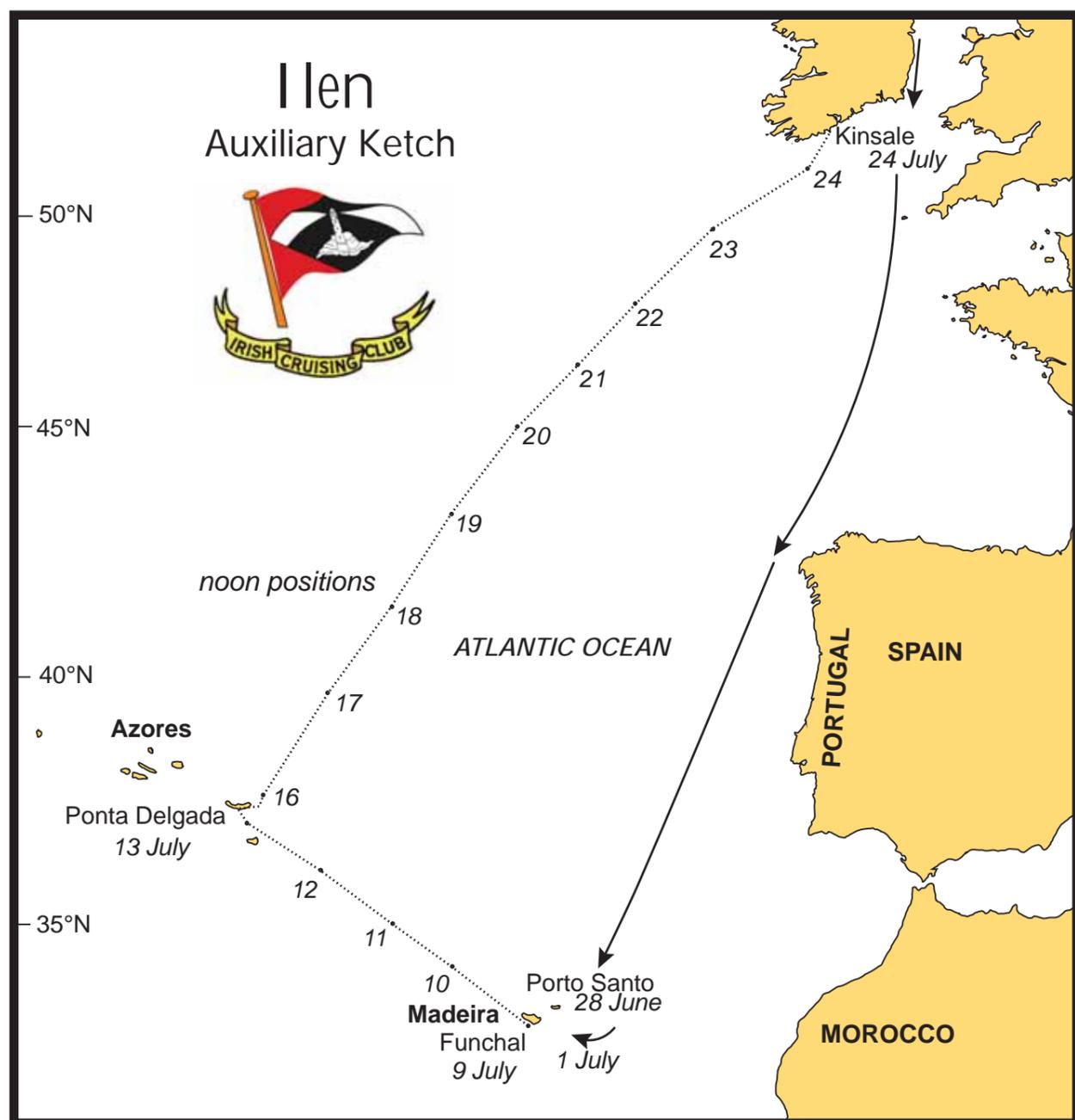
ABOVE: Ilen arrives in Funchal, Photo by CNF



Auxiliary Ketch *Ilen* - Madeira to Kinsale

Cormac O'Carroll

The mid ocean swim



I joined AK *Ilen* on the ICC Saoirse Rally at about 16.40 on the Thursday afternoon 6 July 2023; this was one hundred years, two hours and twenty minutes after Conor O'Brien began his passage on *Saoirse* from Funchal, landing at Porto Grande in the Cape Verde Islands nine days later. We had three days of preparation and partying before we set off from Funchal bound for Kinsale on Sunday 9 July.

The crew for the passage home were David Beattie, Aoife Nolan-Beattie, Roger Hatfield, Tom Sanders, Peter Bowring, Peter Crowley, with Skipper Conal Morrison, and Mirjam Schierscher. I was the last of the crew to arrive on board. I was welcomed by David and Aoife. The rest of the crew were out and about the town apart from Peter B and Aodh who were busy in the engine room. Firstly we went for a beer at the waterfront Beerhouse, where I met Roger and Tom, and later we were joined by Peter C, so that was the home bound crew. Skipper Conal and Mirjam were aboard when we returned to *Ilen*, and that was the introduction to the community for the homeward passage. Later on, after a visit to the Saoirse Village Bar we had dinner al fresco in town.

The Friday morning of 7 July was shopping duty. Peter B had his rented car and had already scouted the best supermarkets convenient to the marina. Shopping detail was Aoife, Tom, Roger, Peter B, Peter C and Cormac. Even with so many hands the full shopping was a huge event. It is interesting to see what supermarkets carry that you do not see in Ireland - frozen pig's ears were my favorite. Once the shopping was aboard, stowing was the challenge. The boat had to be tidy and presentable for the visit of the important members of the organizing committee of the Club, the host organisers as well as the Irish Ambassador to Portugal, Ralph Victory (who came

out for Lisbon specially for the event) and the British Honorary Consul of the Blandy family. Following the onboard reception, we retired to the Saoirse village and again had dinner in town.

Saturday gave an opportunity to see a little more of Funchal. We started with breakfast at the Golden Gate Grand Café, in the manner of Conor O'Brien. Later I managed to get the cable car up to visit the Monte Palace Gardens and to visit Reid's Hotel in the afternoon before the winding up reception on Saturday night at the Saoirse village, ahead of our planned departure at 0900 hours Sunday morning.

Depart Funchal Madeira Sunday 9 July 0750

First stop was at the fuel dock to top up the diesel. We set off at 08.50 on a glass-calm sea with no wind whatever. We motored on a course of 305° throughout the day and mostly held that course for a total of 72 hours, only shutting down engine about 1550 on Tuesday 11 July on a deep azure dead calm sea. We took the opportunity to jump overboard for a swim, something I had never done in mid ocean before! Following the swim, we were treated to Mayfair Gin and tonics from Roger's London Dry Gin distillery. Later that night there was an interesting sky phenomenon spotted, thought to be a Starlink Satellite deployment, as noted in the log - 27 lights moving in the sky like a train. I was not on watch, but it must have been impressive sight. The wind remained northerly and light through Tuesday evening (the 11th) when it began to fill from the SW, giving us hope of a sail. The engine shut down about 0800 on Wednesday 12 July; then we sailed with no engine until about 0500 on Thursday 13 July when the wind began to move back toward the north. During Wednesday the wind increased to



Cormac O'Carroll, Commodore David Beattie, Aoife Nolan - Beattie, Tom Sanders, Peter Bowring, Conal Morrison, Peter Crowley, Roger Hatfield, and Mirjam Schierscher

about F6. We had numerous sail changes throughout the day with the aim of making the best use of the wind that we had, sailing with full main, topsail, jib, genoa and mizzen in various combinations throughout the day. However, throughout the whole passage to Kinsale we never had the opportunity to fly the square sail from the yard, which was a pity. As the afternoon progressed the wind increased. The main was reefed by about 2000, and by 2300 we had first sight of the Ponta do Castelo light at the end of Santa Maria. We had a long uncomfortable night through Wednesday and Thursday. By 0200 as the wind began to ease (though the sea remained very uncomfortable) we needed more sail and added the mizzen and staysail with two reefs still in the main. By 0500 we got the engine going again. David had taken a very bad knock during the night, so we were anxious to get ashore for medical assessment, and we motored for the last five hours as the wind and rain eased. We arrived alongside at Ponta Delgada berthing dock at 1055 on Thursday 13 July, a showery morning.

Arrival at Ponta Delgada 13 July

On arrival, David and Aoife made their way to the hospital accident and emergency, where he was able to get a thorough review by lunchtime. The advice he got was not to continue the voyage to Kinsale and to avoid air travel for a few days. While they were at the A&E we topped the up the diesel and moved *Ilen* to an assigned berth where we would be based until departure for Kinsale on the following Sunday morning. We gave the boat a good tidy up and did whatever laundry was necessary before setting out to discover Ponta Delgada.

On Thursday afternoon we walked the town and

came on a pub called Ned Kelly's. The owner there, a man from Belfast, said he had all the TV channels, and we returned on Friday afternoon to watch the U20 Ireland v France World Cup game. The main thing on our mind of course was the departure of David and Aoife and if we would be able to get two more willing sailors able and interested in joining for the last leg back to Kinsale. Many feelers were sent, and by Friday afternoon arrangements and flights were confirmed for John McCann and Mark Geoghegan, who would arrive late Saturday evening to join us for our departure on Sunday morning. A welcome relief to everyone as we liked the watch system.

Friday 14 July was mostly a tourist day. A few essentials were acquired, most importantly a cushion for the steering box. We had full attendance at Ned Kelly's to watch the U20 Rugby game and had dinner there afterwards. Then we headed back to the portside bar Provisario where the music played loudly until about 0400, not that any of us were participating at that hour. On Saturday morning we had a whistle stop tour of the island taking in the main tourist sights with a very informed tour guide Jorge.

Depart Ponta Delgada, São Miguel Sunday 16 July 0900

We began with a safety briefing for the new crew members John and Mark, and following final preparations we were waved off from the dock by David and Aoife. We had a very light northerly breeze for the next four days. In fact, we logged 86 engine hours, while eking every bit we could out of the wind we had, with many sail changes. On the afternoon



L - R, Mark, Peter B, Tom, Peter C, and John

of Wednesday 20 July we lowered the main as we needed to make a repair to the gaff throat of the main; this was an all-hands event that we finished by dinner time. By midnight there was enough wind from the west to allow us to sail silently until about 0800 on Thursday. That was the day we had two tacks - the only tacks on the voyage to Kinsale. During the day the wind moved more to the north, the wind and cloud increased, and the sea became quite rough. Some of us began to suffer from damp bunks in the midship cabin because of water on the deck. By evening we had reached the same latitude as Bordeaux, so we were making north at a good rate. Through Friday night the wind eased and those anew off watch had a comfortable sleep. About that time we were beginning to think we might even make Kinsale on Sunday. About 2100 Saturday 23 July we were able to sail again without engine and with a westerly wind, sometimes near the top of F6. We sailed until 0100 Sunday morning when we lost the westerly and were back into a northerly. It was cloudy and uncomfortably rough for the rest of the day. The wind only began to ease around 0400 on Monday 24 July. By then we were pretty sure we would get into Kinsale later that evening.

Overall, during the passage spirits were good though a little damp towards the end. Evening meals were enjoyed by all, with each evening meal catering for the vegetarians and the rest of the non-vegetarian crew. Peter Bowring ventured into brown bread and scone baking mode. Traffic wise we were well out of the main shipping lanes - during the passage we saw two cruise ships, a Dole banana boat, one other sailing yacht and three or four other cargo vessels. We spotted dolphins, whales, an occasional shark, flying fish, one or two turtles, Portugese men-of-war and by-the-wind sailors as well as many types of petrels and shearwaters.

Weather updates were scarce on the passage. We set off with a three to four day forecast, but without a satellite link or SW radio. Conal worked hard to try

and tune into the various met service broadcasts, but being so far offshore and with just the FM transistor radio, picking up Portugese Spanish and French forecasts was difficult. We got one update on Navtex, on Tuesday 19 July but it did not operate much afterwards. On Saturday evening 23 July we got a BBC Shipping Forecast, and again on Monday morning we got the weather update from Valentia Radio.

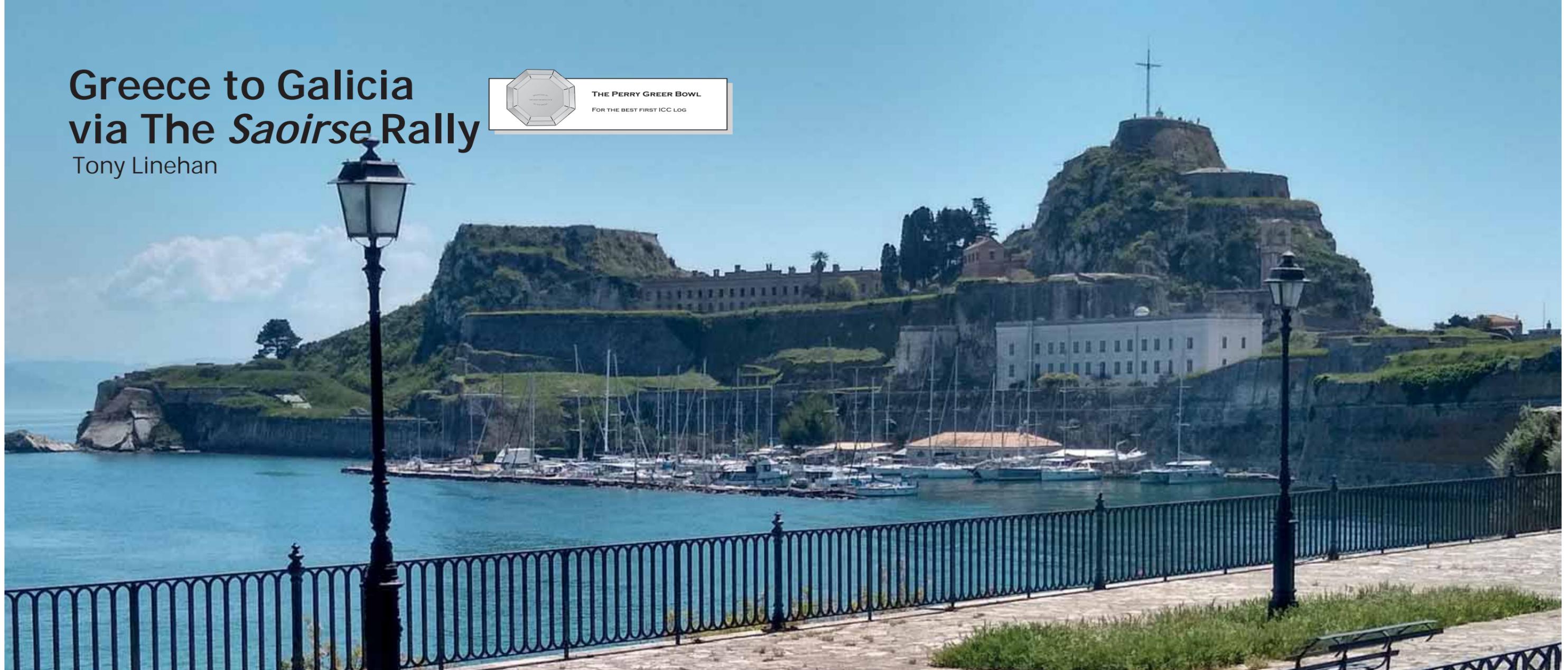
I came on watch very early on the Monday morning 24 July. One of the things that surprised me was how the sunrise aligned with the bow of the boat, we were steering about 60° at the time - you normally think of the sun rising in the east at 90°. The rest of the day we were keenly looking out for first signs of Ireland, and based on our position and distance from the land our first sight was Hungry Hill above Castletownbere as we closed on the coast. At around noon we were able to see Cape Clear; some of the Fastnet racing boats crossed our track as they headed back to the finish line in France. Next, Toe Head came in view and by 1500 we were south of Glandore and beginning to get a view of Galley Head. We could see the other Fastnet boats still making for the famous rock. When Old Head came into view, we felt we were home, but we still had a few hours to go. At 1900 we were directly south of Old Head and Roger's Mayfair gin made its second appearance of the passage. We had our last dinner aboard as we motored up the harbour to Kinsale, passing under Charles Fort at 2015 and docking on the KYC marina at 2100 concluding a nine-day passage from São Miguel. We were welcomed on the Marina by David and Aoife with James and some of the Sailing-Into-Wellness team. Being tired and thirsty we soon removed to the KYC bar for some well-earned beers. On Tuesday morning we had an early start and we spent the day giving the boat a final cleanout before handing back and signing off after a really enjoyable passage in very good company on *AK Ilen* under the very capable command of Conal and Mirjam.

Greece to Galicia via The *Saoirse* Rally

Tony Linehan



THE PERRY GREER BOWL
FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG



Corfu Sailing Club protected by the Old Fortress, Corfu

Adding it all up, we covered over 3,000 nautical miles on our 2023 summer cruise on *Sea Witch*. We sailed from Greece across the Mediterranean and out to Madeira to participate in the ICC *Saoirse* Rally, before making our way north to our new base in Galicia. Not a mean achievement by any reckoning, but I must admit, it was touch and go at times. We had many issues and frustrations. There were times when I felt the gods were against us. My flagging spirits were rescued on more than one occasion by the support, encouragement and goodwill of my long-time sailing buddies.

The story begins in May 2021, when I joined Séamus O'Connor and Paul Taylor on an ICC sub-committee. We were tasked with recommending a suitable ICC centenary commemoration of Conor O'Brien's circumnavigation. We fixed on the idea of a gathering of ICC boats in Funchal, Madeira, 100 years to the day from Conor O'Brien's first landfall after leaving Dun Laoghaire. I was very eager for *Sea Witch* to

participate in the *Saoirse* Rally. Seeing as the boat was in Greece, this was going to be a big undertaking.

Sea Witch is a Jeanneau SO 409 which my wife Geraldine and I have kept in the Med for a number of years. We had a winter-berth at Ragusa in Sicily. In summer, we enjoyed relaxed sailing holidays around the Ionian Islands. We normally lifted the boat out at Cleopatra marina, Greece, for July and August to avoid the summer heat and the crowds. But in 2019 we decided to leave *Sea Witch* at Cleopatra for the following winter, rather than return to Sicily. That was a stroke of luck. It meant the boat was safely ashore at the outbreak of Covid. However, the boat sat in the sun and harsh weather for two years.

We returned to Greece in late August 2021. Then the problems began. On the day of the launch, there was a severe lightning storm. At first it appeared that no damage had been done, but as the days progressed, we began to experience problems with the navigation equipment. The electronics man from a reputable

marine services company did some investigation. He found that the power to the instruments was good but that in some cases, the data was corrupt or missing. He raised the possibility that it may have been lightning damage. The plotter, radar and sensors were later removed and sent to a facility in Athens for testing. The official report stated that the instruments were damaged beyond repair and that the damage was consistent with lightning.

So began a protracted insurance claim. A surveyor appointed by the insurance company climbed the mast and could not find evidence of lightning but instructed that the mast be taken out and the standing rigging checked. The riggers in turn reported there were small cracks and rust showing in some places. The rigging would have to be replaced. By this time, it was mid-2022 and the ravages of Covid were apparent everywhere. The Ionian Islands had been cut-off, staff numbers reduced, and supply chains had collapsed. Agreed replacement instruments were eventually sourced and installed

just in time for Geraldine and me to have a late summer holiday in September 2022. We agreed that the new rigging would be installed over the winter. As we cruised around the islands new problems appeared. The DSC radio no longer displayed the lat/long and the autopilot was showing bearings totally different from the compass. The radio and autopilot would also have to come out and be sent to Athens for analysis. The technical report was the same as before. Replacements were required, and we were back to the supply chain issues again.

I shared my plan for 2023 with the yacht service company and emphasised that I would be back on 15 April 2023 to launch the boat. I built the passage plan and crew changes, around this date. The standing rigging would be replaced, the extra instruments installed, and the maintenance list completed in time for our planned launch date. I found it difficult to get progress reports by phone or email, so I flew out to Greece in March 2023 for a week. While some work had been done, there were significant gaps. I was assured that all would be in place for 15 April. I

busied myself by servicing the winches, replacing the flares, getting the life raft serviced, and so forth.

Geraldine and I arrived back to Greece on 15 April. We had booked a small hotel in Preveza for a few days, expecting to launch on Tuesday 18 April. It was our intention to have three weeks holiday/shake-down cruise before the first crew arrived. However, the boat was not ready, and we had to postpone the launch for a week. We launched on Monday 24 April but even then, the instruments were not installed until the following day, and the riggers were back to do final adjustments and bend on the sails. It was a stressful time. The planned three weeks holiday with Geraldine was slipping away. We took a couple of days to visit Spartachori and Sivota.

It was now only a week before our scheduled rendezvous in Corfu with the first crew for the start of our passage to Madeira. We made our way north via Gaios and Sivota Murtos, to Corfu. While on passage I lifted the steps and discovered that there was a lot of liquid in the well under the engine. There was no alarm, the sea water coolant was running freely, and the engine was running smoothly. When we got to Corfu Sailing Club and I took a closer look, I was perplexed. I removed about 10 litres of a blueish liquid to a fish box. Coolant? It had an oily ring around the edge. Andreas the club sailing

manager, put me in touch with the Yanmar mechanic in Corfu, to be told he could not even look at it for the best part of two weeks. Andreas came up with a knowledgeable boat owner who tried to assist. The expansion bottle was full. When we removed some liquid and ran the engine the bottle filled up again. The expelled exhaust water was cold. There were mutterings of a faulty heat exchanger.

This didn't sound good. My Corfu Team were due to arrive the next day Saturday 6 May. Geraldine was booked on the return flight back to Dublin. I had no idea how big an issue we had, how long it would take to fix and what impact this would have on our plans for the rest of the voyage. There was a long way to go. The logistics were intricate. Three teams had made plans and booked flights. I did not want to let my pals down. I felt bad. The Corfu Team insisted that they were coming out anyway.

The Corfu Team

I was joined by my long-standing friends, veterans of many sailing escapades, David Bagnall, ICC, Lonan Lardner, ICC, and Michael McLaughlin. On Sunday morning, there was much puzzled cogitating. I went for bread and when I returned, I was told that the lads had a diagnosis, and a plan. They reckoned that water was getting into the coolant, and it was either

via the engine heat exchanger or the calorifier. They proposed to cut the pipes and close off the calorifier. I got a moment or two to think about it and consider the consequences. There would be no hot water on the passage, a minor inconvenience. However, there was a good chance that we could isolate or even fix the immediate problem. When I agreed with the plan, Michael suggested that it would probably be better if I did not see the operation. David took me away and we had a nice coffee sitting under the Liston colonnade while Michael and Lonan set to work. The scene of the crime had been cleaned up by the time we returned to the boat. The water level in the expansion bottle remained stable when we ran the engine and there was no leak. We cancelled a mechanic who had agreed to come on the Monday and relaxed for the afternoon.

At noon on Monday 8 May, *Sea Witch* and the Corfu Team commenced our long passage westwards across the Med. We left Corfu by the North Channel and set course for the Straits of Messina. Conditions were very light, with winds F3 or less. We were only able to sail periodically over the next two days. After the earlier drama motoring was not so bad. It was time to relax, enjoy some good food and settle into the rhythm of a long voyage. We agreed two watches of two crew. Watches were four hours by day and three hours by night, the pattern changing at 0800 and 2000. There was very little traffic, apart from some dolphins who played off our bow wave for a while and some small birds who sheltered under the spray hood for the night. On Wednesday morning we entered the Straits of Messina. We crossed to the Sicilian side before the TSS and tied up in Marina del Nettuno at 1530 Wednesday 10 May.

Messina as a major ferry port gets bad press. We found it to be much better than expectations and the locals to be very friendly. We found a butcher's shop with almost empty counters as is common in hot climates. You say what you want (with the help of

Google Translate) and a side of beef or other animal is brought out from the cold-room. You hoped the piece the butcher was beginning to cut for you, was what you really wanted. With Google Translate and vocal input from other customers we went away with an array of local delicacies amid much hilarity. A lovely experience.

Next morning, Thursday 11 May, we topped up at the fuel berth which is about one nautical mile from the marina. There was no sign of Scylla or Charybdis as we headed north through the straits of Messina. Thankfully, the monsters were quiet, but we were left wondering what it must have been like for the sailors of old. Wind was mainly W1-2 as we motor-sailed south of the Aeolian Islands and along the north coast of Sicily. On the morning of Friday 12 May, the wind began to fill in initially from the south. We had some difficulty with the jib furler. The swivel was sticking with the sail only half-way out. We altered course for Palermo and tied up at the fuel berth around lunchtime. We dropped the jib and washed out the swivel. While there was an improvement, our confidence was undermined. A decision was made to use the jib in the traditional manner. We would hoist and drop as required without furling.

We went back out to sea with the wind N1-3 and motor-sailed until we spotted that there was a little oil under the engine well. Then mysterious noises were reported to be coming from the engine. As the wind was building, sailing would not be a problem. The engine was turned off and we pressed on for Cagliari in Sardinia. After midnight, it was time to take a reef. The port side lazy line had snagged around the spreader and when we gybed the lazy line broke. In itself this was not a big problem, but it left the remains of the broken lazy line dangling in the wind. We carried on with two reefs in the main. Saturday 13 May was a great day for sailing, and we made good progress in ENE4-5 winds and F6 in squalls.

Michael, Lonan, David and Tony - all aboard at Corfu



In the early hours of Sunday 14 May the wind went light and we began to be headed. Both reefs were let out in the dying breeze. After a while we got thinking of motoring for about twenty minutes at a time, or until the mysterious noise reappeared. We did this and limped towards Cagliari until we identified the engine-room extractor fan as the culprit. Then, as we approached the harbour, we could not drop the main. A small piece of the dangling remains of the lazy line was caught in the track and the main would not go up or down. David was hoisted up on the spinnaker halyard with the jib halyard as safety and freed the main. As we tidied up, a loop of the spinnaker halyard got dragged into the jib sheave and jammed solid. Something else to sort when we got ashore. We tied up at a marina berth in Cagliari at 1500 Sunday 14 May.

On Monday afternoon a mechanic arrived. He was a big man and we wondered how he was going to get into small spaces. But he did and declared that there was no issue with the gearbox. This was good news, but we were sceptical. Where did the gear oil come from? He said that the gear oil had probably been overfilled and some spilt. At our request, he extracted some gear oil and confirmed that there was no water in the oil. He then said the gear oil was fine but old. Now that was strange because the gear oil was supposed to have been changed in Greece. Luckily, we had plenty of spare gear oil. The mechanic extracted as much old oil as he could while the boat was in the water (we have a saildrive) and refilled with good quality fresh gear oil.

Next morning, we tried to address the halyard issue. I was hoisted up the mast on the main halyard (with the topping lift as safety), but I did not have enough leverage to free the jib and spinnaker halyards and returned to the deck. Perhaps if we could attach a line to the jammed spinnaker halyard we could get more leverage from the ground. I prepared to be hoisted up again, but as I took the strain on the main

halyard it jumped the sheave and also jammed. Now all three halyards were out of commission. Finding a rigger was a big challenge. The first one I contacted was not available for weeks. By Wednesday 17 May I recalled that Jimmy and Judy Houston ICC had a place somewhere in the area, so I gave them a ring. Jimmy was able to put me in touch with some people he used, and he even put in a word for me.

By Friday 19 May the Corfu team had run out of time and flew home directly from Cagliari, Sardinia. They were supposed to fly home from Palma, Majorca, the next crew changeover location. I had already advised the next crew of our issues and the risks around getting things fixed without further delay. The lads agreed to assist getting the boat to Cartagena, but I was reluctant to allow them to book flights until I had a commitment from the riggers. I called our daughter Hannah, who offered to be on standby in Dublin.

The riggers came on Monday 22 May, scoped the problem and said they would need a crane. Thursday 25 May was agreed but later cancelled. I was alone that week and beginning to lose faith. I was very glad to receive an invitation from Jimmy and Judy Houston to spend the following weekend with them at their marvellously restored cottage in the country about two hours away. We went swimming, hill-walking, enjoyed a bbq and a meal out with friends. It was just the tonic I needed.

The Cagliari Team

The riggers and crane arrived on Tuesday 30 May. By the end of the day, we had a new main halyard, new lazy lines and the jammed jib halyards had been released. Alan Markey, ICC, and Adam Grennan arrived around noon and our daughter Hannah arrived late that evening. Things were looking up. We set off at midnight bound for Cartagena. We were already over a week behind plan. The barometer hardly budged for the next three days. There was

no wind and a lot of motoring. There was some high level lightning but mostly sunshine and flat sea. There was a short visit from four dolphins and we spotted a turtle. In fact, those blobs we had passed earlier must also have been turtles. We enjoyed some nice meals and lots of chat. A cargo vessel *True Love* passed astern. At 1100 Friday we hoisted the main and unfurled the jib. The wind did not last and after a while we furled up the jib, and sometime later dropped the main. On Saturday 3 June we berthed in Cartagena.

We spent a pleasant few days in Cartagena and considered our options. There were no oil leaks, and the boat was deemed seaworthy. I was increasingly uneasy about the dangers of orcas. I was offered pingers and bangers by a yacht owner travelling east, but I rejected that option. The research showed that most interactions were in the area of Barbate and extending from there towards the Algarve. There were very few issues south of the mid-line dividing the Straits of Gibraltar. I formulated a plan to avoid the Algarve. My next crew change was scheduled to be in Lagos which would have brought us right through the most hazardous area. I contacted the lads and asked them to change their plans to join us instead at La Linea on the Spanish side of the Gibraltar airport.

Alan and Adam left as agreed and no more crew were arriving. Hannah and I decided to take *Sea Witch* to Gibraltar in easy stages. On Friday 9 June we filled-up at the self-service fuel dock and departed the marina about 1230. The wind was light and on the nose. More motoring! Approaching Aguilas we had to

find a way around nets and pots which were placed around the edge of a sea-grass protection area. We tied up in the marina at Aguilas at 2100. On Saturday 10 June we departed around 1200. It was a bright sunny day. The wind was light but strengthened to F4 in the afternoon before falling away again in the evening. Around midnight we shone a torch on the sails to alert a yacht that seemed to be on a collision course. Having crossed Almeria bay during the night we tied up at the fuel berth at Al Merimar at 0715 Sunday and waited until reception opened. The forecasted strong westerlies for the next few days certainly arrived and we found Al Merimar to be a good place to shelter from the gale force wind.

On Thursday 15 June we fuelled up and departed the marina. The weather forecast was revised downwards. The F3 afternoon breeze faded away. It was quiet as we motored north of the commercial traffic. During the night there was more radio traffic although most of that was misuse by children or fishermen. We motor-sailed from time to time as we got closer to the famous Rock of Gibraltar which we rounded at 1900 on Friday 16 June. We tied up at a finger berth in Alcaidesa marina at 2000.

The Madeira Team

We had an enjoyable week in La Linea. Hannah and I were joined mid-week by Mike Alexander, ICC, and my friend Michael McLaughlin returned. There were visits to restaurants and tapas bars. We walked across the runway, into Gibraltar to watch the Ireland-Gibraltar soccer match. The engine was serviced, and food bought. We took *Sea Witch* around

Hill-walking in Sardinia - Judy, Tony and Jimmy



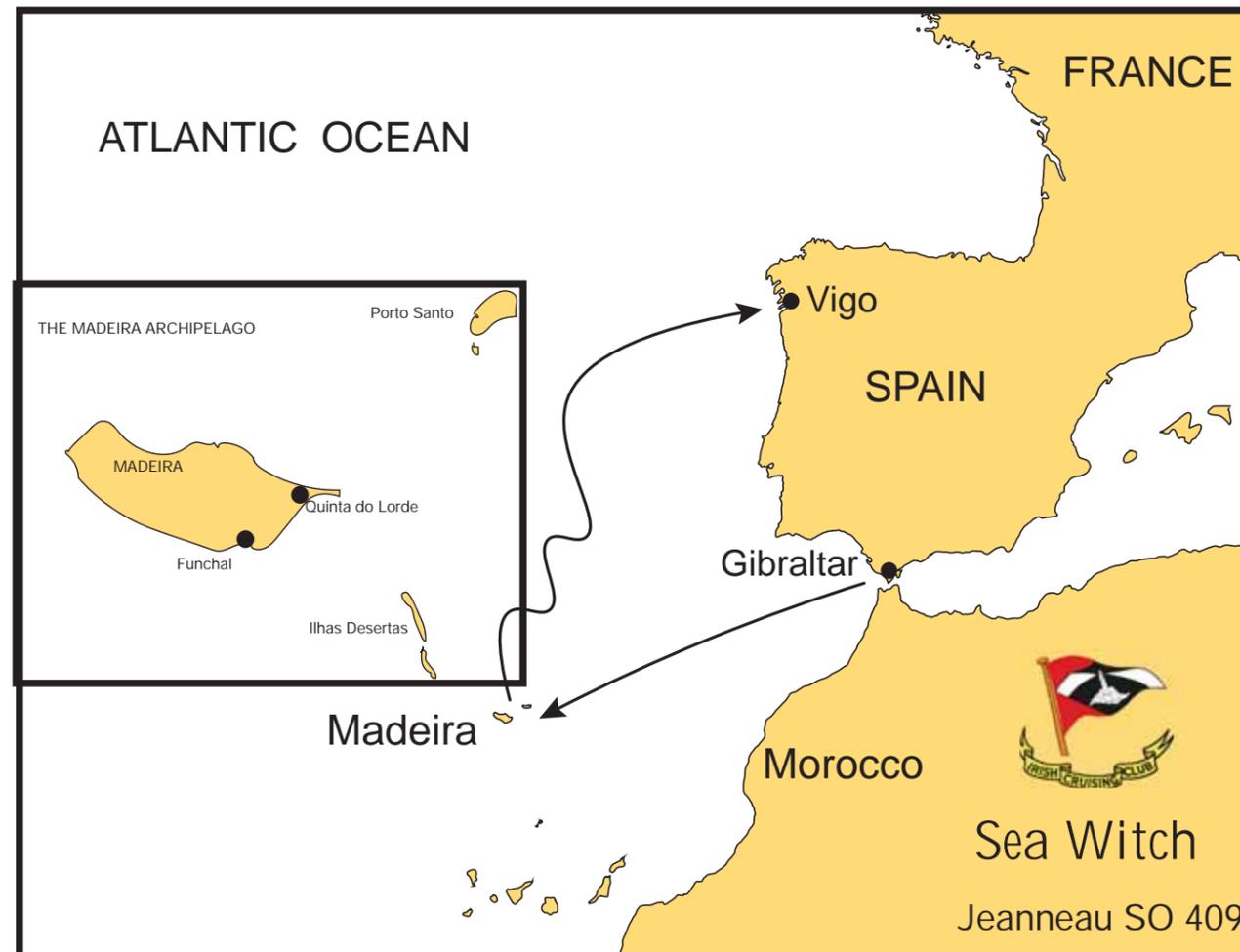
Adam Hannah and Alan in Cartagena



to the Gibraltar fuel dock without much formality and returned to our marina berth on the Spanish side. By Saturday we were ready to go but a westerly gale was blowing through the Straits which was forecast to go easterly the following day.

On Sunday 25 June *Sea Witch* departed the marina at 0900. Before leaving we were in contact with John Leahy, ICC, by phone and text. You may recall that when John delivered that excellent weather talk by Zoom way back in February, he offered to provide weather support to participants in the Saoirse Rally. John warned us of a heavy weather alert from Windy.

In line with our orca avoidance strategy, we went south of the Gibraltar TSS as soon as possible. Visibility was moderate to poor in the wind and spray. By 1200 it was blowing E30kts and the sea was building. By 1500 it was gusting 40kts as we were propelled along the Moroccan coast. We took some turns in the furling jib to assist with control. We saw dolphins but thankfully no orcas. By 1700 we had escaped the Straits of Gibraltar and set course for Madeira. Early on Monday the barometer dropped as the wind backed NE and eased. By evening the barometer was rising again, while the wind continued to back N and was building. We were well-balanced sailing under main and two reefs. Life on board was very pleasant. Before mid-night we dropped the



ABOVE: Rounding Europa Point into Algeciras Bay. INSET: Hannah on the helm and *Sea Witch* tied up in sight of Gibraltar
Tony, Mike, Michael and Hannah departing Gibraltar





Michael, Mike, Tony and Hannah approaching Quinta do Lorde

main, for more comfort during the night, and stuck on the engine for a while to charge the batteries.

Tuesday and Wednesday the wind remained steady NNE4-5. At 0815 Tuesday we picked up a DSC distress call which was, reassuringly, picked up promptly by MRCC. On Wednesday we rang John Leahy on the satphone. The forecast for Thursday was 20+ kts, and on Friday winds were forecast to reach 30 kts just north of Porto Santo. That could present a challenge

as many of the rally boats would be at anchor there. I passed this forecast on to Séamus O'Connor and John Duggan.

As for ourselves, it was time to shake out the reef. As we hauled on the main halyard Hannah shouted 'STOP'. The boom had separated from the mast. We immediately dropped the main. Hannah and Michael did a great job in securing the main. We continued under jib and engine. We needed a steady work platform for repairs, so we decided to aim for Quinta do Lorde and by-pass Porto Santo. On Thursday the NE wind did not go above 20 kts. We were glad to find a very sheltered berth in Quinta do Lorde marina where we tied up at 1700.

On Friday morning, after some huffing and puffing, we were just contemplating having to take the fully-battened mainsail off, when all seemed to click into place and the boom was secured. Big thanks to Michael and Hannah. Quinta do Lorde is a fine marina. But, apart from a cafe with lunchtime snacks, there is absolutely nothing else there. We took a taxi into Funchal on Saturday morning. It felt like a day's holiday as we explored the town. We came together to meet David Beattie, Commodore, and Aoife for a drink and a chat. We had a nice meal in Funchal and returned to Quinta do Lorde by taxi.

The Saoirse Rally

On Monday 3 July we departed from the fuel berth and headed towards Funchal. We arrived at the rendezvous point and awaited the fleet coming

LEFT: Hannah and Tony between Gibraltar and Madeira

from Porto Santo. We were very pleased, after all the challenges along the way, to be able to take our place in the Parade of Sail. *Sea Witch* was one of the boats which had to anchor outside the harbour for the night. Next day at high water we manoeuvred around the dredger and took our place in the marina. We were met by our shore party, my wife Geraldine, together with Paul Maguire, ICC and his wife Angela. We all had a great week participating in the Saoirse Rally. The gathering each evening at the tented village for the Happy Hour was an outstanding success. The food, drink and the variety of entertainment in such an informal setting, was enjoyed by all.

Where to next?

Hannah left us after six memorable weeks aboard. It was wonderful to share such time with our adult daughter. For me, it was the highlight of the trip. Paul Maguire, ICC, joined the crew for the next stage in our very own *Odyssey*. *Sea Witch* had been wandering the Med since 2014 and it was time for new adventures. We had settled on Galicia to be our new base.

On Sunday 9 July we left the marina at 1700. By the time we cleared the main island of Madeira, we were facing into NE 3 and tacked onto starboard to clear west of the island of Porto Santo. We conferred with John Leahy on the weather forecast. It showed an area of calm to the north of our course, and an area of 30 kt winds to the east. The best strategy would be to

tack along the 20kt line between the two systems. We followed that plan but as the line itself was moving we sometimes erred too far in one direction or the other. During Monday the wind remained NE and averaged F4, although wind speed and direction wavered a lot. We were going well, and in the early morning took one reef in the main. By 2000 the wind had eased to F3 and the engine came on again. This was the pattern for the next few days.

By Thursday 13 July the winds were very light. A morning call with John Leahy confirmed the coming westerlies. We should head North to avoid having to beat up the Portugese coast. By late afternoon the wind started filling in from the west. By 2300 it was W5 in gusts. On Friday 14 July the wind continued to veer to N5, rising to N6 in squally showers. It was a lumpy ride. At 0200 Saturday we took a second reef. By 0500 it was N7 in squalls. And then it was gone.

At 0800 it was a beautiful sunny morning with wind down to N4, and we had less than 100nm to go. We were in no hurry. I did not want to arrive in a relatively strange harbour in darkness. The log records our arrival at the waypoint at the entrance to the Ria de Vigo at 0823 Sunday. We tied up in the RCNV marina a little while later feeling very pleased with ourselves. After three months on board and overcoming the various challenges, I was exhausted but happy.





Dawn breaks as we approach the Ría de Vigo

Lessons learnt:

- We loved the Ionian islands of Greece and the friendliness of the people. However, they hate giving you bad news and often overpromise and underdeliver. There was a huge surge in yachting activity coming out of Covid and they were not able to cope.
- I had built into our plans, six weeks for contingencies. Without that buffer, Sea Witch would not have made it to Madeira in time for the Saoirse Rally.
- There were so many gear issues that we began to see problems that did not exist. The whole process can be draining. Exhaustion can make any issue even more challenging when at sea.

- We had many obstacles along the way. But nobody died, and a minor cut was the height of the injuries sustained. Each issue was a challenge to be overcome, something to be fixed and go again.
- My sailing buddies are magnificent. Nothing fazed them. I am very fortunate to have such a pool of sailing friends who put their own knowledge and experience to bear on any issue that arose. They did not grumble when plans changed, and they had to change flights.
- The atmosphere on board was always good. We ate well and cooked from scratch. Everyone participated and even swapped recipes. If you plan to undertake a long cruise, it is great to have such a wonderful bunch of friends to enjoy it with.

Paul, Michael and Mike relaxing in Vigo



Cruising on a Drascombe

Paddy Barry



Drascombe event in Kinvara for Criunniú na mBád

Why the Lugger? In recent years I've spent too much time shore bound, because I've had no one to join me on board my bigger boats. Yes I could go singlehanded; but that's not very social and can be awkward if things go wrong. My old sailing friends are losing both mobility and interest—indeed some are gone 6 feet under!

And, truth to tell, having turned eighty, I'm losing it myself to a degree. But, I have a Five Year Plan to stay in enjoyable good order—and thereafter?

The Drascombe Lugger is an open 19-foot boat with foresail, lug-rigged mainsail and mizzen. Her centerboard and rudder both are lifting; thus she can draw only about 10 inches. For auxiliary propulsion they carry oars--and an outboard of about 5 HP. Ideally she is fit for sheltered coastal waters; although some have gone much further afield, round Ireland and beyond. She has storage for afloat camping, if desired. And more importantly she is safe when singlehanded. Conventionally they are set up on a road trailer and thus can be 'over landed' to the desired cruising area.



So I decided that one of these would be the job for me. There are both smaller and bigger versions, but the 19 footer was my preference. New they cost about € 20,000, second hand about half or a third of that; depending on age and condition. There were three on the Irish secondhand market, one on Bere Island and two in Donegal, neither a short drive for me from Dublin and none being offered by that most desired seller, a fed up or widowed wife!

Fortuitously, through a connection made through the Old Gaffers Association, a Lugger became available just down the road from me in Wicklow. I spent little time inspecting the boat, engine and rig; most deficiencies of which I could probably fix myself. But the trailer got a lot of time. It was of the 'break-back' type, with swivelling back end which makes for easier launching and particularly retrieving. It looked well-winch, wheels, bearings, rollers and frame. The deal was done in a Wicklow field.

Into my back garden in Monkstown it was towed; a garden that 50 years earlier had stored a 42-foot Galway Hooker. Over the winter I titivated it; nothing really was needed. I put in a sounder and plotter, which I had, rigged the boom tent and installed an electric pump for those days of breaking seas over the bow.

Around Easter we towed her to her new base. By arrangement with friends in Clifden Boat Club I cast a concrete mooring block on the shore and towed it into the agreed location. Over the years I had, in my civil-engineering world of work, done various 'tide-lifts'—but this was different, very personal. The Lugger, tightly roped over the block, myself within, took the strain on the rising tide. To one side she leaned. Viewers on 'the lazy wall' might have critically filled their pipes. I donned my life jacket, keeping my

sharpened knife very much to hand. But lift she did, albeit somewhat lopsided, and out to the designated spot we motored and there I cut the lifting line. Gently the block dropped, no drama now, and I moored to my new buoy.

Over the next month Mannin Bay and the waters around Turbot and Inishturk Islands were my cruising grounds, the White Lady beacon and Slyne Head mostly in sight; High Island and 'Bofin tantalizingly remaining for fine weather. A fortnight in Scotland on Adrian Stu Spence's 47 foot *El Paradiso* provided contrast and then it was back to the Lugger.

County Waterford's 'Copper Coast' was the ground for a group of about ten Luggers. In Mooncoin on the River Suir, after camping overnight, at the top of the tide we began. Downstream we went on the muddy waters and raised masts after Waterford's Rice Bridge. Thence under sail, stopping for lunch in Cheekpoint and onward past Dunmore East and Brownstown Head across Tramore Bay (with its over 200 shipwrecks) and into the pier. Some of us pulled boats ashore, some stayed afloat, but all repaired up the road for a convivial dinner in The Pier Restaurant, before rolling downward.

Not so great were my own arrangements; I had forgetfully left my overnighting stuff back in Mooncoin. Donning oilskins and boots I wrapped up in the boat cover, lay on the boat floor and slept as best I could – and thought those days were finished. Next day we engine and sailed westwards, past The Metal Man and into a sunny anchorage at Ardmore Bay for a lunch break. Some swam. I, barely warmed up, didn't. Onward then we went, round the Cunnigar and into Dungarvan. The town on this Sunday night was all abuzz; pints in the Sailing Club and back to the boat down at the Club Pontoon. I had retrieved my gear from Mooncoin. Some rain in the forecast bothered me not at all as I tucked into sleeping bag within a Goretex Bivvy Bag, air mattress beneath.

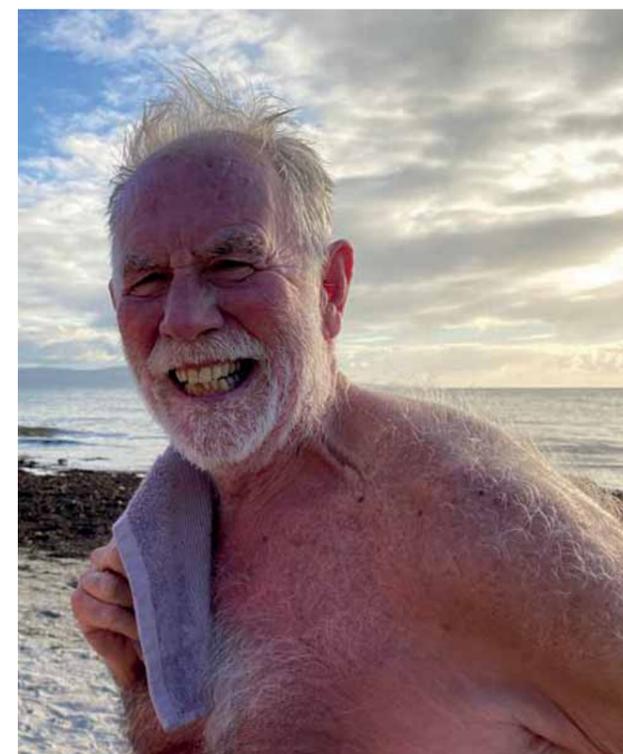
About 0230 the rain started; no bother to me, my Goretex bag had served me well previously in such rain over many years. However, a quarter of an hour later it was wet inside. Another quarter and the sleeping bag was wet and then, so was I. Would I just lie there and stick it out? The air-mattress too had gone down. The prospect of some light pneumonia stirred me into action. I changed into dry clothes, as quick as I could; the rain falling. Into the oilskins, wrapped in the green tarpaulin, lay down and waited for the dawn; swearing to get some new gear—or maybe to pack this game up altogether!

The Drascombe Luggers next event was in Cork Harbour. We based at Paddy's Point, Ringaskiddy, some in B & B's, some in camper vans and some in tents. A good slip there allowed easy launching. Our host Jack O Keeffe, led us away under Haulbowline Bridge across to Whitegate on the other side, then

to an obscure tidal bay, featuring a Megalithic tomb among the trees and back to shoreside coffee in Aghada. The west side of Cork Harbour, Crosshaven and all that, would be well known to most of us, but this east harbour side had been 'terra incognita'.

The following day we sailed up to Ballinacurra; also new ground for me, almost to Midleton itself. Edward Bransfield came from there; a new monument is testimony to his being the first to sight Antarctica. In Colbert's Bar I dare not mention Bellingshausen, from (then) Russian Estonia who was a little ahead of him in that regard. Bellingshausen also was skippering his own Russian Navy vessel whereas Bransfield was supernumerary in a chartered American whaler. Of more recent interest was a lady I spoke to whose father had been the owner / skipper of Brooklands, the last trading schooner to work from this village.

There was a Drascombe event a week later based in Bunaw, on Kenmare Bay, which I couldn't make. But I did make that later in east Galway's Kinvara—of course. The weather was desperate as we set up at Tarrea Pier. Our plan to go out and overnight on Island Eddy or sail up to Clarinbridge was frustrated by strong winds; so was the plan for the Hookers coming across the bay from south Connemara. We instead went westward across Kinvara bay to a pier on the Doorus side, little known and somewhat broken down—these Drascombes can go anywhere! The 'Brogan Barbecue' is the social highlight; held down at Parkmore Pier to welcome the Connemara boats before continuing up the bay to the intensity of the Cruinniú Na mBád Festival. The wind blew and the rain fell, but old friends and acquaintances, and indeed racing rivals, abounded. There being no racing, the drink flowed --and the music and chat. The weather improved next day. The Hookers got sailing, and so did we.



Swimming Time

After that it was back to Clifden to see the Summer out—'Bofin awaiting another day.

And the Look Ahead on this Five Year Plan? 2024, almost upon us now, has the prospect of a non-nautical summer. A few of us, including some other ICC, are gearing up to do an overland road trip to Mongolia. We will be passing by The Black Sea and The Caspian Sea, with the very extensive Lake Baikal not so distant at the far end. So we may just get the odd day afloat!

Drascombe fleet in Kenmare Bay



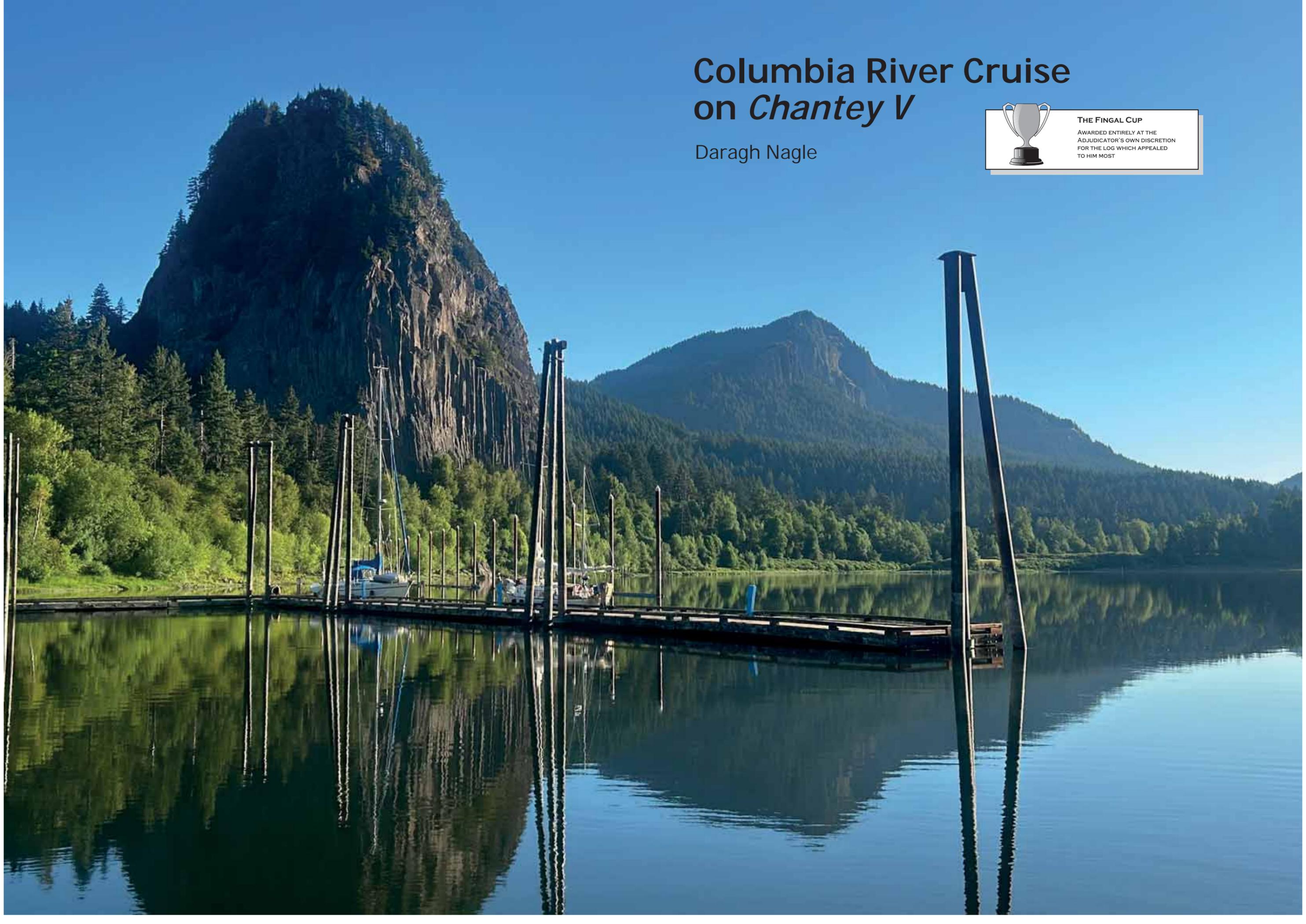
Columbia River Cruise on *Chantey V*

Daragh Nagle



THE FINGAL CUP

AWARDED ENTIRELY AT THE
ADJUDICATOR'S OWN DISCRETION
FOR THE LOG WHICH APPEALED
TO HIM MOST



Another fine plan is born

I've been to Astoria Oregon many times – the mouth of the mighty Columbia River – but had never passed under the bridge upriver. This is the location of the notorious Columbia River Bar which has been given the unenviable reputation as the graveyard of the Pacific, with more than two thousand ships lost in the area since 1792. It was intriguing to watch massive ocean-going ships pass under the huge Astoria – Megler Bridge on their way to Vancouver, Washington and Portland, Oregon some one hundred miles inland. It is navigable to commercial and recreational traffic for another three hundred and fifty miles through a series of locks all the way to Lewiston, Idaho. We were resolved to check it out.

Another motivation was that when we purchased *Chantey V* in 2007 she had Corbett, Oregon as its hailing port on it's stern. I was curious to visit the local waters where *Chantey V* had sailed for her first two decades after being built near another famous river – the Hamble in Hampshire, England.

Also, have Ocean Cruising Club friends Steve and

Vickey Austin live in the city of Hood River, on a tributary of the Columbia. They accompanied us on their Waquiez 38, *Tango*, on our voyage to Alaska back in 2019. Coincidentally, Michael and Anne Hartshorne of *Nimue* were about to resume their circumnavigation west of British Columbia and decided a buddy boat trip down the coast together would make a great restart of their voyage.

Getting to Astoria which is about 200nm distant from Victoria, BC involves a Bluewater section off the coast of Washington (WA) to get there. Think of it as our Bay of Biscay. This section is very unforgiving of any shortcomings in terms of crew and equipment. With this in mind the Spring haul-out was especially thorough, checking steering and rudder, through hulls, standing and running rigging, as well as engine and other machinery. All was well and *Chantey V* had never looked better.

Getting Under Way

We departed our berth at Royal Victoria Yacht Club on 1 July into a moderate breeze of 10 – 15 kts out



Bridey, Daragh, Cate and John

of the west. The crew comprised my wife Cate, her brother John and of course ship's dog Bridey the Sheltie. The forecast was for 10-20 kt westerlies and as we passed Trial Island at 0700 it was all of that and more! In fact, it gradually increased all morning and by eleven we had a double reefed main and genoa and were barely able to lay Port Angeles some 40nm to the southwest. The seas increased in proportion to the wind, then in the mid twenties with gusts above thirty. I regretted not postponing the passage a day but fortunately it was a relatively short passage.

What a difference a day makes! We made an early departure in light winds bound for Neah Bay some 60 nm distant at the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The only hazard was the flotilla of fishing boats of all sizes out to take advantage of the benign conditions. We were happy to motor the entire distance which has prevailing westerlies and can be an ordeal. The last 10nm or so had enormous residual swells from the day before which had us pitching extremely high. This led to some hard slamming of the hull with consequences to be realised later.

Once we got into US waters, we used a new smartphone app process called CBP Roam to check in with US Customs and it worked very well. It provides for an interview via video phone call with the Customs officer if needed and it was a relief that this requirement was waived given the rowdy conditions on board. We were given our clearance number and carried on. The next challenge was getting a berth at Port Angeles. There was no response to either radio or cell phone as we approached. I made a speculative radio call to *Nimue* on Channel 16 and thank goodness they were standing by. They gave us directions and were able to take lines as we came alongside in fierce 25 kt winds even in the marina. *Nimue* also had a rough passage from Port Townsend earlier in the day including losing their mast mounted radar dome during a snap tack. It was great to be back on dry land and our troubles were soon forgotten as we enjoyed a beer and bite in downtown Port Angeles.

We obtained berths in the mainly commercial fishing port of Neah Bay. This is operated by the Makah First Nation. A walking tour of the town included a stop for coffee where we planned the next leg of the trip. Now 150nm from Astoria to the south, this was a good distance for an overnigher with a daylight departure and arrival for the low slack water at the Columbia Bar which was predicted for 1000 the following day. The wind forecast was for the usual northwesterly flow in the 10 – 15 kt range which proved a bit light for sailing. Nevertheless, the direction was right and it would be sufficient for sailing the hours of darkness which lowers the risk of getting an errant crab pot caught in the propellor. *Nimue* made better time and was waiting an hour for us at the sea marker entrance to Astoria. The channel is 12nm long with the critical part of the bar at Clatsop Spit, about half way, so we had to endure over an hour of ebb to get





ABOVE: Approaching Bridge of the Gods. INSET: Railway swing bridge opens at Portland

to it on time. It worked out well and the bar was like a mill pond as we crossed, much to the chagrin of John who was expecting the advertised excitement. After securing a couple of berths at the Astoria West Boat Basin, we decided to tour the city. There is a wonderful restored 1913 tram that runs 12 miles along the waterfront with volunteers providing guidance and narration of this town steeped in history. We chose one of the many restaurants and booked for dinner later. Astoria has a terrific museum dedicated to the Coastguard, Bar Pilots and the history of the port which is a must see for visitors.

Heading up the river

The early morning ebb gave us a leisurely start to the day. John and I walked to the excellent chandlery at Englund Marine. We secured 16 ft of sanitation hose and some fittings. The severe pound near Neah Bay had collapsed the discharge hose and we had the unenviable task of replacing it. Now at least we had the necessary parts. We set out at noon next day to catch as much of the flood as possible. The Columbia is tidal for the first 90 miles or so and the ebb can add another 3 kts to the typical 2 kt downstream flow of the river. There was a good breeze out of the west and allowed us to deploy a headsail periodically when the wind angle cooperated. We had a nominal destination of Cathlamet but given *Nimue's* draft of 7 ft we became anxious of a possible grounding at the entrance at less than half tide. We pressed on,

checking a number of riverside anchoring locations before settling for a spot behind Fir Island. This area is called Cape Horn and the fierce winds as we approached made us realize why. Happily, it was perfectly calm in the lee of the island and soon we were having a pleasant walk ashore with Bridey. Setting out early next day, we were indifferent to the ebb as the flood did not begin until much later and would not be that strong in any case. It was 30 miles to our stop at St Helens and we needed to get on with it. The river is still very wide and huge ships as well as many tugs with barges ply their way up and down. We passed large dredging operations. These machines work continuously to maintain the 40 ft depth required by the ship traffic all the way to Portland. The riverside scenery is interesting with small towns interlaced with industrial activity along the way. There is an east-west railway running along both riverbanks with a surprising amount of traffic, mostly containers with the occasional passenger train.

We arrived at the St Helens docks six hours later and secured ourselves. These municipal docks are unmanned and we were able to see that there was space available ahead of time by viewing the city's webcam online. The docking fee with the option of buying an electrical connection for the night was paid on a dockside vending machine. Once ashore we heard live music wafting through the riverside park with a festive atmosphere. We toured the town

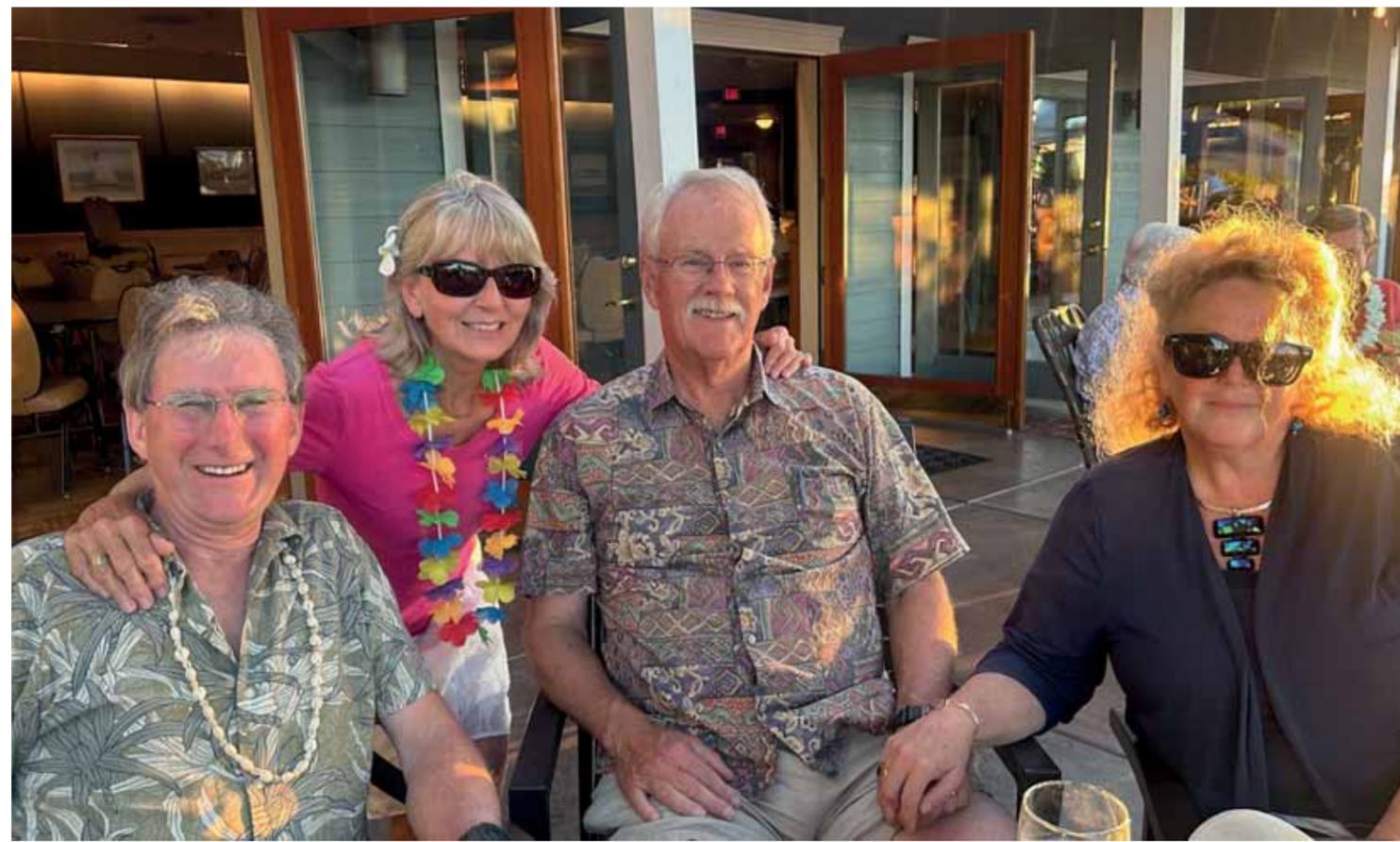
and settled into a sidewalk pub for a few pints. Later we had dinner aboard whilst *Nimue* crew took in the latest Indiana Jones movie at the beautifully restored theatre in the town.

With just 40nm left to go to get to Portland, the shoreline gradually became more industrial as we passed the junction with the Willamette River which leads into downtown Portland. The Railway Swing bridge opened for us after a ten-minute wait and on to the I5 freeway bridge whose 66 ft clearance was nerve-racking for *Nimue's* 63 ft air draft. It even looked too close for *Chantey V* even though we're only 54 ft air draft. We stayed on the Columbia bound for the Portland Yacht Club which is behind Hayden Island. This is a reciprocal club to our RVCY and we received a warm welcome at this beautifully appointed facility.

This welcome included an offer to drive us for a provisioning run to the grocery store next day. This allowed John and myself the boat to ourselves for a few hours to tackle that hose replacement – not a job for the faint of heart. Suffice it to say we got it done. Later the same day I toured Hayden Island on our electric scooter. This is our latest solution for transport to and from the boat. It's very effective and folds up to a smaller package than a folding bike. It can go up to 20 kms an hour with a range in excess of 30 km and can be recharged readily with the boat's inverter.

We took an UBER to downtown Portland on Sunday and had an enjoyable walk around the city. The waterfront is lovely and we found an eclectic retro café for lunch. Alas there was also much evidence of urban decay, homelessness and open drug use which sadly is a scourge in many large cities nowadays. We arrived back to the PYC in time to take lines for *Tango* with Steve Austin on board. Steve, also an OCC member, had sailed down from Hood River to cruise in company with us for the run upriver. Once again, we had an excellent dinner at the fine restaurant in PYC.

After bidding adieu to John who flew back to Victoria from the nearby Portland Airport, it was time to move on upriver. The steady 2 kt adverse current kept our engines busy but we also had many head sailing opportunities when the wind picked up in the afternoons. *Tango* showed us some local knowledge-back eddies on the shoreline which saved us some time. 17 NM east of Portland we passed Corbett Station – the original hailing port of *Chantey V*. Alas all that remains are a few abandoned pilings – apparently the upgrading of the adjacent highway restricted access to the point that the docks were no longer viable. By late afternoon we were docking at Beacon Rock State Park – a most picturesque scene. It was too late in the day to attempt a climb but we resolved that it was a must do on the return trip. We rounded out the day with a salmon plank BBQ on *Nimue* followed by socializing until sunset.



Daragh, Cate, Doug and Jane at PYC



ABOVE: Daragh, Steve, Michael, Anne and Vicky at Hood River

BELOW: Cate at Bonneville Lock



Beacon Rock State Park put us within 5nm of the Bonneville Dam and Locks. Surprisingly we were advised to allow at least two hours for this short trip and once under way we realized why. The river flows faster as you approach the dam overflow discharge and we struggled to make 3kts against the current. We made it handily for the 0900 uplock opening. They employ a system of sliding wall bollards which simplifies the process of tending lines for the 80 ft rise in the lock. Onwards to Hood River and past the disused Cascade Locks which we noted for a potential stop on the way back. We had a strong westerly wind which allowed us sail most of the way. There was a lot of activity on the water in the vicinity of Hood River which is a Mecca for kite boarding and wind surfing. All this in and around the tugs, barges and river cruise ship requires a sharp look out. This part of the Columbia Gorge is famous for its dependable winds and today was no exception. We were fortunate to have Vicky Austen at the dock to take our lines in 20 kt wind gusts. Steve and Vicky took us to their beautiful home for dinner and we looked forward to a few days of shore life there. We hiked several trails and visited the very impressive Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum at the airport. The town itself is charming with coffee shops and interesting stores throughout.

There was one final leg upriver to our final destination of the Dalles which is situated below another dam and set of locks. The landscape had now changed to desert with very high temperatures to go with it. We had been advised that further upriver would be more of the same except hotter. There was plenty of room at the city docks and some members of the adjoining Dalles Yacht Club kindly invited us the use of their clubhouse while we were there. It was a half hour walk into

BELOW: Windsports off Hood River





Columbia 5kt current below Bonneville Dam

the city and soon we regretted the decision in the sweltering heat. Later we took a taxi back to the boat. Meanwhile there was plenty of sight seeing in the old city of Dalles. We visited a veteran's museum in the old fire station and later had a fascinating tour of a neon sign museum.

Homeward Bound from the Dalles

Turning downstream the current was with us but we

were sailing into the prevailing westerlies. Anything above 10 kts true and the whitecaps started. Conditions could get quite rough at 20 kts but this was usually shortlived and often moderated around the next bend in the river. Fortunately making an early start and getting to your destination by noon each day is an effective strategy here as well. We were making great progress in the benign conditions and decided to continue on to Cascade Locks. This worked out well and we got a side tie on the 200

ft of guest docks. This is a great place with the area surrounding the old locks – now inundated – turned into a museum park. There was a dinghy regatta taking place that weekend so a very festive atmosphere prevailed. Crews of *Tango* and *Nimue* drove down next day for a farewell lunch in the town followed by sundowners on *Chantey V. Nimue* had a replacement radar being shipped in so would now be a few days behind us. We decided to stay on another day which turned out just as well when we discovered 2 ft of dodger stitching had failed which would require a repair. It also gave us time to check

out and hike a little of the Pacific Crest Trail and the Bridge of the Gods that pass by Cascade Locks. This famous trail is 2,653 miles long and runs all along the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada.

The downlocking through Bonneville Lock next day was uneventful and we were back into Beacon Rock State Park quite early. Perfect for our plan to climb the 850 ft high rock before it got too hot. It's steep but quite safe with a metal railing all the way as it meanders back and forth across the face of the huge rock. We were rewarded with a panoramic view at the top. A highlight was seeing clearly the 5 kt current flowing from the Bonneville Dam. We stayed a couple of nights at the park, discovering new trails and swimming in the fresh water. We slipped our lines and rejoined the flow downstream. Although the SOG was an excellent 8 kts we had very low boat speed. I suspect that docking with our stern into the current was a mistake and we likely had caught bits of debris accumulated around our rudder and prop. It gradually improved and when I dived on the boat at our next stop everything was clear. A little risky swimming in the 2kt current and a trailing floating line is a good idea. Lots of dock space at Government Island but not much else. We had a nice walk ashore where we saw some deer.

We had a pleasant one hour run down to Portland Yacht Club, where we refueled. A delicious lunch was served and, afterwards, we walked down to the nearest grocery store to reprovision for the journey home. My RVYC friend, Doug Taylor Lee, had offered to sign on for the sail home and my wife Cate readily agreed. This would give Cate and Doug's wife Jane (and Bridey) a couple of days to meander home by road and check out the charms of Tacoma and Port Townsend on the way. The leg from Astoria to the Juan de Fuca Strait is considered an uphill battle with opposing wind and current all the way. Doug and Jane arrived in time for the Tropical Party at PYC that Saturday night, and a good time was had by all.

Be careful what you wish for!

An analysis of the weather forecast on PredictWind indicated that a rare southerly wind would be in effect some two days hence. Could we get there in time? With a first light start at 0500 we hoped that we could do the 85nm directly to Astoria instead of the usual two or three days. We decided to go for it. It was an early start only to waste 20 minutes waiting for the railway bridge to open which was not helpful. We pressed on, motoring hard all the way and boosted by the long ebb. Alas, the tide turned and it was a slow final three hours into Astoria. Still, we made it before dark and in time to go ashore for a few pints to celebrate at a waterfront bar.

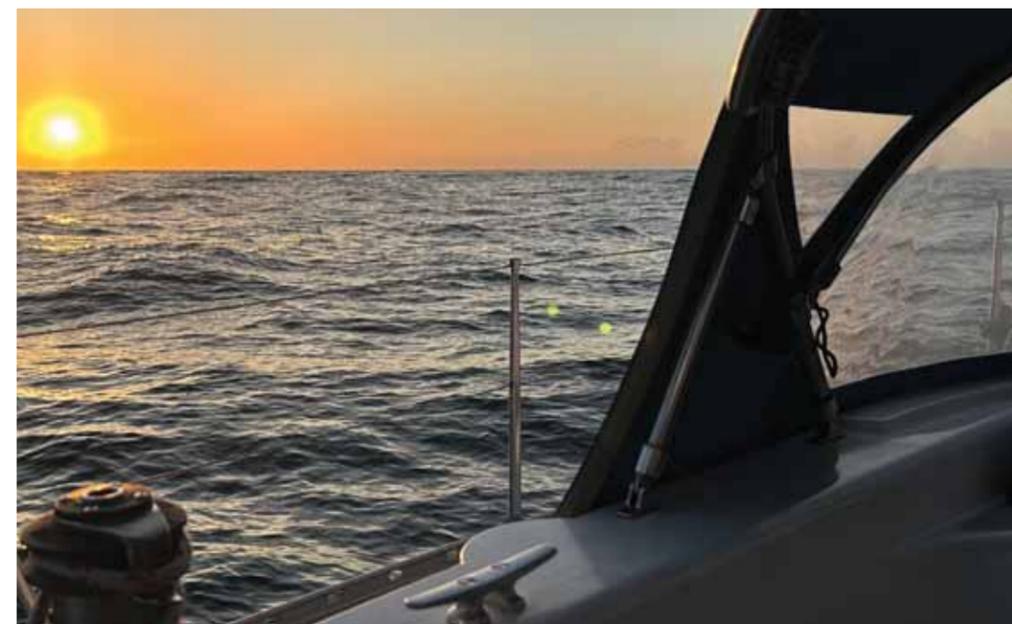
No rest for the wicked, and another first light departure was called for to make another kind of bar at Clatsop Spit slack at 0600. This timing worked



Mt Adams from Hood River

out well and we crossed with full main and headsail into a gradually increasing southerly wind. We were delighted to be sailing fast but not so much with the building sea – another classic case of wind opposing current. We hadn't bargained for the rain either and soon the cockpit was a damp affair with the rain driving over the stern. So much so that the rain hitting the screen of my binnacle mounted iPad began to give errors. Fortunately, I keep a second iPad as a backup and put it in position – this time with a large zip lock bag over it which solved the problem. We got in a good 12 hours of sailing before the wind veered and eased so that we were back

to motor-sailing by evening, and through the night. Dawn had us approaching Neah Bay from the south. We could see that it was shrouded in rain and fog. We decided it had insufficient appeal compared to continuing on home. Arriving at RVYC in Victoria ten hours later, we were tired but glad to be home safely, for a total leg time of 34 hours. Cate and Jane were most surprised that we had arrived before them! All in all, it was a great finish to the voyage! We had travelled 750 nm 15 legs over 24 days. Once again, *Chantey V* had taken us safely and efficiently on a memorable voyage.



LEFT: Homeward bound WA coast

OPPOSITE: Off the Willamette River

It might not seem like a very ambitious objective for a cruise, but on our only previous visit to Bantry Bay (2016) we failed to visit its second most significant island, Whiddy. So for this summer's two-week cruise the goal was to set sail from Galway in our Sadler 26, *Calico Jack*, and make a full rounding of Whiddy, including a stopover there.

Early on the 9 July, sailing friend Colm Tuohy and I set off for Inis Meáin in a nice north easterly breeze with lots of rain forecast. However, the rain stayed over the mainland for the day and we had a fast downwind sail to this beautiful island, including a few hours carrying the spinnaker. In glorious sunshine we went for a swim from Ceann Gainimh (literally sandy head) beach where the water colours match anything you could see in the Caribbean. We met Tim O'Shea and his crew, sailors from East Ferry in Cork, in An Teach Osta and he offered advice on the berthing arrangements when we got to Whiddy. On the 10th we left the Aran islands via Foul Sound and had a long day sail down to Fenit. We sailed as far as Loop Head but then motor sailed the rest of the way to Fenit marina where we secured a cosy inside berth for the night.

That evening we met my replacement crew Walter and Mylo O'Byrne (my father and uncle) for a hearty dinner in Westend Bar in Fenit. Colm was leaving the next morning and my new crew came on board at 1000, having spent the night in luxury at my cousin's hotel in Tralee, the Ballygarry Estate Hotel (more of this anon). A somewhat bumpy passage to the Blasket Sound followed in a fresh north westerly breeze, but with plenty of sunshine. Once we cleared Sybil Head we had a favourable tide through the Sound and the remaining few hours to Dingle were downwind with an improved sea state. An enjoyable evening in Dingle followed, including a visit to the Solas tapas restaurant, which was very good but involved some tense discussions about the extent to which the delicacies should be shared. When we were back on board we discovered that there had been an unfortunate miscommunication about the sleeping facilities available for crew; neither had brought their sleeping bags with them.

My uncle claims he had a fairly pleasant night wrapped in the spinnaker (apparently he kept it filling all night!). My father was draped in all the available dry sailing gear we had on board and, although he didn't complain, I suspect it wasn't the best night's sleep he ever enjoyed.

On the 12 July we had a leisurely sail across Dingle Bay to Knightstown, with a close reach to Doulus Head and then a spot of fishing in the North Channel approaching Valentia Harbour. Mylo is a determined angler and his efforts produced three good sized mackerel, which we promptly baked in the oven

Early start from Renville

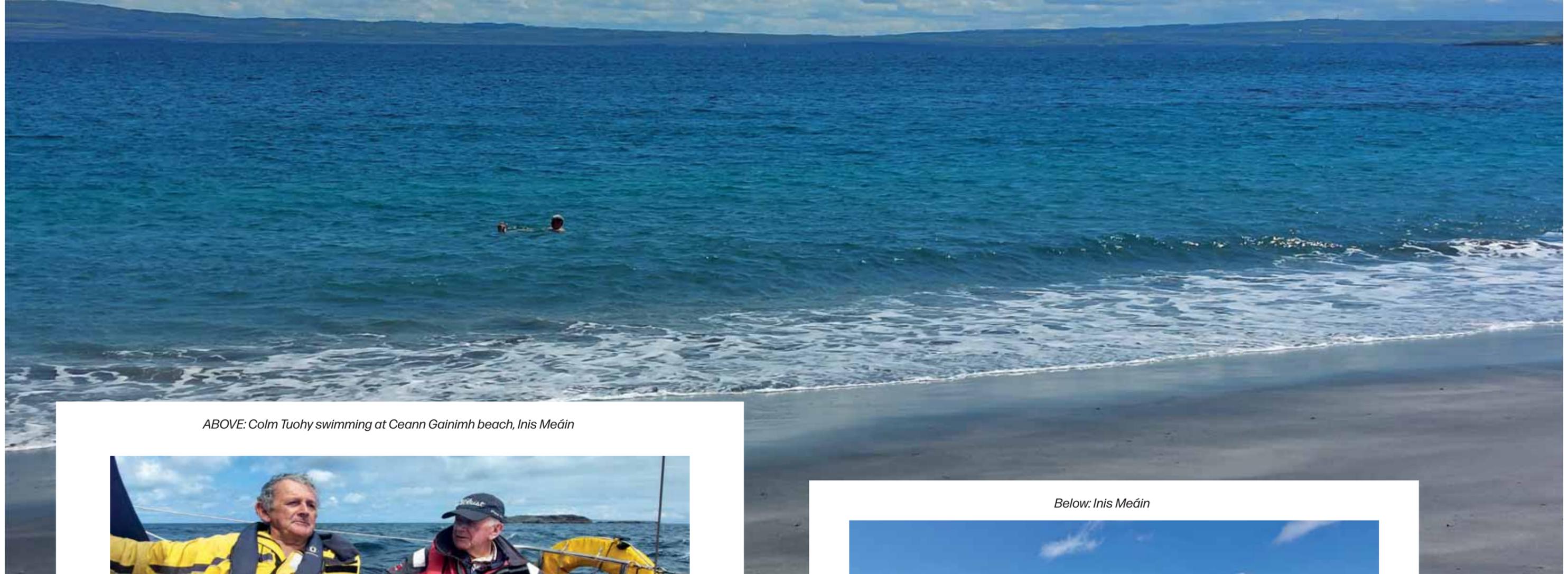
Calico Jack circumnavigates Whiddy Island

Conor O'Byrne



THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

FOR THE BEST CRUISE
IN IRISH WATERS



ABOVE: Colm Tuohy swimming at Ceann Gainimh beach, Inis Meáin

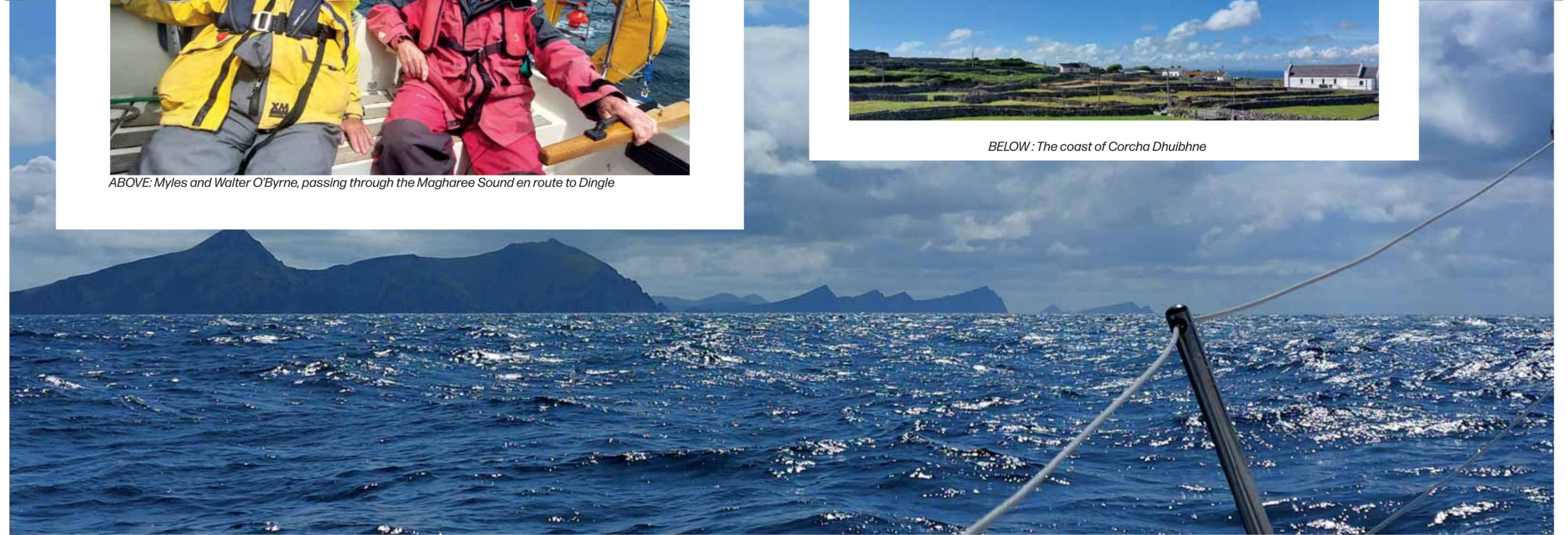


ABOVE: Myles and Walter O'Byrne, passing through the Magharee Sound en route to Dingle

Below: Inis Meáin



BELOW: The coast of Corcha Dhuibhne



once we were alongside at Knightstown. My wife, Aine, who was visiting her mother in Cahersiveen at the time, delivered two king-sized duvets to the boat. Combined with the hospitality we enjoyed in the Point and the Royal this produced a much more sonorous evening on board. The following morning we breakfasted in the Royal Valentia Hotel and then my crew had to catch a ride back to Tralee. This was no ordinary ride; my cousin flew his helicopter from the Ballygarry Estate Hotel, landing in the local park, to collect these two old salts. Much to the amusement of the locals (quite a crowd had gathered) Walter and Mylo were then whisked away, to end their two-day cruise in some style.

The following day (14th) was forecast to bring near-gale force winds so I moved the boat up to Cahersiveen marina for two nights. Since Aine was in town we had an enjoyable couple of days walking and swimming, despite the inclement weather. Then with a reasonable weather window for heading south, I made a solo passage from Cahersiveen to Castletownbere on the 16th. This 10 hour passage was pleasant once I got around Bray Head (the south westerly tip of Valentia), with a moderate westerly breeze and occasional sunshine. Although I passed through the Dursey Sound at half ebb tide the conditions were less confused than I was expecting. The only available space alongside at Castletownbere was a stern-to berth, sandwiched between two fishing boats.

The following day my new crew arrived, Dorothy Goodwin, daughter of Lyle, who has sailed often with me on *Calico Jack*. Dorothy was more-or-less reared on a boat and was just back from a three-week cruise with friends in Brittany, so she was fully acclimated to boat life. That afternoon we made the short passage to Adrigole in murky conditions. Despite the dreary *Taxi driver* (aka Pádraig McGillycuddy, owner of Ballygarry Estate Hotel) arrives to pick up Walter and Mylo on Valentia. Aine and her mother join for the photograph.



Stern-to in Castletownbere

weather, the view up towards Hungry Hill from the mooring in Adrigole was impressive, with a huge waterfall engorged with rainfall cascading down the mountain. After inflating the dinghy, we trudged up to the nearest pub, Murphys, only to be humiliated by the locals at pool. Better weather arrived the following day as we made our strike for Whiddy. With a fine westerly breeze we flew the spinnaker almost as far as Glengarriff. Doffing our caps to ICC's founding fathers, we stopped off at Garnish for swims and lunch. We were delighted to see the resident white tailed sea eagle perched in its nest as we passed Garnish Island and later flying across the harbour.



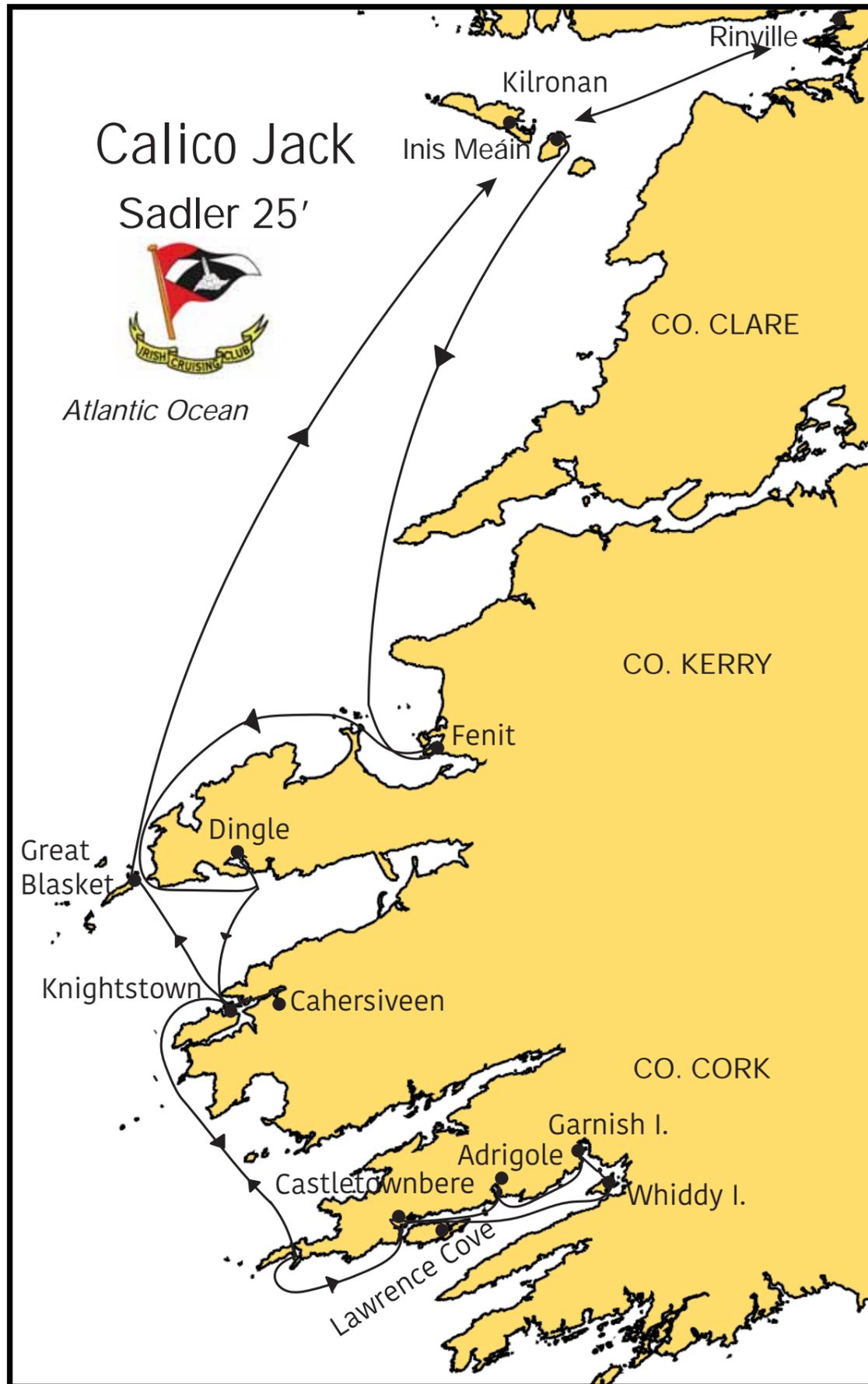
Calico Jack alongside at Whiddy Island

Then in glorious sunshine we sailed around the north east end of Whiddy Island and made our landfall at the pontoon just northeast of Rabbit Island. There we met the self-proclaimed minister for tourism, Tim O'Leary (ferryman and publican, inter alia), who advised on the best spot to berth the boat to avoid the ferry. Tim and his partner Kathleen were great hosts while we were there. They allowed us to borrow bikes from the pub (the Bank House) for a quick cycle tour of the island. It so happened that there was live theatre on the island that evening, a solo performance by Cork's Pat Kinevane in a play called 'King', which had attracted the great and the good. At dinner outside the pub before the performance, we found ourselves rubbing shoulders (literally) with the A-list celeb Jeremy Irons. The play itself was provocative and entertaining

but was marred slightly by the actor stopping his performance abruptly to admonish a slightly tipsy lady in the front row for laughing in the wrong places! The westerly breeze held on the 19 July as we beat back towards Bere Island. After an enjoyable sail we made Lawrence Cove at around 1600 and received a warm welcome from the proprietor Rachel Harrington, who took our lines. A trip to the local pub resulted in disappointment as we were cashless and drinks could be procured only with cash! Rachel came to the rescue with the only cash-back service available locally and she also provided a freezer for me to refreeze the ice packs for my cold box (*Calico Jack* being fridgeless!). We enjoyed a few drinks with our marina neighbours, Eugene O'Loughlin and his brother Brendan, who were cruising on their Sadler 29 *Kerensa* from Crosshaven, Cork.

Conor and Dorothy exploring Whiddy Island





The following morning I dropped Dorothy (and our neighbour Brendan, who needed a lift to Glengarriff) back to Castletownbere and then I sailed on solo to Knightstown. The forecast was looking uncertain for the next few days so I agonised about whether to push on overnight to the Aran Islands while the weather was reasonable. The mind was willing but the flesh was weak and the prospect of a pint and a good sleep ultimately won the day. In Knightstown I found several Galway boats down in Kerry for a mini-cruise so I had good company that evening in the Royal (Frankie Leonard and Conor Owens, both with their Contessa 32s). Both Conor and myself decided that there was a weather window on the 22nd to make for the Aran Islands. With strong south westerly winds forecast during the night of the 21st Conor elected to sail over Smerwick Harbour on the 21st before they came through and I decided to make for beach on Great Blasket, where I picked up one of the ferry moorings. After a windy and mostly sleepless night I dropped the mooring at 0545 on the 22nd and took the passage north going to the west of Beginish. Once I was clear of Sybil Head I poled out the genoa and rigged a preventer on the main boom. A long drizzly downwind sail ensued towards Inismór. Throughout the day I could see Conor Owen's *Sealion* ahead of

me on the AIS, but not by eye through the mist. The wind veered westerly and freshened in the afternoon and this gave a better downwind angle for faster reaching conditions. We were passed by *Blue Moon* from Westport, owned by John Lambe (ICC), just as we approached Gregory Sound at around 1845. A welcoming pod of dolphins played around *Calico Jack* as we entered the Sound and shortly afterwards I berthed alongside *Sealion* in Kilronan. We got a very welcome dinner in the American Bar and recounted our soggy solo sailing experiences of the day. On the last day of the cruise I was joined by Neil Goodwin (uncle of the aforementioned Dorothy!) who had taken the ferry out from Ros a' Mhíl. We usually have a downwind homeward leg into Galway Bay but alas, this was not to be the case today. Instead, a fresh northeasterly breeze made the first few hours of motor-sailing towards Black Head quite tortuous. Neil had brought a lovely pasta dish with him but sadly did not feel up to participating in the lunchtime repast! Eventually the sea state improved as we approached the inner bay and the wind backed more northerly to give us a fetch back to our mooring in Renville. We picked up our mooring at 1820 after what had been for me a very satisfying 485NM fortnight cruise to west Cork, with the circumnavigation of Whiddy now achieved.

Cruising to a 'schedule' defined by work is often a challenge. Chaucer was correct when he said that time and tide wait for no man, but I do not believe he was a seafaring man. If he were, he would have commented on trying to blend these unstoppable forces with the vagaries of the weather. A fresh SE wind was blowing when I finished work on 6 July 2023. Far from ideal conditions for a transit of the Strangford Narrows, so two days were spent provisioning (over provisioning).

On 9 July, we (Alan, my father; Olivia, my wife; and I) motored down Strangford Lough heading for Bangor. The cirrus clouds of the night before had already begun to lower and form stratocumulus and cumulus clouds and by the time we rounded Ballyquintin Point, the wind, always favourable in direction, came and went in line with the rising and lowering of the cloud base during the morning and early afternoon. I began to read the first of my 'holiday readers,' 'The Cloudspotter's Guide' by Gavin Pretor-Pinney. In Donaghdee Sound the wind picked up and we charged north in S 4-5 occasionally 6 near Black Head, with clear skies and good visibility. Conditions too good to miss. The wind dropped off Larne, our progress slowed but we tied up in Glenarm, tired and hungry, in time for dinner.

An awkward tide on 10 July either made for a very early start if we wanted to make a passage to Scottish waters, or alternatively a day split into two passages. The latter seemed more appealing, this was after all a holiday, and it was forecast to rain at lunchtime. We had breakfast underway, and morning coffee tied up in Rathlin. The mandatory walk to a lighthouse, in this case East, along with the first ships callisthenic's session (push ups, dips and squats for Alan; yoga for Olivia and some hybrid of the two for me. My main aim – trying not to fall off the pontoon in the process).

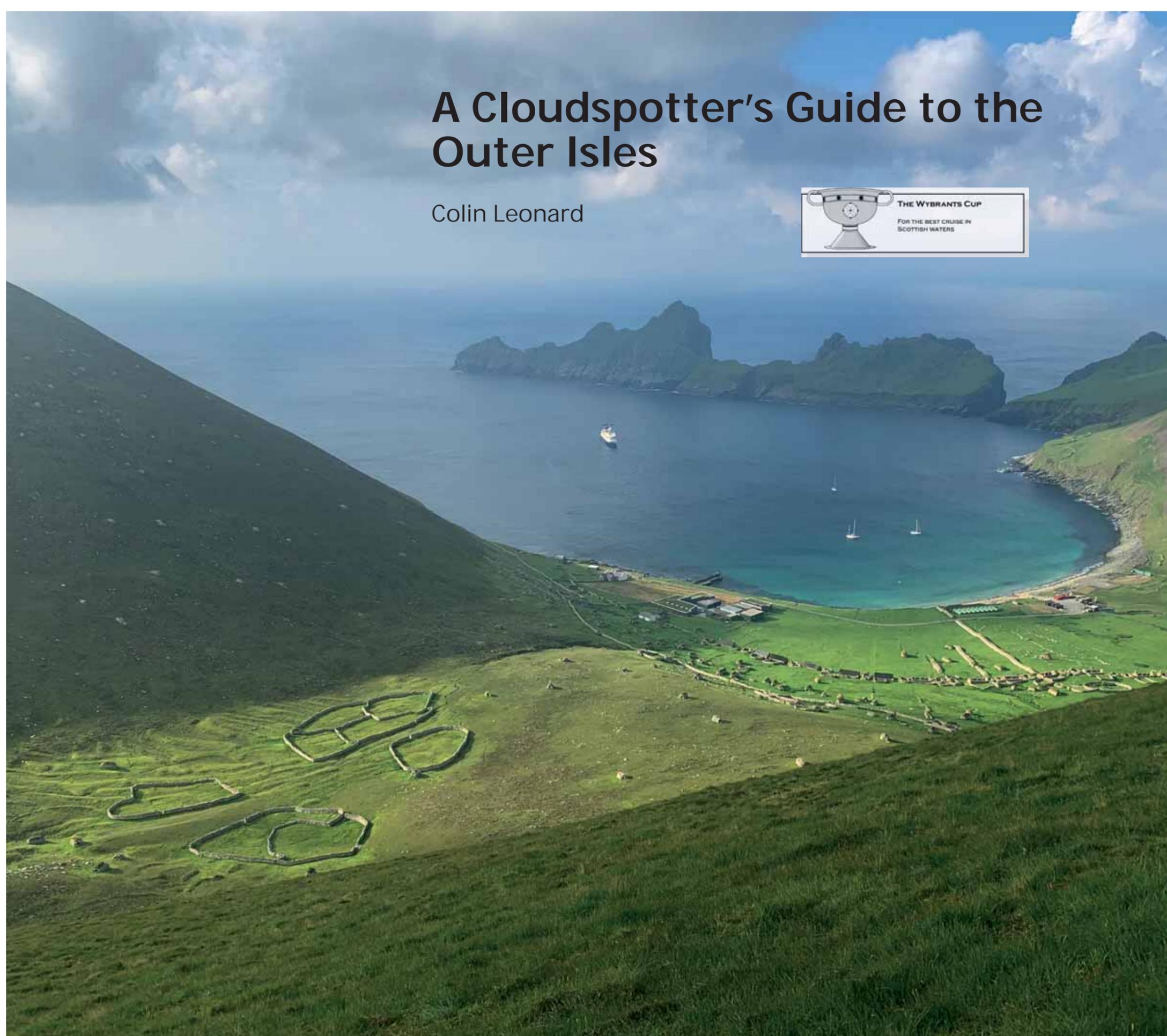
We took the tide to Port Ellen in the late afternoon, E 3-4 guided us through the myriad seabirds, fulmar, guillemot, razorbill and the occasional puffin under the West Light. We were becalmed 8 miles off the Islay coast. We enjoyed the sound of near silence and the evening light. and tied up in Port Ellen just as it started to rain.

The next morning, breezy and bright, we felt under little rush and visited Laphroaig. It was at this stage it was identified that *Ariadne* had enough oatcakes on board for an oceanic crossing. It was clear provisioning was ample and we made for the Ardmore Islands, anchoring beside *Pippa VI* from Royal Ulster in Plod Sgeirean. Seals and their pups were on rocks all around us. Despite numerous visits this remains a magical and unspoilt anchorage. It is of navigational note, that the Tripod Beacon was absent during our visit.

Aware that Olivia had less annual leave than I did,

A Cloudspotter's Guide to the Outer Isles

Colin Leonard



The Village, Hirta from near the summit of Conachair. It is worth noting that the pens below which are believed to date back centuries and the much more modern 'Remote islands of the British Isles' cruise ship.



Ariadne at anchor from Eilean an Tighe, Shiant Islands. The other vessels were tourist vessels, one on a 'Puffin Tour', the other on a wild swimming trip.

and indeed isn't retired like Alan, we felt the need to make some more progress on 12 July and so left the Ardmore Islands by the narrow Caolas Port na Lice and headed north along the Sound of Jura. We were soon racing a yacht motoring a parallel course. A cloud would roll down off the Paps of Jura, we'd accelerate and overtake, get rained upon, then becalmed and fall behind. We caught mackerel in a calm spell but eventually the wind vanished and we motored into Loch Shuna and Craobh Haven. We had time to fill the diesel tank, walk to the breakwater and further callisthenics were performed. On this occasion 'encouraged' by a hardy group of individuals cruising in Wayfarers.

We left at 0700 13 July. Unreasonably early in the poor visibility, pouring rain and flat calm. As the instigator of this plan, my questioning of 'who came up with this idea anyway,' fell on deaf ears. A juvenile sea eagle sat perched on the top of the fort at the north end of Torsa. Head and beak drawn down between the shoulders of its mighty wings, mirroring the hood up, shoulders up, pose of Alan at the wheel in full oilskins. At Easdale we set sail and the breeze filled in SW 2-3, anchoring in Puilladobhrain for breakfast. The day continued to improve and soon we were able to dry our gear on deck.

Olivia and I braved the elements and went for a swim, to the amusement or perhaps bemusement of some passing yachts. It was a strange experience to feel the vibrations of an anchor being dropped through the water. Alan lunched on board, whilst Olivia and I ventured to the Bridge over the Atlantic (Clachan Bridge) and ate a wonderful meal in Tigh an Truish. On our way back we explored/got lost in the forest at the north end of Seil. Then completed a slightly exciting circumnavigation by inflatable dinghy, of several of the islands that make up the

north side of the anchorage. At one point it began to feel a little like 'we didn't mean to go to sea.' Once back on board we made for Oban, where Mull, the Firth of Lorn and Oban itself basked in the evening sun as we looked out from McCaig's Tower.

Sadly though, for Olivia her time on board was at an end as she had to return to work, and she took the 0500 train from Oban to Glasgow on 14th July. At this point, Alan and I were faced with a dilemma. Firstly that we didn't have a plan as the arrangements for a second cruise this summer were at the time fluid. Secondly, we had a favourable tide early in the morning along the Sound of Mull. However there had been pontoon discussion about a NE gale during the day and multiple forecast sites (XCWeather, WindGuru, BBC Weather, Met Office) all supported this notion.

It was mild, sunny, visibility was good, and a light north easterly was blowing down Loch Linnhe. We set off, passage planning being of a 'somewhere that direction and we shall see,' nature. We soon were making steady progress along the Sound of Mull. The wind was a little odd at the corner, before filling in to SW 2-3.

We appraised our situation, perhaps even achieving the old adage of 'paralysis by analysis.' There was no sign of any NE airflow, let alone a NE gale. Could it be that the Sound of Mull was playing tricks on us? Around us boats were heading south along the sound, and Tobermory looked packed and the wind dropped as we passed. We had tide to carry us to Ardnamurchan, and so decided to proceed on motor sailing to make the most of things. A minke whale graced us with a sighting on our way past Rubha nan Gall. A useful prompt to download 'Whale Track,' the application run by the Hebridean Whale & Dolphin

Trust for reporting and identifying marine mammals.

Ardnamurchan was wrapped in a blanket of low cloud, perhaps stratus. It was 'dreich.' Oilskins were on merely to avoid a wet bottom in the cockpit. Surely there wasn't a gale imminent? I checked my iPhone, apparently it should already be blowing 25 knots. Then the wind died altogether. Amongst the uncertainty brought about by the weather forecasting sites, we pressed on. We set a heading for Eriskay, and realised we hadn't brought the Clyde Cruising Club Outer Hebrides Directions. I suspect it was replaced by some of the aforementioned lifetime supply of oatcakes. A quick purchase and download of a digital copy solved that problem. We commented on how quiet the Minch was on AIS. We obviously weren't the only ones spooked by the weather forecast, but we did appear to be the only ones going 'out' rather than 'in.' The weather forecast was clearly wrong...

If I had finished my holiday reader at this stage, perhaps I would have recognised the stratus and ultimately nimbostratus as the cloud of warm sector weather and examined the barometer for change to reassure myself. Instead, I asked Google. My search terms, 'live windspeed Hebrides.' I was greeted with a station in Tiree for windsurfers, a station at Barra Airport and so on. Mid passage to the Outer Isles I could identify that the wind was light to the south of us, but building to the west. In both locations it was E or SE. Comparison with the forecast suggested the gale was approximately 12 hours later than forecast. Meaning it would get moderately windy with about 15 - 20 nm to complete our passage. We adjusted course slightly to the north to allow sea room, in the event that it arrived more quickly and proceeded more confidently.

Slowly though the inevitable happened, the wind backed to the E, NE and finally N and built consistently up to F 5 - 6. The rain started (and only got heavier), visibility fell and we saw only a tanker and a cruise liner. It was noticeable how on the first half of the trip the bird life was similar to that seen around Mull, but puffins and fulmars appeared later, the latter acrobatically gliding around the rigging.



Eriskay ram who despite significant encouragement only reluctantly gave up the road to allow us past

The 15 July saw clearing showers, cumulus, heavy rain and cool air with spells of blistering sunshine. We explored Eriskay, and commented on how much more developed it is since we were last there together, nearly 20 years ago. Despite being relatively more developed, sheep wandered the roads, road signs warned of 'Otters Crossing,' a set of golf clubs in a 'Tigger' bag sat propped against lobster pots. I could not resist the draw of walking across the causeway to South Uist, hoping to encounter a crossing otter, but it was not to be.

Unable to get a forecast by VHF or mobile signal (Vodafone users beware), we were helped by a local who gave us a screenshot of XCWeather, about which I by now was feeling slightly sceptical. We left in an ever more glassy calm, and off Loch Boisdale had nearly an hour of repeated minke and fin whale sightings, the most spectacular of which involved a demonstration of 'lunge feeding.' It was close enough to make clear eye contact. We gawped in amazement as mouth open, a whale burst clear of the water, taking prey by surprise at one to two boat lengths off the starboard quarter. I wished I was a better photographer.

As we progressed north, Beinn Mhòr ceased to be surrounded by blue skies, and the clouds began to coalesce from cumulus heading towards cumulonimbus as the next warm front approached. As we approached Orinish Island, the rain got heavier,





Ariadne after the storm, Wizard's Pool

the cloud more ominous with no photo doing justice to the towering stacks forming to the north of us. We anchored close to the windward shore of Shillay Mor, in the Wizard Pool of Loch Skipport. Another blow was forecast. At last light we were joined by another yacht, the crew of whom circled a few times, perhaps disappointed that their intended anchoring spot had been taken. The screenshots of XCWeather were to prove correct, and overnight despite the short fetch *Ariadne* leapt around at anchor. There was little sign of the storm abating during all of the 16 July. It felt as though even the birds were hiding from the weather. When I ventured on deck to look around in the early evening a red throated diver appeared, and potted around the pool.

17 July was a bright morning, and the winds had abated. I scaled the 29m of heather that make up Shillay Mor (there must be ground under the heather but I didn't find it) and two sea eagles circled above me. I was glad not to be deemed a meal. A short row to Wizard Island later and then we were on board, hauling anchor and setting off through the Caolas Mor or Kettle Pool. We hoisted sail and reached in a W 3-4 past Luirsay Dubh and Luirsay Glas where a herd of red deer watched from the shore. A huge ship tended to the fish farms at Ornish which had been just out of sight the night before. The contrast was a little jarring. We were soaked once, twice, a third time by clearing showers. Each time the wind died to nothing, came back from another direction,

The Little Minch, looking east from the approaches to the Stanton Channel



BELOW: The Lochmaddy Mackerel



suspension bridge and the Hut of the Shadow. Alan agreed and we had a pleasant evening reading our books and watching the crew of the CalMac fish from the deck, tied up on the pier. Just as we were heading to our bunks, I was midway through brushing my teeth, Alan said, 'You know the way you talked about St Kilda and we both thought it was a crazy idea? We'll never get a better weather window.' Tides were hurriedly checked and alarms set for 0600 18 July.

We motored north towards the Sound of Harris in a flat calm. The sky was dotted with cumulus, altocumulus and cirrocumulus, it was mild and we got the laundry we had washed in Lochmaddy dry. We took the Stanton Channel, and admired Ensay house at the top of the beach. A yacht came out of Leverburgh, heading in the same direction. We went through Pabbay Sound and set our heading of 270°T and were soon close hauled on port in a SW 2-3. We made fair progress and kept speed if not heading with the yacht motor-sailing to windward. The sea

before dying again. Finally, becalmed, we heard the calming sound of rain on water approaching. Unique and unmistakable, spoilt only when the wind veered suddenly and the boat tacked whilst staying on the same heading. The wind never really returned with vigour but we persevered in no rush, happy to beat into Loch Maddy and tie up on the hammer head. Later, we sat over a pleasant meal in the Lochmaddy hotel.

A settled weather forecast was ahead. We should have paid more heed to the mackerel skies over Loch Maddy and been more confident in the forecast. Short crewed and with a long passage just a few days before, thoughts turned to exploring Spanish

RIGHT: The Village Hirta, St Kilda from water level. Ariadne hiding the modern Ministry of Defence accommodations

was slight to moderate, and navigation was easy. Firstly, almost immediately I could see the distinct shape of Hirta. Secondly, the gannets flew arrow like, heading for home. It was easy to see how early Hebridean people found their way to the islands simply by following the birds. Eventually the wind dropped, the day got sunnier and the calculations of ETA became less and less favourable. We motored the last few hours, and leapt excitedly into action on arrival. Ashore we enjoyed having the village to ourselves, apart from the Soay sheep and a St Kilda wren on the wall of the graveyard. It was also prudent as the next day another two boats arrived before breakfast. One of them was a cruise liner.

We woke on 19 July to a squally NW, whistling down off Hirta. I took a trip ashore, including taking the direct route from the top of the island back to the village. I was aware that this was through the 'cleits,' however despite the casual comment of the bird warden I was not aware that this was where Great Skua nest...for those who were scared at Alfred Hitchcock's 'Birds,' this is to be advised against. The bird warden thought it was hilarious when I told him of my experience of what he then described as 'bricks with wings.'

That the fresh breeze was localised quickly became clear when we got under way. The reef that we had tied down was not required and we shook it out to motor sail for several hours. Slowly the wind and sea state built and soon we were sailing fast, broad reaching under full sail in a moderate sea, north of Pabbay, back through the Stanton channel and into the Loch Rodel pool by the Bay channel. The tides fell into place with relatively little attention, which was rather agreeable.

20 July saw two very tired, but two very satisfied, perhaps even slightly smug, Leonards sitting over breakfast. The Soay sheep, the scenery, the navigational gannets, and the acrobatic fulmar had enthralled us both. Alan couldn't remember when he was last in St Kilda but there were mutterings that it can't be much less than 50 years ago. A review of the chart showed that the navigational calculations marked then are still present. I dated mine on the same chart. I rowed around the Rodel pool flouting the tide but inspecting the Sea Channel for any swell. I climbed two of the islands around it, mostly pondering the numbers of compass and lion's mane jellyfish that seemed to be swarming everywhere we went, bar the really very cool waters in St Kilda. We left Rodel Pool via the Sea Channel, content to breakfast as we drifted north under head sail alone. Unsure of our destination we motored into Poll Scot, Loch Stockinish and Loch Scadabay before beating for a short while into Loch Tarbert and tying up in Tarbert marina.

RIGHT: Father and son, happy to be in St Kilda together. Grateful to time, tide and weather fell into place





Blue skies greeted us on 21 July, next stop the Shiant Isles, admiring the puffins and marvelling that apparently one in eight of all these entertaining seabirds in the British Isles nest in such a small area. Swimming was again unappealing due to the masses of jellyfish. It was sunny and I chose a detour around the hut when I went ashore. Is it naturist or naturalist? I can never remember. Either way, my detour resulted in further close communication with a Skua, but some nice views. The 21st was sadly a Friday, and by now we knew that a second crew would be returning *Ariadne* to home waters and a flight on the 22nd awaited us from Stornoway. We had lunch and set off under sail, as the wind had filled after the calm morning. We broad reached and the wind veered S 3-4. We made fast progress goose-winged. Rain showers came through, thankfully missing us, but delivering more wind and boat speed jumped to a steady 8 kts. One shower appeared to be passing ahead and I commented that it appeared a little odd, and not 90 seconds later, the wind reversed to N 2-3. A period of some confusion followed as headings were adjusted, sails trimmed and oaths muttered. We persevered in ever more

'variable' and indeed 'cyclonic' winds but eventually capitulated and motored into Stornoway.

In hindsight, it seems terribly appropriate that our last passage of this cruise would involve odd clouds, and making the most of the gaps in weather. The whole trip felt like an exercise in playing the favourable winds and tides. In future though I'll be looking up, as well as into my smart phone to give me confidence in my decisions.

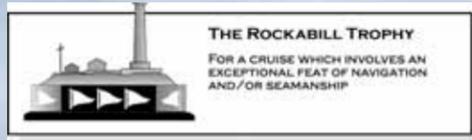
Date	Start Port	Finish Port	Distance (Nm)
9th July	Sketrick Island	Glenarm	59
10th July	Glenarm	Rathlin	21
		Port Ellen	24
11th July	Port Ellen	Ardmore Isles, Islay	8
12th July	Ardmore Isles, Islay	Craobh Marina	37
13th July	Craobh Marina	Puilladobhain	11
		Oban	7
14th July	Oban	Acairseid Mhor, Eriskay	72
15th July	Acairseid Mhor, Eriskay	Wizard Pool	19
16th July			
17th July	Wizard Pool	Lochmaddy	20
18th July	Loch Maddy	Hirta, St Kilda	64
19th July	Hirta, St Kilda	Rodel Pool	55
20th July	Rodel Pool	Tarbert, Harris	15
21st July	Tarbert, Harris	Shiant Islands	17
		Stornoway	19
		Total	448



OPPOSITE: Mull, the Firth of Lorne, Kerrera and Oban from McCaig's Tower

Cevantes - Homeward Cruise

Gillian Fletcher and Paul Conway



Gillie, Paul and Richard. Leaving Marken Lighthouse behind

First World War German Field Marshal Moltke believed in the need to develop a series of strategies for a battle; a concept expressed nowadays as 'no plan survives first contact with the enemy'. Muhammed Ali put it more simply by saying 'no plan survives first punch on the nose'. I suspect very few cruising plans survived the unsettled weather and strong winds of July 2023, and that was certainly the experience of *Cevantes*, on the final leg

of her trilogy cruise from Dun Laoghaire to the Baltic and home.

The 'Plan' for July 2023 was to leisurely cruise from Monnickendam (just northeast of Amsterdam), firstly along the Stand Mastroute to Breskens, then follow the French side of la Manche to Brittany, taking in the Channel Islands, crossing to the Isles of Scilly and on home. July was selected as the best month for warm

settled weather (a giggle is understandable), and long days.

So, on a damp Saturday morning, 1 July, we set off from Monnickendam. The weather matched our melancholy mood as we were leaving our sailing base for the past two years where we had enjoyed the company of many friendly Dutch sailors. We had enjoyed the experience of sailing on the IJsselmeer,

canal locks and bridges, box berths, the vagaries of shallow waters, with often just enough depth to be afloat. We have fond memories of the amazing array of traditional sailing boats, crewed by enthusiastic sailors; and of berthing *Cevantes* in the now almost landlocked historical 17th and 18th century seaports. Their fine buildings and monuments date from the time when fishing and New World trade made Holland a world maritime powerhouse.



Gillie, Paul, Janneke, Marten, Olli and Richard touring the canals of Amsterdam

Crew was Skipper Paul Conway, Oisín Cahill, Gillie Fletcher and the youthful Richard O'Rahilly. An obliging steady breeze gave us a good sail out around Marken Island (now connected to the mainland by a dyke). We dropped our sails for the bridge and lock at Oranjesluizen, then motored past Amsterdam's Central Station as far as Houthaven where we berthed waiting for the midnight convoy through the city.

Interlude entertainment, to fill in the time before the nocturnal passage through the bridges, was provided by work colleague Janneke and her partner Marten who, on their motor launch, gave us a bespoke evening tour through the heart of the Amsterdam, leaving all 'red' lights to port! We had a wonderful view of this amazing city from the very best perspective, that is from the water: seeing all the architectural landmark wonders, new and old, as well as an entertaining insight into the city's history and plans for the future. The Dutch certainly are strategic thinkers when it comes to civil engineering. Did you know Amsterdam has a metro system running beneath all that water? And also to let you know, there are plans to move the Red Light district, an area which has its roots steeped in the history of providing for sailors.

A separate log could be written to describe the operation of the midnight convoy that takes yachts

through the four-mile trip of 11 bridges and one lock. Information is available on various sites and guides. Watch out as midnight is a slight misnomer; it could start anytime between 2300 and 0200 so networking for local knowledge is good advice. It is intended to charge yachts for using the passage, but this year it wasn't yet in place. It's a unique experience having mainline rail, tram, and motorway bridges open to allow sailing boats pass through the city; it's quicker and shorter than the alternative Harlem route (which is also interesting but with more bridges and delays).

Sunday was a blustery day, with not very much boating activity, even on the sheltered canals; we rested at the small, family run 'Otto' marina at Aalsmeer, 15 miles south of Amsterdam. We were also waiting for some technical support for a problem that had struck at 1630 on Saturday when the screen on our chart plotter froze, caused by an overload of information from a recently installed new AIS transponder. A quick consideration of the situation and discussion with the reliable installer of the AIS transponder concluded that, given our planned cruise route, workarounds were too risky; the best solution was to replace the chart-plotter. A new plotter was delivered to Aalsmeer and installed by 1030 on Monday; it's a good example of the type of maritime support available in the Netherlands, thanks to the critical mass of yachts.

On Monday, the cold winds abated, slightly, enough to just about make a passage to Gouda, but in the knowledge that a gale was due later. By evening, as we negotiated the motorway and mainline rail bridges at Gouda, the wind was breaking branches off trees; we were making 4 kts on the canal, under bare poles, no engine. This wind was just the harbinger of a gale which was developing into the very unseasonal storm Poly with hurricane force winds that swept across the Netherlands on Tuesday and early Wednesday 4/5 July. Poly was a one-in-a-hundred year's storm, with a destructive 'sting jet,' (which mixes jet stream winds to the ground as happened in the infamously un-forecasted Channel storm in 1987); it caused widespread damage, disruption, and, sadly, some fatalities. The torrential rain revealed a small window leak, worryingly over the chart table and instruments, the source of which was quickly detected and stopped by the dainty hands and engineering minds of Oisín and Richard. We sat out the storm in Watersportvereniging Marina, Gouda; Richard treated us to his signature dish, balsamic marinated steaks, delicious. When weather allowed, we managed to visit this picturesque town with its canals, square, historic town hall, and cathedral. Needless to say, cheese making was at the centre of everything about Gouda.

Thursday's weather had an autumnal feel to it, still an improvement in comparison to the three previous days. Winds were initially gusting at about Force 5/6 which on canals and rivers can churn up a considerable chop against counter currents, as we experienced negotiating the passage crossing

BELOW: Moving house Dutch style



Traditional Dutch sailing vessel

the Rhine near Rotterdam and on the Oude Maas around Dordrecht. Dordrecht is a beautiful and historic Dutch city, with good yachting facilities, but having lost three days already, we had to give it a miss. Entering the tidal area of Holland's Diep gave a feeling of being close to the sea. By the time we reached the fortified town of Willemstad, our stopover, it was warm enough for a cockpit gin. Willemstad is another Dutch 16th century picturesque and historic gem, complete with a typical Dutch windmill, once a fortified port but now closed off from the open sea.

Friday and Saturday 7/8 July felt more like summer as we made our way to Middelburg. We spent the night at Kats Marina on the Oosterhelde on Friday where we enjoyed a welcome swim in the clean, salty, tidal waters. Saturday lunch taken on the quay in the gorgeous town of Veere before heading on to the picturesque 17th century trading town of Middelburg for the evening and some retail therapy in Jos Boone Watersport, a first-class chandlery.

Oosterhelde and Veerse Meer are deservedly popular yachting areas with attractive wooded shore scenery, tidal waters, and an abundance of yachting facilities.

On Sunday, we entered the real sea through the Vlissingen sea lock and had a lovely reach across Westerschelde to Breskens. Coincidentally or fortuitously, we berthed alongside a boat owned by the family of recently deceased legendary offshore sailor Piet Vroon. We met his daughter Laura who was delighted to make an Irish connection as she is a long-time friend of Una O'Dwyer from the Royal St George YC who kept her yacht, *Escapade*, in Breskens for many years and was a close friend of Piet and his family.



ABOVE : A sunny day on the canals



LEFT: Liz's birthday celebrations

BELOW: Gillie, Oisín and Paul cool down in Veere



Meeting Una's Dutch friend Laura in Breskens

The forecast for the following week was poor, so on Monday 10 July we seized the weather and tide window for a pleasant 40nm sail to Nieuwpoort, lucky to get past Zeebrugge without disruption from ferries or freighters. Richard set the daily speed record of 8.1 kts SOG, showing the importance of a favourable tide on this coast; imagine the contrary. The forecasted westerly gale filled in on Monday evening and continued until late Thursday, too windy for even a swim or walk on Nieuwpoort's fabulous sandy beach; three more days lost to weather.

Friday promised to be a sailing day, so we were out the door at dawn to catch a favourable tide to Calais, 43nm. Luckily we had a flat sea to get through the Trapegeer dogleg channel and on past Dunkirk, dodging busy traffic in the ferry channel. We made it for the 1250 bridge lift and lock gate opening.

Our weather window soon closed and Calais became home until the morning of Tuesday 18th. We had four days sheltering, along with several UK boats, listening to gale force winds screaming through the rigging. Calais town was in summer festival mode, so we enjoyed the Bastille Day fireworks (in the rain) and an equestrian show provided by the town Maire. Unfortunately, the wonderful beach, was unsafe for swimming due to sea conditions. Storm bound sickness was relieved a little by a visit to a small wine shop where we picked up a premier cru champagne for €20 a bottle, produce of a small family vineyard. The value seemed too good to be true and was explained as a benefit of low overheads and no marketing costs. The proof was in the bottle, which lived up its appellation quality. Regrettably, we were too conservative in our purchase.



A display of horsemanship in Calais

On Saturday afternoon, we had a visit from the French Douanes which is probably to be expected on this part of the coast. They made a polite but thorough check of the boat's papers and our passports and took our word there was no contraband on board. As everyone knows, registering a boat in Ireland is quite a bureaucratic exercise so it was kind of satisfying to have gone to the trouble and passed the test. They also advised that if we came across any migrant boats to immediately call the French coastguard.

A promised fair wind for Tuesday 18th materialised but, sadly, Richard had to leave us for a ferry home. He was dropped off on a quay wall at 0700 as we headed for Boulogne, making use of the tide. It was a pleasant 25nm passage, mostly under sail. This rare day of fine weather was also taken advantage of by migrants in large RIBs, none of which were close enough to cause us concern; we could see they were being well monitored by the coastguard with drones,

helicopters, and patrol boats, all very active along the coast. We made Boulogne by lunchtime and enjoyed a sunny afternoon swim. Liz Neary, Oisín's wife, arrived from Dublin via Paris on an evening train to join the crew. Boulogne's old ferry terminal is now a very noisy bird sanctuary, mainly for kittiwakes. Interestingly the birds seem to keep to 'their' part of the port and don't venture amongst the humans; learned behaviour I suppose? Wednesday 19 July was another weather casualty. Happily Boulogne's harbour breakwater facilitated enough shelter for a swim, albeit with a lifeguard warning. Fresh victuals were restocked in the excellent weekly market, typically French.

At this point, we had lost 11 out of 19 days and the forecast gave no hope for optimism so it was time to take the Field Marshal's advice and consider an alternative strategy. Boulogne marina was populated with Dutch crew who originally had the same plan as us to sail the French coast to Brittany but due

RIGHT: Paul and Oisín approaching the Needles Channel at dawn

to weather delays, they were turning back (not an option for us). The south coast of England was assessed as being the more practical route for us under the circumstances, so the plan was amended for the new situation.

On Friday 21 July, in the early morning darkness, we slipped quietly from our Boulogne marina berth, clearing the breakwater by 0530. Winds were light westerly at first but sea state a little roly from the previous near gale. Later the wind filled in and in sunshine we made good progress across the shipping lanes and soon had sight of Beachy Head. Unluckily, the earlier roll got the better of Liz and mal de mer meant she had a tough crossing, which she would probably prefer to forget, although it must be said she dealt with it extremely well. The wind freshened to 20 + kts WSW off Beachy Head and once around it we were easily able to make for our preferred destination of Brighton, avoiding having to end our crossing in Eastbourne, an earlier consideration depending on how the crossing went.

A Notice to Mariners gave advice of silting two hours either side of low water at the entrance to Brighton marina. And guess what, our good channel crossing had us arriving just shortly after the two-hour threshold at 1830, which we confirmed by VHF with the marina. Thankfully the wind had slackened to about 12 kts, but there's no shelter for anchoring outside Brighton in a westerly wind; so not fancying a four hour wait we decided to take our chances with getting into Shoreham, just five miles further west, if that failed, we could always return to Brighton.

Shoreham's outer harbour entrance is tricky in strong winds, but conditions were manageable, so in we went. All seemed wonderful until the canal lockkeeper refused entry as we didn't have a marina reservation. Morale took a bit of a dip, but hope didn't abandon us. While explaining our situation to the lockkeeper, the VHF conversation was intercepted by a cheerful voice from Sussex Yacht club to say a berth was available. The lockkeeper became our new best friend and welcomed us, albeit we were going to have to wait thirty minutes for sufficient depth to cross the lock's sill. We anchored outside the lock, a little unconventional, but better than motoring in circles as there was no place to tie up, and we were happy to take a break after our 76nm passage.

Shoreham is a commercial working port, reminiscent of Arklow or Wicklow. To the west it is a drying river and to the east is a canal running parallel to the coast. It has two small marinas, the Lady Bee and Sussex Yacht Club. Once inside the lock, Kevin Heeden, former SYC Commodore, and Steve Knight from the local coast guard, gave us a warm welcome and helped us berth. Kevin and Steve couldn't



have been more helpful, as were all the other club members and locals we met over the next three days. SYC has a smashing new clubhouse with excellent facilities including a bar and restaurant, which we were very happy to use. The club has no debt, an indication of its very competent management.

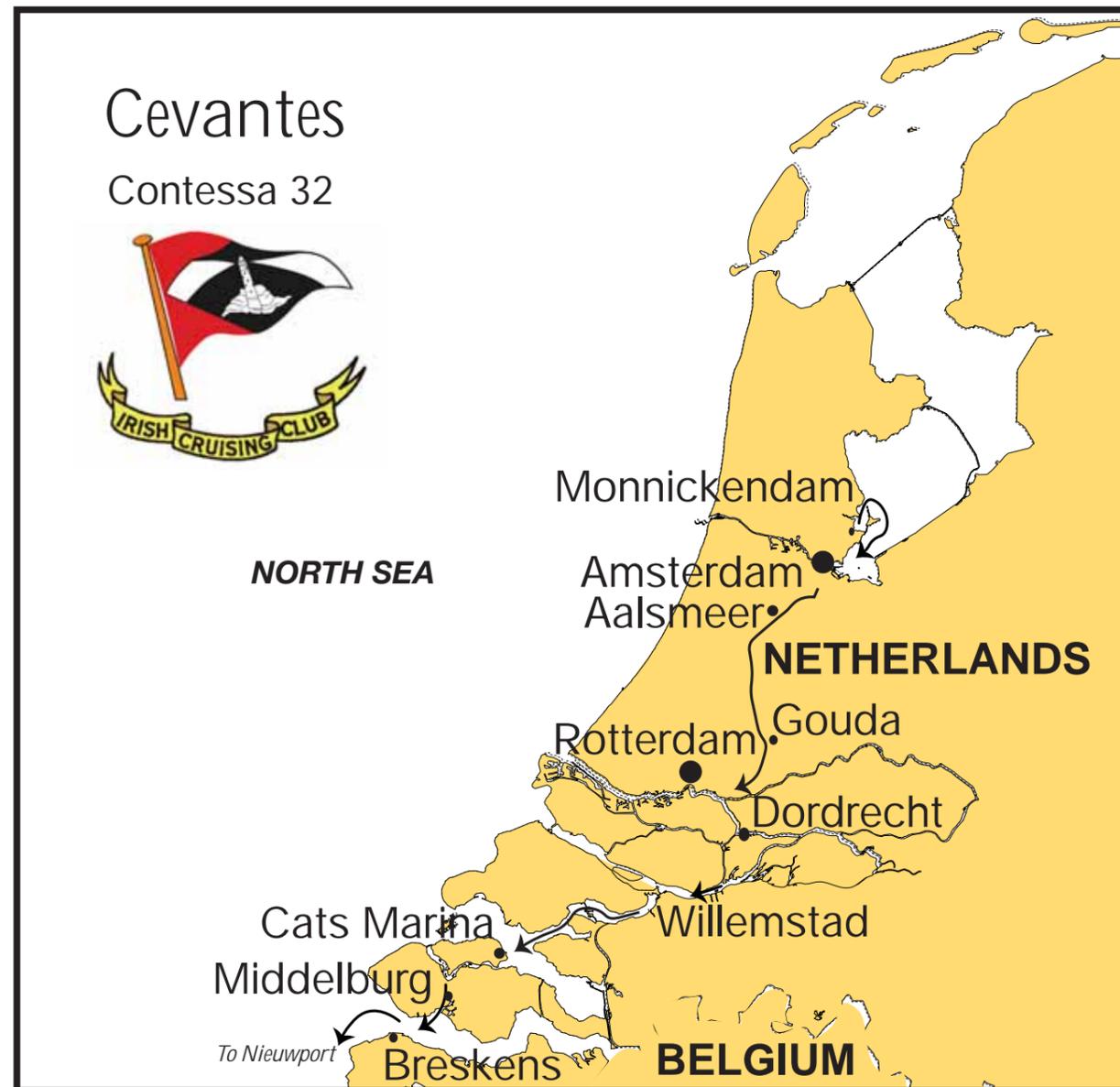
If the whole population of Shoreham was on our side, the weather certainly was not. The forecast was for westerly gale and near gale winds until Monday 24 July, three more days written off. Time was passed

“At this point, we had lost 11 out of 19 days and the forecast gave no hope for optimism so it was time to take the Field Marshal's advice and consider an alternative strategy”

with a bus visit to Brighton, shore walks, and a 3D experience of watching the Fastnet Race start on YouTube while sitting below and listening to the wind and rain howl outside. We were impressed by the competitors' seamanship in the difficult conditions but not envious to participate, even amazed that the race went ahead considering how July's storm Poly had developed so rapidly and unexpectedly.

On Sunday 23 July we calculated we were 23 days into our 'cruise' and had already lost 12 days to bad weather; with still about another 400+ miles to go. I began to think we would make it back before time ran out and questioned the sense of doing long cruises in a small boat.

A lot of thought and local advice went into planning Monday's 40nm leg to Gosport. It was essential to get the tide right at the Looe, off Selsey Bill, especially avoiding a wind over peak of the tide and our start time was complicated slightly by having to get over the sill in the Shoreham lock before low water. We





Our sanctuary in Weymouth Harbour from yet another gale



Gillie, Paul, Liz and Oisín on Weymouth Beach

opted for departure at two hours before low water to comfortably clear the sill, which unfortunately meant a plugging tide in cyclonic variable winds and a choppy sea as far as the Looe. From there on we picked up a brisk NE breeze and a favourable tide which whisked us up the final fifteen miles to Gosport. With Gillie on the helm adeptly avoiding cross channel and local ferries and with 8 kts SOG she seriously challenged Richard's standing record.

Gosport was just a pit stop and we were on the go again at dawn for an enjoyable 20nm westerly passage through the Solent as far as Lymington. We had thought to spend two days in Lymington, a delightful traditional English harbour crammed with sailing boats, but a change in the forecast warned of coming strong winds, so we caught the dawn tide again on Wednesday 26 July. A lovely crisp dawn with a spectacular sunrise got us out to the Needles Channel in light NW winds. Then a combined fair tide and a quickly backing wind to the SW gave us one of the best sails of the entire cruise making great pace for the 45nm past St Albans Head and on to Weymouth arriving at 1130. A temptation to continue was quenched by the coming change of tide and forecast, suggesting that discretion was the better part of valour.

Weymouth is also a very nice and well sheltered English harbour with good facilities close by. This was just as well because we were there for eight days as each forecast vied with the previous one to warn of strong and stronger winds from the west. During the week we had two 40+ kt westerly gales. Nobody

was moving except for some of the very large sail training yachts heading east. A pontoon community developed as we got to know our neighbours, consoling each other about the weather; it seems very few boats made it to the Scilly's in July. *Cevantes* being a Contessa 32 was very popular in this area and everyone seemed to have owned or sailed on one at some stage in their sailing lives. We were also struck by the number of people who told us they had Irish passports (one complained about the cost) and it kind of made us feel at home. Nevertheless, we made the best of it: swimming off Weymouth's lovely long sandy beach, or with a seal in the small cove near the fort on the western side, or walking on some of the local nature trails. We also had a plentiful supply of books onboard and it became a mini shore holiday within the cruise.

Thursday 3 August

Since 1 July the score now stood at:

19 days waiting

14 days sailing.

Finally, on the morning of 3 August we had a window to go west after the second gale in a week blew itself out during the night, bequeathing a confused sea to be mastered when rounding Portland Bill. Negotiating the 'Bill' was much discussed on the pontoons, the main considerations being at what stage of tide to do it and how far off to stay, 300m or three miles. On our easterly passage, two years previously, we took the inshore route, but the sea conditions had been much more benign. On this occasion, we opted for discretion considering the expected sea state and, like most boats, stayed well

offshore where the sea was still very lumpy. Two hardy locals rock hopped inshore and when we met up later on it seemed to have been very doable, giving them at least two hours reduced passage time.

A long day on the wind, in a lumpy sea, got us the 45 nm across Lyme Bay to Dartmouth, which we were very happy with. Brixham, or even Torquay, were the other options dependent on a few degrees of wind angle. The change in the coastline scenery from chalk cliffs to granite, and sighting the odd gannet, gave us a welcome sense that we were getting closer to home. But there was no time to relax or enjoy salubrious Dartmouth; storm Antoni was expected within 48 hours and our marina berth was only available for one night before its owner returned.

To make the tide at Start Point meant another dawn start, our sixth so far, heading for Plymouth on Friday Aug. We just about made the end of the west going tide on the Point and didn't get on very well with its east going sibling as we struggled to sail in a fickle head wind. Determination won out and we managed to sail most of the 20 NM, beating from Start Point to Plymouth, arriving in the early afternoon at the berth we had reserved in the Mayflower marina.

We quickly prepared *Cevantes* for storm Antoni by removing sails, facing into the wind and making sure we had enough to eat (and drink) onboard. The Mayflower Marina was well sheltered from the worst of Antoni. It is worth mentioning that the shore facilities are the best we've ever seen: the shower units are all 'en suite' with underfloor heating and

a bath is available - as good as a five-star hotel. The marina staff were very considerate and helpful. Mike, our pontoon pal in Weymouth had recommended this marina to us.

Antoni spread havoc on this part of the coast. Berry Head and Brixham got smashed, storm winds broke up a pontoon which took off across the harbour with a yacht attached; we thanked our lucky stars to be in the Mayflower marina as we could easily have been in Brixham. On Saturday evening, taking count of our 21 days waiting and 16 days sailing, in the absence of a weather window, thoughts of using a truck and trailer were coming to mind. But hope springs eternal and finally a four-day forecast gave a basis for positive thinking.

Sunday produced a respectable NW wind, 12-17kts, enough to have a decent 40nm sail to Falmouth. Cornish pasties were not on our minds as we plotted our final legs home; although we would have liked more time to explore the Fal. Fingers were crossed and the weather looked like making the end run doable, maybe not particularly enjoyable.

We plotted another 40nm passage to Newlyn for Monday 7 August, in light winds at first and a westerly swell. Oisín made a VHF call with some visible boats ahead, rounding the Lizard, to check on conditions and estimate how far offshore we might go to avoid the turbulence in the aftermath of storm Antoni, plus an Atlantic swell and counter current. Reports back were favourable but admittedly, the tide was almost an hour older by the time we

reached their location, and we got a flavour of what the Lizard can do. Helpfully a favourable wind got us through quickly to make Newlyn on a nice reach, without any more bother, other than a friendly enquiry from a passing UK Border Control RIB.

The daytime temperatures were noticeably chilly, as low as 14° C which might have something to do with the sun halo we witnessed. A sun halo is caused by the refraction, reflection, and dispersion of light through ice particles suspended within thin, wispy, high-altitude cirrus or cirrostratus clouds. Just another feature of July 2023 weather.

Newlyn, a busy fishing harbour, is a very useful stopover when going east or west around Land's End. Every time we've been there the harbour staff have always been accommodating to yachties, although according to the harbour master they didn't see too many in July this year.

The downside was the following morning, Tuesday 8th when we had to beat the 10nm or so in a SW breeze to Land's End. We could put up with that once the SW4/5 going W stayed with us to Kilmore Quay. Finally, we would have a SW / W wind in our favour, even if it came with a fair share of rain and mist which endured to make it a black night, no moon, or stars but amazing effervescence sparkling round us. Morale was not to be dampened by mere rain when making 6kts at times. AIS was very much our friend as we safely passed ships and trawlers, not visible on deck, only on instruments. A Stena ferry and a cruise liner passing on a reciprocal course, about a mile away, appeared as a loom through the mist. The poor visibility persisted until about 1000 on Wednesday morning when it slowly lifted and, with it our spirits, giving quite a pleasant sail towards Kilmore Quay. En route, we cheerfully admired some small flocks of gannets flying in formation, flocks smaller than we have seen in the past. Disturbingly, we also came across a floating bird carcass, possibly due to avian flu. Unfortunately, it didn't occur to us to report the location.

As we approached the coast, with its indiscernible features, we were very happy to have a functioning chart plotter and the ICC E and N Coast Guide. We wondered how the Normans ever found their way to landing on Baginbun beach in 1170: the kind of cockpit conversations you might expect after a long and tough passage home.

We were welcomed in sunny Kilmore Quay by the very helpful harbour master. Our 160nm overnight passage was celebrated by a quick swim to mark the occasion and a good helping of Kilmore's deservedly renowned fish and chips, no wonder the Normans liked this corner of Ireland.

However, weather windows had short shelf life in July and August. While the tidal flows were very suitable

for the final leg up the east coast on Thursday 10 August, the weather was not cooperating. A small craft warning with high winds and poor visibility for the next few days put a pause to our gallivanting and we would have to wait almost a week to get a suitable combined wind and tide opportunity to sail up the Irish Sea. We took some temporary shore leave to attend to real life matters such as work, trimming neglected lawns, and attending a friend's wedding.

Wednesday 16 August provided the opportunity for the final leg to Greystones; easterly winds and a suitable tide over St Patrick's Bridge at 0500 had us scooting up inside the banks peaking with a SOG of 10 kts. We made Arklow comfortably by lunchtime and a break in proceedings would have been welcomed but another named storm, 'Betty', was on the way. We pushed on, almost stopping in the foul tide off Wicklow head, until we finally broke through to make Greystones by 1830. 74 NM travelled on this leg. A total of 830nm and 48 days since we left Monnickendam.

As mentioned at the outset of this log, it is part of a 'trilogy' taking in over 2,000 miles travelled in European waters; from Dun Laoghaire to Monnickendam in 2021; a two-way cruise from Monnickendam to the Baltic and back in 2022; and home to Ireland in 2023. Total mileage similar to three consecutive round Ireland cruises. All only possible due to the teamwork, skills, and commitment (especially on passage home) of the crew who got *Cevantes* there and back: Gillie Fletcher,

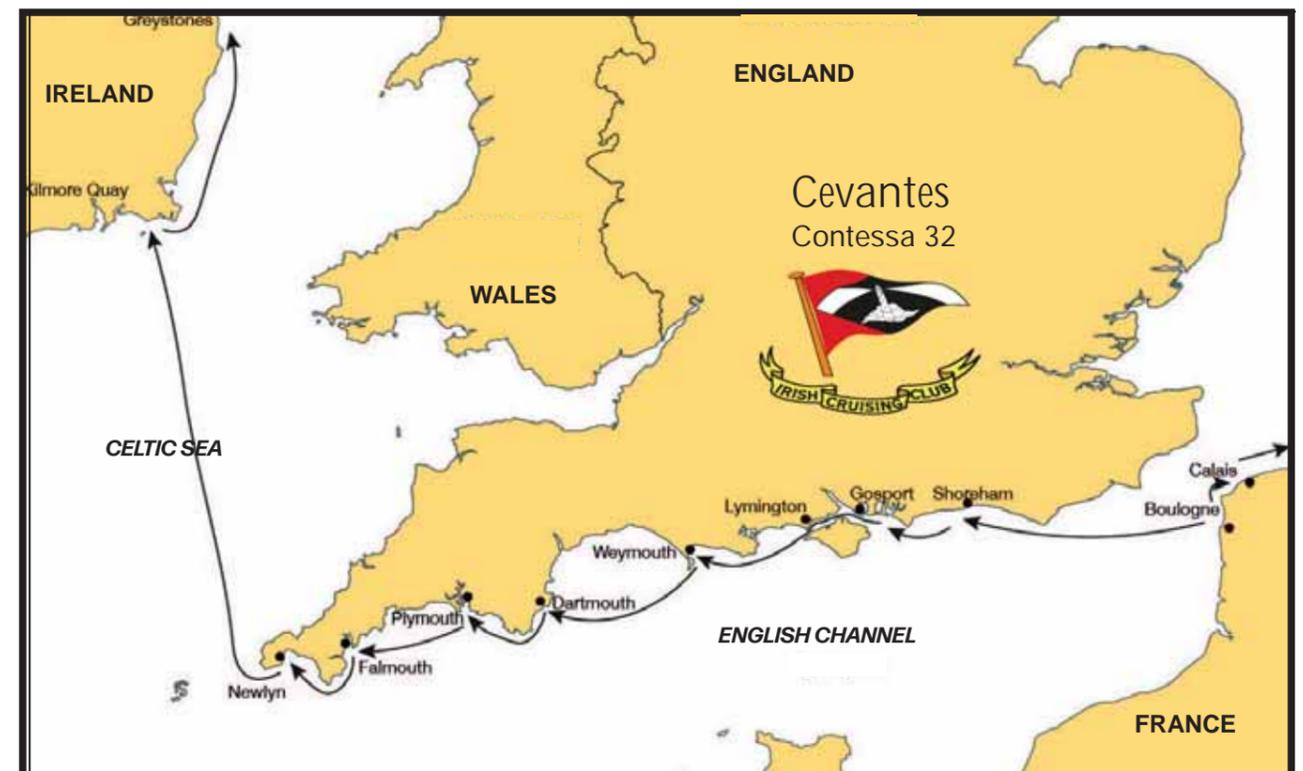
A halo round the sun off the Lizard



Paul, Liz and Gillie, another beautiful sunrise at sea

Oisín Cahill, Liz Neary, Jonathan Murphy, Richard O'Rahilly, Ann Dobbyn and skipper Paul Conway. It was a wonderful time together where we learnt a lot about sailing in different waters and conditions, about nationalities and individuals united by a fondness of the sea and a taste for adventure. Often we were amused by Baltic sailors who looked at *Cevantes*, a 32ft Contessa, and remarked 'you came

all the way in that boat' clearly forgetting about how far their Viking ancestors travelled in open boats. Sometimes we would have liked to have a faster and more spacious boat, but never did we question the seaworthiness of our vessel. It was very much a case of dreaming to sail on a bigger boat or sailing the dream on a Contessa 32.



It wasn't what Tam O'Shanter expected

Neil Hegarty



Neil manoeuvring Tam O'Shanter

Following a successful charter in the Canaries last year, Anne Kenny and I considered a charter again to attend the Saoirse Rally in Madeira. I tried charterers in the Canaries, Azores, Portuguese mainland, and Spain but none would allow us sail so far from their base. Over dinner in October Ian, Anne's son, informed his mother that he planned to leave *Tam O'Shanter* in the Azores for the near future and that she might like to use the family's yacht to attend the Saoirse Rally. I emailed Séamus O'Connor informing him that we had a boat and entered *Tam O'Shanter*. Before that we had also considered applying for berths on the *Ilen* to attend the rally. We invited Tralee based friends of ours, Mary O'Sullivan,

and John Carlin, to spend four weeks aboard with us to attend the rally and they agreed. Both are experienced yacht owners. Mary sails *Samphire*, a Dufour 32.5, left by her late father Paddy, a long-time member of the ICC. In 2011 we four had brought *Samphire*, with Paddy aboard, to Ile de Groix for that year's ICC Brittany Cruise. Sadly, it turned out to be Paddy's final cruise.

I asked my daughter Patricia, who lives in Paris, to help Anne with provisioning. She first experienced doing it as a young teen preparing our new Impala OOD 28 *Beagle* for her first voyage from Crosshaven to Castlehaven to join the ICC's 50th Anniversary

Cruise in 1979, as members of the RCYC. We still remember the wonderfully organized Sunflower in Adrigole and the difficulty of getting fuel during the oil crisis.

Patricia had left her rain gear, often needed in the Azores, in Baltimore. I went to collect them on the 26 of May and took in the launch by Pat Lawless of Kevin O'Farrell's book on the building of Fred Kinmonth's replica *Saoirse* at Hegarty's boatyard, in Baltimore Sailing Club. Pat was Ireland's only entrant in the Golden Globe round the World race 2022 and he answered questions from the floor about his adventures. It was good to see *Saoirse* afloat at the pier and *Ilen* at anchor off it for the Baltimore Wooden Boat Festival.

Anne and I took a bus from Cork to Dublin Airport at 2300 on the 17 of June and then an early flight on the 18 to Lisbon where we met Patricia, who had flown from Paris. On arrival in Terceira, we picked up a hired car. *Tam O'Shanter* was afloat in the Angra do Heroismo marina and Ian was aboard to hand over the keys. It was Patricia's birthday, so we celebrated in our favourite Angra restaurant Tasca Das Tias. Ian returned to his home in Jersey, Channel Islands early the following morning. Over the next five days we went through our list of essential and TLC items for *Tam O'Shanter*. Anne made friends with two young men who were running a glass bottomed boat for tourists from a nearby berth. She persuaded them to do our heavy lifting and they put the life raft, dinghy and outboard into position. The bunk cushion covers went to a laundrette for cleaning. I arranged to have the engine oil and the filters checked by the owner's son at NáuticoAzores. Wednesday was a very wet day so my trip to Baltimore had not been in vain. Thursday and Friday were shopping days. It was a good shop because essentials such as bottled water, UHT milk and fresh butter just lasted the four weeks to the end of our cruise.

On Saturday 24 June Patricia left to fly home to Paris via Lisbon. She was going out on the plane on which Mary and John flew in. Next day we refuelled, put on the dodgers and were able to hoist and check the sails at the marina berth as there was absolutely no wind. I started a discussion with John Leahy on the CRUISING WEATHER WhatsApp for advice on our passage to Madeira. The Azores high was not in its normal position and strong easterlies were developing. Our original plan was to overnight in Santa Maria and reduce the length of the final passage to Madeira, however, in those conditions it would have resulted in a passage of 450 miles on the wind. I decided that, to get nearer to Madeira, we would sail for Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel instead. On Monday after a good dinner, we left our marina berth at 2100. At 0400 John, who was on watch was careful to avoid the Banco Dom Joao De Castro as *Tam O'Shanter* motor sailed close hauled on port. Later we saw a ship going south on a collision course



Tam O'Shanter in Vila da Praia Graciosa

who had no intention of altering course, probably because of the nearby bank, so we headed north to allow him to pass us ahead. I always recommend that crew not interfere with shipping as they are trying to make a living. All the while the wind was getting up and up from the East. John Leahy informed me that he expected the coming Friday would be the windiest day and that it would be windy right down to Funchal.

On Tuesday June 27 *Tam O'Shanter* arrived at the entrance to the Ponta Delgada fuel berth and 'check in' but had to wait outside because there was a ferry boat and a large French yacht ahead of us in the queue. The big scend and my recent knee replacement prevented me from getting ashore, so Mary made the jump and checked in for us. *Tam O'Shanter's* violent movements in the scend caused two dinghy painters to be damaged. I topped up with fuel because, despite the forecast, we still hoped to make it to the Saoirse Rally. When we arrived at the marina it was very full, so the berth area given was exceedingly difficult to approach in the squalls. As I turned *Tam O'Shanter* the trailing edge of the rudder touched ground. This shallow rocky area is in the pilot 'Atlantic Islands' but there is no warning of its

location by say a small series of red floating buoys as is normal in other places.

After berthing I went to the marina office and found that I was far from the first to get into trouble in that area. The office recommended a repair person who was also a diver, Jose Viegas, and arranged for a tow to the marina repair area at 0800 the following day followed by a lift out. I expected the tow would come alongside but they insisted on pulling from the bow, so I had to steer. When *Tam O'Shanter* was out of the water we could see that part of the skeg was missing. Jose went off to dive and search for the missing piece around the shallow area but found nothing. We decided to live aboard during the repair, so Jose put up a timber stair for us with handrails on both sides. On Thursday Jose wanted us off the boat for the day while he removed the remains of the skeg which involved sanding fiberglass to get to the bolts connecting it to the hull. Time went quickly by as it was a ten-minute walk to the toilets and showers and another ten minutes back. Great exercise for all of us and especially for my new knee. On Friday the 30th, the windy day, we explored the centre of Ponta Delgada and on our return, Jose had the skeg off.

Mary and John researched public transport, so we were up early next day for a long walk to the bus terminus to take a bus to Rio Grande on the north shore of Sao Miguel. It was a beautiful drive through the countryside, ending in a city first settled five hundred years ago with a historic core around a large square and well worth visiting. On the way back we were able to get off the bus near the marina, avoiding a long walk back from the terminus, and discovered a small supermarket there where Anne and Mary did food shopping. I texted Jose who informed me that he had done another dive and found the rest of the skeg after two hours of diving between our marina berth and the repair area. It had fallen off on the tow near to the berth. We were all delighted because *Tam O'Shanter* would be back in the water by the end of next week; fibreglass taking at least four days to harden. Mary cooked a great pasta following which Anne and I retired while John and Mary went to the nearby Casino. Mary lost €20.00 while John won €139.08.

On Sunday we again took the long walk to the bus to Vila Franca do Campo to see if we could get out to the small island, Ilhéu de Vila Franca, where there is a caldera that opens to the sea.

Vila Franca do Campo was my final port of call on *Shelduck's* return to Portugal after the 2009 Azores Rally. My crew and I had enjoyed a swim on the island the day before departure to Cascais. I remember it as



Jose finds the skeg

a wonderful experience, like swimming in a Roman Amphitheatre. Sadly, one had to buy tickets by 0930 on the day of departure so we planned a return later in the week. Monday and Tuesday were days of rest and swimming in the nearby public pool. On Wednesday we took a taxi early to Vila Franca do Campo and took the boat out to Ilhéu da Vila. Not a beautiful day so Mary was the only one to go for a swim. On Thursday we hired a taxi for five hours, which was excellent value for four, and did all the touristy things on the eastern half of Sao Miguel. On Friday 7th *Tam O'Shanter* went afloat and berthed on a nearby pontoon without going back into the marina. I phoned Lloyd Hafen at Vila do Porto in Santa Maria and secured a berth for the following day. All ideas of going on to Madeira were sadly long



ABOVE: Safe access to live aboard

BELOW: Work in progress



gone. It is one of the few island groups in the North Atlantic that Anne Kenny and I never had the pleasure of sailing into separately or together.

At 0630 on Saturday the 8th as we prepared to leave the pontoon, I noticed another un-marked rock below water level just ahead to starboard so used the bow thruster to avoid it. *Tam O'Shanter* met a large sperm whale heading north remarkably close by as we headed south. It went by so quickly that we did not manage to photograph it. I took a berth at Vila do Porto marina Santa Maria. The *Shelduck/Yoshi* artwork of 2009 on the marina wall was still in fair condition. The night was wonderfully quiet being the first since we arrived in the Azores on the 18 of June. Loud music and dancing went on until 0500/0600 in Angra near the marina and until 0400/0500 in Ponta Delgada. It is, however, worth all the noise to be in the Azores for the June/July festival season. During the afternoon we took a four-hour taxi tour of the island. A lovely driver with little English which did not diminish our enjoyment. That evening we dined in Clube Naval de Santa Maria where Anne, who was with fellow architect Paddy O'Sullivan, and I had met in 2009



Lift out in Angra to clean fuel tank

after lunch on the deck. We dined inside this time. In 2009 one person joked that you had to be an ICC or RCC committee member to get inside.

On Monday 10th the alarm went off at 0600. *Tam O'Shanter* was away at 0625 for the 200nm passage to Horta Faial. As we rounded Illhén da Vila we set the full main and by midday, the wind had gone noticeably light, so I started the engine to motor sail. At 1900 the engine stopped. John and Mary topped up the fuel to no effect. At 0330 on Tuesday morning, I decided to alter course back to Angra where *Tam O'Shanter* is well known. It was a dull and cloudy with the wind lightning throughout the day. We arrived back in Angra at 1900 to paddle with the dinghy oars entering the harbour to get to the reception berth. It was 36.5 hours since leaving Vila do Porto. When I went to reception to check in, smilingly the official said that there was no need to check in as I had not checked out. He also gave *Tam O'Shanter* permission to stay on the reception pontoon for the night to allow a visit from marine engineers NáuticaAzores that I had arranged for 0830 the following morning. The engineer's report was that

there was dirt in the fuel tank. He arranged a lift out for the following day at 0915. Cleaning out the tank should only take a day. After the engineer reported we moved *Tam O'Shanter* to a berth in the marina as the wind strengthened. Late that afternoon we planned to go to see a bull let loose in the streets. Only John and Mary made the long uphill walk. Anne and I had seen it before, so we relaxed and enjoyed a drink in the main square in a very gusty wind. Suddenly I was on the ground, out of my chair, when a strong gust flattened a large umbrella and me. It was my first fall since getting the new right knee in January, but I was not damaged.

On Thursday 13 July *Tam O'Shanter* was craned out ashore at 0915. on a very warm day. Anne and I stayed in the Cathedral avoiding the heat for about two hours while Mary and John went separately for a massage. I returned to the engineer's workshop to find that launching was at 1530 just before the last launching time at 1600. Eighty litres of clean diesel were added by the engineer to the fuel tank, and we topped it up from the cans we had originally filled for a passage to Madeira. After the launching I

planned to leave for Horta at 1930 to make a passage during darkness between Pico and Sao Jorge. I had made this passage before in *Tam O'Shanter* in 2018 and it was incredibly beautiful in darkness as the stars compete with the twinkling of lights on the islands. I hoped my present crew would experience that. Anne and John came on watch at midnight with the wind increasing to eighteen knots as *Tam O'Shanter* rounded the east end of Sao Jorge heading for the west end of Pico. Sadly, we saw few stars as there was heavy cloud cover. A short stretch of orange streetlights on Pico spoiled the picture for me. Time to move on to LED's otherwise it is like an exceptionally long set of Christmas lights to starboard and to port.

As we approached Horta harbour a large French yacht came out and passed to leeward. On our arrival near the reception area, I sailed to the end of the pier where *Tam O'Shanter* had berthed when we arrived in June 2018 for the OCC Pursuit Rally. I found a space around the end on the south side. When I went to register, I was told at reception that *Tam O'Shanter*

could not stay where she was as the berth was too large and anyway there were many yachts at anchor on a list waiting for berths. As all passports were being checked I threw in a comment about the new knee, and we were kindly offered a nearby pontoon berth to the south of the pier next to reception. The kind gentleman at reception was Jose Lobao whom I heard later had been the first employee when the marina opened for business thirty-seven years ago. During the afternoon we hired a taxi to drive along the south coast of Faial and spent a couple of hours in the excellent underground Interpretation Centre built on the site of the major volcanic eruption which began mid-September 1957 at Ponta dos Capelinhos. Anne and I had been there before, myself in 2009 and Anne in 2018 but both enjoyed the visit very much again as did Mary and John.

Next day, Saturday the 15th, we took a ferry to Pico. On arrival at the Porto da Madelina, as John and I were sitting waiting for Anne and Mary, we were approached by a taxi man offering to show us the many wonderful sights of the island in his

Mary at the tiller



comfortable looking SUV. As it was just 1130, we booked four hours. He stopped for lunch at Lajes do Pico and I saw how small the harbour is and how difficult it would be to anchor or get a berth on the marina there. I had planned to try on the aborted Vila do Porto to Horta passage. At the conclusion of the tour of so many interesting sites the taxi waited for us to shop at a supermarket before returning to the ferry back to Horta. The inhabitants of Pico are particularly proud of their island and have voted to restrict new development there. This island is well worth a visit. It has a reputation for producing the best white wine in the Azores. That evening, after dinner aboard, Mary and John went to Café Sport where they reported a wonderful evening's music.

On Sunday I checked out of Horta and left the berth at 0915 for the short passage to Velus, Sao Jorge. We set sail outside the harbour in a brisk on the nose wind to Velus. We were only able to sail until 1045 when the wind died with fifteen miles to go. I called Jose Dias the marina manager and OCC port officer and when we arrived at reception at 1400, he said the name *Tam O'Shanter* was familiar to him. I asked if we could use *Coromandel's* berth which owner Linda Lane Thornton told me was vacant. As it happened Agustin Martin's boat *Cavallito de Mar no. 9* was in the berth and Jose told me that Agustin was happy to have someone outside. *Tam O'Shanter* berthed at 1430 and were welcomed alongside by Agustin's wife Sonja Schroyens and guests Peter and Wendy Whatley. I had an RCYC vee-necked sleeveless

on which led to a lengthy conversation with Peter RCC and OCC, of yacht *Henry*, about sailing matters. I discovered that Peter had taken part in the ICC, RCC Azores Rally in 2009. With Sonja, we remembered a party Anne and I had attended at her home at Puerto de Pasito Blanco in 2019. Later we met Agustin OCC at the marina entrance who wondered when or where our paths would next cross.

Sadly, while in Velus we were unable to meet friends Linda Lane Thornton and husband Andy who live on Sao Jorge because Linda was ill with a summer flu. *Tam O'Shanter* left Velus at 0640 on Monday 17th for Vila da Praia, Graciosa; one of the islands we had not sailed into before. It was a pleasant passage and on arrival tied alongside another yacht at the quay with help from the owners, a Swedish couple. Mary and John went to explore the town and the Swedish couple went hill climbing. At 1445 Anne and I had a visit from a Maritime Policeman, with excellent English, to tell us that the law had been changed just five days ago, not to allow yachts use the port and reserve it for fishing boats only. He said that we should leave at once and anchor outside. I pleaded the crew's age and my knee replacement again and he allowed us stay until first light the following morning.

We were out of the bunks at 0530 to leave as promised. Many of the fishing boats had gone to sea by then in a flat calm. We motored the fifty-five miles to Praia da Vitoria on Terceira and took a



Mary and John enjoying Café Sport

marina berth for the night; at another town for Mary and John to explore after dark. Next morning *Tam O'Shanter* made the short passage back to her berth at Angra do Heroismo and we prepared to return to Ireland.

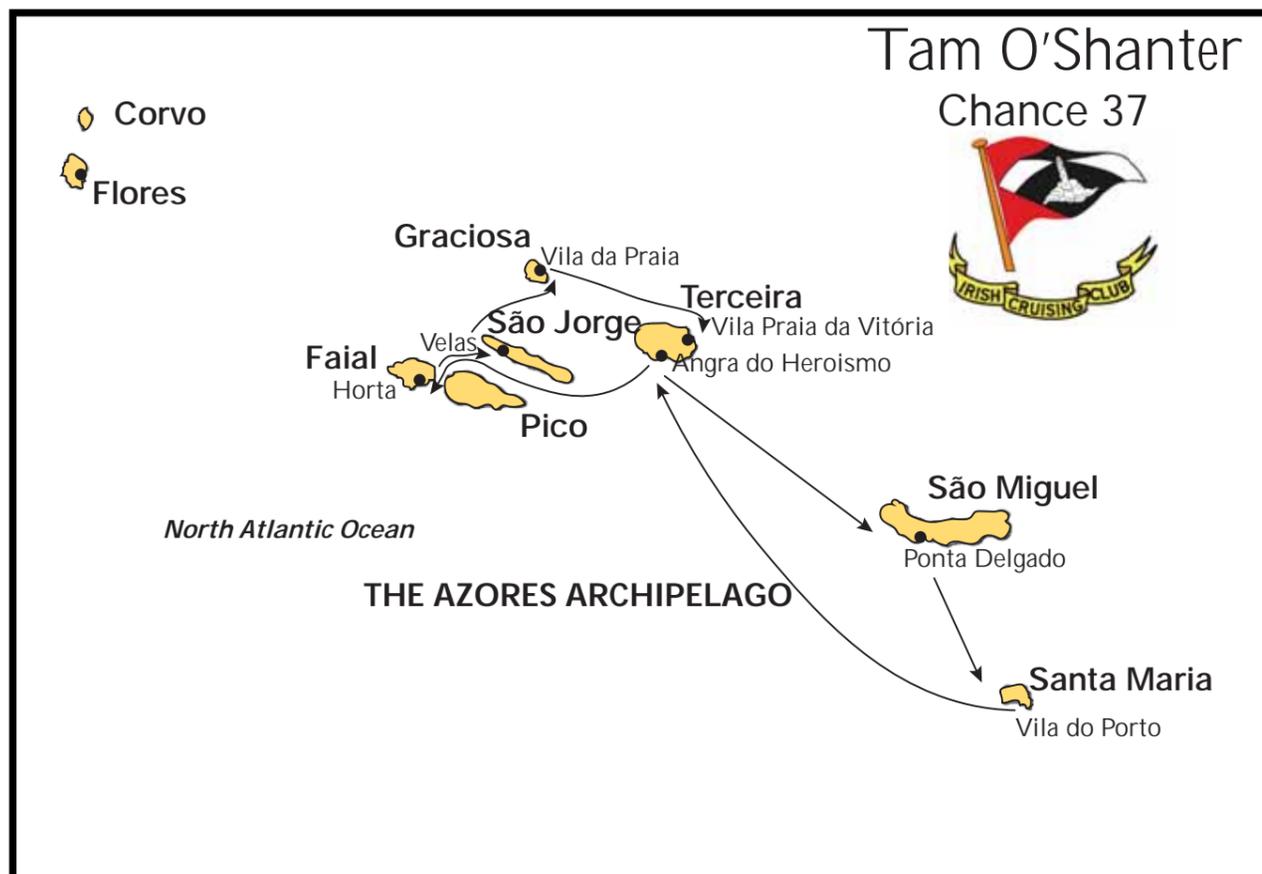
We had logged 515 miles visiting seven of the nine Azorean Islands while enjoying the cruise very much. There was, of course, disappointment that *Tam O'Shanter* did not make it to the Saoirse Rally. Anne recalled her father Alexander Ross advising 'Remember Anne when you think something is bad, in one way or another it will work out for the best in the long term.'

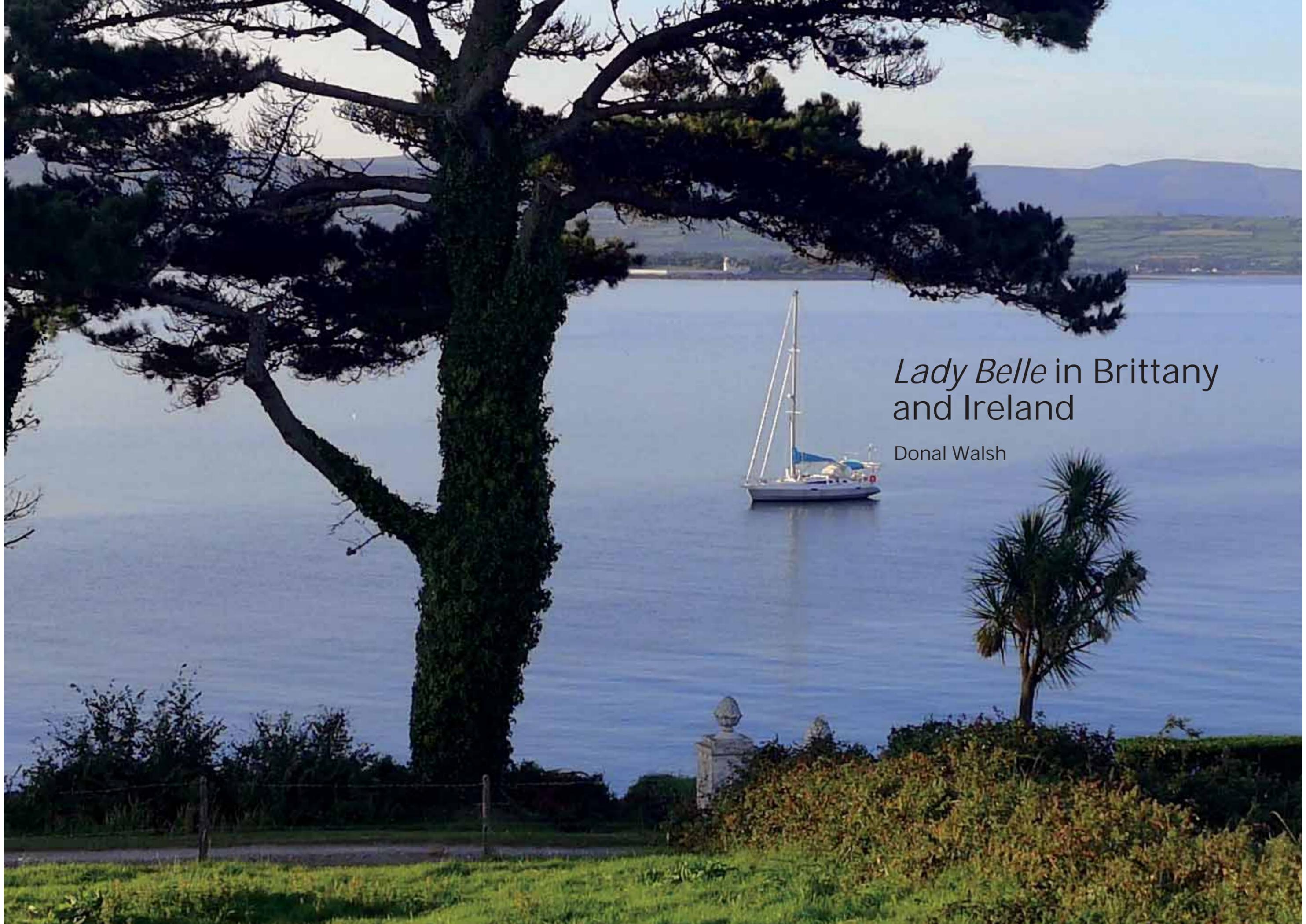
I look the title for this log from Mary Curtin, ICC, who when asked by a friend about our cruise of the Canary Islands last year replied, 'It was not what I expected.'

Tam O'Shanter, designed by Britton Chance, was built by Wauquiez in France in 1972 for Mungo Park, was a member of the Irish Admiral's Cup Team in 1973 and the first winner of the Gull Salver presented by the ICC to the first Irish placed yacht in the Fastnet Race. She passed to Jimmy Butler of Great Island, Cork Harbour and then to Brian Kenny and the Kenny family in 1987. Anne Kenny converted her to a cutter rig, which was carried out by Masts and Rigging at Crosshaven Boatyard in 2010, under my direction. Since then, *Tam O'Shanter* has been cruised from St. Petersburg, Russia, in the east to the Azores Islands, Portugal, in the west while also spending six very enjoyable years in the Baltic.



LEFT: Anne loving life on the ocean wave



A scenic landscape photograph featuring a large, dark evergreen tree in the foreground on the left, framing a view of a calm body of water. In the center of the water, a white sailboat with a blue sail is visible. The background shows rolling hills under a clear sky. In the lower foreground, there are green bushes and a stone pillar with a decorative top.

Lady Belle in Brittany
and Ireland

Donal Walsh

I was beset by medical issues in early 2023 which resulted in some surgery and it was late June before I got clearance to go to sea. Mindful of the medical cautions I was happy to potter along and didn't have any very ambitious plans. There were a few short sails and we spent some nights aboard in Dungarvan Town Quay to see how I would cope before heading to sea.

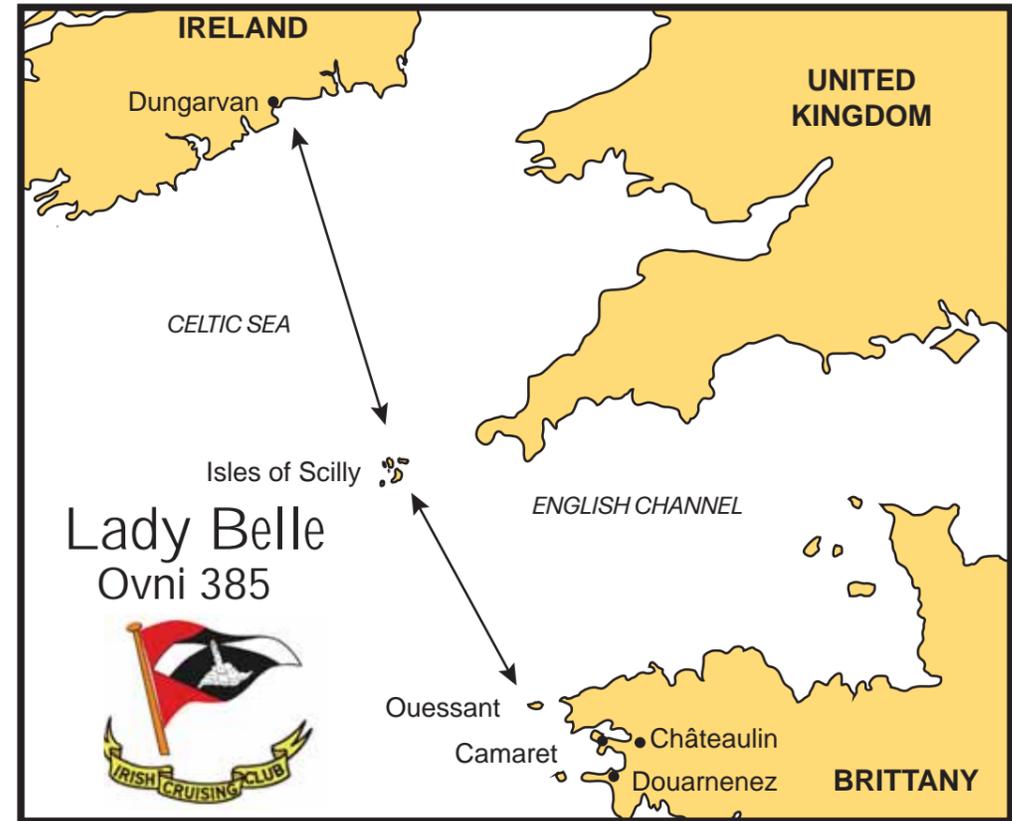
Clare Morrissey ICC who sails with me wanted to do a short cruise in north Brittany and so *Lady Belle* – an aluminium Ovni 385 with lifting keel and rudder - left Dungarvan Harbour on June 28th bound south for France by way of the Scilly Isles. We had a reasonable steady westerly breeze and we carried well for the first few hours. Later the wind fell slack and it was necessary to motor to make sufficient progress. During the night a low flying aircraft with bright lights made several passes overhead. We later discovered that they were searching for a missing yachtsman. With that exception it really was an uneventful passage and on arrival at the Scilly Isles we entered Old Grimsby Sound and anchored off Block House point.

At high water next day we crossed Crow Sound and made our way along the east side of St. Mary's Island and anchored at Porthcressa. Ashore in Hugh Town it was disappointing to see so many disused buildings in the main street, notably the two banks and the Bishop & Wolf public house. The Isles of Scilly Steamship Company offices were closed to the public. The

butcher's shop had morphed into something new and Mumford's newsagents was for sale.

On passage from Scilly to France our low voltage alarms started to activate and I ran the engine in an effort to meet the power demand. This was not as successful as I had hoped, and indicated some problem with our charging system. I ended up hand steering for several hours during the night and decided to put into Le Stiff on Ouessant to await the dawn. As all the moorings were occupied and it was difficult in the dark to find a place to anchor, we ended up in a tight corner which was subject to swell and uncomfortable. I was surprised that there was so much swell especially as we were in the lee of the island and should have good shelter. We got out early next day despite the fact that we would be fighting the stream in Chenal du Four and although our progress wasn't great it was better than being tossed about at anchor in Ouessant.

Headed towards Camaret we encountered our friend Ciaran Geoghegan who hails from Dungarvan aboard *Pivot* homeward bound from Spain. It was years since I had visited Camaret and we potted about here for two days. Next we caught the south going stream and in a light and gentle breeze transited Raz de Sein and brought up in Audierne. Connected to shore power we were able to charge our batteries. This was to be the extent of our southward journey and as we headed north again we decided to visit Douarnenez.



Point de Saint Mathieu



I had never been to Douarnenez by sea before - it is too far off the beaten track and a long way east into the bay. This time there was no hurry and it was a powerful sail in sheltered waters and a favourable wind. Here we anchored in Rade de Guet off Plage de Dames but the beach was crowded with swimmers and we had to land at a nearby slipway which was difficult at low water. Next time I would go further east to Port du Rosmeur which looked easier.

A few days later we were back in Camaret but with a promise of a severe gale we headed into Rade de Brest and sought shelter in its upper reaches. Anchoring one night in Tregarvan we then transited the lock at Gully Glas and spent

a few days in Chateaulin where we rode out the strongest of the wind. It was still very fresh as we headed downstream to return to the sea. We found a sheltered cove in the estuary near where the decommissioned naval vessels are moored and we had a snug anchorage for the night. Thinking things might be more settled we returned to Le Stiff, and although we got to use a mooring there, the swell was unbearable. This encouraged us to make an early start and despite having to plug the tide we headed north for Scilly. During the night our charging problem manifested itself again and we had to hand steer for the last few hours. It was the night of a new moon and there was no light in the sky. On arrival in St. Mary's it was impossible to see

Gully Glas Lock





ABOVE: Port Launay on the River Aulne



ABOVE: Lady Belle alongside in Châteaulin

a clear passage through the moored craft to identify and pick up a vacant mooring, We had to stand off and await the dawn before attempting to negotiate a route through the moorings. Dawn also revealed lots of low profile shellfish keep cages moored in the fairway between the moorings and the shore. It would have been impossible to use this passage in the dark.

Later we went alongside the quay wall where we dried out but had access to shore power to replenish our batteries. I dismantled the alternators and cleaned the brushes and succeeded in getting one of them to charge. Clare's sister Trudi joined us here and we spent a few days exploring the off islands. It was blowing strong all the while and one day we had to remain on board as it was so bad that it would have been dangerous to use the inflatable.

There was no let-up in the strong northerly winds and with no sign of a change it would have been foolish to attempt the passage home. Eventually the winds slackened and although still in the northern quadrant we decided to make a break for home. It was a very unpleasant passage and the best we could lay was Courtmacsherry on one tack and Tuskar on the other. During the night we were overtaken by the lead boats in the Fastnet race fleet. Judging by their speed they were mostly hydrofoils. It was challenging to keep track of them and would have been all the more so but for AIS. By dawn the winds shifted and fell off and we were able to lay Dungarvan.

We were glad to be home as the weather deteriorated over the next few days and had we not made the break we would have been weather bound in Scilly indefinitely. At home the alternators



ABOVE: Donal at the Bull Rock

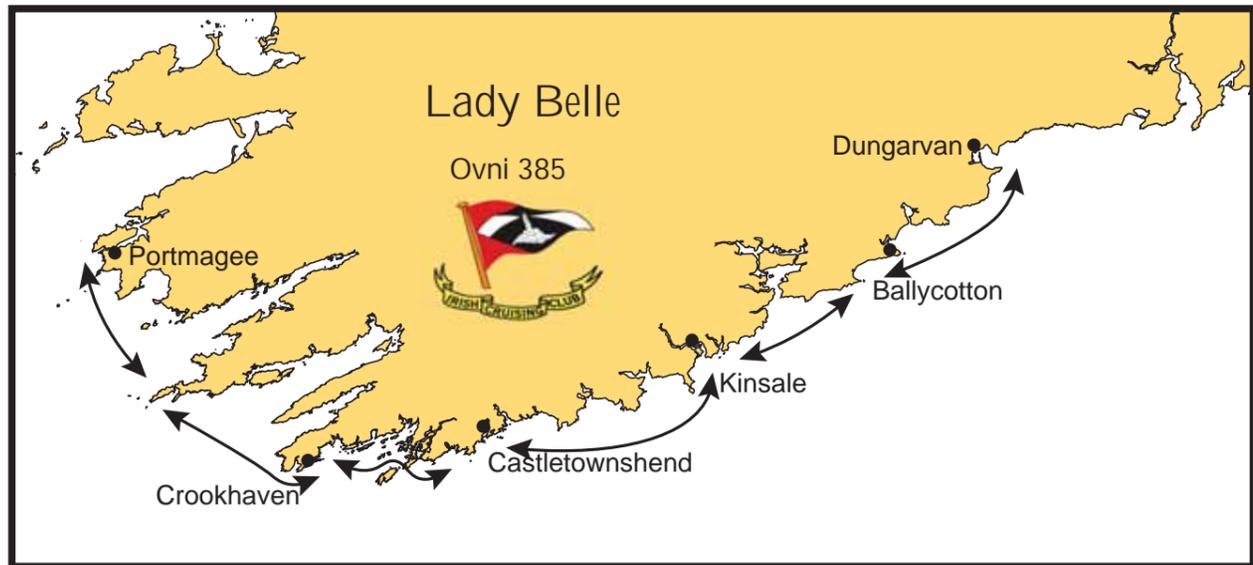
BELOW: Time for a swim in Sandycove

were overhauled and the charging system was functioning again. Clare and I headed west, first an anchorage at Ballycotton, then a swim stop at Sandy Cove and an anchorage at Summer Cove in Kinsale. With winds predominantly in the west it was hard going to achieve westing along the south coast. We had a night at anchor in Castletownshend but it was so wet we did not even go ashore. Then on to Crookhaven before rounding Mizen and getting to Portmagee. Here we were weather bound for a week and although there was a break, a developing storm in the Atlantic put paid to my plans for an attempt at a round Ireland. We gave in and retreated to Dungarvan by way of Crookhaven, Castletownshend, and Kinsale.

Storm Betty arrived as promised and we were glad to be secure on our mooring in Dungarvan as she left a trail of destruction along the coast. We got another break and headed east and made it as far as Carne just round the corner from Carnsore. I had never visited by sea before and wanted to try the anchorage as an alternative to Rosslare which is far too busy nowadays. There are buoys at Rosslare Strand but they are subject to swell and landing on the beach nearby can be hazardous. It was a good peaceful night in Carne but there was a suggestion of swell about the place just as we were about to leave. There was a last stop overnight in Dunmore East and then a pure slog back to Dungarvan.

A final night aboard saw us anchored in home waters at Helvick but for us it was a disappointing sailing season. There was too much strong wind over a prolonged period which gave little chance to relax as one always had to keep an eye on the weather and make the best of the breaks when they presented.





RIGHT: Clare



BELOW: Lady Belle at Dungarvan Town Quay



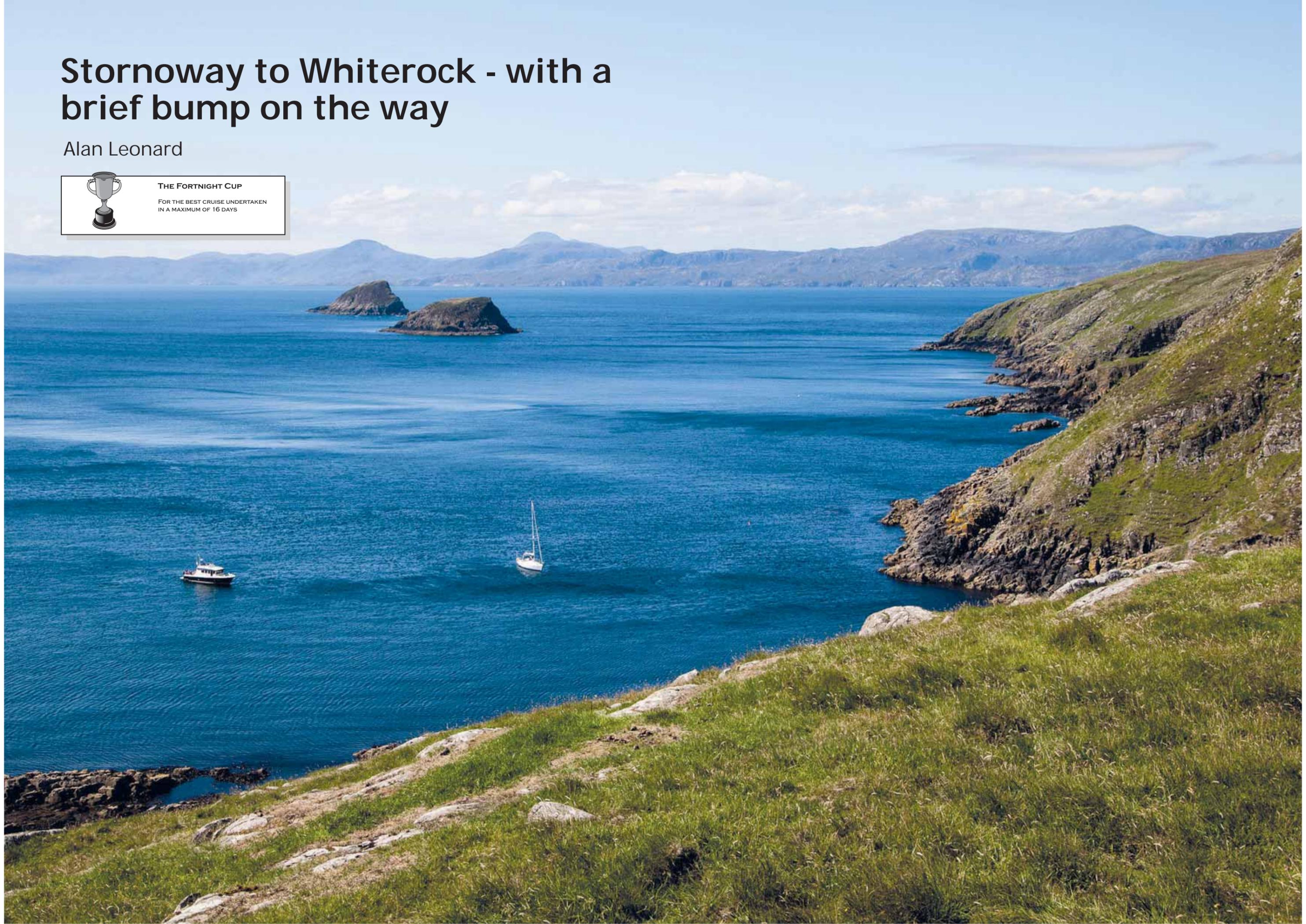
Stornoway to Whiterock - with a brief bump on the way

Alan Leonard



THE FORTNIGHT CUP

FOR THE BEST CRUISE UNDERTAKEN
IN A MAXIMUM OF 16 DAYS



Having spent a few days at home after Colin's cruise, I returned to Stornoway on Sunday, the 30 of July. The 'Wee Frees' still hold some sway here – there is no airport bus service on a Sunday. Fortunately taxi drivers of different persuasions are happy to provide a service, rather than attend a service! David and Hollie arrived on the early flight from Glasgow next morning, and were aboard in time for breakfast.

After provisioning and other preparations, we set off that afternoon. It was a pleasant reach south in a light to moderate easterly. After an hour, we were off the north entrance to Loch Mariveg, which I had first visited as a teenager. Main down, we ran in under genoa, keeping to this side or that to avoid the various rocks. A gybe round Sgeir Rainish, a reach south inside Eilean Thoraidh, and then another gybe to enter the loch itself. After dodging a couple more rocks, we anchored in the north-west corner in 10 m. *Ariadne* snubbed nicely when the anchor bit. It was good not to have to use the engine to set the anchor. A group of seals clearly had their favourite spot right in the corner. Going ashore to explore, we landed further along to minimise disturbance. When we went to shore for further exploration next morning, about five young looking seals, came round to keep an eye on us. David and Hollie climbed up to the headland overlooking the next bay where there was a much larger colony. On returning to the dinghy, seals, seals, and more seals appeared! At one stage we counted over 20; we hoped that we hadn't disturbed them too much.

Ariadne in Loch Mariveg. Four curious seals watching the dinghy



Leaving Loch Mariveg by the south channel, I had the words of the sailing directions ringing in my head; 'It would be unwise to attempt this passage below half tide'. We left at half tide falling, but must have been on the right line as the least depth was 3 m.

The wind was northeast 3 to 4. We reached south to the Shiant Islands, where we arrived by 1130, passing between Garbh Eilean and Eilean Mhuire. We had hoped to anchor south of Eilean Mhuire, but were having to go very close in to get a reasonable depth in which to anchor. We did not want to disturb the many heavily pregnant seals. The alternative anchorage, more suitable for the wind direction, was west of Mol Mor, the stony isthmus between Garbh Eilean and Eilean Tighe, and we made our way there. David and Hollie went ashore for a scramble and the obligatory photography. The birdlife is amazing, with literally thousands of puffins and many guillemots and razorbills, to name but a few.

Back on board by 1530, we were underway to sail to Harris for the night. The options were Loch Scadabay, or North Harbour, Scalpay. The genoa was collapsing on the more southerly course, so we opted for Scalpay sound, passing under the Scalpay bridge at 1730. We were soon alongside the pontoon in North Harbour, and finding the North Harbour Bistro booked out, enjoyed a pleasant meal aboard.

Time limited cruising in Scottish waters frequently exposes one to the conflict between the desire to



Close-hauled in the Sound of Jura

spend time exploring the myriad of anchorages, and the need to make progress, to be sure of being home in time for those afflicted by the need to be back at work. On this occasion, there was no contest - with a fresh north-easterly wind and bright sunshine, why wouldn't one sail hard all day, even if it did mean passing countless nice anchorages? By 1800, having sailed almost the length of the Minch, we were in the latitude of Eriskay. We handed sail just off the entrance to Acarsaid Mor and anchored very close to where I had been with Colin, only a few weeks previously. In the failing light, David spent half an hour in the cockpit, watching a pair of eagles, hovering and circling over the hills to the south – to his disappointment well beyond the range of his camera lens.

On the Thursday 3 of August, with the wind NW 4, it didn't take long to reach down the remaining Minch to Castle Bay, but it seemed a long way in from Bo Vich Chuan in a freshening breeze. We eventually made fast to the pontoon. David and Hollie were keen to spend some time in Castlebay, having passed through on a previous adventure (a circumnavigation

of the Outer Isles by bicycle and packraft no less), and we needed some provisions. There is a large co-op not far from the pontoon, and an excellent community store in town selling local delicacies.

Having made quite a lot of southing, it was now time for some easting. The plan was to run through Gunna Sound, after which we were spoilt for choice of places to go, west of Mull. We left Castlebay at 0800. Clear of Muldoanich, the genoa was boomed out. The log records that 'eggcellent' [sic] sandwiches were served for breakfast. By 1100 the genoa was changed for the spinnaker. It looked as if we were going to need to gybe to lay Gunna Sound, but the wind took off, so spinnaker down, engine on and motor to the Treshnish Isles. We anchored as advised in the Sailing Directions, to the north east of Lunga, off the boulder spit and clear of the moored pontoon. It was fascinating to watch the tourist boat (Staffa Tours) which was a large motor vessel, getting their clients ashore; it moored stern on to a pontoon secured to a swinging mooring, then cast off the pontoon's mooring and backed towards the shore until the pontoon grounded and the visitors could

Ariadne alongside in Castlebay, Barra





A fresh day in the Minch

step ashore! After the last day trippers had left, we went ashore to explore in the quiet of the evening. The views were spectacular in the good visibility as far north as Ardnamurchan point, Eigg and Rum. The Ardnamurchan light was clearly visible in the fading light, but evaded my attempts to capture it on film. Little did we realise that we would be glad to see the Staffa Tours craft again the next day.

The plan was to anchor off Staffa for David and Hollie to go ashore, to visit Fingal's Cave. We had Antares charts on an iPad which had been our principal navigation tool, but our ship's Wi-Fi had (for some reason) stopped transmitting the GPS position. The iPad not having an internal GPS receiver, Antares

was now reduced to a reference tool with the ship's plotter providing position fixing. We knew that there were two off-lying rocks with an anchorage in 3 to 5m inside them. Feeling our way slowly north from the landing place, we saw another yacht at anchor close inshore. We assumed (wrongly as it turned out) that it was anchored inside the rocks. The plan was to approach its stern, drop anchor and drop back on the tide. We were doing this at tickover speed, when we went aground. We were stuck fast and couldn't move either astern or ahead. Attempts to go astern caused the engine to stall, perhaps the propeller choking on oarweed? After some time, the tide swept us around beam-on, but even well heeled with enthusiastic crew hanging from the shrouds she wouldn't come

off. A kedge was laid out, but to no avail. Eventually, when she had turned around 180° but was still stuck fast, the Staffa Tours boat, having put their tourists ashore, came along and offered to help. When I accepted, I was handed a very thick rope, with the instruction to tie it to something VERY strong. The launch went astern and gradually increased the revs to a deep throated roar. The rope got visibly thinner as it tightened round the cleat and she gradually slid off into deeper water. I was impressed by both the skippers seamanship and his humanity. He said, 'just let her drift away to the south and sit in the cockpit and have a cup of tea. The tide will carry you clear of everything.'

We realised subsequently that the other yacht was anchored not inside, but between the rocks. There

are several lessons to be learnt from all of this. Perhaps the most obvious is not to use a high-tech chart to try to get into a tight spot, if your tech isn't working properly. Arguably, another is: don't assume that other yacht is anchored in a sensible place.

Having recovered from our escapade, we made our way south to, and through, the Sound of Iona. The previous leading line of 'keeping the Cathedral in line with the Free Church' is no longer appropriate, as the latter is now private dwelling, though they have retained the Bell Tower. In any case that line was too far west for us as we went between Eilean Dubh and Eilean nam Muc, to go to Tinker's Hole. As it was by now a gloriously sunny afternoon, we decided not to stay there, but to anchor off the white sand beach of David Balfour's Bay. Unfortunately, three

David Balfour's Bay



Ariadne in Bagh Gleann nam Muc





At anchor in the Treshnish Isles

other yachts were there before us, so we anchored rather far out. After a run ashore to the beach for a swim and so on, we did stay the night, but some swell came in and we rolled a bit.

Next morning was calm and sunny. The plan from here was to pass through the gulf of Corryvreckan. We motored through the Torranan rocks and set a course to approach the gulf, as recommended, from the south of Eilean Mor to avoid the overfalls north of it. From there, it is easy to pass north of the Buidge rock towards Eilean Beg and then turn into Bagh Gleann nam Muc. We anchored in the south arm of the bay at 1415, in time to watch the beginning of the flood (west going) tide. Even with only a light north westerly, the overfalls built rapidly. A late evening run

ashore afforded a fine views of *Ariadne* at anchor, and the passage east of Eilean Beg. David and Hollie, ever the mountain goats, scrambled up to headland forming the southwestern arm of the bay and were treated to a spectacular sunset over Colonsay (and a close encounter with some of Jura's native mountain goats). The bay is completely open to the northwest, but is protected by the tide. No swell gets in, except at slackwater – on this occasion, in the middle of the night! I had thought that we might pitch a bit but we must've been lying to an eddy as we rolled. I didn't get up to look.

We had to make more southing, as we wanted to be back in Northern Ireland by the 10 of August, and a depression, waiting in the wings in the north Atlantic

The anchorage at Lunga, Ariadne on the right. Ardnamurchan, Eigg, Rum and Coll clearly visible



The passage out of Bagh Gleann nam Muc, east of Eilean Beg





provided added impetus. A strong southerly would not be helpful. We left Bagh Gleann nam Muc by the channel east of Eilean Beg and slipped round Carraig Mor into the Sound of Jura. A shifting light to moderate south to south-westerly wind, provided an interesting beat. At one stage, we overstood and were closer than intended to the Jura shore, but enjoyed sailing along it, studying the mountains that David and Hollie had run last year. A header then took us across the Sound, past Skervuile, to the north of Gigha and then obligingly freed, allowing us to fetch down the Sound until we could lay the pontoon in Ardmish Bay on the other tack. We could've been laying the windward mark from the left-hand corner on a race course! We picked up a visitors mooring. Ardmish in full holiday mode in the warm sunshine made for a striking contrast to the remote solitude of north Jura. The reliably excellent Boat House restaurant was closed, but we had a good seafood carry out.

Light, somewhat variable, but mainly westerly wind, sunshine and occasional showers were the conditions as we slipped down the side of Gigha, past Cara, next morning. By noon, we had the Mull of Kintyre light under our lee and by 1500, we were in the latitude of Glenarm, which we could see clearly, with the Antrim hills resplendent above it. We still had several hours of fair tide and the wind had gone to the northwest, so the spinnaker went up. What better way to spend your birthday, than running down the North Channel on a nice sunny afternoon under spinnaker. After a while, it went more northerly and we even managed a gybe. When we were off the Gobbins, the wind left, so spinnaker down and motor to Bangor, where we made fast at 1900.

Our final morning broke grey and calm, and it stayed that way, so it was a case of motoring all day. We picked up our mooring off Sketrick Island at 1600 - and it did blow hard from the south next day.

All in all, a most enjoyable cruise, in which we achieved our objectives of delivering the boat home from Stornoway and exploring some interesting places, and had some cracking sails along the way. The weather was good and winds mostly aft of the beam. The only beating was in light or moderate conditions. The only downside was the incident at Staffa, but such things keep one humble, and with no significant harm done, it provided some useful lessons.

LEFT: Under spinnaker in the North Channel

Table of Distances

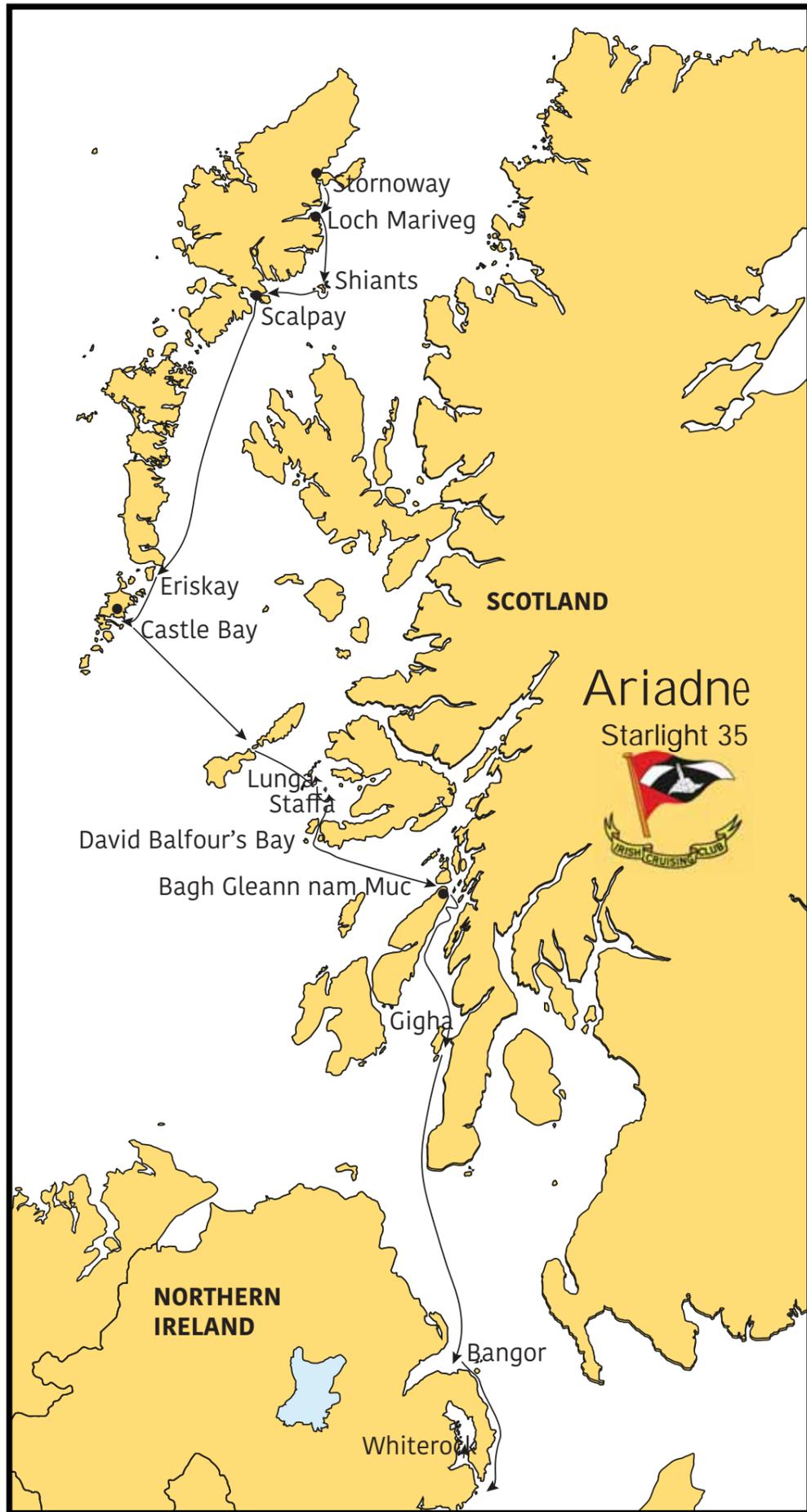
Stornoway – Loch Mariveg	7
Loch Mariveg – Shiantas – Scalpay	47
Scalpay – Eriskay	56
Eriskay – Castle Bay	12
Castle Bay – Lunga	48
Lunga – Staffa – David Balfour's Bay	19
David Balfour's Bay – Bagh Gleann nam Muc	26
Bagh Gleann nam Muc – Gigha	36
Gigha – Bangor	60
Bangor – Whiterock	40
TOTAL	351

RIGHT: Mull of Kintyre under the lee

BELOW: Do I see Ireland? Cara to starboard with Jura in the distance



RIGHT: The sun going down over the Ross of Mull



Gentle cruising in Montenegro with *Kir Royal*

Robert Barker



Kotor Marina

Having explored the delights of Malta, Sicily, Sardinia, Western Italy, Western Greece and Croatia, we decided to investigate the little known cruising grounds of Montenegro in the summer of 2023.

Montenegro is located just across the Adriatic from Italy, south of Croatia and north of Albania. It has sandy beaches, forest-cloaked towering mountains and centuries old towns. Like other Balkan countries, it has had a history of occupation, piracy, war, liberation, finally becoming independent in 2006. It is

a member of NATO, but not yet a member of the EU, although its currency is the Euro. Our information about the sailing grounds was fairly sparse – even the pilot was seriously out of date and even off-putting. Such members of the ICC and Royal Malta Yacht Club who knew anything about Montenegro referred vaguely to a place between Greece and Croatia with a short coast line that they passed, like Albania, en route for somewhere else. All referred to the difficulty of registering with Border Control, Police and Customs on entry and on exit. The sudden williwaw catabatic winds were notorious. Roaming

was extremely expensive and Wifi was hard to locate! All round, it sounded more like a challenge than a cruise.

We decided to give ourselves plenty of time to explore this Adriatic mystery, leaving Malta on 2 June 2023 and returning back to Grand Harbour on 24 July 2023. We changed crew three times. This presented something of a potential issue for our vignette, which authorises named members of the crew of a visiting yacht to stay in Montenegro for a specified period of time.

Crew who joined us during the seven weeks were: Joe and Trish Phelan and Bill and Catherine Walsh (who were with us for the passage from Malta), Terry Giles, Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin, Joan O'Grady, Michael and Mary McCann, Joan Cullen and Clare Balfe.

We potted up and down the coast and through the beautiful Boka Kotorska, re-visiting favourite places with various crew members.



Bill, Catherine, Pat, Trish, and Joe visit the Monastery in Uvala Krtole

Passage from Malta to Bar

Weather conditions for our passage were fair. Wind SW2-3 and sea state flat for the four-day trip. We anchored in Syracuse overnight on 2 June 2023 and dipped our toes into the water for the first swim of the cruise. The water had yet to warm up, but we braced ourselves and felt definitely refreshed. On 3 June 2023, we had early morning swims and Pat brought out the weights for the Geriatric Gym in the cockpit for those of us needing to do our daily exercises. We went into the marina after fuelling and had a day ashore in Syracuse. Rain showers had us dashing for cover on several occasions. Temperature was a nice 19° but we were glad of our fleeces.

We had an uneventful passage to Roccella Ionica on the south coast of Italy and spotted a large school of dolphins at 0900 hrs. Along the coast, we noticed several wrecked yachts on the beaches which looked like the results of a recent severe storm. We called the berthing master on Channel 14 and he guided us in over the entrance which has silted up on the starboard side over the past two years. There was barely 2m at the deepest point. We were disappointed that the restaurant, specialising in Yards of Pizza had closed down over the pandemic and was not yet open, although we were given the number of the owner, who would deliver as many yards of pizza as we wanted to the boat. We seriously overestimated the number of yards we would eat and had lots left over – which served well for lunch on the passage to St. Maria di Leuca the next day. We left 0550 on 5 June in good conditions, although with only moderate visibility. We arrived St. Maria at 1630, just in time to fill with fuel. Closing time was 1900 and the fuel dock is now very tight,

care being needed in coming alongside. We noticed five yachts tied up on the harbour wall opposite the fuelling dock. They looked badly damaged with tattered sails and hatch covers ripped out and portholes smashed. We were told that these yachts, and the yachts we had spotted on the beaches along the south coast of Italy were all boats that had been stolen by traffickers bringing clandestini from Albania, Greece and Turkey to Italy. The yachts were disabled before coming into port to prevent the authorities from turning them back out to sea. On Tuesday 6 June, we cast off our lines at 0510 in gloomy, still conditions. Our distance to Bar in Montenegro was 146 NM. We spotted a hump back whale at 0940. We arrived Bar Customs Dock 1530 to be greeted by our agent, Dejan Jankovic

Coastal Montenegro

Because of our uncertainty about officialdom in Montenegro, especially with so many crew changes, we decided to use the services of a marine agent. This was fairly expensive, but he proved worth his weight in gold, not only for the regular paperwork required in reissuing our vignette each time the crew changed, paying the tourist tax and registering us in and out of the country, but because he was able to source domestic batteries and then engine batteries for us when we ran into trouble with them. He was also a source of information for us when we needed to book into our first harbour and when we were confronted with a tax query. Before we left Dublin, we had sent him all the documentation needed – boat registration, insurance, individual competence certificates, radio licences, and proof of identity. When we arrived, all he needed was our passports and he effected the whole clearance process in 30 minutes. We moved around to the Marina Bar.

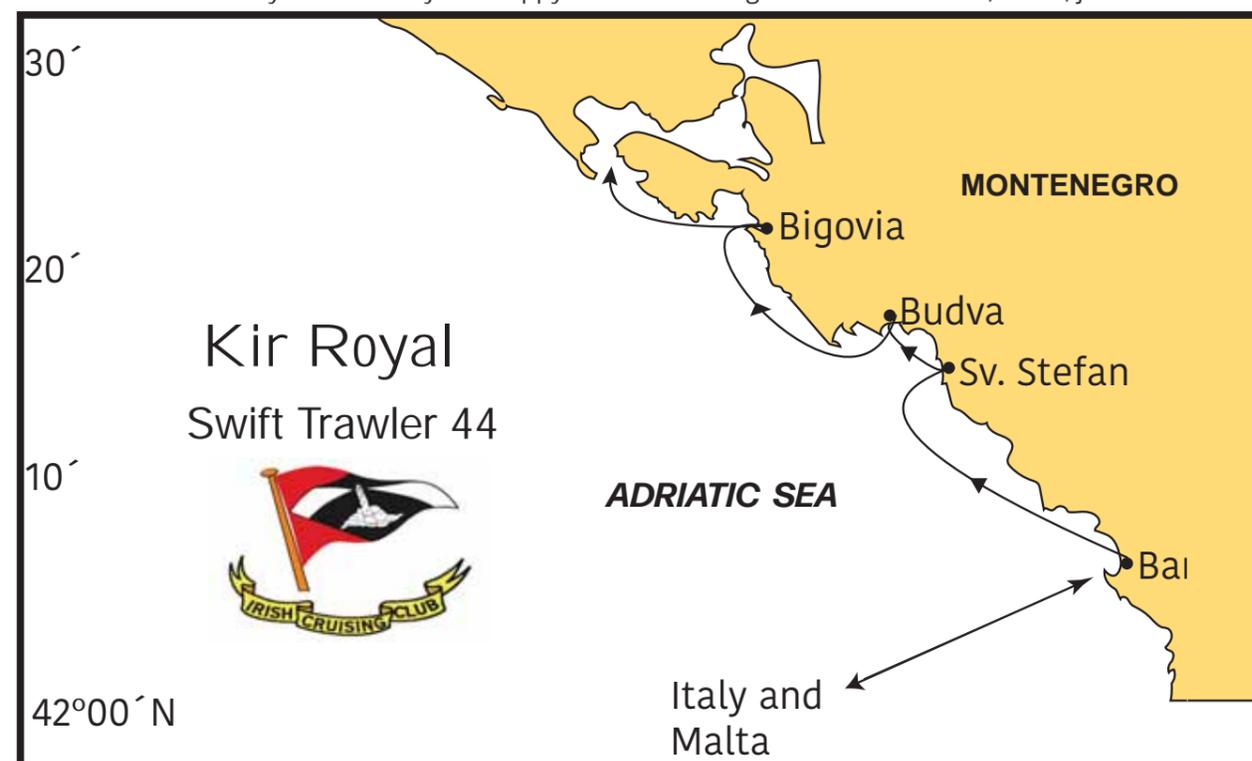


Temple of St. Jovan, Bar

We had a day in Bar, exploring the town and stocking up with supplies. The town is not well developed for tourists. The beach beside the marina is stoney, but with lovely clean water. The lady in the Tourist Office was spectacularly grumpy and unwilling to release any information unless we tortured her. We visited the museum which was King Nikola's Palace, built in 1885, which proved a good introduction to the history of Montenegro. The magnificent golden domed Temple of St. Jovan Vladmir, which we had seen from miles offshore, was also worth a visit. Initially, people appeared dour and suspicious, but we found that they were friendly and happy to

practice their English on us. Although the books told us that the local language is Montenegrin, it is actually pretty much what used to be known as Serbo-Croat before the 1992 War and is largely the same language as is spoken in Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo and Croatia.

Sunshine prevailed with light wind NW 1-2 and good visibility. We motored north to Sveti Stefan, a distance of 14 NM. There was a lop in the sea, making it slightly uncomfortable. We spotted a pilot whale at 1450. We anchored just under the magnificent Palace hotel, in 6m, just outside





Sveti Stefan

the swimming line. We were the only boat in the anchorage and wondered if we needed to mount an anchor watch overnight. However, we were well sheltered by the island, which is connected to the land with a sand spit. The Palace had been the summer palace of Queen Marija, but was sequestered by the Communists in 1952. It is now a luxury hotel – not for raggle taggle boat crews swimming ashore for a coffee. The holding is good although we were slightly tormented by boy racers whizzing up and down on their jet-skis. By sunset, they had all been sent to bed and peace reigned in this lovely spot. We forgot to switch off the three fridges and the water heater when we left Bar. So we managed to drain the domestic batteries. The generator gave us enough power for Trish to cook dinner and for the lights to stay on and heads pumping. Enjoyable swimming before dinner, although still chilly enough.

The next day, after breakfast, we contacted Budva marina to book a place. We had a very efficient welcome, although the mariner took our papers from us and disappeared with them, waving vaguely in the direction of the harbour wall, with an over-the-shoulder reference to 'marina office'. We didn't know whether we should trot after him or wait for him to return. We were slightly concerned to see our papers disappearing into the middle distance in the hands of the berthing wallah. We subsequently discovered that this is normal practice in Montenegro. Papers are retained until you pitch up, on departure, to pay. The Marina Office ladies were glamorous and charming, but had no idea where we might source domestic batteries. At this stage, the smell of sulphur made it crystal clear that new batteries were essential. There was no local chandlery and, as it was Friday afternoon, the local garageman would not be able to get us any kind of a battery until Monday or Tuesday, and at that, he'd only be



Mary securing the lines

Big fenders in Kotor



Sunset at anchor





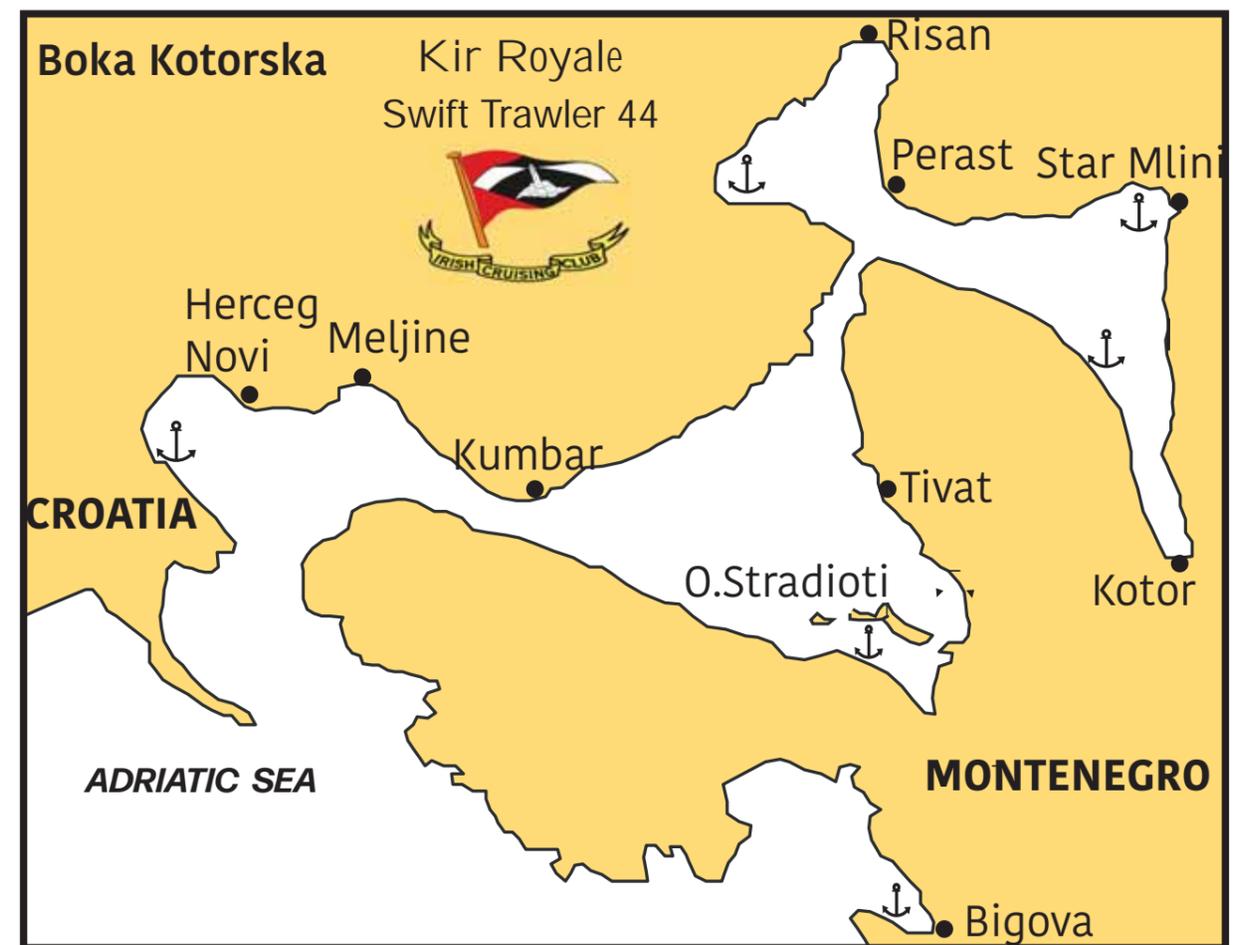
Budva

able to get us one. So we contacted Dejan, who instructed us to photograph the batteries, measure them and send him specifications. He rang us back to tell us that he would have batteries delivered to us in Kotor and that he had booked a space for us on the pontoon at Kotor with electricity. We walked around the old town of Budva and, although there were lots of groups of tourists following their tour guides around the town, we failed to find a walking guide who catered for independent travellers. So, we strolled around ourselves and had a pleasant visit to the Citadel and a refreshing beer in its courtyard. We had planned to dine ashore, but after a rather extended and very stimulating cocktail hour (or two), we put together a repast and ate on board. We motored north along the coast and pulled

into the Bay of Traste. There are options here to anchor at Bigovo or go into the Marina at Traste. We dropped the anchor at Bigovo and had a very comfortable night here at anchorage, again relying on the generator for services. The next day we travelled north, headed for Kotor, to get our batteries.

Boka Kotorska (Kotor Inland Sea)

The Boka is where we spend most of our cruising time in Montenegro and it is truly beautiful. We visited several of the places on more than one occasion, so what follows is a description of where a cruising yacht might like to consider.



The trip through the inland sea is magnificent and there are always boats sailing and motoring around. The regular ferries across the Bay of Tivat and the enormous cruise ships making their way into the Bay of Kotor need careful attention. The medieval town of Kotor is a must-see place. It is served by a small marina with three pontoons, two of which have electricity and water. It has no other facilities. The nearest WC is across the road in the Green Market. It costs 50c to use and is open from about 0730 to whatever time the woman in charge

In early June we had electric storms and severe short-lived katabatic winds, but by July, the weather was benign with no rain, sunny skies every day and only the occasional 30-minute willywaw

decides to close. The trick in Kotor is to go ashore any time you want a coffee and use the lavatory and the Wifi of the café you patronise. In early June we had electric storms and severe short-lived katabatic winds, but by July, the weather was benign with no rain, sunny skies every day and only the occasional

30-minute williwaw. It is good to visit the old city of Kotor early in the morning, especially on days when there is a cruise ship in. Pat asked the very helpful tourist office if there was a walking tour we could join and was told by an earnest young man: "Yes, there is a tour with fifty people going in ten minutes – in Russian." She demurred and enquired about the possibility of having a small group tour with someone speaking English. He located Norman Renas for her. He is a German man married to a Montenegrin and living in Kotor who would take the six of us for a tour in an hour. We all jumped at the chance and scrubbed up to meet him at eleven. All, that is, except Bill, who was not madly enthusiastic about a tour. Fortuitously for him, some 15 minutes before we departed, the boat next to us (manned by Russians) dropped her lines and instantly fouled her propellers on the tailed lines that had not sufficiently sunk. The skipper had all the appearance of a man who had had a hard night. All the talking (or yelling, to be more accurate) was done by a crew member who could only be described as Amazonian. They were stuck in the fairway between the two pontoons and drifting dangerously close to our bow. Robert chucked a heaving line to them and we managed to tie them off onto the quay. Several other boat crews came along to watch, offer unhelpful comments, but mostly to enhance the drama. One very large super



Boka Kotorska viewed from Herceg Novi

yacht lent us two enormous fenders to protect our bow from the amorous advances of the stranded Russian. A diver was summoned. The time came for our appointment with Norman and Bill graciously offered to stay and supervise the mayhem. Sadly, he missed an excellent well-informed walking tour around the ancient town. We managed to complete the tour before the heavens opened and we were forced into a coffee shop to try the famous Dobrotska Torta, which is a traditional Balkan cake with almonds, lemon, liqueur and vanilla, made for sailors from the fifteenth century to present times. It has no butter or eggs or flour and so could survive long sea passages. We noted the extent to which the shops in Kotor are owned by Turks, who have escaped Erdogan's economy. The locals are somewhat peeved by their presence, and we were

encouraged to support local enterprise. Several crew members climbed the 1,470 steps to the defence fortress on the mountain over the town. The best time to go is early in the morning. Definitely avoid any possibility of rain, as the steps can be slippery when wet.

Drago, our engine battery man, arrived and very quickly replaced our domestic batteries for us. He gave us his number and his "address", which was The Red Concrete Boat at Ostrvo Cvijeca in case we needed him again.

The Bay is well served by Marinas, most of which are new and very well appointed. There seemed to be evidence of foreign investment. The fees are not excessive, for such high quality facilities. It is

advisable to ring in advance to book a berth. The welcome is efficient and friendly with berthing masters coming out in ribs to guide visitors to their berth. The biggest marina is Porto Montenegro at Tivat. This marina is very posh and has capacity for smallish yachts right up to superyachts of some 90 m. Tailed lines and power and water at every berth. It has very good shower blocks, a laundry and a transfer service for crew changes from Podgorica Airport. The beautiful people from the region definitely favour this marina. There is only one small chandlery but there are dozens of shops such as Balenciaga, Dior, Tissot, Paul & Shark and Gucci. There were several British boats here – escaping from the 90 day-rule now imposed by the EU on them. Security is very tight here. Terry had great difficulty being admitted late at night when he arrived. Fuel in Montenegro is approx. €1.39 per litre, compared with €1.98 in Italy and €1.25 in Malta.

As we left the fuel dock at Porto Montenegro, our port engine battery packed up. Drago was contacted and he asked us for details of the batteries. This was difficult as we were on anchor and had no Wifi. We had to activate Roaming momentarily, at outrageous cost, to despatch the details.

Marina Portonovi is located at Denovici and is also a new marina. There are tailed lines here, but also finger pontoons, which we preferred and requested. There are flashy restaurants here on the marina, and excellent facilities. There are also nice local eateries along the promenade.

Marina Lazure is, again, a very new well-appointed marina at Melijne. From here, it is pleasant to walk along to Herceg Novi, an ancient citadel and town well worth a visit. Amazing how it has survived the centuries, although there is clear evidence of

Pat, Robert, Mary, Michael, and Joan at Herceg Novi



Robert, Muireann and Terry at Monastery at Uvala Krtole



devastating destruction in the major earthquakes of 1668 and 1979. As an alternative to Marina Lazure, the harbour at Herceg Novi usually has some room for visitors along the quay. Tailed lines and water and power, although there is no shower block at all here.

Apart from the anchorages along the coast from Bar to the Boko Kotorska, there are several comfortable places to spend a night on anchor in the Boko. Difficulties with anchoring include the depths (which can be as deep as 30m very close to the shore), the possibility of sudden katabatic winds (especially in the Bay of Risan) and prohibitions due to fish farms or ferry traffic. The extreme western corner of the Bay of Herceg Novi is comfortable in most winds and it is possible to anchor in 5 meters close to the beach. The Islands of Uvala Krtole are secure – either on the north or south side, depending on the wind. The Bay of Morinj is very quiet, although the water is reputed to be colder here than elsewhere. The Bay east of Perast is well sheltered at Ljuta and a good place to anchor either overnight or while waiting for a free berth at Stari Mlini if you are treating yourself to dinner at this sumptuous restaurant. Perast is worth visiting, but it is difficult to anchor off and it is not possible to tie up at the village. Getting a bus from Kotor along the coast is the best way to visit the ancient village and the intriguing Island of the Lady of the Rocks. There are some anchorages on the west side of the Kotorški Zaliv. At Uvala Velika the water is clear and lovely for swimming. As the weather got hotter towards mid-July, we spent

Stari Mlini Harbour



more and more time at anchor and jumping into the warm waters. Pat is considering having three small signs produced. One for the galley Have you been drinking enough water? One for the heads Have you taken all your pills today? and one for the bathing platform, visible from the swimming ladder Have you taken out your hearing aids?

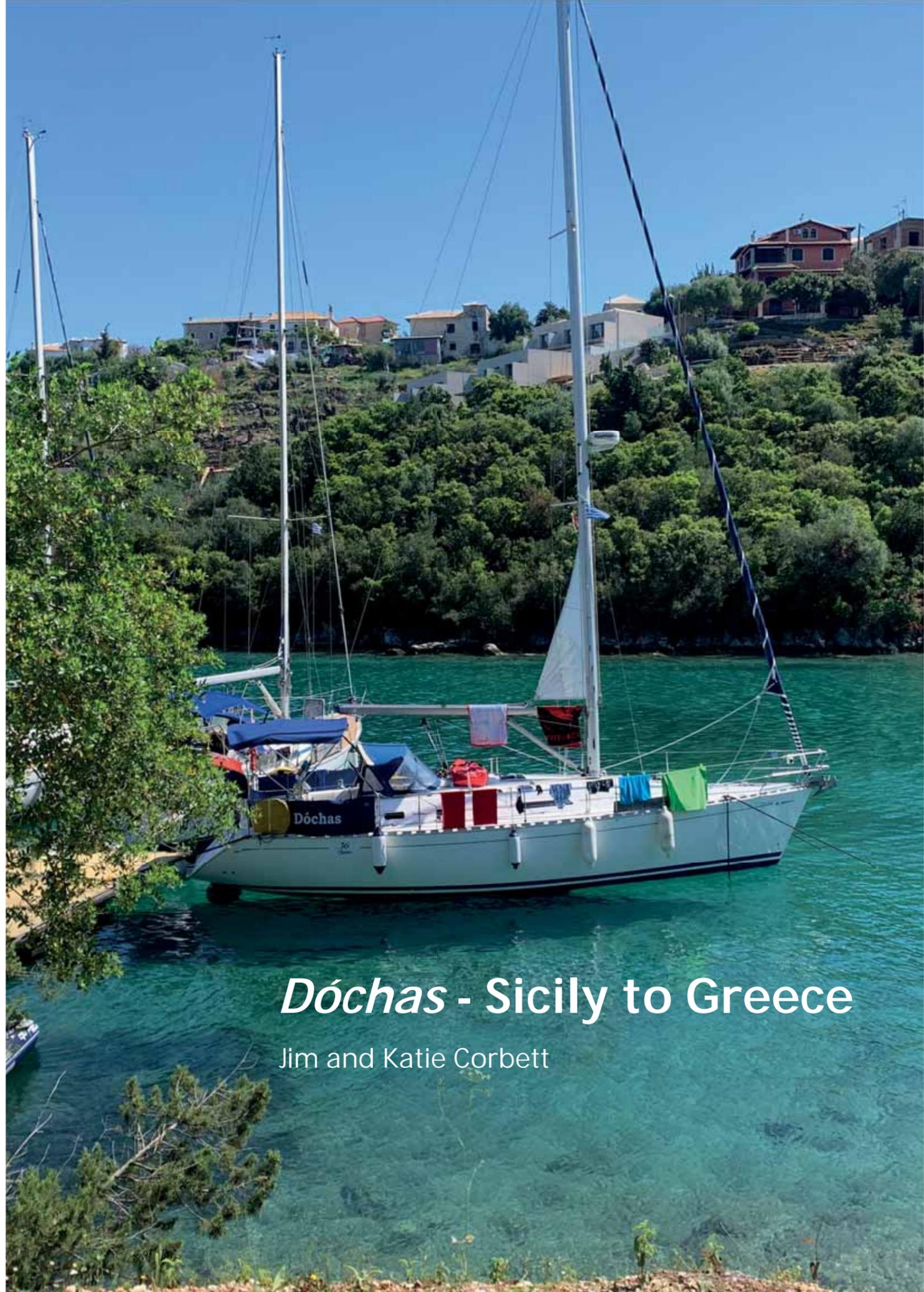
Our passage home was comfortable, but very hot, with temperatures of 47° along the coast of Southern Italy. We travelled a total of 1,122 NM, including 178 NM around the Boka Kotorska. Montenegro is definitely worth visiting and I suspect as the news spreads about its delights it will be busier and more expensive.

OPPOSITE ABOVE : Crew very busy! Mary, Clare, Joan and Michael

OPPOSITE BELOW: Kir Royale back home in Valetta



Marina	Location	Telephone	VHF Channel	€ per night
Herceg Nova town quay	Herceg Nova	+38231323015	-	54
Porto Montenegro	Tivat	+38232661061	71	84
Kotor Marina	Kotor	+382 67663617	17	57
Budva Marina	Budva	+382 33453276	08	77
Bar Marina	Bar	+382 30315116	09	62
Porto Novi	Denovici	+382 31353653	74	82
Lazure	Melijne	+382 69347994	87	84
Drago (Battery supplier)		+38267440853		
Dejan Jankovic	Marine agent	+382 69326888 Dejan.jankovic@yachtagent.me		
Norman	Kotor walking guide	+38267203674		



Dóchas - Sicily to Greece

Jim and Katie Corbett

Our Mediterranean cruise continues with a driving tour of Sicily before sailing from Sicily to Corfu and the islands of the Ionian Sea.

Sicily tour

We flew into Catania airport in mid-April, near where we had left *Dóchas* last season. One of our bags was held over in Zurich airport for a security check. This was not unexpected given the range of spare parts and other boat paraphernalia that we were carrying. Luckily the bag arrived the following morning with a stern letter about not carrying batteries (normal dry cell) on board. We planned to do a clockwise tour of Sicily by car, but first we wanted to check the boat. We dumped our boat gear into the cabin and checked in with the boatyard to set a launch day. We hired a car for a week and conducted a clockwise tour of Sicily. We crossed the centre of the island which is mountainous and largely agricultural and spent a number of days touring the north coast. While the main roads and autostrada are in good condition, the secondary and minor routes are not. Notwithstanding the condition of the roads, the driving is absolutely mental. There are mostly small cars as nothing else would fit on the narrow roads and streets. We took a road trip up around Mt. Etna on our final day with the hire car. It's very scenic and amazing to see all the snow still on the slopes despite the regular puffs of steam and smoke from the caldera.

Back in Riposto, we rented an apartment for a few days until the boat was launched. The apartment was quite spacious and perfect for us.

On the Move

The agreed day for splashing *Dóchas* is the day after 25 April, Independence Day in Italy. This relates to the end of WW2. Overall, we were happy with the yard and the hull cleaning and antifoul tasks that they completed, but that still left us with a lot of work to do before we could undertake the reasonably long passage over to Corfu. The marina was still relatively quiet at this time of year, but we had some very big neighbours of the superyacht variety.

Our two extra crew arrived, and we all worked on commissioning the boat. The routine stuff like putting on sails, deck gear and so forth went well. I had serviced the engine before layup last year and completed the few remaining tasks on the engine. We did a shopping run to the local hyper market which is a few km away. At the start of a season, we stock the boat to the max with all the staples, while topping up with fresh food as we go. Apart from that, we needed to be self-sufficient food-wise for the three or four days run to Greece. Finally, we were all set.

The passage to our chosen landfall from Riposto to Gouvia on Corfu is 300nm and would take about 60 hours. However, the first landfall is 240nm at the north end of Corfu. Here, there are a number

Snow on Mount Etna, Sicily



OPPOSITE: Mourtos mooring



Jim and Katie

of offshore islands plus the coast of Corfu which is inhospitable on the northwest side. Therefore, we planned to arrive in early daylight so that we could see what we are doing, while still allowing time to travel around to the sheltered east side of Corfu before it got dark.

With a good forecast, we headed out mid-morning in fine weather. We were accompanied by a Danish yacht with two persons aboard, also heading to Greece. During the first day we were in sight of land as we travelled parallel to the coast. While we still had a phone signal, we tried to make a reservation at Gouvia marina but were told that no space was available. The wind came up during the afternoon for several hours and then died away before midnight. The wind is due to thermal differences between land and sea. There was a lot of shipping traffic as we crossed the busy exit from the Messina Strait. At the end of the first day, the Danish yacht tacked in towards land, presumably to stopover somewhere to sleep as there were only two crew and we didn't see them again. With four on board *Dóchas* we set up a three-hour watch system. As it was still April, it was chilly during the night and we were wearing long trousers and fleeces, much like sailing in Ireland. The first night passed peacefully. During the second day, we lost sight of the coast and set out across the Gulf of Otranto between the heel of Italy and Greece. The day passed slowly, alternating between sailing and motoring as the wind served. The gulf was quite busy with a steady stream of heavy ships heading to the industrial zones on the Italian east coast. Most were heading north and so were coming from our starboard. Needless to say, we endeavoured to stay out of everybody else's way. The weather stayed fine

so the routine was to first tag a target with AIS and/or radar and then to confirm with a visual fix when the ship came into sight. Later on as we closed on the Greek coast, we noticed that the traffic was then coming from the north and these were all ferries and cruise liners coming from various ports in the Adriatic and heading for Greek ports. Nonetheless, the second overnight passed peacefully and we arrived on schedule at the Greek coast just after dawn on the third day.

Landfall Greece

Having failed to get a reservation at Gouvia, we diverted into the small harbour at Kassiopi on the north coast of Corfu. It's a lovely spot and we were happy to have arrived. The small harbour is a traditional anchor-off and back up to the quay wall arrangement. There are berths for only about six yachts but as it was early in the season, there were only three other boats. The harbour master arrived promptly to extract a small fee. She advised us to register the boat on an App which covers all the municipal harbours and marinas on this part of the coast. We stayed for two nights to decompress after the passage from Sicily. There are a few nice walks, and we got our first swim in Greece. A nice meal of grilled swordfish and tuna rounded off the day. We had been watching an approaching weather system for several days on the various weather apps. The forecast was deteriorating and we decided to head for a safe marina spot in Benitses, about 20km south of Corfu town. Rounding the north east corner, it's a pleasant trip down the strait between Corfu and Albania on the mainland. The Albanian coast is only a couple of miles from Corfu at the north end. The



Old Fortress Corfu

pilot advises care as regards mobile phone coverage here because not only is Albania outside the EU for roaming charges but also one hour behind Greece as regards time zones. On the way we were passed by a high-speed hydrofoil ferry doing over 30kts. We saw ferries like these last year also around Italy. It was flat calm with occasional light rain. We arrived early afternoon into Benitses marina, a new marina south of Corfu. The staff were very helpful and enthusiastic. Mooring here is stern-to but with the addition of heavy lines at the bow which are very secure. We had a quick sea swim in the rain and by late afternoon the wind was rising and the skies opened with heavy rain. The subsequent gale blew F8 and 9 for 24 hours, but we were snug and safe in the marina although it was very noisy.

Corfu town

We took the opportunity of the poor weather to visit nearby Corfu town. Various occupied by the Venetians, Byzantines, Romans, French and British, parts of it are a designated UNESCO site and it is a remarkable city. We caught a bus outside the marina for €1.50 and it was 25 mins to the old town terminus. It was still early season for the tourists and we could walk about the small streets at our ease. The town is dominated by a large fort, originally built by the Venetians and later improved by the French and then the British. The architecture of each period can be seen, including a line of buildings housing rows of cafes which were built by the French as homage to the Rue de Rivoli in Paris. The shops in the old town are small and grouped according to specialities such as; wooden utensils, soaps, jewellery, sponges, seashells, etc.

Mourtos

We were getting cabin fever and decided to head over to Mourtos on the Greek mainland, about 15nm. The wind had died but it was lashing rain, as bad as I've ever been afloat in, and it persisted all through the day and into the evening. Anybody on watch got soaked and could not be complacent as there was lots of traffic. There was no point in trying to exert right of way on the Greek ferries. On the way, we were hailed by another ICC boat, *Seawitch*. They were enthusiastic to talk and they were just commencing the return trip to Ireland via Corfu, Malta, Sardinia the Balearics and Gibraltar after spending seven years in Greece. They tell us that they will be sailing via Corfu, Malta, Sardinia and on to the Balearics before heading out of the Med at Gibraltar. We also are passed by another Irish boat heading south, *Hineni*. A bit like waiting for a bus and then three come along at once.

Mourtos is attractive because it is a particularly nice, deep bay with three islands offshore for protection. However, the real attraction is the local restaurant which has its own pontoon which is free as long as you eat a meal in the restaurant. It's a little overpriced but fine when you factor in the free berth. We arrive in the rain and headed up to the restaurant. A nice meal with a bottle of wine later and we sleep soundly. We turned the heating on to dry everything out after the wet weather.

The following day dawned bright and clear. The sun was up, the sky blue, and all was right with the world. We opened all the hatches, hung out all the wet gear and gave the boat a good clean from bow to stern,

inside and out. Here in this idyllic place the water is crystal clear and needless to say we were swimming before too long. The water temp was 17°, which is about the same as a good day in August at home. Katie went to buy some fresh bread in nearby Sivota and returned with two new large ball fenders. Ball fenders are useful to protect the stern of the boat when moored stern-to up against a pier wall - Med style. Our previous red ball fender had finally burst (after much abuse) during the stopover back in Kassiope. It was a great find in such an out of the way place. The local vendor drove Katie back to the dock with the two fenders.

On the second evening, a flotilla of 12 'Sailing Holidays' flotilla boats arrived in for an overnight. They were all British and provide a great buzz of activity around the pontoon for the evening. 'Sailing Holidays' are the same company that started us out on our first charter holiday over 20 years ago and we were chuffed to be back in Greece again on our own boat.

Paxos Island

Our next destination Lakka Bay on Paxos is regarded as one of the best anchorages in Greece. It was a 12nm run in calm, sunny conditions. The colour of the water has to be seen to be believed. There is plenty of room and we anchored without difficulty in 4 m sand. Situated just south of Corfu, Paxos island is about 10km long and 3km wide. With just 2,300 inhabitants it is a quiet and beautiful place. It has a typical island feel, unlike it's near neighbour Corfu. Every evening there were about 20 boats at anchor with various comings and goings. We took the rubber duck into the quay from time to time, including going for walks. The countryside is surprisingly green and lush with many plants that we also see in Ireland such as brambles, ox-eye daisies and clover alongside olive, orange and lemon trees all bearing fruit.

Our next stop was the port of Gaios, the main village on the island. Katie's brother Mark joined and Billy returned home. Gaios has recently become famous because of the Netflix series 'Maestro in Blue' which was filmed here last year. It is now among Netflix top global viewings and is the first such export from Greece. However, our visit coincided with another storm sequence which saw us moored up for five days waiting for calmer conditions. We spent our time exploring the area as well as the bars and restaurants of Gaios. there are about twenty boats stuck here so we make the most of it and meet many new friends. During our stay, a 35m private yacht arrived for a couple of days. The tender was bigger than our boat and was launched from a dock at the stern of the mother ship. Apart from a Dutch skipper, the yacht had a family crew. When the yacht moved to another location due to the wind her anchor chain lay at an angle across the chains of all the moored



boats, including ours. As the quay wall is curved, this was inevitable. The lady owner walked the dock and spoke with all the boat skippers individually to reassure them that her yacht would be leaving the following morning and hoping that nobody was inconvenienced. We were very impressed with her good manners not often associated with the super wealthy.

On to Preveza

We finally got a break in the weather, so decided to head south toward Preveza on the mainland. We had mixed emotions leaving Gaios. On the one hand, it's a beautiful place with friendly inhabitants and we had made new friends there. However, after six days storm-bound, it was definitely time to move on. The forecast was sort of right; The wind was close-hauled which we can manage, but a succession of thunderstorms march up from the south during the day. We punched out through the narrow harbour entrance up and over the swells that remain from the recent high winds. It was exhilarating but frightening, particularly as we could see the black thunder heads that lined the southern horizon. We were partly consoled by the large number of other yachts that departed at the same time; everybody had the same idea. It was a good passage overall; the 30nm run taking us just over 6 hours, mostly sailing. During the day we met a fleet of yachts all sailing in the opposite direction who had obviously also been waiting for a break in the weather in order to move north. The weather improved and the wind died as we went south. Arriving into Preveza was like another world. We checked into Preveza marina which is a top-class location with excellent facilities. Showers,



Gaios mooring

shops, chandlers, bar and restaurants. A big step up from Gaios. That evening we walked the strip, enjoying the shops and the atmosphere.

A rally for the local Syriza candidate in the election was held that evening. It was a noisy affair with loud music, flares, smoke bombs and beeping of horns. The police were out in force but stayed in the background. We were keen to get a table at a fancy gelateria but a little concerned about the seeming riot going on nearby, Katie checked with the waitress if we were ok; 'of course you are' she smiled, 'this is normal for Greeks'. We sat and watched the show although we could not understand a word. Great entertainment. We were joined by Des and Gráinne for a couple of weeks.

Ionian Sea

From Preveza we were well positioned to cruise around the Ionian islands over the following weeks. May and June are a great time to cruise this popular area as it is not as busy as high season in July and August. Many people rave about the Ionian being the best cruising area in the world and it is hard to argue otherwise. Perfect weather, clean, clear water, and many islands to choose from each day. There are many moorings and docks as well as a multitude of anchoring spots. Time slipped by and we understand why many cruisers who arrive in Greece stay for several years.

Lay Up - Ionian Marine, Preveza

We planned to leave Greece in early July as it is the start of the Italian holiday season which brings a big increase in boats and tourists and also of course it starts to get much hotter, over 30°. We had reserved a place for Dóchas in the Ionian Marine boatyard but first we need to decommission the boat and prepare

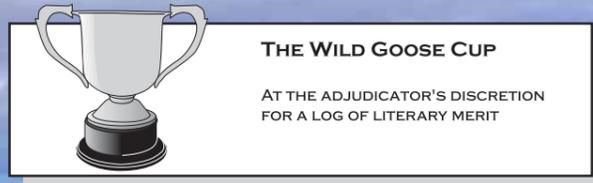
for laying up. The town of Preveza was getting very lively as the July holiday season got into full swing. The town quay was full of boats and the marina was busy with charter boats at the weekend.

The lift out was scheduled for noon on a Saturday. I checked in with a phone call and was told to head over around 1130. The boatyard is about a kilometre away from the marina. The lift crew were excellent. The crew inspected our amazingly clean hull and asked if we really want to power wash it? They gave it a light wash.

The Preveza boatyard is enormous, comprising three yards side-by-side and up to one thousand yachts dry stored. Facilities for boats and owners are all on site including workshops, bars and restaurants. Living on board is allowed and the yard has several shower/toilet blocks, and also a workshop for boat owners to use. We completed a number of follow up jobs during the afternoon including flushing out the engine with fresh water, changing the oil in the saildrive, and fixing on the boat cover. Also, we lowered the anchor and chain to the ground. Finally, as advised, we blocked up the various openings in the hull to prevent insects and rodents setting up nests over the winter. Each boat storage bay has water and electricity. We complete some paperwork and arrange a taxi to take us to a hotel in Preveza. It seems a bit incongruous to be leaving Greece just as the tourist season is getting into full swing but the week after we arrived home was the start of the heatwave which brought temperatures of 30° and 40° degrees to parts of Greece. Compared to that, we were happy to be back home in more temperate climes.

Vigo to Lisbon: The long way

Frank Cassidy



Ocean Blue alongside the new pier in Flores. INSET: Flores breakwater after storm damage in 2019

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.'

I was quick to recognize an opportunity when it arose, so last November I retired early, and went sailing. Please let me assure you such a life is neither idle nor indolent, as I planned some serious sailing, and *Ocean Blue* needed some serious attention. While the yacht had served as an effective facilitator for the last six years of wonderful family holidays in Galicia, it had also been possible to get some necessary upgrades/maintenance, including installing

new AIS/chart plotter, soda blasting and re-epoxying the hull, and installing a hydrovane. But more was needed, and it was the best done at home in the National Yacht Club. This return trip, embarked upon in late September, was relatively uneventful, except for certain precautions taken to avoid attentions of the local 'orca', a subject to which I will return. There was a myriad of things to be done, new batteries, management systems, LED bulbs, iridium-go satellite communication system and solar panels installed, new sails bent, a drive through the night to Hayling Island to get the binnacle bearings replaced (a Brexit problem), the rig and engine fully serviced and tuned, to name but a few. The most difficult job, perhaps, was that the cabin sole, which, after close on 15 years of hard sailing, needed some serious work. All through the winter chosen rooms

at home were witness to extensive drying, sanding and varnishing of sundry wooden panels, my wife displaying admirable patience. There were occasions when I would happily have returned to work. But at last the day arrived, in mid-June, when the boat was ready and Hugh (my 15 year old son), Tom (NYC), Dermott and I set sail to Kinsale.

But where to go then, we have time on our hands and a well-found boat on which to travel? While destinations like the Canary Islands, Cape Verdes, and the Caribbean are medium/long term aspirations, my wife and I really wanted to return to Cascais and thereafter explore the Algarve. But I was not prepared to risk the potentially damaging attention of orcas which are currently attacking yachts all along the western coast of Iberia. Why not make 'a virtue out of necessity' and sail to Cascais via the Azores. I had a personal wish to return to Flores,

having visited that beautiful island some 30 years before on a double-hander from Bermuda.

This is no easy sail, a distance of some 1,350nm, some 32°W and, as it against the prevailing southwesterlies, it was unlikely to be a direct route. We (three of us all over 60) left Kinsale on Monday morning the 26 of June in a light westerly breeze, fine reaching as far as the deserted gas fields until the wind backed SSW and increased to a half-gale. This persisted for the next two days as we beat into it, trying to make as much westing as we could in anticipation of the forecasted shift back to the northwest. This was by no means comfortable sailing on which start such a passage and the dreaded ailments of sleep deprivation and seasickness raised their ugly heads. As we were only three on board, we operated a rolling watch system, five hours off and four hours on, two of which were by oneself. As the other two were trying to catch up with sleep, it was appreciated if sail changes, including taking reefs, could be done without waking the others, something not always possible.

The wind shift, when it at last arrived, came with a bang, requiring further reefing of the sail plan, but at least allowing us to make course on a beam reach. I note from the log that;

'Thursday was a lovely day, blast reaching, up to 8 kts in sparkling seas and bright sunshine. Being bashed about by the waves a bit though, making cooking challenging. Noted fraying on headsail reefing line this evening so sent that sail to bed for the night, with consequent slowing down. We will fix it in the morning...Magical moon and starry skies vs thunderous dousing waves'.

And the following day;

'The relative slowing down last night gave wonderful opportunity to appreciate the moon in all its glory, right up to the setting below the horizon of that orange waxing gibbous orb Which was seen off by a wave of "au revoir". There was then still an hour of darkness to enjoy a clear starry starry sky'.

We were able to put the headsail back in the plan the following morning which had us bouncing along at 7+knots for most of the day. Despite the slight heading off direct course for comfort, which later proved the fastest route through these higher winds, 'comfort' included the occasional spectacularly thunderous dousing wave breaking at height into the cockpit, good for vigorous salt water shower if caught in wrong place, yet awesome to listen to if fortunate enough that it was your turn to be in the bunk below. While we may have complained about wind in the high 20s/early 30s and trying to keep it forward of the beam, (which makes the boat jump like a flea), worse conditions were developing behind us, with gale force winds being generated as the 'High' intensified. We were running away from those gales towards the



Ocean Blue departs Kinsale

centre of that 'High' and lighter airs, anticipating long sunny days and some nice home (boat) cooking. All was well on *Ocean Blue* even if a bit damp.... the new heater proving it worth, keeping us reasonably dry. If Carlsberg did offshore passages ?

After five days, the wind finally eased to around 20 knots and veered a touch, allowing us to sail directly to Flores, six hundred and thirty miles away. The sailing then became truly glorious, as the waves abated and the boat went wonderfully quiet and relatively smooth in motion. As the speed went down from 7 to 5.5 knots, it was my view that it is time to shake out reefs to speed up again; The crew was not so keen, with mutters of mutiny.

However, the following day, with the winds now down to 16 knots, the sea a slight swell with less than 1m waves, one reef was shaken out of main with headsail and staysail both fully out allowing the boat to glide along beautifully at 7.5 knots directly on course. For the first time a substantial and tasty dinner of two courses was prepared, served and much appreciated. There was even a single measure of Grog and diet cola disbursed as sundowners to celebrate the half way mark. Talk of mutiny was temporarily suspended.

Sunday 2 Jul is best described by the contemporaneous log;
43° 28'.698N 20° 10'.743W
Beauuutiful night!

The early hours of full darkness were brightly illuminated by a long beam across the seas to the SW (that now only have a slight swell); the light of which comes from that almost perfect sphere, that is our welcome friend, the moon, in surrounding clear skies. Lone sea birds glide across the beam as if drawn to it. Elsewhere in the sky, stars sparkle out through well broken clouds of a mackerel sky. Couple hours on and the moon is now frequently obscured by scurrying light and dark grey cloud masses A sky reminiscent of old World War Two movies. At times, there is a spotlight round pool of moonbeam in the distance. All this watched over by the ever vigilant Ruby (Hydrovane).
Now, this is my kind of sailing!

By the following morning, the sea had flattened out as the morning cloud was burned off by a blazing early morning sun. At 16 knots apparent, all sail set, *Ocean Blue* glides effortlessly, fine reaching over an azure carpet at a respectable 6.5 knots. A truly beautiful day, useful only for reading, sunbathing up front, big lunches and a steak dinner, the benefit of new solar panels and a working freezer. It is only when we checked the chart we realized just how isolated we were, the nearest land about 500nm away. We had not seen a ship for over two days.

Despite this, sea birds were always about. The dolphins kept coming to visit, but in the ocean they behave differently. First they travel in larger groups,

second they are more playful, often jumping clear of the water and finally they don't stay long, like as if they have a bus to catch. On one memorable occasion, the silence was broken by a distinct spout of water, glimpses of a small dorsal fin and the inverted long pyramid shape of the blow lead, a knowledgeable member of the crew being able to identify our visitor as one of the Baleen family (fin, minke or blue whale).

But after the first five days of pretty tough sailing, we were counting the cost. Both headsail reefing lines had frayed due to constant and extensive tension and probably need replacing. Some screws on the staysail furling gear had worked loose but luckily we found the screws and refitted them. A Harken track-block on the gunwale was hit so hard by a wave that it was washed right down the track, smashed the stopper and disappeared into the Atlantic depths. And I had lost my spectacles.

Focus on landfall

Tuesday's, 4 Jul, weather forecast update had us focusing on the arrival projections for Flores. The high pressure system over the Azores, which had promised us a nice broad reach/run down to Flores and a few days of light airs so we could anchor in peace, had moved south. Now we are struggling to get west, upwind and by the time we were due we

RIGHT: Lost spectacles!

BELOW: Choryna Kiely, John Joe Cassidy and Frank Cassidy



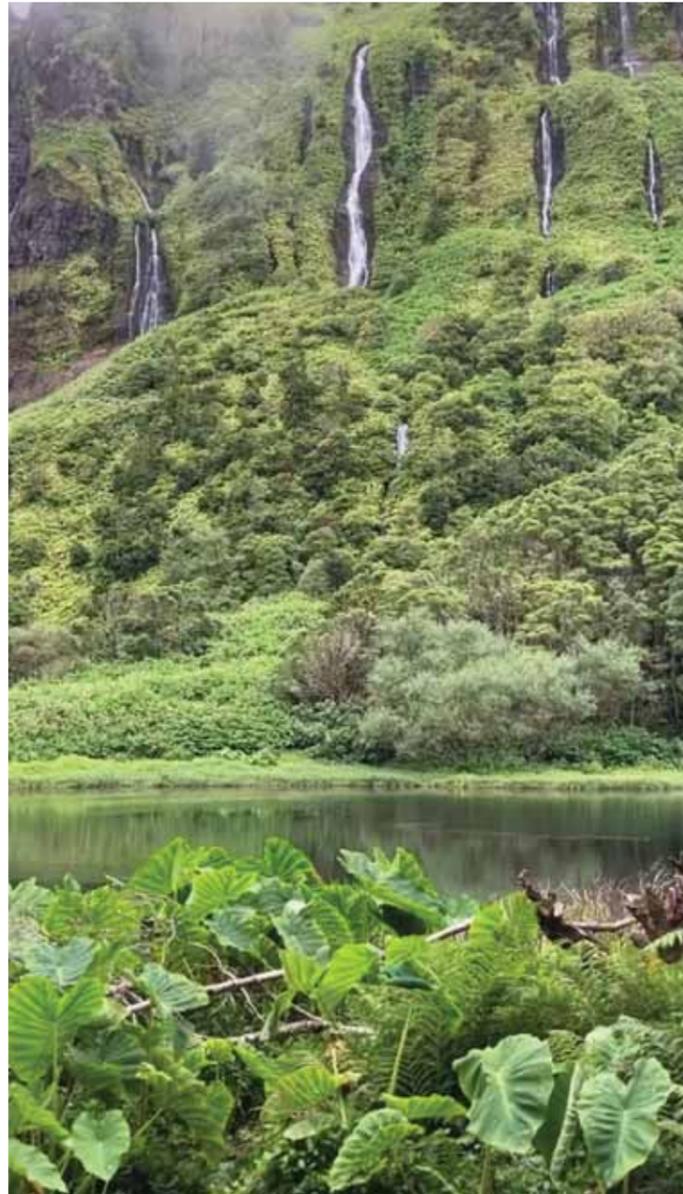
would be battered by a 25/30 knots westerly. While we were then on a direct course to Horta, only 215nm away on a fine reach, we were determined not to give up and go the whole way to Flores, at least another 100 miles to windward and against a knot of drift from the Gulf Stream. Also, landing at night did not look easy as there is no berthing facilities, they having been destroyed in a hurricane in 2019. Yet, we were hopeful.

Initially, as the wind had dropped significantly, we followed the wind-predict routing and motor-sailed directly west in order to optimise arrival conditions. But then I made a mistake. After a day motor-sailing west, the wind came up enough to allow us to make course under full sail at 6 knots. In hindsight, I should have kept going west under motor.

We had an excellent run that Wednesday afternoon and evening, fast and directly on course, even celebrating 100nm to go at 2330. We were looking forward to anchor beers the following evening at Flores. However the wind backed 30° during the night, leaving us with a difficult beat to windward in a building breeze and rising sea all the following day, as well as an awful contrary drift. It was going to be a tough night ahead. It was like a tumble dryer, a night of continuous fast moving squalls, winds occasionally up to 40 knots apparent; and by that point, after ten days at sea, we were tired. But just after midnight, everything started to settle and the welcoming flashes of lighthouse Ponta das Lajes were spotted. It was still dark, so prudence had us reaching gently up and down the coast until first light. Gliding in, in the early morning mist was mystical, the cliffs covered in foliage looking more and more like an Atlantic version of Hawaii. We got a berth by the wall with the help of some new international friends. It was a moment to savour.

Flores was everything it promised to be. The scenery is spectacular, almost Jurassic, high green cliffs with multiple waterfalls, volcanic lakes, profusion of multicoloured flowers, sparsely populated and abandoned villages (each with a church of ornate interior), all with the vast Atlantic ocean as a backdrop. And everyone was so charming, helpful and welcoming.

The sailors who venture here are of a different breed. Short-handed, some single-handed, on small, sometimes steel, boats; some having been living on their boat for over five years. One single handed guy, having been at sea for six weeks on a trip from Guadeloupe, dropped anchor outside the harbor for the night, rather than starting his engine. Flores, more than Horta, is seen as off the beaten track, so this is where they are more likely to congregate. Many are University educated with professions to which they can return when the cash runs out; Sea Gypsies, living a slow, chilled dream. We stayed, exploring the island for 4 days. A plan



ABOVE: Faja waterfall Flores

Church of Nossa Senhora do Rosário, Flores



Deserted village Flores

to leave early in the morning was delayed by a maintenance issue, and it was nice to see everyone gather around to help solve the problem, no one commenting that our eventual departure was not until 1600. Maybe we could get used to this chilled way of life.

Faial our next stop, with Pico peeking up in the background, involved a lovely night sail. Despite warnings, we underestimated the northerly drift

around the island, and had to tack to get to Horta. We arrived just as the weather broke and persuaded the harbourmaster to give us a nice berth, protected from the rising wind, rain and swell. I had been looking forward to visiting Peter Café Sport, a famous watering hole in Horta, well known for its welcome of ocean sailors, the first beer being on the House. It was a disappointment to find it a shadow of its former self, having become purely a boring tourist hub. We didn't even enter for a beer.

Pico from pier wall in Horta



A highlight however was to find a well-known English sailing couple, heroes of mine, Amy and Matt at anchor in the bay, in the process of completing their seven-year circumnavigation on their yacht *Florence*. We invited them to join us for dinner and were fascinated by many of their stories.

After a few days, we got up early so our first mate could catch her flight home, then slipped moorings, checked out from Horta, and set course to Madalena, on Pico Island. We anchored in 4m of clear blue water, at the foot of Pico mountain, not a cloud in the sky, little wind, with kids sailing Optimists and swimming all around us. Pico was a joy to visit, but all too short. JohnJoe enjoyed a stroll through the volcanic vineyards of Criacao Velha, allowing for a more informed discussion on the art of wine production, something for which Pico is renown, with the bartender later that evening. Dinner, held in an open terrace restaurant overlooking *Ocean Blue* laying still at anchor now in less than 3m of water, the ocean depths and big waves temporarily forgotten, was glorious.

Despite this, we were up and out of Madalena and motoring down the south coast of Pico by 0700 the following morning. Plans to stop at Lajes de Pico, or even Ribeiras, were regrettably abandoned due to the skipper's concern at potentially losing an anchor on the volcanic rocky sea floor. So we faced east to the Island Sao Miguel, 130nm away. A light air passage followed, sometimes having to resort to the motor, with occasional misty rain, low visibility and no moon. The following morning found us gently sailing along the coast of Sao Miguel in 10 knots of breeze, with half of the crew (of two) fast asleep.

Sao Miguel is still a little jewel in the Atlantic, though not quite the secret it once was. We were disappointed to find that we had just missed the ICC crew bringing the *Ilen* home from the Maderia Rally. I had promised the Commodore, David Beattie a pint in Punta Delgada, but missed the boat by less than a day. As a small compensation, my daughter, Grace, came out to join us, for the sail to Cascais. We hired a scooter to explore. The scenery surrounding the Caldeira and Furna do Enxofre contrasted with expansive Atlantic views is spectacular, and the scuba diving wonderful. We stayed for a week.

Cascais is 770nm due east, into the Portuguese trade winds. The forecasts was looking good with some nice beam reaching. We were up at seven, gone by eight, rounding the east end of the island searching for the promised NNW winds. From the moment we lost sight of land we could not get the Iridium-Go to give us a signal. So no weather information, and no posts. It was only by dismantling it and disconnecting the battery could we get it to work again. EUREKA. It is far too complicated. The sailing, however, could not have been easier. After leaving the wind influence of Sao Miguel, it settled into nice Force 4 from the north giving us a smooth fast beam reach. Ruby (hydrovane) doing a nice job, so long as there is one

reef in the main, not required by the conditions. By the third day the wind was either dying or on the nose, necessitating some engine noise. Lovely sunny days and a crescent moon often accompanying the night watch. We saw one ship, that night. 360nm to go, less than half way. Some idea of what it was like can be seen from the log;

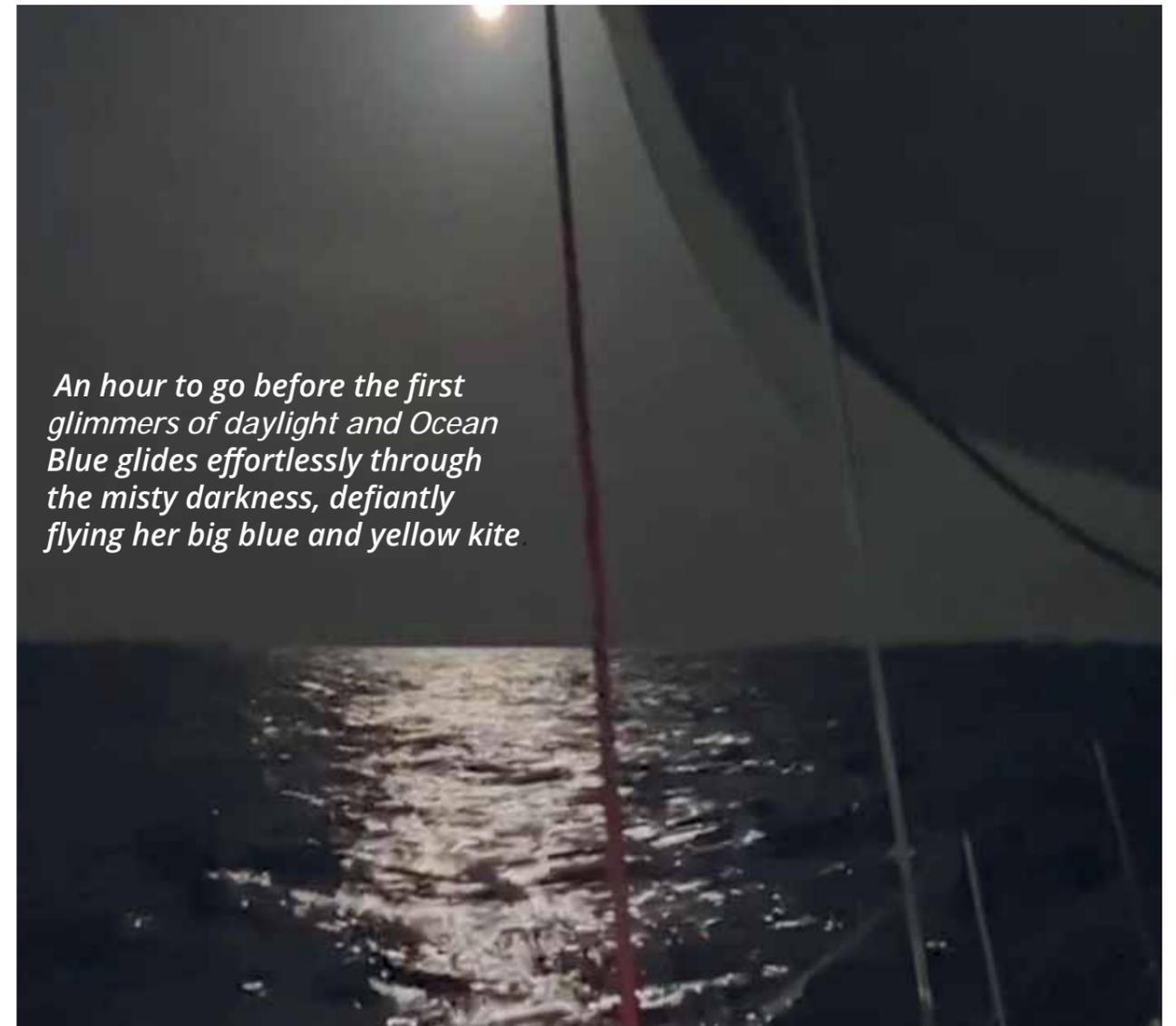
0400 and time for a watch change, and a cup of tea. No matter how long I do this, it is always a struggle to get up during the night for a watch. Sleep, however, one could sleep anytime, so long, of course, as it's not on one's watch.

Grace saw her first ship today, and we spoke to it on the VHF, container ship bound for Chicago. She found it harder to see the second one, as it was during the night. They can see us, and we can see them, both on radar and AIS, and of course by keeping a good watch.

Wind has been dying here, so the engine has been running for most of the day. We are drifting a little north in search of more wind, with the possible chance of flying a spinnaker later on in the day. The nights can be very dark, once the moon sets, still dawn is not far away, and it is not cold or wet. Oops, here comes the wind now, gotta go!

The fourth morning out, Grace, who has had a relatively easy time of it to date, was dragged out of bed at 0500 for her watch; to do what you may ask? To set up all of the various lines for the spinnaker.

Perfect spinnaker weather



An hour to go before the first glimmers of daylight and Ocean Blue glides effortlessly through the misty darkness, defiantly flying her big blue and yellow kite.

Moonbeam

This took nearly half an hour. With the three of us up, we popped the kite and took off. It was perfect spinnaker sailing all day, with clear blue skies, flat seas, and 14 knots of breeze on our port quarter. Ruby however couldn't handle the spinnaker by herself, nor could the electric autohelm. Weirdly, with both of them on the job the boat is sailing perfectly without a human hand on the tiller. Do we risk it for the night?

This freedom lead to some shenanigans during the day, including a pancake tossing competition; won by Grace purely on artistic merit. Dinner was enjoyed to the setting sun and the strains of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Tough life this!

Well did we, or didn't we, fly the spinnaker through the night? It is a difficult enough sail to handle during the day, let alone on a dark night. In reality we had little choice. It is not just that the sail gives us extra speed downwind in light airs, it is its directional facility that is key; it is the only sail that is effective

30° either side of direct downwind in sub14 knots. And anyway we had the benefit of a full moon for most of the night. The moon really does help. The scene was reminiscent of old black and white sepia photographs, with the moon peering from out behind clouds that look much blacker in contrast, yet with the horizon fully visible. When the AIS warned us of a bulk carrier of toxic waste on a direct course for us at 18 knots, it was a simple job to set a course half a mile to leeward.

But the moon deserted us and despite a clear starlit night, the horizon is very dark, misty and indistinct. An hour to go before the first glimmers of daylight and *Ocean Blue* glided effortlessly through the misty darkness, defiantly flying her big blue and yellow kite.

This was Grace's first ever ocean passage, and while she has been included in the ICC annual before, I felt at 19 her first ever log merited inclusion, unadulterated.

'Almost as soon as I set foot on OB, my phone

decided it needed to go for a dive with all my contacts, pictures and passwords, literally everything I need to live, subsequently swimming at the very bottom of the marina in PDL. Whoops. Skipper was great though, he dived in right after, recapturing the phone, and more importantly, the sim card. (SIM card is safely stowed away, so Hugh if you are reading this, do not forget your old phone!)

So, I have been at sea for seven days now, with no phone, internet, social media, movies or music (skipper's music is so terrible you can hardly call it music, its more like torture, so it def does not count) whatsoever. I haven't even looked at a phone screen in a week, crazy.

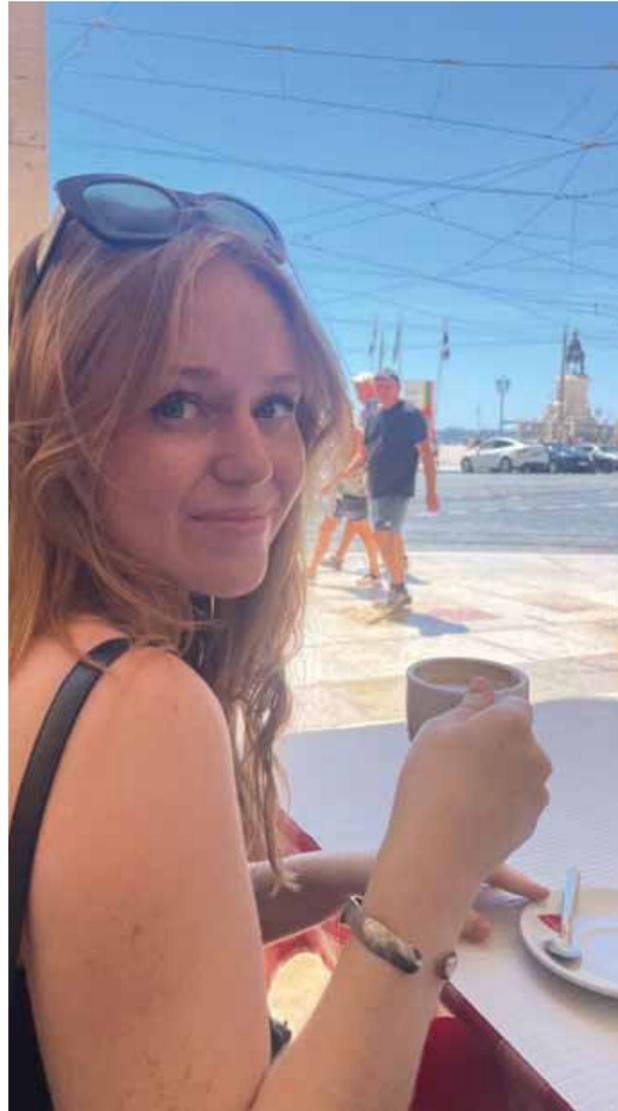
All in all however, these seven days have been pretty amazing. Being in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean with nothing around for miles, and no ability to communicate with anyone or anything else than the crew on board forces you to look around a whole lot more and notice things you never would otherwise. I've seen schools of dolphins playing underneath the bow of the boat, turning on their sides to get a glimpse of you, lone birds, and beautiful sunsets.

During the night watch, when you are pulled out of the warmth of your bed, there isn't much else to do than drink your tea and stare above (after checking for ships, of course) at the glistening stars and moon. Last night, the first mate and I sat staring at the big dipper above the mast in a perfectly clear sky. There were thousands of them, and when you decided to look long enough the amount of falling and shooting stars left you in total awe. I have to say maybe being without my phone isn't all bad'.

By Friday evening, the wind from astern started to die and, regrettably, we had to drop the kite and start the engine. Dawn brought a light mist and a steadily increasing breeze from the north, so no need for the engine.

The traffic separation zone off Cabo da Roca is fascinating to observe at close quarters, the volume of large ships quite remarkable. It is not so difficult to navigate as one might think as, despite the volume, their direction is clearly defined, so easy enough to avoid. As we approached the coast, the anticipated afternoon sea-breeze kicked in on our port quarter, giving us a fantastic and very fast finish into Cascais marina.

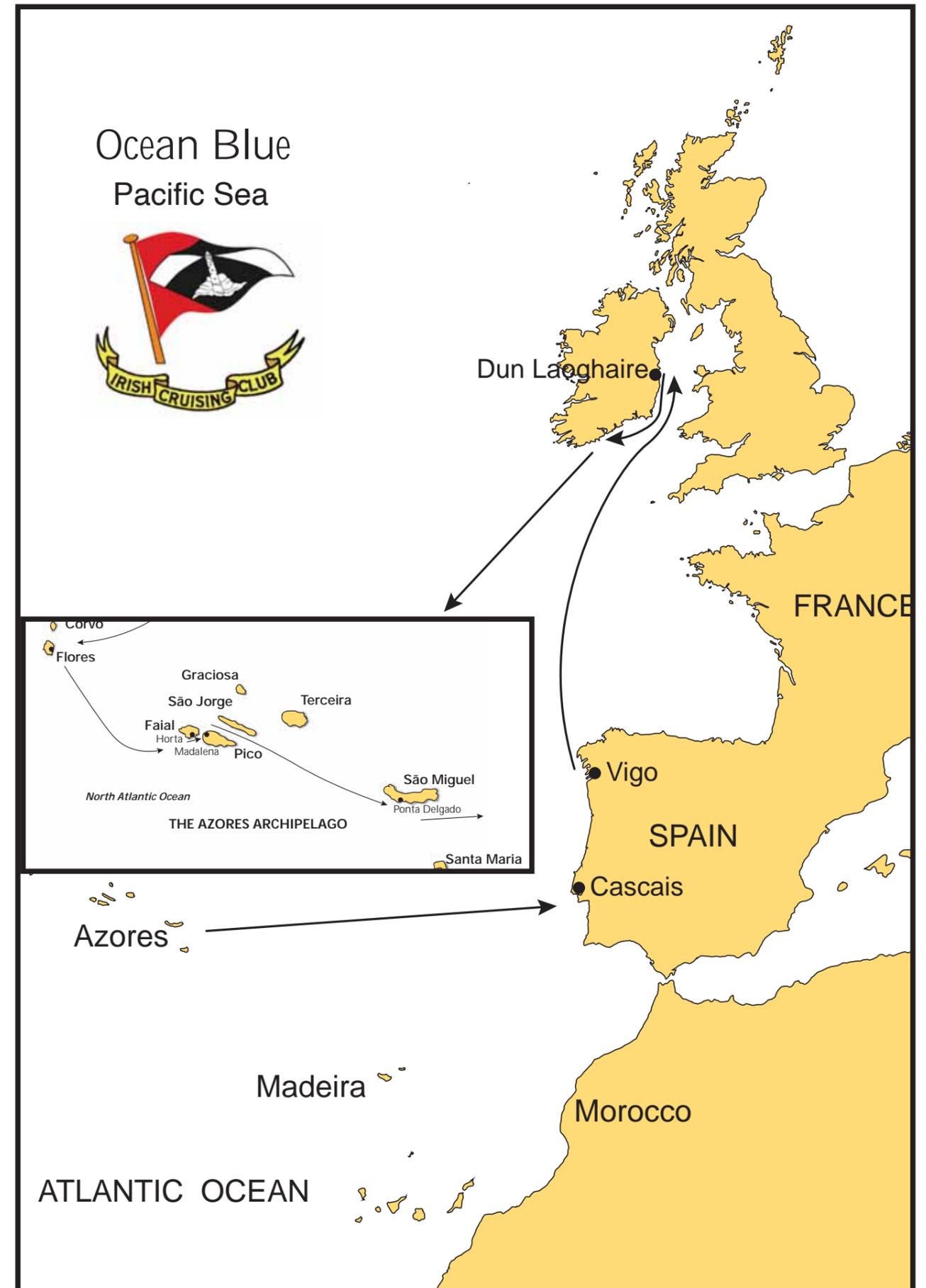
We had prepared for any potential orca encounter by disconnecting the hydrovane rudder, the electric autohelm and the deptsounder. Also the course we chose minimized those areas between 200 and 40m in depth. A sight of dolphin fins gave us a brief cause of alarm, but we encountered no orca. Unfortunately this was not the case for Andrew Collins (NYC), whom we met in Oeiras. On his way back to Ireland, both



Grace Cassidy

his rudders were destroyed by such an encounter, requiring refuge in Camarinhas. This remains a real problem for ocean cruisers.

So ends an eventful trip of well over three thousand miles, ending up a few hundred miles from Vigo, where we left less than ten short months before. The Odyssey will continue.



Grabbing windows of opportunity - *Annabel J's* summer cruise

Máire Breathnach



Having spent almost two years in the Canary Islands, Andrew and I were anxious to sail to the Arctic again. *Annabel J* is a replica Bristol Channel pilot cutter with a traditional gaff rig. She had been laid up ashore in New Ross boatyard for two winters and we had a considerable amount of work to do to prepare her for sea. Consequently we missed the glorious summer days of late May and early June. Finally, on the 10 June, we cast off from New Ross marina and carried the tide downstream to the Barrow bridge which is now permanently open. We anchored off Buttermilk Point at the confluence of the three Sisters (Nore, Suir and Barrow) which gave us time to unwind before making final preparations for sea. Our plan was to sail to Castletownbere and wait for a suitable forecast to sail north. Two nights were spent at anchor off the Bullman in Kinsale and we motored and motor-sailed past all the familiar headlands of the Old Head, Seven Heads, Galley and Toe. Then past the Stags, through Gascanane Sound, and along the north shore of the Cape Clear to Crookhaven. Unfortunately due to the mist and fog patches these familiar landmarks were not all visible. Next day after an early morning swim we motored through the Allderman Sound passing a cable off the Mizzen and had anchored in Castletownbere by 1100.

The weather in the Atlantic was not looking good and Windy was looking far too colourful for a direct passage to Iceland so we decided to carry on sailing north along the west coast as the weather permitted. As we exited the Dursey the topsail got its first outing of the season. The sheet was led the wrong way

Rounding Achill Head



LEFT: 'One of the safest anchorage in Ireland' (S&W Sailing Directions). *Annabel J* at anchor in Ardbear Bay. Photo by Charlie Chevasse



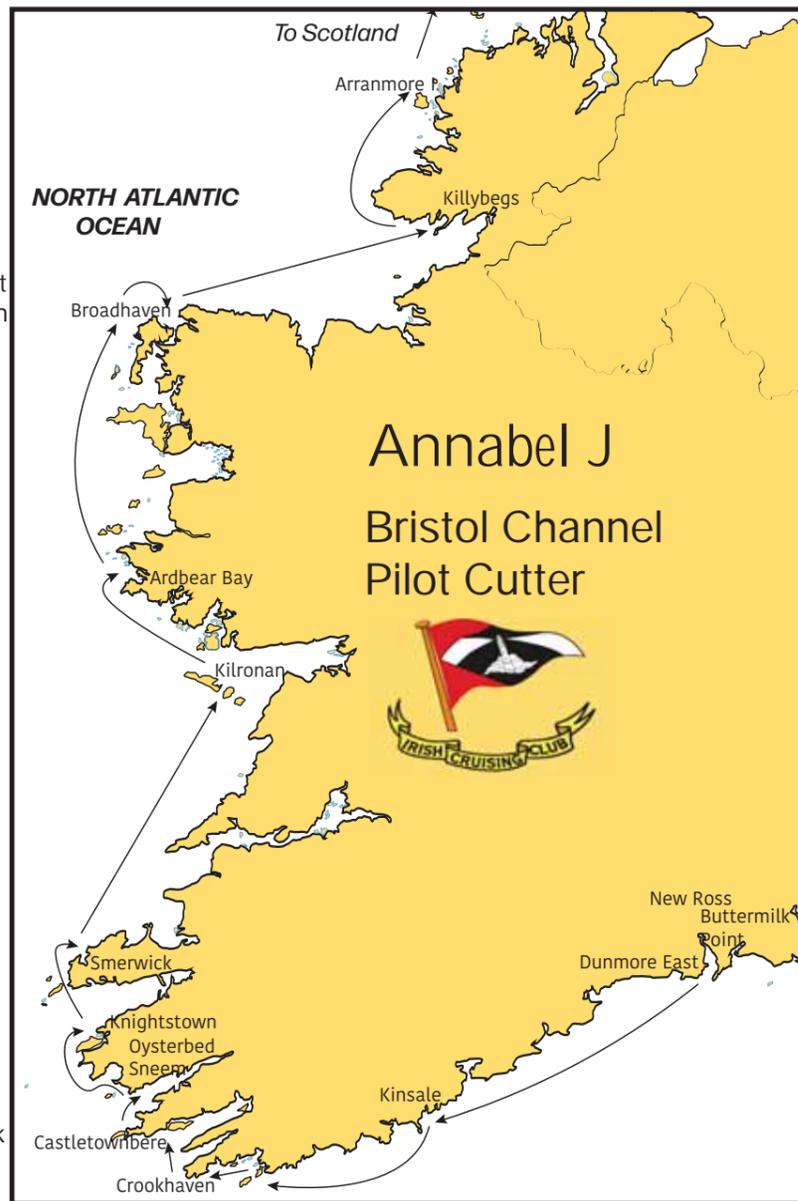
Andrew climbs the hoops to sort out the topsail sheet around so Andrew climbed up the hoops of the main to sort it out. We did a MOB drill in Kenmare Bay.

Once anchored off the Oysterbeds, my cousin, Don, joined us for a swim. I love swimming in this area, the peaty water is always warm and there are rarely any jelly fish. Next morning we spotted a fleet of Drascome Luggers and as they sailed past one skipper shouted 'Hi Máire, remember me, I met you 25 years ago in the North Harbour': It's a small world. Fortune had it that HW was in the evening so we rowed to Sneem with the flood and after a pub meal with Don carried the ebb down river back to the Oysterbeds.

We continued north to Knightstown and, after a beautiful sail through Blasket Sound in light south westerlies under topsails, staysail and jib, we brought up in Smerwick. We attempted to anchor off Trá an Fhíona but after four attempts - lots of kelp - we moved to the anchorage off Dún an Óir where the holding was better. Next day after a dawn start we arrived in Kilronan before the wind freshened. Two days were spent at anchor here as we waited for the strong winds to pass through. Ashore on the quay we met fisherman John Kenneally who had just decommissioned two fishing boats. As I rowed back to *Annabel J* with a dinghy full of stores I was nearly run down by a RIB from the National Geographical cruise ship.

Under jib next day we rounded Slyne in SW5 and made for Ardbear Bay which, according to the Sailing Directions, is the safest anchorage in Ireland. *William Tell*, a Rival from Dungarvan which was being sailed by the Chevasse family was also anchored here. I love this anchorage but it was difficult to get ashore on this occasion given that there were three Connemara ponies in the field which gives access to the road. I had to climb up a wall covered in ivy and roll onto the busy road. The things we do to get ashore.

On Monday 26 June, we ventured out into big swells left behind after the strong southerlies and sailed with two reefs and staysail to Ballyglass. We found a berth in Killybegs marina where we were weatherbound for a week. The 4 July saw us anchored off Arranmore island with a terrible forecast for the foreseeable future. We grabbed a narrow weather window - south west backing south 3 to 5, backing southeast 6 to 7 later, perhaps gale 8 later - and departed at dawn the following day bound for the Hebrides. Ireland had slipped astern by 0900 and 12 hours later, with a south east gale forecast, we decided to press on to Loch Dunvegan, Skye. We had covered 196 miles in just over 24 hours. Here we sheltered for two days as gales swept over the Minch. It was too windy to row ashore. When the weather improved we re-anchored off Dunvegan castle and took the opportunity to fly the drone, our new toy.



Hebridean Princess in the Shiant Islands

On Sunday 9 July we motored to Stornoway in light variable winds. Passing through the Shiant islands we saw the lovely *Hebridean Princess* at anchor. En route Andrew rang the harbourmaster to book a berth and opted for the LOA measurement on the grounds that it was theoretically possible to unstep the bowsprit. The harbourmaster phoned back to say he had measured the space available and we should just fit - In the event, we tried the two quayside berths in different basins of the marina and we didn't fit. Several neighbouring boat skippers checked their insurance policies and we provided a great side show to onlookers sipping sundowners in their cockpits many of whom started filming with mobile phones as we tried our 'quart into a pint pot' manoeuvres. Fortunately, the wind was very light and we didn't hit anything. The harbourmaster found us a much more comfortable berth in the new marina just outside town.

Stornoway was heaving with festival goers attending the HebCelt Fest, a music festival that takes place annually in the grounds of the castle. We attended a few top concerts in the cultural centre An Lanntair, I took part in a fiddle workshop and we enjoyed the gigs in the tents. We caught up with the Buttner family who were sailing our old boat *Young Larry*. One day we walked to Beasts of Holm, a notorious reef where the *HMY lolaire* was wrecked on New Year's Eve in 1919 with a loss of 205 people. The *HMY lolaire* had sailed from Kyle of Lochalsh for Stornoway carrying nearly 300 naval veterans of the Great War home to Lewis and Harris. John Macleod's 'When I heard the Bell' tells the story of a disaster that touched nearly every family on the island.

John Finlay Macleod, a 30-year-old carpenter from Port of Ness, swam ashore with a heaving line from the *lolaire* and saved the lives of 40 men. We visited Port of Ness by road.

Our old boat Young Larry in Stornoway



Annabel J at anchor off Dunvegan Castle





Port of Ness

Our passage to Iceland took four and a half days. We sailed and motor-sailed in a 'corridor' of light winds from every direction from F2 to F4 while gales blew hard to the east and west of us. On one of my watches we passed the enormous *Nan Feng Zhi Xing* a carrier which looked like a pagoda on a barge. Moderate to fresh south easterlies kicked in for the last 36 hours of the passage and we were happy to berth at Brokey S.C in Reykjavik at 2100 on 22 July where we were cleared in by customs at 2330.

During our stay in Reykjavik, we had a great time with our niece Sibéal and her Icelandic partner Óskar. They lent us a car and we visited them in the countryside several times. We drove to ports in the south and west of the country to take drone photos for the next edition of 'Arctic and Northern Waters', a sailor's guide to the Arctic edited by Andrew. We also

Andrew and Sibéal at Brocky marina with the Harpa Opera House behind



took time to catch up with some maintenance. The weather was glorious and most days we swam in the sea at a geothermal beach in Nautholsvik near the domestic airport. On Culture Day we both entered 'cultural' runs in the morning and picked up medals (everyone got one). Later we visited the maritime museum and attended a concert in the distinctive glass clad opera house Harpa. We tried our feet at walking on stilts (Óskar was by far the best) before settling down to watch the fireworks over the harbour.

There are now several large 'expedition' charter yachts with up to 12 crew members sailing between Scotland, Faroe, Iceland and east Greenland many of which use Reykjavik for crew changes. The UK armed services also run expeditions in former BT Global Challenge boats and of course there are cruise ships by the dozen. We met many of the skippers and permanent crew. We also met fishermen aboard the *Runólfur* from Grundarfjörður who had been towed in to Reykjavik in November 2022 when their engine failed. Several months had passed while they waited for parts from Denmark and they were excited and relieved to get away to the fishing grounds again in early August.

It was also time for us to be on our way and we sailed north first to Hvalfjörður, a beautiful fjord close to Reykjavik that we had not previously visited. At the head we anchored off Hvammsvík where you can visit an expensive but beautiful thermal spring. We didn't, opting for a dip from *Annabel J's* bulwark instead. Charming Arnastapi was also new to us. We anchored next to *Blue Jay* and Ollie her skipper and

Annabel J at anchor in Hvammsvík, Hvalfjörður



partner Peta (friends of Andrew's) came on board for a drink. We were away at 0550 and, on route to Bíldudalur passed close enough to one of the Clipper expedition yachts (Skirr Adventures) to have a brief chat with our friends skipper Nic and mate Charlie. In Bíldudalur we anchored in mud, shell, kelp and old rope. We motored to the hot springs in Reykjafjarðarlaug where we enjoyed our bathe.

In Isafjörður we were joined by Óskar, Sibéal's partner and a helicopter maintenance engineer with a passion for all things mechanical. He had not sailed before and was keen to find out if he was a seaman or not! It soon became apparent that he was. It was a pleasure to sail with someone who was curious and enthusiastic about everything we do. He quickly picked up how things worked and we very much enjoyed the week he spent with us.

It was a light winds passage to Hesteyri so we had all the sails set - main, staysail, jib, main topsail and jib topsail. We were ghosting along surrounded by breaching whales and Andrew could not resist the opportunity to launch the drone and take some photos. Unfortunately it crashed into the rig whilst trying to land it back on board. It sank quickly. The next day we ordered a new drone from Reykjavik and Óskar arranged for it to be flown to Isafjörður - it was there for us that evening. The insurance policy that we have allows us to lose two more. Hopefully the skills will improve and that will not be the case.



Óskar



Leaving Hornvík

The NW of Iceland is shaped like a hand and deeply indented with fjords. Hornstrandir (the pinkie finger) is part of the National Park and a nature reserve. We anchored off Hornvík and, when we rowed ashore, were very surprised to find quite a few tourists camping in the wild. Next day we saw a small ferry from Isafjörður pick up some of the tourists. Off the Horn the fishing was great and we landed three cod keeping the biggest one.

In Norðurfjörður, Trékyllisvík, we hiked to Krosness where there is an infinity pool in a beautiful beachside location at the end of a mud track. As we sailed in light winds to Siglufjörður the autohelm stopped working. This provided great entertainment

RIGHT: We landed cod and haddock every other day

The striking rugged headland of Horn, Hornstrandir



for Andrew and Óskar who crawled around the lazarette and replaced a loose nut on the hydraulic ram.

We were sad to see Óskar go in Akereyri where we remained at the marina for three days as gales blew around us. We had ten shorelines in use, and to go ashore, we had to time our jump from the boat to the low pontoon which was constantly swept with waves. After that it was a wet and wobbly run to get ashore.

Hraunhöfn, is the most northerly anchorage in mainland Iceland and when we let go anchor at 2200 we were just loosing the light. We rounded Langanes, the north east corner of Iceland and our final anchorage was in Bakkafjörður. Runar, the harbourmaster, made us feel very welcome on the new pontoon in Seyðisfjörður before we set sail for Faroe in a northerly F4 which increased to F5 that evening before veering to the east, decreasing and then veering again to the W. After a 280nm passage we made a dawn landfall off the spectacular cliffs near Vestmanna. Weatherbound again we took the ferry to Nolsoy and marvelled at the ferry skipper's skill as he manoeuvred in and out of the harbour in gale force conditions and Faroese tides.

Grabbing another window of opportunity between gales we left Tórshavn on 15 September. About six hours after leaving Tórshavn we came across a large pod of pilot whales. In fact, we literally bumped into one of them! The whale surfaced nearby but didn't seem to have any serious injury. Other members of the pod stopped near 'our' whale - it was almost as if they were checking that their friend was OK.

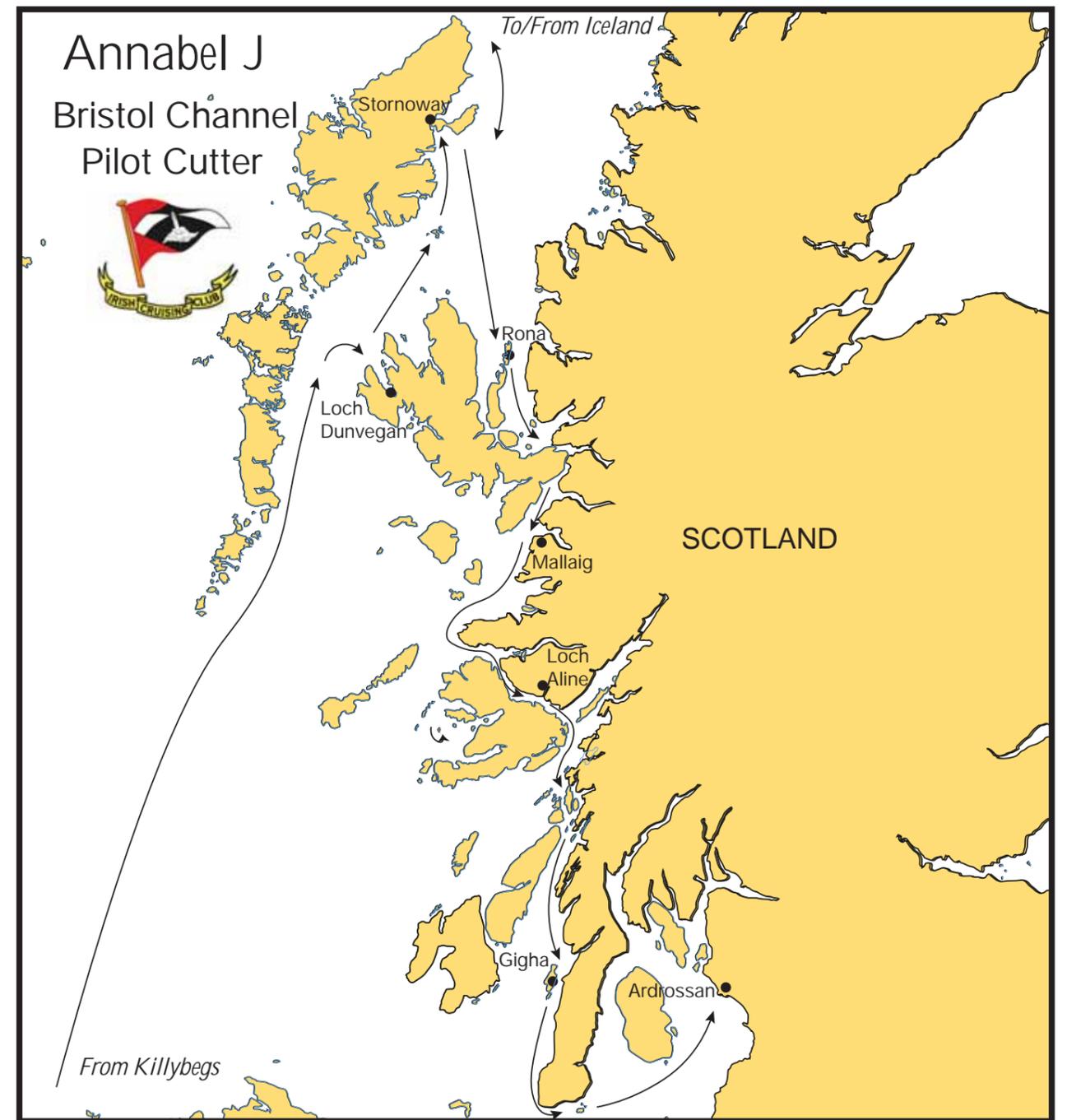
We had a light following wind so motored a lot of the time and made the passage to Stornoway in a day and a half. Andrew contacted the harbourmaster as we approached and they directed us to a nice big berth. It was dark as we came alongside and the harbour master was there to take our lines.

From Stornoway, we sailed to Acairseid Mhòr before sailing on to Mallaig to sit out another gale at the Mallaig marina. This was an opportunity for me to travel by train over the epic Glenfinnan Viaduct to Fort William. The gale passed and we sailed on to beautiful Loch Aline and south again to Ardminish Bay in Gigha. It was remarkable to see so many boats still cruising late in the season.

We had planned to sail *Annabel J* back to New Ross but the weather forecasts looked difficult for the following week or two. We had shore-side commitments so we decided to lay the boat up in Ardrossan for the winter.

It was a boisterous year for strong winds and gales but a variety of weather apps helped us plan our routes and grab 'windows of opportunity'. We had logged over 3,200 miles, our cruise got us back into sailing in high latitudes and we had gathered lots of pilotage information. We'll be back next summer.

We bumped into this pilot whale



A lovely welcome to the Sound of Mull

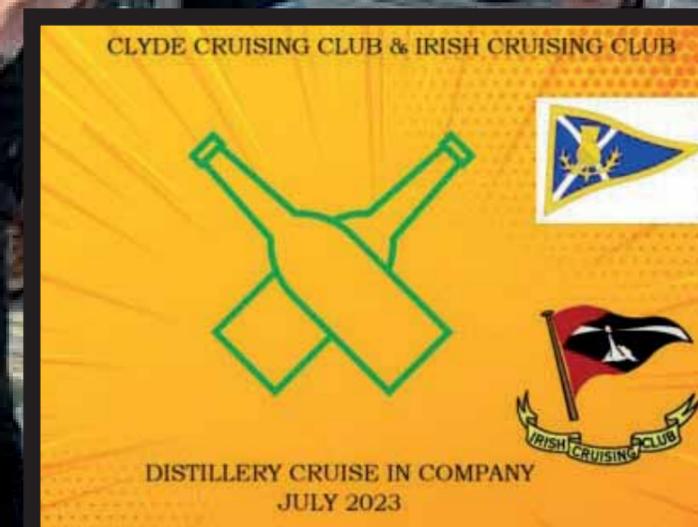




Joint CCC/ICC Cruise in Company

DF White

1-10 July



Pontoon party, Tobermory

Following an invitation from the Clyde Cruising Club to participate in a 2023 Distillery Cruise in Company we put out an Expression of Interest around both clubs.

Some 16 CCC and 24 ICC boats had confirmed attendance with most of them coming to all events. The Itinerary was to be as follows.

1 July
ICC to host a Pontoon party in Rathlin

- 2/3 July**
Boats assemble at Islay - Port Ellen Marina or Ardbeg
- 4 July**
Ceilidh in Jura Village Hall
- 6 July**
Oban for crew changes and re-stocking
- 8 July**
CCC host a pontoon party in Tobermory followed by a meal in Macgochan's Bar
- 10 July**
Final gathering at Talisker Distillery

The best laid plans mostly work but as with the WAW cruise last year the weather calls the shots. In the few weeks before our first muster in Rathlin for various reasons, the ICC fleet had dropped from 24 to 12 boats. A couple of days before the Rathlin event we had a forecast of strong westerlies and on the advice of the Harbourmaster, Clive Reeves and I decided that Rathlin was not the place to be so we moved the first gathering to Port Ellen.

ABOVE INSET: Event flag designed by DF White
On the 2 July we had 4 CCC and 3 ICC boats in Port Ellen marina and Viv and I hosted an extended drinks party for the crews who had made it. I welcomed the CCC on our behalf - we had 18 on board *Ballyclaire*.

On 4 July the fleet had grown to 8 boats - a disappointment in numbers for the Jura Hotel and the Distillery who had organized the evening meal and a group whisky tasting.



Derek and Viv host a drinks party on board Ballyclaire

An afternoon of Malt education was followed by a fine venison stew served by The Jura Hotel in the Community Hall to finish the evening. Following a welcoming speech by RC Clive Reeves our VC Alan Markey responded and thanked the CCC for their invitation to sail with them in these splendid cruising waters and to the Jura Community for their warm welcome.

Following the speeches, I reminded the gathering of the long association between CCC and ICC. Interesting to note that CCC was formed in a bar in Glasgow and the ICC in a bar in Glengarriff! Our two clubs have a very similar background and are some 10 years apart in formation. Although the established yacht clubs had provided the racing and social aspects of our sport, our founder members saw the need to promote cruising and to produce detailed sailing directions to be read in conjunction with Admiralty Charts. The modern editions are very detailed and a credit to both Clubs.

Our Centenary is 2029 and we are in process of arranging something similar to our 75th celebrations which many CCC members attended. In the past there were feeder cruises/races to these major events and we would be happy to put up a prize of an old haggis and a bottle of Irish whiskey to the winner. A fine evening was had by all who attended and we had the added benefit of RIB taxi service back to our boats.

Lunch at Jura Hall and a few tunes from Derek



On 6 July several of us met up in Oban for crew changes and restocking. We were joined by Rear Commodore North, Julie Chambers – now we were 5 ICC boats
On 8 July CCC hosted a drinks party on Tobermory Pontoon followed by the planned meal in Macgochan's at the head of the pontoon.

Due to time restraints and weather we decided to end the cruise in Tobermory. Clive and Alan made closing speeches and we all hope to meet up again in 2025 when the CCA will be organizing a similar event but hopefully without the inclement weather. Not all boats attended every event but the following is the final list of participants.

ICC
Ballyclaire D F White
Reziki Ralph McCutcheon
Big Wig Graham Chambers
Saxon David McCormick
Soothsaye Michael Pomeroy
Altaria Alan Markey
 CCC
Lyrebird Clive Reeves
Argento Ken Andrew
Hecate Patrick Trust
Headstart Jimmy Ritchie
Northern Way Richard Davies
Equinox Richard Popplewell

Although the numbers started at 40 + boats and ended at six boats from each club, the stalwarts who attended had good fun and lots of sailing and are all looking forward to the next joint cruise.
 DF

Distillery Cruise with the ICC and CCC

Clive Reeves



Moored at Jura

The cruise was planned to start at Rathlin with the CCC & ICC meeting for a party on the 1 July. However after a month of little or no wind the forecast was for a westerly gale and the harbour master at Rathlin advised us not to arrive as the waves would be high in the marina.

27 June
 After months of planning and hundreds of emails we delayed our departure as it rained non stop for 12 hours.

28 June
 With a forecast for light west winds we departed Rhu marina at 1500. We had a super sail all the way to Millport in lovely sunshine. We arrived at 1935 and picked up one of the new moorings south of the pier.

29 June
 The forecast was for light winds and I decided to risk anchoring at Sanda Island in order to get favourable tide at the Mull of Kintyre on Friday morning. We set sail from Millport in a light west wind, past Holy Isle on Arran and down to Pladda Island. As we made for Sanda the wind was right on the nose with a hugh sea running. I nearly turned back but we had to get to Islay before the expected gale arrived. We motor-sailed the rest of the way and anchored in flat calm in an empty bay with not a soul to be seen on the island. We enjoyed a lovely meal and a wee refreshment to celebrate being at the Mull.

30 July
 At 0800 After a lovely calm night at Sanda we set sail on a dreich morning for the Mull, to get the tide all the way to Islay. I decided to put a reef in the main as I expected more wind at the Mull, but when we arrived at the Mull the wind had died. We had to motor to Port Ellen Marina. Within 30 mins of our arrival, it was blowing 30 plus kts and continued for three days. It was not a bad place to be stuck in, being surrounded by whisky distilleries and boats from the CCC & ICC.

1-3 July
 On Saturday we had our planned pontoon party hosted by the ICC on *Ballyclaire* Derek White's boat. As so many boats had cancelled due to the bad weather there was room for us all aboard. Although windy, it was dry and a super time was had by all.

2 July
 Another day at Islay with crews visiting the Distilleries nearby. In the evening we were invited to a dinner party on *Ballyclaire*. What a feast it was!

3 July
 Dinner was held in the Islay hotel, and 1,Charlotte St. A very sociable night.

4 July
 At last the wind abated we enjoyed a brisk but dry sail to Craighouse on Jura.I had arranged a whisky tasting in the village hall hosted by Jura Distillery



View from Ardencaple near Oban

which proved very popular with the crews. Dinner in the village hall was hosted by the Jura hotel and was a delicious Venison stew with drinks supplied by the hall committee. A super fun night with Scottish dance music. A big thanks to the Distillery/Hotel and the Hall committee

5 July

At last the sun was out and a light south wind we sailed with the tide past Jura and up the Dorus Mor. We had planned to anchor at Puilladobhrain north of Seil Island. However we could see over 20 masts, the place was chock a block with some boats anchored right at the end of the bay. A few miles before I had spotted a bay with a small boat on a mooring. On checking my charts this was Ardencaple Bay, depth OK to anchor but open to a north wind. A new anchorage, we back tracked then anchored with a wonderful view towards Mull and enjoyed a lovely quiet night, away from the hordes of other boats

Tobermory marina the day before the pontoon party

6 July

An early start to catch the tide in the Sound of Mull before the forecasted bad weather. We had a wonderful sail with a soldier's wind and on arrival in Tobermory were directed onto the inner harbour hammerhead which I had booked for our Pontoon Party. The horrendous weather arrived late afternoon, with winds over 30 knots and driving rain. The southeast wind blew right into the marina. It was very scary and every boat had lots of fenders out. When our cruising secretary, Ken Andrews, arrived on *Argento* I rushed out to take his lines.

7 July at Tobermory

I had arranged with the marina staff for an area for the arriving cruise boats but as the weather was so bad our spaces were being taken by other visiting boats sheltering from the wind. We did manage to berth all our boats but some had to raft up, not ideal in the current conditions.

8 July

Pontoon party hosted by CCC followed by a meal in Macgochan's, Tobermory.



Macgochan's Tobermory - last day of cruise



Muglins to New Ross

Paul Butler



Carnsore Point. Inset: Nóirín at the John F Kennedy Memorial in New Ross

Muglins, our now 20 year old Bavaria 36, spent last winter on her home berth in Dun Laoghaire and, for a number of reasons, we had not time for a 'proper' cruise this summer. So, in August, Nóirín and I decided to visit the Rivers Suir and Barrow. We had previously been to Waterford but not New Ross. We set off on the early ebb on Wednesday, 9 August, having spent the previous night aboard and had a pleasant passage to Arklow, mostly motor-sailing.

We spent three days in Arklow where we were joined for two by Leo Sheehan. Although the river is still polluted, I am happy to report that works on the new water treatment plant are now well underway. In addition there are ongoing extensive works on the banks of both sides of the river as far as the pontoon on the north and the basin on the south. I spent a morning walking up to the graveyard to visit

the graves of my ancestors and we had a lovely walk along the nature trail inland of the North Beach. We took the bus to Wexford, a lovely town with good independent small shops and restaurants. Leo treated us to lunch and we spent a very pleasant afternoon in the town before returning to Arklow by train.

On Tuesday the 15 August we sailed to Kilmore Quay – the easy way, outside Glassgorman and Blackwater Banks, close around Carnsore Point and over Patrick's Bridge. The only difficulty en route was in keeping a sharp look-out for the very many badly marked fishing buoys between Carnsore and the Saltees (I would never attempt this at night). As I had 'phoned the Harbour Master that morning, a fine berth in the marina awaited us. I have always

Arklow sunset



Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Bridge over the River Barrow

loved Kilmore Quay but since the closure of the Silver Fox Restaurant, it is difficult to get a meal. However, the Saltee's Chipper, close to the HM Office has an extensive seafood menu and it provided an excellent take-away, which we enjoyed on board.

The following morning we had an easy short passage to Dunmore East - a day ahead of the well forecasted and expected storm Betty. There was no room on the pontoon but the sailing club kindly directed us to a secure mooring. We launched the punt and went ashore for pints on the terrace of the very welcoming Waterford Harbour Sailing Club. Next day we motored up the river Suir, through the swing bridge and up the river Barrow as far as New Ross. Both rivers are very well marked making the passage an easy one. We arrived at the marina while the flood tide was still strong. Fortunately, there was a hammerhead berth available, otherwise I could not have coped with the flow through the marina. New Ross is a lovely town and Wexford County Council are to be commended for the excellent public works and visitor attractions. It is, however, almost bereft of restaurants - there was just one open after 1830. I slept soundly that night but storm Betty kept Nóirín awake and feeling queasy even in these very sheltered waters.

I had been in contact with Harry Whelehan who gave me much useful advice that included a warning that space might be limited in Waterford due to building works on the quay. With this in mind and because winds were still strong we decided not to sail to Waterford but to take the bus instead. We spent a lovely afternoon sightseeing finishing up with an early Japanese dinner before returning on the bus: and, yes, Harry was right there was absolutely no room, inside or out, on the two pontoons that were still open. On Sunday we had an early start and a

very speedy return on the tide down the River Barrow and the River Suir to Dunmore East where there was an available berth on the pontoon. We went for a good walk followed by dinner at Azzurro Bar and Restaurant. The following day was yet another rest day. We had a late breakfast, walked and ate a lovely lunch in the sun outside at the Strand Hotel.

The return home to Dun Laoghaire was by the same route and unremarkable, save for the passage from Kilmore Quay to Arklow which we managed (again outside the banks) on one tide with a fresh following wind. Leo, who was inspecting his own yacht, was at our berth to take our lines at Dun Laoghaire marina on the afternoon of the 24th. In all, it was a very relaxed home waters cruise taking in just four ports on *Muglins* and two by bus.

Nóirín in Kilmore Quay





A Mysterious Island

John Bourke

Fort and church, Sálvora Island

This year, Peter Fernie invited me yet again, to join him on *Mystic*. He had already been cruising the Galician Rías for a month or two, which included the organisation of EN23 with Peter Haden.

I came aboard in Pobra do Caramiñal on Friday 25 August, finding the marina and town to be delightfully unchanged, still one of our favourite places. The plan was to day sail in the Ría de Arousa before laying the boat up in the boatyard at Xufre, just across the Ría. The weather was benign, and we potted about most pleasantly for a week before we and the boat went ashore in Xufre, where she was prepared for her winter rest.

Having both explored the Rías over many years, we decided that we would try at least one new thing. We would sail out to Isla de Sálvora and would anchor for the night if conditions allowed. Most of those who cruise the Rías are familiar with Islas Cies and Ons, and have visited and enjoyed them with many others from the daily excursion boats. Permissions are necessary but are not hard to obtain. Sálvora on the other hand, is small and rocky, and most boats pass it by, as had we on many occasions. It is part of the same National Park, but is designated as a nature reserve and visitors are not encouraged.

Peter consulted the Internet, and gained permission without any difficulty. Accordingly, on Tuesday 29 August we sailed the ten miles out of the Ría to the Island. Conditions were benign and we anchored with ease in 6m, just north of the harbour and the substantial fort and chapel. An English boat with a young family was already there. A French boat came by, asked the depth and anchored in front of us. Some from both boats went ashore briefly in their punts, and then they left.

The first surprising thing was that, as we approached,

we could see the top of a large new excursion boat alongside the pier. There were no people in sight, but a short time afterwards, we saw a group of four or five standing by the fort and then small numbers on the walkway moving south. The next arrival was a seriously big motor launch travelling at high speed. It swung in to the pontoon inside the pier and a number of people got out. The earlier groups, ten or fifteen in all, then boarded the excursion boat, it could have fitted a hundred, which then departed. None of those we saw were very young or very old, and none looked as if they had been under an umbrella on the island's three beaches.

As we prepared for drinks and dinner, other activities followed which we watched with growing interest. A group of four or five appeared and boarded the launch which then left with a great roar of large inboard engines. Next, on the pier was a white van and trailer which seemed to come from nowhere. The magnificent stone statue of a shapely Siren to



Marina, the Siren of Sálvora

the right of the pier seemed to be as transfixed as we were. Nothing more happened for a little time, until the launch again appeared round the corner at even greater speed. Substantial parcels were then carried up to the van while similarly sized parcels were moved down to the launch. All those remaining save one, then boarded the launch, which whooshed off to the north, rather than eastwards down the Ría.

Our sensors were now on full alert. The last person, perhaps the Island Janitor, got in and drove the van slowly up the short distance from the pier, before disappearing behind the fort. The fort itself is a substantial structure. Once a residence in times past, it looks to be in excellent condition, with windows and stone work well maintained. As darkness fell, lights came on at many of the windows.

As we later tackled a particularly good pasta with the usual Albariño, we tried to rationalise what we had witnessed. Our first impression was of an environmental study group, probably funded out of Brussels or the UN, as a significant budget must have been involved. Peter studied botany as a student, but found this hard to reconcile with his experience

of such things. Could there be another explanation? Could it be planned as a bolt hole or venue for the super rich; or perhaps as a listening post for submarines in the Eastern Atlantic; a good number of antennae were already visible; or could there be other more sinister implications?

I asked and Peter confirmed that the wet suit, goggles and flippers were on board. Propellers do need to be cleared and hulls cleaned. We had water proof torches. It was possible in theory to swim ashore and look further. In practice, and in deference to age and common sense, we poured a last glass, checked the anchor and retired.

Commander Bond we were not.

In the morning the wind was light, the sun rose to a lovely day, and the island and anchorage looked as pretty and deserted as ever. We waited a while; nothing happened; after a late morning coffee we returned to the Ría with our fantasies intact.



Harold Cudmore's cruising notes

ABOVE: Harold ashore Iles Chausey

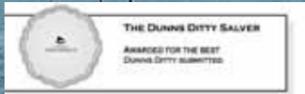
I spent a few days in June on a 43' from Cap d'Ail to Ventimille and back.

I joined James Flynn, (ICC), August on *Pearlfisher* an Oyster 62' for a slow cruise from St Malo through Channel Islands to Cowes. This included a first visit to Iles Chausey and Herm.

A few days on 95' *Patea* from Villanova to Barcelona

RIGHT: Another beautiful sunset





*A new boat for
Lawsie's mantleshelf
Brian Law*

Bethsinda in Strangford

Maintenance is costly and there is much more upkeep to a wooden yacht, especially if it can be looked upon as a classic. Halfway through 2023, I changed to an (in my eyes) attractive 1954 Vertue class yacht.

Vertue yachts have sailed all around the world, both single and double handed, they have rounded all three major capes and even circumnavigated Antarctica (The Ship Would Not Travel Due West by David Lewis (1961)). They have had a book specifically written for them, Vertue by Peter Woollass, published by The Vertue Owner's Association in 1973. At least two other ICC members have made longish voyages aboard a Vertue, namely Messrs W M Nixon and his chum, Ed Wheeler.

Bethsinda at 25ft 3ins is the smallest boat that I have owned, chosen for its looks and my well-advanced years. Well fitted, my little ship had a 21hp engine with less than 50 recorded hours, recent new mast with both new running and standing rigging, several new sails and recently laid teak decks. She is teak below the waterline and Honduran mahogany above, but she came with some very odd features. The propeller was the original for a 10hp engine, the interior cabin lights were new but of the original period and without any wiring at all, while the Taylor paraffin cooker had not worked for years. There was a mast-climbing ladder and body harness, but no crockery, cutlery, cups or glasses and not a sign of spirits or beer. This was mostly sorted before our delivery trip home from Plymouth, before which I

packed two pallets of covers, more covers, sails and fortune's worth of spares, cleaners, oil lamps, warps and a small pipe bender to name just a little of the swag.

The delivery trip was from Plymouth to Ballydorn, in Strangford Lough where *Bethsinda* lies on James Nixon's mooring just ahead of the Down Cruising Club's headquarters, the former light vessel *Petrel*. My crew John, a cousin from Annalong, arrived into Luton Airport from Spain, late on a Tuesday evening and travelled to Plymouth by bus the next morning leaving June, his fantastic wife, to travel home with all their luggage. Next morning, 8 June, we stocked up with food, a gas blow lamp, a saucepan for boiling eggs and making coffee, and set off for home mid-afternoon.

The forecast was northeast to east becoming stronger and veering north, backing west in a few days, perfect. We were anxious to round Lands End before the westerlies so racked on as much as possible on a 21.5' waterline. We anchored in the lee of Lizard Point for a few hours to avoid some of the foul tide. Through the night the wind dropped to east 2-3 so off we went at first light under engine but it stopped with air in the fuel line. This was the second of our troubles. The first was when the stupid electric pump failed and we had no water despite full water tanks. We cured this by throwing the pump overboard and living on bottled water, long life milk and rum, but the second problem was not

so easy — light winds and the engine stopping every two hours or so. Every jubilee clip and washer was tightened at least a dozen times, filters were changed and bad words spoken. Even with forgiveness for the language implored, the situation didn't improve.

We had plenty of spare fuel but no pipe to take fuel directly from a drum. To make matters worse, the wind changed to light northerlies when we were 25 miles or so past the Tuskar Rock. I must have robbed a bird's nest or something when I was young! Our second open anchorage was close in, south of Lambay Island, again missing some foul tide.

We turned into Strangford Lough on Wednesday 14th June and tied up alongside the lightship at 1900 to be met by our wives who never seem to appreciate what stalwart heroes we are with so many scars upon our souls. Some 450 miles in a strange wee boat, two port - Rosslare and Arklow - and two anchorages all achieved on only one bottle of rum and one of coke. John the Baptist had the same problem.

PS. I have solved the fuel, drinking water and propeller problems and have had lots more sailing and a couple of overnights. Some varnishing has started. The weather is a little cold now and Ireland has been sent home from the World Cup: more rum called for. The lovely thing is to come into a harbour (not a marina) and see bystanders appreciating *Bethsinda's* looks and the gleaming varnish, knowing they are admiring her but muttering 'Thank Lord that it is not mine!'



OPPOSITE: Brian, Mat (The Bould O' Donaghadee) and Adrian



Galicia to Porto Santo

John O'Connor

Jane had rigging and maintenance work done over the winter to have her in shipshape for the trip ahead. We had planned to depart Galicia on 25 June, in convoy with Dermot Cronin, ICC, on S/V *Encore*. After departing Combarro marina at 0830, we raised the mainsail in very light wind. We noticed the engine stopped pumping water and after an hour worth of checks discovered air was seeping into the water strainer. Once it was fixed we headed out the Ria to meet *Encore*.

The wind had picked up, so we put two reefs on the mainsail and initially headed west for a few hours to avoid the orcas. Once we were 22 nm out in deeper water, we began heading a southwesterly course for Porto Santo 650 nm away. The wind was 20-25 kts from north to northwest. We had a furled genoa and two reefs in the main, making good speeds as we gently rolled from port to starboard. It was Mark's first offshore trip and overnight sail. I took the job of head chef for the trip and a chicken stir fry was the first choice of meal. Making the sauce brought an initial challenge, but after the fourth attempt, the completed dish was sent up on deck.

Day 2

The wind eased to 15/20 knots as the sunshine appeared and the waves pushed us along. With a reefed main and a poled out genoa on a starboard tack, our progress was good. We were sailing along nicely, remaining outside the shipping

Crew; John O'Connor, Kieran Cotter (Baltimore Lifeboat), Niall Vaughan and Mark Dillon.

traffic. *Encore* could not be contacted on the VHF or picked up on the AIS. We called a passing ship for *Encore's* position to find that they were not too far away.

Day 3

Our watch system consisted of three hours on and six off. Mark joined each one of us on watch to gain experience. Asked how he was getting on, he replied that he was feeling 'rough' but that he was having a brilliant trip. The wind was building throughout the day and within 24 hours we had sailed 178nm, our quickest 24 hour run. Niall continued to trim the sails, along with Kieran checking the AIS and noting the traffic that was appearing in the distance. A whale was sighted on the starboard side about 50 metres away and when I saw a large flock of birds, I knew the land was not too far away.

Day 4

On the final day, the wind had picked up and the sea state was building again from behind. We were doing 11.5 kts with a reefed main and small genoa. Land was in sight, and we jibed for Porto Santo, arriving at the anchorage in the afternoon. We were greeted by a number of ICC boats that had arrived ahead of us. The *Ilen* was berthed at the pier and looked fantastic in the sunshine, ready for the Saoirse Rally planned to start on the 30 of June.

Len Sheil 1934 - 2023

The Skipper - Len Sheil as his friends remember him, living for the moment and enjoying every second of it. Photo courtesy Hazel Sheil

Len Sheil - 'Skipper' to his many friends for as long as anyone can remember - was the very embodiment of Dun Laoghaire sailing with a cruising emphasis. His father Commander Richard Sheil RNR, was Harbour Master of the unique and extensive 'artificial yet natural' port from 1938 to 1948. Thus young Len's already close relationship with the Dun Laoghaire way with boats was at a particularly intensive stage during his most formative years from the age of four to 14 when his father was in the Harbour Office, thereby adding to the intensity of his relationship with his home place. At the end of this special time, the son was already moving from peak parental influence in the maritime sphere to having his own circle of friends around boats, the sea, and with Dun Laoghaire in all its many manifestations, reinforcing it as a central element in his character for all of his 88 years.

MERCHANT MARINE

In fact, the only time he was away from year-round living in Dun Laoghaire was the seven years he spent with the Merchant Marine as a Marconi Radio

The first co-command - with brother David, Len brings the former motorized harbour launch Popeye into the little harbour at Blackrock on a rising tide, with his father, the Dun Laoghaire Harbour-Master, taking the lines. Photo: Paul McNally /Hazel Sheil



Officer, including time with Irish Shipping, when that very special company was in its golden years, his radio speciality providing him with several global circumnavigations and more than 30 crossings of the Atlantic.

Initially, his sailing and early racing had been with his older brother David in a venerable clinker-built craft, a former motorized harbour launch which, at the end of its working life, had been re-born as a useful sailing dinghy, complete unto a bowsprit, and named *Popeye*.



Hazel and Len 'Skipper' Sheil out for a day sail in Dublin Bay aboard their Sterling 28 Gay Gannet, with the anchored vessel a reminder of his time as a much-travelled ship's Radio Officer.

This had been at a time when new boats were completely unavailable, so the conversion of *Popeye* was ingenious. But as Fireflies and IDRA 14s began to spread into the Dun Laoghaire fleet, Len and David joined them to race from the Royal St George Yacht Club during the 1950s and early '60s.

After sea service, he began to build a shore career in the insurance industry, working first in an established brokerage and then setting up his own healthily developing firm. This was something that he found so satisfying that even when supposedly retired with a free travel pass should he wish to use it, he was soon dabbling as a successful business pioneer in the video rental business.

NATIONAL YACHT CLUB & IRISH CRUISING CLUB

Domestic life was a natural for him, and at his passing he'd been married to Hazel Roche for 63 years. With a home in Glenageary, he'd transferred his sailing centre to the National Yacht Club, as it is most directly the Glenageary district's natural link to the sea. He found the cruising element in that congenial club to be his place of special friendship, such that when he ordered a new 25ft cruising sloop from builders in Itchenor on Chichester Harbour in Sussex, his NYC friends Aidan Dunne and Bill Crosbie, together with Hazel's brother Charlie Roche, readily joined up to help him sail her home.

The new boat was named *Gailey Bay* after the extensive inlet on the west shore of Lough Ree where Hazel's family had formerly been so involved with inland waterways high summer sailing that they used to stage their own regattas there. Len himself was meanwhile being drawn into sailing administration of a different kind, as he joined the Irish Cruising Club in 1968 and he and his friend Aidan Dunn were to form a key administrative double act for the ICC for many years as it approached its Golden Jubilee in 1979, with Aidan as Honorary Secretary and Len as Honorary Treasurer.

THE TOTAL CRUISING FAMILY

The complete picture of the Sheil clan as a model cruising family came in 1975, when they'd a classic all-ages family cruise to Scotland with *Gailey Bay*, which Hazel wrote up for the ICC Annual. With all four children – Lenny (13), Bobby (10), Gilly (8) and Susie (4) on the strength, the little headroom-lacking boat was at her ship's company number limits. But by taking the interesting route north from Dun Laoghaire to Peel in the Isle of Man and then Portpatrick in southwest Scotland, they were lined up to access the 'real' West Coast via the Crinan Canal – an ideal project as its workings fascinate young sailors, and you make new friends at every lock.

They were to use 23 new anchorages in all, with a highlight being rowing their own dinghy into Fingal's Cave on Staffa, an experience so unique to cruising your own boat that it puts any visit to Staffa's related geological formations of the Giant's Causeway on Ireland's north coast into the ha'penny place.

Other notable cruises in 'the little blue boat with all the children' were to West Cork where, in Courtmacsherry, they were to strike up a lifelong friendship with explorer Tim Severin. But the immaculately-maintained *Gailey Bay* – with which Len was able to demonstrate the truth of his dictum that the most important additive in perfect varnish work was elbow-grease - had very rapidly passed the stage of being suitable for a growing family with rising cruising aspirations, and Len and Hazel found their dreamship in the Holman-designed full-headroom all-wood Sterling 28 *Gay Gannet*, which they bought from Mungo Park.

Prior to the Park ownership, *Gay Gannet* had been for many years in the fastidious hands of Jack Wolfe, and Len was if anything determined to raise the already high standards of maintenance. Thus she was a natural star at events like the Glandore Classic Regatta, where she not only was in the frame in the concours d'elegance category, but won races as well.

And on a broader canvas, she was well able for husband-and-wife ventures, such as round Ireland

multi-stop circuits and intriguing cruising voyages to other locations 'beyond the seas', during which any fellow cruising enthusiast would be enriched by meeting up with the Skipper and Hazel, as their quiet yet total enthusiasm for this special way of life was an inspiration and encouragement for all cruising folk.

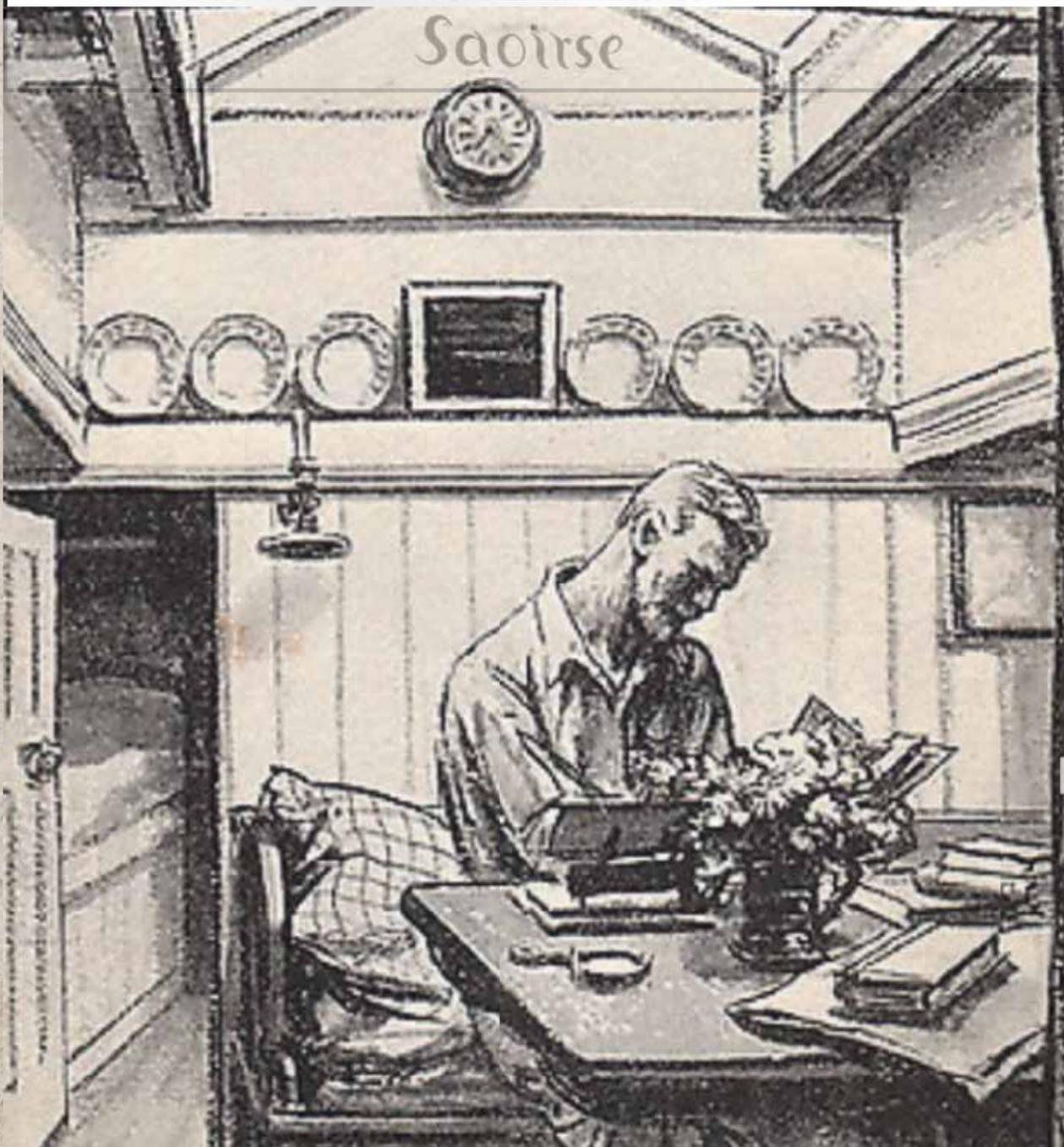
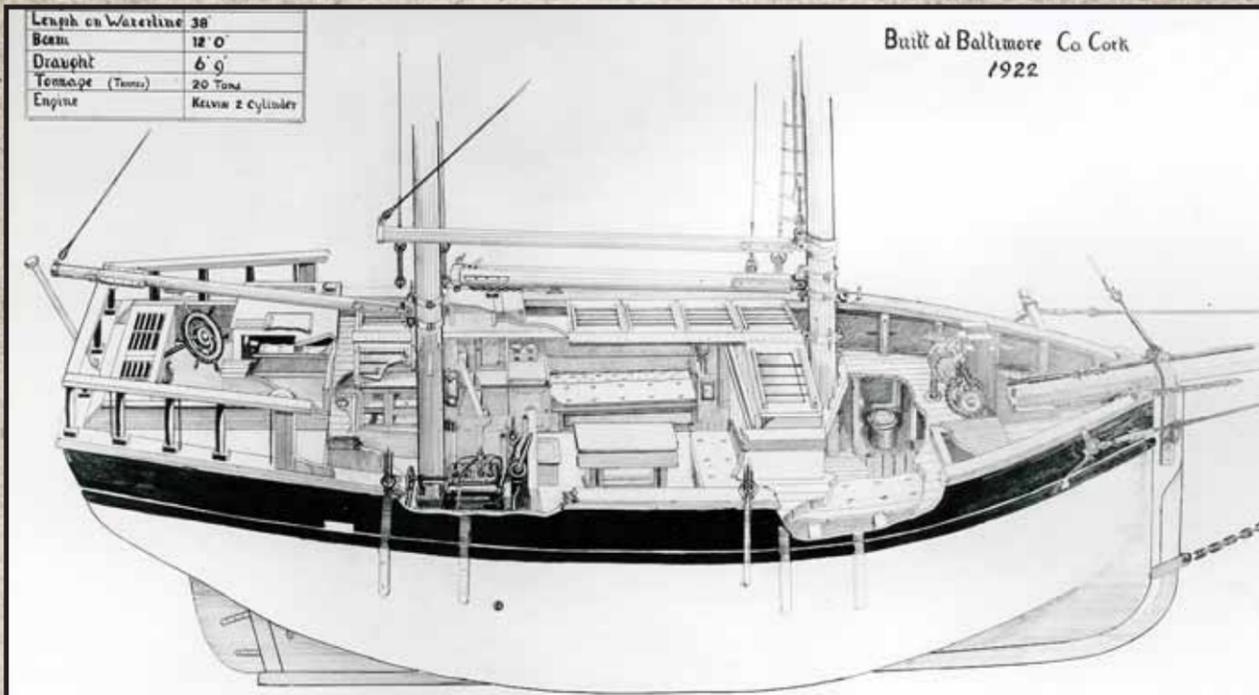
Although he was slowing down on his active involvement in sailing by his late seventies, Len continued as a highly-respected senior figure in the Dun Laoghaire maritime scene, and he and Hazel were regular and popular supporters of the National Yacht Club and its hospitality facilities right to the end, when he was also known to be continuing to practice his radio-signalling skills as an ongoing mental exercise.

Len 'Skipper' Sheil was a benign and quietly inspiring presence, a beneficial influence for many simply by being himself. He will be much missed, and our heartfelt condolences go to Hazel and his family and his very many friends.

WMN

"The little blue boat with all the children in it" – *Gailey Bay* in North Harbour, Cape Clear, in 1972 Photo: Courtesy Hazel Sheil





Log of *Saoirse* by Conor O'Brien

This excerpt from Conor O'Brien's log is printed by kind permission of the RCC. It is an account of his trip from Dublin to Madeira. The 6th edition of 'Across Three Oceans' by Conor O'Brien was republished in 2023 by the ICC and RCC. It includes the twelfth chapter and log book extracts that only appeared in the first edition. It is available on Amazon and from book shops. Photos courtesy Gary MacMahon and Kevin O'Farrell.

(This is the Cruise for which the Royal Cruising Club Challenge Cup has been awarded.)
GENERAL REMARKS—1ST PART, FROM DUBLIN TO PERNAMBUCO.

I. The Ship and Equipment

Saoirse was built at Baltimore, Co. Cork, to my own design, in 1922. She is 20 tons T.M., 15 tons gross and 11½ net register, and displaces, ready for sea, about 27 tons. She is ketch rigged; the jib is hanked to a stay; the mainsail has no boom; the mizzen is a lug sail. There is a pole to the jib-boom 3 feet long outside the jib-stay, on which a flying jib is set; but most frequently it is hoisted right up the topmast-stay as a jib topsail. There is about 1,150 square feet of canvas in the fore and afters, and 350 in a square foresail. The hull is of fishing-boat type, with a wood keel, and about 8 tons of scrap-iron ballast inside. About 200 gallons of fresh water are carried in two galvanised tanks.

The ship was designed for single-handed working, but as I was in a hurry to get to New Zealand I wanted help. Since I could not get the ideal companion, a ship's company of two was out of the question. I was fortunate in shipping two hands who, by present indication, will stay with me at least as far as Port Lyttelton. My chief officer is a professional seaman, holding an O.C. certificate; the chief steward is an amateur. Both are inconceivably careless and untidy, but they are good company and pull well together, which is the main point in a small yacht.

II. Navigation.

A reference to my abstract log* will show that we have been exceptionally fortunate in our winds and weather. The courses and distances given in that log from noon to noon are only approximate; they were scaled off the chart on a piece of squared paper. As far as the Canary Islands the position lines were plotted on Admiralty Chart No. 1. From there to the Cape Verde Islands the noon position was plotted from circles of position struck a few minutes before and after noon. From the Cape Verde Islands to Pernambuco the positions were plotted on the sheets of squared paper annexed hereto. Only one chronometer was carried; it was sent out by the makers with a wrong rate and a wrong accumulated error; in consequence we made a very bad landfall at the Cape Verde Islands. However, with the rate obtained there we picked up Pernambuco Lighthouse within a few minutes of the anticipated time. We hope, therefore, to have no further trouble from this source.

Stellar observations, on account of the violent motion of so small a vessel, were usually not of sufficient accuracy to be worth taking when — as almost every day — the sun or moon were available.

No attempt was made to set compass courses, our object being to use the wind to the best advantage and get the least obstruction and discomfort from the sea. By this we added about 5% to the Great Circle distances, but certainly increased our speed by a greater amount.

A Walker's Excelsior Log was carried, but only used for a few hours when expecting to make the land. I did not want to risk my only rotator at the end of a rotten line, being unable to get spares of either. A Walker's sounding machine and 300 fathoms of line was carried, but has not yet been used. After I had explained to my crew the magnetic properties of iron, the compasses gave no trouble.

III. Sails

On the 7th of August, in Lat. 3° 30' S., and Long. 24° W. we discovered our mainmast head so badly sprung that we could not set more than a close-reefed mainsail. On the 41 days actually at sea previous to this we carried the gaff-topsail for 33 days (3 days over a reefed mainsail); had a reef in the mainsail for 6 days, and for one day — when the wind was light and the sea rough — stowed the mainsail and ran under headsails and square foresail. From Dublin to Cape Verde Islands. 25 days, we had the foresail set for 19 days. It would have been 21, only for an accident to one of the crew, which left us temporarily shorthanded, and we took in the foresail because the ship will not steer herself with it set if there is much sea; and though she will run without attention under foresail with the mainsail stowed, we thought she would roll too much for the health of the invalid.

Generally speaking, the wheel required only very intermittent attention, but on July 8th—9th, with the gaff-topsail set to a wind varying from force 5 to 7, quite serious steering was necessary.

I do not know when we sprung the masthead; it did not show up till we were close-hauled in the S.E. trades and we got a fresh squall (force 6), with all kites set, in the mate's watch. It has cured him of carrying sail. Our second-best day's run was done after the accident, with a close-reefed main-sail. I have clamped a steel T girder 7 feet long against it with three iron bands, and I hope this arrangement will see us home. Except for this, and the mizzen halyards, which got chafed through by the main-sheet one night by gross carelessness — and which was condemned last year, anyway — we have not lost a rope-yarn.

I attribute my immunity from chafe to the fact that I use wire or chain in every short nip. The main, peak and mizzen halyards are 1½" wire, and there is a couple of fathoms of chain spliced into the ends of fore halyards, gaff-topsail halyards and sheet and mizzen outhaul.



LOG OF *Sairse*. I I

We bent our fine-weather sails on June 28th; they are anything from 12 to 20 years old and look pretty shabby, but still survive, and much of our rope is a good match for them.

A sea-anchor and oil-bags were carried, but never used.

IV. Meteorology

My mate has been keeping a meteorological log which will doubtless be filed at the Air Ministry; but a summary of the conditions we found will be more intelligible. The outstanding feature was the remarkable extent and strength of the northerly winds, and the corresponding comparative failure of the S.E. trade for the time of year. We got the N.E. trade in 33° 40' N., after a belt of calms about 100 miles wide; but before this we had met fresh or strong northerly winds from 50° N. We experienced the usual difficulty in getting into Funchal and out again, and though we had no difficulty, except from poor visibility, in getting into Porto Grande, it took us 3 days to get 100 miles S.W. of Sant Antao and pick up what was left of the trades. These oceanic islands have a surprisingly demoralising effect on the wind. The N.E. trade lasted, certainly very light, to 10° 30' N. In the Doldrums for the first 2 days the wind was well from the westward, very constant in direction, and varying from light airs to a maximum, in the squalls, of force 6. But the squalls gave one plenty of warning, and the wind increased very gradually. Afterwards it backed by degrees towards the southward, becoming steadier, though never more than a moderate breeze, till in 7° 30' N. we went on the port tack and reckoned we had got the S.E. trade; though, as a matter of fact, in direction it was little better than south till we reached 3° N.; and attained no real strength till 3° S. From there into Pernambuco the

wind was fresh or strong and always about S.E. We were unable to take any accurate observation of the currents, but could not help noticing a pronounced southerly set throughout. The Guinea current was running strong between 4° and 6° N., and setting well to the south of east, and some extension of it must have extended to the Equator in about 22° W. to account for the astonishing courses we made good on August 3rd and 4th. The Equatorial current was not much in evidence till about 4° S., after which it was setting W.S.W. 20 to 30 miles per day. In fact everything was more southerly than one would expect from the monthly Pilot Charts. We met no abnormal phenomena, such as waterspouts, thunderstorms or tornadoes, and not very much rain. On July 10th, in Lat. 24° N., Long. 19° W., the sky was much discoloured, presumably by a dust storm. For 3 days after this the sea was quite black; this appears to be normal, as it is noted on the chart.

The sea was always providentially calm when the wind was light, but with fresh or strong winds an extremely unpleasant confused sea was usual. Between the Canaries and Cape Verde a big easterly swell persisted, and made the sea very rough. With the first of the southerly winds, also, there was a heavy confused sea, which gave way to perfect conditions as we crossed the line. After that there was again a steep high sea; in fact, generally, the sea was steeper than I had expected in the open ocean. V. Domestic Economy.

For economy of labour and fuel, Maconochie rations were the staple food. With plenty of variety of these, and plenty of fresh butter and potatoes, we lived very well. We got excellent hard bread in Madeira, and it seems far more resistant to moulds and mildews than any of our other stuff. Other good buys were Morton's tinned cheeses, got at St. Vincent, and Brazilian cheeses, also in sealed tins, which we found here. All the cooking was done on primus stoves. We were very unfortunate with our fishing. Even flying fish were not caught every day.

The issue of water was not checked, but the daily consumption did not exceed a gallon per head. We are therefore comfortably safe for a 4 months' passage.

For lighting we depended on acetylene and candles. The acetylene generators were badly designed and gave a lot of trouble till an intelligent mechanic in Madeira fixed them, since when they have worked excellently and are a godsend in hot weather.

Our greatest enemy was mildew, but nearly every second day was fine enough to get our gear on deck and dry it. Our only cotton sail, the flying jib, is in a hideous state; the flax canvas is untouched.

We did not feel any inconvenience from the heat or from the tropical sun. I do not think either the mate or myself ever wore a hat on deck.

VI. Miscellaneous.

We had unfortunately no zoologist, nor any books on the subject, on board. Our most interesting encounter was with two whales, the species of which we could not identify.

At Madeira we fell into the hands of Sr. A. Coelho, who is a keen yachtsman and did everything possible for us. At St. Vincent, Manoel Ben David took charge, to our great satisfaction. At Pernambuco the first person one meets is Mr. Ayres.

In Portuguese and Brazilian ports a few shillings expended on a national flag to fly at the fore is a courtesy very much appreciated. We found that in these ports it is almost essential to have an agent. No one man, especially a stranger, could do all the paper work required. Also, we always take a pilot when going into a foreign port or, at least, make a signal for a pilot—which avoids all possible trouble with the sanitary and other authorities.

If I may presume to offer advice on an experience of only 2 months, I think that even when one is conspicuously older or more experienced than one's crew, it pays to sign them on Board of Trade Articles, and occasionally to come the commanding officer over them, so as to make it quite clear that there is only one captain in the ship.

Our best thanks are due to the captains of the barkentine *Czarina*, the yachts *Frontiersman* and *Felix Ventura*, and the steamships *Tiara*, *Valparaiso*, *Mont Ossero* and *Norseman* for information and other assistance given. We cannot thank individually all our friends on shore.

COPY OF DECK LOG FROM DUBLIN TOWARDS PORT LYTTTELTON, N.Z., 1923.

20 JUNE—10.0.—Got comparison for chronometer from Chancellor, viz., 28 sec. slow. Query this as inconsistent with Lilley's rate. 16.0.—Left moorings in Dunlaoghaire* Harbour under all fore and afters, the new suit of sails. Wind very light, S.S.E., veering as we got into the bay. 20.0.—Ship coming up to her course.

23.0.—Codling L.V. close aboard. Passing outside the Light ships with the wind a point free; average speed 5 knots. JUNE 21ST.—4.0.—Wind veering and fresher. A/c S.W. by W., having drifted far to eastward with tide.

9 io.—A very doubtful observation for deviation.

• 10.0.—Tuskar abeam, distance about 8'. Steering by the wind about S.W. by S.

12.0.—Definitely close-hauled; sent down fore-yard, P.M.—Wind veering, but always light. 18.0.—A better observation gives deviation J pt. E.

20.0.—Wind free and freshening. Average 4 knots to this. This day ends fine and warm with promise of summer weather; steady wind and smooth sea, and ship doing 6 knots.

22 JUNE—A.M.—Wind falling lighter. Patches of fog between 6 and 7. Freshening towards noon. In flying jib. Very fine in P.M. 19.0.—Wind freshening and sky overcast. In gaff-topsail. Clouds are light and low, and seem to mean no harm. Rather cold.

Fresh breeze in first watch; lighter again at midnight.

23 JUN.—7.0—Set gaff-topsail. 8.0.—Set foresail.

Very fine, clear and hot all day. Ship steering herself well and doing 4 knots and 5 after 20.0.

Very conspicuous "green ray" at sunset. After 22.0 a * Kingstown, formerly Dunleary.—ED.



curiously sharp demarcation between the part of sky illuminated by the sun and the rest; moon extremely clear. Compass courses given this day are merely tokens, as wind is so far aft that steering is left to the discretion of the helmsman.

[NOTE.—This remark applies to every day till we reached the Capo Verde Islands.]

24 JUNE—4.30.—Gybed and a/c S. W. by S. Running much steadier this way. Wind fresher between 5 and 7.

Fresh breeze in forenoon, with slight sea. Ship moving knots by patent log.

P.M.—Fine and clear, moderate breeze and sea, clouding later and wind veering.

20.0.—Wind round to E. by N.; sea slight; ship doing very well with fore-tack boarded, 8 knots at times, till midnight, when wind falls lighter.

25 JUNE—Begins wind rather puffy and sea increasing; overcast, but clearing at sunrise and brilliantly fine after.

Noon.—Less wind; confused sea.

16.0.—Wind freshening again and sea rather cross. In gaff-topsail.

20.0.—Sea more regular if bigger, and wind rather lighter, but freshening again before midnight. Ship steers much better without topsail and, I think, goes just as fast.

26 JUNE—A.M.—Same wind and sea; cloudy; warm.

Noon.—Less wind and sea; set the old gaff-topsail.

NOTE.—It is probable, having regard to the courses steered, that the longitude given for yesterday (25th) noon is too far to the eastward. Dull all P.M. Ends with less wind and sea, and ship running very dry and easy, but will not steer herself yet.

27 JUNE—A.M.—Wind falling lighter. Pumped out ship.

11.30.—Lavelle badly knocked out by mizzen sheet. Treating him for concussion. In foresail; set staysail and a/c south, so that ship would look after herself when required, which she does.

Ends dull and threatening rain; wind dropping. Passed a 3-masted schooner going north.

Award Winners

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>Cullaun of Kin-sale</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>
2007	Michael Holland	<i>Celtic Spirit</i>
2008	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2009	Trevor Lusty	<i>Seafever of Cuan</i>
2010	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2011	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2012	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>
2014	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>
2015	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
2016	Daragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</i>
2017	Máire Breathnach	<i>Annabel J</i>
2018	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Belle</i>
2019	Daragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</i>
2020	Vera Quinlan	<i>Danu</i>
2021	Robert Henshall	<i>Maria</i>
2022	Duncan Sclare	<i>Quibus</i>
2023	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</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>Cullaun</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>
2017	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Belle</i>
2018	Derek White	<i>Ballyclare</i>
2019	Paddy Barry	<i>Ilen</i>
2020	No Award	
2021	Daragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</i>
2022	Paddy Barry/ Adrian Spence	<i>El Paradiso</i>
2023	Máire Breathnach	<i>Annabel J</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>
1987	James Cahill	<i>Ricjak</i>
1988	Brian Smullen	<i>Cullaun</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>

Award Winners

1995	Henry Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>
1996	Cormac McHenry	<i>Erquy</i>
1997	Brendan Bradley	<i>Shalini</i>
1998	Adrian Spence	<i>Madcap</i>
1999	Bernard Corbally	<i>Rionnag</i>
2000	Henry & Ivy Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>
2001	Susan & Peter Gray	<i>Waxwing</i>
2002	Peter Killen	<i>White Magic</i>
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	<i>Waxwing</i>
2004	Noel Casey	<i>Kish</i>
2005	Marilyn Kenworthy	<i>Flica</i>
2006	Peter Killen	<i>Pure Magic</i>
2007	Seamus Salmon	<i>Saoirse</i>
2008	Máire Breathnach	<i>Arctic Tern</i>
2009	Frank Ranalow	<i>Shady Maid</i>
2010	Michael Coleman	<i>Oyster Cove</i>
2011	Stephen Hyde	<i>A Lady</i>
2012	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>
2014	John Coyne	<i>Lir</i>
2015	Peter Killen	<i>Pure Magic</i>
2016	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>
2017	Mike Hodder	<i>Jasmine</i>
2019	P.MC Sorley	<i>Viking Lord</i>
2020	No Award	
2021	Robert Henshall	<i>Maria</i>
2022	Máire Breathnach	<i>Hunza</i>
2023	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>

ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

1941	E.J. Odlum	
1951	Brendan Maguire	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
From 1954	the Navigation Cup was awarded for the best cruise around Ireland.	
1954	Wallace Clark	<i>Caru</i>
1955	Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon	<i>Ancora</i>
1956	R.C. Arnold	<i>Maid of York</i>
1957	R.P. Campbell	<i>Minx of Malham</i>
1961	C. O'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>Rilla</i>
1982	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1983	A. Doherty	<i>Svegala</i>
1984	J. Guinness	<i>Deerhound</i>
1985	T. O'Keefe	<i>Orion</i>
1986	B. Hegarty	<i>Freebird</i>
1987	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1988	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1989	Tony Morton	<i>Lamorna III</i>
1990	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1991	Robert Barr	<i>Ar Men</i>
1992	No Award	
1993	G. Nairn & M. D. Whelan	<i>Lola</i>
1994	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
1995	Cormac McHenry	<i>Erquy</i>
1996	Michael McKee	<i>Isobel</i>
1997	No Award	
1998	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1999	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2000	Harry Byrne	<i>Alphida of Howth</i>
2001	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2002	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2003	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Brandon Rose</i>
2004	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
2005	No Award	
2006	John Delap	<i>Sceolaing</i>
2007	Brendan Bradley	<i>Afar VI</i>
2008	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2009	No Award	
2010	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>
2011	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2012	Paul Butler	<i>Muglins</i>
2013	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2014	No Award	
2015	No Award	
2016	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Belle</i>
2017	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2017	Garry Villiers Stuart	<i>Winny</i>
2019	Norman Kean	<i>Coire Uisge</i>
2020	Paddy Barry	<i>L'Iroise</i>
2021	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2022	DF and Viv White	<i>Ballyclare</i>
2023	No Award	

THE FORTNIGHT CUP

1958	L. McMullen	<i>Rainbow</i>
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>
1961	J.W.D. McCormick	<i>Diane</i>
1963	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>
1964	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>
1965	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara</i>
1966	H.W.S. Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1967	Miss E. Leonard	<i>Lamita</i>
1968	P. Dineen	<i>Huntress</i>
1969	R.C.A. Hall	<i>Roane</i>

1970	N. St. J. Hennessy	<i>Aisling</i>
1971	J.R. Olver	<i>Vandara</i>
1972	C. Green	<i>Helen</i>
1973	M. Tomlinson	<i>Pellegrina</i>
1974	J. Wolfe	<i>Gay Gannet</i>
1975	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1976	A. Morton	<i>Sung Foon</i>
1978	R. Dixon	<i>Oberon</i>
1979	B.J. Law	<i>Sai See</i>
1980	R. Paul Campbell	<i>Verve</i>
1981	S. Orr	<i>Den Arent</i>
1982	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>
1983	C.P. McHenry	<i>Ring of Kerry</i>
1984	B.H.C. Corbally	<i>Puffin</i>
1985	R. Barr	<i>Joliba</i>
1986	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1987	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>
1988	John Ryan	<i>Saki</i>
1989	Brian Hegarty	<i>Safari of Howth</i>
1990	Seamus Lantry	<i>William Tell of Uri</i>
1991	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>
1992	Clive Martin	<i>Lindos</i>
1993	Brendan O'Callaghan	<i>Midnight Marauder</i>
1994	Frank Larkin	<i>Elusive</i>
1995	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Hobo V</i>
1996	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
1997	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1998	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>
1999	Jim Slevin	<i>Testa Rossa</i>
2000	No Award	
2001	Gary Villiers-Stuart	<i>Winefreda of Greenisland</i>
2002	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwilli 3</i>
2003	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>
2004	Roy Waters	<i>Sundowner of Beaulieu</i>
2005	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>
2006	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2007	Pat Lyons	<i>Stardancer</i>
2008	David & Grainne FitzGerald	<i>Ajay</i>
2009	Patrick Dorgan	<i>Verdi III</i>
2010	Derek White	<i>Ballyclare</i>
2011	Neil Hegarty	<i>Shelduck</i>
2012	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>
2013	Nigel & Heleen Lindsay-Fynn	<i>Eleanda</i>
2014	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2015	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
2016	Adrian & Mave Bell	<i>Oisín Bán</i>
2017	Nikko Duffin	<i>Nautilus</i>
2018	John O Rahilly	<i>Rike</i>
2019	Peter Fernie	<i>Naias</i>
2020	Mick DeLap	<i>Agathos</i>
2021	Colin Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2022	Vincent Guénebaut	<i>Dame de Jade</i>
2023	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>

Award Winners

THE WYBRANTS CUP

1933	J. B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>
1934	Dr. L.G. Gunn	<i>Albatross</i>
1935	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>
1936	Leslie Chance	<i>Britannia</i>
1937	A.W. Mooney	<i>Aideen</i>
1938	Dr. O.P. Chance & R. Storey	<i>Sapphire</i>
1939	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>
1940	K.McFerran & Dr. O'Brien	<i>Huzure</i>
1941	D. Keating & R. O'Hanlon	<i>Evora</i>
1942	J.B. Cotterell & J.F. McMullan	<i>Minx</i>
1943/45	No Award	
1946	J.B. Kearney	<i>Mavis</i>
1947	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>
1948	Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon	<i>Evora</i>
1949	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>
1950	A.W. Mooney	<i>Evora</i>
1951	P. O'Keefe	<i>John Dory</i>
1952	H. Osterberg	<i>Marama</i>
1953	No Award	
1954	T. Crosby	<i>If</i>
1955	R.P. Campbell	<i>Alata</i>
1956	S.F. Thompson	<i>Second Ethuriel</i>
1957	Col. W.S. Knox-Gore	<i>Arandora</i>
1958	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>
1959	G. Kimber	<i>Astrophel</i>
1960	J.C. Butler	<i>Happy Morning</i>
1961	S. O'Mara	<i>Fenestra</i>
1962	D.N. Doyle	<i>Severn II</i>
1963	Lt. Com. T. Sheppard	<i>Greylag of Ark-low</i>
1964	T.F. Doyle	<i>Elsa</i>
1965	S. O'Mara	<i>Oisin</i>
1966	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>
1967	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>
1968	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>
1969	R.I. Morrison	<i>Querida</i>
1970	Hugh Coveney	<i>Dalcassian</i>
1971	J.A. McKeown	<i>Korsar</i>
1972	J.C. Love	<i>Fionnuala</i>
1973/77	No Award	
From 1978 onwards the Wybrants Cup was awarded for the best Scottish cruise.		
1978	Chris Green	<i>Norella</i>
1979	D.J. Ryan	<i>Red Velvet</i>
1980	D.A. McMillan	<i>Goosander</i>
1981	W.M. Nixon	<i>Turtle</i>
1982	Ronan Beirne	<i>Givusa Kuddle</i>

1983	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1984	R. Barr	<i>Condor</i>
1985	B. Hegarty	<i>Freebird</i>
1986	M.M.A. d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1987	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>
1988	Paul Butler	<i>Arandora</i>
1989	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
1990	Roddy Monson	<i>Mazara</i>
1991	Dermod Ryan	<i>Sceolaing</i>
1992	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1993	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
1994	James Cahill	<i>Ricjak</i>
1995	Paul Butler	<i>Red Velvet</i>
1996	Brian Black	<i>Cuillin</i>
1997	James Nixon	<i>Ardnagee</i>
1998	Peter & Evie Ronaldson	<i>Scotch Mist</i>
1999	No Award	
2000	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2001	Sean McCormack	<i>Marie Claire II</i>
2002	Paget McCormack	<i>Saki</i>
2003	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
2004	Norman Kean	<i>Xanadu</i>
2005	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2006	Harold & Vivienne Boyle	<i>Gentle Spirit</i>
2007	Adrian & Maeve Bell	<i>Eala Ban</i>
2008	David Williams	<i>Reiver</i>
2009	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
2010	John Crebbin	<i>Ocean Gypsy</i>
2011	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Rupert</i>
2012	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
2013	Joe & Trish Phelan	<i>Lydia</i>
2014	Matthew Wright	<i>Thor</i>
2015	Derek & Viv White	<i>Ballyclaire</i>
2016	Robin & Denise Wright	<i>Geronimo</i>
2017	Robin & Denise Wright	<i>Geronimo</i>
2018	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
2019	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2020	No Award	
2021	Paddy Barry	<i>L'Iroise</i>
2022	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2023	Colin Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>

THE FINGAL CUP

1981	Robert Barr	<i>Condor</i>
1982	W. Walsh	<i>Carrigdown</i>
1983	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1984	R.M. Slater	<i>Tandara</i>
1985	P. Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1986	B. Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1987	Frank McCarthy	<i>Scilly Goose</i>
1988	Robert Barr	<i>Joliba</i>
1989	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1990	Michael d'Alton	<i>Siamsa</i>
1991	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft of Howth</i>
1992	David Park	<i>Alys</i>

1993	Stephen Malone	<i>Symphonie</i>
1994	Wallace Clark	<i>Wild Goose</i>
1995	W.M. Nixon	<i>Witchcraft</i>
1996	Richard Lovegrove	<i>Shalini</i>
1997	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
1999	Peter Killen	<i>Black Pepper</i>
1999	David Park	<i>Alys</i>
2000	Tony Clarke	<i>Velella</i>
2001	Michael Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
2002	Dianne Andrews	<i>Great Escape</i>
2003	Grainne FitzGerald	<i>Mountain Mist</i>
2004	Michael & Alison Balmforth	<i>Greenheart</i>
2005	Clive Martin	<i>Beowulf</i>
2006	Peter Haden	<i>Papageno</i>
2007	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>
2008	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>
2009	Michael Brogan	<i>Mac Duach</i>
2010	Eddie Nicholson	<i>Mollihawk's Shadow</i>
2011	Máire Breathnach	<i>Young Larry</i>
2012	W.M. Nixon	<i>Ainmara (Capriole)</i>
2013	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2014	Ian Stevenson	<i>Raptor</i>
2015	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Kate</i>
2016	Peter Fernie	<i>Mystic</i>
2017	John Clementson	<i>Faustina II</i>
2018	Ed Wheeler	<i>Pembroke</i>
2019	Stephen Hyde	<i>Cruachan</i>
2020	Sally Cudmore	<i>Dame de Jade</i>
2021	Máire Breathnach	<i>Annabel J</i>
2022	Andy McCarter	<i>Gwili 3</i>
2023	Daragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</i>

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

1993	James Nixon	<i>Sea Pie</i>
1994	Robert Barr	<i>Pen Men</i>
1995	Bill Rea	<i>Elysium</i>
1996	Maeve Bell	<i>Réalta</i>
1997	Máire Breathnach	<i>Romist</i>
1998	Brendan Travers	<i>Sea Maiden</i>
1999	Máire Breathnach	<i>SeaDance</i>
2000	Paddy Barry	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
2001	No Award	
2002	Brendan Travers	<i>Seodín</i>
2003	No Award	
2004	David Beattie	<i>Schollevar</i>
2005	No Award	
2006	Alan Markey	<i>Crackerjack</i>
2007	Sal & Jeffrey O'Riordan	<i>Adrigole</i>
2008	Harry Barnwell	<i>Hylasia</i>
2009	David Whitehead	<i>Joyster</i>
2010	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2011	Mick Delap	<i>North Star</i>
2012	A & M Bell	<i>Oisin Ban</i>
2013	Harry Whelehan	<i>Sea Dancer</i>
2014	B. O'Callaghan	<i>Katlin</i>
2015	Paul McSorley	<i>Wild Cat</i>

Award Winners

2016	Máire Breathnach	<i>Annabel J</i>
2017	Clare Morrissey	<i>Lady Belle</i>
2018	Peter Mullan	<i>Oyster Bay</i>
2019	Stephen Hyde	<i>Cruachan</i>
2020	Fergus Quinlan	<i>Pylades</i>
2021	Jim O'Meara	<i>Second Chance</i>
2022	John Park	<i>Pegasus</i>

THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

1959	P.H. Green	<i>Ann Gail</i>
1960	R.I. Morrison	<i>Vanja IV</i>
1961	R. O'Hanlon	<i>Harmony</i>
1962/63	No Award	
1964	J.D. Faulkner	<i>Angelique</i>
1965	J.H. Guinness	<i>Sharavogue</i>
1966	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>
1967	No Award	
1968	P.H. Greer	<i>Helen of Howth</i>
1969	No Award	
1970	J.P. Jameson	<i>Ganiamore</i>
1971	R. Courtney	<i>Bandersnatch</i>
1972/73	No Award	
1974	J.P. Bourke	<i>Korsar</i>
1975/78	No Award	
1979	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1980	J. Wolfe	<i>Deerhound</i>
1981	No Award	
1983	K. & C. Martin	<i>Estrellita</i>
1984	No Award	

From 1985 the Rockabill Trophy was for 'A Feat of Exceptional Navigation/Seamanship.'

1985	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Shardana</i>
1986	John Olver	<i>Moody Blue</i>
1987	J.B. Law	<i>Redwing/ Spirit of Shell</i>
1988	No Award	
1989	Colin Chapman	<i>Deerhound</i>
1990	Colin Chapman	<i>Deerhound</i>
1991	Wallace Clark	<i>Aileach</i>
1992	Peter Bunting	<i>Gulkarna II</i>
1993	Bernard Corbally	<i>L'Exocet</i>
1994	Peter Hogan	<i>Molly B</i>
1995	Brian Smullen	<i>Zaberdest</i>
1996	Tom Foote	<i>White Heather</i>
1997	P Barry/ J Cunnane	<i>Tom Crean</i>
1998	No Award	
1999	Donal Lynch	<i>Laroha</i>
2000	Susan & Peter Grey	<i>Waxwing</i>
2002	J. Gore-Grimes	<i>Arctic Fern</i>
2003	Ed Wheeler	<i>Witchcraft</i>
2004	Jarlath Cunnane	<i>Northabout</i>
2005	Brian Black	<i>Caelan</i>
2006	John Clementson	<i>Faustina II</i>
2007	No Award	

2008	Paul Bryans	<i>Odysseus</i>
2009	Wallace Clark	<i>Agivey</i>
2010	Tom Foote	<i>Picnic</i>
2011	Norman Kean	<i>Xanadu</i>
2012	Brian Black	<i>Séafra</i>
2013	Sam Davis	<i>Suvretta</i>
2014	Norman Kean	<i>Aircin</i>
2015	Paul Cooper	<i>Drumbeat</i>
2016	No Award	
2017	Michael Madsen	<i>Gabelle</i>
2018	Paul McSorley	<i>Viking Lord</i>
2019	Donal Walsh	<i>Lady Belle</i>
2020	Máire Breathnach	<i>Annabel J</i>
2021	No Award	
2022	No Award	
2023	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>

THE GULL SALVER

1971	Otto Glaser	<i>Tritsch-Tratsch</i>
1973	Mungo Park	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>
1975	Otto Glaser	<i>Tritsch-Tratsch II</i>
1977	Otto Glaser	<i>Red Rock III</i>
1991	Donal Morrissey	<i>Joggernaut</i>
1995	Donal Morrissey	<i>Joggernaut</i>
2001	Denis Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>
2003	D & T Andrews	<i>Amethyst</i>

From 2004-2006 this Trophy was awarded for distinction in an international event by a member sailing his/her own boat.

2005	Brian Smullen	<i>Cuiltaun</i>
2006	No Award	
From 2007 reverted to its first designation.		
2007	Ger O'Rourke	<i>Chieftain</i>
2008	No award	
2009	Mick Cotter	<i>Whisper</i>
2010	No award	
2011	Bruce Douglas	<i>Spirit of Jacana</i>
2012	No award	
2013	Martin Breen	<i>Discover Ireland</i>
2014	No award	
2015	No award	
2016	No Award	
2017	Michael Boyd	
2019	Conor Doyle	
2021	Rónán Ó Siochrú	<i>Desert Star</i>
2022	No award	

THE PERRY GREER BOWL

1995	Alan Rountree	<i>Tallulah</i>
1996	Jimmy Conlon	<i>Saint Patrick</i>
1997	Hilary Keatinge	<i>Kilpatrick</i>
1998	No Award	
1999	Jack McCann	<i>Mary Lee</i>
2000	David Beattie	<i>Aeolus</i>
2001	Noel Casey	<i>Chartered</i>
2002	No Award	
2003	Paddy McGlade	<i>Sabrone</i>

2004	Sean Fergus	<i>Estrellita</i>
2005	Robert Barker	<i>Alchemist</i>
2006	Ian Stevenson	<i>Raptor</i>
2007	Nigel Lindsay-Finn	<i>Eleanda</i>
2008	Patrick Dorgan	<i>Verdi III</i>
2009	Declan Connolly	<i>Khepri</i>
2010	Anne Kenny	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>
2011	David Jones	<i>Tidal Dancer</i>
2012	Ann Lyons	<i>Stardancer</i>
2013	Peter Mullan	<i>Sancerre</i>
2014	Justin McDonagh	<i>Selkie</i>
2015	Michael & Anne Madsen	<i>Gabelle</i>
2016	Darragh Nagle	<i>Chantey V</i>
2017	Ailbe Millerick	<i>Hecuba</i>
2018	Jim O'Meara	<i>Second Chance</i>
2019	Frank O Beirne	<i>Samphire</i>
2020	Sally Cudmore	<i>Dame De Jade</i>
2021	Vincent Guénebaut	<i>Dame De Jade</i>
2022	Jim and Katie Corbett	<i>Dóchas</i>

2023 Tony Linehan Sea Witch

THE WILD GOOSE CUP

1995	Robert Barr	<i>Pen Men</i>
1996	James Nixon	<i>Ardnagee</i>
1997	D & J Nicholson	<i>White Shadow</i>
1998	No Award	
1999	Ray O'Toole	<i>Lotophagi</i>
2000	Bill & Hilary Keatinge	<i>Rafiki</i>
2001	Robert Barr	<i>Oyster River</i>
2002	Peter Fernie	
2003	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2004	Peter Fernie	
2005	Dick Lovegrove	<i>Vivace</i>
2006	John Madden	<i>Bagheera</i>
2007	Wallace Clarke	<i>Agivey</i>
2008	David Beattie	<i>Reespray</i>
2009	WM Nixon	<i>Capriole</i>
2010	Paddy Barry	<i>Ar Seachrán</i>
2011	Mick Delap	<i>North Star</i>
2012	Garry Villiers-Stuart	<i>Winifreda</i>
2013	James Nixon	<i>Meander</i>
2014	John Duggan	<i>Hecuba</i>
2015	Winkie Nixon	<i>Ainmara, etc</i>
2016	Brian Black	<i>Séafra</i>
2017	Bob Brown	<i>Narnia</i>
2018	John Duggan	<i>Astraeus</i>
2019	Daria Blackwell	<i>Aleria</i>
2020	Margie Crawford	<i>Europa</i>
2021	Robert Fannin	<i>Capa111</i>
2022	Alan Leonard	<i>Ariadne</i>
2023	Frank Cassidy	<i>Ocean Blue</i>

Award Winners

JOHN B KEARNEY CUP

THE MARIE TROPHY

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>
2017	Duncan Sclare	<i>Freebird</i>
2018	Peter Fernie	<i>Mystic</i>
2019	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>
2020	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>
2021	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>
2022	Conor O'Byrne	<i>Calico Jack</i>
2023	Paddy Barry	Drascombe Lugger

DUNN'S DITTY SALVER

2001	Brendan Travers
2002	Wallace Clark
2003	John Bourke
2004	Fergus Quinlan
2005	Eleanor Cudmore
2006	Dan Cross
2007	Wallace Clark
2008	Hugh Barry
2009	Diana Gleadhill
2010	David Whitehead
2011	James Nixon
2012	Alan Leonard
2013	Raymond Fielding
2014	Derek White)
2015	Jarlath Cunnane
2016	Dick Lovegrove
2017	Pete Hogan
2018	Peter Haden
2019	Leo Conway
2020	Alan Leonard
2021	Michael Brogan
2022	Norman Kean
2023	Brian Law

1983	P. Campbell: Compiler of ICC Directions
1984	J. Moore: Skipper of S.T.Y. Graine
1985	Jennifer Guinness: ICC Publications Officer
1986	Harold Cudmore Junior: Yachtsman
1987	Cap. G.F. 'Eric' Healy: Captain of S.T.Y. Asgard II
1988	Capt. Tom McCarthy: Captain of S.T.Y. Asgard II
1989	Sail Ireland Project: Round the World Race in NCB Ireland.
1990	Ursula Maguire: Secretary of Irish Yachting Association
1991	The Southern Cross Team Winners: H. Cudmore, J. English & J. Maguire
1992	Denis Doyle: Yachtsman
1993	Arthur S. P. Orr: Compiler of ICC Directions
1994	Daphne French: Yachtsperson
1995	Ronan Beirne, Editor Annual
1996	No Award
1997	'South Aris' team. Shackleton escape from Antarctica
1998	Malachi & Evelyn O'Gallagher. Sailing directions
1999	No Award
2000	David Burrows: Olympic performance
2001	Carmel Winkelmann. Services to Junior Sailing
2002	Tom McSweeney. Services to Maritime Ireland
2003	The Jeanie Johnston Project
2004	David Tucker – 75 Anniversary Cruise
2005	Paddy Barry – 10 years as Honorary Editor of the Annual
2006	No Award
2007	William M. Nixon – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2008	Norman Kean – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2009	John Killeen – outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2010	The Irish 'Commodore Cup' winning team
2011	Jerry Smith – for rescue of crew of Rambler 100
2012	Annalise Murphy, Con Murphy and Cathy McAleavy
2013	Brian Craig - organisation of Irish Sailing, etc
2014	Joe English, posthumously - for outstanding sailing career
2015	Justin Slattery - for excellence in offshore racing
2016	No Award
2017	Peter Haden -Organising highly successful Rally in Galway
2018	Gregor McGuckin
2019	Clayton Love Junior-Outstandin contribution to Irish sailing
2020	Stanton Adair- Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2021	Hal Sisk - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2022	John Clementson - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2023	Ed Wheeler - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing

Award Winners

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>Ithuriel</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>Suzette</i>	
1965	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1966	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1967	S.F. Thompson	<i>Wye</i>	
1968	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1969	F. Cudmore	<i>Setanta</i>	
1970	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1971	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1972	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1973	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1974	G. Radley	<i>Cecille</i>	
1976	J.C. Butler	<i>Tam O'Shanter</i>	
1977	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1978	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	Islands Race
1979	B. Cudmore	<i>Anna Petrea</i>	
1980	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1981	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1982	C. Love Jnr	<i>Rebel County</i>	
1983	S. Mansfield	<i>Luv Is</i>	
1984	D.N. Doyle	<i>Moonduster</i>	
1985	J. Donegan	<i>White Rooster</i>	
1987	T.E. Crosbie C.J. Fitzgerald	<i>Senta</i> <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 South & West Sailing Directions
2007	Joe & Mary Woodward	
2008	Paul Bryans	Outstanding seamanship

2009	Neil Prendeville	Two transatlantic crossings back-to-back in one season
2010	Donal Lynch	Contribution to maritime culture and community sailing
2011	Dan Cross	Organising of Brittany Rally 2011
2012	Norman Kean	Co-auThorship of Cruising Ireland and ICC Sailing Directions
2013	RNLI Kinsale	Rescue of crew of STV Astrid
2014	Eddie Nicholson	Circumnavigation of N Atlantic
2015	Donal Walsh	Norway
2016	Neil Hegarty	Trans Atlantic in Shelduck
2017	Donal Walsh & Clare Morrissey	Cruise to Iceland
2018	No Award	
2019	Seamus O Connor	Bantry Bay Cruise
2020	No Award	
2021	No Award	
2022	Neil Hegarty and Anne Kenny	

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

1993	Dave FitzGerald	2009	Anne Kenny & Paddy O'Sullivan
1994	Brian Lynch	2010	Fergus Quinlan
1995	Paddy O'Sullivan	2011	Fergus Quinlan
1996	Jarlath Cunnane	2012	Brian Sheridan
1997	Pat Lavelle	2013	Anne Kenny
1998	Brendan Travers	2014	John Coyne
1999	John Cunningham	2015	Justin McDonagh
2000	Jack McCann	2016	David Whitehead
2001	Roger Bourke	2017	Peter Haden
2002	Dave FitzGerald	2018	Gary Mc Mahon
2003	Frank Larkin	2019	No Award
2004	Dick Scott	2020	No Award
2005	David FitzGerald	2021	No Award
Year	Winner	2022	Peter Fernie
2006	Peter Haden	2023	Tom Foote
2007	Seamus Salmon		
2008	Michael Craughwell		

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
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

List of Award Winners

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 Carribean 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 Cruising Ireland
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 and Chairman ICCPL
2017	Tony Weston Outstanding subscriptions treasurer
2018	Michael Mc Kee A lifetime of service to sailing and to the ICC

2019	No Award
2020	No Award
2021	No Award
2022	Andy McCarter
2023	Adrian and Maeve Bell

DONEGAN MEMORIAL TROPHY 1940

Year	Yacht	Recipient	Race
1945	Evora	R.H. & D.M. O'Hanlon	
1946	Mavis	J.B. Kearney	Kingstown/Cork
1947	No Award		
1948	Aideen	A.W. Mooney	Kingstown/Clyde
1949	Evora	A.W. Mooney	Kingstown/Clyde
1950	Sonia	D.J. & P.M. Purcell	Clyde Race
1951	Minx of Malham	B. Maguire	Clyde Race
1952	Viking O	Col Hollwey	Clyde Race
1953	Flying Fox	F.W. Brownlee	Beaumaris-Week
1954	Flying Fox	F.W. Brownlee	Clyde Race
1955	Glance	F.C. Hopkirk	Puffin Sound Race
1957	Severn II	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1958	Vanja IV	I. Morrison	Dun Laoire/Cork
1959	Severn II	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1960	Severn II	D.N. Doyle	Dun Laoire-Cork
1961	Cu na Mara	D. Barnes	Irish Sea Race
1962	Vanja IV	I. Morrison	Irish Sea Race
1963	Fenestra	S. O'Mara	Morecambe Bay
1964	Susanna	J.C. McConnell	Irish Sea Race
1965	Cu na Mara	D. Barnes	Morecambe Bay
1966	Orana	P.D. Pearson	Irish Sea Race
1967	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1968	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1969	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1970	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Cowes/Cork Race
1971	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1972	Tritsch-Tratsch	O. Glaser	Irish Sea Race
1973	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1974	Assiduous	C. Love	(1st ICC Boat)
1975	Dictator	D.M. Irwin	Morecambe Bay
1976	Tam O'Shanter	J.C. Butler	Irish Sea Race
1977	Red Rock III	O. Glaser	Morecambe Bay
1978	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1979	Korsar	R.E. Mollard	Morecambe Bay
1980	Standfast	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1981	Bandersnatch of Howth	R. Courtney	Morecambe1
1982	Joggernaut	D.J. Morrissey	Irish Sea Race
1983	Imp	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1984	Little Egypt	R.B. Lovegrove	Irish Sea Race
1985	Demelza	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1986	Rob Roy	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1987	Demelza	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1988	Red Velvet	M. O'Rahilly	Irish Sea Race
1989	Comanche Raider	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1990	Woodchester Challenge	H.R. Gomes	Round Ireland

1991	Finndabar of Howth	P. Jameson	Round Ireland
From 1993 Awarded by the Eastern Area Committee			
Year Recipient			
1993	P. Hogan	Circumnavigation of the Globe	
1994	Brendan Bradley	Brittany Rally Organiser	
1995	Barbara Fox-Mills	Distributor of Publications	
1996	Evelyn O'Gallagher	Sailing Directions	
1998	Bruce Lyster	Tall Ships Committee Chairman	
1999	Susan & Peter Gray	Pacific cruising	
2000	Arthur Orr	ICC Publications	
2001	Mungo Park	Sailing into his 80s	
2002	Cormac McHenry	Holland to Dun Laoghaire	
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	Capetown to Dun Laoghaire	
2004	Bill Rea	Trophy & Annual distribution	
2005	Hal Sisk	Restoration of a Classic Yacht, Peggy Bawn	
2006	Grainne FitzGerald	Cruise organisation	
2007	Michael Holland	Cruise from Arctic to Antarctic	
2008	Cormac McHenry	Spain to the Canaries	
2009	Terry Johnson	for his contribution to the RNLI & Irish Lights over 21 years	
2010	Ruth Heard	Services to sailing and boating and to Inland Waterways Association.	
2011	John P. Bourke	Contribution to Irish and international sailing	
2012	Sean Flood	Support for youth sail training	
2013	Winkie Nixon	50 years of Annual contributions	
2014	Kieran Jameson	Many years of outstanding achievements	
2015	Alan Rountree	Significant cruising exploits	
2016	Ian French	Services to sailing for the disabled	
2017	Paddy Barry	Many years of adventurous sailing.	
2018	Peter Killen	Many years of adventurous sailing and support of the RNLI and the ICC	
2019	Brian Craig	A lifetime to the sport of sailing	
2020	No Award		
2021	No Award		
2022	John Gore Grimes	Many years of adventurous high latitude sailing	
2023	Tony Linehan	A meticulously planned cruise to Madeira	

TRANS OCEANIC PENNANT

Auchincloss, Les	Coleman, Michael	Hyde, Stephen	Musgrave, Stuart	Snell, Michael
Barnes, Sean	Corbally, Bernard	Kean, Norman	Nicholson, David	Spense, Adrian
Barnwell, Henry	Craughwell Michael	Kenworthy, Marilyn	Nicholson, Eddie	Viriden, Jonathan
Barry, Paddy	Cudmore, Ronald	Killen, Peter	O'Farrell, Kevin	Whelan, Michael J.
Bradley, Brendan	Cunnane, Jarlath	King, Heather	O'Farrell, Vincent	Whelan, Pat
Bramwell, Barry	Davis, Sam	Lindsay-Finn, Nigel	O'Flaherty, Michael	White, Lawrence
Breathnach, Máire	Drew, Bob	Leonard, Alan	Osborne, James	
Bunting, Peter	Espey, Fred	Lusty, Trevor	Osmundsvaag, Arve	
Cahill, Bernie	Glaser, Otto	McBride, Davy	Petch, John	
Cahill, James	Gore-Grimes, John	McClement, Donal	du Plessis, Hugo	
Casey, Noel	Gray, Peter	Mc Donagh Justin	Prendeville, Neil	
Chapman, Colin	Gray, Susan	McHenry, Cormac	Quinlan, Fergus	
Clementson, John	Greer, Perry	Mullins, Peter	Smullen, Brian	
Coffey, Jack	Hogan, Peter		Smyth, William	

THE FASTNET AWARD

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	Máire Breathnach and Andrew Wilkes
2015	No Award
2016	Nikolai Litau
2017	No Award
2018	No Award
2019	Royal Cork Yacht Club
2020	No Award
2021	No Award
2022	WM Nixon

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Norway	2014, 2015, 2017, 2018,2022
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