



IRISH CRUISING CLUB

ANNUAL 2024



IRISH CRUISING CLUB 2024 ANNUAL

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Front Cover: *Blue Way* at the Fastnet. Photo by Matthew Wright.

Back Cover: Bob Brown, and his guest Dave Thompson on board *Serenade*.

Frontispiece: *Annabel J* at anchor in Reine, Moskenesøya, Lofoten Islands. Photo by Andrew Wilkes.

Inside Back Cover: Irish Cruising Club Photographic Plate.

Submissions for the 2025 Annual

To reach the Honorary Editor, Máire Breathnach, annual@irishcruisingclub.com by Friday 17 October 2025. 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. Log titles should contain the name of the area cruised. 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 2025. 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.



Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



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Contents

Introductory pages

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Letter from Commodore Alan Markey | iii |
| Honorary Secretary's Report 2024 | iv |
| Membership Changes 2024 | vi |
| Officers and Committee 2024 | vi |
| Editor's Remarks | vi |
| Challenge Trophy Awards 2024 | vii |
| Club Awards 2024 | x |

Logs

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----|
| A cruise to Norway in <i>Annabel J</i> | Andrew Wilkes | 1 |
| Sailing, running and driving around Ireland | Matthew Wright | 11 |
| Cruise to the Ionian | Robert Barker | 21 |
| <i>Serenade</i> circumnavigates the Mull of Kintyre | Bob Brown | 29 |
| On a path to Liverpool | Fergus Quinlan | 37 |
| <i>Chantey V</i> - Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands | Daragh Nagle | 45 |
| Round Ireland cruise - <i>Viking Lord</i> | Paul McSorley | 49 |
| Back to Brittany | Neil Hegarty | 57 |
| A short Autumn cruise to Connemara | Pat O'Shea | 62 |
| An unintended cruise to Ardglass | Paul Conway and Gillie Fletcher | 67 |
| A summer sailing up the Norwegian coast | Mark Sweetnam | 73 |
| <i>Lady Belle</i> rounds Ireland and explores the Irish Sea | Donal Walsh | 85 |
| Return to Bénodet | Andrew Kennedy | 95 |
| <i>Imagine</i> - Corfu, Taranto, Corfu | Neil Kenefick | 101 |
| <i>Sea Dancer</i> to the Clyde again | Harry Whelehan | 109 |
| Run silent, run deep | Frank Cassidy | 115 |
| Not a bad year to go the wrong way round Ireland | Andy McCarter and Paddy Margey | 121 |
| <i>Corryreckan</i> ...for a tube of glue | Collin G Leonard | 130 |
| <i>Dochas</i> in Greece | Jim and Katie Corbett | 135 |
| When things don't go as planned | Sean Norris | 143 |
| Spouse, a sea dog and two old salts join <i>Calico Jack</i> on a cruise to Dunmanus Bay | Conor O'Byrne | 151 |
| A tale of three men (and a pigeon) on a boat | John Sweeney | 156 |
| Baroque on <i>Sassy</i> | Jim Houston | 161 |
| A love affair with the Azores | Dermot Cronin | 171 |

Articles

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-----|
| Brittany Rally 24 | Alan Markey | 177 |
| Encuentro Náutico 24 | Peter Fernie | 181 |

Dunns Ditties

| | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|
| A few days in the Stockholm Archipelago | Alan Leonard | 187 |
| Yacht <i>Orchestra</i> | Michael Craughwell | 189 |
| Cruising Notes | Harold Cudmore | 190 |

Obituaries

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------|-----|
| Cormac McHenry | abridged from AFLOAT | WMN | 191 |
| Clayton Love Jnr | abridged from AFLOAT | WMN | 192 |
| Keith Hunt | abridged from AFLOAT | WMN | 193 |
| Dennis Woods | | John Leahy | 194 |

Archive Logs

| | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|-----|
| <i>Gull</i> Log | | Henry Donegan | 195 |
| Happy 100th Birthday Jack Wolfe | | | 204 |
| <i>Gay Gannet</i> Log | | Jack and Peter Wolfe | 205 |
| Past and present Officers of the Irish Cruising Club | | | 208 |
| List of Award winners 1931-2024 | | | 210 |
| Index of cruising grounds for the past ten years | | | 219 |

Commodore's Letter by Alan Markey



Dear Reader,

I hope you enjoy reading the 2024 Annual, a reflection of our members' cruising adventures over the past year. This year's edition is an impressive collection of twenty-four logs across Irish Waters, Scotland, France, Norway, Canada, Azores, and the Mediterranean. I would like to thank all those who contributed to the annual, making this publication a true celebration of our club's spirit of adventure and camaraderie.

I am especially pleased that five members submitted a log for the first time and are eligible for the prestigious Perry Greer Bowl. I hope their contribution will inspire others to share their stories in the future. A heartfelt thank you goes to Maire Breathnach our dedicated editor whose meticulous work has produced another exceptional publication. I would also extend my thanks to former Commodore Peter Killen for his thoughtful adjudication, completed under very tight timelines, and to Seamus O'Connor for his efficient handling of distribution, ensuring everyone receives their annual in good time.

Helen and I are looking forward to attending the regional Christmas events and hope to meet as many members as possible.

Our 2025 AGM will take place in the National Yacht Club on 21 February and the Annual Dinner Weekend will be held on 28-29 March at the Bloomfield House in Mullingar. Details of the weekend will be issued in the next few weeks, and I would urge you to book early.

I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Regards,

Alan

Honorary Secretary's Report by Donal Gallagher



This year's highlights on the water saw the Club return to the cruising grounds of South Brittany, under the leadership of newly elected Commodore Alan Markey, for the first time in over a decade for a very successful and well attended rally. Yachts attended from all regions and beyond. Highlights included the opening dinner in Benodet, fabulous evening at the Groix cultural centre and seafood dinner with sing song on Ile d'Houat. Several participants continued south across the Bay of Biscay to join Encuentro Nautico '24 which continued the tradition of successful ICC rallies in Galicia during July.

The January membership election meeting and Committee meeting was held in the National Yacht Club on the 5 January. Eighteen new members were elected to the club.

The February committee meeting, AGM and EGM were held at Howth Yacht Club on the 16 February. 85 officers and members were present for the AGM and over 100 members and guests remained for dinner.

In addition to the normal business of the AGM, which was conducted without dissent, the Commodore led warm tributes to the outgoing Committee members. Patrick Blaney stood down as Honorary Treasurer having overseen many improvements including the introduction of online booking. Maeve Bell, Peter Cudmore, Seán Fergus and Robert Michael stood down from the committee and were thanked for their many years of service. The following elections were duly proposed, seconded and unanimously approved: Alan Markey (Commodore), Julie Chambers (Vice Commodore), Alex Blackwell (Rear Commodore), Kieron Guilfoyle (Honorary Treasurer), Joanne Magowan, Sally Cudmore, Frank O'Beirne, Judy Houston (Committee Members). The names of the officers and committee members continuing in their positions were read. The outgoing Commodore presented Alan Markey with his Commodore's flag and pin, and the new Commodore presented David Beattie with his past Commodore's flag and pin. The incoming Commodore then presented Julie Chambers and Alex Backwell with their flags and pins.

Immediately after the AGM, an EGM was held to amend the rules to clarify the role of ICC Publications

following a change of legal entity form (CLG). It was proposed that rule19 should be amended as follows: 'Irish Cruising Club Publications CLG shall manage the organisation of the writing, editing, printing, publishing, sale and distribution of the Sailing Directions and associated publications'. The motion was duly seconded and carried and there being no other business the members retired to dinner.

The annual dinner was held in Maryborough Hotel in Douglas, Cork. Rear Commodore Seamus O'Connor and his team organised a flawless event with 236 attendees including Nick Chavasse, Commodore, Royal Cruising Club and Bob Medland, Commodore of the Cruising Club of America. The inaugural Friendship Cup, a gift of the CCA at the 2023 Annual Dinner, was presented to Peter Haden. Twelve of eighteen new members attended the New Members Reception on Friday evening of the weekend.

The October Committee meeting, held on the 13 October in Adare, Co. Limerick, afforded the Committee the opportunity to review plans for 2025 which include a rally mustering in Baltimore in June to commemorate centenary of the return of Conor O'Brien from his circumnavigation in June of 1925, a joint rally with the CCA in the Western Isles and Encuentro Nautico '25 in Galicia. The Committee further reviewed a presentation from Frank O'Beirne investigating options for a rally in Norway in 2026 and it was decided to carry these plans forward, the first such ICC rally in Norway.

January 2025 will see the membership election and general committee meetings held on the 10th in Howth Yacht Club with the AGM to be held on the 21 February in the National Yacht Club.

2025 promises to be an exciting year on the water as does 2026 with the prospect of a rally in Norway. On behalf of the Flag Officers and the Committee we wish you a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2025.

Membership Changes 2024

New Members elected 2024

Aisling McCarthy - Belfast
Anthony McCarthy - Belfast
Sarah Brown - Argyll
Patricia Morgan - Newtownards
Julian Morgan - Newtownards
Alan Ryder - Newtownards
Brody Sweeney - Dublin
David Lawlor - Dublin
Katie Corbett - Crosshaven
Pat Fleming - Cobh
Patrick O'Keefe - Bantry
Eugene O'Loughlin - Belgooly
Jim Buckley - Cork
Evanna Lyons - Crosshaven
Andrew Wilkes - Dunganvan
Aoife Nolan - Ballymahon
Ann Gaughan - Foxford
Ian Gaughan - Foxford

Deceased Members in 2024

Cormac McHenry
Clayton Love Jr.
Michael Dwyer
Sean O'Loughlin
Keith Hunt
Ruth Heard
Dennis Woods
John (Jeanot) Petch
Terence (Terry) Johnson

Officers and Committee 2024

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Commodore: | Alan Markey (East) | 1st year |
| Vice Commodore: | Julie Chambers (North) | 1st year |
| Rear Commodore: | Séamus O'Connor (South) | 2nd year |
| Rear Commodore: | Alex Blackwell (West) | 1st year |
| Hon. Secretary: | Donal Gallagher | 2nd year |
| Hon. Treasurer: | Kieron Gullfoyle | 1st year |

| North | South | East | West |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Des Brown (5th yr) | Paul Taylor (5th yr) | Tony Linehan (5th yr) | James Cahill (3rd yr) |
| Paul McSorley (2nd yr) | John McAleer (2nd yr) | Harry Whelehan (2nd yr) | John Coyne (2nd yr) |
| David Meeke (2nd yr) | Jim O'Meara (2nd yr) | Frank O'Beirne (1st yr) | Louis Keating (1st yr) |
| Joanne Magowan (1st yr) | Sally Cudmore (1st yr) | Judy Houston (1st yr) | |

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 |
| Honorary Admissions' Officer | Paul McSorley | | |

Ex Officio:
Alex Blackwell (Web Editor)

David Meeke (Chairman Irish Cruising Club Publications CLG)

Editor's Remarks

Máire Breathnach

It has been a true pleasure to produce this annual. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed articles and logs. A special mention goes to Mark, Andrew, Pat, John, and Andrew for submitting their first logs - your contributions are deeply appreciated. Writing logs, articles, and ditties requires time, thought, and effort, and I am grateful for each submission.

Additionally, I would like to extend my thanks to Kevin Lane for graciously allowing us to publish the *Gull* Log from the 1925 Fastnet Race.

2024 was a momentous year for Jack Wolfe, who celebrated his 100th birthday on 31 May. As the eldest member of our Club, Jack's milestone is truly special. In honour of this, I have selected *Gay Gannet's* log from 1974 as this year's Archive Log.

If you are planning to contribute to the 2025 Annual, please be sure to review the guidelines for contributors, which can be found inside the front cover.

My sincere thanks to Andrew Wilkes and Norman Kean for their meticulous proofreading.

Máire Breathnach



Peter Killen

When I received a phone call some time ago from the Commodore, asking me if I would adjudicate the logs this year, I first frantically searched my mind for a very good excuse, but finding none, took a deep breath and said 'yes!'

It really has been a great honour and, as I discovered, a great pleasure to read so many varied and interesting logs.

The theme this year in northern waters was, surprise surprise, windy, cold, with lots of rain. Isn't it interesting that at the end of each season, we optimistically hope for better weather the next year? 90+% of the time this does not materialise.

There were 24 logs in all and every one of them was interesting and instructive, from Andrew Wilkes and Mark Sweetnam's cruises north to Norway, to Robert and Pat Barker's and Jim and Katie Corbett's cruises in the Med. I was delighted to receive five first logs from new members John Sweeney, Pat O'Shea, Mark Sweetnam, Andrew Kennedy and Andrew Wilkes.

I felt for Donal Walsh and Clare Morrissey on *Lady Belle* and Harry and Liz Whelehan on *Sea Dancer*, struggling to various destinations in frigid conditions.

Nevertheless, it wasn't misery all the way and everyone, whether sailing in the north or elsewhere, experienced great sailing at times which more than compensated. From personal experience, in the depths of winter, tucked up in a pub, I always found that when reminiscing, one soon forgot the bad bits, and remembered with pleasure the good bits.

I loved Neil Kenefick's account of their quick trip to Italy on *Imagine*, Bob Brown's very entertaining account of his circumnavigation of the Mull of Kintyre on *Serenade* and Colin Leonard's account of the crew's voyage to Scotland on *Ariadne*, including their adventurous trip by dinghy into Cumhann Beag. I must remember always to keep a tube of fresh usable glue on board.

Daragh Nagle always writes a great log, as was the case this year and his log was definitely in contention. Andy McCarter and Paddy Marge too had a really well planned leisurely cruise around Ireland on *Gwili 3*, with Paddy jumping over the side at the drop of a hat and then lying about the water temperature.

It is always difficult and very subjective as to whom the various trophies should be awarded and I am sure that my choices are easily challengeable.

Finally, thank you Alan for entrusting me with the task and thank you everyone for taking the time and trouble to submit such interesting logs.

Challenge Trophy Awards



Peter's Pure Magic Too in Bantry Bay

THE FAULKNER PERPETUAL CHALLENGE CUP

Andrew Wilkes' account of his and Máire's voyage on *Annabel I*, a replica Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter, to and from Norway had me spellbound for the entire journey. It's beautifully written, informative and thoroughly interesting. It's also his first ICC log. I have no hesitation in awarding Andrew the Faulkner Cup.

THE STRANGFORD CUP

Donal Walsh's log of his and Clare Morrissey's cruise on *Lady Belle*, lasting 77 days of which 34 were lost to bad weather, was excellent. They cruised southwest Scotland, northwest England, Wales, the Isle of Man and then threw in a circumnavigation of Ireland, having the heat from a roaring fire blocked at one point en-route. It was a tour de force. Donal is a worthy recipient of the Strangford Cup.

THE FORTNIGHT CUP

It was a breath of fresh air to read Dermot Cronin's account of his racing in the Azores on his yacht *Encore*. Plus it was a very nifty way to secure a marina berth for the boat. He has chalked up very many sea miles racing in some of the most respected offshore events and is never one to avoid a challenge. Indeed, when one thinks back to the origins of the ICC, there was a time when there was a much greater emphasis on racing. It is a pleasure to award the Fortnight Cup to Dermot.

THE ROUND IRELAND NAVIGATION CUP

Matthew Wright's account of his circumnavigation of Ireland in his yacht *Blue Way*, with lots of overland running and sourcing TVs to watch various sports events as they travelled, makes for a most enjoyable read. I have also taken note of the various watering holes which he, his parents and the balance of the crew checked out. They all sounded perfect venues in which to chill out and recharge the batteries. I am delighted to award Matthew the Round Ireland Navigation Cup.

THE WYBRANTS CUP

Harry and Liz Wzhelehan on *Sea Dancer* hoped for an idyllic cruise in Scotland in warm balmy weather. Alas, it was not to be. However, despite everything, they did knock out a good cruise and Liz has not jumped ship. To cap it all, Harry succumbed to COVID as they neared their home port. Harry is a well deserved awardee of the Wybrants cup.

THE PERRY GREER CUP

Mark Sweetnam had a great voyage to and up the coast of Norway on his yacht *Don Carlos*. It was full of useful information and left me in no doubt that he and his crew had a very enjoyable time. I award Mark the Perry Greer cup for his excellent log. I must also mention that this is his first ICC log.

THE WILD GOOSE CUP

This cup is awarded for a log of exceptional literary merit and to my mind, Andrew Wilkes's log is my choice, hands down. It really is a gem, and I need add no more. It's with much pleasure that I award the Wild Goose Cup to Andrew.

THE MARIE TROPHY

Conor O'Byrne's log outlining an entertaining short well executed cruise was enjoyable reading. I was lost in admiration at how he and Aine managed to fit Fionn, their golden retriever, down through the companionway on a small boat. I also shuddered at the thought of him shaking himself dry before bedding down for the night. *Calico Jack* was the only boat under 30 feet for which a log was submitted and which qualifies for this award, but this does in no way take from my judgement that Conor's cruise was exemplary. The fact that they had some really good weather was a huge bonus. He is a worthy recipient of the Marie Trophy.

viii | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

Paul McSorley's account of his cruise around Ireland outlines a really robust voyage, normally against wind and tide, done with aplomb and enjoyment. I was most impressed with the thought that he appears to be looking forward to more of the same in 2025. To my mind, this was the best log of a cruise in Irish waters. I award Paul the Glengarriff Trophy.

THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

John Sweeney's log, his first to be submitted to the ICC, is a very factual description of his engine going AWOL on his yacht *Island Lass*, when well offshore. The practical way in which he and his crew managed to tie it down and carry on with the rest of their voyage to Galatia was admirable. There is no doubt that reasonable weather played an important role, but nevertheless the whole episode was handled with great efficiency and coolness. Thank goodness also that his daughter fully recovered from a very nasty fall on dry land. Despite the problems, John and his crew had an enjoyable and well planned journey, and I am very pleased to award him the Rockabill Trophy.

THE FINGAL CUP

This log is awarded at the adjudicator's discretion for the log which most appeals to him/her. I think that Jim and Katie's 90 days cruise on their yacht *Dóchas* in Greece was thoroughly enjoyable. Whilst most people in Northern Europe were experiencing truly nasty weather, they were rocking along in warm to hot conditions. The ground they covered and the locations they visited made for an engrossing and educational log. It is a pleasure to award them the Fingal Cup.

THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

Not awarded this year

THE DUNNS DITTY SALVER

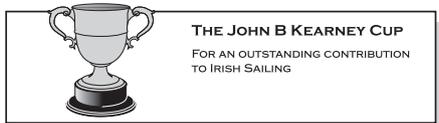
Awarded by the Annual Editor to Alan Leonard

Peter's Pure Magic in Antarctica in 2005



Club Awards

The John B Kearney Cup



John P. Bourke



A Sailing Life

John Bourke has spent a lifetime participating and administrating in the sport of sailing, which he loves. He has been a senior administrator at club, national and international level, an ocean racing navigator at international level, an enthusiastic club and eventing sailor, a passionate cruising participant and a family man who brought his family with him on the water.

John came late to the sport going sailing with a friend in a Mermaid out of the National Yacht Club in his early twenties, graduating onto the 505 and becoming totally hooked.

He started his yacht racing in earnest on the renowned *Greydog of Arklow* in 1962 and went on to complete 14 Fastnet Races, eight Round Ireland races, including five class wins, three overall wins and two elapsed time records with *Moonduster*. He took part in three races to Spain, two transatlantic races and numerous Irish Sea and other shorter offshore events.

John established himself as a high level navigator and, in that role, competed in five Admiral's Cups from 1973 -1987. Notably, he was non-sailing Captain of the Admiral's Cup team in 1979, leading the event going into that fateful Fastnet Race.

John sailed on many notable racing boats including *Greydog of Arklow*, *Huff of Arklow*, *Korsar*, *Moonduster*, *NCB Ireland*, *Jameson*, *Cullaun* and cruising boats in *Wolfhound*, *Oleander*, *Joyster* and his own *Hobo V* and *Grand Slam*. In his long standing boat partnership with Richard Hooper, he owned a Dragon, Comfort 30, Shipman 28, Sigma 38, Dufour 41, J109 and his favorite, a racing specified She 27 called *She Mite*, which never lost a race on IOR rating.

He competed many times in Cork Week, Cowes Week and Calves Week, once winning the latter much to the surprise of local organisers. He completed in many other racing events around the world.

In cruising, John enjoyed many cruising grounds in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, France, Baltics, US east Coast, Caribbean, New Zealand, Greece, Italy, Croatia, Turkey and a longer stretch in Galicia in Spain, in his Dufour. His favourite cruising of all is the Isles of Scilly and the coast of Cornwall. He has participated in many cruises in company with the OCC, CCA, ICC and the Royal St George. John is particularly fond of ICC dinners and contributing with pithy wit and brevity, to the ICC Annual.

He was a member of many clubs and held numerous voluntary leadership roles in his sport. He joined the RstGYC in 1962, later becoming Vice Commodore (1986-1988), and the Royal Alfred Yacht Club, later that decade. John joined the Irish Cruising Club in 1965 and remains a keen member today. The Royal Cork Yacht Club and Royal Yacht Squadron followed in 1980 and the Royal Thames Yacht Club in 1989. John joined the Royal Ocean Racing Club in 1991, where he served as Commodore (1994-1996) and Admiral (2001-2005). John joined the Cruising Club of America as an honorary member through the RORC and later as an individual member. He was also a member of the Ocean Cruising Club, serving as Vice Commodore and was Commodore of the Bank of Ireland Sailing Club.

John served for a decade at the Irish Yachting Association, now Irish Sailing, firstly as Vice President, then Chair of the Offshore Committee and finally as President from 1982 -1985. He served on the Ocean Racing Council, the primary rating organisation of the day, acting as Chairman from 1985 to 1991, attending many ISAF conferences.

John has lived and loved a life of sailing, building organisations, relationships and friendships. His logbook tracks over 90,000 nautical miles in both racing and cruising. Paradise, he says, is going around a headland in the early morning.





Michael Brogan

For his many years involvement in the annual Galway Hooker Festival (Cruinniú na mBád), said to be one of the best maritime events in the country. He spends significant time for months beforehand organising it and works hard over that weekend each year. He has been involved for the full 45 years it has been going. The festival contributes significantly to sailing interest on the West Coast, in particular to the continued interest in traditional craft.



Seán McCormack

The Eastern Committee is delighted to award Sean McCormack the Donegan Memorial Trophy for his outstanding cruising career, spanning over four decades in *Marie Claire II*.



Stuart Musgrave

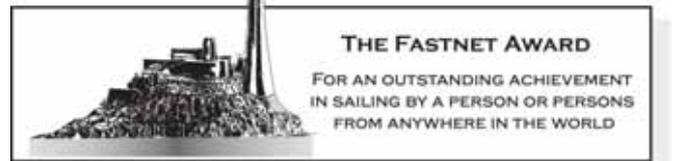
Stuart is a very active member of ICC since 2005. This year he played a key role in the Brittany Rally. His intimate knowledge of Brittany as a sailing destination together with his experience of the culinary delights of the area were well demonstrated in choices of locations and restaurants for the get-togethers. On top of that he personally provided ferry and water taxi services especially at Île Houat which were most welcome. His efforts ensured a successful rally. Thank you Stuart.



Peter Mullan

The Northern Committee are delighted to award the Wright Salver to Peter Mullan for his services to ICC. Peter joined ICC in 2011, was elected onto the Committee 2015 and became Subscriptions Treasurer in 2018 to present day. He has spent many hours over the last six years refining the collection of our subscriptions. Peter is now stepping down and we wish him fair winds for the seasons ahead.

The Fastnet Award



Tom Dolan

Tom is awarded the Fastnet Trophy for winning the 55th La Solitaire du Figaro Paprec the annual multistage solo offshore race, which is considered the toughest event of offshore sailing. Tom is the first non-French person to win the event since 1988.

BELOW: Tom, winner, at the finish of leg 2 in Royan. INSET: Tom at the finish of the final in La Turballe when he won the Solitaire du Figaro series. Photos by Alexis Courcoux



Sir Patrick Spens

*The King sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blood-red wine;
"O where shall I get a skeely skipper
To sail this ship o' mine?"*

*'To Norway, to Norway,
To Norway o' the foam;
The King's daughter of Norway,
'Tis thou must fetch her home.'*

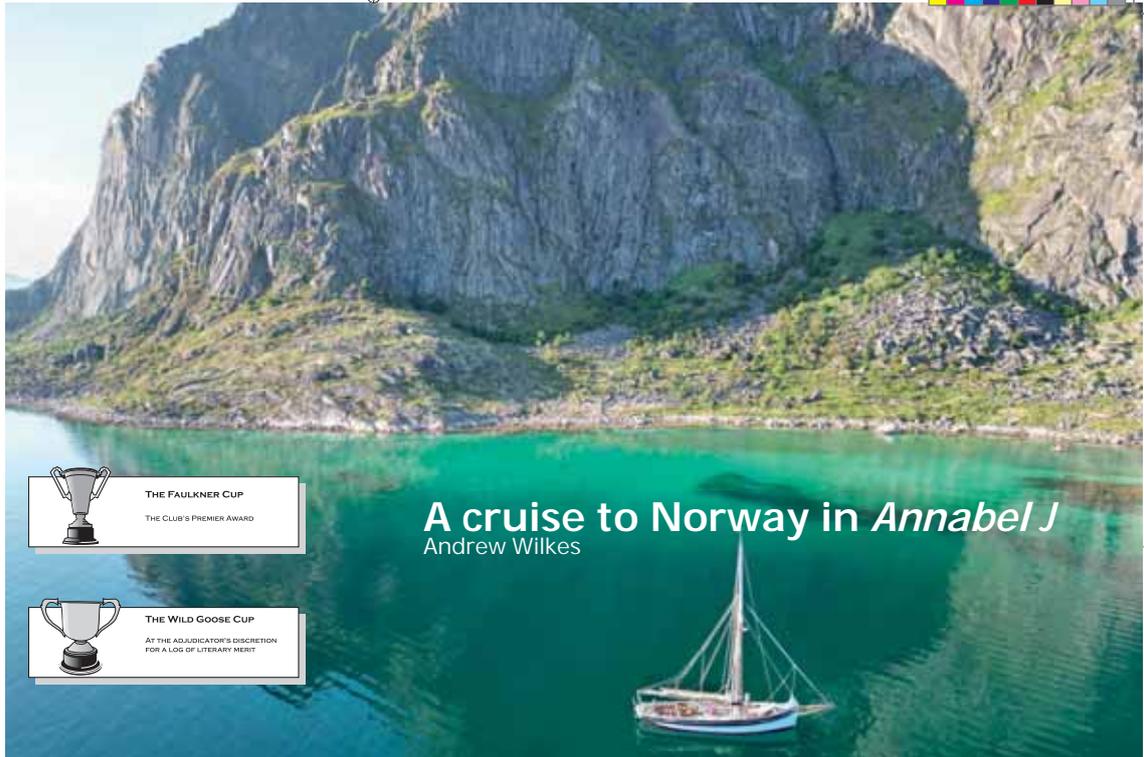
'Sir Patrick Spens' is one of the most famous of the Child Ballads and originates from Scotland. The maritime ballad tells the tragic tale of a disaster at sea.

I had wanted to follow in Sir Patrick Spens's wake 'to Norway o'er the foam' ever since I bought the 'Den Norske los-pilot books at a London Boat Show in Earls Court about 30 years ago. Maire (who edits this Annual) and I decided that 2024 would be The Year. We invested in new charts and pilot books including Judy Lomax's excellent RCCPF publication 'Norway'.

Our boat, *Annabel J*, is a steel replica of a Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter. She was built in 1996 in the style of an 1896 boat. She is 56ft on deck and carries 1,800 sq ft of sail with her gaff main, staysail, jib, topsail and jib topsail all up. She looks a picture with all the sails set and we tried to capture this with a drone photo last year off the coast of Iceland - sadly I crashed the drone into the rig on the return flight and I now have to get clearance from Maire before taking off.

On returning from Iceland last year, we over-wintered the boat at Ardrrossan on the Clyde. The yard, Clyde Marina, are easy to deal with and we would recommend them. At the end of the 2023 season we removed all the running rigging and took the wooden blocks back to Dunganvan for varnishing. After re-rigging and the usual pre-season maintenance work we departed on 14th June to motor-sail the 14 nm in light winds to an anchorage at Lamash on the Isle of Arran. It is always a relief to clean the shoreside dirt off, raise the sails and see if we have rigged the boat properly - we had (more or less).

We wanted to get to Norway as soon as possible so spent long days sailing, and motor-sailing when necessary, to Loch Inchard which is 10 nm south of Cape Wrath on the northwestern extremity of



THE FAULKNER CUP
THE CLUB'S PREMIER AWARD



THE WILD GOOSE CUP
AT THE ADJUDICATOR'S DISCRETION
FOR A LOG OF LITERARY MERIT

A cruise to Norway in *Annabel J*

Andrew Wilkes

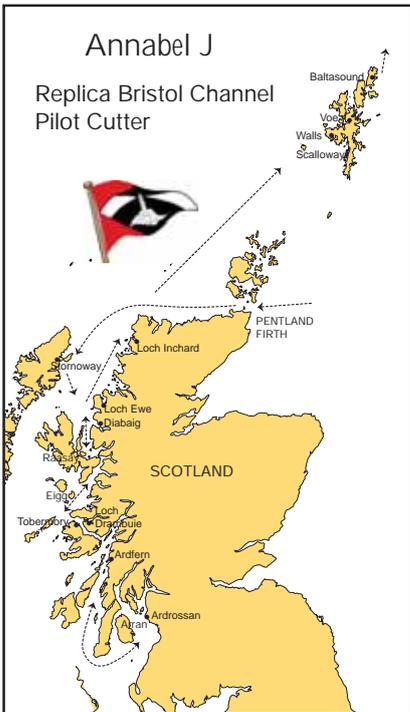
Annabel J at anchor in Lillemolle

mainland Britain. We anchored every night calling at Ardfern, Loch na Droma Buidhe, Ramsay and Loch Ewe. Loch na Droma Buidhe, 5nm to the east of Tobermory, was a particular delight. We dropped the anchor there at lunchtime just as the northwesterly head wind was increasing to F6. With the half dozen other yachts (two of whom we knew) also in the anchorage we enjoyed perfect shelter. David Vass, (RCC), and his friend Jake were anchored nearby in their yacht, *Borealis*, and we were treated to drinks and yarns on board.

It was a fast passage, on mid-summer's day, of 26 hours to sail and motor-sail the 162 nm from Loch Inchard to the Shetland Isles. We went alongside

at the Scalloway Boat Club pontoon at teatime the next day, our first shore-side berth since leaving Ardrrossan. We were swinging to the anchor again on the 25th at Walls, 13 nm to the north, but our departure to Voe the following day was delayed due to a defective solenoid on the anchor windlass. We jury rigged the windlass and ordered a new solenoid from a forklift truck spares company in Manchester (the same component as sold by marine suppliers but SO much cheaper). It arrived four days later at the Lerwick Harbour Office. Our time was not wasted - we got buses and hired a car to explore the Shetland Islands.

The 'Shetland Bus' fascinated us. In World War II a number of Norwegian fishermen escaped to the Shetland Islands in their fishing boats. With the support of the UK and American forces they went back and forth across the North Sea exporting arms, explosives and secret agents. On the return trip they bought back refugees and resistance workers who were threatened by the Nazis. They could not operate in daylight for fear of German fighter planes so only sailed during the long winter nights in terrible conditions. It is a captivating story told in the Scalloway museum and in David Howarth's, the UK Special Operations Executive commanding officer's, book. We visited David Howarth's grave in the churchyard close to the Shetland Bus HQ at Lunna.



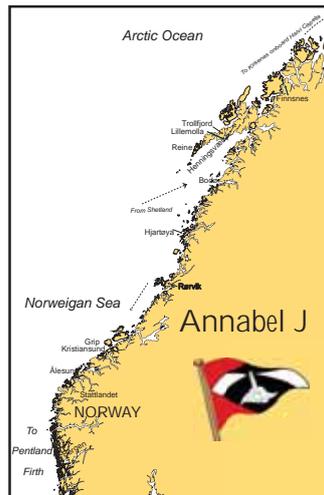
Tantalising mountains make for a dramatic landfall

With a fully functioning anchor windlass we anchored on Yell and at Baltasound on Unst before making the 500 nm passage to Bodø in northern Norway (4 days). It was so good to get back into old routines and enjoy being offshore again. We were sailing into the Arctic Circle so there was no darkness at night time. It was a lovely landfall - cloud on the horizon gave way to the suggestion of distant mountains. As we approached closer, islands materialised. They had fantastic shapes which seemed to have been sculptured for a Lord of the Rings film set. 'Troll's playthings' scattered on the shores of the North Sea?

We spent three days enjoying the bright lights of Bodø before sailing the 50 nm to Reine Harbour on the island of Moskenesøya, one of the southern Lofoten Islands. Reine was charming but very touristy. From there we motored to Siraumøya (11nm) and then sailed onto Litlmolla (34nm). The anchorage at Litlmolla was beneath a sheer cliff 500m above us and is a favourite haunt of sea eagles. Not surprisingly, there was the odd blast of katabatic wind.

There was a choice of routes northwards and we elected for the 'middle inner route' by way of Raftsund. The tides here are strong and timing is important. We sailed, and motor-sailed when there was no wind, to a potential anchorage at Grasholm, 60nm to the north. A new pontoon had been built there which, together with underwater electric cables, made the anchorage a little too snug for our liking. We motored on to Gjerdneset (68° 40.9N 16° 33.3E) which is not in the pilot book but seemed a fair anchorage.

The following day we motored with no wind to Finnsnes which is on the mainland opposite Norway's second largest island, Senja. There



was a small marina in Finnsnes and, like all the Norwegian small boat harbours, payment was made using the 'Go Marina' App which is easily downloaded. Mooring fees are reasonable and no contact with harbour staff is necessary. Everything in Norway seemed to 'work' and payments are automated wherever possible. Yachtsmen are trusted to pay the correct amount.

We wanted to see as much of the Norwegian coast as possible, so we created! The Hurtigruten Shipping Company has been taking mail, goods and passengers along the Norwegian coast from Bergen to Kirkenes on the Russian border since 1893. In recent years, another company, Halvi, has been granted a licence to operate on the same route. The ships' arrivals and departures every day give a timetable and rhythm to each of the 34 harbours on the trading route.

We joined the *Halvi Capella* for the day and half's cruise from Finnsnes to Kirkenes. It was an interesting trip through increasingly remote and arctic scenery. Periods of fog made us pleased we were not doing the trip on our own hull. We spent a day in Kirkenes, where, despite the present difficult relations with Russia, we noted a couple of Russian fishing boats in the harbour. We caught a plane back

Halvi Capella alongside Honningsvåg the northernmost town in mainland Norway





Andrew, Emma and Gerry hiking on Senja

to Tromsø and one of the super-efficient fast ferries from there back to Finnses.

The next day Máire had Covid. Máire's niece Emma and her partner Gerry were joining us for a couple of weeks so poor Máire was put in semi-isolation. Emma, Gerry and I took the opportunity to go hiking on nearby Senja. The island is apparently the preferred holiday destination for Norwegians who find the Lofoten Islands a little 'over-touristed'. The climb up Hesten (520m) gave us some spectacular views.

I tested positive a couple of days later so it became my turn to eat dinner in the cockpit for a few days. We wore masks if Covid and non-Covid people were in the same cabin. It did excuse me from cooking and washing up duties though.

We had a lovely time with Emma and Gerry. Emma spent every childhood holiday sailing and she is very at home on a boat. Gerry is relatively new to sailing and he loved the remote anchorages we visited. They are both keen hikers who enjoy an evening sing-song so it was the perfect holiday for all of us. We made our way south anchoring at Helloya, Trollhomen and Svolvaer. Henningsvær is known as 'The Venice of the North' and, after dropping our sails, we motored up the 'main street' to the little marina at the head of the waterway and centre of the town. It is very picturesque.

From Henningsvær, we had a lovely sail to Røyskjaer in light winds. All sails and topsails were set and the scenery was wonderful. I could not resist the temptation. Disobeying



Gerry, Máire and Emma hoisting the mainsail



Annabel J alongside pontoon in Henningsvær 'The Venice of the North'

strict orders not to do so, I flew the replacement drone. I crashed it again.

The sail from Røyskjaer back to Bodø was Emma and Gerry's last leg on this cruise. We have-to-to fish. Emma caught two haddock and soon afterwards Gerry caught five more all on the same line. This was fortunate because it was Sunday, the shops in Bodø were closed and we met a friend, Ollie, who we invited on board for dinner - a sort of 'loaves and fishes' affair.

Máire and I resolved to day-sail south, as far as time would allow, before we had to make the crossing back across the North Sea to Scotland. We anchored in the middle of a rock pool amongst the skerries in Gåsvaer, sailed south of the Arctic Circle into Hjørtøya (Máire's favourite anchorage) and got scared in a dramatic thunderstorm whilst anchored in Moyhamna. The torrential rain lasted much of night but the 9 August dawned into a beautiful sunny day. We motor-sailed in light winds to Rørvik where we stayed alongside for three days waiting for the weather to improve.

Henningsvær as seen from Festvågtdind



Gallery



Sailing along the west of Shetland



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Hannigsvær; Trollfjord; Fisherman's hut on Grip Island; Oskar in Tobermory



OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Our propeller before and after



Andrew and Måre in Røyrskjær





Every cruising area has its own 'Cape Horn' - think of rounding the Mizen Head or Portland Bill. On the Norwegian archipelago, these tend to be the sea areas and headlands without an inner passage which are exposed to the North Sea. The Folda, south of Rørvik falls into this category so we treated it with respect. It was still quite windy when we left in the morning but by mid-morning we had shaken out our two reefs and we ended the passage to Sandnessvågen under power.

We had a long day sailing and motor-sailing the 82 nm from Sandnessvågen to Kristiansund. I liked Kristiansund very much - the town is built around four waterways in the shape of a cross which intersect four islands. We moored alongside in the northern arm close to the excellent Mellemværfet open air maritime museum. We took a boat excursion to the island of Grip which was a klipfisk fishing centre from the ninth century until 1974 when the last permanent inhabitant left. In its heyday the tiny island was home to 2,000 people in the fishing season. The wooden Stave Church was built in 1470 and it was obviously constructed by people familiar with wooden boat building. The beautiful dutch triptych behind the altar was a present from Princess Isabella of Austria who was rescued at sea by Norwegian sailors in a violent storm in 1515.

From Kristiansund, we sailed to Ålesund by way of an overnight anchorage at Vevansåg. Two policemen visited us at Ålesund - they said they had been tracking us on AIS and suspected unregistered British citizens might be onboard. In fact I had had my UK passport stamped by the police when we arrived in Bodø but this had not been entered on 'the system'. Brexit!



Kristiansund

On leaving Ålesund, the engine throttle cable parted. Fortunately we were within heaving line distance of the marina and our former neighbours hauled us alongside an unsuspecting Halberg Rassey. The Norwegian owner returned later and helped us source a spare cable (my spare was too short). We replaced the cable in time to make our way to Raudøyna that evening. It was a short but weatherful passage with heavy rain and southwesterly winds gusting to a near gale F7 in Salafjord. However, the sheltered waters of the archipelago gave us good protection and no cause for concern.

The weather moderated overnight which was much appreciated because the next day's passage was around the Stattlandet peninsula, Norway's most notorious Cape Horn. Many vessels have been lost here and smaller ships wait until the weather is favourable before rounding the headland. A 2 km tunnel, the only one of its kind, is currently being built which will allow ships of up to 16,000 tonnes to steam beneath the peninsula. It is due to be completed in 2026 but was fortunately not required when we rounded on the afternoon of 23 August. The log just records a 'heavy swell'.

We anchored overnight at Rugsund, Hellarshammen, and Byrknesøyna on our way to Bergen - lovely anchorages all. The last day approaching Bergen yielded some especially fine pilotage south across Fensfjord to Fønnesstraumen, Kalandsund,

Bakkosundet, Risasjøen, Radsund, Alversund, Salhusfjord and Byfjord. There were some very narrow passages and, as is often the way, that is where we met the fast ferries coming in the opposite direction.

Óskar, partner of Máire's other niece Sibéal, flew from Iceland to join us in Bergen for the return trip to Scotland. Óskar is a helicopter maintenance engineer and loves all things mechanical - a great person to have on board.

On leaving, we spent a night at anchor in Hufurarøy 28 nm from Bergen before sailing for Scotland. It was Óskar's second sailing trip and his first offshore passage - he seemed to thrive on it. It must be the Viking blood. We thought we saw the northern lights. We had debated the merits of sailing back to Ardrossan by way of the Caledonian Canal or by the north coast of Scotland. We opted for the northern route and threaded our way through the North Sea oil rigs to the Pentland Firth.

Tides through the Firth are notorious and careful planning is needed. They can run up to 12 knots so a certain amount of commitment is required. Fortunately, the metaphorical stars aligned and our ETA coincided with the perfect state of the tide for a transit. The only drawback was that the transit would be at 0400 on a pitch black night. We got to the right place at the right time and after that we were largely at the mercy of nature. We steered west, heading directly for the Duncansby Head light, knowing that our course over the ground was 50° to the north of our heading. It was totally black except for the bright light flashing above us. The Inner Sound sucked us in and spat us out again over the tail end of the Merry Men of Mey at 15 knots (speed over the ground). It was exciting.

We made for Stornoway. It is a tight harbour with little room and I planned to manoeuvre astern into our allotted berth. The control gear seemed to fail and moving the gear lever aft made us go forward faster. Fortunately we were moving slowly and we turned the boat through 180° using the bowthruster. Heaving lines were put to use again and we were pulled into our berth by friendly neighbours.

We berthed alongside at Stornoway on 2 September, 283 nm and 61 hours after weighing anchor at Hufurarøy. We had a good run ashore.

The next day, Óskar and I carefully examined every part of the gear and control mechanism but could not find anything obviously wrong. We lubricated the controls and dived on the folding propeller to see if the blades might be sticking.

On the trip south from the Isle of Lewis to Ardrossan we anchored overnight at Loch Diabailg, South Bay on Eigg, Tobermory, West Loch Tarbert and Lamash.

BELOW: Óskar hoists the main



Tidal calculations were the order of day and we made 12 knots (SOG) transiting Kyle Rhea with a spring tide under our keel. We were conscious that the propeller and/or transmission chain was making strange noises, so dived again to see if the blades were loose - they didn't seem to be.

We returned to Ardrossan on 9 September, serviced the engine, stripped the running rigging and then *Annabel J* was lifted onto the hard three days later. On lifting the boat, we saw our three blade folding propeller was now a two blade propeller!

Earlier in the year, a friend had said he would be very interested in my impressions of Norway. I suspect he was just making polite conversation but I'm going to take him at his word and send him the following: Our Impressions of Norway:

The land: mythical, troll country, Lord of the Rings,

The pilotage: skerry-ful, intricate in places, protected, well marked, plentiful anchorages and pontoons

The people: seafarers, taciturn, conforming, fit, healthy, modest, comfortable, honest

Life: well organised, automated, structured, saunas, excellent mobile coverage, cinnamon buns, high quality

The climate: heatwave, thunderstorms, little wind

Máire and I had a great summer cruising on the Norwegian coast and hope to return soon.

END
2838 words - one for every mile we sailed!



LEFT: Triptych in Stave Church on Grip



Blue Way departed its home mooring at East Down Yacht club on Saturday 22nd June with my father, Graham, my uncle, Kieran, and myself on board. Afternoon tea at the Quoile was followed by a brisk sail across the Lough and a night on a mooring at Castle Ward. An 0500 start the next morning caught the tide out of the narrows but little wind meant motoring as far as Howth Head before a pleasant sail across Dublin Bay into Dun Laoghaire.

There was a pause of about 48 hours before I escaped school amidst the last Leaving Cert exam on Tuesday 25 June. Dad and I were pleased to catch the south going tide around Wicklow Head and into Arklow with a sense that the cruise had begun in earnest. An 0430 departure the next morning caught a couple of hours of south going tide before slow progress down the coast and around Carnsore Point against the stream. Our reward was a blue sky sail around Hook Head and into Dunmore East.

We had a pleasant couple of days in Dunmore East. The Seagull Bakery and the Bay Cafe were highlights for food and I managed a tentative 3km run on return from a tweaked hamstring. We were pleased to see my brother, Fraser, and Mum, Patricia, arrive by car from Belfast via Dublin in time for fish and chips from the East Pier and a one sided Top 14 final.

On Saturday, Mum and Dad took the easy option in the car while Fraser and I endured a damp and lumpy passage to Crosshaven. A good fetch from Ballycotton to Roches Point was some reward. The next morning saw *Blue Way* under gennaker out of Cork Harbour to Kinsale. Lunch at the Bulman never disappoints before we dropped Fraser to Cork train station for a return to Dublin. Monday was a lay day in Kinsale with brunch in the Lemon Leaf and I enjoyed a 5km run to Castlepark Marina and back. The Euros continued to provide good post dinner entertainment.

West Cork

Glandore was the next destination where we also explored Union Hall by dinghy. A drink in the Glandore Inn overlooking the bay is a must while we also took the car to Skibbereen for some provisions. O'Sullivan's Toy & Fuel Shop stocks the increasingly difficult to get Camping Gaz while fresh produce in Fields SuperValu is worth the trip.

On the afternoon of Wednesday 3 July we made the short hop to Castlehaven where we anchored just off the boathouse in good shelter from the fresh westerly. Castletownshend is a delight, there is a spectacular view over the Haven from St Barrahane's Church and I also walked the far shore, landing at Reen in the dinghy. We enjoyed an excellent meal in Mary Ann's on Wednesday evening and music in McCarthy's the next night.

Friday morning was sufficiently settled to allow us to



Sailing, running and driving around Ireland

Matthew Wright



Blueway entering Baltimore Harbour

negotiate the entrance to Barloge Creek where we had morning coffee and explored the rapids at the entrance to Lough Hyne. The afternoon brought *Blue Way* to a visitors' mooring off Baltimore. Mum was hopping ahead in the car and walked to the Beacon to capture *Blue Way* passing through the entrance to the harbour. We were surprised to find there is no longer a pontoon at Sherkin Island but were told it has been removed for a number of years.

Saturday was very fresh but I enjoyed running a 5km loop via the Beacon. 4G signal on the boat was strong enough to see Ireland defeated by the Springboks in the first test. Saturday afternoon 1720 racing in the harbour made for equally impressive viewing with spinnakers being flown in 25kn of breeze. A pizza and a drink in La Jolie Brise in the evening was a satisfying way to round off the day.

Sunshine greeted us on Sunday morning and we made the short passage to the beautiful South Harbour on Cape Clear. We had lunch at Sean Rua's before Mum and I walked the Little Hills Loop. We were pleased to overcome the heavy gorse and accompanying population of flies to the spectacular views of the north side of the island. Cotters were very busy with Cork supporters and we proceeded to make the short hop around to the North Harbour with one eye on the second half of the All Ireland Hurling Final. The pontoons were jam packed so we took onboard some water and made passage to Schull. The following day was a write off with wet and windy conditions. The highlight was a hearty breakfast in Nickie's kitchen and I was pleased to get another 5km run along the shore road.

The Fastnet and rounding the Mizzen

Just as well we saved some energy as Tuesday 9 July was busy. Dad and I sailed out of Schull Harbour at 0930 bound for the Fastnet. Flying the drone in a 2-3m swell is not to be recommended but we managed to recover it with a few good shots of *Blue Way* at 'The Rock'. By lunchtime we were on a visitors' mooring at Crookhaven where we met Mum in the car and proceeded to Barley Cove and a walk to the viewing point at Mizzen Head. Back in Crookhaven we caught our breath and made the short passage to Goleen. The entrance is not for the faint-hearted. We tied alongside a fishing boat and explored the 'cleft in the rocks' as described in the Club's pilot book. The smell of dinner emanated from the companionway by the time we picked up the visitors' mooring again



At anchor in Barloge Creek

in Crookhaven but there was still time to catch the second half of the Spain v France Euro semi-final in O'Sullivan's. What a day. We slept well.

Wednesday saw us round the Mizen and enjoy a gentle sail to Ahakista - previously uncharted territory for us. We will not pass by Dunmanus Bay again, the food in Arundels By The Pier was excellent and the Tin Pub must have one of the best views from a beer garden in Ireland. We watched the second Euro semi-final that evening on the iPad which saw England defeat the Netherlands with a late winner.

When reading the Club's Sailing Directions one

winter's evening I had put an asterisk beside Pulleen Harbour, about 1.5nm west of the entrance to Castletownbere. A gentle offshore breeze the next day provided ideal conditions for exploration and we edged our way in. The heavily forested high rise shores make for stunning surroundings and our anchor held just long enough to capture the anchorage with the drone. The aerial photographs reveal the very narrow passage to the inner anchorage but we were not brave enough for that on this occasion.

Later that day, we tied up in my favourite marina in Ireland, Lawrence Cove, and Mum joined us as the only passenger on Murphy's ferry from Pontoon. Bere Island wins the prize for the most scenic 5km



Blue Way in Pulleen Harbour

loop of this year's cruise, out along the road from the marina to Lonehort Harbour and back via the Gaelic grounds. Murphy's Post Office & Shop has an excellent café out the back and we enjoyed breakfast here the next morning.

Glengarriff was calling later on Friday and we anchored inside the occupied visitor moorings. Mum and I ran the Glengarriff Parkrun on Saturday morning which takes place in the Glengarriff Nature Reserve. We took the car to Bantry before midday to meet Fraser who rejoined us via train and bus from Dublin through Cork. Lunch and provisioning in Bantry was on a tight timeframe as we needed to be back onboard for Ireland's 2nd test against

the Springboks. And just as well we were, our celebrations of that last minute drop goal may have caused some disturbance among the other yachts in these typically tranquil surroundings.

Into the Kingdom

That evening, we returned to Lawrence Cove to shorten the following day's passage around the Beara Peninsula, including the passage under the cable car at Dursey Sound. Mum and Dad took the car and made it to Dursey in time to see us proceed tentatively under the cable. Pictures taken from ashore revealed more than ample clearance but it is always a nervous affair from deck level. The Irish



Blue Way in Goleen



More than ample clearance in Dursey Sound



Patricia and Matthew Glengarriff Parkrun

Times had recommended Helen's Bar at Bunaw and so we proceeded up Kenmare River to Kilmackilloge. The outdoor seats along the pier were full with live music adding to the atmosphere. The food was excellent and the hospitality even better when the landlady opened up their cosy wedding venue so that a small crowd of us could enjoy the Men's Final from Wimbledon.

We made the short hop across the Kenmare River later that afternoon to pick up a visitors' mooring adjacent to Oysterbed Pier at Sneem. Determined to see the Euros Final, we thought we'd chance the

Matthew, Nick and Fraser leaving Fenit



Parknasilla and hoped we would blend in with the residents. It was difficult to tell whether the audience were in support of the English or not! Departure on Monday 15 July was delayed while some weather passed through but we enjoyed a wander around Sneem and breakfast ashore. Derrynane was the next port of refuge and it continues to take your breath away. We were grateful for a visitors' mooring as the number of small moorings would make anchoring a squeeze. The 5km run the next morning through the dunes and along the beach was definitely the toughest of the trip and brunch in Derrynane House was hard earned. We took the car to Waterville late morning before returning for an afternoon of exploring and relaxing on the beach.

A fresh south-westerly on Wednesday morning gave us a good blast inside the Skelligs and we were bowling along the north shore of Valentia Island as the breeze freshened again. Up the Valentia River and into Cahersiveen we went. It is a charming town and we enjoyed an afternoon on the Main Street. It was Mum's last night providing shore support and so we thought we'd use the luxury of the car to head to the Fisherman's Pub in Portmagee. Full marks for the recommendation from a friend.

New crew onboard

Dingle was calling next and the weather dictated a two night stay, hardly a chore. The shower pump gave up at 1800 on Thursday evening, a bit of a first world problem. My cousin Nick was coming to join us from London via Cork airport the next day. Nick made a flyby visit to Union Chandlery in Cork on his way to catch the bus to Tralee and we had the new pump fitted shortly after his arrival at lunchtime on

RIGHT: Matthew, Graham and Nick walking to Joe Watty's, Inishmore

Friday. Dick Mack's was the hostelry of choice that evening followed by dinner at The Boathouse.

We were keen to get moving the next day and had hoped to land on the Blaskets. Experience now says that The Blasket Sound in a NW 5 over tide is not to be recommended! There was certainly no stopping at Great Blasket and we were very glad to ease off and clear the cliffs at Brandon Head. Nick's steaks went down a treat on board in Fenit marina and a drink in the clubhouse at Tralee Bay Sailing Club was fair reward.

In spite of the weather, we continued to press ahead on Sunday 21 July. The wind was fair at least and we rolled our way north as far as Kilronan, Inishmore. Rain shrouded the island upon arrival and didn't cease the whole evening. The sight of the 4 of us walking into Joe Watty's Pub in full foulies brought a few strange looks from the locals. It was brighter the next morning and we were greeted by probably the best dolphin show we have ever seen at the entrance to Rossaveal. There is no shortage of fish in the ocean based on the size of these dolphins.

Before midday we were on a bus from Rossaveal towards Galway. We had lunch in the excellent Blackrock Cottage at Salthill and Nick was determined to have a swim despite low tide and the diving board being closed. Nick departed for Belfast soon after while Fraser, Dad and I caught the bus back to Bearna where there is a good SuperValu for provisions. A friend hosted us for afternoon tea and we enjoyed the comforts of the sitting room with a stunning view over Galway Bay.

From Galway into Mayo

We continued north the next morning and dropped anchor in Gorteen Bay for lunch and some exploring. With sufficient rise in the tide we then crossed the bar to Roundstone. Accessible diesel is hard to come by in these parts so we took the opportunity to top up some jerry cans from the pump on the village street. A drink in hand at the front of O'Dowds, *Blue Way* anchored just off the pier and a view towards the Twelve Bens of Connemara remains etched in the memory. The gentle bump of the keel about half an hour before low water around 0100 is a memory that we will cherish somewhat less. Clearly there was not quite enough water for *Blue Way* at low water springs - a bit of an arithmetic error from the maths teacher on board!

The next morning was one for the purist; grey, damp and a fresh south westerly but we enjoyed an exhilarating sail around Slyne Head. The young sailors at Clifden were not deterred and they had just launched when we were picking up a visitors' mooring in the bay at 1115. With a glimmer of brightness in the sky, we enjoyed the walk along the shore into the town. The traditional roast dinner in



On the Square was good value and back at the boat club a member kindly arranged for Ireland's Olympic 7s game to be put on the big screen.

Thursday 25 July was one of those unforgettable days on the West Coast. We extricated ourselves from the swell bound approaches to Clifden Bay before enjoying a tide assisted sail through High Island Sound and around the eastern tip of Inishbofin. The anchor bit hard beyond the sandy beach of Rusheen Bay. The Galley Café in the East Village is to be highly recommended. We were there for opening at noon and enjoyed an excellent lunch with the mast of *Blue Way* still in sight.

The freshening westerly then saw us charge across to Inishurk where we hung on a visitors' mooring. The Club's sailing directions describe this as 'Ireland's

Graham and Fraser on the west coast



most captivating island' and we would agree. Fraser and I walked a 5km loop via the bustling community centre, the hidden harbour at Portdoon and the breathtaking Páirc Na hOileán. The Páirc must rank only second to Thomond Park as Ireland's most imposing sports ground.

By 1700 we were running before a F5 into Clew Bay. We were met at Dorinish Bar by 20+ racing boats beating to windward in Mayo Sailing Club's Thursday night racing. The outer visitors mooring in Collan More Harbour, Rosmoney had just enough depth for our 2.3m draft at low water, my arithmetic was better this time. Dinner onboard and a pint in the busy clubhouse wrapped off a memorable day.

At high water the next morning we came alongside the pontoon to take onboard water before Fraser departed on the train to Dublin at 1300. Dad and I enjoyed a day ashore in Westport where friends hosted us for dinner that evening and we enjoyed their stunning view over Clew Bay and towards Croagh Patrick.

The North West corner

We retraced our path between the drumlins of Clew Bay on Saturday morning and headed out to Clare Island where the sun shone for much of the day. I set out with good intentions on another 5k but the steep sides of Knockaveen made it more of a climb than a run. The panoramic view at the top, north towards Achill Island, east including Clew Bay and Croagh Patrick and South towards Inishbofin and Inishturk made it worth the sweat. A swim was even required to cool off.

On Sunday 28 July, a freshening southerly gave us a superb sail around Achill Head, inside the Inishkeas, round Erris Head and into Donegal Bay. We had intended to stop at Ballyglass but the sailing was so good that it seemed a shame to stop. We continued

Matthew at Páirc na hOileán, Inishturk



on down the coast, past the spectacular Downpatrick Head, and into Kilcummin. The 4G signal was good enough to stream the All Ireland football final on the approach and there was a great buzz from the bar on the shore. A British couple, Nigel and Alison, on board the Cornish Pilot Cutter *Maeve*, invited us onboard for an evening drink.

We both departed sharply the next morning with the forecast southerly set to freshen as we proceeded across Donegal Bay. With gusts of 30kn beyond Malin More Head, *Blue Way* topped 11kn in the surf. We put all of our 200ft of chain onto the sandy bottom off the fantastic beach at Church Pool, Portnoo as the wind whistled through the rigging. With the tide out it was a long pull of the dinghy up the beach and it was even longer on the way back when there was nowhere open for an evening meal.

Before departure the next day I enjoyed an adventure in the dinghy across the sandbar inside Inishkeel to land in time for the shop opening at 0800 at Portnoo. Shortly after 0900 we were under iron lady, making passage outside Arranmore, through Owey Sound and into Cruit Bay. We had intended to return to Bunbeg but a phonecall with the Harbourmaster about the depth in the approaches to Gweedore Harbour did not fill me with confidence. Gortnasate Quay, with deep water alongside, seemed like a good alternative and we secured to a fishing boat for a couple of hours. A local taxi driver took me to a nearby filling station for diesel and we topped up the water tanks with the tap on the pier. The quay is accessible at all states of the tide, benefits from the shelter of surrounding rocky outcrops and is a useful harbour for replenishing for deep drafted vessels.

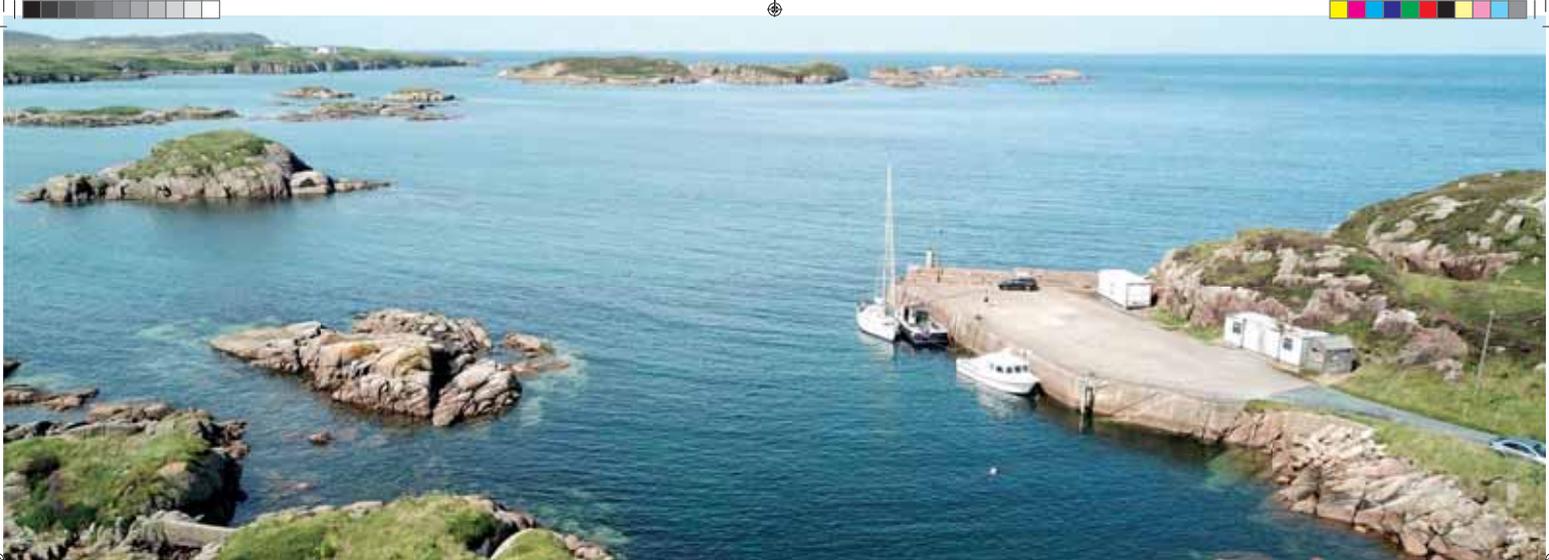
Gola Island was calling in the mid-afternoon sun but we found the main anchorage to be somewhat exposed to the swell and so decided to press on to Tory Island. We followed the leading marks at the entrance carefully and tied up alongside the harbour



wall at the ferry berth, having passed the last ferry of the day bound for Magheraarty. What we didn't know is that there is also a smaller fast ferry which arrived into the harbour at 2030. Our lines were temporarily cast off, all in a very polite manner!

The fender plank moving up and down the harbour wall did not make for a particularly peaceful night's sleep so we were happy to be underway again at

0800 on Wednesday morning. We tried Pincher Bay, in the shadow of Fanad Head Lighthouse, as a lunch stop and to wait for the tide to turn at Malin Head. The surroundings were pleasant but the headland does little to stave off the swell. The passage inside the Garvan Isles at Malin Head is tricky and we would think twice about it again. We did benefit from a favourable tide which carried us against a short chop



Blue Way at Gortnasate Quay

the whole way to Portrush where Mum was stood on the pier to wave us in and re-establish shore support.

The North Coast

Breakfast is good in the White House and we departed shortly after for Portballintrae, a holiday village we know well having spent many summers here growing up. There are two large yellow moorings in the bay, what we presumed to be visitors' moorings, to which we secured. The small shop near the beach has basic provisions and fishing



Annual 15.50 2 DEC.indd 19-20

tackle and we enjoyed an ice cream in the sun. Later, we made passage to Ballycastle where my Aunt Vivien, and Uncle Alan, joined us for a Morton's Fish and Chip on board. Friday 3 August would bring a pause to our circumnavigation as I had to fulfil groomsman duties at a friend's wedding in England the following week.

I returned to Ballycastle on Saturday 10 August with friends Robert, Jonny and Chris. It was a bright and breezy day so we brought our hiking boots and set off on the Fairhead An Bealach Runda walk. The route follows the cliff edge and makes a great viewing point across the North Channel to the Mull of Kintyre. After working up an appetite we treated ourselves to dinner in the Salthouse Hotel. The coincidence of a chess board on the coffee table in the waiting room kicked off the chess competition for the week. Robert was not very happy to lose out to me in match #1.

In light of the previous evening's activities, the crew requested a leisurely departure the next morning. Jonny and Robert deployed the fishing lines as we were swept sideways crossing Rathlin Sound. In short, fish were scarce. Chris took the ferry back to Ballycastle after a couple of hours while the beautiful day persuaded Jonny, Robert and me to rent bicycles. We visited all three lighthouses - Rue Point, the East Light and the West Light - with time for an excellent Sunday roast at the Manor House overlooking the

Johnny, Matthew and Robert on the Bealach Runda Walk

harbour in between. The 4.5 miles from Church Bay out to the West Light was a bit more than we bargained for and there were only a handful of games of darts and pool that night in McCuaigs. We walked at a more leisurely pace the next morning before some relaxing on board and an al fresco lunch in the cockpit. The intention had been to hop across to the Inner Hebrides but the forecast southerlies left us in doubt about when we might get back. Instead, we took the west going tide back along the coast to Portrush. After a hearty feed in the Harbour Bar, Robert insisted that us 30 year olds would try out some of the amusements at Currys Fun Park. Their latest addition, a large pendulum type ride that simultaneously spins you around in circles while swinging your head over heels left Jonny with a rollercoaster version of mal de mer. Live music in the Harbour Bar was extra entertainment.

The pontoons in Portrush were rather rolly in the 25-30kn NW breeze on Tuesday and we were glad of the busy town and nearby East Strand to get off the boat. Jonny was delighted to pick up a chess board on the high street and an easing of conditions in the evening meant that the chess pieces would now stay on the board. Jonny pulled off a Scholar's mate - a 4 move Checkmate - much to Robert's disgust.

Homeward bound

Wednesday 14 August was much calmer and the passage to Glenarm was memorable for Robert's bacon buddies enroute and the seaward view of the rugged Glens of Antrim. Glenarm is very sleepy in comparison to Portrush but we enjoyed the change of pace, in particular the excellent eateries at Glenarm Castle and some more games of chess. By this time Robert had taken over the lead in the championship.

We departed Glenarm on Thursday around lunchtime with the south going tide and were helped down the coast into Bangor by a gentle northerly. Robert and Jonny stepped off that evening and Mum and Dad rejoined for dinner onboard. My Uncle, Kieran, who had been with us for the first passage of our circumnavigation joined again for the last. It was a brisk sail, hard on 20 kn of breeze under reefed main and staysail. We were grateful for the south going tide before the flood flushed us down the narrows and back into the protection of Strangford Lough. We enjoyed dinner in the cockpit and a quick toast on the way across the Lough to pick up our home mooring for the first time in almost two months. In spite of the very mixed weather, our circa 900nm circumnavigation of Ireland will live long in the memory. It remains a cruise of challenge and reward in equal measure.



Cruise to the Ionian

Robert Barker

Kir Royale in Platarias

On Sunday 9 June 2024, Bill and Catherine Walsh and Muireann Ni Dhuigneáin joined Pat and me in Grand Harbour Valetta at 2300. We prepared to depart the following day at 0700.

We took in our lines in the marina at 0655 and set our course for Syracuse in Sicily. Wind 0-1 var, weather fair, visibility moderate, baro reading 1020 mb. We set the speed at 10 kn. The wind rose gradually to SE 4-5, and it was gusting F6 as we approached the fuel dock in Syracuse at 1500. We were a bit confused, firstly by the unforecast afternoon wind strength and secondly, by the total disappearance of the marina. There was a series of buoys scattered around the approaches to the fuel dock, which made for a tricky slalom navigation in the freshening wind.

Eventually, we successfully tied up and filled with fuel. The fuel dock crew told us in broken English something about a cruise ship and a gale. When we googled the story, it became clear that, in January 2024, in the teeth of a howling storm, the cruise ship *MSC Simphonía* had broken her lines and crashed into the marina, destroying all the pontoons and sinking several yachts. There is now an insurance 'discussion' in progress. So, it might be some considerable time before the marina is restored to its former state. Because of the difficulty coming alongside, the fuel gentleman told us that nobody else would be coming in that afternoon and that we could stay tied up until our departure the following morning. In the disturbed conditions that prevailed as we filled with fuel, Pat tripped and cracked her skull and ended up with a proper shiner for much of the rest of the cruise.

We departed at 0700 next day. The NW 3 wind made for a lumpy sea across the Straits of Messina, and increased to F4-5. Once through the straits, the wind abated and we arrived, after 96M at 1530 to a warm welcome at Rocella Ionica. We refuelled again, as the news from St. Maria di Leuca (our next proposed destination) was bad – the chat around the Rocella marina was that the Leuca marina was closed for renovation works. However, when contacted, they kept saying to call later and that they might be able to take us. We departed next day with a S 1 – 2, Baro 1010, and moderate sea. At 1200 we reviewed our situation and decided that our best bet was to go straight for Corfu. We slowed down to 7kn and set up

Breakfast at Gouvia - Robert and Clare



Pre-prandials at Viikho. Joan, Pat, Robert, Mary and Michael

night watches which ensured that we didn't reach the Greek coast until daybreak. We sighted the islands off the NW of Corfu at 0430. Visibility was poor at the coast and the rain started – it was like Donegal on a good day. The wind was SE 2-3, baro steady and a flat sea. We passed the MSC boat the *Simphonía* and gave her a wide berth!

We arrived at Gouvia marina at noon on Thursday 13th, and were glad we had booked a place as there were hoards of flotilla boats coming in to escape the gale forecast for the following day. We stayed put on the marina and sat out the gale that took all day to pass through. Robert and Bill replaced the fitting on the fly bridge fridge door, fitted a new bracket for the outboard engine and found a solution (that they didn't understand) to the mystery of the trim tabs that had refused to work for the duration of our passage from Malta. The solution seemed to centre around 'Switch the whole lot off and then switch on again'. We intended to dine ashore, but got stuck into glasses of wine and a heavy discussion about local election results, European elections

and the potential for a general election in October. Exhausted by the discourse, we melted into the cockpit with another glass of cooling ale and we produced plates of crackers and cheese and home cooked ham to sustain us to debate well into the night.

On Saturday 15 June we bought a new gas container and tried to solve the riddle of the smell of gas in the gas locker. We tried unsuccessfully to buy ethylene glycol for the gas safety monitor which identifies bubbles from escaping gas, but no luck. Pat wanted to buy a new Leatherman for Bill, she having accidentally thrown his leatherman into the sea.

We left Gouvia marina at 1305 and sailed over to the mainland to Paganía for a gentle isolated night at anchor. Once we had navigated the very intimidating fish farms across the entrance we found a lovely sheltered cove, with approx 5 m. Only one other boat joined us for the night. It is a grand little anchorage and gave plenty of opportunity to view the stars without any light pollution. This anchorage is just on the Albanian border (400 metres away) and

Crew in Gouvia. L-R: Bill, Robert, Mary, Catherine, Clare, Pat and Michael



as we were getting Albanian telephone connections, we hastily switched off our roaming.

On Sunday 16 June, we weighed anchor and headed for Platarias in a flat sea with variable wind. We arrived at 1530 to discover that the west pier has been developed since our last visit in 2019. The harbour master, Bambis, guided us in and indicated that he had tailed lines, which was nice when we were just preparing to chuck out our anchor over the bow. Power and water is free, although there no shower block yet. At €35 for the night, it seemed very fair. We dined at Olgas and found it was chaotic and not yet seasoned up to deal with the volume of customers from the flotilla boats which lined the east pier. Bambis suggested we call him if we wanted to return to ensure a space on the quay. We decided to have another day in Platarias and discovered Bambis's restaurant, Officers, on the waterfront. We spent a very pleasant afternoon watching the flotilla boats trying to park, with varying degrees of success, along the quay wall. We took ourselves off to the beach for a swim after some shopping in this delightful little harbour. Dinner at Officers was good and Bambi and his mother were the chief chefs. We definitely planned to come back here.

On Tuesday 18 June, we cast off our lines at 1330. Pat had a morning meeting of the Board of the PA and the decks were washed down before departure. We headed for Mourtos in the hope of finding a space in this diminishing anchorage. The buoys marking off the swimming area have advanced since our last time here. There were already several boats at anchor taking lines ashore which left no room, so we dropped anchor to the north east side of the outer perimeter. The holding was not great and it was deep, but we managed to get it to hold. There was a little scend on the anchorage overnight although

it was not uncomfortable. We found the source of the gas leak, using washing up liquid to detect bubbles. On Wednesday 19, we weighed anchor at 1100 bound for Paxos and Lakka. We arrived 1230 and the place was jammers. We tried to squeeze into a small space on the quay, but the fisherman whose space it actually was, turned up and roared at us. We tried a couple of times to find a space in the crowded anchorage and then found a spot close to the beach, where our shallow draught was useful. More boats poured in during the course of the afternoon. The day tripper boats left at 1430, which left some space on the quay wall – clearly mid-week is popular with the flotillas. It would seem that Lakka is best avoided until the weekend when they are returning to their respective bases. We rowed ashore and dropped Bill and Robert at the bar while the girls had a late swim and shower. After dinner ashore Robert took an unplanned swim between the dinghy and the dock.

We weighed anchor at 0710, bound for Prevesa in calm conditions. A dolphin and turtle were spotted at the entrance to Lakka. The 36 nm passage to Prevesa was very pleasant. Pat had her scheduled meeting on Teams, using her hotspot until her phone expired with the heat. The temperature 32° and it was very hot on the concrete marina. Prevesa has nice showers, a laundry, a fair chandlery and restaurant. It was tough work walking 2km to the supermarket and on our return, everyone stood under the hose on the bathing platform – posh showers eschewed.

On 21 June, we were up early for geriatric gym activities and a walk along the seafront in the (relative) cool. Various maintenance jobs were performed and lines dropped at noon as we left the marina in 38° bound for Vonitsa. En route, the holding tank macerator refused to pump out. Robert and Bill did a temporary job and freed it, but they



Entrance to Gaios

felt it would not hold. Several turtles were spotted. Having arrived in Vonitsa we anchored in 3.5 m to the east of North Koukounitsa on the southern shore. The bay was busy with anchoring yachts. The temperature was touching 40°. We all leapt into the sea as soon as the anchor was set.

During the afternoon, a neighbouring boat launched a paddle board and the learner crew, taking shouted instructions from the stern of the yacht, started drifting away and could not get back. Her partner had difficulty launching his dinghy and then, in desperation, dived in and started swimming towards the now panicking board sailor. Before long, they were both in trouble, and Bill and Robert took our dinghy to their rescue. The boys then engaged in major brain surgery of the holding tank pump and after much hot endeavour, they reassembled it and Eureka! it worked. The macerator blades needed cleaning. We sat on the fly bridge as the sun set and then very suddenly the full moon popped up from behind the mountain and cast a silver pathway towards us over the water. A beautiful evening for the summer solstice.

On 22nd, we were up early for exercise and swimming and then stowed the dinghy and set off at 0825, bound for Gaios distance 40 nm. The

forecast was for stiff westerlies for the afternoon, so we travelled at 10 kn to try to assure ourselves of a good spot on the quay with power and water access. We spent the afternoon people-watching and hiding from the heat. We were entertained by a Greek dancing troupe along the quay before dinner. There was a powercut for the afternoon and that required turning on the generator to keep the batteries charged. Apparently, this happens a lot and the power and water pillars have a habit of packing up spasmodically, even when you have paid the €12 for a token. So, it's worthwhile topping up with water as soon as you arrive and then topping up regularly.

Next day we took in our lines and hauled anchor noon, bound for Benitses in good weather. Thank goodness we did not get foul of the anchor chains, for which Gaios is famous and had a pleasant trip to Benitses (27 nm). Pat had booked a space in the smart new marina and the mariniero came out to meet us and guide us in. There is power and water on each berth with a shower block and laundry at the office. The marina restaurant offered good plain fare at a reasonable price. Later in the month, when Michael suffered from swelling of his legs and ankles, he visited the local clinic in Benitses. They were concerned, although many northern Europeans suffer in this way due to the heat and sunshine.

Greek folk dancers in Gaios





Sunset at Mandraki marina

Michael received very good care from the doctor and nearby hospital and was back on his feet again within ten hours.

Next day we walked along the beach and exercised before the heat of the day kicked in. There are two little supermarkets opposite the marina, which we visited. We dropped our lines and had a good passage to Valtou, (14nm), for a last night on anchor for Catherine, Bill and Muireann. The holding tank pump problem re-emerged and we couldn't get the macerator to work. Bill and Robert did another open brain operation on the macerator: it seemed that the impeller needed adjustment, which did the trick. Robert also mended the catch on the forward hatch – the screw had sheared and needed replacing. The windscreen wipers were repaired. Everyone swam again in the lovely quiet anchorage. On Tuesday 25 we had a nice passage to Gouvia, (19 nm). The wind freshened to NW 3 as we pulled into Gouvia.

We stayed in Gouvia on Tue 25, Wed 26 and Thu 27 as Bill, Catherine and Muireann left and Michael and Mary McCann and Clare Balfie joined us. We bought a replacement impeller and two new seals for the macerator pump. On Friday 28 Pat and Robert took an early morning hike up to a hardware shop, called Technomarket. We were told that they had absolutely every tool, fixture and building supply

item that anyone could want. Robert needed a T20 screwdriver and, lo and behold, they had it in stock.

For the next four weeks, we re-visited some of the same places with Clare and then with Joan O'Grady. Instead of changing crew in Gouvia, we had arranged for a berth for a couple of nights in the Yacht Club at Mandraki which is actually closer to the airport and right under the fortress at Corfu town, so very convenient in lots of ways. There is power, water and a shower block (although no laundry) and an excellent restaurant on the marina. It is a busy spot and booking is essential to be sure of a berth. Other places we visited during the following four weeks of pottering around the islands were:

Sagiadha: (39°37'.52N, 20°10'.83E) This harbour is not heavily used. The wind started to increase as we entered the very narrow entrance, but we got through comfortably. It is only suitable for entering or leaving in flat conditions with little wind. The anchor was chucked out over the bow and we set lines ashore onto the concrete wall. We were helped by Greek neighbours who took our lines, which was just as well, as the top of the wall was well outside our leaping capacity. Water on the wall, but no power and no shower block. The passerelle had to be padded to access the quay wall. We dined ashore and had the cheapest dinner of the cruise. There is a

supermarket and bakery up the hill about 1 km which are well stocked. We called into the port authority (border station) office and our documentation, including vignette and passports were examined and approval issued. This is the closest point to the Albanian border, so we were glad to have that clearance, just in case.

Two Rock Bay: (39°12'.42N, 20°29'.52E). We decided to take a chance on anchoring in Two Rock Bay, in spite of a forecast for stiff onshore wind, and rocks at the entrance. It was difficult to spot, and as it opened out, we realised that it was pretty full. There were 14 boats there before us, but we dropped the anchor in the NW corner and prayed for good holding. The wind dropped from W 5 to Var 0 – 1 overnight and although there was a residual swell, it was not uncomfortable. We listened on and off to the results from the British elections overnight. As predicted, a landslide for the Labour Party. This is a lovely undeveloped little bay with good shelter and well worth a visit.

Petriti: This is a handy little anchorage with good shelter from the prevailing NW wind south of Benitses on Corfu. It has cute shore-side eateries which serve a mean Greek breakfast if you break out the dinghy.

Robert barbequing at Mourtos anchorage



26 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



Pat with nibbling fish

Levkas Marina: This is a fine marina with all facilities and a fresh water swimming pool. We fuelled up here and the ladies had a wonderful time in the sophisticated shopping centre. We all partook in a very sophisticated session with our feet in a fish tank and thousands of little sprats nibbling at our feet and legs. A strange and cleansing experience!!

Vlikho: We had two lovely, relaxed days at anchorage in Vlikho on Levkas, with several trips ashore to the Yacht Club, run by an Irishman and his British wife who make Irish breakfasts and dinners that provided welcome relief from six weeks of Moussaka, Keftedes, Soutzoukakia, Stifado, Souvlaki and Greek Salad. Excellent shelter here and good holding.

Spartakhori (on Meganisi): This is a nice spot on Meganisi, but although we had rung ahead to the Taverna, the only space left for us was on the outer mole without tailed lines, power or water. This would not be good in anything other than really calm conditions.

Vathi (on Meganisi) is a lovely spot. Odysseas Marina has laid moorings to the quay and power and water. They are busy and booking ahead is essential here.

Sivota (on Levkas) was our jumping off point for the passage back to Malta. It is a very popular little spot and booking ahead for a berth is also a good idea. The berths, power and water are free provided you dine at one of the tavernas. They had supplies for the passage, but we were unable to top up with fuel as the tanker only comes at 0900 and fuel cannot be acquired at any other time.

Our passage back to Malta had to be planned very carefully. The winds were much stronger than normal for July in the Ionian and across the Malta Channel. We watched for suitable weather windows all the way across, balancing the weather with fuel consumption and speed to optimise the safety and comfort of the passage. Although we had originally planned to cross on Thursday 25 July, our only opportunity to jump was leaving Greece on Saturday 20th and, rather than stopping off in Sicily for an overnight, going straight for Valetta.

We left Sivota at 0500 on Saturday morning and arrived at Valetta on Sunday at 1715 – a passage distance of 341nm and total distance travelled for our 2024 cruise of 1,125 nm.

It was noticeable to us that there was more wind than normal. Instead of afternoon breezes falling away in the evening and overnight, we experienced many days when winds of F4 – 5 blew from midday until almost midnight. We observed that it was certainly hotter than we had experienced in previous years, with temperatures in excess of 35° being fairly common from early June and some days with 40°+.

Additionally, we noticed a fall off in the number of sightings of cetacea and turtles compared with previous years. Life was made easier when we had rung ahead to book for berths where it was possible and it took the stress out of arriving in a destination unsure whether we could get in or would have to find an anchorage. Contact details attached in Table opposite.

We had a good cruise, characterised by fair winds and sunny skies and with a good smattering of repairs and maintenance to keep us entertained with emotions ranging from sinking heart on discovering the failure, through hope that it could be fixed, to final ecstatic success (particularly when the job related to the heads).



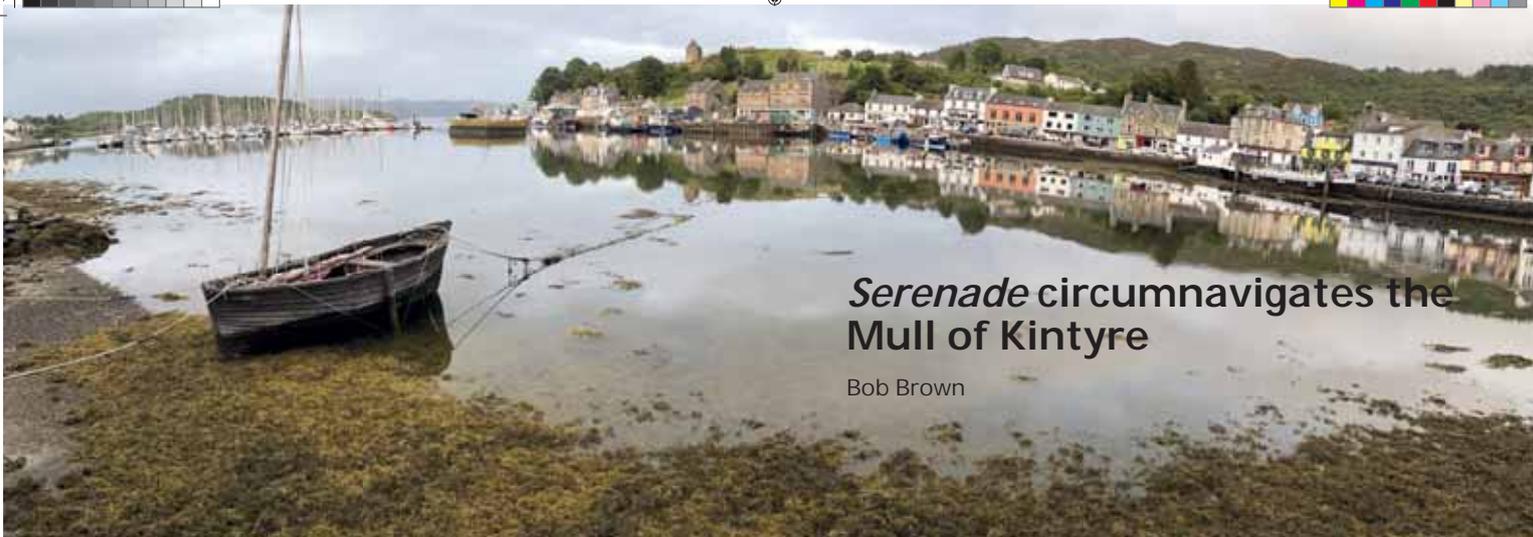
Sundowners at Levkas. L.R. Michael, Pat, Joan and Robert

| Berth | Telephone | VHF Channel | email |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| Gouvia Marina | +302661091900 | 69 | gouvia@medmarinas.com |
| Berithea Marina | +302661072627 | 67 | info@beritheatmarina.com |
| Pagalari Harbour (Statis Konstantinou) | +306942853942 | 12 | Storantzinou4@gmail.com |
| Odysses Marina (Vathi) | +302645051084 | 72 | welcome@odysseamarina.com |
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| Taverna Stavros (Sivota) | +302645031181 | | |
| Spilia Beach Taverna (Spartakhori) | +302645051616 | | |
| Litochi Restaurant (Sivota) | +302645031870 | | |
| Levkas Marina | +302645026645 | 69 | k.p.@medmarinas.com |
| Preveza Marina | +302682025199 | 71 | info@prevezamarina.com |

Mirror conditions at the anchorage at Pagania



ABOVE: Mirror conditions in Pagania Bay



Serenade circumnavigates the Mull of Kintyre

Bob Brown

East Loch Tarbert

Going bravely where several thousand yachts have gone before...
Having escaped the confines of Strangford Lough, our plan was – ‘no plan.’ Just as well: the vagaries of June weather meant that we were always dodging Atlantic weather systems – two days overcast, two days rain and wind, two days bright, and then repeat as necessary.

We assembled aboard *Serenade*, our Moody 346, on 20 June – the summer solstice: Linda and I, with Dave Thompson and Celia Spouncer from near Portaferry. At 1130 we cast off from Strangford’s pontoon, punching the flood tide in the narrows, and picking up the north-going ebb along the outer Ards coast, giving us about 7kn. We cleared Donaghadee Sound before the tide turned and once through, nipped across Belfast Lough, and enjoyed the much more interesting Antrim coast, especially close to Muck Island, so named for its ‘sea pigs’, namely porpoises. Here, despite the ravages of avian flu, there was a vigorous colony of kittiwakes and common guillemots, to judge by the birds rafting in the nearby waters and the white spattering the cliff ledges. Puffins too, in small numbers offshore – if only it was possible to keep the island free of rats, I’m sure a good colony of these popular little birds would get well established.

Then into Glenarm at 1900, with its safe little marina, where you could sit out a hurricane if you like that sort of thing. Billy McClelland and his assistant Davey were as ever unfailingly helpful and friendly, and although the village may be one of the sleepest places on the Antrim coast, we decided to stay for a day.

Don’t knock sleepy places. Glenarm Castle, for centuries the seat of the Earls of Antrim – the McDonnell family – has an extensive garden covering the slopes around the castle, and given their love of gardening and exotic plant combinations, Dave and Celia were soon wandering, occasionally glimpsed emerging from behind flower beds and voluminous hedges dividing the whole area into different ‘rooms’, each with its own character. Then it was a brisk walk through the woods alongside the Glenarm River, where you are absolutely guaranteed to see red squirrels scampering up the tree trunks in the dappled shade. The river is a beautiful torrent of dark waters swirling over a rocky bed, fed by streams tumbling through small ravines. Of course, no squirrels.

At 1040 on the 22 June, we put our nose out, aiming for Gigha off the Mull of Kintyre, punching the last hour of south-going flood. A nice SW 3 allowed us to run out the genoa as soon as we’d cleared the

nearby fish farm. This gave us a bit of a lift for a while before the breeze died again. It was an easy crossing northward to the Mull, each of us taking an hour’s watch, and seemingly we got the tide just about right because as we proceeded along the Mull’s western shore, a current lifted our speed to about 9kn. After little over five hours we were passing the little islet of Cara, then turning into Ardminish Bay, ready to pick up a mooring, assuming the pontoon would be crowded. It wasn’t, so out with lines and fenders, and just as we were coming alongside a brisk southerly breeze sprang up, pinning us against the pontoon near its outer end. If only the wind had come earlier and given us a real run under sail!

Nonetheless, we were safely tied up, although with *Serenade* having 1.8m draft, I spent a while watching the small tidal range in case we grounded. No problems, but I wouldn’t like to go any further in than the outer two sections. By contrast, a couple of cabin cruisers, with shallow drafts, had moored well in. By the time we were sorted, the sky darkened, and a generous drizzle ensured that everything got a bit damp and soggy. However, below decks all was well, and an outbreak of drinking and eating ensued, everyone happy that we were now in Scottish waters.

We decided to stay a couple of nights, and the following day Gigha was at its best, with a light

warm breeze and blue skies. The island is relatively low lying although the rocky outcrops afford great views of the anchorage, and much of it is scattered farmland and dotted cottages linked by a little road that runs the length of the island. Linda managed to entice everyone with ideas of lunchtime ice creams in the Wee Isle Cafe, with its glorious array of different flavours. Everyone slurped through ‘bramble and peat’ (with hints of Islay malt), or ‘marmalade,’ or ‘coffee crunch’, with about another dozen untested. Worthy of attention from even the saltiest mariner.

Achamore Gardens is about a mile along the road to the south. Because of the gulf stream it escapes excessive winter cold, and is almost subtropical in character, glorious in the June sunshine, innumerable species in full bloom, sending Dave and Celia into yet more ecstasies. Then a short walk up to a large standing stone, some two metres high and roughly square with 1400-year-old Ogham script along one edge, but so eroded and smothered with lichens that the name, possibly of a local chief, is lost. Apparently the only translatable bit is ‘son of’ so not surprisingly he was a bloke who had a father, which isn’t very helpful.

From there we wandered along a rough path to the south of the island, offering views of the rocky



Port a'Gharaidh, Gigha

bay Port a' Gharaidh, echoing to the piping of oystercatchers, with Islay and Jura in the distance. Whilst Celia plunged into the sea, Linda and I wandered on, checking out the conspicuous wind farm (known locally as the 'dancing ladies') which, they say produces up to 2,100 kWh of electricity, most consumed locally. This apparently gives as much as £80,000 profit per year, a large proportion of which goes into benefits for the island community. Whilst this is self-serving promotion by the operator, it seems unlikely that they'd make this claim amidst the islanders unless they could substantiate it.

The Gigha Hotel, a favourite watering hole of many cruising folk, was closed for refurbishment, but an enterprising character had converted a horse box, towed into the garden, from where he was able to offer a range of local ales and cider. It seemed uncharitable not to support such entrepreneurialism, so we joined the happy folk in the sunshine, and quaffed a couple of ciders, leaving us with a feeling of fuzzy optimism as we tottered back along the pontoon.

On 24 June we set off once more, this time for Ardfern in Loch Craignish. The tidal atlas suggested a north-going current in the main Sound of Gigha starting about 1230, so we cast off an hour earlier, punching a modest flow. Then a course set almost on 360° once we had cleared the reef. An Dubh Sgeir, or 'black rock' off the north end of the island. I wonder if anyone has counted how many black rocks there are off Scotland and Ireland! I suspect the name has nothing to do with the actual geology, but more with the common black lichen *Verrucaria maura*, that grows just above the high tide line, sometimes mistaken for oil pollution.

Weather was overcast, dry and warmish, but the SE breeze was very light, so the engine had us rumbling along at 6.5kn. Things got much more fun off the MacCormac Isles and Eilean Mor. An early sign of the turbulence was the large number of Manx shearwaters, in dense rafts, apparently fishing, as well as sitting out the windless conditions. As the rocky little islands came on the beam, the current suddenly increased, and in moments we were flying along at 9kn over a sharp chop, to everyone's delight, with helming becoming quite challenging. Shortly after, three porpoises only added to the scene, but as ever they didn't stay for long.

About 1530, with the large white Crinan Hotel in sight, I called Ardfern and was allotted a berth in the marina, with an hour's run left in very sheltered waters. Loch Craignish is seriously beautiful, with oak woodlands running down to the rocky shores, backed by higher hills. All the islands lie on either side of the main channel and so navigation is very straightforward. Less so is the discovery of one's berth in the marina: despite the phone guidance from a friendly official, we were unable to spot berth numbers – not surprising, as we later found the signs were small and obscurely located. Future skippers should simply throw their arms up in a gallic gesture of bewildered frustration, and await the arrival of helpful staff who in our case, ran down the pontoon and cheerfully waved us into the right slot.

Round to the Galley of Lorne for a pint or two. Very sadly, we then heard our friend and my marine colleague, Joe Breen, had just died after a sudden and short illness. I had known Joe (as he had reminded me about a week previously) for some 42 years. He had an exemplary career in marine conservation, playing a key role in documenting

Northern Ireland's subtidal marine life, as well as many other roles in the maritime community. If we continue to enjoy a vibrant and biodiverse marine environment, and especially to restore it, much of this will be due to Joe's work. He and I fought, and laughed, over many conservation battles over the years, and I shall miss him.

Life goes on, and so does Scottish weather. The shipping forecast offered a lively depression curling itself up for action between Iceland and NW Scotland. The prospect of moving to some of the outer islands wasn't promising, so we opted for the Crinan Canal, taking us to the sheltered side of the Mull. Phone calls concluded with a relaxed young female cheerfully urging us to come on in, the lock will be open!

We headed out of Ardfern at 1210, and once off the Crinan Hotel, near yet another Black Rock, I made a further call, ensuring that all was still well, and to adorn *Serenade* with fenders and warps on all sides. Then gently into the lock, with high, weedy, dark walls hanging over us, and the cheerful lass of our phone calls taking lines with a very long boat hook. At 1330 the gates closed quietly behind us, and *Serenade* had left the world of porpoises and shearwaters, and entered one of tadpoles and water lilies. A strange feeling.

The lock opens at its upstream end into a basin where some boats choose to rest. We decided to go on, immediately entering the next lock, operated by the same lass who had run round (these lock folk must get quite fit) and we climbed a further ten feet or so. From there we had a delightful couple of miles where the canal runs parallel, and well above, the Crinan Estuary and the River Add, a curious

BELOW: Dave and Celia - First lock, Crinan Canal





ABOVE: *Serenade* and company climbing the locks

situation for a crew more used to looking up at the land. Further along there's a swing bridge, where you hoot a horn, slow down, and await a guy who does the business. He was keen to warn us that a 'grumpy' guy driving a large cabin cruiser was approaching – sure enough this monster charged along, sending tsunamis up against the bank vegetation and throwing us around. Then Bellenoch swing bridge, more hooting, and just beyond we found a small concrete quay to stay overnight, a beautiful spot with a view across to the ancient site of Dunadd – more about that later. It was a gloriously calm evening, with a lingering sunset that left a glow on the horizon well past midnight. And not a midge to be felt.

26 June saw us enjoying a leisurely start, and some exploration. Up the road from the canal is Argyll Beaver Centre, based around the nicely wooded Barnluasgan lake, with a small visitor centre based on a converted cottage. The hospitable folk there explained all their work

whilst making coffees. It was the sort of centre where people saw real things and learned about them, rather than messing around with computer generated virtual nonsense (as I see it). The beaver introduction project was started about ten years ago and apparently doing very well. Whilst we didn't see the notoriously shy critters, there was plenty of evidence of their activities, distinctively gnawed willow stumps everywhere, and a marshy thicket wherein a vast bundle of branches and weed denoted a lodge.

At 1330 we cast off, aiming to complete the five uphill locks at Dunardry. By about the second of these we'd become a well-oiled machine, Linda and Dave doing the business of taking lines above us, and myself with Celia controlling *Serenade* from below. You can't count on canal staff being around to assist, but we were lucky as they were keen to clump up vessels in the locks, thereby using the waters most efficiently in this 'dry' season. *Serenade* was being followed by three very large charter yachts, the first of which became our companion through the locks. As sluices were opened, the fenders of both craft were put to the test in the swirling waters, and at times we all had to push them apart. We couldn't work out what language these folk were speaking and attempts with different languages resulted in blank stares. Eventually it turned out they were Israelis who were blissfully enjoying cold Scottish summer as a welcome retreat from the sweltering heat (and probably other challenges) of their own country. Just as we were heaving a sigh of relief at the last of the uphill locks, the canal staff urged us to do four more going downhill at Cairnbaan. I was reluctant, but it did make good sense, so we and our Israeli companions continued. Downhill locks seemed easier, and by now everyone was working well together, the folks on the other boat nonchalantly lighting cigarettes and sipping wine as they bumped

Greater butterfly orchid, Crinan Hotel



Duntrune Castle opposite Crinan Hotel

back and forth. And so finally we emerged from the last lock and another swing bridge, to berth on a nearby pontoon. Our Israeli colleagues paused here, awaiting their other companions to emerge, but then motored off to get provisions a couple of miles further at Lochgilphead.

Provisions became the topic on *Serenade* too. We seemed to be ploughing through a lot of stuff, much of it the liquid variety, and the Crinan Skippers' Guide seemed to recommend the Lochgilphead Spar, so off Dave and Linda went, along the towpath. It was a pleasant walk, and perhaps the most exciting thing from Dave's viewpoint was the discovery of a healthy population of greater butterfly orchids, 142 creamy-white spikes poking dramatically from the colourful verge.

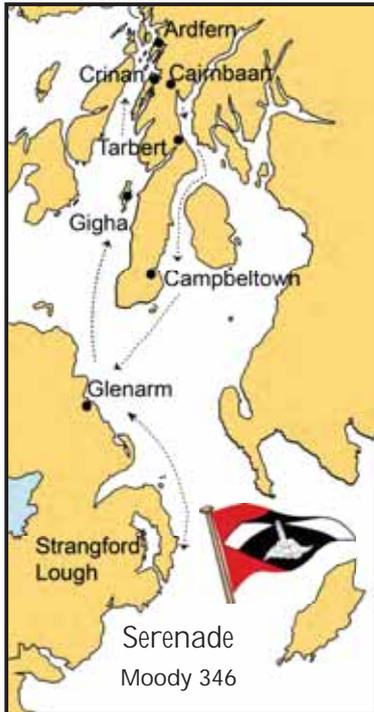
Essentials acquired, and perhaps a little weary, they were contemplating the return, when Dave had the bright idea of hitching a lift back to Cairnbaan with the Israelis. So as Celia and I were enjoying a tipple back on *Serenade's* deck, under a darkening and unsettled sky, this enormous yacht, with its cheerful and laidback crew, came round the corner, having motored astern for the whole two miles from Lochgilphead, and there on board we spied our nearest and dearest, slurring away at wine, looking extremely smug, and ever so slightly pissed.

We stayed at Cairnbaan the next day and night, a strong wind eventually requiring, much to my surprise in this sheltered canal, extra lines overnight. Linda was keen that we visited nearby Kilmartin with its museum, and so perusal of bus schedules was needed, requiring almost paranormal skills in interpretation. Finally, we set off along the towpath

with its glorious orchids, and to our astonishment a bus turned up on time in the right place. The museum focuses on Dunadd or Fort on the river Add' dating from the Iron Age, thought to be the capital of the ancient kingdom of Dalriada, and offers striking interpretations of their way of life. The prominent outcrop, surrounded by today's very low-lying reclaimed marshland, may have been an island offering good defence in Dalriadian times of higher sea levels. It might return to that state with climate change in the next century.

The rapidly freshening wind was now accompanied by heavy and squally rain, but that didn't deter a nearby friend, Patricia, from meeting us and very kindly take us around one of Scotland's richest prehistoric landscapes. The whole area is full of Neolithic and later antiquities, with churches, rock carvings and other features, and would repay several days exploration for the archaeologically minded. We also visited Duntrune Castle's gardens and the romantically derelict garden at Kilmory Castle. Finally, our bedraggled and soaked expedition made it back to *Serenade*, where hot whiskies restored equanimity. We also spied Auberge from our Quoile Yacht Club, with Alistair and Debby Cairns aboard, tied up near us.

On 29 June the weather was much more settled, and at 0830 *Serenade* and *Auberge* cast off to complete the remaining section of the Crinan and out into Lock Glip at Ardishaig, and thence southward through Lower Loch Fyne. It was largely uneventful, with the usual canal staff keeping pace as we motored at the regulation 4kn. By 1130 we had cleared the final sea lock, and once more we were in the salty stuff. A nice westerly sprang up, and we ran out the genoa for the



short run to Tarbet on the eastern shore of the Mull, giving 7kn for most of the way before the breeze died yet again. Off Barmore Island about ten porpoises joined us as they focused on some productive fishing, giving us unusually fine views of these rather shy creatures.

We had the rest of the day in Tarbet, having found buckets of space in the marina – it has grown enormously since we visited on *Sapphira* some twenty years ago. It is a pleasant little village, these days more given over to tourism, but the relics of its role as a fishing and trading harbour remain, with large fixtures and a square central structure in the middle of the harbour for warping sailing vessels

from the quay. A nice little restaurant, the 'Starfish,' added to our visit. And to everyone's complete indifference, I found one of our rarest seaweeds, *Ascophyllum nodosum* var. *mackii*, a dark brown, afro-looking plant, lurking where it should be, on sheltered shingle not far from open waters. Time was catching up with us, and we needed to make southing. So, on 30 June at 1020, we returned to Lower Loch Fyne, southwards down Kilbrannan Sound, past Arran Island, to Campbeltown, with a NW 3-4 helping us, later backing to west, and we were able to keep up about 6.5kn for most of the way. Other than that, the passage was uneventful, and by 14.05 we were off Davaar Island lighthouse, with just half an hour's passage left as we turned into Campbeltown Loch against the chill westerly, with low, grey scudding clouds.

The next twenty-four hours were bleak, spells of persistent rain, the westerly sweeping over Campbeltown. Nonetheless, ales in the 'Feathers' helped things a bit as well as a distillery visit. The problem was the forecasts: the Shipping and Inshore Waters forecast would offer benign conditions a couple of days before, and then within 12 hours of a departure, would deteriorate. One character commented that 'they forecast bad conditions quite accurately, but always get it wrong when the forecast seems good.' Perhaps that's unfair, but it did seem to apply here, and I felt apprehensive about crossing the pond to Co Antrim.

The next morning, consultations with Alistair of *Auberge* on the pontoons, halliards and other rigging

BELOW: Leaving the Crinan at Ardrishaig



howling in the wind, suggested that conditions might improve, and at about 1340 we both cast off, with a very stiff westerly still blowing. Rounding the corner of Island Davaar, we followed the coast to Sanda, getting about 7 knots from the breeze. Off Rue Stafinish we encountered some overfalls but nothing too serious, and large numbers of gannets and Manx shearwaters enjoying a feeding frenzy suggested food-rich turbulence. After clearing Paterson's rock about 1520, we were treated to some lively seas, followed by a deeply rolling swell that must have built up from the weather system. The wind petered out, but we still maintained about 6kn. Aside from the mobility of our possessions below deck, nothing adverse happened and *Serenade* rolled drunkenly towards County Antrim, which was emerging as a faint shadow on the horizon. Meanwhile, *Auberge* headed on a more southerly course, aiming, I think, for Bangor.

We were expecting the tide to change into a south-flowing flood at about 1430, and the direct course would have been about 220° for Glenarm without this. But as we parted company with the Mull of Kintyre, a distinct lump appeared in Antrim's grey profile, which I guessed was Garron Point. This would offer us a slightly more northerly course (about 230°) which might counteract any south-going current. As it proved, this lump was a hill behind Garron Point, but it did the job for us, and we stayed on target, only picking up any significant leeway as we closed with the Antrim Coast. And then into Glenarm marina once more!

Two days of poor weather were forecast, so we decided to go back home – I always regret doing this, but it seemed the most practical, and we could be responsible and vote in the general election.

Finally, with a reasonable forecast, three of us returned to *Serenade*, Celia having to pick up the reins of work. Belfast LW and the start of the south-going tide was predicted for 1733, but leaving then would have us arriving into Strangford Lough in near darkness, a dim prospect even at this luminous time of year. We decided to punch the last of the ebb, much earlier in the cycle than I've tried before. Casting off at 1400, the trick seemed to work. We maintained a reasonable speed, only being slowed to 4.8kn off Ballygalley Head, whilst off Muck Island we got a favourable counter-current lifting us to 7 knots.

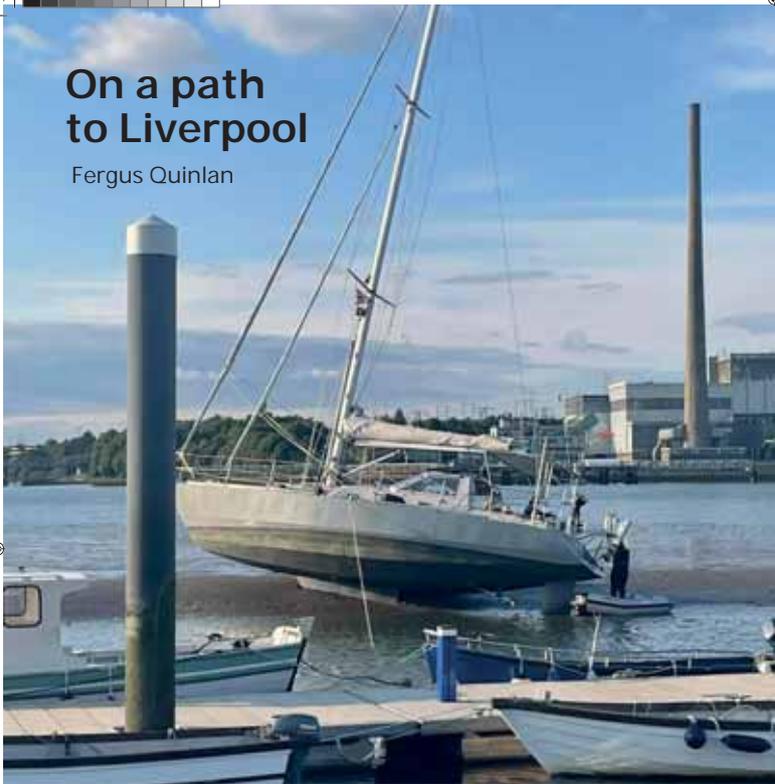
The passage down the outer Ards coast found a cold southerly breeze against the current creating a sharp chop with us slamming through the waves just when we wanted an easy conclusion to our cruise. So it was with relief that at 2110 we rounded the Bar Buoy and entered the settled waters of Strangford's Narrows. Relief didn't last long however – we found our mooring in busy Strangford Harbour hopelessly tangled, but we had help from a kind lad in a small dory who spotted our plight – from his perspective he was able to unravel things. So finally, engine off, make all tidy, and below for a reflective tittle on the completion of our trip – or as Derek White put it, 'the circumcision of the Mull of Kintyre'



ABOVE: Serenade heading for Tarbert

On a path to Liverpool

Fergus Quinlan



Pylades - Stuck at Cheek Point

Mid-winter, sipping wine in the glow of a log fire, each of us present our sailing preferences for the coming season. A consensus is reached. The Irish Sea, indulge in nostalgia at the locations of the launching and naming of *Pylades* 27 years ago, rerun our first offshore passage which was to the Isle of Man and skip south along the western shores of the UK.

30 May The reach to the Aran Islands turns into a beat as the north breeze backs. Tying to a fishing boat at Kilronan, we assist two yachts to raft outside us, leading to interesting conversations. Two days

later we exit at 1600, a cold north westerly speeds us through the night, the Blasket Sound magical at dawn provides a favourable tide, whales, perhaps minkie, feed in the south race. Dingle marina as always is a delight. We dine well at the 'Boat Yard' restaurant. Running a check, our VHF proved difficult with no response from Valentia Radio, it turned out to be just a black spot, we transmitted and received perfectly in other locations.

Peadar, the Marina manger described the amazing accident at the south pontoon, a year earlier. A large trawler tying in the harbour had a 'hard reverse

failsafe' built into its computer system. Its computers failed, it reversed, a large motorboat had just tied to the south pontoon but thankfully its owner had departed. The berserk trawler demolished both motorboat and pontoon. The section of pontoon has now been replaced, and a new motorboat for the lucky boater, the joys of computers.

5 June A favourable wind sweeps us south to the beautiful anchorage at Dunboy castle. Two days later we exit Baltimore, a fine unseasonable cold northerly wind provides a reach along the entire south coast taking in the second reef became a problem as my eye splice parted, three reefs were a bit much, but we still slip along at 7 knots.

We tie at a very friendly Kinsale marina. As architectural students in Cork, a group of us used to drink and with the sweet voices of youth, sing at the Spaniard Pub, the proprietor Peter Barry covered every second round if we were up to standard. Great days they were. Now sipping pints at the Greyhound Bar where a statue to the famous Peter Barry stands, memories flood back, the years roll away and a tear forms in the skipper's eye... 'Once upon a time there was a tavern, where we used to gather long ago.'

Entering Youghal over the east bar *Pylades* tied at the deserted pontoon. Having tried all the various contacts mentioned in the pilot and at the gate to ascertain payment and access, we failed. Taking our chances we exit the caged dock, enquiring for contacts at various drinking dens, opinions varied we were directed from one to the next. Many had never heard of or seen the new pontoon. Eventually a woman found a fob which gave us access. Plans for a pint in town were abandoned due to TV infestation. I held the gate as Katherine returned the opener.

The fine fast reaching along the south continued. After overnight stops in Dunmore East and Kilmore Quay we get the tides right to round the Carnsore Point. The sea was infested with pot marker buoys and long pickup lines, it would be impossible to safely sail these waters at night, in poor visibility or fresh conditions. It was a sunny day with two of us on watch, the bright sun reflection masked a marker, we were trapped. Midst a flow of impolite language and stress, our aim was to keep the lines on the skeg away from the propeller. Maintaining slow forward, with our boathook we managed to grab and cut the rising line, we were free.

The careless manner in which these marker buoys are laid is a growing hazard, there is a simple solution which needs to be propagated and enforced by the coastguard. We were lucky to get away with our entanglement and also lucky that sailing up the east coast the wind backed to the west. My brother Brian lives in Arklow, ensuring meetings and chats. Next stop was Greystones a fine place for an evening stop.



Once upon a time there was a tavern...

On 5 June 1997 *Pylades* had a formal launching and party at Poolbeg Yacht Club. Peter Redmond, many of the crew of *The Bracken Lass*, and club members had been of great assistance in the project and we planned to meet with them. Thus, we wound our way along the southern edge of the shipping channel and tied at Poolbeg. That night the mirror still water of the Liffey painted a magical tapestry with the lights of the city. We bussed into Dublin and met with many other stalwarts of the period. As we walked, a strapping young man suddenly sprang in front of Katherine exclaiming, 'You have just been robbed', he handed Katherine her purse, I thanked him, and he melted into the crowd. The purse was open, nothing missing, the backpack was open. Our only conclusion was the young man had apprehended someone taking the purse, grabbed the person or the purse, exclaiming 'purse or Police.' No other scenario made sense. Katherine's backpack became a front pack: the sailor adjusts slowly to the realities of city life.

In Malahide we recalled a terrifying moment in May 1997. For on that day *Pylades* after three years of construction was slowly lowered into the waters at the Marina, dry retching and nightmares of water-soluble welds slowly cleared, as with no leaks it floated level to its marks. The Marina manager, Damien Offer, observant of our mental state insisted on hauling us to a secure position with warps and bade us chill and sip champagne for the day. So, 27 years later we again tie at Malahide, reminisce with the marina staff and meet relatives.

24 June Having anchored at Skerries overnight we set sail for the Isle of Man at 0455. The light wind increased all day and by the time we passed the Chicken Rock we had three reefs in the mainsail, a genoa rolled to match and still holding eight knots. At 1500 we picked up a mooring at Port St. Mary, sleeping well as the wind and sea eased. The next day we moved via the outer pontoon and tidal gate to Douglas Marina and spent five days sightseeing, immersing ourselves in the history of TT races and the exploits of mad motorcyclists.

My Grandfather's first commission as a ship's captain was on *Pylades* a ship of the City of Cork Steam Packet Co. - hence our own boat's name. As a tramp steamer one of its frequent ports was Liverpool, thus to follow in her wake, on the 30 June at 0530 we set sail for Liverpool in a fine breeze, running downwind we pole out the genoa. At 1030 the head sail split right across, with a great deal of fluttering we rolled the wounded genoa in an untidy bundle. The passage from the open sea to Liverpool dock was sixteen miles of gybing. Arriving at high water we passed through the locked gate, there was a great deal of fuss by the marina as we did not book, could they find a berth or not! There were about forty empty berths! Our priority was genoa repair, enquiries with the local chandlery indicated about four week delay. Frantic calls found Carl of Wirral Sail and Tent Services a taxi ride away who said he would deal with it. We delivered the sail, it would be repaired by the next day.

The genoa was ready as promised, at reasonable cost and an excellent job. Our repairman however warned that the sail was getting frail and its future could not

Decision on genoa?



Annual 15.50 2 DEC.indd 39-40

be guaranteed. We informed him that it was now 27 years old, and had over 80,000 miles on the clock. Taken aback, he retorted, 'ye got your money's worth out of that' a testament to our fine sailmaker, Philip Watson. He delivered us with the heavy sail to the local bus stop. The bundle looked remarkably similar to a body in a shroud, gaining us strange looks. Back on board our bandaged sail looks good, both hoisted and rolled, acknowledging its weakened state we resolved to sail a little easier and consider a new genoa.

It is about 20 minutes' walk from the marina to the city which has much to explore. The two Cathedrals were remarkable in size and design, one provided us with a recital of organ and choir, the other a spectacle of ballet. Despite the Tate being refurbished, there were plenty of alternative art galleries and museums to enhance our cultural outlook. In the main museum while studying a large painting depicting the death of Nelson, an adjacent male spectator of similar vintage to my own exclaimed that Nelson did not die on that date, I retorted, that is the date of the artist's death. 'What age are you' he exclaimed, 'seventy-seven' I replied, 'have you still got your own teeth he asked, 'I have mine' he said as he opened his mouth to display. I now found myself showing him my teeth, 'your hair is OK as well,' he exclaimed. Another man intervened, 'I'm his brother' he said, 'the bus is waiting outside'. I wandered off silently.

During the 16-mile inward passage to Liverpool we had resolved not to exit in a westerly, the thoughts of a swift ebb against a stiff wind did not appeal. How Liverpool ever became a major seaport in the days of sailing, is a mystery. Selecting calm conditions,

we motored away with the ebb at eight knots. The breeze filled in from the west. Close hauling south through endless wind farms which extended for miles was unnerving: there was no clear path or exclusion zones that we could see on our route. The gigantic whirling blades and pervasive hum combining with the lifeless muddy waters extruded a dark Orwellian atmosphere. We speculated on the fate of these farms when they exceed their economic life.

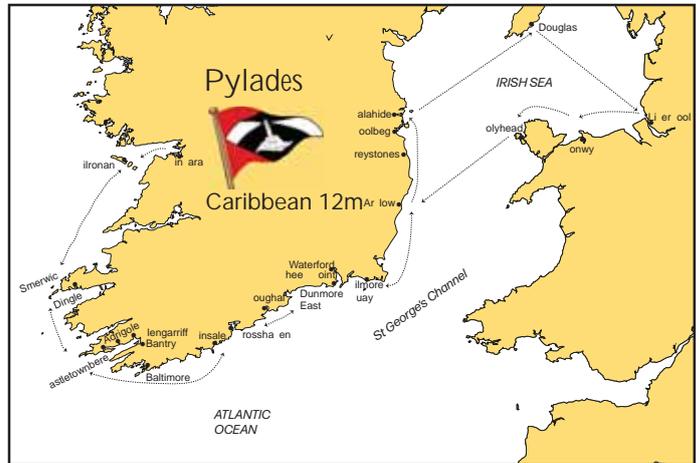
At Conwy Bay Safe Water Mark, dusk was falling, the pilot stipulation was to follow the lights rather than the charts, due to shifting sands. While some of the lights were flashing, it took darkness for them all to function, our twisting entrance was cautious. Arriving at the marina flap gate in pitch darkness, we faced unlit boats, moorings, a plethora of lights with one bright green light. Adrenaline was high; normally one would enter with green to starboard, which would in this case have been a disaster. The marina had instructed on the VHF to berth at C19, in darkness no demarcation was visible, we tied at our convenience. Checking in the next morning, I explained to the assembled marina office about the significance of red and green lights, and how I felt about the reversed entrance lights the night before, I was answered by a stoic silence.

The town of Conwy is about 20 minute's pleasant walk from the marina, a fascinating walled town with

its dominant 13th century castle, full of small shops and tourists, all leading to traffic problems in the tiny streets, a local elderly and not so gentle man, turned to us 'Tourists I hate 'em'. 'But we are tourists' exclaimed Katherine, 'I know, I can tell', as he ambled off. After pints and great conversations with locals in the TV free, hotel bar, we too amble off.

12 July After a 0330 alarm to catch tides, we wind our way out the now more familiar exit route. High swell ran at Skerries Island which lies northwest of Holyhead. We pick up a mooring at Holyhead marina; part of the deal is that the friendly harbour launch will drop you ashore on request. Katherine decides to go provisioning, but a man originally from Ireland had listened to her call on the VHF and was waiting. Katherine was assured by the ferryman's complex innuendo that the man was not the local serial killer, so off she went in the car. The man explained when he heard her accent he really wanted to meet and talk, he had come from Ireland thirty years ago, met a girl, married, and had hardly been back since.

Having wine and dinner in the cockpit that evening was glorious, it was a rare full summers evening with sunset to match. At dawn we motor across a glassy Irish Sea for Arklow. Our only dilemma is to calculate tides at the Arklow Bank and if we should pass to the north or south. By 1800 we had tied up at the Arklow pontoon. Provisioning is extremely convenient and less costly than the UK, so much is carried aboard. Also, much use is made of the washing and drying



facilities. That evening my brother Brian insists we meet at the Harbour Bar, a dystopian hell with seven TVs, background music and a karaoke type band all blasting away, we question the future of civilisation.

Incident at Cheek Point.

It was many years since we tied at Waterford City, so we headed inland after rounding Hook Light. The estuary is well serviced with port and starboard marks. The day was fine, the wind light, following the red and green marks, nothing could go wrong! Approaching Cheek Point upstream, the marks are tight to the port hand side, rounding the point there were more red and green cans, these were however leading along a channel to a small pontoon at Cheek Point, realising that, we turned back to join the main channel. Alas we were aground, the tide turned. We quickly launched the dinghy and got a line ashore to the pontoon, but with winches and engine *Pylades* failed to move.

A young man appeared on the pontoon and said it was essential that the boat now fall to starboard away from the dredged deep water. We ran a kedge far out to starboard, attached the spinnaker halyard and winched. Then we secured a 20-litre diesel can to the boom end and swung it off 90 degrees. *Pylades* lifted her bow and settled firmly to starboard. Recovering our anchor and fuel can, the ship was prepared for lift off which was due at 0230 next morning. Many kind people came to hailing distance offering food and shelter, the young man who insisted we fall to starboard was so correct as the low tide revealed the horror that might have occurred, the same man gave us his phone number and said he would keep it at his bedside and to call him at lift off time if required.

Incident at Cheek Point



That's mud not water

Our phone rang, This is the Coast Guard in Dublin, we have reports of a yacht fitting your description aground in the Waterford estuary. We agreed it was indeed *Pylades*, and after answering many questions concerning ruptured hull and tanks, we assured him all was well. He said, 'if you need us, we are ready to throw the kitchen sink at you,' What we asked, would that entail? Oh, a tug, lifeboat, helicopter, that sort of thing. Thanking him profusely we assured we were fine, and we would report, as requested, our safe arrival at Waterford dock.

18 July. 01.00 Sleeping poorly at strange angles, the sound of gushing water hurtled us from our beds. Lifting floorboards in panic, we found thankfully no ruptured hull or estuary water. The extreme angle of the boat was now correcting itself and likewise the starboard freshwater tank was dumping water at speed back to the port tank. Our nerves were shattered. At 0230, with engine in reverse and winching the line from the pontoon, we slid off, briefly tying up at the pontoon as we recovered our line. Fearful of turning, we reversed exactly down our entrance line to the main channel. It was a tricky to read the channel navigation lights with such a cacophony of background lighting, but an hour later at slack high water we tied alongside in Waterford city and slept late.

The history of the city kept us enthralled for days. The discovery of a pub, 'J&K Walsh' that had a policy of no TV, background music, and even frowned on the use of mobile phones, contributed to our stay. The skipper's daughter Sarah joined us in the city before we took off down the very pleasant rural river on the 22nd of July. Unfortunately, at sea the light westerly wind did not favour us we motored with and without

Fergus and Sarah in Cork



Waterford conversation pub

sail to the Royal Cork Yacht Club marina. The young marina staff were most welcoming and knew their boat handling, Sarah took off on runs to Camden Fort and the following day to Carrigaline, O the joys of youth! That evening we had pints in Cronin's Bar. Borne by a flood tide we sailed to and tied at the Cork City dock. Fergus's Cork brother Aodhan had organised a meal at a Palestinian restaurant, to our horror we found it did not serve wine. However, it was a memorable occasion. Nostalgia was in floods as the skipper pointed out where on the river, he sat in a self-built PBK canoe on the 28 June 1963 listening to President JF Kennedy at City Hall, also pointing out the Crawford Gallery where he studied architecture under the tutelage of the esteemed Neil Hegarty (ICC), Sarah, suffering perhaps from a surfeit of nostalgia fled to join a friend.

That evening, a magnificent French sailing ship the 'Belem' tied opposite us at the city, it insisted on running its very noisy diesel generator day and night. The next morning, we fled back to the RCYC for peace. A day later Kinsale was busier than on our passage east, but as charming as ever. From Kinsale we anchored off Sherkin Island and took the north passage to Castletownbere. After provisioning we sailed east with headsail only. Entering Adrigole the wind increased, we went to roll the headsail, it jammed, thankfully we looked at the drum before using a winch. Disaster! the roller reefing line was wrapped around the bottom of the genoa. The skipper donned a harness and crawled forward.

Leaving Castletownbere that morning we had not tied down the anchor as normal, as we were only going a few miles and anchoring again, what could go wrong?

The light line used to secure the anchor had been hitched at the pulpit, wind flipped it around the roller reefing line and pulled it up out of the drum. With the sail now thrashing wildly we could not roll or unroll it. Each loop of the errant line had to be coaxed back to its rightful place, to compound the problem the thrashing sail undid the figure of eight stopper and the loose sheet was flaying the ship and anyone around. Katherine in the meantime was, avoiding pot markers, easing the reefing line, and attempting to control the highly active sheet. Eventually all was sorted, the headsail rolled, and lessons learned, peace restored, we finally anchored at Adrigole under the dark and formidable presence of Hungry Hill. The skipper eyed the hill, remembering times when to climb its inviting gorges, and scan the bay from its crest would not pose a problem. Alas the ravages of time!

At Glengarriff, picking up a mooring that has no buoy and line has always been a challenge. Attaching a hook and line to a boathook, Katherine got it first shot. Winching in we added stout lines. However, after all that, determining the location was a bit exposed for the forecast wind, we moved and anchored in the snug Blue Pool northwest of Garnish Island. Later in Eccles Hotel, we imagined the conversations of the sailors during the formation of the Irish Cruising Club 95 years ago. The next day as predicted atrocious howling winds and sheets of rain, thunder and lightning swept over us. After two days we sailed east of Whiddy Island and anchored off Rabbit Island. Ashore we sat outside for drinks at The Bank Bar. It was to be one of very few days that one might call summer, many were in shorts and tee shirts, children were swimming, sun hats were in order. The following morning, having walked to the famine graveyard, we contemplated on the motivation for the sad and ghastly genocides of then and now.

Bantry marina is a great spot to hide from inclement weather. A cranky local claimed we had tied at his berth, the harbour authority implied there were no reserved berths, we were correct to hold our position, a truce prevailed. The town is excellent for browsing and provisioning, and just as well, for westerly winds continued to roll down Bantry Bay. Our longest-range indicator of weather is the Jetstream forecast, it showed an unremitting Jetstream which would prevent hope of settled weather in the Atlantic. The general plan had been to use our last month to flit from one gorgeous west coast anchorage to the next, these unsettled conditions and the accompanying seas meant dashing from one secure harbour to the next.

10 August the wind relents, we motor west via Bere Island Sound and on to Dursey, the sea subsides somewhat on entering the sound, as we round to pass under the cable car, we managed to avoid a very dangerous placing of pot markers set at a

critical point on the port side. The north exit was a maelstrom of breaking waves and white foam, increasing revolutions we push through. The hoped for west wind did not materialise, a hoisted mainsail would have thrashed its slides to death, a small section of headsail helped reduce rolling. Passing Puffin Island and Bolus Head the seas increased, a plan to run into Valentia was abandoned due to size of the sea running directly towards the entrance. Twelve and a half hours after Bantry we tie at Dingle facing the rising southeast wind.

We arrived at Dingle at a much earlier date than planned. Over the next twelve days we enjoy the delights of Dingle, we could not be stuck in a better place. Katherine's sister Siobhan joins us for a few days. We walk to the famine graveyard which overlooks the town. There is much to explore. The Carol Cronin Gallery is a delight, we buy her book. A local bus brings us to Dunquin's Basket Centre, it retells the fascinating story of the rise and decline of its island people.

For three days the National Coastal Rowing championships were staged from Dingle Marina, it's a spectacular event with over five hundred boat crews of all ages competing. In poor conditions the races are hard fought. The magnificent seine boats with twelve men rowing and a coxswain on each vessel are worthy of special mention. Every morning at 0900 the action would commence with loudspeakers crackling into life with 'Amhrán na bhFiann' they would continue without a break for twelve hours. To add to the festivities of the regatta, *Pylades* dressed all over with courtesy flags, causing comment and appreciation, another yacht followed suit.

The mighty rowers at Dingle



Festival flags Dingle

Justin and Trish McDonagh of *Selkie* (ICC), and Ken Cunnane and Aileen O'Carroll of *Mynx* (ICC) come calling, sea stories are traded.

26 August Finally we exited Dingle, and with a light westerly and a confused sea on the nose, we motored to the Basket Sound, sunlit as we entered dark and foreboding on exit. Between Sybil point and the entrance to Smerwick Harbour the seas were even more confused. The anchorage under Dun an Oir was haunting and calm, and a hint of sun peaked out. Next day at 0555 alarms rang, we breakfasted, broke out the anchor and hoisted the main. While there was little wind the forecast promised much, but we were unable to secure the first reef, something was jammed in the boom. We put in two reefs and glad we did, for outside the sea was 2m high from the west and the southwest wind built to 20 to 25 knots and gusty. The preventer was cranked up and a partial headsail flattened to reduce roll. The monitor self-steering worked hard and *Pylades* flew along at 7 knots running before wind and sea. Both of us harnessed on. About a mile south of the Gregory Sound the sea and wind built further, as it always seems to give one a final little test, the Skipper hand steered, surfing down the breaking seas.

Katherine was scanning for pot markers, calling their positions, the consequences of entanglement could be catastrophic. Halfway through the sound against expectations the sea quietened - the flood was with us. Berthing to a fishing boat in Kiltonan, a welcome tranquility descended.

Next morning I removed the rear boom fitting to discover a split block, which explained our reefing problem. Gentle walkabouts and chats including an enlightening meeting with Tommy Flaherty to whose vessel we had tied, pleasantly passed two days. In contrast to our passage north, motoring east to home waters with no wind and blue sky was very soothing. Picking up our mooring in Parkmore after three months, we felt as always, a mixture of delight at our safe return and a sadness on leaving *Pylades*.



Chantey V - Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands Daragh Nagle

This year's cruise took us south and east from our base at Royal Victoria Yacht Club. The Puget Sound is an interesting and scenic, but often overlooked, cruising area just a stone's throw away. Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands are entirely within the USA so once cleared in with CBP (Customs and Border Protection) you can cruise freely without further formality other than flying your US courtesy flag. Our crew comprised myself, Cate and brother John, as well as canine crew Bridey the Sheltie and River the Labradoroodle.

Wooden Boat Festival

Port Townsend at the entrance to Admiralty Inlet was our first port of call after a glassy water transit of the Juan de Fuca Strait. The anchorage out front and both marinas were packed due to the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival that weekend. This is the largest festival of its kind in North America and second largest in the world with close to 300 watercraft of every size and shape imaginable.

Undeterred, we were fortunate to find a scarce slip in

the Boat Basin, and more so to stay on as reciprocal guests of Port Townsend Yacht Club the next day. We deployed our dinghy and kayak, an ideal viewing platform for the beautiful wooden sail and power vessels on display. As a major event for the town, it was a most festive atmosphere with many intriguing shipwright trades. This year's festival honoured the many women in shipbuilding in the northwest. We were invited to an evening party with the Off-Center Harbor group, an event overflowing with wooden boat enthusiasts from all over the world.

We departed for Port Ludlow next morning in heavy fog which is characteristic for that time of year. We motored slowly towards the Port Townsend Canal, no hardship as it was necessary to delay for slack water in any case. Always exciting to pass under a low clearance bridge, in this instance 58 ft. matched with our air draft of 54 ft. and we just squeaked under. We were towing our dinghy and had pulled it up close to the boat to facilitate docking, when suddenly Bridey, our Sheltie, had an instinctive urge to jump in! She misjudged the distance and landed in the drink with a splash. A quick reacting Johnnie reached down and lifted a soggy puppy back to safety.

OPPOSITE: Wooden boat festival Port Townsend by kayak

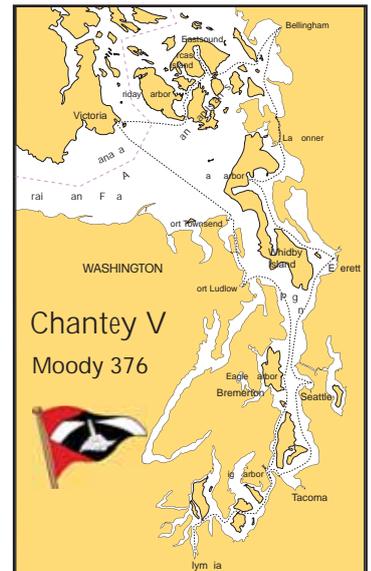
Eagle Harbour on Bainbridge Island was a 30 NM run where we tied on at the City Dock due to the proximity to the quintessentially small-town American town of Winslow. After scoping out the shops and restaurants we were welcomed to the home of friends Chris and Mary for a scrumptious farm-to-table traditional harvest dinner fresh from the garden. We were surprised to learn that there was no marine fuel available anywhere on the island due to the ongoing environmental clean up of the harbour.

Gig Harbor, a 20 NM run next morning began with a leisurely breakfast at Madison's Diner, a historic streetcar style diner transported from New York City a number of years ago. This is a very picturesque village and a hub of activity. Unfortunately, the yacht club was quiet with no one about, as we found to be typical with most of the clubs on our travels.

Tacoma Narrows

The trip to Olympia, the state capital, at 32 nm distance, involves passing under the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Lots of clearance here but there is a formidable current that can run in excess of five knots. This necessitated an 0700 start with the SOG flying up to ten knots at the Narrows. The Olympia Yacht Club is a very old and recognized club with a maze of boat houses extending around the nearby downtown streetscape. It was a particularly poignant arrival as this is the spot where I purchased *Chantey V* over 17 years ago. Many miles have passed under her bow since then but the old girl still has plenty of sea miles to go. I had arranged for a replacement fridge unit to be delivered to the West Marine store, and this meant an extra day here to do the installation. Anyone who has wrestled with fridge cooling lines will appreciate the relief of getting it done successfully. We celebrated with dinner and drinks at the Oyster and Fish Restaurant.

Daragh and Cate at Port Townsend



Olympia was also our turnaround point and we then had to deal with the turbulent Tacoma Narrows northbound. Predicted slack at 1000 called for a

pre-dawn 0500 departure. Fortunately, the visitor slips at OYC are located on the outside of all the docks and this simplified easing out to the navigation channel in darkness. We made the Narrows just after slack water but even so we were reduced to four and a half knots as we passed under the bridge. We arrived at the Tacoma Yacht Club's visitor dock before noon and were pleased to find the club was open for lunch. This beautiful clubhouse is situated on top of Point Defiance and enjoys panoramic views of Washon Island and surrounding waterways. The dining room was equally splendid and we enjoyed a tasty lunch there. Later, I rode our small electric scooter into old Tacoma downtown. This folding scooter weighs 24 lbs, has a range of 20 kms and goes faster than I dare. It takes up less space than the folding bike it replaced and is a most useful addition to the boat's equipment.

Seattle Socializing

Rain overnight put a bit of a damper on the day but it cleared off as we approached Seattle. We had emailed and phoned the Bell Harbor Marina to no avail so we decided to do a drive-by. We were delighted to get a response and a slip assignment on the VHF radio. We learned that the Port of Seattle had been victims of a Ransomware attack which had disabled all their normal communication. Bell Harbor Marina is close to Pike Place Market and the bustling old town of Seattle. We rendezvoused with Cate's family here and treated ourselves to a stay at the classy Mayfair Park Hotel. Later, *Chantey V* hosted everyone with a fish BBQ on board - it was fun to watch the daily 'throwing of the fish' and eat a fish

that had been 'caught' at the market. (Pike Place Fish Market is known for its tradition of fishmongers throwing the fish purchased by customers prior to wrapping it - Editor). The Seattle waterfront along Alaskan Way is greatly improved with foliage and walkways along with an impressive extension to the Aquarium. Here we bid adieu to John and River the Labradoodle who returned via the Clipper Catamaran service to Victoria.

Everett Yacht Club, some 30 nm further along the east side of Whidby Island, is a vast marina beside a US Naval base. It is well serviced by numerous marine support services including West Marine. I have difficulty passing these without finding some parts I suddenly 'need' and this was no exception. We hosted friends Grayce and Tripp to Sundowner C&Ts with real ice produced by our new fridge, and later a lamb BBQ at their home - a real treat for this Irishman.

Our route continued up the east side of Whidby Island with a stop at Oak Harbor Yacht Club. This was one of the few legs we were able to sail and it was great to ghost along without the sound of our engine. This harbour has a fairly shallow approach and a tricky entrance best taken at half tide or higher. There was a surprisingly strong side current which contributed to a botched docking. It was unfortunate that there was no one to catch a line, but on the other hand the incompetent manoeuvres were unwitting. The OHYC invited us to join them for dinner and a presentation on boat maintenance that followed. We met the Commodore and several members for a most enjoyable visit, as well as getting



La Conner sunset

some advice on the tricky passage to La Conner the next day.

Swinomish Channel and La Conner

High tide next morning should have made for an easy departure but visibility was severely limited by fog. This was more concerning as all the local advice emphasized the necessity of using the leading marks to determine the safe entrance to Swinomish Channel. As luck would have it, the fog lifted enough to see them - but only just! Half an hour later we were docking at the Swinomish Yacht Club conveniently located at the north end of town. La Conner is charming with many trendy shops, bars and cafes. The La Conner Pub & Eatery provided great food and drink at extraordinarily low prices - can you remember the last time you got a pint for three dollars?

Finally, I had determined that half tide was optimum for arrival and departure, when current is minimal for docking and yet enough water sustained for the hour-long transit to the channel north entrance. We saw a least depth of eleven ft. as we passed the railway swing bridge. This confirmed that we could not pass here at low tide with our six ft. draft. We carried on to Bellingham Bay and were able to conveniently refuel before docking at the Bellingham Yacht Club. The club was not open but we did enjoy a nice walk around the waterfront which has been greatly upgraded since my last visit 20 years ago. It's an active fishing port and they have succeeded in harmoniously blending these hardworking commercial vessels with the many recreational boats that are based here as well. Our Alaskan buddy boat friends John and Nicky came down and joined us for pizza in downtown Bellingham. It was great to reconnect and John provided some good anchoring tips for our next stop at East Sound, Orcas Island.

It was very flat water all the way past Lummi and Blakely Islands and made for a pleasant passage to East Sound. We anchored in a bight on the west side to provide some relief from the forecast southwesterly that night. This was yet another village exuding that small town American charm we have so appreciated on the trip.

Homeward Bound

Although only 14 nm further to Friday Harbor, we weighed anchor early to be underway before the forecast wind picked up. Within the hour we had 20 kts apparent wind which stayed on the nose most of the way. We were grateful to have reserved the RVYC outstation as the marina was pretty full. Friday Harbor is always a treat to visit. We strolled through town and found a great variety of shops with a maritime emphasis. This rounded out our last port of call for the voyage.

We choose the south route home: it was a couple of miles shorter than going over the top of San Juan Island and the timing for slack water at Cattle Point at 1000 was feasible. This passage can have current up to five knots and is not to be taken lightly. As we entered Haro Strait we encountered thick fog with visibility down to a mere quarter mile. Gingerly, with both AIS and Radar we eased our way across the traffic separation zone. Over the radio the voice of the captain of a large container ship crackled, asking us to stop as he passed by. We readily complied but we never did get a visual on him as he passed. The fog lifted as we approached Cadboro Bay and we were safely back in our slip at RVYC by early afternoon. We think Peter Puget would have been well-pleased with our voyage; it took him considerably longer to survey the sound in 1792. We had covered 340 nm in 11 legs over 17 days in mostly sunny weather - pretty good for September cruising!

Flying fish at Pike Place market Seattle





Round Ireland cruise - *Viking Lord*

Paul McSorley



A settled evening on Inishbofin after an unsettled day

Conditions at Malin Head were in less than ideal on our first morning out. Northwesterly winds were increasing F6 -7. This would usually be sufficient to keep us in Lough Swilly but we had a rendezvous to keep with the Northern Rally in Glenarm and conditions were not expected to improve for nearly 48 hours. The plan was to get around Malin Head before the full extent picked up and then run with both wind and tide. Conditions had been particularly calm in the days before so there was little swell to start and the hope was to get to Malin Head before it built. We were making timely progress, tacking up the lough but beyond Dunaff Head seas were building short, choppy and confused. Outside the lough on port tack with single reef and half genoa it was moderately comfortable but the starboard tack, (which we needed to clear Malin Head and the Garvan Isles) was rough and slamming. Our timing was spot on and we rounded Malin shortly after the turn of the tide. Clear of the Garvan Isles we put in another reef and accelerated down the building surf. Not long after the main was dropped and boom lashed to keep her under control. F7 is succinctly described- 'Sea heaps up: white from breaking waves begins to blow in streaks, probable wave height four metres'. This was a pretty good match for our surroundings. It wasn't fun going east but I certainly wouldn't have fancied going the other way.

After an afternoon sleigh ride along the Inishowen coast, we were relieved to take the shelter and hospitality of Greencastle Harbour. Local advice was to tie outside the sailing boats in the harbour rather than take a pontoon in the marina section

(even with the recently extended breakwater). The harbour proved a comfortable berth while the strong winds blew through the night and next day. At least we were under way and past Malin Head, one of the defining headlands of any circumnavigation of Ireland. We had just set off and early optimism still held dreams of fine sailing days with following winds.

Somewhat bruised by the winds of the previous day there was little enthusiasm for a repeat as the strong north-westerlies were not abating. So we had a leisurely day tied up in the middle of the bustling harbour. We set off to take the very scenic walk along the shore to Moville, but noticed a large white object drifting northwards about 1/2 mile offshore. It was hard to determine what it was without binoculars but it had the profile of a capsized sailing boat. There were no persons visible but if there were people in the water they would have been there for a concerning amount of time. We put a call through to the coastguard and stayed on station to assist with rescue efforts. A dredging vessel, the *Lough Foyle*, out of Lisahalla, which was just off Moville, was tasked to divert and steam towards the object. The coastguard RIB was launched from Greencastle and both vessels converged on the object. The dredging vessel was large and cumbersome-looking and approached the casualty at speed. I could only imagine the mixed feeling of anyone in the water. Elation at the prospect of rescue and a dread of the limited manoeuvrability of a large vessel coming upon you at speed. Fortunately there were no casualties and the 'casualty' turned out to be some inflatable sections which had broken loose from a water-park at Moville. Still I think it was a good shout - better safe than sorry.

Friday 23rd the wind had blown through and we were due to attend the ICC northern rally at Glenarm. Underway again we caught the morning tide to Rathlin. Rathlin is charming and elusive. All was dormant when we tied up in the near empty marina. Yet once the ferry docked the island blossomed into a hive of activity.

A hearse emerged, followed by a large crowd of mourners and their vehicles. We learned that the oldest resident of the island had passed away. He had been born on the island during a gale many years previously and his funeral was delayed as the ferry was not running the previous day to bring his remains home. An island lifetime spent subject to the vagaries of the weather from beginning to end. A procession set off around the village and made a convoluted passage to the chapel. The numbers did seem to drop off in the vicinity of the public house.

Visitors arrived seeking puffins and the welcoming harbour master was excited for the start of a

week-long festival. Berths would be in demand. The island was suddenly abuzz and we joined the quest for nesting puffins. Out at the west point lighthouse we weren't disappointed.

Suitably enchanted with Rathlin we took the evening tide to Glenarm in calm conditions. A festival was definitely in the air as we motored past a parade of Dutch, French and local boats all making their way to Rathlin. Next time we'll have to put the festival into the itinerary. An island definitely worth a longer stay.

The ICC northern committee had planned a Viking invasion in Glenarm for the Spring rally. In the end we didn't get enough boats to take the town by siege but the weekend was a cosy gathering in good company. There was merriment and feasting aboard *Big Wig*, hosted by our Rear Commodore Julie (& Graham) Chambers. A few got to claim the Game of Thrones crown during the tour of Steensons Jewellery workshop. An opportunity to 'stiffen up the sinews and lend the eye a terrible aspect'.

Rathlin Is - Funeral procession for the island's eldest resident





LEFT: *Viking Raid, Steinstons, Glenarm - 'Stiffen the sinews... Jend the eye a terrible aspect*

Joined by John we proceeded southwards. Themes were developing. Winds were blowing from the direction we were heading and with fresh winds blowing against tide, headlands were pretty rough. The turbulence just south of Wicklow Head in 26 knots (gusting 32) took us by surprise, although we were well reefed at the time. Rounding the southeast corner, inside Tuskar Rock was another washing machine experience. So, Dunmore East was a restful stop after an early start and a cool shake-down off Tuskar. A pontoon has been installed since my last visit in June 1993 which made a pleasant change from the extended raft of yachts of previous times. Dunmore East had a vibrant bohemian feel with relaxed holiday-makers, health conscious sea swimmers and some enticing artwork. There was a pull that said stay a little longer. However we were pushing on. In 1993 on board *Auvergne*, my Sabre27, Dunmore East had been our furthest south when weather, time and crew enthusiasm had combined to limit any further progress. We had set off into a dull dawn with F5 plus from the southwest bound for Cork. After several hours of making little headway we had turned tail back to the comforts of the harbour. We spent our remaining time exploring the river Suir and got as far as Waterford city, tying up alongside the old wooden dock.

On this occasion, Claran and I had a stonking passage from Dunmore East. It was a blustery day with wind force 4-6 from the Northwest. Suitably reefed, this gave us a superb close reach on one tack all the way from Dunmore East to Cork Harbour entrance. *Viking Lord* was flying. Definitely one of the best days sailing off the trip. Despite the wind the air was clear and we relished the views of the southeast coast

Saturday afternoon offered a valuable cultural insight into northern life. The FA cup and the Scottish Cup were taking place at the same time. Both were local derbies between long-standing opponents. Manchester United vs Manchester City and Glasgow Celtic versus Rangers. Both presented opportunities for an out-pouring of rival tensions. In the local pub, FA fans sat side by side at the bar, while the Scottish fans sat in the main lounge. A lone Celtic supporter decked in his stripes sat amongst a swathe of blue tops. The matches were exciting and intense. The results may not have been to the majority craving but the atmosphere remained good natured and all dispersed in good terms. Just to show that we in the North are able get on at times.

North Harbour, Cape Clear



51 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024

– low red cliffs and gentle green plains backed by rounded mountain ranges.

New territories of Cork and Kerry were now opening up for *Viking Lord*. We stopped at Crosshaven, Kinsale, Glandore and North Harbour Clear Island. Claran's son, Liam joined us in the bustling port of Kinsale, abundant with sailors, tourists, hen parties and fun seekers. All making their contribution to the craic agus ceoil. The tranquil bay at Glandore was another favourite stopover and we were treated to the sight of a Minke whale accompanying us for a short time as its feeding route coincided with ours. Our passage took us on a fresh beat through Gascanane Sound, north of Clear Island. Tradition has it that on the first passage through the sound one is entitled to write a poem. My own effort was brief but hopefully captured the intent of the voyage –

We came up to Gascanane Sound,
And sure we did blow through it,
For *Viking Lord* was going round.

Fastnet was now in sight and calling out for a visit. As it turned out we couldn't have avoided it anyway. Tuesday 4 June was damp, cool day with a fresh/strong breeze from the west. Once again, we were headed directly into it and in rather unfavourable conditions. It was a long day with little comfort. After an early start at first light, we were up close and personal with Fastnet Rock. The wind increased during the day and visibility was variable in murky conditions. Deeply reefed our boat speed was good but progress against the wind was poor. Off Mizen Head we found the seas were rougher further offshore than close under the cliffs. We stayed on the

offshore tacks for as long as we could tolerate the poundings and then tacked inshore for a little relief until we ran out of sea. It made for spectacular views around Mizen Head but it was a long day of tacking. Our new crew Liam was relatively inexperienced with passage making but showed no difficulty coping with the challenging conditions.

With progress over the ground slow, Kitchen Cove in Dunmanus Bay, offered the closer opportunity for overnight shelter than our intended destination of Castletownbere. Conditions had not been attractive for going below throughout the turbulent day so the prospect of a calm anchorage, an early night and a hot dinner were hard to resist. Entering Dunmanus Bay was both a relief and intensely beautiful. It was calm and remote – the high peninsulas on either side displaying few signs of human habitation.

Castletownbere is described as a no-nonsense place. Although attracting tourists it's *raison d'être* is fishing and that's that. The harbour advised the pontoon was full of fishing boats but we were welcome to anchor in the harbour. We joined two other visiting yachts in the basin and enjoyed a lower key tourist experience – good Guinness in MacCarthy's and fine seafood in the Lobster Bar.

Onwards we went to Caherdaniel passing under the cable-car in Dursey Sound – quite tight! Derrynane Bay was beautiful. We were now in Kerry and the low cliffs had given way to high jagged peaks, steep valleys, awesome cliffs and twisted rocks. The landscape is wild and remote. The sailor is gifted with views from seaward which are stunning and awe-inspiring. Although very welcoming we did not



ABOVE: Skipper up close to the Fastnet

52 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



Skipper, Ciaran and Liam Knightstown, Valentia

stop in Derrynane Bay – The walk to the pub was uphill and looked arduous. But more to the point was there enough water in the bay for overnight anchoring?

Cahersiveen and Valentia Island were a favourite stopover. The scenery is stunning and the area abounds with historical tidbits - a Cromwellian fort, a transatlantic cable & telegraph station, a Green Knight, a Royal Hotel and the birthplace of Daniel O'Connell. The Fertha river runs through a broad flat valley between steep sided mountains and opens into a wide lagoon between mainland and Valentia Island. Cahersiveen sits on a southern slope and a curiously designed old barracks forms a prominent blip on the approach from seaward. Rumour has it that it was intended for the Punjab rather than rural Ireland. The town was quaint and welcoming. A Royal hotel in this remote outpost harkens back to the strategic importance of the former telegraph station in the village (operational from 1858-1966) and the beneficent influence of the Green Knight of Kerry.

I have followed the travels of the sailor and revolutionary, Erskine Childers, with some interest and apparently, he toured this area with a party of

Leaving Valentia for Dingle



irregulars in late July 1922. Childers diary records that they inspected the cable station then stopped and dined at Royal Hotel Valentia. The diary does not record whether they paid or left a customary chit. The press used much of the visit to build a picture of a devilish mastermind leading an attack and organising destructive strategies across the territory.

Onwards to Dingle for food, drink, a bit of craic, more American accents and a crew change. Liam left us and Phil Burgess joined us. The bus from Dublin conveniently dropped him off while the Sunday afternoon traditional session was well warmed up. There are a few questions that are not worth asking on an Irish cruise. 'Is the fish fresh?' when dining out- you will be advised with a cheeky grin that it was swimming an hour ago. 'Is there music tonight?' before ordering a drink at the bar - this will immediately identify you as a tourist and not a discerning traveller. And thirdly, do not ask the skipper if we are leaving early - the answer will be yes. The tide through Blasket Sound suited a departure before dawn so off we went.

Bacon butties were well done and dusted well before Sleah Head. Good planning skipper. Established trends

BELOW: Early morning off the Blaskets



were set to continue - fresh to strong winds would head us and headlands would be rough. Blasket Sound with wind against tide lived up to expectations and challenged digestion.

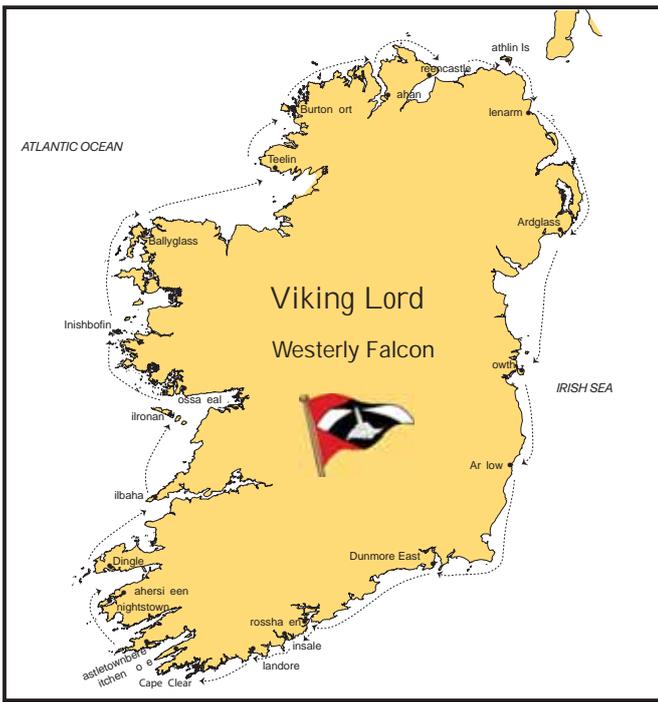
Loop Head, Erris head and Glen Head would subsequently be added to the rough roll call as we made our way around. After a fine day's thumping along the majestic coast of the kingdom we sought shelter under Loop Head. Kibaha harbour turned out to be pleasantly sheltered and the anchor held through a calm the night (holding is reported as indifferent). Hungry for more ceoil agus craic we inflated the dinghy and motored ashore. But such is hard to find in rural Ireland early in the week - the nearest pub closed at 1700 and we arrived at 1730 too late for a pint. The other pub was housing unfortunate refugees and not open to the public. Nonetheless our cellar was well stocked and a pleasant night in our own company was had.

We got into Inishmore in good time for a bit of exploring. An island buzzing with tourists and a big push on Aran sweaters. Strong westerly winds were forecast for the latter part of the week so we pulled into Rossaveal marina. Ken Ferris, another old friend from uni days, joined us briefly. We set sail the following day into a strong westerly, found we weren't making much progress in the direction of Inishbofin and returned to Rossaveal for shelter.

Ken left and the remaining party forever keen for a session took the bus into Galway on Friday afternoon. Phil, recently returned from extended travels in the Far East, remarked on the similarity to travel by bus in rural India. The bus stopped wherever someone was waiting and it just kept filling up and up. We didn't get as far climbing on the roof or hanging on the sides but certainly crowds were flocking to Galway for a Friday afternoon. It was easy to see why - Galway was buzzing with colourful clothing, chat, music, relaxed students, smiling faces and American accents. The craic started early and we joined in the merriment. Fed, watered and suitably entertained we caught a late bus back to *Viking Lord*. Saturday saw a little easing of the wind but the direction remained stubbornly against us. It was time to move on and a Saturday evening on Inishbofin was apparently not to be missed. The day was an uncomfortable punch into the wind with little opportunity for turning off the motor if we wanted to get there before the end of the week. This picturesque and lively island is definitely one of the highlights of the west coast. However, it takes some commitment to reach (even taking the ferry requires a long drive through Connemara to a remote harbour) and judging by the proliferation of trawler-designed Fisher yachts in the area, pushing into heavy seas is not an infrequent occurrence.

Sunrise, Kibaha Bay, Co Clare





We entered Inishbofin in fine evening sunshine and were pleasantly welcomed by a local resident who had been watching our approach. We took a berth at the end of the inner stone harbour with just enough water for us to spend the night. And then RIBs started to arrive and they kept on coming and coming. A fleet of over 30 boats, was converging from all points of the compass and their crews suited in fashionable sailing attire alighted at the pub very conveniently located next to the pier. *Viking Lord* was surrounded and the craic was building. This was a RIB rally for charitable purposes and everyone was in buoyant form. One supposes that after the excess fossil fuel has been burned some worthy cause will benefit while the net worth to the planet is less certain. Still, everyone was out and about having a

good time and enjoying the fine ambience on this lovely island.

Reminiscent of the final scene from Hitchcock's classic movie *The Birds*, in the calm early morning we departed Inishbofin picking a path through rafts of sleeping RIBs to find an open passage to the sea. The morning started calm but the wind was now swinging north/northwesterly and set to remain there. Sunday was a mostly pleasant days sailing before the wind turned fresh later in the day and turned Erris Head into a washing machine. Off Achill Head I was awoken from a nap by excited calls of shark, shark! Phil had spotted a huge dorsal fin off our stern and it was swimming directly towards us. The large basking shark, feeding with mouth agape

came right alongside our starboard quarter before diving out of sight. They are magnificent animals and it was another high point to have one make its own way to our proximity. It is also encouraging to see them in waters where there were once hunted for their valuable liver oil.

Broadhaven was a pleasant overnight respite after the turbulence around Erris Head. Another early start to get across Donegal Bay. Conditions were recorded as damp, drizzle and dreich. Not an inspiring start to the week and a mooring at Teelin was very welcome. Passing time amidst the gloom I did remark that I couldn't remember where I had put my tool box. Normally on passage it sits on the cabin floor as the contents are in constant demand. On this trip it has been stowed in a locker and hadn't been required for over a week. Something was going well. The evening turned fine and the Rusty Mackerel was beating the trend of quite rural pubs early in the week. It was buzzing with tourists.

Phil's time was up and, in another scene, reminiscent of an early 20th century thriller we dropped him, like a fiendish German spy, on a cool damp dawn on the pier at Teelin. Somewhat apt as Teelin had been the base in 1937 for a Nazi spy Dr Ludwig Mülhausen much to the upset of the local population. Not having to travel under the radar, Phil managed to make his way by bus and ferry back to home in Scotland before nightfall. Meanwhile, Claran and I headed out around Glen Head and Rathlin O'Beirne island for another cold pounding. Our tacks eventually took us onto a good course for Cloghy Head and the southern approach to the South Sound of Arranmore. My intention had been to take the safer route north of Arranmore but conditions – visibility, swell and flood tide – were aligned in our favour so we stood on. We passed through without making contact with the bottom but at times there wasn't

much water. At times we had only 2m below us and that was during the second half of the flood (I wouldn't want to go any earlier). Although there was little swell, wind against tide produced about a half metre bounce giving even less depth and we had to reduce speed. It is certainly a passage only to be undertaken in ideal conditions.

Burtonport was relaxed and we got a large free berth at the end of the pier. Finding a berth for a visiting yacht in Burtonport is usually difficult and normally this one would have been occupied by a float of large trawlers which would come and go at all hours. It was free and we weren't disturbed. It maybe that our good fortune was not shared by the fishing fleet of the locality. The Lobster Pot, on previous visits, did possibly the finest seafood platter in the country. However, on a Tuesday evening and the last night of tour it didn't open. Although a final pleasure was denied, our dwindling stores and reduced cellar provided for a decent finish.

The last day broke the trend. We got a following wind and the passage was smooth. We had finally notched up a round Ireland trip. We had sailed most of the way round and had seen some big stuff. *Viking Lord* had shown herself well up to the task and remarkably returned to Fahan with little needing repair (at the end of the Azores trip in 2017 there was little that didn't need repair). We had seen some fabulous scenery and witnessed stunning wildlife: there was barely a day without frolicking dolphins: we could also include in our sightings nesting puffins, a minke whale, a basking shark and possibly a blue shark near Inishmore. Ireland is a great cruising ground. I love it and must do it again.

Phil and Claran - fendish spies putting ashore at Teelin after a damp passage





Back to Brittany

Neil Hegarty

Terra Nova, Cullian and Orchestra

My first cruise to Brittany was for Brest 2000 when my brother-in-law Hugh Kennedy invited me to sail from Baltimore to Brittany and back on *Tosca* V/a Sparkman and Stephens, She 36' built in 1980. Hugh had persuaded the organising committee to accept the entry of his modern fibreglass yacht because *Tosca V* was a sister ship of the French *Lorelei* which had rescued the entire crew of the sinking *Griffin* during the '79 Fastnet Race. Hugh invited me to helm when the fleet moved from Brest to Douarnenez in a Parade of Sail. I will not forget the fun we had sailing quietly on the quarter wave of *La Recouvrance* for most of the passage.

Returning from the ICC Basque Cruise in 2006 I was back in Douarnenez on *Shelduck*, a 2003 Dufour 34, during another classic boat regatta and anchored too close to the participating classics. A very polite Frenchman came out in a rib and told me we were spoiling the photographs of the fleet, and would I please relocate which, of course, we did. I had called at Douarnenez during the regatta to encourage Choryna Kieley to join us and help with the passage back to Baltimore. I made a mistake as Choryna was securing *Shelduck* to a mooring in St. Mary's Pool, Isles of Scilly and she had a narrow escape from a damaged hand. I met her for the first time since then at this year's ICC Annual Dinner in Cork.

2011 was a remarkably busy year for Anne Kenny, the ICC, and me: five cruises in all, two on *Shelduck*, two on Anne's *Tam O'Shanter* and one on Paddy O'Sullivan's *Sapphire* to join the ICC Brittany Cruise. *Sapphire* sailed directly from Cahersiveen to the first event at Port Tudy, Île de Groix and directly back from La Trinité-sur-Mer to Valentia Kerry. Sadly, it turned out to be Paddy's final cruise. The standing ovation he received at the final dinner brought tears to his daughter Mary's eyes. Paddy had made the passage through strong winds in his eighties. We sailed back to Brittany again in 2017 during *Tam O'Shanter's* passage from Travemunde Germany to join the ICC Galician Cruise and we enjoyed another good Brittany lobster dinner in Concarneau.

Wednesday 12 June 2024.

Having taken Stuart Musgrave's advice to travel to Brittany by car on the Cork - Roscoff ferry, Anne and I collected Mary and Len Curtin, both ICC, at their home in Crosshaven. Following the short drive to the ferry berth in Ringaskiddy we joined an efficiently managed vehicle queue and boarded quickly, easily finding our cabin. Next morning we awoke to very pleasant music and were quickly ashore. I had chartered a Delphia 33 at La Trinité-sur-Mer through Click&Boat from Frenchman Philippe Lacombe. *Tofino* was Philippe's pride and joy and was in good condition. She was built in Poland in 2008.

Taking care, with Anne's help, to stay on the correct side of the road I parked near the marina in La

Trinité-sur-Mer and shortly after Stuart Musgrave ICC arrived to welcome us and pointed out a place for lunch. Stuart helped with a little translation during the handover by Philippe Lacombe. The handover was thorough and took three hours. Not long by Irish standards where a handover can take at least four hours, I later learned.

Friday 14th to Monday 17th of June 2024.

Early on Friday morning, I assessed the weather from La Trinité towards Bénodet and decided that our first passage in *Tofino* would not be to Bénodet. Having the back-up of the car we booked at Le Grand Hotel 6 Avenue L'odet for Sunday 16th: the day of the first event dinner. It turned out to be an excellent choice. Two double bedrooms at a cost of 37.50 euro per person including breakfast and taxes. It was in the centre, on the river between the marina and the ICC dinner venue.

Again, on Stuart's recommendation, we walked to the weekly Friday morning market set up in Carrefour's car park and did some shopping. After lunch Philippe came and filled us in further on *Tofino* and removed the sails we would not need. Stuart arrived for a chat about 1730 while our roast pork was cooking. I first met Stuart in Baltimore in the fifties when he was eleven so know him well. On Saturday we shopped for stores, explored the town, and relaxed aboard.



RIGHT: Neil relaxing in Port Saint Gildas



LEFT: Len working on deck

squeezed in, just avoiding *Torfino's* transom. At 1740 we assembled at the nearby Café de la Jette for instructions on how to get to the pre-dinner drinks. There, Stuart introduced us to Erwan Tonnerre who owned the Café and was providing the evening's food and drink. He had also done it for the 2011 event. Erwan immediately offered Mary and Anne a lift in his car up the hill to the Community Hall where our dinner was being held. At the Hall Erwan introduced his wife Agnes to the girls who were the first to arrive.

Len and I joined the group on an interesting walk to the Hall, first up steps and then along a path part of which was downhill over exposed rock. Andrew Kennedy was on hand to see that I did not stumble with my two recent knee replacements. In the Hall, Anne and I reconnected with Brian Smullen, ICC of *Cullan*. We last met at a very enjoyable OCC dinner in Dublin about 2016 organised by John Bourke, ICC. In conversation Brian told us that he was at the London Boat Show in 1972 with Mungo Park when Mungo bought *Tam O'Shanter* and that she was Boat of the Show that year.

I drove to Bénodet on Sunday, checked into the hotel and we attended the pre-dinner drinks at the Yacht Club De L Odet where I met Peter Bowring, ICC, and his wife Annmarie. My son Neil sails a Dragon out of the Royal St George in Dun Laoghaire with Peter.

Having failed to get from the Azores to the Madeira rally last year and with the disruption of Covid, Anne and I had not been to an ICC rally since 2017 in Galicia. We both noticed a generational change of those attending this rally, a good sign for the club. As a group we walked to the dinner venue L'Effet de Mer where Len, Mary, Anne, and I joined a table with Andrew Kennedy, ICC, Lisa and their crew from Belfast and Baltimore. We all enjoyed decent food and good company. Andrew is a nephew of former ICC Commodore, Hugh. He sails a sister ship of *Shelduck*, a Dufour 34, *Jacada*. After the hotel breakfast next morning we returned to *Tofino* at La Trinité and were welcomed back by heavy rain.

Tuesday 18th to Thursday 20th June 2024

Arriving early at a marina in Brittany is always a good plan to be sure of a berth. I set the alarm for 0600 and *Torfino* left her berth half an hour later for Port Tudy. It was an uneventful passage of six and a half hours with little wind and three hours of rain. The early start paid off with a berth available in the marina directly facing the harbour entrance. Philippe had given me a plastic card, the size of a credit card, on which details of the yacht were recorded for entry to a harbour. It was also possible to record pre-paid days at harbours on the card. Our first day in Port Tudy was free courtesy of Philippe.

Wednesday was a relaxing day aboard watching the comings and goings in the harbour including a large bulk carrier carrying road making materials which

Later Peter Mullins ICC, who was on *Cullan* with Brian, said that he was on Irish Admiral's Cup team member, Ken Rohan's *Regardless*, when she was towed into Baltimore by the lifeboat having lost her rudder during the 79 Fastnet Race. As commodore of BSC that year I remembered it well. Peter suggested that there should be a gathering of those who took part for the 50th anniversary in 2029. Mary, Len, Anne, and I dined at a table with Stuart and, after dinner, Aoife Nolan-Beattie ICC organised entertainment. Our Len sang Raglan Road. As it was raining Stuart produced a lift back to the marina for us. Next day was a day of showers so between them we provisioned.

21 - 24 June 2024

The alarm was set for 0530 on Friday morning. Len filled the water tanks and *Torfino* left the marina at 0615 for the passage to Île d'Houat. We were

A busy Port Tudy



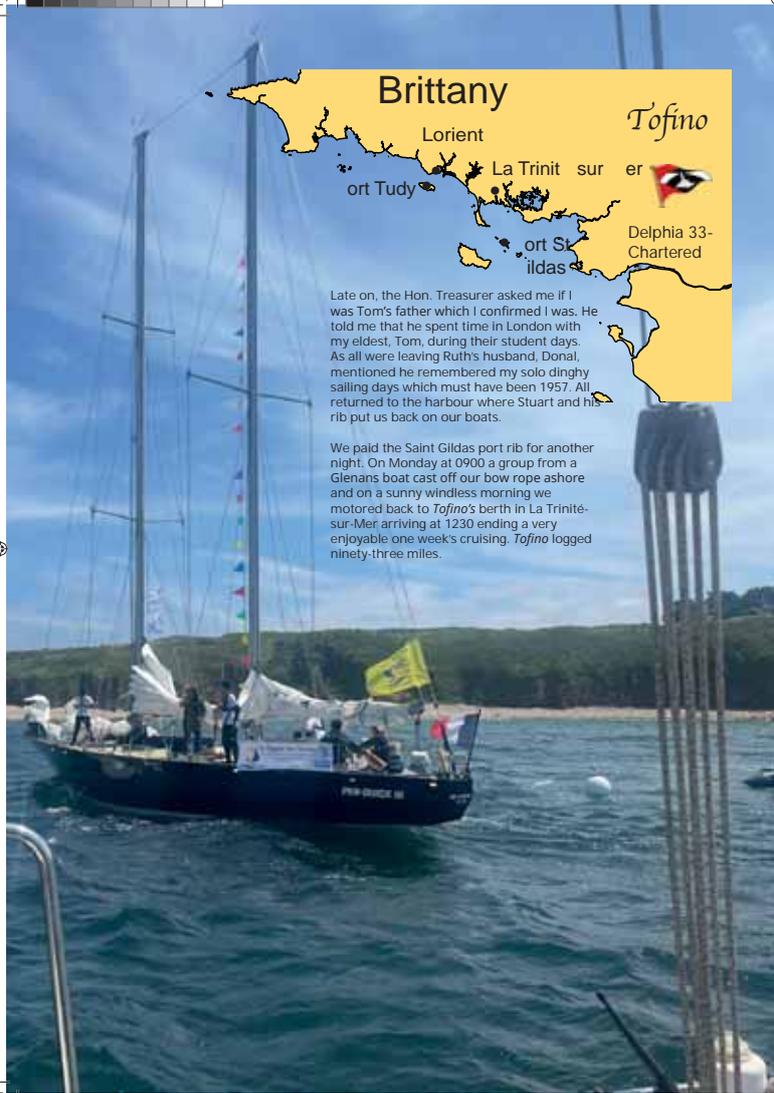
ABOVE: Mary and Anne ready for rain

off the entry to La Trinité at 0915 with the tide sweeping us along at 6.5 kn. Len and Mary provided the expertise on the bow and picked up a mooring buoy outside Port Saint Gildas at 1125. When Len called the harbour, he was asked what number we were which we did not understand. At noon, a large, dressed regatta fleet for young people arrived and picked up all the moorings while some went into the harbour. Two boats rafted to the mooring next to us, so we were not disturbed. It was a lunch event so the yachts, including *Pen Duick III*, departed about 1500. At 1700 after a failed attempt to pick up a more sheltered mooring Len encouraged me to enter the port and take a berth there. I was nervous of damage to Philippe's boat but tying up to three buoys on one side was easy with the help of the port rib who also tied our bow line to the pier.

Next day the ICC fleet arrived, and Stuart took everyone ashore from their boats for dinner in his rib. *Torfino's* crew were sitting with *Orchestra's* crew. On my port side was Ruth Curtis of Cork and Galway whose late sister Ann was a good friend of mine in Cork. During dinner, to our dismay, the Commodore announced that the final dinner at K5 restaurant Kerneval on Wednesday 26th was cancelled (because of a poor weather forecast - Editor). After dinner Michael Craughwell played his accordion with a song from the mayor of the island Philippe Le Fur. Local people spilling out from the bar sang La Marseillaise and Ireland's Call.

BELOW: Len contemplating Brittany's cuisine





Brittany
Lorient
La Trinité-sur-Mer
Port Tudy
Port St-Gildas
Tofino
Delphia 33-Chartered

Late on, the Hon. Treasurer asked me if I was Tom's father which I confirmed I was. He told me that he spent time in London with my eldest, Tom, during their student days. As all were leaving Ruth's husband, Donal, mentioned he remembered my solo dinghy sailing days which must have been 1957. All returned to the harbour where Stuart and his rib put us back on our boats.

We paid the Saint Gildas port rib for another night. On Monday at 0900 a group from a Glenans boat cast off our bow rope ashore and on a sunny windless morning we motored back to *Tofino's* berth in La Trinité-sur-Mer arriving at 1230 ending a very enjoyable one week's cruising. *Tofino* logged ninety-three miles.



A short Autumn cruise to Connemara

Pat O'Shea

Galam Head

BELOW: Jim Lawlor, Tom O'Shea and cruising chute

Just like a lot of other sailors this summer, I had been waiting for weeks, hoping for some settled weather to get in some cruising. Eventually, towards the end of August it looked like there might be a week of decent weather. The original plan was to head north of Slyne Head and do some hiking on Clare Island and the Inishkea Islands, however the weather window available dictated a more curtailed cruise. My wife Ruth had other commitments at this time so I managed to round up my brother Tom and Jim Lalor as crew. Jim is a very experienced sailor and Tom has cruised on *Amergin* a number of times.

We set off from Kilrush marina at 1000 on Tuesday 27 August. The forecast was for SW winds, F4-5 and mainly dry. We unfurled the mainsail and motored down to Loop Head with the ebb tide helping us along. After rounding this spectacular headland we hoisted the cruising chute, shut off the engine and furled the main. We had some very enjoyable sailing making 6-7 kts until we got within a couple of miles to Gregory Sound. Suddenly, out of nowhere a vicious squall hit us and overpowered the cruising

BELOW: Leaving Kilrush Marina. Jim Lawlor





View from Tigh Lee Kiggaul Bay

chute. With some difficulty we managed to get it back in the sock and lowered it down. It also started to rain heavily. We completed the last few miles into Kilronan under engine, where we rafted up to a small boat in the harbour. Dinner on board was followed by a few pints in Joe Mc's. Kilronan was fairly quiet and it looked like the season was tapering off. It rained heavily during the night but we all slept well.

Wednesday morning dawned dry and sunny. After breakfast we motored out of the harbour and as soon as we got in to open water, we set full sail and headed to Rossaveal on a broad reach. It only took us two hours to reach the marina where we tied up to one of the hammerheads. The ferry port, a short distance away was still busy taking visitors out to the Aran Islands. We had lunch on board and then went for a hike along the shore out to the Martello tower on the east side of the bay. It was built around 1815 and is still in great shape which is no surprise as they are a very robust construction.

Paddy Schutte joined us on *Amergin* that evening. Paddy and I had been on a course together earlier this year and he lives nearby; it was great to catch up with him. We walked to the local pub, An Chéibh,

about a mile away where we had a few refreshments before turning in.

Thursday morning was again very pleasant and we motored out of Rossaveal toward Greatman's Bay. An hour and a half later we picked up a mooring buoy off Maumeen Quay. Maumeen is located at the north of Gorumna Island near the head of the bay. It is a beautiful bay and well worth a visit. It was a sunny day and the scenery all round us was stunning. The Maum Turk mountains to the north of us looked very impressive. After lunch on board, we relaxed for the afternoon and soaked up the beautiful vista. Reluctantly, we decided to move on and proceeded west under engine a short distance to Kiggaul Bay where we dropped anchor abeam of the pier and just beyond the small lighthouse in good shelter. Later that evening we took the dinghy across to the head of the Bay where Gorumna Island is joined to Lettermullan by a small bridge. Two prominent rock beacons mark the channel. We landed at a small slipway, a short walk from Tigh Lee where we had dinner. We walked past Colaiste Chamuis, an Irish College. The views from the restaurant were outstanding. It was almost dark as we headed back across the bay to *Amergin*.

Pat and John at Martello Tower at Rossaveal





Kilkieran Quay

Friday morning was dry and sunny with a flat calm sea. The anchor was hauled up and we motored west towards Kilkieran Bay. Golan Island with its prominent watchtower was left to starboard. Two hours later we tied up to a visitors' mooring near the busy Kilkieran Pier. The Arramara Teoranta seaweed processing factory is located near the pier. This business was started in 1947 and is now a sizeable operation. We took the dinghy ashore and walked around the small village before having lunch in Coyne's gastro pub. The food was excellent and the staff very friendly.

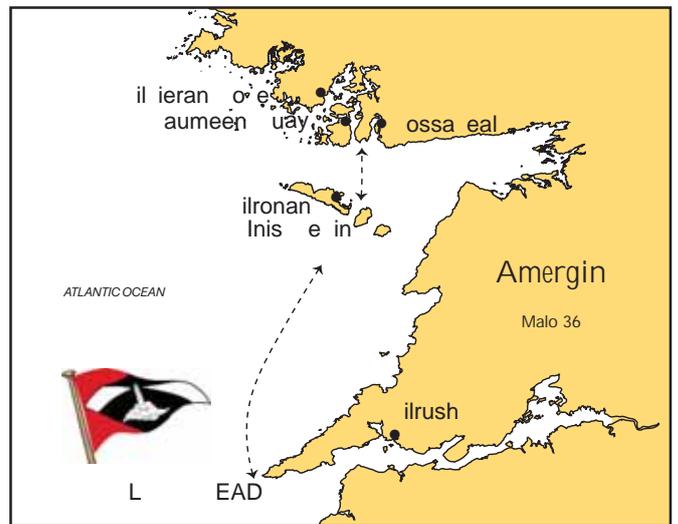
Unfortunately, the weather forecast was now indicating strong winds from the south on Sunday

and Monday, so we decided to head back to Inis Meáin rather than on to Roundstone which was the original plan. We tied up in the new harbour at Caladh Mór Pier just after 1800. Another boat from Kilrush, *Arabesque* was already there before us. I spoke to Skipper David Hogan and he was also concerned about the weather and was considering shelter options for the following few days. After dinner on board we walked to the pub, Teach Osta, a 5 km round trip, only for the committed!

After an early rise on Saturday morning, we motored out of the harbour at 0800. Once outside we set full sail and sailed south through Foul Sound in a SE F3 wind. A couple of hours later, the wind died and we

had to motor the rest of the way to Loop Head. As we rounded Loop Head, the breeze picked up and with the flood tide helping us, we had a very enjoyable sail all the way back to Kilrush. We tied up to our berth in the marina at 1800. The cruise was a few days

shorter than planned but still very enjoyable. We managed to visit a few bays that we had not been in before, some of which we will certainly return to.



OPPOSITE: Amergin and Arabesque alongside Caladh Mór Pier, Inis Meáin

An unintended cruise to Ardglass

Paul Conway and Gillie Fletcher



ABOVE: Gillie, Oisín and Liz enjoy a bit of sunshine in transit to Port Oriel

We knew from the outset that 2024's cruising season was not going to be our most adventurous year: weddings, births, marriages, moving house, and more were converging to curtail our sailing time. Our best chance would be a quick passage to Scotland, or so we hoped. And with the timing set for late June/early July, there was the hope of long warm days and other Scottish delights.

So, on Saturday, 22 June, in the late afternoon, with Paul Conway skipper, Gillie Fletcher, Oisín Cahill, and Liz Neary on board, *Cevantes*, a Contessa 32, set sail from the Royal St George against the end of an ebb tide, which soon turned northerly and combining with a moderate southerly breeze, gave a nice comfortable sail around the Bailey and on towards Lambay Island. Despite the wind's southerly provenance, it still felt cool, not much to suggest a midsummer's day.

Most of our recent cruising has involved long passages and use of marinas, so it was a pleasant change to make a 15nm passage to Saltpan Bay anchorage, on Lambay's northern shore. Two other yachts were there ahead of us, also a small lugger type open boat with just an A frame tent for shelter, hardy folk. The ILV *Granuaile* was anchored off, adding to the company.

Saltpan Bay always triggers thoughts of David Attenborough wildlife documentaries: thousands of birds on show, whizzing about, busy feeding their young, learning to fly and fish, practising highspeed sea landings without tripping beak over flippers, and generally having a good time; albeit sea birds are



Paul in Dundrum Bay

not particularly melodious and when lots of them get together, it's not a good idea to be downwind of them. Then again, it's their bay.

The anchor was set in 6m, as close as we dared to the shore to get a good view, hoping we weren't intruding, too much. With all the elements in harmony, we had a good night's sleep, disturbed only in the morning when the anchor alarm triggered on the tide's turning, but we were already awake.

For cockpit breakfast, we had flocks of guillemots, puffins, and razorbills to watch. It was interesting to observe the birdlife hierarchy of things: just above the waves were all the guillemots, puffins and razorbills, the gulls stayed away and generally circled above, and then above all that there seemed to be a larger bird of prey hovering on the cliff's updraught and cormorants nesting high up the cliff. The bigger predators probably thinking about a breakfast opportunity - luckily for the wave scrapers there seemed to be security in numbers.

Sunday's weather looked promising, sunshine and southerly wind forecast. We didn't have a precise place we had to be, just to head north, maybe Port Oriel or Carlingford, depending on progress under sail in light wind.

Our track took us close to Rockabill. *Granuaile* was there ahead of us, with a long cable ashore. Then it occurred to us we hadn't seen the light the previous

BELOW: View of Ardglass sheltered marina





Classic tugboats *Swiftstone* and *Brienne* in Carlingford night, so guessed maintenance was going on. The terns were about in great numbers, so lots more photo opportunities.

Later, the wind freshened to a southerly 3/4 (still feeling as cool as a north easterly), and we made good speed northwards. We'd often thought of using Port Oriel as a pit stop along this stretch of coast but didn't have much information on it, so a bit of exploring was an incentive to visit. A call to the harbour master offered an option to tie up alongside a trawler.

Port Oriel welcomes yachts, albeit the facilities are basic, really just a place to shelter for a rest or waiting on a tide. On this occasion the sun brought out all the locals and there was a buzz on the quay, all enjoying the excellent fish 'n' chips and oysters from a very stylish pop-up caterer. We enjoyed a walk over Clogher Head, warm and sunny in the north side

lee, sunny and cool on the southerly windy side, but didn't go as far as the town.

Wind and tidal stream offered the possibility of a 15nm downwind sail to catch the flood into Carlingford Lough. So we pushed on; the day's sailing finished off with an enjoyable motor up the calm Lough in a setting sun.

Monday's forecast was for damp conditions and a chilly wind coming down the Lough, so we opted for a rest day. Our legs were stretched with a stroll into Carlingford town and a browse around its historic monuments. Lunch was enjoyed in Ruby Ellen's, a gem of a place with good salads, teas and homemade pastries; and even more interesting was the collection of china and interior layout, full of Edwardian charm.

A visit to King John's Castle is well worth the effort



RIGHT: Liz interviews a Norseman

to climb the steps up to it, and we found some conservation work has been done to stabilize this 12th century structure and make it accessible to visitors.

On a stroll down the west pier under King John's Castle, we came across two very interesting historic vessels, tied alongside: the *Brienne*, a restored 1940s Dutch tugboat and tugboat *Swiftstone* launched in 1952 to tow barges on the Thames. We were warmly welcomed aboard the *Swiftstone* and treated to an intriguing insight into how tugboats operated and life on board for the permanent crew. These boats were certainly tough, and so too were the people who worked them. Unfortunately, we didn't take any interior photos of the massive diesel engine, which was spotlessly clean and its operating system. A mega monster compared to our teeny Beta.

Later, we had time for more maritime history when we bumped into Conor, a berth holder on the marina. He introduced us to the fascinating story of the 'Cretageff' or 'Lady Boyne' as she was known in Drogheda, the grounded / floating concrete ship which is part of Carlingford marina. She was built in Shoreham in 1917, a place where we sheltered from a three-day gale, last year, so we felt a certain connection. The history of concrete ships, why and how they were built, and individual ships' stories, is available in a book to be published by Richard Lewis, or if interested, take a look at his website on the Cretefleet.

The day was finished off by a walk along the Carlingford to Omeath Greenway which runs past the marina. A plan for our next visit to Carlingford will allow time to hire bicycles to complete the round trip.

An early start on Tuesday was required to exit the Lough before 0730. We had a nice downwind sail to the Hellyhunter buoy until the wind and tide turned adverse. The tidal change we had expected but the wind direction was a gamble we had taken with the forecast for variable wind directions. Progress towards Ardglass was slow, in damp cold conditions, and beating into a head wind did nothing for onboard morale. Eventually our numbers came up and the wind backed to give a tight fetch across Dundrum Bay to make St John's Point and on to Ardglass by early afternoon. Weather forecast indicated that we might be waiting a few days for our next sail.

Initially, once logistics were attended to (and we found good fresh food supplies), there didn't seem a lot to do in Ardglass, especially with uncooperative weather. Our first realisation was that we were in a quiet and friendly place, so we began to appreciate the serenity, and even the changing shores and colourful shore scape as tides came and went, and the occasional visit by the resident harbour seal, things we missed when sailing in the Netherlands

OPPOSITE: Liz and Oisín off Rockabill



and the Baltic. A pontoon camaraderie was struck up with the few other visitors in the same situation as ourselves. There were Dutch, British, French, and German crews waiting to go north or south, so plenty to talk about.

Walking being a useful use of leisure time, we swapped out maritime footwear for shore boots. Our first outing was along the shore walk in Ardglass golf club, taking great care not to disrupt any shots, or be shot at ourselves. Members on the course were very welcoming and offered an invitation to use the club house facilities for lunch, which we happily availed of and can highly recommend. While walking along the shore we spotted the Paddle Steamer *Waverley* steaming north towards her home port on the Clyde.

A second walk took us to the 15th century Ardtole Church, perched on a hill just northeast of Ardglass. With great views of the countryside and sea scape, it is easy to understand its strategic importance. As we pondered our return route, we considered the

Paul goes golfing





Ruins of 15th Ardtole Church

viability of crossing along the side of a very large field stocked with about fifty fine heifers. That was until we spotted the boyfriend, a very large agile black bull, who might not have taken too kindly to the idea. Fortunately, we then located the assigned path for a safer descent. This type of bull doesn't usually qualify for mention in sailing logs. Our third hike was out around Coney Island, sometimes a bit of a scramble over the shore rocks but with some nice views and bird spotting opportunities, finished off with lunch in the golf club.



Ardglass was never our intended cruise destination; Scotland, wherever we could get to, was first preference but the forecast suggested that if we continued on to Scotland we might have had to stay longer than intended. Plans B and C had ideas about Whitehaven on the Cumbria coast, or Peel on the Isle of Man, but even these plans, with the prevailing weather and forecast,

Killough viewed from Coney Island



looked like more bother than fun. We cut our cloth according to the measure, and accepting reality, decided that rather than fight the elements we would settle for what we had done and take the favourable forecast for a passage towards home via Malahide, opening the opportunity to take part in our club regatta.

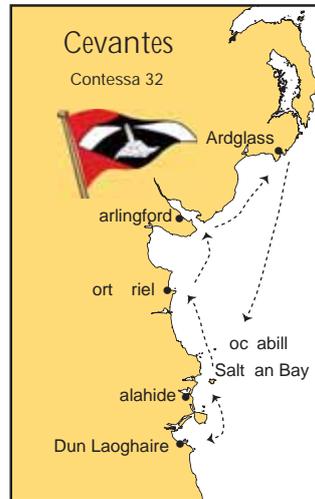
On Saturday, 29 June, it was an early start in dull conditions as we headed south, in light tail winds, requiring some engine assistance. By the time Rockabill was in sight the sun was out and wind had improved. We skirted the Rock to take another look at the bird life and to our delight it seemed to be a puffins' day out, they were skimming the waves in droves, almost appearing to outnumber the terns. A real delight to experience.

The entrance bar to Malahide channel was negotiated with care, we were a little ahead of time so stood off for a while, awaiting certainty on the depth. The motor up the channel in sunshine, warm for a change, was welcomed. None of us had been

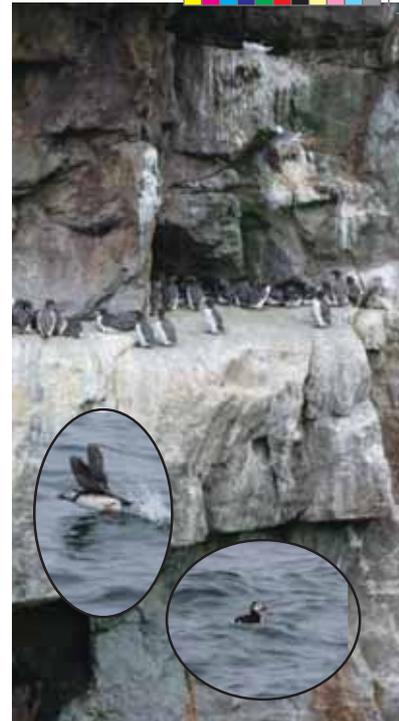
to Malahide for quite a while so it had the sense of a 'new' place, the beach and sand dunes looking their best, exposed in the near low water and early evening light. When in Malahide, do as the locals do, we explored and enjoyed the local hosteleries and walks, a fine way to pass a Saturday evening and a Sunday afternoon.

Monday's tide and forecast had us on the move by 0700, a damp grey sky, and a building westerly wind promised a quick sail to the Bailey and a blast across Dublin Bay to home. Once again, the sea was teeming with birds, this time gannets, giving a great display of their aerial acrobatic diving. We wondered if Saturday had been 'Puffin Day,' Monday was 'Gannet Day.' Sailing close to the northeast corner of Ireland's Eye we spotted a large colony of guillemots nesting on a rocky ledge. A close sail past the island gave us a great view of the nesting colony, and flocks of seabirds in flight, a mini Skellig experience without having to go too far. We were back in the George in time for a late breakfast.

A few hours then spent preparing *Cevantes* for racing mode for Saturday's regatta. Two wins on handicap, so not a bad way to finish off a cruise that didn't make it to Scotland but certainly taught us how to appreciate our own home waters, with its masses of wildlife. Just required a small attitude change.

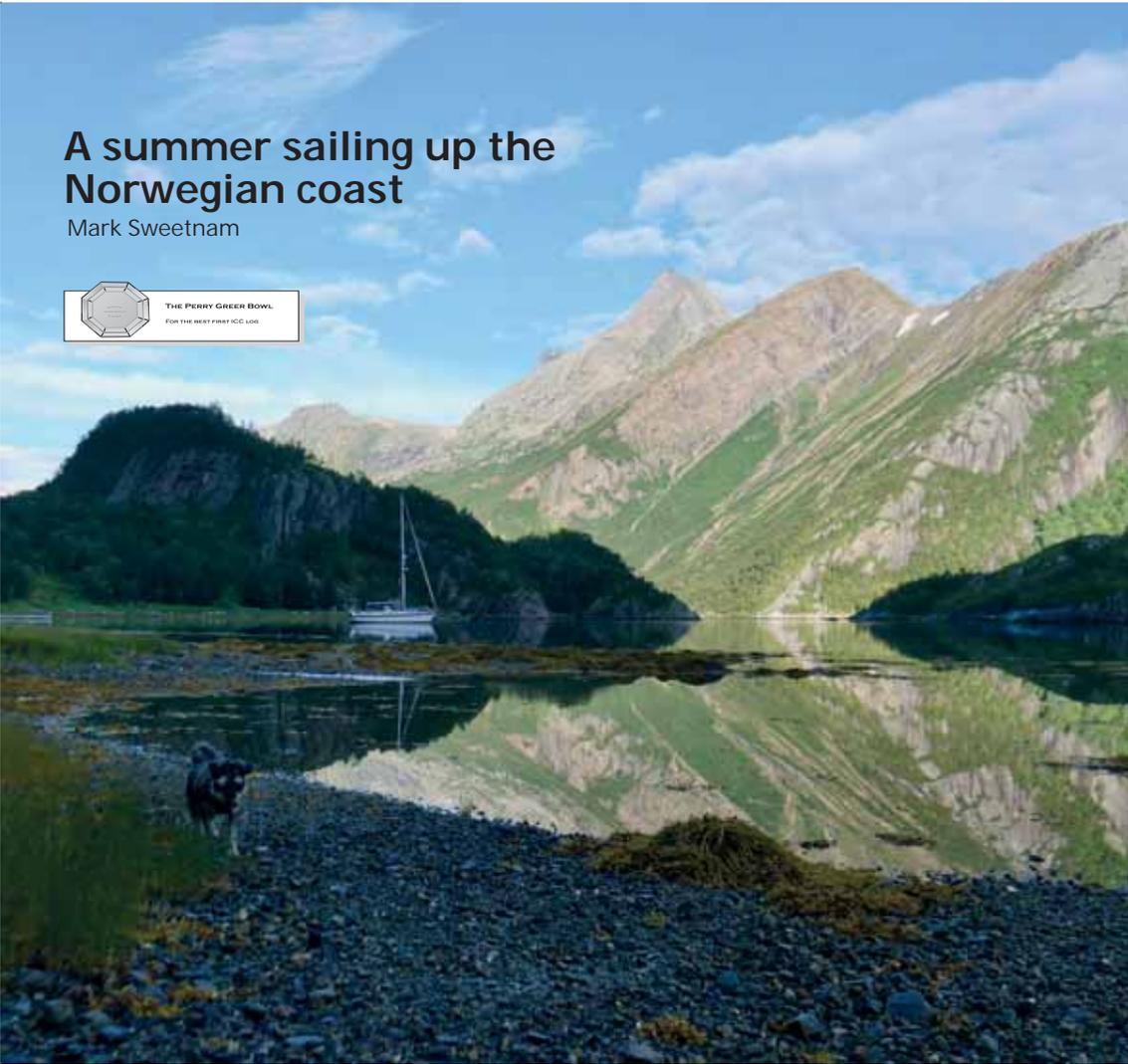


RIGHT: A gannet seen off Howth head bringing home the breakfast



ABOVE: Guillemots resting on a ledge on Ireland's Eye, INSET: Puffins





A summer sailing up the Norwegian coast

Mark Sweetnam



THE PERRY GREER BOWL
FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG

It's 5 May 2024 and the lock gate shuts quietly behind us. After months of planning and preparation and a few days of chaotic last minute activity things now seemed surreally serene. This was the first long cruise we were undertaking and the first time we would be sailing the boat outside of the British Isles. We would have had done so a few years earlier but Covid put paid to those plans. We were leaving Kilrush, where the boat had been over-wintered, out into the Shannon Estuary, heading north. Eventual destination at the end of the season being North Norway. The forecasted winds over the coming two days were 10 to 20kn – from the north – then backing southwesterly and increasing.

Don Carlos is a Najad 420, built in 1992. Sloop-rigged, she is easy to sail, sea-kindly and very forgiving. All sails are controlled from the centre cockpit, which is sheltered and secure. Onboard with me were Paddy Barry, (ICC), Pat O'Shea, (ICC), and Michael Weed. Paddy is no stranger to Arctic and Norwegian sailing, to say the least. Pat had previously sailed up the coast of Norway and Michael, being originally from Inishbofin, is no stranger to the Atlantic and Atlantic swell.

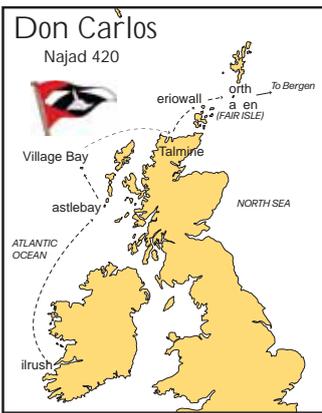
We spent the first day heroically beating up the west coast in moderate swell and after 30 hours we were still 15M WSW of High Island. We decided to motor-sail to clear the Donegal coast. Our intention had been to make straight for St Kilda, but after receiving an updated forecast we diverted to Castlebay (56°57.2'N, 007°30.8'W) on Barra. Then on to Village Bay (57°48.6'N, 008°34.0'W) on Hirta. We were lucky enough to be in the perfect location to see the best aurora borealis in recent years. Unfortunately, though, we were fast asleep for them and only heard about them the following day from passengers on the small cruise liner that also anchored in Village Bay.

Then to anchor at Talmine (58°31.9'N, 004°25.6'W) in the Kyle of Tongue. In rising winds we sailed to Perlowall (59°19.4'N, 002°58.3'W) on Westray and then to North Haven (59°32.3'N, 001°36.2'W) on Fair Isle.

Landfall near Bergen was 200 miles away. Using the cruising chute we were able to sail the first 140 miles. The wind then backed and dropped so we motored the remainder, mooring at Kleppholmen (60°11.1'N, 005°09.1'E), the passage taking 39 hours. Then to Bergen (60°23.8'N, 005°19.3'E). It was the Sunday of the biggest holiday weekend of the year and the harbour and town were really teeming. Paddy and Pat left and Michael and I went on to Strussholm (06°24.2'N, 005°11.5'E) on Askøy. We returned to Bergen and Michael left.

My wife Dawn and dog Skipper flew to Bergen and we departed northwards. On route to the headland of Statt (where the North and Norwegian Seas meet

LEFT: The isolated anchorage at Nordfjordholmen off Melfjorden, just on the Arctic Circle



rare to find any Norwegian coastline without a house appearing every mile or so) but many of the islands do not have year-round inhabitants.

The weather in Norway is changeable. The forecast produced by YR seems to be almost universally used. It is very localised and gives hour-by-hour predictions for the next eight days. It is updated hourly and the forecast conditions can change quite dramatically for a particular hour over time. We found the forecasts for the upcoming few hours to be very accurate. Norwegian synoptic charts (<https://www.met.no/en/weather-and-climate/subjective-forecast-chart>) are only published for the next 48 hours.

Leaving Sandshamn a succession of fronts and high winds were forecast. We sat those out at anchor off Raudøya (62°14.3'N, 005°58.0'E) in the Østral fjord, and then made for the beautiful town of Ålesund (62°28.4'N, 006°09.3'E). Ålesund burned to the ground in the early twentieth century and was rebuilt in the Art Nouveau style. The centre of the town remains unchanged since then and it is world-famous for that. It is also on the cruise line circuit – two cruise ships arrived when we were there disembarking 10,000 passengers between them.

While in Ålesund two police paid us a visit on the pontoon to ask did I not know that I should have reported the boat's arrival in Norway to Immigration. I had researched the entry requirements to Norway and all sources suggested that there was no need to inform Norwegian immigration, but that the situation was under review. (Norwegian customs are a different matter and I had informed them of our arrival). The two police were very pleasant, said that they know it is very difficult to find the required process on the internet, which had just recently been introduced, and were almost apologetic for having approached us. They said that they had been following us on AIS since Bergen. They looked at our passports and wished us a pleasant time in Norway.

and which has a fearsome reputation) we anchored at Vikingevågen (60°52.0'N, 004°54.4'E) and on pontoons at Svanøybukta (61°29.8'N, 005°07.6'E), Kalvåg (61°45.9'N, 004°52.7'E) and Silda (62°00.7'N, 005°12.3'E). We rounded Statt with light wind and little swell. We moored on a pontoon at Sandshamn (62°15.1'N, 005°29.1'E).

Norway has many off-lying islands along much of its coastline, which provide sheltered inshore passages. In some places there is a single layer of islands sheltering the 'inner lead', in others there are layers of islands stretching 30 miles offshore. Most islands offer mooring possibilities – sometimes pontoons, sometimes secluded but sheltered anchorages, sometimes both. Most islands have dwellings (it is



FROM LEFT: Dawn, Maeve, five-month-old Aoife and Rich sailing in the upper Trondheim fjord

Leaving Ålesund we moored at Bjørnsund (62°53.7'N, 006°49.4'E). This was a series of small islands and largish rocks completely exposed to the Norwegian sea that were joined together in the early twentieth century by a series of long breakwaters to form a very sheltered harbour. Although there are around 60 (seasonal) houses on the archipelago there was no shop, which was unusual for an island of that size. Most communities that have a summer population sport a shop. Norway has a reputation for being extremely expensive. It is certainly extremely expensive to drink out – perhaps twice the price of Dublin. Groceries were in general slightly more expensive than in Ireland, with some things very much more expensive and some cheaper. Spirits and wine can only be bought from government owned outlets, which have short opening hours and are typically located only in larger towns.

Our next stop was Kristiansund (63°03.7'N, 007°44.0'E). Kristiansund is a small town built on three islands surrounding a deep and very sheltered natural harbour. Of particular note is the 'new' church, which was completed in the early 60s. It is a stunning design today, it must have been revolutionary when designed in the '50s.

Leaving Kristiansund we stopped in a series of passage anchorages. One great thing about cruising in Norway is that usually there is a suitable anchorage within a few miles. We anchored at Leirsund (63°12.0'N, 007°57.4'E), Berroya (63°18.1'N, 008°19.6'E) and Anøya (63°31.6'N, 009°08.1'E). Then to a remote pontoon at Kongensvollen (63°33.1'N, 009°24.1'E) and on to Hasselvika (63°37.0'N, 009°49.6'E) at the mouth of the Trondheim fjord. There were a few days of fronts forecast so we sat them out in Hasselvika, which is a busy little village.

Hasselvika has a commanding view over the entrance of the fjord and there are very extensive and well-preserved WW2 fortifications there.

In Trondheim we moored at Skansen (63°26.0'N, 010°22.3'E), which is slightly out from the city centre – about a 15 minute walk. There are also guest pontoons in the city centre near the ferry terminal and in the old town, but the latter requires bridges to be opened for access. We were happy in Skansen. Trondheim, previously called Nidaros, is Norway's fourth city and perhaps its most historic. It was a really important and powerful religious centre and the Diocese of Nidaros was vast (and rich) and included the Isle of Man, Hebrides, Orkneys, Shetland and parts of mainland Scotland in addition to Iceland, Greenland, Faroes and Svalbard. It's about a 27-mile detour inland from the inner lead to the city and many visiting boats stop at Trondheim. We were in Trondheim on the solstice and although the sun set it remained twilight until it rose again.

When at Skansen we witnessed the lifeboat summer camp for kids. The Norwegian rescue system is run by an organisation called Redningsselskapet (RS). The RS caters primarily to its members, and membership entitles a number of free call-outs and hours of divers' time every year. Any callout for non-members is charged at commercial rates, which I understand are very high. It is not possible to become a member retrospectively and it's highly recommended to join before entering Norwegian waters. Membership costs 1,295 KR (€110) annually.

The Trondheim fjord extends 55 miles further inland than the city. It is wide with rolling and low-lying surrounding hills and Norway's agricultural heartland lies at its head. Our daughter Maeve, son-in-law Rich

OPPOSITE FROM LEFT: Mark Sweetnam, Pat O'Shea, Paddy Barry and Michael Weed in Kilrush before departure.





ABOVE: An example of one of the light pontoons, at Vågan. This one does not have cleats (it does have rings).



ABOVE: My brother Paul in our sailing tender Baidin in the anchorage at Færøyvalen.



ABOVE: The old harbour in Bergen. Guest berths are along the quay walls on the near side

BELOW: Bow wave infinity! Leaving the anchorage at Sor- Skjama. We witnessed a rock slide a couple of hundred metres from where this shot was taken.



ABOVE: Skipper taking his watch duties suitably serious in Nordfjorden



ABOVE: Passing the Hurtigruten



BELOW: Midnight on 9 August from the anchorage at Angerøya





Lying on the small guest pontoon in the Fleinvaer archipelago. The 'Arctic Village' development of small experimental holiday homes is visible in the left foreground

and five-month-old grand-daughter Aoife joined us and we decided to use the opportunity to explore deep into the fjord. We sailed across to the small town of Vanvikan (66°33.2'N, 010°13.4'E), then picked up a mooring buoy at Serhamna (63°34.9'N, 010°37.9'E) and then onto a pontoon at Ekne (63°42.3'N, 010°02.8'E). Ekne is a sleepy little town with golden wheat fields. It has a dark side: one of the most notorious concentration camps in WW2 was located there and the atrocities were horrendous. The visitor centre is interesting but harrowing.

We anchored off the island of Ytterøya (63°47.7'N, 011°08.8'E), which the locals call 'the jewel of the Trondheim fjord', and then on to the market town of Lavenger (63°44.8'N, 011°17.8'E) where we stayed on the town pontoon. It's a 40-minute train journey from Levanger to Trondheim airport and Maeve, Rich and Aoife left us in Lavenger.

We moored on a pontoon in the sleepy little village of Kjerkesvågen (63°54.8'N, 011°11.3'E), with its interesting heritage boatyard. Then to the bustling and prosperous market-town of Steinkjer (64°00.5'N, 011°29.2'E), at the head of the fjord and 80 miles from the open sea. We had not seen a foreign boat since we left Trondheim city and a local told us that we were the only foreign boat that had visited Steinkjer so far in 2024. Steinkjer is the starting point of the famous Kystriksveien, the 650km tourist road route through Norway to Bodø.

We like anchoring and had assumed that we would spend most nights at anchor in Norway. But small guest pontoons are very common, cheap and well-serviced. They almost always have water and electricity and all provide rubbish bins. Access from the sea is usually straight-forward, they never have a security gate and are often in the centre of the community and feel like an integrated part of the local surroundings. Pontoons are often much flimsier than we are used to. Many do not have cleats and lines need to be wrapped through gaps

in the pontoon planking, which makes short-handed mooring trickier. Depth is usually not an issue but there are some places where it is, so nothing can be taken for granted. Pontoons are usually secured by heavy chains from the pontoon ends to the shore or underwater anchor points. Those chains often attach to the pontoon at shallow depths and it's critical to always be aware of and avoid them when mooring.

The cost is low, varying from 100 NOK (€8.50) to 500 NOK, but are typically 200 to 250 NOK per night including electricity. The upshot is that we used pontoons more frequently than anticipated and only anchored when we wanted remoteness or there wasn't a pontoon in the area. Only three times did we find visitors' pontoon full and were usually less than 50% occupied. All pontoons accepted payment via a Norwegian payment system called VIPPS, which is app based. However, VIPPS is not available to foreign nationals. Some pontoons accept payment through an app called GoMarina, which is available to foreign nationals. Most also have a physical honesty box that will accept cash but getting the right denomination proved challenging in a country that has largely moved away from using cash. Some self-service locations, for example diesel pumps, accept credit cards but sometimes only Norwegian credit cards. We found that Revolut worked in some cases when my AIB Visa card was not accepted.

We returned to Lavenger and our son Darragh and his girlfriend Paulina joined us. We anchored at Ytterøya (63°47.7'N, 011°08.8'E) and stayed at pontoons at Småland (63°25.8'N, 011°42.1'E) and Vågen (63°35.1'N, 010°48.6'E) before returning to Skansen in Trondheim, where Darragh and Paulina left us.

On the way out of Trondheim fjord we passed a pod of about 30 pilot whales. A spectacular sight, but that was one of the few times we saw marine mammals (apart from solitary harbour porpoises). Otherwise, the nature was awesome at every turn. Sea eagles

would be seen every week and vast numbers of other birds abounded. Spectacular starfish and sea urchins were visible in nearly all shallow water. The fish – cod and haddock in particular – are large, plentiful and easy to catch. Or so I was told! All I managed to catch all summer was a handful of mackerel and one very small cod.

We pressed on making miles to the north. We anchored at Steinvikbukta (63°48.6'N, 009°39.5'E) then moored on a pontoon at the little harbour of Kuringvågen at Stokksund (64°02.4'N, 010°03.7'E). This is a dramatic location where the inner lead narrows to less than 100m, is surrounded by 300m steep hills and turns abruptly through 130°. The Hurtigruten passes under the 30m bridge and it's quite a spectacle to witness. The Hurtigruten (meaning fast route) is a ferry from Bergen around to the Russian border. It was established over 100 years ago and became the catalyst enabling the development and colonisation of north Norway. There are 35 stops along the route with each stop being served once a day in each direction. Shipping traffic can be heavy – particularly around the southern half of the country – and Norway has a specific law that sailing vessels and vessels under 20m must stay away from and not impede commercial vessels, particularly in harbours and narrow channels. So basically you need to be aware of all approaching shipping and take early avoiding action.

The route north of Stokksund is exposed so we were back into the swell on the passage to Rørvik. Rørvik harbour was full (we could have rafted up) so we moored instead on a pontoon at Ottersøy (64°51.4'N, 011°16.8'E), on the other side of the sound.

Then to Skel (65°05.3'N, 011°44.5'E) on Leka. The geology on Leka is unique. Leka is also the location of an incident in the early twentieth century when a sea-eagle lifted a three-year-old girl, who was found alive and well seven hours later on a mountain ledge and went on to live to a ripe old age.

Norway consists of 15 counties (it used to be 19, then consolidated to 11 and as of 2024 back up to 15). Nordland county starts just north of Leka and it's 270m from its southern to northern boundary as the crow flies. Its coastline is very varied with many long fjords, glaciers and islands – many remote and offshore – including the famous Lofoten. Many cruisers find Nordland to be the pinnacle of cruising areas in Norway and we agreed – you could literally spend a lifetime cruising this area alone. The area has some very treacherous waters with literally thousands of (charted) rocks.

Norwegian charts are produced by Kartverket, an official state body. Paper charts can be purchased (print on demand) but the agency advocates electronic usage and all Norwegian charts (raster) are available free over the internet. We had ten small-scale (1:350,000) Coastal Chart Series paper charts covering the entire coastline of Norway (it would have been prohibitively expensive to get a full set – 188 – of larger-scale paper charts). While those small-scale charts were somewhat useful we found they were really too small-scale for even general passage planning. We used the electronic raster charts for route and passage planning but used the vector charts on our on-board plotters for actual navigation. Kartverket provides an excellent app for viewing the nautical charts (and also topographical maps) called Norgeskart, which works on iOS, Android, Windows and Mac. The charts are also viewable on the internet (<https://kart.kystverket.no>), then select 'Basemaps' and then 'Nautical', but that's much more fiddly to use than the app. Mobile phone coverage is very good along most of the coast, although we did anchor in three or four remote places with no coverage at all.

We passed Brønnøysund and moored a few miles north in Ytresund (65°33.3'N, 012°14.4'E) (Brønnøysund is considered to mark the border between south and north Norway). Next to a very pretty enclosed anchorage on Hjarøy (66°00.3'N, 012°24.4'E). A few miles further north we moored in the harbour at Sandnessjøen (66°01.4'N, 012°37.8'E).



The NATO station overlooking the anchorage at remote Hagabukta

Sandnessjøen is a busy town and a useful stopover but it was perhaps the least charming place we visited.

There are a number of guides we relied on. The book *Norway* by Judy Lomax and published by Imray is a single volume covering the entire coast. It is excellent and, while not as detailed as others, was always our first port of call. The Norwegian Cruising Guide (<https://www.norwegiancruisingguide.com>) is available in printed and ebook form (we have the ebook version). They are more detailed than the Lomax Book and also very good. We heavily relied on information from the on-line version of Harbour Guide (<https://www.harbourguide.com/en/>), which is a paid service and has very detailed information, photos and charts of all harbours listed. But the content seems to be crowd-sourced with the result that some of the content is subjective, self-promoting and out of date – so caution is advised. Even so we found it incredibly useful. Most small harbours in Norway are private with no provision for guests so it is pointless to enter one unless it is known that they accept guests.

We next spent a couple of weeks on remote off-lying islands and deep in the deserted glacier-topped fjords. We anchored between rocks at Risvær

(66°18.1'N, 012°27.2'E). Next to the island of Lovund (66°21.9'N, 012°21.9'E), which is 15 miles offshore. It is a thriving island with a permanent population of 500. Lovund was the only place in Norway where we came across a dog park – a designated place where dogs are allowed to roam and socialise. The Norwegians have a different attitude to dogs than the Irish. Although dogs are quite common, they seem to be less socialised than we're used to and it's unusual to see a dog off its lead. Dogs seem to be considered more domestic animal than pet and this attitude seemed to increase the further north we went.

On then to anchor in Hagabukta (66°30.1'N, 012°02.2'E) on Sanna. It was a strange juxtaposition – 25 miles offshore, overlooked by a cave that was heavily inhabited 10,000 years ago and has a huge NATO radar station 300m above on an acute peak overlooking over the bay. After a night on the pontoon in Træna (66°27.7'N, 012°51.1'E) in the same archipelago we headed east and anchored between a few islets at Andklakken (66°30.8'N, 012°52.3'E). We then crossed the Arctic Circle and went deep up a very remote fjord, anchoring at Nordfjordholmen (66°35.9'N, 013°31.6'E), which was a tiny bay snugly enclosed by 2 rolling islands. This fjord was one of two listed in an older guide from which one could access the Svartisen Glacier, the second largest in Europe. While it was visible high on the mountains above it has retreated significantly in the intervening years since the guide was written and is no longer



ABOVE: Dawn, crossing the Arctic Circle on 25 July



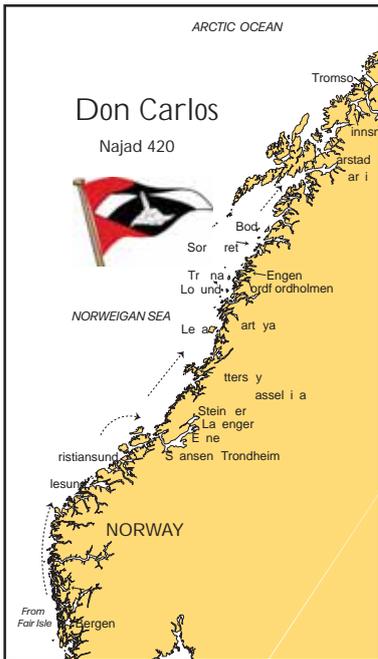
Engen, under the watchful eye of the Svartisen Glacier – the second largest in Europe

accessible from this fjord. Then on to a pontoon at Engen (66°42.6'N, 013°42.5'E), deep in a more northerly fjord beside the Svartisen Glacier. We moored there at 1900 in beautiful sunshine with a fantastic view of the glacier, and looked forward to visiting it the next day. However, the weather changed the next morning with the passing of a cold front earlier than forecast and the weather was miserable. Although we set off on the three km hike to the glacier we decided it was prudent not to persevere in those conditions and turned back a few hundred metres from its snout. Of course, the obvious thing we should have done was visit it the previous evening – isn't hindsight great! We next anchored at Åg (66°43.1'N, 013°28.9'E) and in a stunning position between islands at Ruskøya (66°47.4'N, 013°07.1'E) before heading for the small town of Ørnes (66°52.0'N, 013°42.1'E).

Bjørnsund islands joined together by breakwaters to form a harbour. Don Carlos' mast is just about visible in the centre



Norway has some of the strongest tidal streams in the world. At Saltstraumen near Bodø the stream can reach 20 knots, tidal races off Lofoten can be dangerous and the streams in a handful of narrow passages around the coast can reach four knots or more. But paradoxically tides are usually ignored by both leisure and professional sailors when planning passages. The reason is that tidal streams are affected much more by environmental factors like wind, temperature, rainfall and glacier melt than we are used to in the British Isles, and tidal streams are so complex and local that they have proved unfeasible to map. Apart from the handful of cases mentioned above (where tidal stream predictions are accurate) sailors set off and make the most of whatever tidal streams they encounter. Tidal height ranges are low in the south of the country but increase, up to about two metres, in the north of the country. Given the generally deep water tidal height is not usually an issue but there are a few places



where it is. The Norwegian mapping service provides a forecast of tidal heights taking environmental factors into consideration, which we found to be very accurate (<https://www.kartverket.no>, then select 'English' and 'At sea'). Their forecasted heights can vary from the purely astronomical prediction by half a metre or more.

While water draft is usually not an issue air draft is an issue and considerable attention needs to be paid to these hazards when route planning. Vast numbers of bridges and overhead cables span channels, ranging in height from 45m down to five metres. Heights are always clearly marked on charts and are usually clearly displayed on bridges and cables. Underwater cables are always clearly signed where they make landfall.

Next to a barren anchorage between rock islands

at Langøya (67°02.8'N, 013°38.5'E), about six miles offshore. The islands were barren and low-lying, but there were about six old dwellings built on stilts around the sound. We then moored on a pontoon at Sørvaeret (67°09.7'N, 013°46.2'E), one of perhaps 100 lush islands making up the archipelago of Fleinvær, which is situated 16 miles SW of the large town of Bodø. These islands are fairly low-lying but rich agriculturally and have a vibrant albeit small year-round population. A famous artist and a few famous musicians live there – in fact the artist came down to the pontoon to take our lines when he saw we were being blown off in 20kn winds. A very memorable spot.

On then to Bodø (67°17.1'N, 014°22.2'E). My brother Paul joined us there – it was a 15-minute walk from the boat to the door of the airport terminal! Bodø is a big town with all services and good shelter and is quite charming. We sailed on to Kjerringøy (67°31.3'N, 014°45.7'E), which has a very interesting museum of a preserved original trading post. Then into a snug and isolated anchorage at Færoyvalen (67°29.9'N, 015°16.5'E), deep in Løir fjord. Returning to the coast we had a fantastic sail to the small ferry port of Hellnessund (67°43.8'N, 014°46.0'E), where Paul left us to take the 60-minute fast ferry back to Bodø.

You often hear it said that it's not possible to sail in Norway – that the winds are too light and variable (and are inevitably on the nose!) and that you will end up motoring nearly all of the time. This was not our experience and we were able to sail generally (except when in fjords). We did find that winds could be very inconsistent and variable, both in direction and speed. It would not be unusual to have both periods of absolutely no wind and gusts of 30 knots and wind-shifts of 180° within 30 minutes and a mile or so. There were days when we might have flown and doused the cruising chute and reefed and unreefed the genoa and main three or four times within a couple of hours – we have in-mast furling. The big thing was that as there was no swell this actually was fun and challenging. Deep in fjords there would normally be no wind at all from any direction so there would be no option but to motor. But we found that otherwise we could and did sail – provided we were not in a rush to any particular destination. In the calm water you could make steady (if slow) progress with only a few knots of wind and have plenty of opportunities to fly the cruising chute. But you do need to have the luxury of having the time to let the wind dictate your route and destination. Most of the distance we covered while in Norway was under sail.

Most visitors head straight across Vestfjorden to Lofoten islands. We instead hugged the coast of Nordland and then up Ofotfjorden to the city of Narvik, which requires a detour of over 30M inland. En route we anchored at remote offshore anchorages of Angerøya (67°54.6'N, 014°49.9'E)

and Brunvær (68°00.5'N, 015°22.9'E) before calling to Straumhamn (68°03.3'N, 015°22.9'E) on the mainland. Straumhamn is a stunning setting. There there's a sharp peak called Hamarøyskaflet, which rises finger-like to 613m and is reminiscent of French Polynesia. Then on to the pretty village of Tranøy (68°10.8'N, 015°40.4'E) and anchorages at Korsnes (68°15.4'N, 016°02.9'E) and Kjeldebotn (68°24.5'N, 016°40.3'E).

We moored at the small-boat marina at Vassvika (68°26.8'N, 017°25.8'E) in Narvik. This marina is small and shallow with least depth of just over a metre (we visited at neaps). At springs boats may be able to get permission to moor at a quay in the deep-water port but that is not an attractive proposition. Narvik is a very interesting town, but it's rarely called to by visiting yachts. Narvik was established at the beginning of the twentieth century as an ice-free deepwater port to export iron ore from the large mine being developed across the border in Sweden. A railway line was built and 100-carriage trains still roll down that track 24 hours a day laden with iron ore to feed the 300m bulk-carriers waiting in the port. It was the scene of very significant naval battles between the Norwegians, Germans and British early in WW2 and there are the wrecks of 20 naval ships in the fjord.

Leaving Narvik we anchored at Sor-Skjome (68°11.7'N, 017°19.1'E) at the head of a near-by fjord, with another large glacier visible on the mountain tops. Because of a bend near the head of the fjord the anchorage was completely surrounded by mountains and it seemed like we were anchored in a small mountain lake. The following morning there was a loud roar that sounded like a helicopter hovering immediately over us. It turned out to be a rock slide a few hundred metres away that lasted for a minute or more. It was quite frightening. We anchored again at Kjeldebotn and had a long sail through Lofoten islands to Harstad (68°48.1'N, 016°32.7'E), a busy town with good restaurants and patisseries. Then on to pontoons at Engenes (68°55.5'N, 017°07.6'E) and Finnsnes (69°14.4'N, 017°58.8'E) before arriving in Tromsø Havn (69°39.1'N, 018°57.7'E). Tromsø is the largest city in north Norway and claims to be the most northerly city in the world. There is a large university there and the cathedral (built in the '60s) is unique and quite staggering. It's a vibrant, fashionable and interesting city. It is referred to as 'the Paris of the North', although there are different theories as to why.

On 28 August we made the three-mile passage to Skattora Marina (69°41.7'N, 019°01.0'E), where *Don Carlos* was lifted for the winter. We spent a few days winterising her and flew back to Dublin in early September for the winter.

Norway is not in the Customs Union so goods (and boats) cannot be freely imported into Norway. Boats



Laid up on the hard at Skattora in early September waiting for the cold weather to come.

may visit but cannot be left unattended for a period longer than six weeks without specific customs approval. Special permission can be obtained to leave a boat for up to a year, which can be extended by a maximum of one extra year. That permission was easy to obtain. Our fridge broke and the replacement model I wanted was not available in Norway so I ordered it from Germany. I coordinated with Norwegian customs to pay the VAT due (25%) but it transpired that as it was for a boat 'in transit' no tax was liable.

It was 2,179M since leaving Kilrush, 234 engine hours and 748l of diesel were burnt. We sailed for 1,383M and motored or motor-sailed for 798M. The cruise lasted 119 nights in total. Five of those spent at sea, 29 at anchor, 73 on pontoons and 11 on quay walls. The weather was stunning – consistently dry, sunny and hot. Locals we spoke to said that it was exceptional and they could not remember a summer as good. We only lost about six days to high forecast winds. Our abiding memory of Norway will be that of a heavenly cruising ground. Countless anchorages, pontoons and towns. Always within a day or so of a well-stocked grocery and other services. Stunning and varied 360° scenery. Wildlife to dream of. Large areas with no swell. There are not enough superlatives to do it justice! Although navigation takes a little getting used to it is straight-forward and safe. Anyone who is comfortable on the west coasts of Ireland and Scotland will have no difficulty there. The only down-side is the time and distance required to get there.

Lady Belle rounds Ireland and explores the Irish Sea

Donal Walsh



Donal at Old Head of Kinsale

Dungarvan has become quite a tourist destination in recent years and we thought we should commence our summer cruise at leisure by spending a night or two aboard in our home port before heading to sea. This would give us an opportunity to be sure we hadn't forgotten anything and allow a run ashore in the evenings. *Lady Belle*, our aluminium Ovni 385, with a lifting keel and rudder is ideal for mooring in Dungarvan Town Quay as she can take the ground at low water on our tidal mooring. We were on neap tides and we were able to lie afloat at low water alongside Dungarvan Harbour Sailing Club's pontoon.

The crew as in previous years was Donal Walsh and Clare Morrissey both ICC. The plan was to take *Lady Belle* round Ireland with a possible visit to Scotland and Northwest England. We slipped Dungarvan at 0900 on Sunday 9 June 2024 and headed west, carrying a good favourable breeze as far as Mine Head at which point we were tighter on the wind but still making good progress. As we passed Ballycotton Island the wind shifted into the west and we were badly headed. With little appetite for several more hours of adverse wind to reach Kinsale we turned and picked up a mooring off Ballycotton for the night. By morning the wind had gone into the northwest and died away and it was a mix of sailing

and motoring throughout the day. Progress was good and we made Castletownshend by evening.

A glorious sunny day followed with flat seas and favourable wind and we made it to Cape Clear North Harbour and squeezed into a comfortable berth. Strong northerlies were forecast so we decided to get round Mizen before they set in. Very light winds reduced our speed to 2 knots at times but it was wonderful to enjoy the fine weather and sunshine. In Castletownbere we anchored in the northeast end of the harbour and then the wind came southerly 6/7 and gusting. Fearful that our anchor might not hold I got out during the night and prepared the kedgie in case it was needed and ran a line to a nearby redundant mooring as added security. We lost two days in Castletownbere and then were faced with a forecast promising gale to near gale northerlies.

Sensing that there might be a window we put to sea and although it was challenging at times made it to Knightstown in Valentia by way of Durseay Sound. All lines were doubled up on the pontoon and given the wind that came we were very happy that we had taken such precautions. It blew and blew never a gale but regularly force seven and always from the north straight through the Blasket Sound. There was a bicycle day, a walking day, a bus day and of course

every day was a pub day!

A week was lost before the wind shifted to the south, bringing with it a cold steel grey overcast day but a favourable wind. The transit of Blasket Sound was fast as we carried the tide and in the freshening wind made over eight knots at times. Clear of the sound the downdraft from Mount Brandon kept us busy - hand steering and hard going - but we made great speed touching over ten knots regularly. The forecast again spoke of near gale winds from the south accompanied by heavy rain. This put paid to our plans for a passage to Aran and we choose to anchor off Brandon Pier and ride it out. A few attempts were made before we were satisfied that were we holding well enough for the promised wind but I decided to lay out the kedgie as an extra precaution. A kindly fisherman seeing what was going on came alongside and offered us the use of a mooring. This made such a difference as we could now sleep soundly and avoid anchor watches. There was lots of wind accompanied by very heavy rain during the night and early morning, nothing to do except sit it out and wait for a change. The day was lost to wind but we were content knowing that we were secure on the mooring. Ashore there was a fire lighting in Murphy's pub and it was cosy. All was well until an American lady with an arse about a yard wide stood right in

front of it and like a solar eclipse blocked off the heat from everyone else. She remained by the fire for so long I wondered if she was made of asbestos.

The following morning was grey but came with a fresh southerly wind, so we tucked in a reef and were away early. The fresh wind required us to hand steer in gusts but we made good progress. It was lumpy much of the time and we didn't get much respite until well into Gregory Sound. At Kilronan we secured to a mooring buoy. Our 59 mile passage from Brandon took just under twelve hours. With better weather we headed north again towards Roundstone and as usual it took several attempts to get the anchor to hold. The forecast promised fresh northerly winds over the next few days and we decided to make the passage round Slyne Head before we got headed. Well reefed down there was a lot of hand steering in the prevailing conditions. It was pretty exciting rounding Slyne Head and then we had a following wind to Inishboffin which required the full attention of the helmsman. There was great shelter in Inishboffin and we had a comfortable night at anchor. I noticed that the rudder hydraulic lift system was not working properly and got Clare to attach a rope to the aft end of the rudder blade which would enable us to lift the rudder manually if required.

It was a pleasant passage north from Inishboffin towards Westport with light freshening winds and sunshine. We approached Westport just after low water and had to lift our keel to negotiate some of the more shallow sections of the approach channel. By then the wind had freshened considerably and in the final stretch to the quay we had to lift our rudder which makes steering less effective. The channel is only about 15 - 20 metres wide at low water and it was difficult to swing into the wind to come alongside the pontoons. We were happy to be secure here as an Atlantic gale passed through. I tackled the issue with the rudder and discovered that when I stowed the kedgie in Brandon it had squeezed the supply pipe from the reservoir to the hydraulic mechanism - without fluid the system could not work.

My son Brendan lives in Westport and it was good to catch up. The strong winds continued for over a week and all the time from an unfavourable direction. It was relentless and even if we headed north we would be even more uncomfortable in Blacksod or Ballyglass. The option of getting through Achill Bridge wasn't available as the combination of high water times and restricted working hours by Mayo County Council ruled it out. Sit it out. There was a consolation however - prior to departing Dungarvan I had brewed a keg of home brew and put it on board leaving it mature before consumption. Now it was just about right and a welcome distraction from all the bad weather. I borrowed Brendan's bicycle and explored the highways and byways of Mayo. There was another course of bicycle days, walking days, bus days, swim days, and jigsaw days. It took all of ten



Westport pontoon

days for the strong winds to work their way through but there was a window on Friday 5 July and we were away. A cold day at sea but the wind was light. It was however westerly and our progress was slow until we were west of Achillbeg. Once we were able to lay off a bit the speed improved. We encountered a very confused sea off Achill Head and rather than

taking the shorter option through the sound, stood outside Carrickakin to avoid the disturbed seas. As we headed north conditions improved allowing us to make decent speed and we revised our plan to overnight in Blacksod and decided to continue on to Ballyglass.

Something to drink



The forecast indicated that it would be possible to get across Donegal Bay and we made an early start and carried a brisk northwesterly wind all day. At Aranmore we thought that we would overnight at Rossillion Cove but there was too much swell to make for a comfortable night. We had a look at the moorings south of Calf Island but again the swell would be uncomfortable. Carrying on to Burtonport, we went alongside a fishing vessel after a thirteen hour passage covering 72 miles. The weather looked like it was going to improve and the winds dropped off and the sun shone.

We headed north and decided to do an overnight stop on Tory Island. Here we got a nice snug berth inside the pier which runs north to south. The drawback however was that we had to launch our inflatable to go ashore as there is no ladder on this part of the pier. In the morning I helped a local fisherman clear a fouled line from his propeller after which we opted to head east. Just about able to lay Mulroy Bay, but the wind was freshening all day and we were glad to turn south and head for the anchorage at Fannys Bay. Here I found a new pub but the walk uphill was murderous! It looked like we were going to be stopped again by an adverse forecast and rather than sit it out in Mulroy we put to sea again bound for Rathmullan. The short offshore section of this passage between Mulroy entrance and Fannad Head was uncomfortable but once we headed south into Lough Swilly we had a fair wind and calm sea. Irish Lights vessel *Granuaile* was servicing the Swilly More buoy as we entered.

A shock awaited us at Rathmullan, construction work was taking place on the pier and the pontoons had been removed to facilitate this. Of course had we checked Norman's E&N Amendments we would have known about this. The option of spending a night at anchor off a lee shore in a rising wind did not appeal. We crossed to Bunrana and went alongside there. Plenty of wind next day and straight from the north. This was followed by an incredibly wet day and after three days alongside the forecast favoured a move. Once clear of Dunaff Head when we were able to lay off for Malin we made great progress and transited Garvan Sound at eight to nine knots. We carried a fresh favourable wind almost as far as Inishowen Head but the wind fell off and we motor sailed the last few miles to Greencastle. Although the breakwater has been extended to give more shelter there was still some swell around low water on the pontoons. In calm we motored across Lough Foyle and as we came abeam of Giant's Causeway the wind freshened out of the east.

At Ballycastle preparations were being made for a Red Bull diving competition which was to take place the following week. A diving platform had been erected on the pier end and a dredging rig was deepening the targeted landing area. The tide gate in Rathlin Sound and the North Channel dictated



Jigsaw day

our departure time and in flat calm conditions we rounded Fair Head and headed south along the east coast. Making a routine check on the bilges we discovered a considerable amount of water which tasted of salt! This was alarming at first but on checking we found the discharge from the anti-siphon vacuum valve was pumping water into the bilge while the engine was running. The spring which holds the valve closed had become dislodged and caused the malfunction. It was a simple fix.

Further south, as it was so calm, we anchored off Carnlough. We had never cruised the northwest coast of England and made an early start next day and headed for Portpatrick. Here we were berthed alongside the quay wall which has floating fenders. There was plenty of wind next morning and we tucked in a reef: it was a fast passage to the Mull of Galloway and a great sail across Luce Bay. Rounding Burrow Head we anchored at Isle of Whithorn. This is a drying harbour and although the approach is tight there is just about enough room to anchor. It was pleasant ashore and we found a local craft brewery which had excellent beer.

On Christmas Eve 1895 the ship *Moresby* was wrecked in Dungarvan Harbour with the loss of 20 of her crew. The *Moresby* was built in Whitehaven and I always wanted to visit the town and see if anything relating to her still survives. Leaving Whithorn the



Portpatrick

wind was light but gradually picked up during the day and made for great sailing as we closed Whitehaven. The outer approach to Whitehaven dries and entry is via a lock. One of the basins had orange coloured water, a result of runoff from old iron mines in the area. Ashore there was a museum but little was known of the ship *Moresby*. However there is a headland and a district called Moresby where there are several Moresby Streets.

Leaving the lock as we headed to sea it was ugly cold and unpleasant - hard to call it summer. A long day brought us to Barrow in Furnace and we anchored off the Isle of Piel. Our arrival at low water meant that we required a very long rope for the inflatable when we landed as the tide covers the slipway quickly as it rises. Ashore we found a ruined castle and an interesting pub. From Barrow we headed south and in the calm conditions motored to Liverpool where

Whitehaven



my daughter Emma would join us for the weekend and we would be tourists for a few days.

The Mersey is a big river with strong tides and lots of commercial traffic. It is essential to inform Mersey VTS of your entry and intentions. The Liverpool Marina lock was closed on arrival and we anchored off the entrance out of the shipping channel and waited for a sufficient rise of tide before entering. The wind shifted into the west and freshened so we spent a few days visiting the tourist attractions in the city. We left with a promise of a northerly wind but made slow progress against the flood stream in the river. With a sufficient rise of tide it is possible to take the passage through the Rock Channel just north of New Brighton and this shortcut makes a considerable saving of time on the journey to sea. Detailed pilotage instructions are posted on the Liverpool Yacht Club website.

would be up for the task so we picked up a mooring buoy for the night.

On an ebbing tide we took a run ashore in the inflatable and landed on a steep shelving slate beach. I enquired from some other boatowners who were nearby about the distance the tide would fall to be advised that we were in a good place. Returning to the beach after our run ashore there was about 200 meters of soft mud to be negotiated before the inflatable would even float – so much for local knowledge. Now our best option saw us taking the outboard off the inflatable and resorting to carrying it and the inflatable down the road about half a kilometre to another slipway which extended further into the water and while we encountered some mud it was far better than the former option. Not wanting to endure another night of wind against tide conditions on the mooring we headed south and got a berth at Caernarfon Marina for the night. Next day we were obliged to vacate the berth as it was prebooked for a speed boat rally and we were offered the use of a courtesy mooring. This was a long way from shore and out in the tidal stream. At some stage in the wind over tide conditions the mooring chain got entangled in our keel and the buoy got completely submerged under the hull. This caused us to lie beam on to both wind and tide which was incredibly unpleasant. I was fearful of trying to motor off as I might foul the propeller in the riser chain. By using the go pro camera we were able to establish what was happening and extricate ourselves from our predicament.

Port Dinllaen Cove had been recommended as a sheltered anchorage in southerly winds and we headed south and crossed Carnarfon Bar in very lumpy conditions. Once clear of the shallows the sea settled and we made good progress south and did find excellent shelter in the cove. By morning

Once clear of the Rock Channel the tide favoured us and we made great progress along the North Wales coast. Our intention was to transit the Menai Strait and we made our way to the pool off Beaumaris where we anchored for the night to await favourable tidal conditions in the Swellics Channel. It was a good anchorage with good holding. Negotiating the passage under the bridges was without incident. When I deviated to the Anglesey side of the channel to get a picture of Nelson's statue and two other yachts which were following did likewise I wondered if they were taking the same picture or just following our course. At Port Dinorwic conditions were so bad – strong wind against tide – we doubted our anchor

Beatles fans Liverpool



Gallery



ABOVE: Menai Bridge

BELOW: Anchorage Isle of Whithorn

BELOW: Something to eat



Donal at the Maidens Light



Clare at Valentia Island



ABOVE: Fanny's Bay, Mulroy Bay

BELOW: Alongside Bunerona



conditions had improved enough for us to make the crossing back to Arklow and we completed the sixty mile passage uneventfully in just under twelve hours. Making a very early start next morning to catch the southgoing stream we had another sixty mile passage down the east coast, round Carnsore Point, before finally anchoring at Fethard on Sea. A promise of strong westerlies saw us on the move again and we were homeward bound on the last leg of our journey to Dungarvan arriving at 1600 on 30 July 2024.

Clare's friend, Therese Molyneux arranged to swim the North Channel at the end of August and we thought we would sail *Lady Belle* north and be in the area for the swim. I intended to do another clockwise circuit which would place us nicely at Down for that swim. No sooner than we were ready to leave the winds were blowing strong out of the west. We were weather bound in our home port of Dungarvan! After ten days we threw in the towel and resigned ourselves to a passage up the east coast to Donaghadee. This time the sailing was great, the wind was on our shoulder and by evening of our first day, we were anchored off Rosslare. Carrying the tide we made Wicklow next day and went alongside the east quay. Here we met local artist Pat Davis. A talented man, he has paintings of all sort of vessels along the quay wall.

With a following wind and favourable tide our next stop was Skerries where we anchored off the beach overnight. The forecast spoke of freshening winds from the north and we pushed on again toward

Pat Davis, artist, Wicklow



93 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024

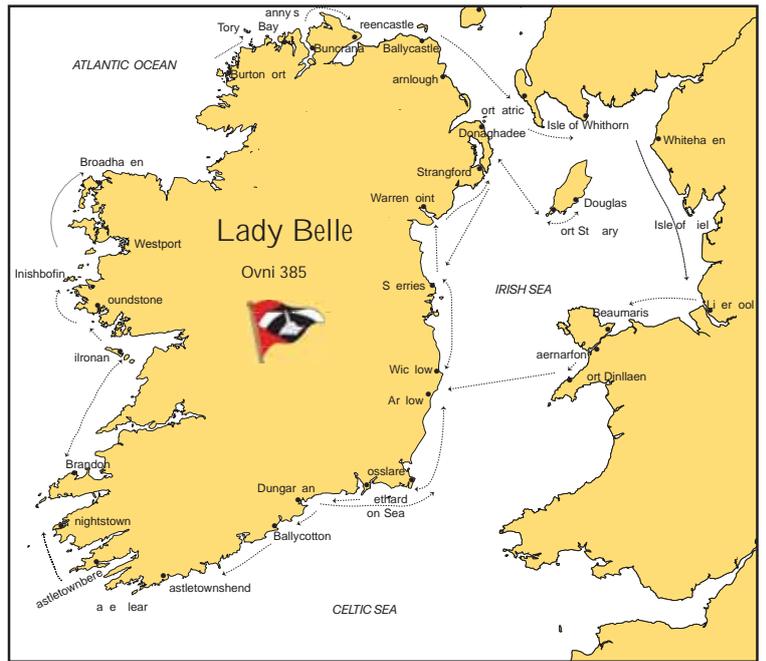
Carlingford, here we opted for Warrenpoint as we had never visited by sea before. Motoring the last few miles up the entrance channel against wind over tide conditions was slow and unpleasant because of a short steep chop in the water. Our departure was timed to carry the tide clear of the Lough entrance and north along the coast. There was a light favourable wind and a calm sea and it was necessary to motor sail to make ground. A favourable tide in Strangford entrance enabled us to get to Strangford where we moored for the night.

With a few days in hand before Therese's swim we decided to cross to the Isle of Man. This was a brisk enjoyable sail with a fresh favourable wind. We took the passage through Calf Sound and opted for Port St. Mary. The harbour dries and the anchorage is a long way offshore and subject to swell. Strong winds were forecast and we headed for Douglas where we would have calmer conditions. Initially we were on the waiting pontoons in the outer harbour but they were uncomfortable and we had to lock into the inner harbour marina to get shelter. We lost five days to gales here and I was worried that we might not make it back to Ireland in time for the arranged swim. There was a weather window and we made a break, but we had to do a seventeen mile sail to get around the south tip of the Island. Conditions in Calf Sound were bad. There was an adverse current with wind over tide, and this required attentive helming. In the troughs we appeared to make no progress and at one stage we did actually go backwards but on the crest of the wave we would surge forward - exciting stuff! Wow. Once clear of the sound we could lay

Donaghadee and we arranged a berth on the visitors section of the quay wall. Several days were lost to strong winds.

On Thursday 22 August there was a weather window. Clare headed off with the swim team whilst I took *Lady Belle* to sea bound south for Strangford. Therese completed the North Channel swim in just under fourteen hours making a landing in Scotland at 2230 having set out from Ireland at 0800 that morning. I brought the boat to Strangford scraping in on the last of a dying flood stream. Clare rejoined ship and again we lost a day while yet another strong wind system passed through. It was time to be getting home and we started south - Skerries, Wicklow, Rosslare. Anchored off the

boat cove west of Rosslare main harbour the wind freshened during the night and appeared to shift into the north which put us on a lee shore. I got up and prepared for sea and stood an anchor watch fearful that if we dragged we would be ashore very quickly. With so little sea room we needed to be able to react fast if our circumstances changed. After a few hours the wind shifted again and the tide slackened and I felt a lot more at ease and got some sleep. Our final leg from Rosslare to Dungarvan was uneventful but it was a long day. We picked up our mooring and spent our last night aboard. We covered 1,580 miles, sailed for 77 days, but lost 34 days to bad weather, rarely a gale but wind too strong for us to be at sea in. Whilst we were frustrated by the weather we continue to love cruising in Irish waters.



94 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024

Return to Bénodet

Andrew Kennedy



Anna, Angus and John D crossing the English Channel

Towards the end of a very enjoyable academic year (1982 preparing to repeat my A-Levels in Belfast at the prestigious Belfast College of Technology), a classmate Hugh enquired if I would like to accompany Hugh and his father Nikko Duffin, (ICC), sailing in Brittany. Instinctively I responded 'definitely'. The Duffins owned an apartment in Bénodet where they had a boat on the hard. The plan was we would travel to Bénodet by car and ferry, launch the boat and cruise down to the Golfe du Morbihan before returning north to Salcombe and subsequently Ringhaddy in Strangford Lough.

What only became apparent on arrival in Bénodet was that the boat in question was a Westerly 24. After some adjustment to the size, I experienced the joy of day-sailing along the beautiful south Brittany coast for two weeks before heading north across the English Channel to Salcombe where we transferred to Nikko's new boat, a Westerly 32 Longboat ketch *Hot Chocolate* which we sailed back to Strangford.

Rowena, our family boat at the time was one of four Hunter Impalas based in Baltimore which arrived in July 1979 after some encouragement from Neil

Hegarty, (ICC), at the January 1979 London Boat Show. Neil had bought *Beagle* the same year. The primary use of the boat was one design racing combined with trips to the islands in Roaringwater Bay. I can still remember remonstrating with my father how we really should be aiming to do more cruising with our boat. I had purchased a Brittany courtesy flag in anticipation. Unfortunately *Rowena* never made it to France and the courtesy flag remained folded in her chart table. I assumed responsibility for *Rowena* when my father's health deteriorated bringing her to Strangford and then

around to Bangor. She subsequently returned to Strangford joining the expanding Impala fleet in East Down.

Time moved on a few decades but the itch to return to Brittany persisted.

Come 2023, I had acquired a Dufour 34, *Jacada*, in 2015 (influenced by Neil Hegarty's extensive exploits in *Shelduck*), joined the ICC and come 2023 the Brittany Cruise was beckoning. An opportunity I could not miss. And so the return to Bénodet. The



BBQ at sea

trip commenced on Saturday 1 June leaving Bangor Marina at 1200 on the dot aiming to catch the south going tide through Donaghadee Sound at 1300. On board with me was my good friend John D Woods. After a fetch over to the South Briggs cardinal we bore off and enjoyed perfect conditions under blue skies and a following F2-3 breeze with spinnaker up and full main. We carried the kite until dusk. Our first stop was to be Dun Laoghaire to pick up crew. After a beautiful clear night without incident we arrived in the marina at 0600 on Sunday morning. After a shower and breakfast, the day was spent visiting the National Maritime Museum of Ireland and enjoying some refreshments in the sun on the RIVC terrace before dinner onboard.

Sunday evening my daughter Anna, Senior Stewardess on 58m schooner *SY Adela* and partner Angus flew in to join us. We departed on the south going tide at 0900 on Monday morning through Muglins Sound, again in favourable conditions with the breeze on the starboard beam and slight seas. Our plan was to head for Brest in one hop if conditions allowed. After passing Wicklow Head and South Arklow Cardinal we continued down the Irish

Sea east of the Smalls TSS and across the Bristol Channel. We enjoyed several sustained dolphin visits which, as ever, entertained the crew.

By Monday evening the wind had died and we opted to motor into the night. Early Tuesday morning brought the breeze back F4-5 from the west and an overcast sky necessitating taking down 2 slabs in the main and 3 rolls in the jib. AIS assisted traffic management with a couple of requests for 'intentions' to coasters heading north into the Bristol Channel. We passed Longships Lighthouse at 1500 Tuesday afternoon. A discussion then ensued as there was a degree of fatigue all around and the decision was made to head for Newlyn, dinner ashore and a good nights sleep. As frequently is the case in Newlyn, berthing was alongside. In our case, this was outside *Auburn Lass*, a Dehler 39 from Hereford Sailing Club, outside a Newlyn fishery protection vessel. A magnificent dinner was had at the Mackerel Sky Seafood Bar with a brief visit into the Swordfish Inn to sample a little Sea Fury Special Ale prior to retiring.

After availing of the facilities adjacent to the lifeboat house we departed on Wednesday morning at 0900 heading due south on starboard gybe again with the kite up and the sky blue. Anna served a hearty breakfast underway. Conditions were maintained throughout the day with the only blip the discovery that the gas was finished (schoolboy error admitted by the skipper). As the conditions were slight, dinner was cooked on the Cobb barbecue which worked well. The wind died as the sun went down and we again opted to motor into the night.

The original plan had been to pass west of Île D'Ouessant. However after reviewing the RCC Atlantic France pilot, with a fine weather forecast and a favourable tide behind we opted to head east for the Chenal de la Helle and subsequently into the Chenal du Four. Good visibility and AIS again facilitated crossing firstly the stream of traffic heading east into the English Channel and then the vessels heading southwest out of the Channel separated by the TSS northwest of Ouessant. On leaving the Chenal du Four at 0630, with the 40-year-old Brittany flag finally flying off the starboard spreader, we rounded Pointe de St Mathieu, altered course ESE for Pointe du Grand Gouin outside Camaret-sur-Mer and were tied up on the pontoon by 0730 Thursday morning.

Paul Butler, (ICC), *Muglins* and crew had arrived earlier and kindly provided useful local information. Sign-in was straightforward at the marina office adjacent to the pontoon steps. We were advised that paperwork would be passed on to Brest and we would receive confirmatory emails which never actually arrived. Brexit in fact had no impact on movement of boat crew. I sent a text to my cousin Hugh who reminded me that Hugh Kennedy senior, (ICC), and crew had arrived in Camaret-sur-Mer on *Tosca IV* en route to the Festival of Wooden Ships at Brest in July 1992 as detailed in his log in the 1992 Annual. Hugh treated his crew to an early lunch of abundant fruits de mer avec Muscadet at a seafront café. We followed suit and raised a glass to HPK.

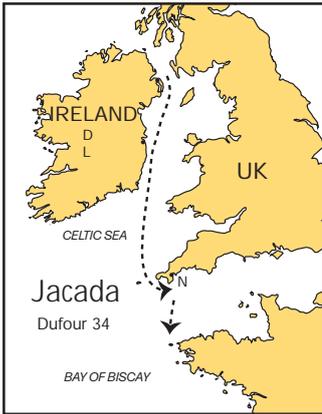
We moved to La Marina du Château in Brest on Friday. This coincided with the arrival of the Olympic flame in Brest from where it left for Guadeloupe and Martinique onboard *Ultime Banque Populaire XI* skippered by French sailing superstar Armel Le Cléach on the Friday evening. The Musée National de la Marine in Brest was definitely worth a visit. My youngest daughter Alice joined us onboard on Saturday. Anna, John D and Angus departed Sunday



Banque Populaire XI departing Brest with Olympic flame

and Monday after some serious shopping in the Mousqueton store in town (essential for the true Breton look). Alice and I returned to Camaret-sur Mer on Monday afternoon with the objective of getting to Benodet by Wednesday and having the boat sorted prior to Mother's arrival on Friday.

As the forecast was fair, after again consulting the excellent RCC Atlantic France Pilot and tidal atlas, we decided to depart towards Audierne on Tuesday. We left Camaret-sur Mer 0900 via the Chenal du Toulinguet passing the Raz de Sein at 1300 in very calm conditions. The passage up to Audierne is somewhat tricky, and accessible approximately two hours before high water. We therefore dropped the hook at Anse de Sainte Evette just west of the entrance for lunch and headed up to Audierne at 1730 after conferring with the helpful harbour master. The channel to Audierne is narrow and shallow but well-marked with clear instructions in the RCC pilot. Dredging was ongoing at the entrance to the channel. The packed fishing port opens



ABOVE: Mother's arrival in Bénodet

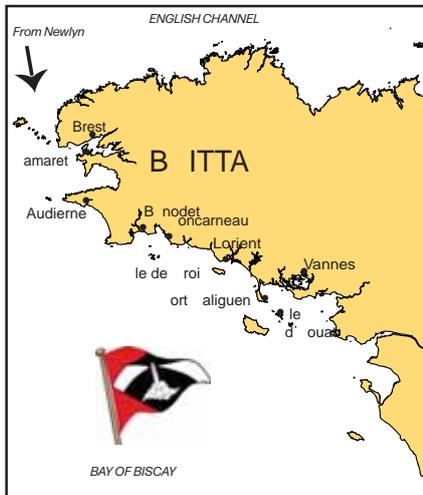


Full crew assembled in Bénodet

BELOW: Snug in Audierne



99 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



beautifully on arrival and the harbour master was kindly on the pontoon to assist with securing lines. Alice and I enjoyed a walk around the town, visited the market adjacent to the marina and enjoyed a rotisserie dinner onboard.

We departed at 1000 Wednesday morning around high water negotiating the channel down from Audierne before turning southeast on a broad reach under full main and Code-0 making good speed with flat sea and clear blue skies. We passed the 65 metre Phare d'Eckmühl (one of the tallest lighthouses in the world) and turned east and then northeast towards the Odet estuary and arrival in Bénodet.

Approaching Bénodet, we joined a stream of vessels including Kevin Lane (ICC) and *Alisha* heading into the estuary. We had called ahead to the marina office. Spaces had been reserved for the assembling ICC fleet. Traffic was fairly heavy and we loitered around awhile before eventually finding a spot on the outside of the visitors pontoon. Luckily the tide was slack and assistance to hand to help with the lines: mission accomplished! We took advantage of an excellent fish shop near the marina and enjoyed delicious fresh prawns and linguine vongole for dinner.

Over the following days the crew grew in preparation for the formal cruise with the arrival of Lisa (boss),

Andrew (Pangé) Kennedy and Alice's boyfriend Michael Ramsey. There will undoubtedly be accounts from others on the very successful Brittany cruise finishing in Lorient where our younger crew disembarked on Sunday 23 June. Lisa and I then enjoyed a fine week visiting Port Haliguen where we met Donal Gallagher (ICC) and crew Stephanie, Kay and Matt on *Catalina*, Ile d'Houat and La Trinité-sur-Mer where we bumped into Neil Hegarty and crew Anne, Mary and Len on *Tofino*.

After one more careful perusal of the RCC Atlantic France Pilot we entered the Golfe du Morbihan with a following tide benefiting from reasonable experience passing through the Strangford Narrows. We spent the Friday night on the pontoon off the beautiful Ile-aux-Moines. The following morning, Saturday 29 June, we headed up to Vannes on the north going tide where I had arranged to leave *Jacada* for the winter. As luck would have it, we met Neil and crew again in the town who by then were cruising by car. We were delighted Neil, Anne, Mary and Len joined us for a drink on *Jacada*. We left the boat on Sunday 30th taking the train to Nantes, Ryanair to Dublin and finally the bus back to Belfast. The Brittany itch well scratched.

100 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024

Imagine - Corfu, Taranto, Corfu

Neil Kenefick in collaboration with Daniel Forster



Setting off from Gouvia Marina *Imagine* motored along the Corfu coast marvelling at 'Corfu's Malibu', with its €10 million mansions loosely distributed along the olive groves. On board with Neil Kenefick, ICC, were James (Joxer) O'Brien, ICC, Brian O'Sullivan, Ken Corry (Commodore Los Angeles

Yacht Club), and internationally renowned sailing photographer Daniel Forster.

Our goal was the city of Taranto in Apulia on the southern tip of Italy, founded by the Spartans in 706 BC; the same century as the first Olympic Games and

the founding of Rome .

To avoid looking for a berth in the marina in the middle of the night we had a late morning departure arriving in Taranto at 0600 the following morning after 20 hours at sea.

Sail GP Taranto, Italy. Taranto's weekend event was the famous SailGP where a fleet of rival nations go head-to-head at iconic venues on three continents on cutting-edge 50-foot catamarans. In Taranto the racing was near the coast, in the shadow of the 15th-century Aragonese castle. Photo by Daniel Forster

After passing the Othonoi lighthouse and waving goodbye to Greece, the breeze picked up so we hoisted the main and unfurled the A-sail. It was serene. At sunset, we were chasing dolphins, making good progress, reaching under jib and mainsail. When the boat speed was under 6.5 knots, we got a little help from the motor.

Early in the morning, 150 miles and 22 hours later, we found a berth in the Porto Turistico di Taranto.

That Friday was a practice race day for the SailGP cats. There were eight countries represented in Taranto: Australia, France, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, Great Britain, Japan and New Zealand. The teams were sailing the modified F50 (50 feet) catamarans which originated at the 2013 America's Cup event in San Francisco.



Neil checking sail trim. Photo by Daniel Forster

They can travel up to four times faster than the wind that propels them. The race course was within the city boundaries, the viewing stand on the border of the shore.

It almost ended in a catastrophe. The Danish team and the Australian pulled a stunt by drag racing through the canal between Mar Piccolo and Mar Grande passing the Castello Aragonese, built in 1490. The Australian cat did not foresee the obvious gust at the end of the canal and avoided a capsize by a hair. The scene was publicised on all social media.

Saturday racing started with a bang. The wind clocked in at 25 knots and the start was delayed.

Dolphin on the way to Taranto. Photo by Daniel Forster



Then the races started. First race was over in 11 minutes and so were the second and third! This is a different type of sailing. The start is on a reach and then it goes around a course laid out around buoys sailing upwind, reaching and downwind. The speed of those rigid windsail propelled machines was exhilarating. Each crew member is harnessed and on a horizontal 'leash' to avoid instant ejection on mark rounding. Being there, 30 feet away from these super-cats, passing you at 40 knots with a whisper of spray, was incomparable to see in person compared to television.

Brian on the helm. Photo by Daniel Forster



Sail GP Taranto, Italy. Photo by Daniel Forster

The day ended with a delightful seafood dinner at the Moleto Marina Bar, introduced with a Negroni cocktail.

The Sunday racing started with splendid Cinecitta clouds - Cinecitta Studios is a large film studio in Rome, considered the hub of Italian cinema. But the wind kept dropping from five knots to a whiff of wind. The last race got down to slow motion and Emirates GBR won the event in a light wind final. The return leg began with champagne sailing - perfect reaching conditions.

With nine knots of wind speed and a 135° wind angle, we unfurled the Code 0 sail and *Imagine*, my Simonis Voogd designed yacht, was sailing comfortably at a solid 7.5 knots from Porto Turistico di Taranto, on the southern tip of Italy, to Paxos, south of Corfu.

The mood and the craic was good as the good life continued with a delicious dinner of pasta and tomato sauce concocted by Daniel, followed

Daniel Forster at the helm of *Imagine* passing Othonoi Island, Greece



by scrumptious chicken courtesy of fellow Cork yachtsman and old friend Joxer. But it could have been our 'Last Supper'. Suddenly, some ominous flashes, followed by thunder quickly changed the mood. Then the artillery got going - the bangs were louder and the multiple flashes brighter.

One front after another passed from southwest to northeast, while our course was southeast. As the lightning came closer the gusts strengthened, churning the seas around us - we had no option but to press on.

As I helmed in the rough conditions two lightning flashes right next to the yacht had me lying on the deck having instinctively ducked. The white flashes were so bright Joxer was temporarily blinded in the light filled cabin. I checked the mast, hoping the electric system and navigation system were not affected. Miraculously, the lightning missed the mast.

As we forged on against the lashing rain and wind the visibility was so low that we were forced to rely completely on the AIS. It showed us all the vessels with AIS - yachts, cargo-ships and cruise ships - on both screens above the two helms. This gave us the names, position, speed and sailing direction of the vessels. Two cargo ships and a cruise ship passed close ahead and behind like ghost-ships, with blurry lights in the poor visibility. One was the cruise ship *Serenade*, less than a half a mile away.

The crackling sound of thunder and lightning and torrential rain lasted for four hours. The wind kept up with the gusts going from 9 to 30 knots. At one stage we sailed a complete circle to follow the wind shifts trying to keep the yacht steady in the crossed seas. By noon, the squalls and the rain were still pummeling *Imagine* and her hard-pressed crew. With

Double lightning. Screen shots from a video shot on iPhone by Daniel Forster



James, Joxer O'Brien fighting the storm. Photo by Daniel Forster

gusts of 33 knots, we reefed the main again. We had no choice, the rhumb line to Lakka, on Paxos Island, pointed straight through the constant thunder and lightning.

In the early afternoon we arrived at the well protected cove with 25 yachts at anchor. While we looked for a clear place to drop anchor, we heard a salute from another yacht. It was Robert Dix, Irish yachtsman and friend. He recognised Daniel immediately, saying 'you photographed me on the yacht *Justine IV*, built by Killian Bushe, during the 1983 Admiral's Cup'. Daniel replied: 'That was 40 years ago! You can't make it up.'

My friendship with Robert goes back a long way. I first came head-to-head with Robert Dix in 1975 at the Pre-Olympics in Kingston Ontario in the 470 Class and sailed with and against Robert in the Admirals Cup and Sardinia Cups since then.



After a well-deserved short siesta, it was time to get into the dinghy and celebrate on shore. We were amazed at the culinary arts and nightlife in Lakka, this little village on the north end of Paxos, and ten miles off the mainland of Greece.

The next two days were quite uneventful. We motored to Gaios, a few miles south, to anchor and enjoy some Negronis and another scrumptious meal, before returning to our *Imagine* for the night. Upon arrival, we noticed our new neighbour, *Infinity*, a

400-foot megayacht owned by Daniel's friend, Eric Smidt, billionaire, owner of Harbor Freight Tools. Our 58-foot *Imagine* looked like a small dinghy next to this modern mastodon....

The last day of our Mediterranean Odessey was like a cruise on a Swiss lake - flat water and blue sky. We stopped at Blue Lagoon Beach, near Syvota, on the mainland, for a dip in the turquoise water, before returning to Gouvia Marina to put *Imagine* to bed for the winter.

The favourite dish at Alexandros was definitely the Lamb Klefthiko. FROM LEFT: Neil, Frances, James Joxer, Daniel and Brian. The *Romantica* bar, who served us Jameson whiskey, was still humming when we left at 0200.



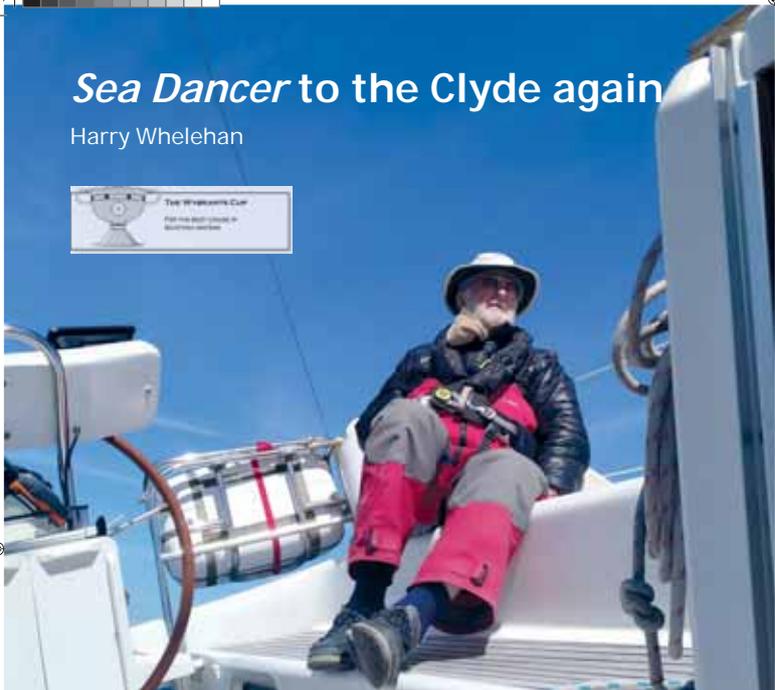


Taranto, Italy during SailGP. Photos by Daniel Forster



Sea Dancer to the Clyde again

Harry Whelehan



Homeward bound

'The best laid schemes o' mice and men, gang aft a-gley...'
Rabbie Burns

Having been turned back last year by southerly gales in our attempt to cruise the southwest coast of Ireland we decided this year to play 'absolutely safe' and return to the Clyde. We had a genuine expectation of almost guaranteed conditions for pleasant cruising and the likelihood of being able to sail every day for a few hours without necessarily going to windward.

It was just Liz and myself on *Sea Dancer*, a 32 foot Jeannau Sun Odyssey. We were confident that the idyllic cruise planned for the Clyde would be preceded by the mundane though unchallenging

delivery trip which would be easily accomplished i.e. Howth - Ardglass - Clyde routine. Thereafter it would be idyllic downwind cruising all the way wherever the wind would take us in this most beautiful and varied stretch of water.

In order to be 'absolutely sure of weather, we banked on the last week of June and the first week of July.

We left an overcast Howth at 0630 on 24 June for Ardglass, (62M), under main and genoa and enjoyed a relatively uneventful but most pleasant sail arriving at 1530. On passage as we were passing north of Lambay at 0715 we spotted *Granuaile* (Irish Lights vessel) already at work. I took the opportunity of calling them on VHF both for a radio check and to confirm that our AIS was transmitting and got a friendly thumbs up on both counts.

The next day the weather was showing signs of being unfriendly, fresh variable or northerly winds with patchy rain or drizzle. The tide called for a departure

for Bangor at 1300 (35M), and once we cleared the harbour we got the sails on. The wind, in fact was, SSE light and variable, which gave us a very pleasant sail along the Ards peninsula to Bangor via the Copeland Sound (with periodic injections of help from the engine). We arrived in Bangor at 1800, and topped up our diesel at the 24hour self-service fuel berth.

Something arose that required Liz to be back in Dublin on 27 June which would involve her having shore leave for two nights. I intended bringing *Sea Dancer* up to Belfast into the Abercorn basin to drop Liz off for her train to Dublin and await her return. We had previously spent a couple of nights in this very centrally located marina and had enjoyed the facilities and the access to nearby central Belfast. Luckily, I checked with the marina, before leaving Bangor only to learn, sadly that the marina was closed for refurbishment.

I was at large in Bangor for a few days which passed very quickly. The Bangor City regatta was on and it was blowing absolute stink F7 in the lough outside. Ed Wheeler, ICC, and Jan took me to a splendid lunch in the RUYC, and from the comfort of the club dining room we watched the mayhem among the competing sailors on the water. The *Waverley*, the last of the passenger carrying paddle steamers in the world built in 1946, made her way majestically up the lough to Belfast without a bother. Ed also came on board *Sea Dancer* and very kindly downloaded 'The Memory-Map for All' to my iPad. This comprised a very detailed set of electronic charts, which I was glad to have as a backup to my chart plotter.

With very low temperatures and strong winds persisting, and being without crew, I was snug in my berth in Bangor and enjoyed all the buzz being generated by the regatta. While passing the time and looking at the marina notice board, I noticed a considerable range of technical services being offered by local technicians and wondered if, during my few days, I could sort out a few matters on the boat which had been 'long-fingered'. To my delight I ended up having my gas piping partly replaced and re-certified, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms replaced. The ship's heating system was fixed after a very simple diagnosis. The heating had not worked for a few years: the installer had, despite numerous requests, refused to attend. Then a different electrician, who was installing new batteries, looked at the heating and said that the unit was poor and badly installed and he could do nothing. Alan Cockerill, the Gas Man (as his business card describes him) looked at the system and discovered that the electrician who installed new batteries three years ago had attached both the heating system supply leads to the positive terminal on the ship's battery - this was very easily rectified, thankfully without any damage. Little did I realize, at that stage, what was in store for us in terms of cold weather to come, and to continue throughout our cruise.



Liz hanging on

We were extremely lucky to have the heating back and 'purring' for the remainder of the cruise and we remain deeply grateful to Alan, the Gas Man. I also had the brainwave of getting Liz to bring our heaviest sleeping bags from home when she returned to the boat.

While in Bangor, apart from the Wheelers it was good to catch up with Peter and Evie Ronaldson, ICC, my old school friend Simon Healy and his wife Jane who sailed their beautiful *Maggie Mai* out of the Quoile for many years, and with whom we had dinner in the RNIYC in Cultra the night before we set sail for the Clyde. We also met Dan Thompson, (son of my late colleague and friend John Thompson and his wife Tina). Dan was driving a beautiful classic Swan *Lofna* in the regatta. This boat had been bought as a wreck by Gill and Derek Fairley and stunningly restored. Also in Bangor was John Mc Inerney and his crew on *Ar Nds na Gaoithe* from Howth, like ourselves held up by the strong winds but the impatient and hardy crew yielded to cabin fever and bravely took to sea despite the persistent bad weather. The stopover in Bangor was most enjoyable, and productive, and as it turned out would have been dictated by the weather, even if Liz did not have to absent herself and return to Dublin.

Being behind in time, the strategy was to get as deep into the comfort of the Clyde and dawdle lazily about wherever the wind would take us. So I selected Largs, an 80nm leg from Bangor which would leave us in the vicinity of the Cumbrae Islands, and within easy reach of the cruising grounds of the Kyles of Bute, Loch Fyne and the Island of Arran. On 29 June we set sail for Largs at 0500 in light airs to take the north going tide. Once outside the harbour we set the main and

genoa. The forecast was WNW 3-5, but soon the wind dropped away and we motored for a while before the wind filled in as predicted. The NNW 5 arrived and we carried it all the way to Largs arriving at 1640 (11 hours) tired, happy and delighted to be greeted by my lifelong friend Freddie Moran who had tracked us on AIS from Bangor. Freddie is from Howth, but settled in Scotland where his career was with IBM. He cruised extensively out of Largs with his wife Hilary in their Malo *Arctic Fern*.

On the passage from Bangor we listened to a distress rescue arising from a 'multiple man overboard' call in the Sound of Jura. We also witnessed, off the south coast of Arran a remarkable, and scary, operation of a tiny helicopter (resembling a bubble car) ferrying significant quantities of materials from Pladda Island to an anchored-off Northern Lights workboat. This was fascinating to watch as we scooted along, the chopper alternatively landing (in a F5) on the tiny platform on the bow of the ship, and on occasion lowering cargo to the deck from the air. While it was an exhilarating sail, it left us tired so we had a couple of gins, fillet steaks and a bottle of wine before repairing ashore for a nightcap. We decided on a rest day on 30 June.

Now, we were precisely where we wanted to be to start the relaxing part of our cruise, and we were optimistic that the fresh unsettled weather and the especially cold and windy spell could not continue into the month of July. One can never tire of the Kyles of Bute.

On Monday 1 July we left Largs at 1120, heading for East Loch Tarbert in Loch Fyne (30M). It was damp and windy, but unfortunately, having felt 'secure' where we were 'in the Clyde' I did not take a weather forecast. Before long we were beating into a F5 using the engine to push us through a lumpy sea, I decided to go east of the Great Cumbrae Island and seek quieter water up the East Kyle. This worked well, and did not add greatly to the distance to be covered to get to Tarbert, but it has to be said this was our most miserable experience of many trips through the Kyles. We got some temporary respite when we reached the northern end of the Kyles and altered course to broad reach down the West Kyle when the joy of being there returned briefly. As we turned to reach down the West Kyle before entering Lough Fyne when we had again to man up to the northerly F5 in order to fetch East Loch Tarbert. This we did in



Harry loving Colintraive Hotel

considerable discomfort caused by rain and a very lumpy sea. Our morale was however briefly lifted as we overtook a large fish farm boat limping along in the same direction at 2kn.

We arrived in Tarbert 1730 after five challenging hours mostly motor sailing. It was well worth the hardship as this is such a beautiful ancient and natural anchorage completely unchanged except for a very fine new shower block and shore facilities constructed, since our last visit, as an adjunct to the marina.

The next day the wind was in the same quarter we left Tarbert at 1130 for Colintraive just south of the Burnt Isles. The anchorage there is a mandatory stop for us. The Colintraive Hotel is a delightful unpretentious inn on the shore, and the hotel has a few moorings laid to attract passing waterborne



Corsewall Point astern

diners. We also wanted to salute our late friend and club member Alex Booth ICC, CCC and Howth YC who died earlier this year, and whose ashes now repose at the Burnt Isles. There was rain and mist galore, and this would let us enjoy a downwind version of the previous days ordeal. We carried a fully reefed main and a well rolled jib down Loch Fyne, and then motored up the West Kyle around the north and through the Burnt Isles where we did our formal salute to Alex Booth R.I.P. We then continued the short distance south and took a mooring at the Colintraive Hotel where it was still raining on our parade' the days voyage 20M. The idea of pumping up the dinghy and rowing ashore was not at all attractive even if tradition and sentiment required it. However fortune would, I hoped, favour the brave, so I pumped up the dinghy, booked the table in the hotel and invited our guests Freddie and Hilary Moran to join us for dinner. Thankfully as the time to go ashore approached the rain stopped and we had a most enjoyable evening with Freddie and Hilary in what, for us at least, is a very special place.

Needless to say in view of the persistent rain, wind and cold conditions, I had begun paying greater attention to weather forecasts! They were full of rain, mist, poor visibility and freshening winds from the SE, and continuing low temperatures. The entirely unsettled weather over the previous week was going to last with no indication of respite in the forecasts. Further west and to the north, in Bailey and Hebrides the forecasts were for gales all week, so there was little comfort to be expected from those quarters. We decided that, in the days ahead, we should try, as best we could, to make a civilized cruise out of our passage home.

The following morning we slipped our moorings at Colintraive heading for Troon (30M). Conditions were calm and misty, visibility was poor. We motored until the wind came up from SE and it quickly freshened, through stages, as we continually reefed to the point

where we ended up with the main fully reefed and a lady's handkerchief for a jib, as we plugged to windward.

A direct course would have taken us west of both the Great and the Little Cumbrae Islands, but as we came south of the Great Cumbrae the seas were building and I had the engine going in order to push through the seas. I decided to tack through Cumbrae Pass and hug the mainland shore for a quieter passage and maybe find less weight of wind. I think this worked, visibility certainly was better, though coming and going, and sea seemed somewhat quieter inshore. Approaching Troon the visibility reduced significantly, and while I had been there before, I found it very hard to pick out the entrance. Another worry was that we could not comply with the requirement of calling the Ferry Terminal to get clearance before entering the harbour. There was no response to many attempts to raise them on VHF and by telephone. In the end Liz phoned the marina and asked them to inform the Ferry Terminal of our ETA. We tied up at 1425 after another heavy five hour slog.

Throughout July 4th, the weather forecasts were adamant, West 5/6 occasionally 7, with a similar outlook for a further 24 hours, so clearly our homework march was stalled. There was however a suggestion of winds moderating and veering NW 3/5. We knew that our departure from Troon would have to be timed in order to catch a favourable south going tide at Corsewall Point when entering the North Channel. We also knew that in Troon we were about six hours sail from Corsewall. There being just the two of us on board, in the predicted winds it was going to be too much to undertake a six hour leg to Corsewall Point followed by a six or eight hour crossing to Bangor or Ardglass. Portpatrick was unlikely to be a comfortable haven after such sustained winds over the previous week. I was delighted to find in the Clyde Cruising Club sailing

OPPOSITE: Fish farm boat being overtaken



The Mournes and calm sea

directions, and to receive confirmation from Freddie Maran that there was an anchorage in Lady Bay in Loch Ryan. Just a mile or two south of Corswall point it would provide on overnight anchorage to enable us to catch a favourable tide at 0600 the following day.

At 1100 on Saturday 5 July having topped up our diesel we left Troon for Lady Bay. Loch Ryan, 40nm, in a fresh NW. We had a delightful sail, quite close along the shore, conscious that we were very obviously in the middle of heaven for golfers, passing the courses of Royal Troon, Prestwick, Turnberry and Girvan. I had little doubt that the golfers had a much better time the previous week than those of us who had ventured afloat. It was however a great relief to be at sea again despite it still being penetratingly cold. We had no trouble finding Lady Bay and arrived at 1745 anchoring in three metres on a clean sandy bottom. The agricultural backdrop was delightful though we could have done without the 'Hummm' of freshly spread high octane slurry wafting from the shore.

On Sunday 6 July we lifted the anchor at 0700, and made for Corsewall Point aiming to be well around before the change of tide. We wanted to have a full tide to take us across to Bangor (27M), or if the wind stayed strong and favourable to take us past the tide gate at South Rock to Ardglass (57M). The wind did fill in SE 2/3, fine on the port bow, and we held our course for Ardglass, just managing to slip by South Rock in time to avoid the adverse tide change. We



arrived in Ardglass at 1530. Again we had a very cold voyage. On arrival our shore lines were graciously taken by John Magowan and his wife Joanne, both ICC, who were on a jaunt to the Quoil on their enviably comfortable and elegant motor cruiser *Privateer IV*

I was cold to the core despite many layers topped by oilskins. I actually suffered bouts of involuntary shivering on the passage, and even in the harbour in Ardglass where it was warm and pleasant. I just could not shake off the embedded cold. I was definitely out of sorts and not feeling at all well so we had an early night.

On Monday 7 July, as I felt up to the trip, we left for Howth (62M) at 0800, having discussed leaving the boat and travelling home by alternate transport. The wind again filled in from SE at F3. We set full sail under blue, but cold, skies; it was yet again oilskins, layers and boots all the way. Otherwise, it was a delightful sail. We really enjoyed the Mourne landscape at its best, ever changing shade and colours brought about by the passing clouds. I tried unsuccessfully, to console us both about the continuing arctic temperatures, by observing that the mountains would not have looked half as well if there was a warm heat haze obscuring them.

We arrived at our berth in Howth at 1640, and our marina neighbour Paul Newport *Puffin Eile*, ICC, was at hand and greeted us and took our shore lines. Paul and Fiona were back in Howth from Scotland a day earlier than us having experienced similar windy, cold and wet conditions to us further north. I was still not myself and was to discover when we got home, and I took a Covid test, that I was positive with the virus. We both went straight into isolation, but strange to relate Liz, who despite our forced close proximity on *Sea Dancer*, escaped the virus. What a weird, selective and random enemy this virus is!

LEFT: John and Joanne Magowan in enviable comfort



Reflections

We had an utterly different cruise from the one I thought I had so meticulously planned. Our best sailing was on the way to and the way back from the chosen cruising ground...so much for careful planning!

We had tried, unsuccessfully, last year to break through the lethargy which had built up with which we were beset as a result of the Covid pandemic lockdown. This year was to be a 'make or break year' for us, to get back to cruising after being land bound for almost five years. Clearly if we could have foreseen what was in store for us, we would, almost certainly have cancelled, postponed or signed up an unwitting competent enthusiastic young crew member to supplement our on board workforce.

Having coped as we did, and needed to do, and having been mightily challenged by the experience, our confidence in ourselves and in the boat was fully restored. The overriding verdict is 'Mission Accomplished'. In addition, we were jollied along, and sustained by the great pleasure which we enjoyed ashore and by the kindness and company of the above mentioned friend.

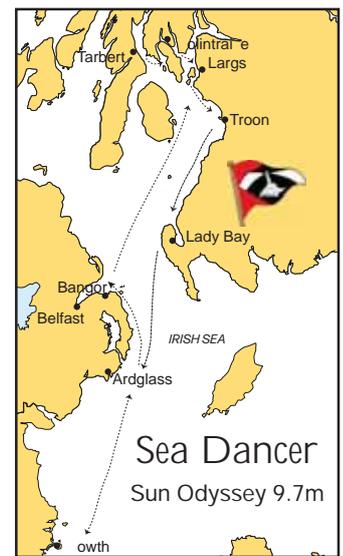
Liz, my loyal wife and crew, is still talking to me and crewing for me, and I am both grateful and lucky, on both counts.

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Days away | 16 |
| Days at sea | 9 |
| Days weather-bound | 4 |
| Distance covered | 407M |
| Destinations | 9 |

Harry and Liz in Ardglass. A team and still talking



114 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



Run silent, run deep

Frank Cassidy



Frank and northwest point of Madeira

Some may recollect that my concern about orca attacks along the Iberian peninsula was one of the many reasons why I sailed to Lisbon via the Azores last year, rather than along the Portuguese coast. As *Ocean Blue* was now berthed in Olreias, less than ten miles from Lisbon, it remained a concern.

Orca attacks and risk

Since 2020 about 15 members of a population of orca have been waylaying yachts in the seas between Cape Finisterre and Gibraltar, causing damage to numerous small vessels, at least four of which have sunk. The primary risk from these interactions lies in potential damage to yachts and the possibility of injury to the crew. To my mind there are two, ideological distinct, approaches. 'Cry havoc, let loose the dogs of war'

On one hand experienced sailors may, quite legitimately, focus purely on the freedom to cross and re-cross the oceans in safety, not an unreasonable view when the experience of Robert Powell is considered. In late July 2024 orcas relentlessly battered his yacht in a 'terrifying' two-hour attack that didn't end until his vessel sunk. 'To me, they were not playing at all, they knew exactly what they were doing. They knew the weak points of the boat, and they knew how to sink it. Their sole intention was to sink the boat, and that was it. It's only a matter of time before someone shoots one

of these killer whales', Powell ominously warned. 'The fight between man and beast is going to get worse. Luckily none of us were in the water or got hurt', he said.

From personal discussions, I am aware that many cruising sailors are quite happy to invoke reactive offensive tactics to protect their boats and crew, including explosive bangers, pingers, cans of sand or even diesel, or any other action they feel may be effective in driving the orcas away.

Resident/Transitory

Yet is this the only 'strategy'? After four years of study, scientists are still uncertain why the orca are behaving this way, suspecting it may be a form of play. The local Spanish and Portuguese authorities insist that the orca are a protected species, and any action taken to deter or drive them off during an interaction must not harm them. Those authorities point out that damage typically only affects the rudders and crews can usually make their way to a safe port. Furthermore, to date no-one has been seriously injured. The orca are resident rather than transitory, solely consuming fish and avoiding warm-blooded mammals. The question arises: Whose right should prevail?

Run silent, Run deep!

In-depth research indicated that in early 2023, the number of interactions escalated, with no perception that the situation would ease in 2024. Interactions peak between April to September, with reduced interactions during winter. Past behaviour indicates orca activity is concentrated in the Strait of Gibraltar from April to early July as the bluefin tuna exit the Mediterranean, then many of the orca locate elsewhere, yet, their movements are unpredictable, at times dispersing and then simultaneously appearing in disparate locations.

As some of the research indicated that there had been very few attacks in depths under 20 or over 400 m, I felt it might be best to spend minimal time in the danger area, going from shallow to very deep as quickly and silently as possible, somewhat reminiscent of the Second World War submarine novel (E.L. Beach, Jr.), *Run silent, Run deep*.

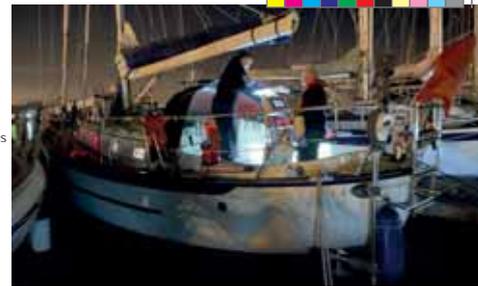
Chance meeting

Late summer found *Ocean Blue* safely berthed in Olreias, a pretty bejov marina adjacent to a pleasant beach, yet less than ten miles from Lisbon. Wonderful location. The ambience was significantly enhanced with the impromptu arrival of Andrew Collins (NYC, and ICC candidate member) sailing his beautiful Moody 45, *Christo* from the south of France to Dun Laoghaire. Unfortunately, when leaving Galicia, he was attacked by a pod of orca and both his rudders were destroyed. It was with some difficulty, and a display of significant seamanship, that he eventually managed to manoeuvre his craft into Camariñas for repair. While that is a story in itself, best told by him, for the crew of *Ocean Blue* it was a salutary tale.

Back to sailing

My Portuguese contacts had put me in touch with Formosa Boat yard, near Faro, where I planned to lift for the winter and do some repairs. Leaving Olreias in early November presented an interesting dilemma, though. When I advised the marina that I planned to leave the following morning, I was presented, with a further bill, their interpretation of 'three months' (already paid) being somewhat at variance with common parlance (and totally inconsistent with the Statutory Interpretation act). Members be warned! When asked, they admitted I was fully paid up until midnight that night, so with the enthusiastic support of my crew, Hugh, Dermott and Barbara, we slipped lines at 2359.

There followed a straightforward 200 mile passage around Cape Saint Vincent and on to the east side of the Algarve. My 16-year-old son Hugh, on school transition-year, abandoned his usual taciturn and



Run Silent, Run Deep

super cool demeanour being unusually loquacious about the bright moon, sparkling stars, lights of the passing ships, and scudding clouds. An unexpected pleasure, and significant milestone in a father/son relationship.

As research indicated that the orca generally did not waylay small boats at night, and also we were late in the season, our main concern was the strong tide, creating quite sloppy conditions over the shallows at the approaches to the Tagus Estuary. Once clear, we sailed on a lovely beam reach, heading out as quickly as possible to the deep sea channels, avoiding the

No phone, a book will have to do!



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numerous cargo ships and tankers that frequent these shipping lanes. The following day gave us a beautiful sunny, fast, rollicking, dead downwind sail, followed by a blustery beam reach round Cabo de Sao Vicente in the approaching dark, eventually dropping anchor in Sagres around midnight, where the wind switched off like a light.

The following day we enjoyed all the social delights to be offered by Lagos, to such an extent that we left late the following morning, struggling to make the tricky entrance into Ria Formosa Nature Park at slack tide (which can run up to six knots) in the approaching darkness. Feeling our way carefully up the narrow fairway in pitch dark surrounded by confusing lights, sometimes with less than two metres under our keel, we felt a little like the 'cockleshell heroes' creeping up the Gironde estuary. Having anchored for the night in the middle of the delta, we awoke the following morning to a picturesque seascape and the unobtrusive sound of the abundant local waterfowl.

A Wetland of international importance, the Ria Formosa is a maze of canals, islands, marshes and barrier islands, stretching 60kms along the Algarve coast, between the beaches of Manta Rota and Garrão, quite a picturesque location to spend the winter months. While Easter found us enjoying a family holiday on the boat in the Algarve, it was time to plan our passage to the Canaries.

Passage: Vilamoura to Lanzarote
So where was the pod of orca? The numerous websites and apps were unclear but seemed to indicate it had split, with recent incidences close to both Galicia and Gibraltar. As the Algarve, up to Cabo de Sao Vicente, had been clear of incidences for the previous week, we left Vilamoura at dawn on Friday the 13 April, and proceeded to sail close to the coast, along the 20m contour, until we were just off Cabo Sagres. Then we switched off everything: the engine, depth-sounder, radar, VHF, AIS, autohelm, in fact we disconnected all electronics by use of the battery isolator. We also disconnected the hydrovane rudder, as we felt it might prove too tempting a target. With one stroke we lost 50 years of yachting development. Relying on old fashioned dead reckoning with paper chart plotting, compass, handheld VHF radio, hand bearing compass, and our eyes, we sailed as fast as we could directly towards deep water. We flew away from the coast of Portugal in 18 knots of breeze, just broad of a beam reach, full sail and

gorgeous sunshine. It was fun. However, to comply with the ColRegs, we switched everything back on once we hit the shipping lanes, by which time we were in 2,500 metres of water. Silent and deep, and no sign of orca. Perhaps all these precautions were unnecessary, but we will never know.

Madeira

To my mind, it would be inexcusable to sail to the Canaries without taking the opportunity to visit that beautiful island of Madeira. That passage was 500 miles, with a plan to make a little westing, once out of the shipping lanes, to avoid building winds near Gibraltar. We had a crew of four, my 16 year old son Hugh and I, my brother John Joe and Dermott. While the winds built a little during the first night, it settled into a down-wind, broad-reach blast for most of the passage, with the occasional use of the spinnaker. The main concern was meeting ships in the night at an oblique angle, en route to Gibraltar. It was here that Hugh came into his own, his young sharp eyes proving more reliable than the AIS. Without the internet, he had to experiment with something new for entertainment, so he started reading books. I'm not sure he will remember how once he gets back to civilization. His favourite occupation was feeding a small bird which followed us until we neared land.



Landfall at porto Santo, after three days



Madiera, Gorges dont change!

After three days we pulled into Porto Santo, for a gin and tonic, and some days later found ourselves in Funchal.

Madiera has changed significantly since I last visited it, some 25 years ago, the common areas around the town significantly developed for the tourist industry, a line of new hotels along the south coast and, most importantly of all, a museum to the footballer Ronaldo. Hugh is a fan, so we had to see it. All that being said, the inland beauty of the deep gorges and high mountains basking in the clouds cannot change and were a joy to behold, as we explored the island on beautiful new hired 125cc scooters (very different from the clapped-out Honda 50s we got 25 years ago).



ABOVE: Stowaway

RIGHT: Skipper in control

Lanzarote

The 300 mile passage to Lanzarote was bliss, downwind sailing in these latitudes being the Nirvana of cruising in small sailing boats. Excepting a few reefs in the sails to navigate the wind acceleration zones at the southeast point of Madeira, we flew down under all white sail in a fresh breeze and a gently rolling swell. Arriving too early, we had to pick our way carefully in the pitch dark, to anchor alongside a number of other yachts just off Playa Blanca. Rubicon Marina, where *Ocean Blue*





LEFT: At anchor Playa Francesa, la Graciosa

breeze in the afternoon. Fortunately, there was an unseasonal south to south westerly airflow on the morning of the first day so I snuck out to sea in the light morning breeze, seeking to circumnavigate the island, clockwise. Hauling the heavy mainsail to the top of the mast, without assistance (or an electric winch) was a strain, and I did feel my age. Thereafter it was a joy, sailing slowly along the west coast of the island, close to the wild volcanic cliffs. After a passage of about 40nm, I dropped anchor at the scenic Playa Francesa, on the island of La Graciosa. With the stew bubbling away and a cold beer in my hand, I relished the spectacular beauty and solitude of this place, which photography fails dismally to replicate. I spent the next day just pottering around the boat, doing little jobs and listening to music. At one point, as I was changing the propeller anode, I got a fright as the largest tuna I've ever seen swam quite close to me, totally unconcerned.

The following morning, I tacked through the narrow channel between La Graciosa and Punta Fariones, the northern point of Lanzarote, high cliffs to the south and the volcanic island to the north. I then headed for Arrecife, pleasant enough for an overnight stay. The following day, after a fast reach down the east coast, I experienced the full strength of the acceleration zone just off the southern point of Lanzarote, requiring fully reefed sails to beat northwest into Marina Rubicon.

All sorts of unanticipated problems arose. Just when I needed it most the electric autohelm switched off, when reefing the head sail the spinnaker halyard got wrapped up in it, the top batten on the main jammed

Ruby, the hydrovane in control



was booked for a six month stay, is a spacious, professional operation, with a boatyard and supply shop nearby. While lacking a little of the old world charm of some of the older marinas, it is well supplied with good restaurants, beaches, and a lovely swimming pool accessible to all berth holders. It was, for the rest of the year, the scene of many adventures, including a four week family holiday, three trips around the island, an off-site meeting of the NYC cruising group subcommittee, some night-time scuba diving, etc.

La Graciosa (single-handed).

There were occasions when the boat was based in Galicia that I would sneak off and sail around the rias, bereft of any company. There are compensations; no objections to whatever music you wish to play, to what time you get up in the morning, to your choice of destination, even as to what vegetables are put into the chicken stew. *Ocean Blue* can be a bit of a handful singlehanded in a breeze, there being no electric winches and the forces are quite heavy. However as the halyards, reefing lines and sheets are led into the cockpit and, having sailed her for over a dozen years, I have a fair knowledge of her vices. So I found a free week in June and headed for Lanzarote.

The winds around Lanzarote are pretty consistent, varying between northeast and north, being a little lighter in the morning and building to quite a



Mr and Mrs Cassidy enjoying Olhao

in the lazy-jacks as I was dropping it, marina staff who promised to be on the pontoon when I arrived were invariably late, all part of the learning process. Most notably, for the following two days my muscles ached, it proved to be quite a physical endeavor but well worth the effort.

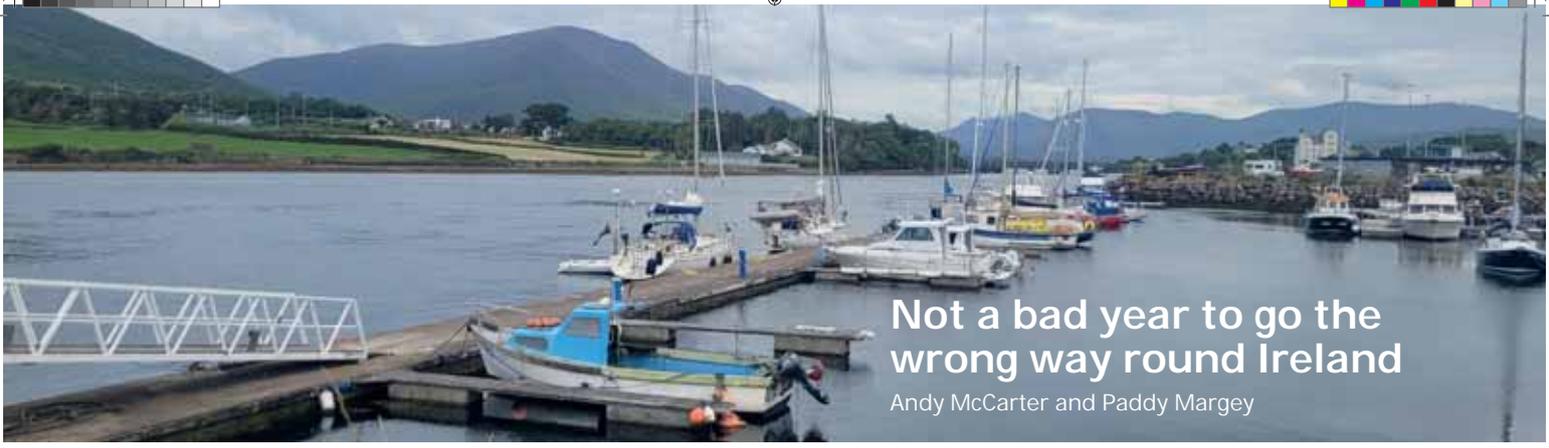
Credit card sailing ?

One last tale worthy of mentioning involves a chance 'beery' evening with a number of live-aboard sailors on passage from Morocco to Lanzarote in their well-appointed steel 31-footer, where the skipper was taking up a sailing instructor's position in Tenerife. He, and to some extent I, lamented the change of the cruising scene over the last 25 years. He described the average cruising package now as '50 footer with a credit card'. The old live-aboards on their small boats, fixing everything that broke themselves, mostly anchoring and rarely using marinas, sailing just for the joy of it, may now be a thing of the past. I wonder is he right? Hopefully not!



RIGHT: NYC cruising group meeting, la Graciosa. FROM LEFT: David Lawlor, ICC, Frank Cassidy, ICC, Andrew Collins, NYC and ICC candidate





Not a bad year to go the wrong way round Ireland

Andy McCarter and Paddy Margey

Cahersiveen Marina

The last time we circumnavigated Ireland anticlockwise it took us almost 15 years (admittedly we did include the Canary Islands in that trip) so we were well pleased this year to complete the circuit in under nine weeks although I note that *Teasing Machine* went the other way in the Round Ireland race and took line honours in a little over three days. Needless to say we weren't racing and speed was nowhere in our calculations. Our only deadline was a very loose one - to make Baltimore by mid July for a short cruise in company with my daughter Shonagh and son-in-law Paul (who live in Cork) in their newly acquired Leisure 27, *Image* with plenty of good food and drink along the way.

It's probably fair to say that Ireland in general will look back on summer 2024 with no great regrets and hope that 2025 will be better. They talk of how cold it was in May and June and the rain and wind in July and August. Our experience was different ... a wonderful cruise with no set plan other than keeping Ireland mainly to port. Weather undoubtedly affected

our progress but we did get to be stormbound in some delightful locations allowing us to savour the multitude of attractions that our own little island has to offer.

We had our first sail of the season in early May to Ardrossan in the Clyde to lift out for a good scrub and general maintenance and back to the Swilly with all shipshape and ready to depart round Ireland on 11 May. Our daily routine was to wake at eight each morning and check the Predict Wind weather forecast. We just needed a few days of any wind that wasn't 6 or above and from the west to get us out of the Swilly and round the NW shoulder of Ireland. A month later our patience was virtually exhausted and Paddy said let's go down to the marina and just go for it. So that's what we did and set sail for Downings on the afternoon of 10 June in reasonably calm overcast conditions. We anchored a hundred metres or so off the pier, the only boat in the bay. We hit the Harbour Bar 30 minutes later for a couple of pints

in front of a roaring fire (in June) before dinner on board and a wonderfully quiet first night at anchor in Downings Bay.

Next morning the sun came out briefly but long enough for Paddy to get into her togs and take her first swim of the season off the stern of *Gwilli*. Through chattering teeth she encouraged me to join her 'Come on in... it's lovely' but her blue face and uncontrollable shivering told me she was lying. In fact she later admitted it was the coldest swim of her life! The weather forecast was not encouraging. It looked like we were in the lull before the storm and yet another westerly gale was fast approaching. We obviously couldn't safely stay in Downings so our options were either to go back to Fahan Marina or head west round Bloody Foreland and run for Burtonport before the storm hit. We never like going back so we opted for the latter and actually had a very pleasant trip in cool but dry and light conditions.

Our route took us west from Sheephaven past majestic Horn Head and through the sound between Inishdooye and Inishbofin, part of the Donegal Archipelago just out from Magheraroarty. Safely round Bloody Foreland we turned in towards the shore taking the inner passage between Inishsirr, Inishmeane to the north and Gola to the south towards Bumbeg. Then west again around the South of Inisfree, past Carrickfin (where Donegal Airport is located), leaving Kincaslough and Cruit to port and finally inside Owey before heading for the entrance to Burtonport Harbour well sheltered from the coming westerly storm by Aranmore, Eighter, Inishoo and Rutland Islands. Every time we pass this way we talk about some time when the weather is

right, how we should come here for a longer cruise and explore all the islands in this magical part of Ireland and its fascinating history in more detail. It remains on our bucket list.

The entrance to Burtonport Harbour sounds tricky but is well documented and charted and if in doubt you can follow the ferries which run in and out to the

Paddy's coldest ever swim, Downings



Horn Head...the lull before the storm





Gwili 3 safely tucked up in Burtonport

Island of Aranmore several times a day. We found a space alongside the pier and called the harbour master, Manus Gallagher (from the pilot) to check if we were OK to tie up. Manus told us he had retired five years earlier but assured us we would have no problems in Burtonport. A few more calls and I got in touch with Noel McGettigan who works for Donegal County Council and is harbour master for the small *Paddy at the helm. Aranmore Sound heading south*

The Harbour Front Cafe and the Wheelhouse), two good pubs (The Lobster Pot and O'Donnell's bar) and a well stocked shop within easy walking distance so we were happy out while the gales raged around us for the next four days.

Another lull in the weather persuaded us to leave our cosy berth and head for Teelin on the north side of Donegal Bay. We exited via the North Channel and down the Sound of Aran. An uneventful trip in cool but dry conditions we enjoyed the rugged scenery of the Donegal coastline as we progressed south past Loughros More, Glen Head, Malinmore and inside Rathlin O'Birne under the mighty cliffs of Sliabh Liag. We reached our destination tired and hungry and dropped anchor in Teelin Harbour at 2030.

Next day the forecast was for more westerly storms so we didn't dally in Teelin but upped anchor early afternoon after Paddy had her swim and sailed the few miles to the shelter and safety of Killybegs. We took one of the visitor berths across the pontoon from *Ar Alis Aris* which was flying an ICC ensign and as we later found out belonged to Aedan Coffey who normally keeps his boat in Baltimore. Aedan was also on a round Ireland cruise but going the opposite direction to us. His challenging mission was to visit every island with a pub en route. We were glad to be able to offer some advice for his planned visit to Aranmore, Tory and a berth in Fahan Marina. We didn't know it then but we were destined to spend almost two weeks tied up in Killybegs partly

The visitor berths Killybegs Marina



waiting for suitable weather to cross Donegal Bay and also some personal circumstances which required a trip home to Derry for a few days. Killybegs is a good place to shelter or leave a boat in the NW of Ireland. It has a good secure marina which is well sheltered in all winds and excellent services which are improving all the time. A new toilet and shower block at the top of the gangway was near completion when we left. Mooney's boatyard (which has a boat hoist) is beside the marina and they have a super chandlery and general hardware on site. Good shops for provisioning, excellent pubs and restaurants are all within easy walking distance, and the welcome is warm and the staff in the office could not be more friendly and helpful.

At 0430 am on the drizzly morning of 29 June we bade farewell to Killybegs and set out in light NW winds hoping to make Broadhaven but we were blessed as dawn came up, the wind freshened and went round more to the north enabling us to comfortably average around seven knots. A pod of playful dolphins and the sun came out around midday as we sailed on past the Stags. We were tramping along across Broadhaven Bay under full sail when *Gwili* suddenly collided with an object in the water. Too late we saw a line of cork floats stretched across our path—an illegal, unmarked, and unmanned salmon net, a serious and potentially dangerous hazard. But somebody was looking out for us and the boat cleared the net as it was pulled under our keel, and both our skag and rudder passed safely over it. Unhindered we powered on toward Erris Head and then with the wind behind us sailed down and round the Mullet Peninsula in sunshine and blue skies to anchor for the night in calm waters off Blacksod Quay, exhausted but relieved after an exhilarating days passage.

We would normally spend a day two in Clew Bay and Westport when we're in this part of the world but the morning forecast persuaded us to give these lovely places a miss this time and instead set our sights on a comfortable berth in Galway City as it looked likely we would be stormbound once more for several days. Another westerly gale was approaching from the Atlantic but with luck we would have a couple of days to make Galway before it hit and so we headed South out of Blacksod Bay and after clearing Achill

head we had a pleasant broad reach keeping west of Bull Rocks, Clare Island and Inishturk and then cut slightly east to make our approach to Inishbofin Harbour which was relatively uncluttered and we had no trouble finding a spot to anchor for the night in plenty of time for our customary visit ashore to Days pub for a few pints and a bite to eat.

We got away the next morning in good time and motored south in flat calm conditions but south of Slyn Head we found a little more breeze which gave us a nice reach towards the entrance to Galway Bay. According to our forecast we still had 24 hours of lull before the storm and decided to break our journey with a slight diversion up to Kilkieeran. We spent a night there before the final leg next day into Port of Galway Marina, where we were lucky to get a berth (it was quite full) and spend the next five days. It's a great location right in the centre of the city within easy walking distance of everywhere and we thoroughly enjoyed the craic and found an opportunity to meet up with friends from Gort and Barna while we waited for the weather to improve.

Improve it did and we departed Galway on the 7 July in warm brilliant sunshine escorted most of the way by a pod of very lively dolphins to the Aran Islands where we anchored approximately 100 metres off the North Strand of Inis Oírr at the opposite end from the pier (first time on this island). We were enjoying a late morning coffee on board when we noticed a couple of paddle boarders coming in our direction (not another soul in sight). As they got closer we saw that they were wearing yellow and red uniforms and they lifeguards, a guy and a girl. The girl wished us good morning and asked would we mind moving our boat out a bit further from the shore. We asked what was the problem and she told us there was a bye law prohibiting anchoring within 200 metres of the beach. I'm sure we could have made a suitably witty and probably sarcastic response but we were chilled and mellow sitting there drinking our coffee in the sunshine and enjoying the ambiance and not in the mood for an argument so we acquiesced to her request and moved out a bit after we finished our coffee! Paddy had a swim and we went ashore for a late lunch, a nice walk up round O'Brien's Castle and back to the village for a pint before we set sail across to the middle island, Inis Meain. We found a space

At anchor off North Strand, Inis Oírr with O'Brien's Castle in the background



and tied up against an angling boat in the sheltered little harbour, dredged to three metres depth with water available from the pier. There is a regular ferry service that comes into the harbour several times a day so it's essential to leave the northern arm of the pier free. It took us about 30 minutes to walk to the pub, Teach Osta where we received a warm welcome and an excellent pint of Guinness. Teach Osta also has an excellent reputation for food and music. We spent two nights on the island and found it a most charming place, reminding me of my own childhood holidays in Inishowen some seventy years ago. We highly recommend a visit.

Leaving Inis Meain we opted to bypass the main Aran Island of Inis Mór (which we have visited several times in the past) and head to the north of Inis Oírr towards Doolin. This course took us under the Cliffs of Moher across Liscannor bay to Loop Head at the mouth of the River Shannon where we decided to anchor at Kilbaha for the night. The holding here is not great and we regretted not having gone a little further north to Carrigaholt but we were enticed by the reports of very good pints and pub grub in Keatings Bar and we were not disappointed. I paid the price of disregarding the pilot as later I lay awake a good deal of the night listening to ominous scraping sounds of our 25 lb CQR moving back and

forward over a rocky bottom. By 0630 I could stand it no longer and got Paddy up to take the early morning tide up to Kilrush. We were apprehensive about the instructions for operating the lock gates to enter Kilrush Marina but we needn't have worried. It was so simple and straightforward and even if we had been totally incompetent the friendly staff on 24 hour duty in the marina have the ability to monitor and operate the lock remotely if necessary.

We stayed a couple of days in Kilrush, finding it a good place to re-provision the boat and do laundry etc before continuing south across the Shannon to Smerwick in County Kerry. We were abeam of Ballydavid Head making for the entrance to Smerwick Harbour when we encountered our second salmon net of the trip. However this time we were alerted to its presence by its owners in a half-decker who hailed and told us to follow them in towards the shore and safely round the inner end of the net. We opted to anchor for the night off Feohanagh on the northern



Kilrush Marina

shore of the harbour just inside the entrance. We found it satisfactory except a fisherman came all the way across the bay to our position and laid a trot of pots almost across our buoyed anchor. We stayed put and as it happened we were clear of his pots when we lifted the anchor in the morning.

It was a beautiful morning and with the sun shining, blue skies but not much wind. Paddy had her first swim in Kerry followed by a leisurely breakfast and then a truly awesome passage through the Blaskets, across Dingle Bay to Valentia and up the river to Cahersiveen Marina. The very grand white chateau-like building with turrets and battlements is the local Garda Station and the story goes that back before independence the British civil service were asked to design a new RIC station for Cahersiveen. By coincidence they were working on plans for a police station in Bombay at the same time and when they sent out the plans they got mixed up and Cahersiveen got the Bombay police station.

We believe that the best seafood in this part of Ireland is served in O'Neills of Reenard Point. We had a very nice meal there on Saturday night and we recommend taking Maureen's taxi as it's a three mile walk and you also get the low down on all the latest scandal in Cahersiveen.

It was getting closer to our rendezvous with Shonagh and Paul in Baltimore. We got word that *Image* was still on the hard awaiting rudder repair parts so, with the flexibility we are renowned for, we changed the plan. Shonagh rented a townhouse in Ballydehob for the weekend and arranged to meet us in Crookhaven on Thursday for lunch in O'Sullivan's pub. With this in mind we departed Cahersiveen at noon and headed for Derrynane Harbour where we attempted to anchor. It was quite crowded and we were unhappy about our holding in such a congested space so we

picked up a decent looking mooring which held us safely for our short stay.

The weather was fine with light NW winds which allowed us to sail inshore of the Skelligs, through Dursey Sound and around Mizen Head. We then motored the short distance up the coast and into Crookhaven where we were delighted to find ourselves a vacant visitors' mooring with a decent pick-up strop. This left us safely at our meeting place with a full day to spare to take care of general 'housework' and boat maintenance in preparation for our visitors' arrival. We met as planned outside O'Sullivan's Bar and had a beautiful lunch and 'the most southern pint in Ireland' on the quay in the warm sunshine. Shonagh, Paul, granddaughter Aoife and friend Eileen had two cars so they were able to leave a car in Crookhaven and sail with us up to Schull later that afternoon. On arrival in Schull harbour we sat on a mooring in the evening sun enjoying a pre dinner glass or two and then motored to the pier head to drop off our guests. Paddy and I delivered *Gwili* back out to the mooring. We then dinged back to join the company in L'Escale French fish and chip restaurant a few metres from the harbour. It was almost dark by the time we said goodnight to the family as they departed by road for Ballydehob. We dandered down the pier to take the dinghy back to the boat but it was not to be straightforward! Our normally very reliable Suzuki outboard picked that night to throw a wobbler and despite my best efforts we had no other option but to row back to *Gwili*.

Next morning I tried again but could not get the outboard to run. We needed help and Google search turned up Diarmuid of ABS based in Skibbereen. Diarmuid, the harbourmaster in Baltimore arranged a berth for us on the Baltimore pontoon and said that he would sort the outboard for us on arrival.

O'Sullivan's bar, Crookhaven. FROM LEFT: Aoife, Eileen, Paddy, Andy, Shonagh and Paul





LEFT: En route to Schull, Shonagh and Andy

however, seemed weary and worn out after the recent Cork Week festivities. Cronin's Pub, of which we had fond memories, looked as though it hadn't been cleaned since our last visit in 2006. We met Aedan Coffey again who was about to depart on his final leg to Baltimore and also Paddy McGlade, ICC, who was preparing *Sabronne* for his trip to the rally in Bantry.

We were now into the eighth week of our round Ireland cruise and Paddy was starting to miss her garden and grandchildren so we hatched a plan for her to jump ship and head home from Kilmore Quay the following weekend. I gave my son-in-law Paul a call and he volunteered along with my granddaughter Aoife to join the crew for what should have been a fairly brisk trip up the Irish sea and back to Fahan.

Paddy finished her stint on a high note as we had a beautiful sail in warm SW winds from Crosshaven to Kilmore Quay with a pleasant overnight stop alongside Helvick pier. She was a happy girl with maybe a few regrets when she headed off the next morning to catch the train north from Wexford while I prepared *Gwili* for the arrival of fresh crew.

The good spell of weather continued and we departed early next morning under engine to catch the tide round Carnsore hoping to make Arklow for the night. About 15nm from our destination the engine suddenly changed its note and we felt massive vibration. Crab pot was my first thought but we could see no trailing rope or buoys. Inspection of the engine revealed little of concern. However the vibration was worrying so we turned it off and reluctantly I pulled on my wetsuit and went over the side to take a look. There was no evidence of anything caught round the prop but when I took another dive and got closer I saw the problem. We have a fixed three blade prop but now there were only two and a half blades. One of the blades had broken off!

We decided to use what wind there was and succeeded in getting into Arklow late on Sunday evening. There was little point in staying there due
Relaxing outside Glandore Inn



127 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



Gwili 3 alongside Helvick pier

to lack of lift out facilities and in any event locating a suitable replacement prop was likely to take several days. The following day we continued north to Greystones making a lot of phone calls en route. By the time we arrived in Malahide on Tuesday we had ordered a new prop to be delivered to my home in Derry on Friday morning. The following day we booked our lift out in Malahide for Friday afternoon and leaving *Gwili* in charge of my crew I got myself home intending to collect the prop and get it back down to Malahide for a 1400 deadline on Friday. However it was not to be...the prop arrived at 1000 and Paddy and I were in the car speeding towards Malahide by 1030 when disaster in the form of an engine warning light came on and halted our progress! A call to Malahide resulted in our lift-out

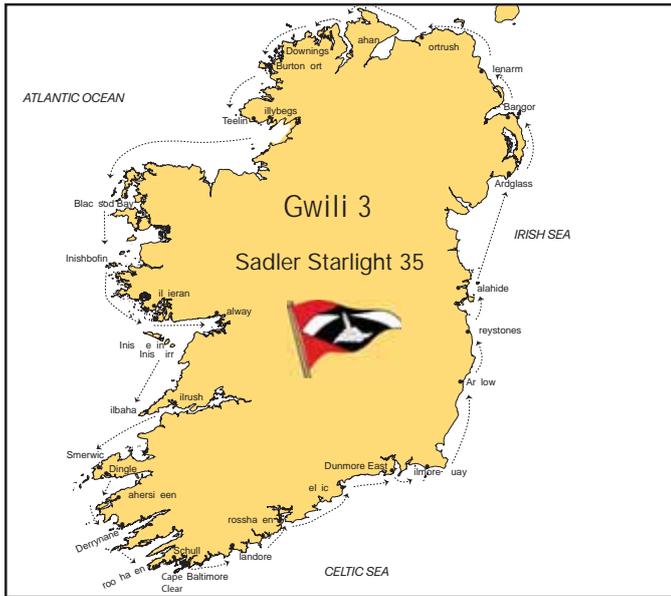
being postponed until the following Tuesday morning (it was the bank holiday weekend) So nothing for it but to relax and enjoy my weekend at home while my crew took the train into Dublin to visit the zoo! I returned to *Gwili 3* with my new prop on Monday and the following day everything went like clockwork. We lifted out and while we were held in the hoist the Malahide engineer replaced the prop so that by lunchtime we were once again under way and reached Ardglass marina in Northern Ireland just as it was getting dark.

After a good night's sleep we sailed up to Bangor where Aoife had to leave us to get back to Cork for a prior engagement and Paul and I continued homeward via Glenarm and Portrush round Malin

Kilmore Quay Marina



128 | Irish Cruising Club Annual 2024



Head and safely back into our berth at Fahan on Sunday 11 August.

A happy skipper with new prop

A two and a half blade prop



Corryvreckan...for a tube of glue

Colin G Leonard

The furthest offshore we ventured during our motor south from Larne

As *Ariadne* sailed goosewinged away from Bangor marina in a patchy but building southerly breeze, her motion hadn't even gone from drift, to surge, to charging, when I thought, 'I wish we'd got away sooner.' At Black Head light, with a following wind, waves big enough to push up the boat speed pleasingly and with the sun shining that feeling only got stronger. Work (that bane of the cruising sailor), 'summer' weather, and an early summer house move meant we just were not ready to set off cruising until Friday 19 July.

Olivia (my wife) asked Alan (my dad) as we crossed Belfast Lough to tell her how he got into sailing and as a result we had a fascinating day discussing how cruising was 50 years ago. Olivia and I are now sharing a copy of the text responsible, 'Sailing' by Peter Heaton. We chatted that night in Glenarm that having had sun and wind on our faces, surely summer was arriving and the ten days we had to cruise would be much better than the weather over the summer to date...

We awoke the next morning to an oily calm, with a left over swell and visibility reduced to what can only be described as dense 'murk.' We set off an hour before the tide began to ebb in the channel and, as on so many previous occasions, attempted to find slack water, or perhaps even a back eddy close in shore in Carnlough bay. On this occasion a successful effort was made by following the ten metre contour. We motored relatively close to the Black Rock, just off Straidkilly Point and thereafter had between 0.5 - 1.0 knots of favourable tide. As we were making rapid progress and had arrived at Carnlough harbour at high water we did a brief turn of the harbour. Just long enough for a local to inform us that it was 'shallow' and something along the lines of 'you can't park there.'

The Boathouse, Ormsay, ornately decorated and in a truly scenic location with vies to Islay and Jura

The usual array of sea birds and the occasional seal increased in frequency as we neared the Mull of Kintyre en route to Gigha. I would admit, not entirely on purpose, we passed rather closer to the Mull than intended. The cloud hung like a belt around the Mull, with the feet and heads of the cliffs visible.

When calculating our course, I used the nearest tidal diamond rather than the tidal diamond in the Clyde. As a result, our course set us rather further to the east than intended but self-corrected as we hooked into 4 - 5 knots of favourable tide half a mile off the lighthouse. This is not a location I would wish to be in the event of any significant sea state or wind.

The Boathouse restaurant being fully booked for the night of our arrival was duly booked for the following night and the array of walking, running, paddle boarding and calisthenics that seem to announce our arrival in most harbours commenced.





Achamore Gardens, Gigha

21 July was spent on Gigha, tinkering at jobs on board, walking to the tropical gardens and up to the viewing point that looks out to the west of the island (or rather further and rather more through the middle of a farm for Alan). A thought was given to walking to the beaches at the north of the island, but this was soon considered too much like hard work. Books were read, swims taken, and dinner was excellent.

We set off at a very civilised 0930 on 22 July and enjoyed a short period of what I would describe as 'traditional' Gigha sunshine that had been rather missing the day before. Despite this, it was not warm and there was little to no wind. With visibility good, we enjoyed motoring north with a plan to stop for morning coffee at the 'Twin Beaches'. With the northern beach being occupied by a large catamaran,

we anchored at the south beach, a very sheltered spot tucked between the main island and Eilean Garbh. A quick swim was enjoyed by those who enjoy such things (not Alan), which was found to be particularly cold, and the decision made to head to West Loch Tarbert, Jura. The wind remained absent, so we motored to the Sound of Islay in ever greyer skies. We passed through the Cumhann Mor mid-afternoon and having circumnavigated the middle section of the loch, selected a quiet spot away from other yachts on the north side.

A quick calculation suggested that slack water Cumhann Beag was approximately 1830, a plan was formulated and an adventure by dinghy proposed. All were in agreement that an exploration of the upper reaches was to be a pre-dinner adventure. At this stage, I should admit that we had some concern that one of the valves on the dinghy was leaking. It had been deemed that said valve, treated with WD40 and wiggled a bit, was now sealing. The dinghy was duly pumped up, the outboard put aboard and we departed.

At this stage, I begin the confessional. I will commence by absolving Olivia of all responsibility in the tale to follow. She was an innocent party, who unquestionably placed her faith in her more experienced crew mates, perhaps she'll know better next time! As we boarded the dinghy (wearing lifejackets) brief discussion as to whether to bring the pump and spare fuel resulted in them being left behind. Shortly into the trip, it was identified that the tube mentioned earlier appeared to be deflating, and as a result Olivia was moved into the middle of the boat. It was felt that 'it'll be fine' and on we went. In Cumhann Beag, it was commented that despite being near to 'slack water' there was still a strong current. The track on Navionics shows our fully loaded dinghy with a rather diminutive outboard peaking at 9 knots, we were rather committed now. We took comfort from the fact that 'slack water won't last very long in a place like this'. Attention turned to the scenery, bird life etc, but a retrospective review of photos (not included for anonymity reasons) does demonstrate that some crew members may have had concerns at the slow decrease in pressure of the port tube.

We reached the pool at the upper loch, and it was clear that the tide was still flowing strongly in. We paused for discussion, do we wait, perhaps explore further, or do we start making progress back to *Ariadne* hoping that the tide will turn? It was felt that with a slowly deflating tube on one side, we should start making some progress back to *Ariadne*. It is fair to say that progress was, slow...but we persevered attempting to stay out of the main stream. Shortly after we passed the mid point anchorage, one Leonard was heard to comment, 'I hope we have enough fuel.' The second Leonard commented, 'it'll be fine, you'll only have used the half of it.' So perfect



Cumhann Beag, at the start of our adventures

was the timing of the engine cutting out, that Olivia assumed it had been done for comic effect. We promptly grabbed hold of the nearest bit of rock we washed up against.

Through a combination of grunt on oars, eddies and slack water at the last bend, we made it right to the inner end of the Cumhann Beag. For a brief while (30 minutes) we discussed why the tide hadn't turned, as it was now sometime after the expected beginning of the ebb. It was felt best that at this stage we held on, avoided the deflating tube (from which without the outboard noise, a whistling could be clearly heard) and played 'I spy'. Progress via a channel that appears to dry at low water was made, as direct exit appeared completely beyond reach and after 90 minutes and several changes of oarsperson en route, we made it to *Ariadne*. Conversation over dinner was, limited. It was perhaps predictable that throughout this adventure the wind continued to increase from the NW, slowing our progress.

Over breakfast the following morning, 23 July, we made two key observations. The first, 'that was rather more adventure than planned'; and the second how could we have been so cavalier. In retrospect, it was a significant assumption that both narrows shared a tidal constant. In effect the upper loch is really like a miniature Strangford Lough. Where the water continues to flow in until the water level in the middle loch is lower than the higher loch. As a result, the tide must turn sometime later at the Cumhann Beag than the Cumhann Mor. In our estimation, at least 90 minutes later.

The NW breeze overnight had settled to a pleasant F 2-3, and it had also blown the cloud away. We made our escape from Loch Tarbert, set sail and beat to windward in pleasant, sunny, if cool conditions. We

arrived in Oronsay, anchored off the boathouse, had lunch whilst watching a teenager wing foil off the back of a catamaran (occasionally rescued by his dad in the dinghy), and went ashore for a walk on the beach. A swell was rolling in and staying the night deemed unfavourable, so we had two factors to consider, tide and the need to fix the dinghy. The latter having been patched with duck tape and sail repair tape (completely) unsuccessfully.

Olivia at the helm beating to Oronsay





Ariadne from the dinghy, anchored at Oransay. Sun at last, but not for long

The breeze was now SW 2-3 and plans were made for a spinnaker run to the north end of Jura, but mother nature disagreed and by the time hoisting was considered the wind was gone. The excitement of any cetacean sighting never diminishes and whilst motoring was deemed rather tedious, we were visited by a pod of dolphins and kept our eyes and binoculars focused as a minke whale had been reported in the area earlier that day. (Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust App).

Bagh Nam Muc treated us to sightings of many seals, goats and red deer on the hill side. We discussed spending the night but a late finish was deemed favourable to an early start to head through the gulf. We watched a local fishing vessel head full steam into the still west going Corryreckan and thought it would soon be time for us to follow. Emboldened by our findings a few days prior in Carnlough and having carefully considered the sailing directions (and perhaps keen to redeem ourselves after Loch Tarbert), we hugged the 10m contour once through the passage between Eilean Beag and Jura. As we whistled through 30 minutes before the expected turn of the tide on a significant back eddy, we overtook the fishing boat, which had remained mid

channel. At least we occasionally get these things right and we hoisted sails as it clouded over and began to rain. We made fast in Ardfern in time for a late dinner and our bunks.

Ardfern Yacht Centre had more than ample choices of glue, and the dinghy was soon repaired. Walks, runs, provisioning and showers all happened in short order. Minds were set to the more important details in life, where to have lunch and reflecting upon the planting styles of the vegetable gardens in Ardfern (ingenious pea beds). Eventually, tides were considered, and a pre-dinner passage to Carsaig Bay planned. The anchorage at the north end felt sheltered from wind, but we lay to the tide and holding was poor. We also discovered that when at the bow one could look over into extremely shallow water, whilst the echo sounder read more than four metres. We left promptly and anchored in the much more suitable anchorage to the south for dinner and a peaceful night.

The Sound of Jura provided some wonderful sailing on the 25 July, distracting from the necessity to think about getting home and the reasonably variable but universally unfavourable wind forecasts. We beat to windward in a light to moderate SW (full oilskins due

to grey skies, occasional rain and low temperature), the tide under us making for narrow tacking angles and favourable velocity made good. Lunch in the Ardmore Islands was followed by a motor in the now non-existent breeze to Port Ellen. Olivia and I went for a paddle board and then all three went for an evening stroll before the breeze freshened and went to the SW.

The passage from Port Ellen across the North Channel started with some promise, the wind was funnelling around The Oa. We set off in moderate NW and moderate sea state. Within an hour the wind was insufficient to keep the sails filled against the motion of the sea, and reluctantly the engine went on. It remained slightly unpleasant until sheltered by Rathlin, where we washed through the Macdonnell race. It then began to rain...heavily. The tide was strongly favourable and a review of the sailing directions highlighted that the tide turned inshore at Islandmagee, 90 minutes before the main channel. We were making good progress off Glenarm and continued, aiming to pass close to the Maidens and then remain offshore (1.5 miles), hoping to sneak past Blackhead and across to Bangor. All proceeded to plan, until S 4-5 developed at the Maidens and the engine made a peculiar noise (fan belt in the process of snapping). 13 tacks later we were on a visitors mooring in Larne lough. We utilised the techniques learnt changing the tubes on countless bike tyres to change the fan belt and made a plan to set off for Whiterock at 0830 the next morning.

Planning the passage from Larne to Whiterock on the 27 July provided a number of challenges. Firstly southerly, or no wind. Secondly the tide at the Isle of Muck, thirdly the tide at Donaghadee Sound and finally the tide at the narrows. A careful re-reading of the sailing directions later and our final tidal adventure of the trip was planned. We would depart and take the north going ebb out of Larne lough. We would then plug the slack (or we hoped back eddying tide) close in shore along Islandmagee and Muck. It was to our pleasant surprise that by sticking extremely close in shore (10-15 m contour) we had over a knot of favourable tide. In contrast to the sailing directions, we did not find this to extend further off shore as we neared slack water. Hugging

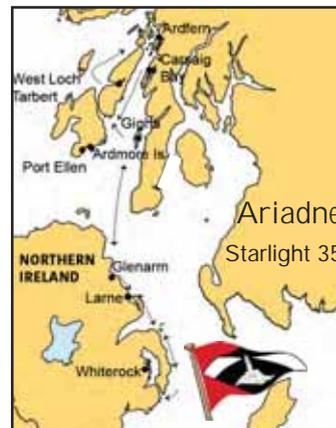
close under the Gobbins footpath we had a knot of favourable tide until Black Head light. At this point we set course for Donaghadee Sound where we arrived with a strong fair tide. A pleasant afternoon of motoring, motor-sailing and finally sailing later, we arrived in a timely fashion at the narrows mid flood. The Ruten Wheel was full of vigour on our way past, and we were swept up the lough home (again under motor) to Whiterock where Mum (Elizabeth) greeted us with a meal ashore.

A brief, largely windless or to windward cruise, which could just as well be titled 'A motor-sail round Jura.' We returned home wiser about our adventures, wiser about the tides in places both familiar and unfamiliar to ourselves and *Ariadne*. I think though the most important thing to remember though, is that the easiest way to a chandlery is sometimes through the Corryreckan.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Christopher Green, former member of the club and life long friend of my dad's, for his witty response to hearing about the trip. 'There aren't many Belfast sailors that go through the Corryreckan for a tube of glue.'



OPPOSITE: Alan at the helm in a well timed departure from Port Ellen



Dóchas in Greece

Jim and Katie Corbett



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

DÓCHAS log - Greece 2024

Starting on May 1st, Dóchas' cruise into the Gulfs of Patras and Corinth, through the Corinth Canal followed by a cruise of the Western Aegean.

Preveza

We arrived in Preveza in mid-April having driven from Ireland to Greece via the Rosslare-Bilbao ferry. Temperatures were already in the 20s with blue skies. *Dóchas* was in a boatyard on the east side of the harbour and we were comfortably installed in a hotel in the town centre. We drove over to the yard each morning to prep the boat and returned later in the day to enjoy the town. Choryna arrived to help with the fit-out. During the winter, we had arranged

with the yard for the replacement of all standing rigging, new VHF aerial and nav light. We also replaced our chain/rode setup with 100m of all-chain. It was Easter Week (according to Greek Orthodox rites) and the town was full of holiday makers. Each evening we enjoyed the local scene including street celebrations with traditional concerts and dancing.

Arriving in the boatyard on the scheduled launch date, the launch crew rocked up with the loading trolley 15 mins early and things happened quickly. *Dóchas* is trucked down to the craning area. We were allowed ten minutes to finish off the antifouling before the boat was launched. All aboard. The engine started but wouldn't take revs and quickly died..... I then remembered to check the fuel tank isolation valve and it was closed. Whew! That was an easy fix. I

restarted the engine and tested forward and reverse gears just in case. All was good and we motored out of the dock and straight over to Preveza marina for the next stage of the work.

Preveza to Messalonghi

We spent two days on Preveza marina bending the sails on and provisioning the boat. We filled up with water and fuel and were on our way by mid-morning. It was a cracking day for a first sail with a 15 knot breeze out of the west. This gave us a nice fast reach

LEFT: Corinth Canal

down to Lefkas canal. The canal bridge had been under repair so we were happy to hear the warning siren for opening just as we arrived at the top of the hour. We motored through and out into the South Ionian. We hoisted the sails again and got to deploy our gennaker. This was great fun: we scooted along at over 6 knots for several hours, progressing south via Meganisi Island, Kastos Island, finally arriving to Messalonghi at the entrance to the Gulf of Patras. The town itself is located in the centre of a salt marsh lagoon with a new marina 2nm up a narrow entrance channel. We had hopes that Messalonghi might be a useful place to leave the boat at the end of the season but it's a pretty desolate place and the marina looks and feels a bit under-invested. The town was closed for the bank holiday but nevertheless we toured around by bike. Messalonghi was the site of a dramatic siege during the Greek War of Independence which ended with the slaughtering of all the inhabitants by the Ottomans. The Garden of Heroes in the center of the town is dedicated to this tragic event. The poet Lord Byron, who supported the Greek struggle for independence, died in Messalonghi in 1824. He is commemorated by a monument, apparently containing his heart, located in the town.

Into the Gulf

Leaving Messalonghi, we were finally entering the two gulfs; first the Gulf of Patras as far as the Rio-Antirrio bridge and thereafter the Gulf of Corinth. The gulfs cut across Greece from west to east with the Peloponnese peninsula to the south, effectively an island due to the Corinth Canal linking the Gulf of Corinth to the Saronic Gulf over in the east. It was a sunny calm day and we proceeded under engine toward the bridge. The Rio-Antirrio Bridge crosses the Gulf of Corinth near Patras, linking the town of Rio on the Peloponnese peninsula to Antirrio on mainland Greece by road. The 2.5km bridge is one of the world's longest multi-span cable-stayed bridges. It's quite a spectacle passing under the bridge and, as always, we had the momentary fear that the bridge was not high enough for our mast.





LEFT: Jim and Katie transiting the Corinth Canal

Corinth and the Canal

We stopped over in the surprisingly modern city of Corinth, adjacent to the entrance to the canal. Situated on the narrow strip of land joining the Peloponnese peninsula to mainland Greece, it has been an important and prosperous place since antiquity and marks the intersection of the Ionian and Aegean Seas. The low-lying land around is fertile and the inhabitants were excellent seamen and traders, hard-living and hard working. Indeed, the term, 'Corinthian lifestyle' is based on the hedonistic life that the original Corinthians lived, even by the excessive lifestyles of ancient times. In ancient times boats were hauled across the isthmus on a paved road on wooden rollers. Octavian dragged his fleet across here in pursuit of Antony after the battle of Aktio. The Roman emperor Nero started digging a canal, but the canal was not finally completed until 1893. It is about 6km long and 25m wide. To transit the Corinth Canal you pay a fairly substantial fee, in our case about €170 one-way. This is done online beforehand. Traffic through the canal is in convoy, one direction at a time led by a pilot boat.

Islands in the Corinthian Gulf

Once through the Rio-Antirrio bridge, the Gulf of Corinth opens up. It's over a hundred miles to the other end and there are fewer locations of interest compared to where we had come from. Trizonia is one of the few islands and being 20 or so miles from the bridge is a popular transit stop. The island is small (2.5 km sq) with a tiny fixed population of around 50 people and is the only inhabited island among the islands of the Corinthian Gulf. The harbour is well protected, which is just as well as we were expecting some wind over the next few days. Lying just 1km from the mainland there is a small ferry which runs every hour or so for €2. We stayed for two days and enjoyed exploring.

The next stop for us was Galixidhi which is on the Greek mainland. This is a beautiful little harbour and comes highly recommended. We were lucky to nab one of the few spots remaining on the harbour wall. However, we came to regret our decision that evening as a strong northerly wind kicked in. It was a bouncy night, uncomfortable rather than dangerous. The wind slowly abated during the following day and harmony was restored. An Irish-flagged boat arrived in after us, a 30-footer named *Somers Isle*, the original name for Bermuda. This boat was skippered by Norman who, like us, spends two to three months a year on board in Greece. We had a great chat and found that Norman is full of local information. A former ship's officer and coast guard, he originally bought the boat in the USA and sailed her back across the Atlantic. A log of his voyage is available on the HYC website.

We set off from Corinth harbour at about 1030 for the canal entrance and called on VHF 11. The traffic controller confirmed our details and payment receipt number, and we were told to wait offshore. We joined 12 flotilla yachts and two large superyachts in a melee for most of an hour, while waiting for a couple of medium sized cargo ships to come through from the other direction. Eventually the controller called us each by boat name with the faster motorboats going first. We lead the long line of yachts through the canal which took about 45 mins in total. It's a fabulous experience with the steep walls nearly within touching distance on both sides. Unexpectedly, there were crowds of spectators on one of the bridges high above us waving and cheering. At the east end of the canal, there is a transit dock which sells diesel, and we took the opportunity to top up our fuel. Afterwards, we set sail and headed on into the Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea.

Saronic Gulf and the Aegean Sea

Athens and the mighty port of Piraeus dominate the entire northern shore of the Saronic. Over the next few days we proceeded SE, stopping at Korfos and then Nea Epidavros. This is a new harbour with a small jetty. We slotted into an empty space stern-to and picked up a lazy line. The line was encrusted along its entire length with sponges and urchins making the rope about four times thicker than it should have been. Wearing heavy work gloves I used a big knife to clear the line on the deck which made an awful mess as the sponges squirted goo in all directions. It was like a scene from *Alien* meets *Ghostbusters* and I was left dripping with yellow and green slime.



Vaithi Harbour

Epidavros is near to the site of Asclepieia, a short taxi ride away. These were healing temples in ancient Greece and in the wider Hellenistic and Roman world, dedicated to Asclepius the first doctor-demigod in Greek mythology. Stemming from the myth of his great healing powers, pilgrims would flock to temples built in his honour to seek spiritual and physical wellbeing. Part of the site contains the ancient Theatre of Epidaurus. Constructed in the late 4th century BC, it is considered to be the most perfect ancient Greek theatre with regard to acoustics and aesthetics. Because of its exceptional architecture and aesthetics, the theatre and temple were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1988.

Vathi on Methana Peninsula

We had already visited two other 'Vathis' in the Ionian, a word meaning 'harbour'. This Vathi came highly recommended, and we got a space in the lovely tiny harbour with several tavernas along the short quay. The following day we set out on foot to visit the nearby Methana volcano. It was a stiff uphill walk of 6km each way followed by a final section of 1 km or so up a marked trail over very rough terrain, comprising huge boulders thrown up by the volcano. Having seen or visited several volcanoes on this cruise, we were interested to learn that this volcano is different in that the eruption took place in slow motion over several millennia. The lava was so viscous that it accumulated vertically creating high and steep mountains before finally flowing into the sea to the west. The eruptions were not violent and lasted

for long periods. We got to look into the residual vent which is dormant and does not have the typical caldera shape.

Poros island

We progressed south to Poros, known as the 'Venice of Greece', comprising a large harbour and bay area with the town of Poros on the island about 300m from the mainland. There is a long, long circular quay wall with plenty of room, at least at that time of year. We moored up without difficulty and were shortly greeted by the harbour master on an electric bicycle. She was very friendly and talkative, especially when she learned that we were Irish as her daughter is married to an Irish man and lives in Co Dublin. We spent a few days enjoying the town and surrounds. We met a yacht crew from Skerries and enjoyed some fine meals in the local restaurants.



RIGHT: Theatre of Epidaurus

Mycenes

We began to realise that many of the attributes that we associate with the Greeks were inherited from previous eras. One of the most influential predecessors were the Mycenians who were all-powerful in the second millennium BC. Mycenae was a major centre of civilization and military stronghold which dominated much of southern Greece, Crete, the Cyclades and southwest Anatolia. Mycenae is celebrated by Homer as the seat of King Agamemnon and his wife Clytemnestra, who led the Greeks in the Trojan War. There is a long, convoluted family history around Agamemnon (murder, incest, cannibalism, revenge, warring, etc). The Mycenae were assisted in times of need by the Cyclops, one-eyed giants that hailed from Asia. That helped a lot, I guess. We drove up to the centre of the Mycenian world, just north of Argos. Built in the period around 1400 BC, the ancient city sits on a hill top, nestling between two mountains, where it commands the entire area. We also visited Nafplion and the famous Palamidi fortress.

Dochas on Dokos

There is a (nearly) deserted island called Dokos off the Greek coast between Hydra and Port Kell. With that name we felt we could not pass it by. It has a large deep bay on the north side facing the mainland so it's sheltered, although winds are gusty during the afternoon requiring an anchor watch for a couple of hours. We were very happy with our new anchor set up and the long 8mm chain which is much easier for Katie to manage. We found a small farm with goats, donkeys and sheep roaming the island. We spent several days here on two separate visits. On our last morning, two superyachts moved in. With the prospect of the bay being filled with jet skis and other water toys, it was time for us to move on.

Hydra island

The pilot advises to stay away from Hydra as it is a tiny port and hugely popular. On a busy day, yachts are stacked three deep to the quay wall, nose-to-tail with the resulting chaos of crossed anchors and chains. However, on the advice of those who know the area well, we arrived in just after 1100, found a narrow slot on the north quay wall and elbowed our way in. There are advantages to not having the biggest boat. Once landed we went ashore to explore this little gem. The island itself is charming and a 'must see' destination for high-end tourists, particularly Leonard Cohen pilgrims. The town of Hydra is shaped like an amphitheatre around the harbour and is the only settlement on the island. There are no cars and fleets of donkeys are used to transport goods around the island. It's like stepping back in time to see lines of donkeys lined up on the quay to unload the various supply ships and ferries. We enjoyed a lazy lunch followed by a swim. We



Leonard Cohen's house on Hydra

walked up to Leonard Cohen's house just above the town. He was in his early 20's when he arrived to the island in the 1960's to search for his 'muse'. The house, although now unoccupied, still belongs to the Cohen family. Hydra was popular at the time as a colony for artists and poets, although lacking in basics like electricity. On Hydra, Cohen met the love of his life, the Norwegian woman Marianne Ihlen as in, 'So Long, Marianne'. Marianne was married to someone else. Those interested can Google the rest of this sorry tale.

Cap Sounion

After Hydra, we returned to Poros to top up on fuel and water. We then headed out NE for Cap Sounion, located east of Athens and the NE corner of the Saronic Gulf. We had a nice sail in a reaching



Temple of Poseidon

wind. The anchorage at the cape is beautiful and is overlooked by the Temple of Poseidon. This is a busy tourist spot, and we were happy to view it from the water. The anchorage was roily from passing ships until about midnight when things calmed down enough for a good night's sleep.

Evoia Channel

The next stage of our cruise was up north, taking the Evoia Channel inside the island of Evoia which lies along the eastern coast of mainland Greece. The channel is about 100nm long and is a sheltered passage with the wind either blowing north or south along the channel.

Katie at the helm



Toward the end of the first day, we passed by a small island called Kavalliani and decided to check out a remote harbour that is mentioned in a blog but is not noted on the charts or pilot. It's a tricky, narrow entrance but we got in safely and were assisted with our lines by the one other boat that was there ahead of us. The island is about 3km long by 1km wide and was totally deserted. The harbour is new-ish, of rough poured concrete typical of Greece. There is a perfectly smooth roadway all around the island with about two or three deserted large villas and sites for many more. These are totally ruined and deserted. Best we could figure is that the island was planned as an exclusive resort destination that fell foul of the financial crash. It was eerie but strangely beautiful with an abundance of wildlife, birds and flowers.

Over the following days we passed through the narrows at Chalkida, negotiating the sliding bridge which seems to play a key role in attracting tourists to the town by detaining boats for several days due to its various malfunctions. There were fewer charter boats up this way and we stopped at various anchorages along the way where we were the only boat. Finally we rounded the corner at the north end of Evoia via the Volos channel out into the northern Aegean toward the Sporades islands.

Skiathos Island

The Sporades islands are known as the gates of the wind: Anemopiliae. There are 24 islands, only four of which are permanently inhabited. These islands are like an arc of pebbles, supposedly thrown from Mount Pelion eastwards into the Aegean by the gods. We motored in calm conditions over to the island of Skiathos. Skiathos boasts an international airport and is an extremely popular spot as a result. The harbour nestles in a beautiful location at the head of a long bay, protected from all winds by small islets. Despite dire predictions of no space ever here, we phoned the Port Authority when we were one hour out and 'Mister Panos' confirms a spot for us on the town quay. We were very happy to be settled in this jewel of a spot. The flight path for the airport is down through the harbour so anchoring anywhere in the harbour is not allowed. We thought this is a bit of an

exaggeration until we saw our first 737 descending on final approach at near mast height. We hired a buggy to tour the island over the next few days.

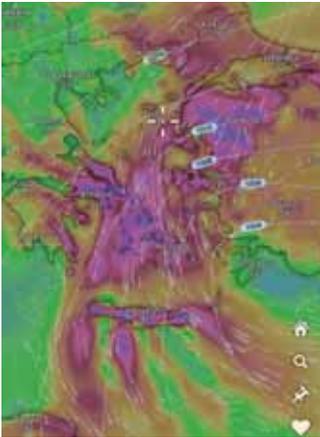
Mama Mia island (Skopelos)

Mamma Mia (2008), was filmed on Skopelos and Skiathos. Judging by the amount of advertising, no visit to the Sporades is complete without a visit to the tiny chapel on the island of Skopelos, the location where Sophie's wedding takes place. Situated on top of a high rock overlooking the sea, the chapel can be reached by climbing 200 narrow steps. We arrived mid-morning. There are a couple of big underwater rocks to be avoided and it took us three attempts to get our anchor to set on the rocky bottom. We took the rubber duck ashore. The climb up the near vertical steps was murder in the heat. The view is spectacular from the top especially gazing down into the deep blue water which is crystal clear. For all the razzamatazz, it is a special place and continues as a place of worship. We left after a couple of hours with the strains of 'Mama Mia, here I go again' ringing in our ears, from speakers on one of the large motor boats anchored in the cove. We docked in Skopelos harbour for the evening, quite a classy place, and enjoy a wonderful dinner of swordfish.

Melted and Meltemi'd

We had originally planned to finish our cruise in the Aegean. However, there were very few berths

Meltemi on Windy

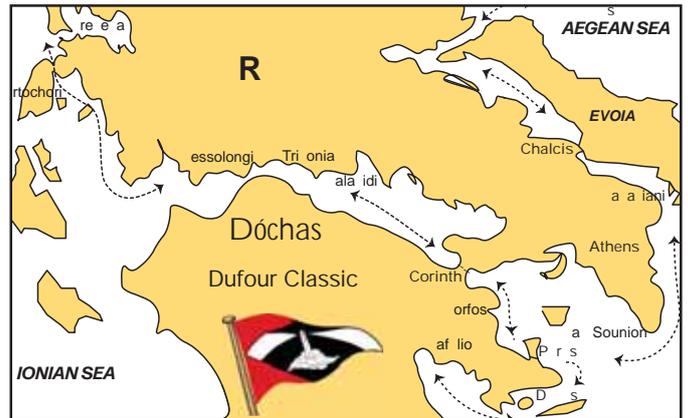


available in the marinas and boatyards thereabouts. There is a concentration of marinas around Athens, but these are very expensive and, in any case, there are no spaces available with waiting lists of several years. For *Dóchas*, our cruise up to the Sporades means that we were then 400 nm from our base in Preveza. After chatting with various cruisers, we concluded that our best option was to return to the Ionian. The next few weeks were dominated by the weather. Greek temperatures in June had risen to high thirties, which was unseasonably hot. Mid-June also saw the arrival of a Meltemi, the strong, dry NE wind that blows down through the Aegean due to high pressure over the Balkans and is not normally seen until July and August. Wind speeds were up to F6 with higher gusts under mountains and lasted for several days. For cruising sailors this usually means finding a sheltered anchorage and holing up for the duration. We decided that our best option is to retrace our route back to Preveza.

With the threat of a new Meltemi on its way, we needed to get down the Evoia Channel quickly. The Meltemi was forecast to start the following day but the guy at the fuel depot assured us that it wouldn't arrive for another 24 hours (local knowledge). Armed with this vital weather information from the pump jockey we headed off in the early hours and got to see dawn off Cap Sounion and the Temple of Poseidon. Winds were a consistent 20 knots, gusting over 30 knots. The forecast was for the weather to build to higher wind speeds over the next few days.

Our next challenge was crossing the busy shipping lanes leading into Piraeus. Even at such an early hour the horizon was filled with large ships. Many were parked up waiting for daylight to be called to enter the busiest port in Greece. The first of the overnight ferries were romping up over the horizon doing 20 knots and needed only about 20 mins from first sight on the horizon to close our position. We tried to cross the traffic lanes at right angles per the regulations. Then, as we approached a very large, stationary liner it gave a long, loud blast on the horn. That, plus the large issue of smoke from the funnel, warned us that the liner was about to get underway. We quickly changed course and ducked under his stern, wallowing in the backwash from his propellers. All good.

We were sailing and making good progress. The northern coast of the Saronic Sea west of Athens has many oil and chemical refineries and is a busy place with large tanker movements around the clock. Later that evening and into the night we were monitoring several 'targets', including oil and gas tankers on the move with attendant tugs. We threaded our way in the dark through a parking lot of large oil tankers ranged in two rows parallel to our course without incident. At dawn we traversed the Corinth Canal again and are back in familiar territory.



Westbound out of the Gulf of Corinth

Out of the Aegean and back in the Gulf of Corinth was a different world weather-wise. The Meltemi only blows in the Aegean and here was back to normal: calm mornings with nice afternoon winds. Over the next few days we exited the Gulf of Corinth with a favourable wind. The wind increased to over 20 knots in the afternoon, and we were barrelling along at over 7 knots under jib. Occasionally, *Dóchas* came close to broaching while surfing down the short seas. I was mostly hand-steering, not trusting the autopilot to

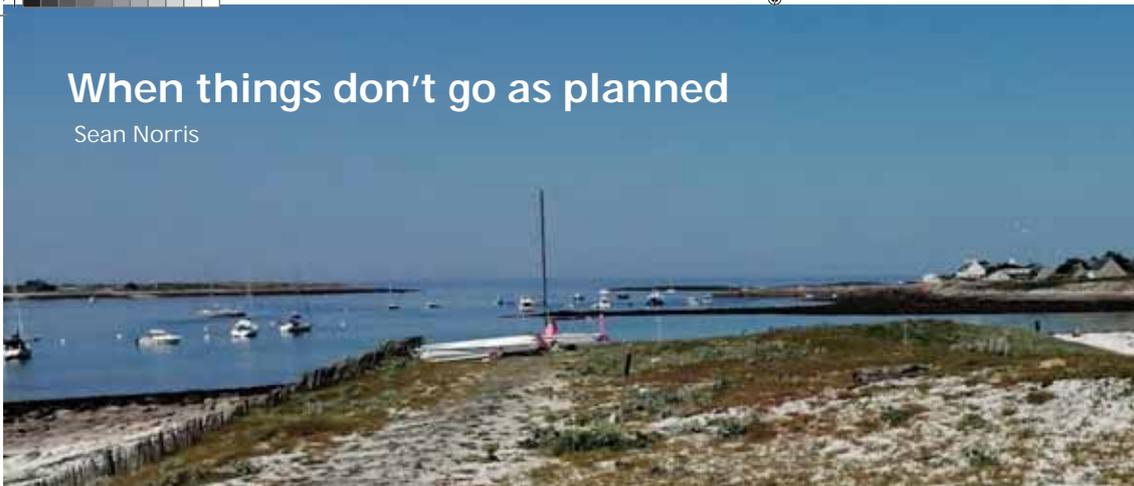
react quickly enough. We arrived back in Preveza a couple of days later and de-commissioned *Dóchas* over the next couple of days. There was a choral festival on in the town providing entertainment each evening. We checked in with the yard and recovered the car which thankfully was in great condition under its cover. The lift was done flawlessly as usual and *Dóchas* was trucked back to the same spot we had vacated earlier in the year. It was time to check into our hotel and relax.



ABOVE: Spartahori

When things don't go as planned

Sean Norris



Ashore on St Nicholas, Îles de Glénan

Something as simple as a two-week cruise takes a lot of thought and planning especially if you are still actively working and have family care commitments which are greater than the norm. So it was for the 2024 *Raffles* summer cruise. When the Brittany Cruise in company was first mooted having chatted with my co-owner Tom Kirby my first thought was to bring *Raffles* to France in August 2023 and have her positioned there for the planned cruise in 2024. Unfortunately, I was unable to assemble a crew to bring that plan to fruition so *Raffles* remained in Ireland for 2023.

A chance meeting with the crew of another Schull Harbour Sailing Club boat at Rosstrin Boatyard during laying up started with 'I have a proposition for ye lads, how would you like to do a delivery to France next summer?'. After some texts back and forth all Andrew O'Regan, Sean P O'Sullivan and Peter Duffy a relatively youthful crew signed up for the trip down. Over the winter Eugene O'Loughlin (ICC), and Aidan Coughlan both of whom have completed passages with me previously were enlisted for the return trip along with Robert Hilliard, a Flying Fifteen sailor based in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire.

At times over the winter my care commitments put the planned cruise in doubt but things started to improve such that I felt confident that we would be able to go ahead. However, in early May Tom had to withdraw from the cruise. The main impact of

that for us was that due to our own circumstances, it would be no longer possible for us to commit to any of the formal events of the rally. However as we had everything in place to get to and back from France, I decided that we would proceed with the trip and join the cruise in company at some of the places along the way.

Raffles went into the water on 20 May and the preparations continued for a departure on 1 June (the Saturday of the Bank Holiday weekend). In between I had brought the boat alongside in Schull and with the assistance of one of my local crew Steven O'Reilly I had loaded up all the cruising gear and non-perishable supplies.

Delivery to France

June 1st was a beautiful sunny day. There was high pressure and settled weather with a gentle westerly breeze with a promise of NE winds out in the Celtic Sea and onwards to the English Channel. After a nice lunch in the Bunnratty Inn we departed Schull at 1430. At the Gascanane Sound we hoisted our cruising chute which we carried until 2030 when the wind died and we started the engine. We motored through the first night running watches of one hour on and three off. At 0600 on 2 June we had 12 kn out of the NE and were back under sail with engine powered down. By 1900 that evening the Scillies were abeam of us some 30nm to the east. Nothing in the forecast broadcast by Falmouth Coastguard was of concern and we enjoyed the dinner that Tom

had prepared for us. We ran the engine for an hour at sunset to charge the batteries. We were then 48nm to the Ushant TSS, still making way under sail with another night of one on three off watches. At 0745 the following morning we entered the traffic east of the TSS and, with the wind going further aft and easing, we motored onwards to the Chenal Du Four. The traffic was unusually light so we had a very straightforward passage arriving the northern entrance of the Chenal Du Four at 1500 to catch the southbound tide. Off Pointe St Matthieu with the change of course and a slightly strengthening wind we sailed the last few miles to Camaret. We were directed to a berth in Port Du Styvel at 1900 after a run of 52 hours with which I was very pleased. After dinner, again courtesy of Tom, we wandered up town and met the crews of three Irish boats also heading to various points south.

Crossing east of the Ushant TSS



The following day was a lay day, and a chance to catch up on emails, do jobs around the boat and chat to the neighbours including the crew of a Sadler 34, *Alice*, who had tied up alongside us. The new 'simplified' arrangements for dealing with UK boats had come in on 1 June. Unfortunately, we discovered in Camaret at least, they were applying them to all Non-Schengen arrivals which of course included us. So, I had to fill in the Form complete with passport details and they said they would send it off get it stamped and they said they would email us when it was ready for collection. I may have tuned out for that part as I promptly forgot about it until I saw the email some days later to tell me to come and collect it. By then I was then in Concarneau.

On 5 June at 0430 we motored out of Camaret in a squally downpour and headed south to catch the tide through the Raz de Sein. Having read the Pilot, almanac, comments on the Club's Facebook page and given how shorthanded I would be for the cruise proper the plan was to skip Benodet and head for Kerneval with an overnight stop in Concarneau. That plan was torn up by 0800. There was enough wind at Pointe Du Toulinguet to sail across Baie de Douarenez until the wind died just north of the Raz de Sein. We started the engine but after about 15 minutes there was a loud bang. We immediately stopped the engine and on lifting the cover were met by a cloud of smoke. We set sail and with the little breeze of wind that was there plus the south going tide we were flushed through and out the far side of the Raz de Sein. We slowly made our way across the Baie de Audierne having by then hoisted the spinnaker. At the same time the crew who were all quite mechanically minded went at the engine once it had cooled down. An initial test showed that it was not seized. The problem was eventually traced to the Vetus exhaust and water trap box which has cracked in multiple places thus venting water and exhaust back into the boat. The venting of the exhaust would starve the engine of oxygen and it would stop. The water went into the bilges and all that goes with that problem.

The crew's view was that the engine would start, it would run but would eventually stop as it was starved of air. In the meantime, the wind had built such that we had a nice following breeze and made good progress southwards and then eastwards. I decided that we would stick with Concarneau as the arrival port as it was a major port with the availability of services/spares. The only thing of note during the afternoon was on approaching Concarneau I intended to call the marina in Concarneau by telephone but inadvertently called CROSS Etel. Even though I hung up immediately they called me back and I told them my story. They called the marina in Concarneau and advised that if the marina staff were there, they would get us alongside but if not and we had to call them out we would have to pay!



FROM LEFT: Eugene O'Loughlin, Robert Hilliard and Aidan Coughlan

We arrived at Concarneau at 1800 having left starting the engine as late as possible and then ventilating the engine compartment as best we could with all the covers off and the hatches opened and hand pumping the bilge. We just about made it, and tied up at the C pontoon hammerhead. We must have seemed like the Beverley Hillbillies venting exhaust through the companionway hatch. Our fellow Sadler *Alice* was there ahead of us.

The following morning having reported to the Capitaniere we moved to Pontoon D but lost engine power as we approached our berth so it was a drift in and all hands to stop manoeuvre! The crew were confident that they could make the necessary repairs. A great design feature of the Sadler 32 is that there is good access to the rear of the engine by removing the cockpit floor and the storage underneath affectionately known as 'the bath'. So having gained access and removing the offending parts we set off to get a new water trap and some fittings from the local agents Meca Diesel about a 30-minute walk from the marina. Having obtained what we needed we had lunch before going back to the boat and fitting the new water trap. All was working as expected. A job well done!

The following day we left for home. We took a bus to Quimper, a train to Landerneau, another to Morlaix where I met one of my mother's bridge friends by chance. Another bus brought us to Roscoff for the ferry to Cork.

Cruise (16 - 28 June)

The cruise proper dates coincided with the Club's cruise in company. The crew consisted of myself, my wife Irene and my son James who has additional care needs. By then I had an outline cruise plan of Concarneau, Port La Forêt, Lesconil, and Loctudy for the first week and for week two eastwards towards Kerneval and Groix to meet the other ICC boats.

We came to France on the *Pont Aven* and brought our car. On the ferry in both directions, we met



ABOVE: Damaged water trap and new water trap

neighbours from Schull - everybody seems to have gone to Brittany. We drove directly to Bénodet on Sunday morning where we briefly meet some of the ICC members there as well as collecting our cruise in company pack. We then drove onto Concarneau and parked in the open area near the marina, a decision which later had a knock on effect. We settled into the boat and had decided we were going nowhere until at least Tuesday. The weather however was not very kind with Wednesday being particularly windy so we were still in Concarneau on Wednesday. A new plan was now formulated. We would head west towards Saint Marine, then Lesconil, Loctudy and back to Port La Forêt and finish in Concarneau. Thursday had promise of little wind but thunderstorms in the afternoon so we decided to make a dash for Sainte Marine in the morning!

We motored over with the only thing of note arising was a swarm of insects hitching a ride with us, thankfully they left as we approached Bénodet. On arriving at Sainte Marine I could see that the visitors pontoon was full with what looked like a rally. On calling the Bureau De Port they told me that they could not take me until high tide an hour away, so we waited until they came out and directed us to a berth which although it was slack water still had tide on it which is not something I have to deal with very often in my home waters. We got alongside successfully and when I went to the port and told them I wanted to pay up to Sunday the lady there said 'It's OK, you can pay when leaving, you might not leave on Sunday' The promised thunder rolled in just after we tied up.

We actually had a very pleasant stay apart from an unusual visit from three gendarmes the first night who seemed quite concerned that Irene was OK. On receiving appropriate assurance that she was they left us. We don't know if they were concerned about us or just happened upon us in their rounds. Sainte Marine has a small supermarket (recently expanded and appears to have everything including a roast chicken dinner on Sunday). It also has a few bars, cafes, creperies and restaurants, a bakery about five minutes walk away, self service laundry and a foot ferry across to Bénodet.

Having settled up on Sunday morning we left but on arriving in the mouth of the Odet it was very foggy outside so we turned around and went back to the berth we had just vacated. The reason for the suggestion that we would not leave on Sunday also became obvious, there was a mini festival taking place on the water front which was aimed mostly it would appear at families and children.

The following morning (Monday) dawned sunny, clear and with no wind. A check of the forecast showed those conditions holding for a few days, so another change of plan. We would head for the Glénans. Some quick research indicated that the La Pie anchorage was the only practical one available to me



James settling in on board Raffles in Concarneau

given the state of the tides and our draft (1.8m). On arrival there, while most of the visitors' buoys were taken, we found an unoccupied one and secured ourselves to it. We were joined later on an adjacent buoy by Gavin and Catherine Pitcher on *St Jude* from NYC. We were invited for drinks but unfortunately had to decline given our particular circumstances. On arrival I had taken out the dinghy but it was too hot to go ashore then. Later having enjoyed a nice accompaniment with our dinner it was too late so we settled down to watch the sunset. The following morning our mooring fee (€15) was collected and I rowed ashore and had a wander around St Nicolas. We departed at lunch time passing Alan Markey's *Altaria* and exchanged pleasantries with them on the way out and headed into Port La Forêt on the rising tide.

We spent the following day in Port La Forêt. There is a pleasant walk along the inlet to La Forêt Fouesnant along both sides. I walked up one side and back the other. The marina also had several IMOCA 60's there, including Jean Le Cam's and Violette Dorange's boats. I also took the opportunity to get some spares and to do laundry at the port. The following morning, we left and had a short sail (our only one of our cruise) in Baie de La Forêt before arriving in Concarneau where we arrived at about lunchtime. There we met Chris Heath (Chairperson of the Sadler & Starlight Owners Association) and his wife Julia who were there on their Starlight 39 *Etoile Filante*.

After settling in Irene went up town and found that our car was gone! She was told by a traffic warden that the car was either stolen (unlikely) or impounded. So, I headed up to the Police Station. I told the officer on duty 'Mon voiture est perdu' 'Perdu'? He replied, 'Oui perdu' I replied. After some enquiries from him about where it was lost from, he took out a big book and without asking the reg number told me it had been towed away the previous Friday. Once I'd produced my licence, he told me where the pound was and I had to sign for receiving the car back. Another police man there offered to bring me to the pound which was some 5 km away and I paid and got the car back, at least it was safe for the week.

The following morning we packed up and left for home. As the ferry was not due to depart until 2300 that evening we took the opportunity to head for a favourite part of Brittany, the Crozon Peninsula. We stopped off at the chapel of Sainte-Maria-du-Ménez Hom which I have wanted to visit for some time.

Delivery Home

The plan was that Eugene and I would fly out from Kerry Airport on 6 July catch a train to Quimper and a bus to Concarneau. We would be joined by Aidan and Robert on Monday so the planned departure day was Tuesday which given the weather situation was the earliest possible departure date anyway.

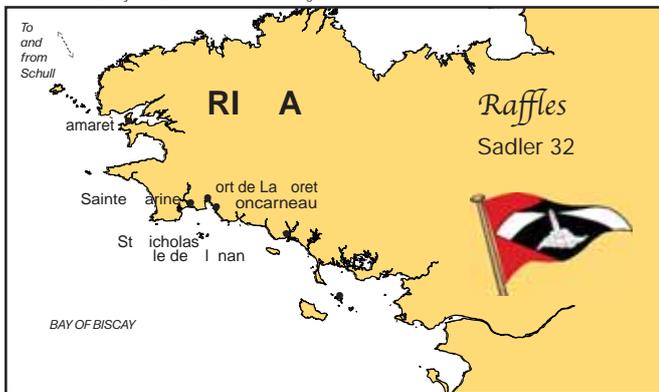
Tuesday dawned miserable with misty rain and wind from just west of south. The forecast was for the wind to gradually veer into the west as Tuesday went on and then fall light Wednesday out in the English Channel before coming up from the north in the high teens for several days. A far from ideal forecast to get



Colours off Le Guilvenec

home!

We left Concarneau just after 1100 on Tuesday with the wind on the nose. During the afternoon we passed the Spinec Buoy off Penmarc'h which marked a turn northwards in our passage. At 2300 we passed the Chaussée de Sein Buoy which marked a further turn to the north. We made our way north close hauled under sail that night arriving in the traffic in the morning when the wind died so we started the engine. The rhumb line course had us touching the NW corner of the south lane in the TSS. We were nearly across the traffic at 1030 when the engine started producing steam so we had to stop it. We set



sail making about 3 knots but were initially sailing NE against the traffic direction. We altered course but had already been spotted by Ushant Control who were not very happy. I explained that we had lost engine power and were endeavouring to exit as quickly as possible which somewhat placated them.

Eugene spent a couple of hours on the engine trying various things as we were trying to decide what to do. The options at that stage were to go back, try and make the UK Coast or try and get home. We were leaning towards heading for Falmouth but decided to give the engine one more attempt at running. It started and was pumping water so we decided to push on northwards towards home at reduced revs with an expectation that we would pick up wind eventually. We ran under motor for 18 hours getting 60nm closer to Ireland until the wind filled in from the north.

The following day Thursday was a slog to windward making our way slowly northwards on a course of about 290° so making some northing but nearly an equal amount of westing. During the afternoon a boat, *Twoflower*, crossed tacks about two miles ahead of us. As the day wore on, we took rolls on the jib and a reef in the main until the wind fell away that evening. We ran the engine for an hour before it stopped pumping water again. At this point despite Eugene's best efforts we could not get it to pump so we shut it down. We had managed to make another 50 miles closer to our destination during the day but we still had over 100 miles to get home. Overnight the wind came up again into the low 20s which required more rolls in the jib and a trip to the mast at midnight to take a second reef in the main. The following morning the wind slowly moderated and then died. We contemplated calling for assistance at that point when we were over 40 miles from the coast but a breeze sprung up from the NW so we were at last getting good northing. We did however make contact with Mizen Radio to advise that we had

Castletownbere Lifeboat. Photo by Eamonn Coughlan



Approaching Fastnet

told our shore contacts that we had expected to be in on Friday and that we were proceeding under sail. *Twoflower* reappeared about five miles to leeward of us.

Friday evening at 2130 we finally sighted land, we were over 20nm south of Galley Head and the wind had once again gone to the north. At this point we were closing the coast at an angle making a course for the Fastnet. We were in contact with the Coast Guard at nightfall. We advised that all was well on board and we were slowly making our way in at that time. During the night the services battery gave up unable to provide power any longer and while we bridged the engine battery it too was drained in a matter of hours such that by dawn on Saturday, we were about three miles south of the Fastnet with no electric power and the wind dying out completely. I called the Coast Guard at 0545 and advised that our luck had run out and that we required assistance. Particularly as the forecast we had picked up the previous evening had no prospect of wind filling in and having no power. The Coast Guard called us back and told us the Castletownbere lifeboat was on its



Saint Marine

way. It arrived at 0715 and took us under tow before passing us over to the Schull Coast Guard RIB who had us in at 0900 after 95 hours at sea. Probably not the end I would have wished for but glad to be home safe and well.

Reflections

Overall leaving aside the mechanical difficulties for me the cruise was a really satisfactory one. I had the opportunity to 'blood' some new people to the joys of sailing offshore and passage making as well as renewing with others. As a family holiday the

Peter Duffy, Sean P O'Sullivan, and Andrew O'Regan



cruise was most enjoyable and we may have found a practical way to use the boat in the future into the bargain. The absolute highlight for me was anchoring at the Glénans all the more because it was unplanned.

I felt that I had assembled a strong and experienced team to assist me, probably the strongest and most experienced team I have ever had access to for such an undertaking. I had everyone briefed on what to expect. When our engine packed up at the Raz de Sein one of the crew remarked that I seemed very calm. My reply was we were in no danger and there was no point getting excited we would either solve it or call for assistance. On the way home the work that Eugene did on the engine to get us as far as we did deserves special mention.

I felt that I had prepared the boat as meticulously as I could for the trip with plenty of fuel, water, foodstuffs and general boat kit. The only thing we ran out of was bread. We did not even touch our reserves elsewhere.

Our shore contacts had been told in advance that the voyage would take three days and a delay would result in anxiety for loved ones. In anticipation of this I had made radio contact with the Irish Coast Guard during day three to tell them we were all fine and continued to make our way expecting to be home on day four. We kept in contact with the Coast Guard for the remainder of the voyage.

Communication is key, from calming an irritated French traffic controller to providing assurance to others when overdue and getting the help promptly when needed. It often makes a difficult task somewhat easier.



Sean and Irene in Concarneau



BELOW: Raffles and Alice in Cameret



Spouse, a sea dog and two old salts join *Calico Jack* on a cruise to Dunmanus Bay

Conor O' Byrne



John Morrissey, Ceann Gainimh beach, Inis Meáin

I can remember precisely the moment my other half decided that sailing wasn't for her. It was in 1998 when we moved to Aberdeen and I bought a Fireball. Or rather, it was during our first sail on the Fireball, when she realised how cold the North Sea was and how much time the crew would have to spend in the water while the helmsman learned to handle the boat. Subsequent attempts to lure her onto sailing trips have met with only limited success. *Calico Jack's* cruise to Bantry Bay in 2023 convinced me that this could be a suitable place to renew my efforts. So one of the primary objectives of this year's cruise was to revisit Bantry Bay and spend a week there with Aine (and our water-loving Golden Retriever, Fiornn) to see if her interest in cruising could be restored.

Getting the boat down to Bantry commenced on Sunday 7 July when sailing friend Lyle Goodwin and I set off from Rinville for Inis Meáin. In a light northwesterly breeze we motored for the first couple of hours, until we reached Inverin then we hoisted all sail and had a fine reach in sunshine all the way to the new harbour on Inis Meáin. There we met Andy McCarter (ICC) and wife Paddy and welcomed them on board *Calico Jack* for pre-dinner drinks (we had ice on board at this early stage of the voyage).

With a long passage to Dingle (approx. 80 M) planned for the following day we retired early and set our clocks for 0400. In a light northwesterly we motor-sailed out through Foul Sound in the pre-dawn light. The gentle conditions meant that we could alternate watches and this allowed us to catch up on sleep. We passed due west of Loop Head at around 1300 and then arrived at Sybil Head at 1930, in time for

the south going tidal stream. Our thoughts of a well-earned rest in Dingle were short lived; we met a stiff easterly breeze in Dingle Bay and it took us another couple of hours of beating before we called a halt to the day's sailing in Ventry. We picked up a visitor's mooring there at 2245, tired but happy to have the long leg behind us.

After the short hop into Dingle on the 9th we had a leisurely and sociable day, meeting various friends and family who happened to be in town. We evening a memorable seafood dinner in Doyle's that evening with my aunt and uncle, Pauline and Jim O'Meara.

Pre dinner drinks on board at Dingle marina. FROM LEFT: Pauline, Lyle and Jim



We could hardly believe our luck as the wind was forecast to stay in the North with plenty of sunshine for the next couple of days as we made our way to Bantry. On the 10th we had one of the best days sailing I can remember on *Calico Jack*: a broad reach from Dingle out around the Skelligs in 18-20 knots of breeze, carrying the spinnaker the whole way, and then a reach into Derrynane harbour, all in glorious sunshine. The new starboard mark in the channel made the entrance to Derrynane less nerve-wracking than I remember from previous attempts.

After a hearty breakfast on board, we set off towards Castletownbere, still with a favourable wind and sunny conditions. We were a bit late for the south going tide in Dursay Sound but decided to chance it anyway. It was very lumpy at the north entrance to the sound but flattened off once we were inside. We sailed in as far as Ardnakinna Point on Bere Island and then motored up to an anchorage just west of Dunboy Point where we dropped the hook for lunch. This is a lovely spot, surrounded by mature forest and overlooked by Dunboy House. From there we had a short sail up the sound to Lawrence Cove on Bere Island, where the ever-smiling Rachel Harrington was there to take our lines. After a swim from the slip in Rerrin village and some refreshments in the pub we returned to the boat to cook supper. We met Maeve McDonnacha and her husband Seamus, friends of friends from Galway and on a cruise north towards Ros a' Mhil. They joined us on board for an enjoyable chat and a couple of glasses of vin rouge.

Light winds the following day meant that we had to motor most of the way to our next destination,

Ahakista, on the north shore of Dunmanus Bay. There were several yachts anchored there before us, all much bigger than *Calico Jack*. It gave me some satisfaction to motor straight up to the head of the pier to take the most convenient berth available, suitable only for a boat of our modest draft. We enjoyed a good dinner with a great view sitting outside Arundel's. Graham Norton has a shore-side house within walking distance of this pub and, sure enough, a little bit later he and his husband strolled in for a drink. Another windless day followed as we motored back around Sheep's Head and in to Bantry.

Lyle Goodwin passing Little Skellig





LEFT: Fionn in Lawrence Cove; big dog small boat

We stopped on Whiddy to enjoy a stroll and take in the Ireland v South Africa rugby match, which proved to be a thriller with Ireland winning at the death with a drop goal. Then we went into Bantry for the evening where we were joined by Lyle's wife, Joan and their springer spaniel.

On the 14 July Lyle and Joan left the boat to spend a couple of nights camper vaning in the area and I was then joined by my wife Aine and our golden retriever, Fionn. While I was delighted to see them arrive I was a bit shocked by the amount of gear that came with the entourage; a sizeable natural history library and enough camera equipment for the next David Attenborough documentary, not to mention all the dog paraphernalia. Being an eternal optimist, I consoled myself that the extra ballast would be an advantage on a port tack (the gear all being stowed to port) and of course the case for a bigger boat could now be made more convincingly! We spent that evening in Bantry alongside the marina and went for an evening stroll in Bantry House gardens. As we settled in for the night it proved difficult to get the dog down the companionway – the steps were a bit too steep for him and he jammed his paws in the hatch to prevent himself from being manhandled below. In the end a combination of cajoling, treats and a bit of assistance from the topping lift saw him installed down below and a good night's sleep was had by all.



After a very wet night, that required all hatch boards to be in place, the morning was sunny so we walked across to Cloonaghlin slip on the south side of the island for a swim. After breakfast on board we departed in a light southerly breeze, aiming to return to Glengarriff for a rendezvous with my parents. The day was so warm that we had to construct a makeshift bimini in the cockpit to keep the dog cool and even resorted to dousing him with seawater. When we reached Glengarriff harbour we took the dinghy across to Bark Island, about 2 cables south east of the main pier in Glengarriff, and all had a badly needed swim to cool off. Ashore we met my parents in Harrington's for aperitifs and then enjoyed a good dinner on the terrace in Casey's Hotel, where the dog was also welcome.

Swim time, Bark Island

Annual 15.50 2 DEC.indd 153-154

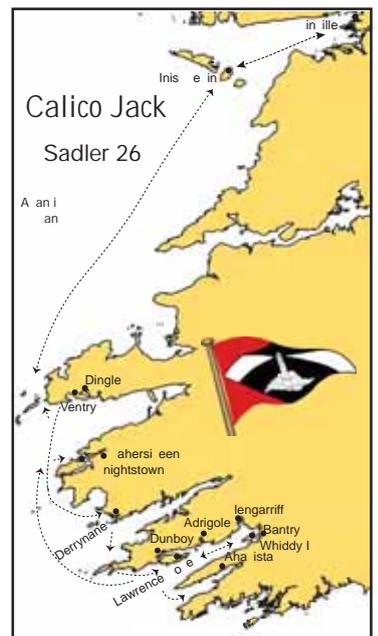


Aine helming towards Adrigole, Fionn off watch!

The following morning after breakfasting ashore and stocking up on provisions (especially ice) we dropped the visitors' mooring and sailed back to Bantry. Aine did most of the helming and by now was pretty comfortable with the sailor's life: dare I say it, she was enjoying herself. She and Fionn were leaving that day and my father, Walter O'Byrne, and his brother Mylo, two seasoned sea salts, were joining for the next few days as we made our way back towards Valentia Island.

In light northwesterly winds we had a pleasant close reach all the way out to Lawrence Cove, arriving there at around 1300, but when I called the marina, they said that a berth alongside (a requirement for my new crew) wouldn't be available until 1500. We picked up one of the visiting moorings off Ardagh Point outside the entrance to Lawrence cove and the sun obligingly appeared as we ate lunch in the cockpit. Once on the marina we found we were berthed alongside Robert and Rose Michael (ICC) who were cruising on their Jeanneau Sun Fizz *Mystique of Malahide*. That evening we strolled up to Rerrin for libations and dinner. The following day was going to be a rest day as the weather wasn't suitable for sailing north to Valentia. It was also the day of the hurling all-Ireland final and Cork was in the final for the first time in ages so we were keen to take that in while still in the Rebel County. The atmosphere was great in the pub but sadly Cork didn't deliver the goods and Clare were the worthy winners.

On the 22 July we departed at 0940 to make our passage to Knightstown on Valentia Island. The southerly wind was light until we cleared Bere Island and then increased to 15 knots giving us nice reach out to Dursey in misty conditions. Because the wind was due to go westerly later on I decided to make as much west as possible and go outside of





Walter, Fion and Conor in Glengarriff

Dursey Island rather than through the sound. We passed inside the Calf at 1330 and then bore away for a course northwest towards Puffin Island. Later the wind veered to WNW and we had to motorsail for a couple of hours to lay Bray Head on the south westerly tip of Valentia. We finally arrived in Knightstown at 1915 after a long day at sea but with some good sailing. We were happy that Royal Hotel was still doing dinner when we got there and after that we enjoyed a couple of rounds in Bostons pub, where we chatted to a few of the locals.

The following morning we had a sentimental cruise up the Portmagee Channel to see the renovations taking place at the Fishery, a 200-year-old shoreside cottage that my parents had owned for 25 years. It is still a work in progress but we are hoping the original character will not be lost. Then we motored up to Caheriveen marina where the final crew change was taking place. John Morrissey was joining the boat and conveniently, he had driven Mylo's car around from Bantry. After we said goodbye to Walter and Mylo, John and I paid a visit to my mother-in-law who is a Caheriveen native. On our return to the marina we gave our custom to Mike Murts and the Anchor bar. On the 24th we had a short sail across to Dingle and spent an enjoyable evening there. The forecast was for a favourable south westerly breeze the following day so the plan was to avail of that and make for the Aran Islands.

We departed Dingle at 1045, aiming to be in the Blasket Sound as close to slack water as possible. Conditions were sunny and there was about 15 knots of wind from the southwest. It was glorious passing through the sound in these conditions and the water was flatter than I have ever seen it. The wind freshened as the day went on, reaching 22-25 knots later that afternoon, but this was downwind sailing

and we were flying along, regularly doing 8 knots and hitting 9 knots a few times in the 3-metre quartering sea. The occasional wave slapped off the port side and doused the cockpit but the Simrad tiller pilot coped with most of the helming. It was 0100 on the 26th when we reached Gregory Sound between Inis Mor and Inis Meáin. Just as we approached the sound the heavens opened and torrential rain reduced the visibility to nothing. John was fast asleep below at this point and I didn't have the heart to wake him until we got into the harbour on Inis Meáin when I needed some help with lines and fenders. In his semi-woken state, the process took a bit longer than usual but by 0200 we were snug alongside a local fishing boat and then we were both fast asleep within minutes.

A pleasant lazy day followed on Inis Meáin, which in my view is the most unspoiled island of the archipelago. We swam off the beach at Ceann Gainimh and later visited Teach Osta, locally just known as 'the pub' (there is only one). When we enquired about food the bean an tí said the fish wouldn't be up from the pier for another half an hour when the fisherman got in, were we willing to wait? Absolutely no problem, we said. It really was straight out of the sea and absolutely superb. We rounded off the evening by going to a concert in the community hall by The Raines, a trio of talented female folk musicians, who put on a great show.

The last day of our cruise, 27 July, was a fast sail back to our mooring with a north westerly 4 breeze. We picked up our mooring in Rinville at 1515, very content after three weeks of good sailing and company. Aine has already booked her berth for next season's cruise so I deem the cruise a good success.



A tale of three men (and a pigeon) on a boat

John Sweeney



Pedro, our new crew member

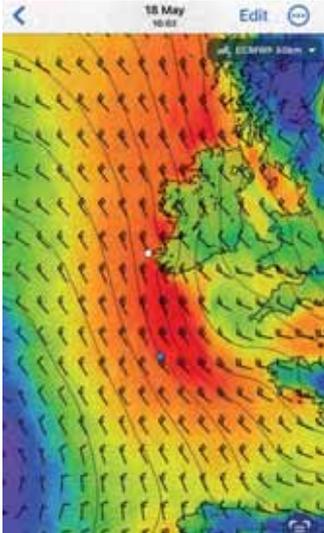
When you open the engine bay 100nm off the coast and find that two mounts and the coupling have failed, it for sure brings a moment of clarity. All those years of experience in many adventurous situations (be it in rescuing a group of colleagues sheltering for 12 hours in a flooding cave in the west of Ireland or crewing during a 53 kn storm off Cape Wrath), gives one the ability to act in a measured and resilient way. This is the story of just that from my recent passage from Ireland to Galicia for the EN 24 ICC Rally.

Never start a passage on a Friday they say, and maybe for good reason! But due to a medical appointment and a closing weather window for the Bay of Biscay, I had no option this time. In preparation for this trip, over the winter, I had upgraded my 'trickle charge' solar panel to a 115watt Victron Blue Solar System, and I also replaced our old Flavel cooker with a new Plastimo Voyager. The final addition was a Matussec AIS Class 'B' unit which I linked to Open CPN and Navionics. Other than that, boat preparations were the usual paint jobs etc. In terms of crew, I had enticed Conor Owens from Galway Bay Sailing Club and Paddy Griffin from Kinvara. Paddy's partner Eva Cantillon was also meant to come, but due to a family matter she had to pull out at the last minute. Conor and Paddy brought a wealth of experience. Conor is a lifelong sailor and has sailed extensively in Irish, British and French waters. Paddy works as an oceanic surveyor and has sailed in waters of the Arctic (*Danu* 2023) and to Antarctica, including South Georgia.

As for myself, my preparations for this trip were

somewhat different to other trips I have made. In January 2024, I was diagnosed with an autoimmune condition known as Ankylosing Spondylitis. The main manifestations relevant here, is that the mobility in my lower spine and pelvis has lessened, meaning that manoeuvring around the boat has become more of a challenge. Therefore my own preparations came in the form of 'mental preparedness'. This involved many conversations with myself about the what its and the why notes. I can only control the controllables.

On the week leading up to the trip, I got the engine serviced, including all filters and impeller replaced. I had developed a small problem with the raw water intake, but within 15 minutes of mechanic friend Mantas coming on board, the diagnosis was that of an incorrectly sealed strainer cap. Provisioning could start. Eventually, with final farewells, an ebb tide and favourable NW 3-4 we slipped our mooring at 1505 on the 17 May and took up a bearing of 270° towards the Aran Islands, through Gregory Sound and then south towards the Blasket Islands. The wind had eased and the sea state was quite lumpy, so we motored for three hours to try and keep momentum and to stabilise the boat. Under sail, we passed the Blaskets at 1020 the following morning. I made a routine call to the coastguard for a weather update, as we noted that overnight we had not heard any traffic on the VHF. The Coastguard gave us a one out of five for our transmission. A quick change to an auxiliary VHF aerial, brought us back to 5/5. They also confirmed that we were visible on AIS and they wished us a safe passage. It later transpired that there was damage to the VHF aerial aloft. Some hours later and using the last bit of mobile



LEFT: Predictwind grib files 'screen recorded' to phone

data, I screen recorded onto my mobile phone the grib from Predict Wind, which turned out to be quite important over the coming days. I needed to get as far south as soon as possible, as a weather system was approaching from the west and the northern sector (north Biscay) was to experience gale force winds, with the mid to southern sector less.

At 0100 on the 19th, the engine overheating alarm activated, and it was soon evident that we were not pumping raw water. I began to diagnose the issue, beginning with the strainer cap, to the water pump, the new impeller and the heat exchanger. No solution was evident. Again, repeat the process, what have I missed? All hoses were clear, strainer cap seal was good. After three hours, I was getting frustrated, a little queasy and very stiff. Once more, it must be the pump. I compared the old and new impellers. Although they looked the same size, there were two slight differences noticeable:

- 1) The spine in the middle of the new one was slightly thinner.
- 2) The rubber of the new one was very slightly less chunky.

For pig iron I put the old impeller in again, and hey presto we had water! A quick tidy up, a cup of soup, and we were on our way again.

That evening at approximately 1800, we had a visit from a very tired racing pigeon. Our new crew member 'Pedro' was indeed a curious little creature. From landing on the bow, he cautiously made his way to the cockpit and eventually onto the navigation table. Luckily, I was able to catch him relatively easily before a mess was made. He was given a berth under the spray hood where he stayed for the next 16 hours. We fed Pedro water and mixed seeds, and you could see him getting stronger and stronger. Overnight, he puffed himself up for warmth. He looked as if he doubled in size, but I guess this is how they use their down to trap air and create an insulated layer. Eventually at 1030 on the 20th, Pedro took the leap of faith and continued in his race.

On the night that Pedro arrived at approx. 1030 and c.100M south of Baltimore, my watch was finishing. We were under motor with slack winds a good sea state. Earlier that evening I had added fuel to the tanks, as I knew that these conditions were not to last. Just at handover, Conor remarked that the engine had 'not missed a beat' since our episode the previous night. I wished him a safe watch and with that climbed into my bunk, when there was a very noticeable change in the sound coming from the engine. Without inspection, I immediately killed it. I lifted away the steps to reveal a Yanmar 30gm 30F slumped to port. I could visibly see that the forward mount support had broken. On the Sadler 32, there is extremely good access to the engine and shaft through the cockpit sole.

On gaining access, I was horrified to see what lay

in front of me. The aft mount had sheared its bolts, and the shaft coupling was mangled. Luckily there was no compromise to the shaft and no water was coming in. I must say that at this point I notified the crew that "We are not in Kansas anymore Toto". I was quite happy though that at no stage did even the resemblance of panic set into any of the crew, myself included.

Ok, So what to do? I took a few minutes to gather my thoughts for rational thoughts. Interestingly, it was the principles of first aid that came to me - Preserve Life, Prevent Deterioration, Promote Recovery.

Preserve Life - At that very moment in time we were not in immediate danger. Nobody was injured and there was no water ingress. We were not near any rocks or shipping and there was a good sea state and slack winds. There was no need for outside assistance.

Prevent Deterioration - I needed to ensure that the engine with its broken mounts could not compromise the shaft. I asked that the engine be put in reverse in order to prevent the prop from spinning. Using the lifting points on the engine, we hoisted the engine to bring the broken mount supports in line. These were tied off either side of the gangway using winches and cleats. Satisfied that this was a good jury rig, I made a step from one of the bunk locker covers.

Promote Recovery - The last piece of the puzzle was where to go. With an impending strong northerly forecast, my concern then was to get out of its way. The options that I had were - north to Baltimore c. 100M, east to the Isles of Scilly c.140M, southwest to Brest c.230M or south to A Coruña c.430nm. After some consideration and agreement with the crew, we made the decision to continue south as planned without an engine. After all, we were on a sailboat. We did not fancy trying to track north or seek refuge in the Isles of Scilly or Brest, where I had no pilots etc. So, after another epic two hours and another cup of soup, we set south towards Galicia, with a slack wind and poor visibility.

Overnight we made only 23M. In the morning, spirits were high, as the pigeon was eating and the winds were slowly rising. We had a glitch in the AIS meaning that we could not see other boats. At 1750 we hailed a French fishing boat that we could see in the distance for an updated forecast, and it was still matching the Predictwind grib that I got a few days back. He also confirmed that our AIS signal was strong, so that bolstered our spirits even further. The new solar panel was working like it should to keep the batteries topped up. To be cautious all instruments (bar VHF and 12v charger) were switched off with only navigation lights by night. Navigation was, especially for the approaches and final leg was by Navionics operated on tablet and iphone.

As for food, the fridge was not in use and this was not a real problem, as the only real perishables were milk and cheese. I had mainly provisioned for



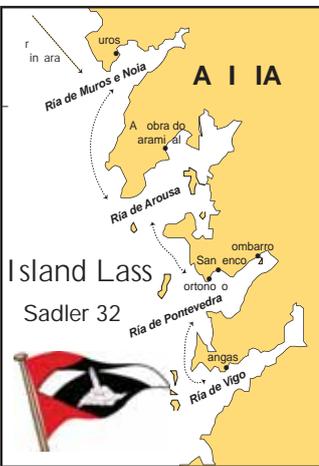
The remains of the coupling

a vegetarian / vegan passage. With this in mind, the cooker operators conjured up some fine fayre. The downside was that on arrival the beer was warm. The following two days gave some very pleasant sailing in F4-5 on the beam. We saw dolphins, basking sharks and a minke whale within metres of the boat. Some huge blows in the distance may have been sperm, blue whales or humpback whales. We even saw a late cuckoo going north.

To our dismay at 2115 on the 21 May, the wind died and the visibility dropped to 1nm. Thank goodness that we had confidence that the AIS was giving our position to the boats that were potentially all around us. It was not a comfortable 12 hours wallowing at the mercy of the benign milky ocean. Suddenly, our attention was diverted to the sound of 'All Ships, All Ships, All Ships' as it came bellowing from the VHF. An EPIRB signal was being received by the coastguard, and what we assume was a spotter aeroplane was scrambled to investigate. Was it ours? Frantically I grabbed McMurdo but he was not the culprit. Conor grappled with his pocket to see if it was his personal EPIRB, but it was not. We kept watch but there was no further correspondence. In the morning (22/05), another fishing boat was spotted, and once again we made contact. Our AIS signal was perfect, and the wind gods were turning once again in our favour. F6 imminent, but no stronger. We had progressed far enough south to avoid the big blow. I was happy with our decision to continue. Every watch change, I would inspect our jury rig, but most importantly the shaft. All was well on all occasions.

From this point on we experienced two days of some of the most exhilarating sailing that I ever have had with 112 nm best daily run and a 117 nm run over a 24hr period. *Island Lass* just let the big rolling sea pass underneath her and she kept pushing forward. A double reefed main and 20% genoa, gave her fine balance.

On the approaches to Galicia, shipping got much more frequent, and the winds kept a steady F6 on





Skipper contemplates entering harbour

The motley crew. FROM LEFT: Paddy, John and Conor

Kino Quilmas (+34 655 964665). I must say that the repairs of four new mountings, a coupling and full alignment of the engine were amazing. The engine never sounded or ran better. Kino has given me permission to give his number.

It was my intention to join EN 24 with my wife and two of my children (Jess, Sean and Gráinne). However, the week before the event, my youngest daughter took a very bad fall on the waterfalls in A Pobra do Caraminal. She fell and hit her head badly enough to knock her unconscious and land her face down in one of the pools. I was able to get to her immediately as I was by her side and again given my background in cave rescue, I was able to deal with the situation. It took her a good 15 minutes to be lucid and in a position to walk over the slippery stones. With the help of a local couple who were bathing (with no clothes on) nearby, we were able to manoeuvre her to the path. I was lucky that I was able to have a video call with my sister-in-law who is a consultant in emergency medicine back in Ireland. We were both happy that Gráinne could be

evacuated without external help. As the area is quite remote, she was carried off the track by Jess and me, to José who was waiting in his taxi (0034 68 6516626). We monitored Gráinne for the next 12 hours and took it easy for the next week. It really knocked the wind out of our sails!

We met some wonderful ICC members, old and new acquaintances, along the way. I joined an impromptu gathering in A Pobra, where I was only delighted to play some guitar and entertain the owner's daughter with an Oasis classic, 'Wonderwall'. Thanks to all that we met over the summer, especially to Peter Haden and Brian & Mairead Quinn for their help and hospitality. *Island Lass* is now overwintering in Muros, afloat.



The celebratory beer. FROM LEFT: Paddy, John and Conor

Jess carries Gráinne off the trail



the beam. My mind at this point turned to orcas and what to do if we were unlucky enough to encounter one. Just as I thought it, a distinctive orca fin was spotted by all crew members about 20 metres from the boat. We kept watch, but it never came back. A beautiful full moon guided us along the Costa da Morte until daylight broke as we approached the Ria de Muros. Tired and in the lee of the mainland, our ETA was putting us in the marina in the ria at approx. 0900. Alas, I had not factored that the NE6 that was powering our charge down the coast, would become the F6 that would halt us in the ria. I was in contact with my good friend and ever helpful Peter Haden (ICC, OCC) as to potential contacts with the ability to give us a tow onto a berth. However, on contacting the marina and others, none were at hand.

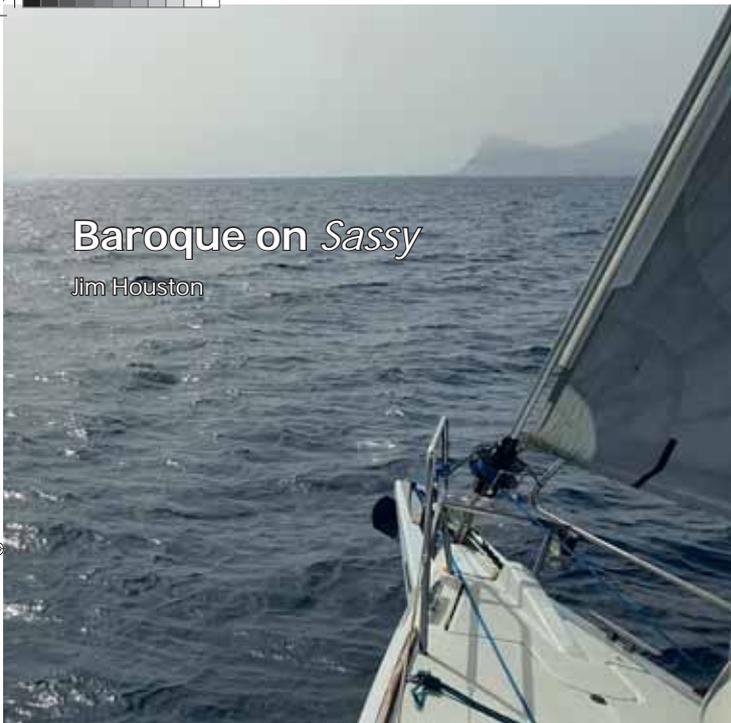
Five hours beating up the ria eventually gave way to the wind dying off completely, and a gentle sea breeze developing, which allowed us to set a course to the marina entrance. I tacked into the entrance channel, up the fairway and tacked onto a waiting marina berth at 1300 on the 24 May. Paddy stepped off and gently held our bow. Relieved and exhilarated, we cracked open a beer and exhaled. We had made it safely and successfully despite our misfortune. A huge thanks to Paddy and Connor for their company, advice and good humour over the trip.

On returning to Galicia in July, I had arranged that repairs would be undertaken by a local mechanic

ABOVE: Engine supported by ropes tied off either side of the gangway using winches and cleats

Baroque on Sassy

Jim Houston



Approaching Cabo San Vito

Having circumnavigated Sardinia in 2022 and Corsica in 2023, we were challenged to find the next largest Island in the central Tyrrhenian. Brief visits along the north coast some years earlier and skipping along the southern coast in 2021, left some unfinished leisure in Sicily and so the plan came together. A key consideration, possibly brought on by some maturity was to take in much more of the Sicilian art, architecture and history, most especially our fascination with the volumes of Baroque. We were also intrigued by mention of exotic traits of a mysterious goddess and her orgiastic rituals. We needed to find out more and where.

We planned a clockwise route and on the basis that there would be just two of us for much of the trip, we would not put ourselves under any time pressure and use any contrary weather conditions to explore

more including inland. This meant leaving the boat for extended periods of time, so the preference was to utilize harbours and marinas, for security, peace of mind and to avoid dinghy logistics. Another key item though was to ensure we were back at our berth in Sardinia prior to the summer holiday masses hitting the coasts early July. And so we set sail from our base in Teulada, Sardinia on 17 May.

Villasimius – 42M

Regular Sassyrevellers Grainne and Aidan Beggan joined us for a week to do the crossing over to Sicily. With a thundery forecast we decided to take the short hop east across the south of Sardinia and get ourselves in position. We anchored off for a swim prior to berthing in the marina. The overnight rumbling, crashing and flashing had us grateful for the berthing decision. This continued periodically



Judy, Aidan and Grainne

throughout the day, however the forecast showed it much more localised for the following day so we decided to set off early and leave it behind.

San Vito Lo Capo - 168M

Happy Birthday Grainne! With a northerly wind veering easterly over the next 24 hours, we kept a high course aiming for the island of Ustica and which if conditions allowed, we could visit. Ustica, some say, could have been home to Homers king of winds and weather, Aeolus, so respects could be paid.

That night, a full moon provided sufficient light that torches were not required which also helped to make the watches seem shorter. The freshening breeze slowly veered as forecast and by morning we were heading for Capo San Vito with cracked sheets on port.

Landfall Sicilian Are we sure? Stepping ashore it seemed like we had arrived in North Africa with stalls, streets, architecture and smells more Moroccan and no sign of the terracotta roof tiles typical of Italy. We even dined on tagine for dinner.

Balestrate – 19M

A brisk sail along the dramatic coastline to this cheerful, helpful, but rather non-descript town. The marina here is part of the same Marinedi Group where we have our contract in Teulada, availing us of a discounted rate, so ideal to leave the boat here whilst we hired a car and spent a night in Erice. A well-preserved historical hilltop town accessible by cable car from Trapani with a mix of Arab influenced Norman castles, towers, churches, narrow streets, craft shops and fantastic views over the surrounding landscape, coast and our approaches from Sardinia. Cashing in on the tourists illustrated by our having the most expensive Campari Spritz ordered just to use their loo.

The following morning on the return journey we visited the Greek Temple at Segesta and the 4000

seat open air theatre looking out over to the Golfo di Castellammare and Balestrate. Looking around the barren landscape, we couldn't help but wonder where these 4000 might come from.

Palermo – 30M

After motor sailing east against a punchy breeze we berthed in Porto di Palermo, (Galizzi Marina) for easy access to town and facilities. This place rocked! Busy, modern waterfront for the glitzies to the more Bohemian Vuccaria district jammers with lively middle-aged young travellers. The squares and streets morphed from daytime eateries to booming night clubs. It was little quieter by day to visit the Baroque attractions. Too many to mention here other than the notably cheeky cherubs poking at the Virtues in the Oratorio di Rosario.



Cheeky cherub antics

Restaurants are numerous ranging from pristine glass establishments to the daytime fresh seafood pop-ups in the streets and squares, busier at lunch time which is often the main meal of the day in Italian culture. We had a crew change here - Grainne and Aidan left, Rees Kavanagh, son Charlie and Bill Nolan joined. All were able to spend time in this lively city.

Cefalu – 35M

An early start around Capo Zeffarano, leaving astern the town of Porticello which sadly hit the headlines later in the season with the foundering of *Bayesian*. Gives me a shiver to think of that now. We anchored off Cefalu beach for a swim and lunch before rounding the headland and entering the fuel



Alicudi Transporters down to meet the ferry

dock and marina. A touristy but lovely coastal town wrapped around a rocky promontory, with a well-maintained Arab/Norman cathedral and its Byzantine mosaics. From the triple-gated fortifications vertically above the town, duly climbed, we could see the beckoning Aeolians, each highlighted by a light cloud. The forecast for the next few days looked ideal to venture there, anchor on some ledges and do some more climbing.

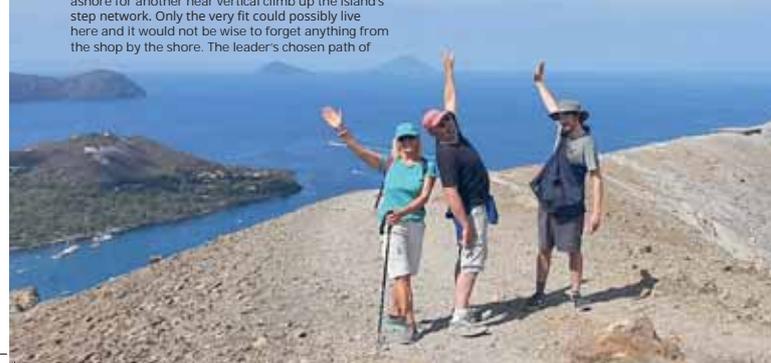
Alicudi – 34M

The SE ledge available for anchoring when there in 2008 now has half a dozen moorings erratically installed so we chose to hang off one of them for fear of snagging the anchor. Salvatore grumpily obliged to take €50 off us for the privilege. Swim, lunch then ashore for another near-vertical climb up the island's step network. Only the very fit could possibly live here and it would not be wise to forget anything from the shop by the shore. The leader's chosen path of

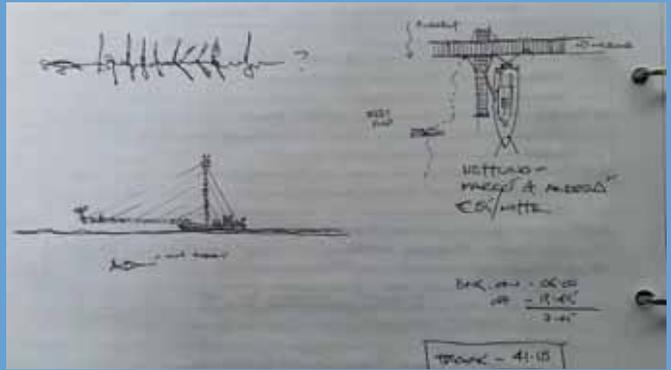
descent proved quite technical as was equally steep, but little used. We were however well rewarded with cold beers and fresh steaks from a recently caught tuna at the little bar restaurant by the pier.

Vulcano – 33M

Glassy oily calm seas all day allowed us some close encounter ventures. First with the tower stack of Scoglio La Canna then Faraglioni off Lipari for a swim through the hole in the stack. We moored in Bala di Levante on the north east of Vulcano for a further evening climb up the steaming volcano. There are stunning views down the island chain from here.



Cheeky cherub antics



Log book extract

Messina – 42M

Leaving the islands for the straits we were fortunate enough to escape the notorious mythical challenges and arrive in Messina to witness four of the unique swordfishing boats swirling around in search of a catch. These boats are quite a sight to behold and many a Madonna may be required to oversee the risks of operation.

The reconstructed town has many Baroque examples however our favourite would be the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta with its campanile sporting an astronomical clock, perpetual calendar and statuettes ringing the bells. The cathedral has many beautiful details, inside and out. Our visit coincided with part

Waving to Bill from Vulcano's volcano

of a service including a singing priest backed by a harmonious choir. Whilst a modern variation, it was quite uplifting.

A 30 minute walk north from the marina took us to the Museo Regionale which houses many artefacts collected after the destruction of various earthquakes including two large works by Caravaggio. The staff were bemused at having visitors appearing for the 9am opening time. The museum is well laid out and we could have spent much more time, but the crew were eager to experience the delights of Taormina.

Taormina – 27M

Elevated above the east coast, we anchored in the bay just south of the railway station for easier access ashore. A major tourist destination with several large weddings in town coinciding with our visit, we felt a trifle under-dressed although we gents donned

BELOW: Fancy shirt finals. Bill, Rees, Charlie, Jimmy and Judy in Taormina



suitable shirts for dinner, Judy attempting her very best chiaroscuro Caravaggio style photo. Judy visited the 5400-seat ancient Greek theatre here with its dramatic view of the coast and Mount Etna. Returning to the boat after dinner proved quite dramatic as a swell had built up, crashing upon the pebbly shore. Whilst we managed an almost dry exodus, it proved a roly, sleepless night as we were held parallel to the swell by the current. The original idea was for the lads to catch a train from here back to Palermo for their flight home, however a glance at the swell breaking ashore had us up sticks and clatter down to Riposto's Marina del Etna. 8M to the south where, once berthed, allowed them to get ashore dry, shower and catch the train from there.

Riposto - 8M

With the lads on their way, it was back to the two of us and we thought to plan an ascent of the volcano as she seemed relatively calm. However, whilst the harbour is allegedly the gateway to Etna, the logistics from Catania seemed a lot simpler. Whilst here in 2019 we had been woken in the wee dawn hours with an almighty crack and rumble when she blew her top. In the half-light we could see the burning lava flowing down the mountain. It seemed close enough to us, but the locals continued with their routine unfazed, so I guessed we should too. After a boat wash and reset, we took advantage of easy access to great fresh fruit and veg markets across the road from the marina to stock up. The cupboards and fridge having been left a little bare from the lads' cavernous appetites and thirst.

Catania - 19M

We had a short motor sail down the coast past the rocky Cyclopi Islets and into Catania's old port. Grubby but central to our requirements. One morning on board the boat whilst Judy was utilizing the marina's shower facilities, I glanced towards the pontoon 'Sheep peppers!' Two uniformed, capped and armed officials and one plain clothes character indicated that I should follow them with appropriate paperwork. At a table on the quayside, three of them on one side, me on the other, their faces expressionless, eyes hidden behind their mirror Ray Ban aviators I was quaking in my flipflops. The forms were solemnly infilled, the two outside officers adjusted the sheets and carbon paper from misaligning in the light breeze. Giuseppe and Luigi softened after they discovered I knew of their Sardinian colleagues, most especially Carmello who works from St Antio. Sunglasses and caps removed, a smile and an extended hand - 'Tell them you meet Pepe here.'

Like Palermo, this city has so many sites, in varying states of repair, to visit. The privately owned Palazzo Biscari, which would have originally overlooked the harbour, has stunning interior features and reminded us of Tomas di Lampedusa's Gattopardo.



Ladies of Noto, Tracy and Judy

When mentioning this to the current proprietor Ruggero Moncada, he exclaimed with feigned contempt - 'oh no, they were from Palermo.' Judy and I organised our Etna visit from here which included inner city driving experiences on both the out and inbound journey, which I have to say was considerably more hazardous than climbing the volcano itself. Tracy Carey, another of our regular revellers, arrived to join us for the next week.

Syracusa - 33M

With a breezy afternoon forecast, we were on our way from Catania early. Having beaten the breeze, we anchored off the Porto Grande for a swim and lunch aboard. As the yacht harbour on this side of town was cordoned off, and the quay wall reserved for superyachts, we popped around to Porto Piccolo, avoiding an unmarked rock in the now strong southerly. Shoreside activities here included a visit to the conspicuous church spire - Basilica Santuario Madonna delle Lacrime. We also visited the Greek archaeological site. An airborne white knuckle Piaggio taxi ride back into Syracuse central had us seeking out a bar immediately. I shouldn't have mentioned Sean Connery/James Bond to the driver whilst negotiating the fare. Syracuse is well maintained popular tourist resort with plenty bars, good eateries and shops.

Spaceship interior of the Basilica Santuario, Syracuse



Marzamemi - 25M

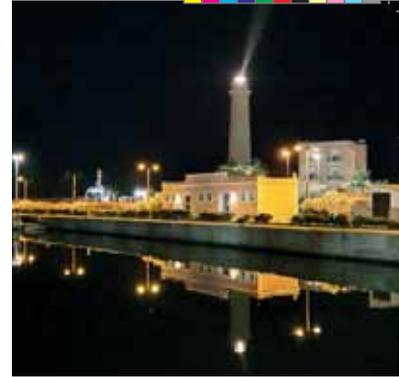
With the wind in the north we had a quick run down to the more artisanal resort of Marzamemi just before the southeast tip of the island. A repurposed tuna processing facility converted into bars, restaurants and shops to the delight of the girls. With imaginative floral decorations, this place has a much more relaxed Caribbean feel.

Being too breezy for a beach day, we hired a car to visit Noto, the noted Baroque capital of Sicily. A catastrophic 16th century quake decimated much of the east coast. Noto being a major casualty that required being entirely rebuilt mostly in the baroque fashion. It is stunning, although it is a bit of a stage set and certainly touristy. We did the sights and returned to the boat via a farmhouse where a Roman mosaic floor had been uncovered and finally to a beach for a cooling swim in the slightly calmer conditions.

Ragusa - 38M

Another early start to catch the sunrise, turning our bows to the west through a lumpy seaway on the corner around the aptly named Isola delle Correnti onto a nice broad reach along the rather uninteresting coast to the enormous Marina di Ragusa. A major tourist resort livened further with the euro football event being screened in the squares and along the promenade. We took a 40-minute bus ride inland to Ragusa Ibla. Another splendid Baroque pile a little more dramatic being perched over a ravine. On the return journey the bus was rammed with young teenagers each paying cash separately for their ticket. With many standing in the aisle. I was impressed by the driver's care at negotiating corners and roundabouts so as not to spill any of the precious cargo. We were equally impressed with the behaviour of the kids, who deluged off the bus on return to the resort town heading for the beach with not a beer can in sight. The following day Tracy caught a bus back to Catania for an evening flight home to Dublin, leaving the two of us again.

RIGHT: Licata's harbour light



Licata - 36M

A motor sail, grasping at zephyrs across the oil like sea, the sun reflecting off the acres of coastal 'plasticulture'. The two gas platforms standing threateningly like Transformers, thankfully paying us no attention. Licata is off the tourist trail, both by land and sea, so may not get the budget for renovation as many other Sicilian towns, however it still has plenty to offer including a short sharp climb up to the Castel Sant'Angelo for great views over a most impressive cemetery. With a forecast of more NW breeze arriving in 36 hours we sadly decided to leave much of Licata undiscovered including the alleged best restaurant in the world - Ristorante la Madia.

Siacca - 50M

Slipping out to a mirror calm at first light, we are constantly amazed and amused to find the most determined folk fishing off seemingly inaccessible

View over Licata harbour and cemetery from Castel Sant Angelo





OPPOSITE: Messina swordfish boat in action

harbours were much the same. Sadly the locals do not seem to notice and appear to be happy to pick through it to bathe and swim. The planet has no chance.

Mazara de Vallo – 28M

With the strong westerlies now blown through we headed along the coast managing the last few hours sailing with cracked sheets. We called Salvatore as arranged and he was on the dock to catch our lines. It had been shallow on the approaches and the depth dropped to -0.5 as we rounded up to park. -0.2 at the berth, but Salvatore insisted there was 4m, so plenty for our 2m draft. Mazara is another huge harbour, whilst billed as a major fishing port, the number of boats is greater in Sicca although here they are bigger offshore boats. We visited a number of Baroque examples in various states of repair, a favourite was the Chiesa di San Francesco with more hordes of cheeky cherubs. The museum housing the famous Dancing Satyr was a must see. An incredible piece of sculpture of its era, as is the story of its find and refurbishment.

Marsala – 14M

Wow, what's that on horizon to the south? The 836m Sicca harbour townscape

of the island of Pantelleria, 58nm away. Amazed we could see it. The immediate coast is very flat here and we could also see the bump of Erice and Capo San Vito, reminding us that the loop is nearly completed. We had wanted to visit Marsala to discover more about the wines we had read about and sampled on our voyage. The marina location here is not handy for the town and requires a scary dash across a main road prior to the long walk in. However it is near to a number of high walled, beautifully restored old wine cantinas, so perfect for that reason. We did follow the road around the coast towards town, to visit the museum housing the recent discovery of a Phoenician trading ship. Almost half of the hull is intact from being buried in the seabed. What is incredible is the workmanship of the carpentry and the use of metal fixings. The relic is contained in a specially conditioned area to keep it preserved. We had a minor altercation with the pontoon when the marina bow line broke during a crosswind gust. With the help of some neighbours and the engine we managed to keep the boat off until we had a replacement line attached. I negotiated a small discount for the berth the following day, providing I didn't write about it!

Trapani and Egadi – 23M

What's all the noise? It's charter change over day and the Italian or otherwise crews seem to have to shout at each other whilst organising the handover. It was

rocks at this time of the day. On this occasion quite a few dinghies and small ribs. This put me in mind to replace our own highly unsuccessful line and lure. And so it remains, the success that is! The calm allowed me a temporary repair of the 'backdoor' restrainers, damaged at Ragusa. Later we altered course a little to avoid the flightpath of a firefighting aircraft picking up water. These guys have had a busy time of it this year.

The breeze had arrived and was building by our arrival into the harbour of the busy fishing port, Sicca. We elected to go stern to at the Lega Navale Italiana pontoons and were met by the helpful Accursio. By the time we were washed down and heading out to explore the town, other yachts that had been anchored along the coast were making their way in. We were to remain here for the next 4 nights.

The L.N.I. here is one of the most social we have visited. Taking up a fair amount of harbour side for a bar/café, toilets, showers and storage facilities for their waterborne activities. They have set up pleasant areas for outdoor seating in the shade and on the occasion of our visit, large screens for the Euro football games. The audience not particularly pleased at their side's performance. Access to town proper is by various stairways to make the reason to have a thirst quenching drink easy. Another reward are the views out to sea and the harbour below.

We ate in various places over the next few days, one family restaurant had a wine list where the most expensive bottle was €12, and the mama apologized for this ridiculous high price. We hired a car to visit a couple of out of town

attractions, the huge ancient Greek city of Agrigento and Castello Incantato, a wacky artist's home with hundreds of sculpted heads decorating the landscape. We took advantage with the car to visit our next port of call which had only minimal information in the pilot book. Meeting the harbour master gave us peace of mind that we would be expected and where we could fit in as there were few berths available, as alluded to in the pilot book.

We couldn't help but notice the amount of plastic floating waste in and around the harbour at Sicca. The breeze over the past few days would not have helped but the sheets of shrink wrapping, polystyrene boxes and water bottles that litter the water and shore is heart breaking. The next few



Basilica Sicca





Mazara reflections

we couldn't hug any of our meeters and greeters in case of infection. Luckily we were still testing negative by the end of the week so organised our return party for the weekend.



ABOVE: Washdown back in Teulada

LEFT: 'OK, I have seen enough temples'. Templo di Ercole Agrigento

also almost impossible to get along the pontoon, having to negotiate around the kit bags, barrows, stores and boat bits randomly discarded. Time to get home.

Being Saturday, the tour boats and locals were all gunning out to the Egadis. Many passed so close to us, I thought we must have been in cloak mode! After some exploration and finding all anchorages crowded we decided to head into Trapani especially with Roger Cagney, ICC, arriving the following morning to assist with the return trip to Sardinia. This was to be the right decision as the next few days the westerlies were back. A 25 knot beat to Sardinia was not considered an option. The harbour filled up with other boats seeking harbour shelter.

Trapani is not a bad place to sit it out waiting for a window for crossing. We took ferries out to the Aegadi to cycle, swim and lunch, watching charter boats struggling to remain attached in the few barely sheltered bays. We took Roger up to Erice, this time under the clouds. In Trapani, we found plenty places to eat and drink and became a regular feature at the Camio sunset bar a short distance from the boat. A weather window appeared and we prepped to leave on Friday July. The forecast over the track was for a northerly, going easterly and back to north on the approaches to Sardinia.

If we could manage across in 24 hours we would arrive in ahead of the thunderstorms due in the area on Saturday afternoon. If, big if, we made very good time, we could alter course for Teulada where the

forecast was better.

Villasimius - 159nm

We crept out at 0520 am, the sun rose at 0550. Judy and Roger went back to bed whilst I got back into delivery mode. By 0700 the sails were set although keen to get some miles done, I kept the engine assisting. Marettimo, the westerly of the Aegadi is a high island and a bit of a morale buster as it remains in view for many hours.

It became obvious that all was not well with Roger, whilst we determined it was not serious enough for us to return to Trapani he was to remain in his bunk for much of the crossing. I decided then that we would keep on track for Villasimius, being the shorter option.

With little traffic either in view or on the AIS I started to doubt our decision, so it was with light relief that we passed a boat on our reciprocal at the halfway point. Roger surfaced for the excitement.

We put in a reef before dark. And it was a dark night without the moonlight as we had enjoyed on the outbound crossing. Dark makes for much stargazing and I find it fascinating that the recognized constellations are difficult to find on a night like this when the sky is just full of stars.

Eventually the loom of Cagliari appeared and then the two lights at Capo Carbonara, although at first we couldn't read one of the flashing sequences correct, probably due to it dipping below the horizon.

The eastern horizon started to glow and with enough light by 0530 we were passing through the channel between Isola del Cavoli and Capo Carbonara in a blustery grey, now overcast morning, the rumbling thunderclouds threatening to burst. It would appear they have been waiting for us to return!

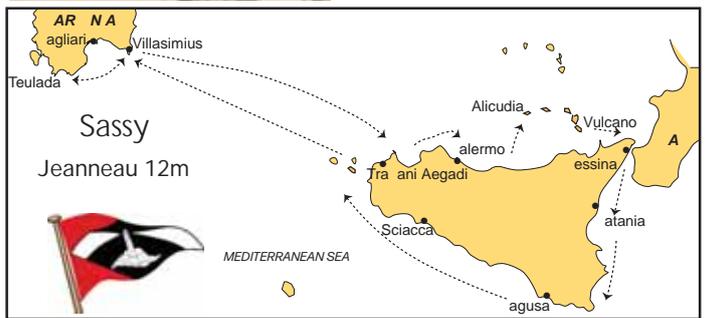
After refuelling, we were lucky to be tied up before the first downpour. Having been on watch considerably longer than planned, I immediately went to bed. We sent Roger to organise a visit to a doctor at a Centro Medico, where he picked up some medicines and started his recovery.

We stayed on here a further day, the weather clearing up, allowing us a walk out to the point and the nearby beach. A now chattier Roger headed off for the airport for his flight. On his return home he tested Covid positive.

Teulada - 42nm

Light and variable conditions for our last day, we sailed and motored west across the south of Sardinia to Capo Spartivento and familiar shores. By 1400 we were tied up at our berth in Porto Teulada, although

LEFT: Judy and Roger on Favignana. Marettimo in the background.



A love affair with the Azores

Dermot Cronin



Sun setting into the west behind Pico

Following on from the 2023 Saoirse Rally in Madeira, *Encore* made the 500M hop to the Azores. Neil Hegarty, ICC, guided me in my plan to base *Encore* there for a season or two, giving ample time to explore all nine islands.

I arrived, according to plan, on 3 August 2023 looking forward to berthing at my new home port, Angra do Heroísmo, on the island of Terceira, where *Tam O'Shanter* is based. The arrival didn't go as planned: back came the response on the VHF 'the regatta is happening, we are sending away visiting boats, berths are for regatta boats only!'

Thus started my introduction to the Atlantis Cup Regatta. Pedro Parreira, who looks after *Encore* at Angra, filled me in on how local boats and visitors from 'the continent' take part in inter-island races: the lead organiser being the Clube Naval da Horta, on the Island of Faial.

As the *Encore* crew sat at anchor looking at the plentiful supply of free marina berths it occurred to us that 'if you can't beat them, join them' and it wasn't long before it was decided to participate in this year's regatta.

It was to be first and foremost, a family affair with a crew composed of my sailing sons Brendan and Paddy, plus friends from previous offshore racing campaigns. More about the crew anon. And, might this be my last offshore racing event?

Barry Hayes in his sail loft in Crosshaven prepared the racing sails and sent them by cargo ship to Terceira. The Portuguese 'Associação Nacional de Cruzeiros' uses a measurement handicap system

similar to our IRC. Their rating officer, Diogo Serrano, based in Lisbon, along with invaluable input from Pedro, got all the numbers crunched and I obtained an 'ANC (Associação Nacional de Cruzeiros) Rating Certificate.

On 27 July, after an overnight sail from Angra, *Encore* arrived in Ponta Delgada, São Miguel for race registration and briefing. It was a huge relief to find that the briefing in Portuguese was immediately repeated in English. The regatta management team were both friendly and obliging in giving all the time necessary to make newcomers welcome and to answer all questions.

A fleet of twenty-three boats would compete in the three race regatta series and all crews gathered together at a reception in the Clube Naval de Ponta Delgada. This was a great way to meet the various boat owners and crews. It was also interesting to meet members of a network of transient sailors who have settled in the Azores, Horta in particular, and come together to crew the more potentially competitive boats.

Race 1: Ponta Delgada, São Miguel to Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira

29 July, 1040. We depart Ponta Delgada marina, São Miguel, in pouring rain for the first of the three inter island races. The rain intensifies further as we shut off the engine, put the throttle in neutral and come to grips with how to tie a 'trip line' around the gear lever which will be checked at the end of the race to prove that we have not used our engine! This leaves us slightly short handed as we go into the start sequence but at 1130 we get a nice clean fast start.

It's *Encore's* first race since the 'Dun Laoghaire to Dingle Race 2019' and a gorgeous settling in course for a Beneteau 40.7, a beat of 100nm to Terceira. We fly a full main and genoa in 12 kn of breeze and the tweaking and adjusting commences immediately as we fine tune everything and soon have *Encore* tramping along upwind at 6.5 kn boatspeed.

The rain eases away as *Encore* and two other faster boats cross tacks and lead the fleet along the south coast of São Miguel. When we clear the west end of the island at 1440 the wind veers slightly. Were the first to spot this, giving us the lead on what is now a one-sided beat along a rhumb line course to Terceira.

At 1715 we're becalmed! The more and more we pulled away from the island the more and more the wind died away to zero and the sea turned to glass. We tried chasing the dying wind with our Code Zero asymmetric spinnaker but it soon flopped like a wet hankie.

However, we're happy. We've had six hours of thoroughly enjoyable sailing, the sun is out, the temperature is in the mid-twenties and mindful of the gloomy summer weather at home we top up on sunscreen and get some decent heat into our bones.

It's not long before boats start to retire from the race. I know from my weather routing App 'SailGrib' to expect very little gradient wind during the race and now, with 74nm to the finish line, the likelihood of getting a finish within the 30 hour time limit is slim. Still, we decide to continue soaking up the sun, have supper around 2000 and then see how things stand. After a pasta and chorizo dinner there's still not a puff of wind anywhere. Most of the fleet has retired already so we bow to the inevitable and join them. We motor to Angra do Heroísmo arriving there at 0920 next morning.

Great food! Pity about the wind



Race 2: Angra do Heroísmo, Terceira to Velas, São Jorge

Thursday 1 August 1305, bang the gun goes! *Encore* makes a perfect timed-run start, sweeps across the favoured pin end of the line and we're up for the battle for bragging rights at the windward mark, 1nm ahead, nestled closely by the head of the town breakwater. Whoohoo! As we close in towards the town the westerly wind coming over Monte Brasil, which shelters the town from the west, is gusting viciously and shifting wildly left and right. Ahhhhh... We almost crash tacked. 'Ease everything!' We're okay. We harden up. Wallop, it happens again. This continues.

As we approach the mark it's heart pounding, we have a clear lead but we're coming in on 'port' whereas the challenging pack with right-of way is thundering towards us on 'starboard'. The gauntlet is thrown down. A chorus of shouting from the other boats gets steadily louder. We get ready. We hold. We hold a bit more. A bit more again. Enough is enough, we don't push 'above' our attackers but tack and show them our lovely transom. After some more wild gyrations we squeeze round the mark and lead the fleet out to sea towards São Jorge.

Phew! All that for bragging rights in *Encore's* new home town? Still, tremendous fun which brings huge smiles all round.

The predicted gradient wind for the race is SW 2 veering W-N 1 so it's another beat west. After the excitement of the race start it's a pleasure to spend the afternoon fine tuning *Encore* as she slips away from the island and glides along upwind, albeit getting slower and slower. As the evening draws in, the true wind is down to 4 kn and boatspeed is 3.1kn. Our immediate objective is to close in on the east end of São Jorge island, we're already 19nm along with another 8nm to go.



Sun setting behind São Jorge

With the sun setting behind São Jorge the crew are working hard trying to keep the boat moving while other boats begin to retire. As they motored past us, I was confident that we had the right crew to continue racing once the maker of wind breathed enough to shift us along.

The family based crew plan hadn't materialised. With Paddy having a newborn son, Kit, born in February it was decided to defer this gathering. So, the Atlantis Cup 2024 crew consisted of fellow Malahide Yacht Club sailors Padraig Somers and Donat O'Brien, both of whom already cruised with me in the Azores and have long offshore sailing experience. Mairéad Ní Cheallacháin from the RYC in Dun Laoghaire already raced on board for the 'D2D 2019', she currently races at the front of the big boat fleet in Dublin Bay and is a master of all things 'strings' in the cockpit. We needed an expert and experienced sailor to manage all that happens on a challenging racing foredeck and be equally skilled in the cockpit. Paddy found us our sailor, Dan Jones from the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club in Falmouth. Dan, sails his own boat in Cornwall and while still in his twenties has vast offshore racing experience.

FROM LEFT: Dan Jones, Padraig Somers, Mairéad Ní Cheallacháin, Dermot Cronin and Donat O'Brien



This crew came prepared for action. We had plenty of action at the 'start', however, action now means perseverance and patience. We set to it. It's a challenge to keep *Encore* moving as the wind fizzes out to zero, raises itself to a knot or two then vanishes again. Dan comes into his own as we peel from genoa to code zero and back again, chasing wind and waiting patiently when it vanishes temporarily.

Towards midnight the fickle wind has gone around north but we've made progress, we are now 2.2M off the island. And, we've got a favourable tide under us, when our boatspeed drops to 0.7 kn, our speed over the ground is 2 kn. A great boost to have this. In the early hours of the morning we creep in under the south coast of the island and find a narrow band of 3-4 kn of ghostly wind whispering along the shore. And so with 18M to go to the finish line, the two-handed short tacking up the shore commences: two up, two in the bunk, tack in, tack out, in again, we share helmsman duties to stay sharp. In the black of night we tack in to the 10m depth contour, hear the sea gently washing up on the shore, tack out until the wind starts dying on us and then it's back in again. 0915 finds us off the town of Calheta with 11M to the finish. All other ANC class competitors have retired. Will we get a finish? We don't know, but at this stage it doesn't matter, we've won the moral race. It's now a race against time, the time limit expires at 1800. The maker of wind decides to test us severely by mid-day the wind drops to under 2 kn, dies away completely, breathes like a cooling baby at 1kt and, like the 'babbié', nods off again for a nap. It swings all about us, dead ahead, dead behind, now to the left, now to the right. We chase that baby breeze with Dan ever so expertly and gently managing the changes as we swop back and forward from genoa to code zero. As we pass midday we've been racing for over 24 hours and it's frustrating, nothing works

RIGHT: It's me! the *Encore* mermaid, Mairéad, Velas, São Jorge

for long. It's tempting to try our light 0.5oz masthead symmetrical spinnaker but the consensus is it wouldn't fill. We try the genoa goose-winged, no use. We're parked up, looking at the outline of the village of Velas 8M ahead.

Patience, patience, whatever happens, happens. But nothing happens. One o'clock nothing, two nothing.

Then something, on AIS we've been keeping an eye on the single boat ahead of us, off to the south-west, a Pogo raced by its US owner and some very competent friends from Clube Naval do Horta where the boat is based. She's been parked up too. She's not in our class but we're monitoring her to see if she's moving? Lo and behold she is, at 4 kn. It's soon clear that some wind is filling in from the west. When it finally gets to us it's biting at 5 kn+ and gives us a decent tight reach towards the finish line. With no fanfare *Encore* slips over the finish line at 1540. A little over 27 hours elapsed time and 60M logged. Since we're the only ANC class finisher we've won the race.

The marina in Velas is nestled snugly under vast cliffs and it's a unique and friendly place. So too is the town's sea swimming area, a generous 'pool' cut into the black volcanic rocks that form the shoreline. Our mermaid, Mairéad, fell in love with this pool and there she is, pictured against the backdrop that makes Velas a very special place - its view across the channel to Pico, Portugal's highest mountain. We have 'Skellig Michael', the Portuguese have 'Pico', both are awesome. And, towards Pico is where the final race is heading.

Race 3: Velas, São Jorge to Horta, Faial

Sunday 4th August: 1052 we head for the race start knowing that we just need any place position in the results to win the ANC class overall however, above all, we must avoid a 'disqualification non discardable' (DND) which would knock us off the top spot. So, no silly bugger stuff today!

The wind once again is extremely light but, after a one-hour postponement, it bites nicely from the southwest giving us a beat of 20M from Velas to Horta on the island of Faial. At 1235 we make a conservative start, get into clear air and sail our own race. The wind had built to 11 kn by the time we had made it south across the channel to Pico and find ourselves close tacking west along the shoreline towards the 'Canal do Faial' and Horta. The race turns into an afternoon 'jolly' and everyone enjoys a spell helming. It's a Sunday, a day of rest and leisure and, for me, a time for contemplation as we near the end of the regatta. Leaving the crew to do the racing I take a turn as ballast and sitting on the rail I reflect to myself that it's certainly not the prospect of trophies nor the excitement of intense competition that's been so enjoyable: rather that it's been an



enchancing upwind love affair. The best of time has been courting the warm Azorean wind, in the black of night under São Jorge or today under the majestic Pico.

Arriving at the Canal do Faial we are surprised to find ourselves amongst the leading competitors closing in on Horta. Our racing passion is reignited and we enter the fray as five boats converge in a final reach for line honours. In the outer harbour the wind pipes up to liven the action. All boats are over-canvased as we power towards the tiny inner harbour entrance that is the finish line. Too late to reef now! It's a mighty fast nail-biting finish that we don't win but what a marvellous and memorable way to sweep into Horta and complete a regatta. We lift our heads, look at each other, smile and shake hands.

The Forte de Santa Cruz is a formidable 16th-century fortification overlooking Horta bay and on Monday night the Clube Naval da Horta hosted the prize giving ceremony at the hotel within the fort. *Encore*, having placed 3rd in the final race, was declared the overall winner of the ANC Class.

I entered *Encore* for the Atlantis Cup Regatta as a contrivance to get a convenient berth at the height of the local regatta season. Pedro Parreira enticed me to take the opportunity to enjoy some pleasant racing in company. The event is a friendly affair, well run, and welcoming to visitors. This year's Regatta Director, João Morais and the Race Officer, Luis Raposo Verissimo, could not have been more accommodating to the fleet than they were.

Most entrants are genuine cruisers out for some comfortable passage making in company, followed up with a fleet party ashore after each landfall. Is this not what most ICC members are all about too? Indeed, the event has the charm of Calves Week regatta in the days when we raced between the villages along the coast of West Cork. I believe that ICC members would enjoy the event just as thoroughly as we did and there's no need to join a measurement Class, the organisers have an open



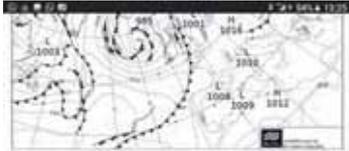
Encore crew take care of this.

The summit walking trail encircling Faial's volcano crater.

Racing over, the crew return to exploring the Azores islands. The island of Faial is entirely volcanic in origin, its highest mountain, the Caldera Volcano (Caldeira do Cabeço Gordo) has a walking trail that encircles the 2km diameter crater, that is 400m in depth below the crater rim. On our previous visit in 2023, we had taken a taxi to the mountain summit, intending to do some walking but, while our tee-shirts were grand in the 25°C down at the marina they were inadequate for the much cooler temperature at the summit, 1,043 metres above sea level. We passed on doing the walking trail but the photo we took (above) beckoned us to return.

Disappointed then, now it was time to head off again for a more prepared attempt to complete the 8km walking trail around the crater rim.

BELOW: Caldeira do Cabeço Gordo, August 24 that hanging white related to the weather front extending from Donegal to the Azores



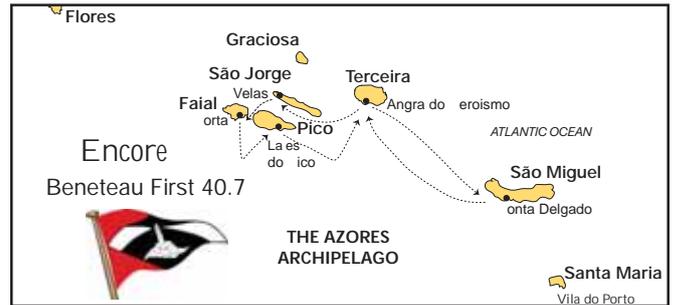
First though, check the weather. I refer to my 'go to' website: the UK Met Office 'Surface Pressure Charts'. I was introduced to these by John Leahy, ICC, when he gave his weather briefing to the boats planning offshore passages to the Saoirse Rally. As well as the usual presentation of pressure isobars you get to see the frontal systems: cold fronts, warm fronts etc you're predicted to meet. As I'm doing this Mairéad, who has a residence in Donegal, remarks that the Tory ferry is cancelled due to bad weather. Looking at the weather chart I see it confirms something that I have been observing: the tail end of 'fronts' associated with weather systems far off in the North Atlantic often extend south as far as the Azores and explain much of the 'unexpected' precipitation which is not readily apparent looking solely at pressure isobars.

So, the 'low' pressure system approaching Ireland should give us some rain during our walk. It does, but we are prepared. It's fascinating to reflect how the clouds that fall and rise about the summit and the weather in Donegal are linked.

The mist and rain that swirls around us make the walk all the more dramatic, providing a tremendous



ABOVE: Emerging from the mist, Dermot brings up the rear as the Encore crew walk along the summit ridge



variation in the views we get into the volcanic crater, one time a sneaking partial glimpse, another time a more panoramic view, more often a collage. We complete the walk, have a swim at the beach in Porto Pim, at the south end of Horta town, and have dinner at Genuino Restaurante which overlooks the beach, our favourite restaurant in the town. The restaurant is owned and run by Genuino Madruga, the tenth person to sail around the world single handed and first Portuguese to do so (2000-2002).

The Azores smallest marina at Lajes do Pico

Horta is as far west as *Encore* goes this season and on Wed 7th at 1130, after filling our diesel tank we depart Horta eastwards. Jose, the harbourmaster at Lajes do Pico, remembers *Encore* from a visit in June and he confirms that he will have a berth for us at this, the smallest marina in the Azores. The approach is strewn with rocks, but these are well charted and while the entrance is very tight the channel is well buoyed. We carefully follow Linda Lane Thornton's very clear guidance in the 'Atlantic Pilot' and go extremely slowly up the channel. However, if you're steering, as I was, you shouldn't answer a phone call, even from the harbourmaster, as I did, because you'll most likely, as I nearly did, wander out of the channel. 'Stop Dermot' shouted our mermaid. I did. Unscathed, we berth safely.

It's a tiny port and, like Velas, it too has a wonderful Packing away *Encore's* unused spinnakers



swimming 'pool' at the east end of the village, always a hive of activity with plenty of laughter, splashing, diving and posing. All the sights and sounds of high summer. And to the West, there again is Pico overlooking everything.

On Thursday 8th, before it gets too hot, we pack away the unused spinnakers and transform *Encore* into cruising configuration. Then, snorkelling gear is purchased and off we go to swim and admire the abundant colourful fish. Lajes do Pico repays the sailing visitor in spades for taking the time and care to visit; one walks slower and slower each day one stays. Over a few visits now, the *Encore* crew have developed something of a routine; morning coffee outside 'Dannys Cafe', potter along the waterfront walkway for a dip in the sea, potter back to the boat for a bite of lunch, read a book or have a snooze. An evening dip before dinner brings an added bonus, one is rewarded on the way back by the magnificent sight of the sun setting into the west behind Pico. At 0700 on Sat 10 August *Encore* departs Lajes towards Angra and arriving there at 1500 we remove all canvas and prepare the boat for lifting ashore.

Afterword
Back home in Malahide, Winkie Nixon kindly congratulated me and the *Encore* crew on our success and, in our conversation, like a penitent to his prophet, I confessed to him how I'm trying to give up racing. Back came the prophet, you can't Dermot, you just simply cannot. It's in the blood!

Brittany Rally 24

Alan Markey



The fleet at L'Houat

After more than a decade, the Irish Cruising Club finally embarked on a return rally to Brittany—its first since 2011. Brittany, with its rich maritime history and beautiful coastlines, is a great destination and easily accessible from anywhere in Ireland. During the annual dinner in Sligo, March 2023, the idea of a return to Brittany was initiated. An organising committee was quickly established consisting of Alan Markey as Chair, and included Stuart Musgrave, Donal Gallagher, Tony Linehan, William Morrison and Robert Kilkelly. Stuart Musgrave was an invaluable member of the organising team as he spends a lot of time in Brittany, and he made several visits to the various venues and most importantly liaised with Erwan Tonnerre. Erwan is well known to many ICC members and with his wifeANGES and family they run Café de La Jetée at Port Tudy on Île de Groix.

The rally was held in June to avoid the main French holidays ensuring more availability of berths and mooring buoys and for those attending they could head off further afield once the rally was over. Over the next few months the committee organised berths at Bénodet, the starting point for the rally, Île de Groix and mooring buoys at Houat.

The committee held several online meetings and calls to agree the details. Once the rally plans were finalised all members were sent details of the rally and booking information. 17 boats confirmed they would be attending.

By Saturday, 15 June, most boats had made their way to Bénodet, marking the start of an exciting two weeks sailing around the scenic Breton coast. Thanks to a favorable northerly wind, crews traveling south enjoyed a fast, exhilarating passages across the channel, setting an upbeat tone for the sailing ahead. One or two did sail north and had a more challenging time reaching Bénodet. All boats were in situ for the opening of the rally on Sunday 16 June. The previous evening Michael Craughwell kindly invited all to a cocktail party aboard his beautiful 1984 ketch, *Orchestra*. This was the unofficial start to the event and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Sunday 16 June Bénodet

Up to this point the weather was very mixed but as all the attending crew gathered at the welcome reception in Yacht Club de L'Odét the sun broke out from behind the clouds. The Commodore of the Club, thanks to Stuart Musgrave's translation, welcomed the ICC to Brittany. Burgees were exchanged and welcome packs were given to all boats.

A walk along the seafront took everyone to a local restaurant, L'effet Mer, where we met for dinner. The night was spent making plans for the next few weeks and catching up with friends.



The Commodores exchange burgees in Yacht Club de L'Odét

Monday and Tuesday 17 - 18 June Individual Cruise

Leaving Bénodet on Monday morning the boats went their separate ways. Some sailed up the River Odet making their way to the historic town of Quimper. Others headed for Loctudy or Îles de Glénan. A number of boats headed for Concarneau, with its walled medieval town on an island just beside the marina. Unfortunately, very heavy rain arrived late Monday into Tuesday, but this did not seem to dampen spirits as crews enjoyed many fine eateries and Breton hospitality at the various locations.

Wednesday 19 June Dinner on Île de Groix

By Wednesday all boats had made their way to Île de Groix, which was the location of the second meet. Erwan organised berths for all boats, which was very helpful as the marina has very limited capacity. The crews met outside the Café de la Jetée at 1800 for a short hike along the cliff path to the Performing Arts Theatre the venue for our evening meal and entertainment. This is a magnificent building perched on the cliff top which hosts the annual International Island Film Festival. The Mayor and other dignitaries greeted everyone and Erwan was on hand to translate. After a feast of seafood, a group of musicians entertained us with songs and music from the local area. The similarity to Irish music was very notable. Not to be outdone on the musical front,

Aoife Nolan Beattie, quickly organised a regional 'ICC Has Got Talent!' Songs from each region were googled, decided upon, and sung with great flourish. This was the perfect end to a great evening.

Thursday and Friday 20 - 21 June Individual Cruise

Some chose to stay on Île de Groix for the next day or so and explore the wonderful beaches of the island. Others sailed up the river Blavet into the city of Lorient while some slipped into the marina just under the Citadel of Port-Louis, at the entrance to the river. Port Haliguen in the heart of Quiberon Bay also proved to be a popular spot for some of the boats.

Saturday 22 June Île d'Houat

By Saturday morning all boats were making their way to Île d'Houat, the location for the third meet. Berthing was a combination of moorings with some of the early arrivals getting a berth inside the harbour wall. A dinghy service was hoped for but did not materialize, so we were very grateful for Stuart Musgrave who arrived in his rib and kindly provided a water taxi service for everyone to get to the shore and back to boats at the end of the night. Dinner was at La Sirene, a short walk from the harbour. The sun was shining and everyone met outside for drinks and catch-up, sharing stories of where they had been for the last few days. The restaurant provided us with an amazing array of



La Sirene sing song

seafood platters and dinner was a huge success. After dinner the Mayor stopped by and thanked us for coming to the island. Michael Craughwell just happened to have his accordion with him and Frank O Béirne borrowed a guitar, so a singing session started. The Mayor was thrilled to join in playing his spoons. Rugby songs proved to be very popular with the locals who joined in the singing.

The final event in Kerneval was planned for the following Wednesday. The forecast for the coming week for those heading North was deteriorating. After much discussion amongst the skippers, it was decided to cancel the final dinner to allow everyone to make arrangements for their return trip home. Boats departed Île d'Houat Sunday morning. Some were heading south and others into the Morbihan to continue their summer sailing adventures. Those

Traditional fishing boat off Île de Groix



heading back home made the trip north stopping at various locations such as Île de Groix, Îles de Glenan, Bénodet, Cameret and the Scillies.

We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to making the rally such a special experience, and in particular, the organising committee and Erwan and his family, without whom the rally would not have been a success. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Breton people, whose generosity, hospitality, and kindness made us feel right at home—they went above and beyond to assist, feed, and entertain us at every port. Finally, a special thanks for all who joined the rally and I hope that everyone left Brittany with wonderful memories and a true appreciation for the beautiful spirit of Brittany.



The fleet at Bénodet

Encuentro Náutico 24

Peter Fernie



Koala passing Castro de Barona

This was the sixth iteration of the Galician Encuentro Náutico or Nautical Gathering held since the first one in 2018. The intention was to continue in a smaller way the ICC comradeship of the ICC Rias Baixas Rally held in 2017, principally for boats permanently located in Rias Baixas.

This year we had invited the Ocean Cruising Club (OCC) to help them celebrate their 70th birthday. A total of 30 boats including a number of ICC/OCC as well as six OCC had registered by the Jotform deadline.

The original plan was to gather in Finisterre (the Galician one) and spend several days in the surrounding bay. This section was made optional however, in view of the limited berthing and anchoring facilities in the port as well as the notorious variability of the weather in the area. In the event the Finisterre section was abandoned because of unseasonable weather in this part of the year.

July. Boats had slowly turned up in Muros over the previous week during the indifferent weather, and berthing arrangements had been arranged in advance by Ana Noal of Muport. We were well looked after by the hospitable Pedro and his team in the marina. The weather had taken a turn for the better and everyone agreed that Muros is always a special place to visit. The pontoon party was organised by John O'Connor as the ICC representative of the OCC, ably assisted by Phyllis Hayes and Jim Sammon. Various tables were scrounged from the

The first event was a pontoon welcoming party hosted by the OCC in Muros Marina on the 13

Presentation at MRCC, Manuel Capeans and Peter Haden. Photo by Ann Lyons

Assembled crews





A Darsena. FROM LEFT: Pat, Peter, Gerard and Maura

Marina office and converted into an al fresco bar. Flags were hoisted. The locals wondered what was happening. Wine and beer was chilled in a number of boats with refrigeration and despite an inordinate consumption nobody embarrassed us by falling in the water. Several Galician friends joined us including Alejandro Pazo and his son who had hosted us at EN23 in Corruedo last year.

Geraldine Hennigan scrambled across boats to get the best viewing point to take a proper photograph with a proper camera. We all then trooped across the road to the A Darsena restaurant where 65 members and guests sat down to a magnificent Galician seafood feast.

Sunday dawned grey and chilly for our excursion to the spectacular waterfalls in Ezaro, several kilometres up the coast. Ezaro was one of Spain's earliest hydroelectricity schemes and led to early electrification of this part of Galicia, somewhat similar to the Shannon scheme in Ireland. Unfortunately the hydroelectricity interpretation centre closed during Covid and has since not reopened. The falls themselves are still there however and Norman Kean launched the ICC Publications drone to take an aerial photograph of the falls and our group at the viewing platform.

It continued chilly and we were all fairly glad to get indoors again. Lunch was held in a beachside *Top table Portosin*



restaurant Mar e Terra. The proprietor, Javier Martin welcomed us at the door with a glass of specially chosen albariño. Forty-five people sat down in the restaurant and we could not have squeezed in another person. We enjoyed veal, shellfish, and other local delicacies followed by a huge choice of rich local desserts. Javier and his team assiduously looked after us and for many, this was considered the best lunch of the rally, and possibly the best meal overall.

On our journey back to Muros we stopped in the small village of Carnota. Horreos, as most visitors to the area quickly learn are the ubiquitous stone built granaries; the one in Carnota is some 35 metres long, and reputedly the longest in Galicia.

A raft up had been programmed for the next day in Ensenada de San Francisco, a delightful SE facing bay close to Muros. Sadly the weather gods were against us again and most boats took advantage of a break in the rain to sail across Ria de Muros to Real Club Náutico Portosin (RCNP) for the second half of the rally. The club and marina were as efficient as ever and Juan and his team of mariners did sterling work to move resident boats and provide us with suitable berths, and of course, were supported by our Hon. Port Officer Carmela Nuñez and her office staff.

The final dinner of EN 24 was on Tuesday night in RCNP and we welcomed several guests including

Carmela and Manuel Capeans, the Director of the regional Marine Traffic and Co-ordination Centre. The President of RCNP, Jorge Aran, sponsored a drinks reception on the wonderful club balcony. We enjoyed great views across Ria de Muros in the setting sun, before we sat down to dinner. Unfortunately the Commodore who had initially planned to attend the dinner, couldn't be present and Tony Linehan read out a short address from him. Carmela's contribution to the organisation of the Portosin section cannot be overstated; organising mariners, arranging coach sponsorship and the club reception. A large bouquet of flowers was presented as a small token of our appreciation. After dinner there were several vocal musical contributions of variable quality. Ray O'Toole espied the grand piano in the corner of the club restaurant and presented a short extempore selection of jazz piano. One has to wonder how many yacht clubs have grand pianos?

The final day of EN24 saw us in Castro de Baroña; an Iron Age fortified settlement along the south coast of Ria de Muros. The local Mayor of Portosin had kindly sponsored a coach for our excursion. The rigorous walk to the fort and back was rewarded by lunch outside (WX had taken a serious turn for the better) in the Restaurant O Castro. We were then conveyed on a hair-raising journey to the Traffic and Maritime Co-ordination Centre at the top of the neighbouring Monte Enxa. Director Manuel Capeans welcomed us and together with his team provided an extremely comprehensive tour of the centre and its facilities. Meanwhile the coach driver had somehow managed to turn his coach around on a sixpence and take us safely down Monte Enxa via precipitous eucalyptus-lined roads and so finally back to Portosin.

The fleet largely dispersed the following day.

EN events continue to increase in popularity, perhaps due to the increasing number of ICC boats now permanently based in this magnificent cruising area. A recurring problem is now finding restaurants and



Horreo de Carnota



Ezaro Waterfall from the air

marinas that are capable of accommodating our increasing numbers. This was particularly so this year and we may have to restrict boat numbers in the future.

Postscript: The first email in connection with EN 24 was on 16 September 2023. The first restaurant reconnaissance was 16 August 2023. Gmail informs me that in total 310 emails were sent and received. Thirty boats registered and ninety participants were advised as attendees, skippers, crew or guests.

PHOTOS BY GERALDINE HENNIGAN UNLESS INDICATED

Gallery



ABOVE: Castro de Baroña from the summit



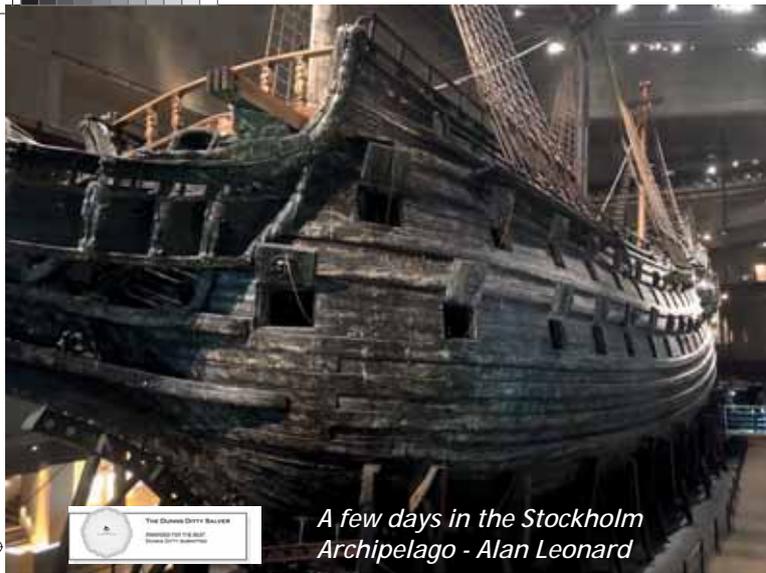
ABOVE: This was taken in the Ria de Arousa. A dorna is a small wooden boat, which has its origins in Viking models. It is used as a sail training vessel in the Ria de Arousa, and much enjoyed by the locals for a spot of fishing as well. (Geraldine Hennigan)



ABOVE: Camino en Kayak - Like our Wild Atlantic Way, 'Camino' tourism has many faces in Galicia. (G.H)

BELOW: It was a busy Saturday at this very popular anchorage, known for the warmest waters in the Rias Baixas. With many boats at anchor, there were quite a few people swimming, kayaking, paddle boarding, etc. I was in the cockpit, reading in the shade of the bimini, when this delightful menagerie passed by. The paddler did a wide circuit of the anchorage and I had got hold of my camera by the time he returned past Coire Uisge. (Geraldine Hennigan)





A few days in the Stockholm Archipelago - Alan Leonard



Adrian and Maeve on board Oisín Bán in Nynashamn

Vasa, sank on her maiden voyage in 1628, raised 1961

When Adrian and Maeve Bell asked me to join them on board *Oisín Bán* (Arcona 43) in the Stockholm archipelago, I was delighted to accept. They had been invited to join the Ocean Cruising Club's 70th Anniversary Rally, organised by the Regional Rear Commodore, Hans Hansel. I flew to Arlanda airport and then took a train to Nynashamn where the rally was to start. Nynashamn is at the end of the line, with the station right beside the marina. When Adrian & Maeve met me, it seemed as if we stepped straight from the platform onto the pontoon.

Next day was a shakedown day for me, before the rally began. We had a pleasant reach north to Uto where we made fast in Gruvbryggan for lunch. In the afternoon, we moved to Natterö to pick up a mooring for the night. This had a tall cylindrical buoy, topped by two fixed rings to which you made fast. The trouble was that, as the boat swung to the mooring, the warp wound round the buoy, winding it in until it was clunking on the topsides. We moved to anchor off the beach before nightfall, for a quieter night. In the morning, we returned to Nynashamn, to meet our fellow participants and to take part in the opening function, which was a reception and meal at the home of the organiser.

The next two days were blown off by winds associated with the same front that so badly affected the Northern Rally to Ardglass and the Quoile. Instead of the proposed voyage in company to an anchorage well north of Stockholm, we were treated to a coach tour to visit an ancient church at Osmo, complete with a painting on the ceiling depicting the devil making a pact with 11 local witches! We also saw a mediaeval beacon on high ground, one of a chain of beacons leading all the way to Stockholm, so that an imminent attack could be signalled to the capital.

On the Friday afternoon there was a brief weather window, so, on our return to *Oisín Bán*, we immediately got underway, pulled down a reef and enjoyed a fast (8 to 9 kn) sail north to Kyrkviken in the island of Ornö. This is a narrow and almost totally sheltered inlet, where we spent the next day listening to the wind whistling overhead. We entertained some friends of the Bells, Torbjörn, Ulla and their son Ewen, on board. When introduced, Torbjörn, a big man, drew himself up to his full height and said in a deep voice: 'You may think of me as Thor's bear! We had to get to Stockholm on the Sunday and enjoyed another brisk sail, again with a reef in, but when we got to the narrower channels, sail was

handed. Motoring past the KSSS (Royal Swedish Yacht Club) clubhouse and the Grand Hotel in Saltsjöbaden, we were amazed at the number of dinghies racing in the Baggensfjord. We counted about thirty Optimists on the leg of the course to which we were parallel, to say nothing of the rest of the course – and equally large fleets of the different rigs of Laser, elsewhere in the fjord.

constantly aware of the vessel's exact position and of the positions of the nearest hazards' (ICC, East & North Coast Sailing Directions). Of course, there is no tide in the Skargård, and one would not expect to see a vessel the size of a cross channel ferry coming along Ringhaddy Sound!

Passing them, we entered the narrow Baggenstaket, which in places seemed to be little wider than the Crinan Canal. The main difference is that a large ferry may appear round the corner at any time! AIS is of great value, as you can check if a ferry is in the offing. Having traversed the narrow channel, at Kungshamn, you emerge into the main channel to Stockholm. We motored straight upwind and made fast in the Vasahamn Marina. A visit to the Vasa museum next morning and dinner in a local restaurant that evening concluded the rally. I thoroughly enjoyed a few days sailing in good company on an outstanding yacht, despite losing a couple of days to the weather.

Enjoying refreshments ashore, while weatherbound in Kyrkviken. Maeve, Alan and Adrian



The similarity to Strangford Lough struck me: 'In the Skargård, ensuring that one keeps a constant and accurate track of one's position among the numerous reefs and islands is vital...' (RCC Pilotage Foundation, The Baltic Sea) and it is particularly necessary to be

Yacht Orchestra Michael Craughwell



Orchestra anchored off Ferragudo in Portugal. INSERT: Michael playing his piano accordion at the Brittany Rally

Orchestra (originally *Cattleya*) was built at the Jongert yard in Holland in 1984. Her build number is BN321 so she has many sisters. She is model 20S. I first came across Jongert Yachts in Mallorca in the mid 70's and from then on I was hooked!

In 2006 I found *Cattleya*. She was for sale in Marmaris (Turkey). Anne, my brilliant engineer, Joe Kirwan and I headed off to check her out after which the deal was done. She was not in great shape so we set out a programme of work which has continued to this day. Jongerts need constant TLC. Then we decided to change her name. There were many suggestions none of which suited. Then one night I was in a pub in Ballyvaughan, MacNeils (not much bigger than our aft deck) with my great friend Donal Morrissy. The purpose of our being there was to have a few pints and a brain storming session with some friends to find a new name for *Cattleya*. As the night progressed we had all but given up. A sing song started with me providing the music on a piano accordion. Those who understand piano accordions recognise that this instrument provides both treble, bass and chords. Then the magic moment. Donal said "that's not an instrument, it's an ORCHESTRA. Job done! (a few more pints to celebrate).

Since then I have found only two vessels of the same name, one is a research vessel in Japan, the second

is a cruise liner which we met in the Caribbean. We had a hilarious radio conversation with the liner captain, "cruise ship *Orchestra x 3*, this is *Orchestra over*, (liner) 'station calling *Orchestra over*' (me) this is *Orchestra* and so it went on for a few minutes longer. End result, I asked the captain what year was his ship built he said 2002. I told him my *Orchestra* was 1984 but in the circumstances I didn't mind sharing the name with such a majestic ship. The master of the cruise ship then invited Anne and me for dinner on board (his *Orchestra*) with him when next we meet.

Since I bought *Orchestra* we have cruised from the Black Sea (not much of it) through every nook and cranny of the Med, Turkey, Greece, Croatia, Venice, Italy, South of France, Spain, Balearic Islands, the Caribbean then back to Europe including the Azores, Madeira and the Canaries. We have spent many summers cruising beautiful Galicia and Brittany. Over the years we have been joined by many friends and family. The biggest party was an ICC raft up off the Island of Cies when we counted over 60 people on board.

Final words, if we ever have the misfortune to have to ask for assistance the conversation could go something like 'Shore station x 3 times, this is yacht *Orchestra*, we have hit a submerged object and require assistance' 'Shore station, 'Are you chamber or philharmonic?' So that's the story of *Orchestra*.

Harold Cudmore Cruising Notes



Schooner Atlantic seen from Harold's home in Cowes

Beginning June I joined a friend in Monaco, Cap d'Ail, to cruise west on a 42' Jeannau for a week to various ports. We picked up third crew in St Maxime.

I had my first visit to Porquorles having raced around them over the years - shabby chic that gets very crowded in the summer months - still worth it.

Called into La Clotat which has transformed from a shipbuilding town into a large yacht refit base and a tourist town. It still has the drydocks and huge cranes similar to Belfast.

Met with Butch Dalrymple-Smith, erstwhile partner of Ron Holland. He is involved in the design team for the world record attempt on water of four hundred knots (sic). Sanaray is being upgraded and is now rather attractive too.

I joined 95' sloop *Patea* mid August in Corsica. After several days on the coast anchored in small bays we headed to the Balearics. Following the forecast closely we targeted getting to Palma as some bad weather was forecast. A mistral hit the very warm Spanish mainland summer heat and created savage mini systems. The island authorities instructed all moored boats into harbour. After midday we were hit by storm cells. 15 yachts ended on the beach in Formentera including 100' *Wally*.

Following a visit to Barcelona for the America's Cup semi-finals I flew to Bari in Puglia, Italy. Cruised on the coast Brindisi, Monopoli/Bari and back on a Grand Soleil 42' taking days away to travel to Lecce. The Trulli of Alberobello and Loc Rotund. Attractive area and more prosperous than expected - suspect lots of

EU cash. Joined by James FLynn (ICC).

Took *Moonbeam 3* (now *Moonbeam of Fifé*) from Cowes to Le Havre ahead of a gale during the Richard Mile Regatta after racing cancelled on the day.

Patea in Barcelona for America's Cup



Cormac McHenry (1936-2023)

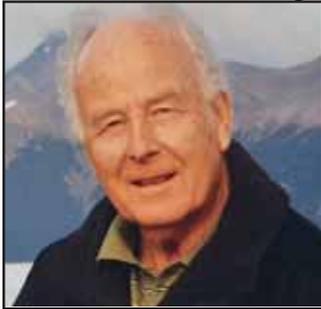


Photo courtesy McHenry family

A man of the mountains and the sea – Cormac McHenry balanced a busy professional life with treasured time in the hills and on the ocean.

Cormac McHenry of Dun Laoghaire, who died on 22nd December 2023 at the age of 87, was a highly-regarded sailor with a particular interest in short-handed long-distance cruising. He was a quietly determined enthusiast whose many other interests included Leinster rugby. He pursued them all with the same devoted, serious and intelligent focus that he brought to the world of boats.

His boyhood, as the oldest of four children, was in Dublin in Rathgar and Terenure, and he acquired his lifelong love of rugby at Terenure College. His highly successful career started as an Engineer in England and went on to several postings in Ireland with major companies. In 1956, at UCD, he married Barbara Nevin. They had five daughters and a long and happy marriage of 67 years.

His sailing career started with a self built Enterprise dinghy sailing from the Boyne Yacht Club at Mornington. This was taken to a higher level in an International Finn in which he represented Ireland throughout Europe with an aspiration to the Olympic ideal.

Whilst working in Waterford, he self-completed a 6-ton Kerry Class cruiser which he named Ring of Kerry. Thus started a lifelong enthusiasm for cruising and voyaging.

A career change in the 1960's bought the family back to Dublin where Cormac joined the National Yacht Club in 1967. The NYC became his real and spiritual nautical home for 56 years and, in his mature years, Cormac served many years as a Trustee.

By the mid 1980's, Cormac's professional life had developed into labour relations and he became a much-respected Member of the Labour Court.

He had a keen interest in sail training and he was one of the few people who had sailed as a Watch Officer on Asgard, on her successor Creidne, and also on the brigantine Asgard II.

Cormac started his 43 years of membership of the Irish Cruising Club in 1980, with Barbara joining in 1993. All this time he cruised extensively in Ring of Kerry, the Nicholson 31 Erquy and finally in the Island Packet 40, Island Life.

In 1989, he was awarded the Faulker Cup, the premier award, for his first ocean passage, a singled handed voyage in the little Ring of Kerry from Ireland to the Azores. The honour was repeated in 1997, for a solo Atlantic Circuit cruise in his Nicholson 31 Erquy. At various stages he was also awarded the Strangford Cup, the Atlantic Trophy and the Round Ireland Cup.

He gave his time unstintingly to the ICC serving as an editor of the Annual, Committee Member, Honorary Secretary, Rear Commodore, Vice Commodore, and finally Commodore in 2004-2005. His fastidious attention to detail made a major contribution to the Irish Cruising Club's ability to take on its growing status in the international cruising and voyaging world.

His work saw friendships develop internationally and he was elected to the Ocean Cruising Club and the Royal Cruising Club in the 1990's.

Like many ICC members, he and Barbara were drawn to the attractions of northwest Spain, with his final cruising years being happily spent there on Island Life.

In 2023, Susan Spain, Cormac's daughter and Honorary Sailing Secretary of the National YC, asked him to perform the naming ceremony for her new Dublin Bay Water Wag. It was to be named 'Comac' and is the latest manifestation of a local class dating back to 1887. Typically, in his special appreciation of the workmanship involved, Cormac flatly refused to smash the bottle over the stemhead. Instead, he poured some of the champagne with gentle and loving care over a small area of the immaculate varnish work, leaving everyone with an abiding final memory of a great sailor and assiduous servant of sailing, a skilled technician and craftsman who, when asked, was always generous with practical and sound advice. Particularly when it was something to do with boats and sailing and the people who go with them.

Abridged by the Editor from an obituary written by Winkie Nixon and published in *Afloat* magazine.

Clayton Love Jr (1929 - 2024)



Photo by by WMM

The widely-mourned death of Clayton Love Jr of Cork at the age of 94 may leave a void in the lives of his very large circle of family, friends and colleagues in many parts of the world and numerous areas of interest. But our environment - both at sea and on land - has ample evidence of his enduring enthusiasm and effectiveness in creating and nourishing structures - both organisational and in the built environment - which have been of great benefit to many. And his clear-sightedness in advocating projects with the bigger picture in mind, aided when necessary by his patient yet persuasive good humour, has helped development in Irish life at all levels despite the sometimes traumatic events of a lifetime of more than nine decades. Clayton Love Jr. was deeply embedded in the sailing world from an early age. Born in 1929, one of his early experiences with sailing included a memorable 1944 voyage from Cork Harbour to Dublin Bay in *Tertia*. His devotion to the sport was nurtured by his love for boats, his deep family ties to Cork, and his relationships with the wider sailing community. His connection to his wife, Betty McCann, was foundational in his life, and their partnership was a steady anchor throughout their journey together. Betty, a member of the influential McCann family from Dundalk with ties to Cork, played a crucial role in Clayton's world, supporting him both on land and at sea. Their family became an extension of Clayton's passions, with their children—Clayton Minor, Sarah, and Neill—and later, ten grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren, reflecting his values of strong familial bonds and deep ties to both tradition and innovation.

From Dinghies to Cruiser-Racers:

While initially focused on dinghy racing—particularly in the IDRA 14 Class and 505s—Clayton's interest gradually turned to larger vessels, where he would leave an indelible mark. The acquisition of the *Fionnuala* in the early 1970s marked a pivotal shift in his sailing career, as he moved into cruiser-racers. By 1971, he had joined the Irish Cruising Club and quickly became a key figure in its development, eventually becoming Rear Commodore in 1990, and

so regularly an attendee at ICC events that one of his last (and obviously enjoyed) public appearances was at an ICC Christmas Lunch in December 2022.

One of the high points of Clayton's sailing career came with his involvement in the creation of *Big Apple* in 1977, a boat that remains a legendary part of Cork's marine history. *Big Apple*, a 44-foot marvel, was renowned for its cutting-edge design by Ron Holland and its exceptional construction.

Big Apple went on to sweep the board in prestigious events such as Cowes Week, earning accolades like the Admirals Cup Concours d'Elegance.

Lifeboats, Legacy, and Community Involvement:

While Clayton's sailing successes are certainly impressive, his legacy extended far beyond the racecourse. A staunch advocate for the safety of sailors and coastal communities, Clayton's tireless work for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) became one of his defining legacies. His successful campaign for the establishment of a lifeboat station in Crosshaven, and his pivotal role in the development of the Ballyglass Lifeboat Station in County Mayo, showed his profound commitment to saving lives at sea.

Later in life, Clayton pursued Mediterranean cruising with Betty, their family and close friends aboard the Nicholson 70 ketch *Royal Tara*.

The Final Chapter:

Despite the inevitable sorrow of losing Betty after fifty years of marriage, Clayton's resilience remained evident. In 2013, he married Barbara McGonagle, and together they found a new home on the south-facing shore of Dublin Bay. This new chapter of his life was marked by quiet enjoyment and an appreciation of the beauty of the Irish coastline. Clayton's later years were also dedicated to spending time with his extended family, sailing, and reflecting on his incredible journey.

A Renaissance Man:

In the end, Clayton Love Jr. was much more than a sailor. He was a dedicated businessman, a patron of the arts, and a community leader with a deep commitment to the public good. His contributions to Cork, through his work in commerce and business, his leadership in the RNLI, and his advocacy for the arts, have earned him a lasting place in Irish history. His passing in 2024 leaves a profound void, but his legacy lives on in the many lives he touched and in the waters he loved so deeply.

The words of Tániste Micheál Martin, posted on social media following Clayton's passing, capture the essence of his influence: "Deeply saddened at the passing of Clayton Love Jr, who made an enormous contribution to Cork through his pioneering work in commerce and business. He was a Renaissance Man, well read, erudite, altruistic, and a patron of the arts with the public interest at heart."

Clayton Love Jr.'s life was truly a masterpiece of exploration, dedication, and generosity, and he leaves an indelible legacy both on the water and in the hearts of all who knew him.

Keith Hunt (1934 - 2024)

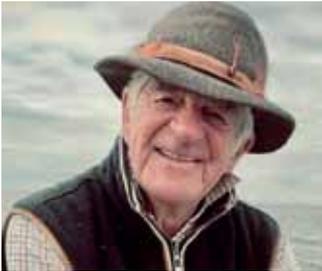


Photo courtesy Hunt family

Keith Hunt has gone from among us with dignity, just 21 days short of his 90th birthday. While we knew him mainly as a man of many and various sailing talents - with 16 Fastnet Races and several dinghy championship titles in his CV - his very well-lived life was one of numerous active interests, both ashore and afloat.

His exuberant progress through it provided many examples of how absorbingly enjoyable and fulfilling life in Ireland can be when it involves the gift of friendship with a generous interaction with the environment, and with the many similarly-minded people in country and town who live for the day, and appreciate our land, its waterways, and the sea around them.

Born in Ballinasloe, County Galway, on October 12, 1934, Keith's early years were shaped by his family's dynamic moves due to his father's role as a Bank of Ireland manager. His childhood included a fascination with aviation during WWII, and a penchant for mischief, which would stay with him throughout his life. Keith attended Midleton College at just six years old, where he excelled in sports, particularly gymnastics, rugby, and boxing, although his mischievous streak often got him into trouble. His educational path later took him to King's Hospital School in Dublin, where he joined the Guinness Trainee Manager Scheme. This led to a successful career at Guinness, where he became a well-known figure in the company's corporate network.

Sailing became Keith's true passion, and he played an instrumental role in Dublin's vibrant sailing scene. His achievements in the sport were vast, including involvement in the 1963 Fastnet Race, where he sailed with Adlard Coles on the Nicholson 36 *Cohoe IV*, securing a remarkable second place overall. Keith's connections in the world of offshore racing further flourished through his time with the Noryema fleet, particularly under the leadership of English entrepreneur Ron Arney.

On the business front, he was able to combine commercial acumen with a bit of fun when he put the full Guinness resources behind the celebration of the Schull Centenary Regatta in 1984. He participated in every Fastnet Race from 1961 to 1989, completing 16 races in a row before prioritizing his family over his competitive spirit in 1989. Some time later in a small group of sailors, one of them observed to him that had he gone racing in the 1989 Fastnet, he would soon be in line to have done a record 20 Fastnet races on the trot, and wasn't it a pity he hadn't left professionals to sort the medical problem, and gone ahead to do the race? Keith Hunt gave him a look that would have pierced steel, and quietly said: 'For Heaven's sake man, it's only a boat race'.

Family and home life around Kinsale and outdoors was now everything to him, and the three children - Jamie, Sam and Holly - were encouraged into an energetic way of life, with Jamie in rugby and Sam well known and successful in sailing. Keith also much enjoyed taking them on less structured activities, and they particularly remembered camping on an uninhabited island in West Cork with one very ga-battered night spent hanging on to the remains of their tent.

Kinsale was very much home, and Keith continued sailing - occasionally long distances, including an Atlantic crossing - on Kinsale boats such as his longtime friend Conor Doyle's *Xp50 Freya*. But throughout all his continuing experiences afloat, the little Dracombe continued to give him much pleasure and the source of much fresher-than-fresh seafood for supper.

One move for the horses

The Hunt family moved just once since they located to Kinsale. But it was only across the harbour to a more secluded place at Sandycove, which came with six acres to enable Poppy to give more direct attention to her beloved horses.

Another millennium

These days, the Hunt name comes up with well-earned regularity in sailing when Sam Hunt scores another success. His father's remarkable success in sailing and in many other sports is now almost entirely something that happened in another Century, indeed in another Millennium, and half-lost in the mists of time.

There are still some around who can remember this personally, and can probably add further extraordinary stories to the fantastic history of Keith Hunt. He knew how to live, how to live very well indeed, and yet be a selfless asset to any group with whom he found himself. Our heartfelt condolences are with Poppy, Holly, Jamie & Sam, and Keith Hunt's many close friends.

Dennis Woods (1945 - 2024)



Dennis Woods was born in Newcastle, UK, in 1945, in poor circumstances. After finishing school, he was destined to become a welder, working in the ravaged UK shipyards. However, he soon found an engineering role and rapidly did well, ending up some years later on the management team at Whitbread brewery.

Dennis had a deep passion for music and was an accomplished guitarist, able to play a Stratocaster with ease. This interest brought him a job offer in Ireland in the 1990s, when he was offered the position of Head of Warner Bros Music, a role he eagerly accepted. He immediately fell in love with Ireland, and it was here that he began to indulge in another of his passions—sailing.

Over the years, Dennis owned two notable yachts. The first, *Khamsin B*, was a 46-foot Amel Santorin, which he co-owned with Rob Kyle. In 2004, they sold the boat to the Garda Sailing Club, where it continues to operate today. Dennis then purchased the beautiful 52-foot Amel Super Maramu, *Il Flauto Magico*, which he kept in Dun Laoghaire Marina. It was a great sea boat, fully equipped with an 8 kW generator and a water maker. *Il Flauto Magico* had electric-powered systems for everything from reefing sails to auto anchoring and even a jet wash to clean the anchor as it was raised. She was the perfect boat for Dennis—capable of being sailed easily by just two people, though he often sailed her single handed.

Dennis joined the Cruising Association of Ireland (CAI) early on, participating in many of our cruises. He joined the Irish Cruising Club (ICC) in 2014. He crewed on my yachts *Xavantes*, *Adastra*, and *Spiral Moon* on several adventures. In 2018, Dennis was appointed Vice Commodore of the CAI, a role he thoroughly enjoyed for four years before returning to the back benches.

Though his health began to decline in recent years, Dennis continued to sail until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and remained a regular at both CAI and RSGYC events. His final year was spent at his

home near Killiney Beach, with frequent visits to local haunts like The Irish, The George, and others. Just two weeks before his death, he was enjoying a couple of Guinness or two with me at The Irish. And then, just before Halloween, in a blink, God took him, so he never felt the sorrow of prolonged ill health. His family did though, and feel the loss deeply.

They don't make 'em like Dennis anymore: a true Geordie, gruff, jolly, great musician, forthright, opinionated and immensely likeable. We have lost a great sailor, a good friend and fellow member of our clubs. We will miss him dearly. Rest in peace and may the Guinness in heaven be every bit as good as it is in Dublin.

John Leahy

ICC and CAI





We are indebted to Kevin Lane and the RCYC for allowing the ICC to reprint the Log of the cutter *Gull* in this year's Annual. This historically important document was bought at auction last year by the RCYC and is now preserved in their archives. *Gull*, a vintage 1896 cutter, took part in the first Fastnet Race, then known as the 'Ocean Race', in 1925.

The Ocean Race was inspired by the Newport Bermuda race held the previous year and is often described as the first European offshore yacht race. Organised by Lt Cdr E G Martin OBE, owner and skipper of *Jolie Brise*, the race marked the beginning of the Ocean Racing Club (later to become the Royal Ocean Racing Club). Although fifteen boats entered the race, only seven started.

Gull, the only Irish boat, was the only boat not designed as a working boat. She was a fierce competitor and, after leading the fleet several times during the 6 1/2 day race, she came third. *Gull's* log is a fascinating read and the sentiments expressed will be familiar with anyone who races offshore today.

It is a privilege to reprint *Gull's* log on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Ocean Race.

OCEAN RACE FROM RYDE. I.O.W., ROUND FASTNET BACK TO PLYMOUTH.

EXTRACTS FROM GULL'S LOG
By Henry P.F. Donegan, Esq. Solr.

Skipper of *Gull*,
Harry Donegan Snr



SATURDAY, 15th August, 1925.

The morning of the start saw all intending competitors anchored in the vicinity of Ryde Pier. *Jolie Brise*, *Saladin*, *Banba*, *Jessie L.*, *North Star*, *Fulmar*, and *Gull*. However, we aboard *Gull* had no time to make anything like a minute inspection of our opponents. We had to load up our fresh water tank to its utmost capacity and fill our three extra breakers, and were too fully occupied attending to stores—meat, bread, etc.—and that link with civilization: 'fresh milk.' Then there were the usual duties of stopping canvas and getting gear ready in preparation for our lengthy race.

I confess we expected a bigger fleet, but we learned from Major M. Mextall-Smith that all the other boats that had entered and then scratched had given reasonable excuses for doing so.

There was a nice easterly breeze, which indicated a fast passage down channel with the wind 'all a poop' and a bright sun offered a promise of at least comfort on the first day of the race. Having received our final instructions, we parted company with Colonel Donegan's launch, and the real business of the ship superseded all other considerations henceforth.

At 11:35, we weighed our kedgeree, to which we had been lying, having previously stowed our big anchor and chocked our punt on the starboard deck. *Gull* was manoeuvred to the pier end of the starting line, across which she nipped into premier position a few seconds after the gunfire. It soon became obvious that the only boat in the fleet able to challenge her on the wind was *Fulmar*. *Jolie Brise* stood over towards the Southsea shore, followed by *Banba*, *Jessie L.*, and *North Star*.

Saladin tacked towards the Ryde sands, down which she fetched with one hitch to windward and saved a good deal of the flood tide, which enabled her to round No Man's Fort just ahead of *Gull*. *Fulmar* was close astern of us, but the rest were considerably behind. It was a broad reach to the Bembridge Buoy, rounding which, at 1:12 p.m., we were one minute ahead of *Saladin*, five minutes ahead of *Fulmar*, nine minutes ahead of *Jolie Brise*, twenty-three minutes ahead of *Banba*, and twenty-five minutes ahead of *Jessie L.* *North Star's* time was not taken. *Jolie Brise* set her enormous spinnaker to port and began to overhaul the leaders.

Approaching St. Catherine's Point, *Gull* still maintained her lead, challenged only by *Jolie Brise*. The relative positions of these two boats were maintained throughout the day, but we both drew away considerably from the others. Towards nightfall,

we seemed to draw further ahead of our big rival, but the wind was very light. It was a beautiful, starry night, and all hands were joyful. We did not stream our log at this stage of the race.

SUNDAY 16th August 1925 revealed the pleasant certainty of our lead in the fleet. We could see *Jolie Brise's* lights all through the dark, but when we were able to make her out distinctly in daylight, she bore



Fleet at anchor off Ryde before the start of the race

about two miles to the east of us. *Fulmar* was about five miles in our wake, and there was just a suspicion of one other sail in the distance, which we took to be *Saladin*. Nothing else in sight. This, however, did not represent much progress, for the distance made good in the middle and morning watches was only about eleven miles. The morning watch was particularly bad, barely stemming the tide, sometimes drifting back, and then gaining



Major M. Heckstall Smith measuring *Gull*



Some of the crew

foot by foot. We had barely steerage way at times, but nevertheless, seemed to be doing better than *Jolie Brise* and *Fulmar*. It took us until 12:00 noon before we were able to bring the day mark and the Lighthouse of Portland Bill in one, but we got past eventually, encountering only light cat's-paws.

Since passing the Bill, a sail was observed bearing S. ½ E., which caused much discussion. "Can't make out whether she is one of us or not." The majority did not think so, but at least one adhered to the belief that



Portland Bill

It was *Saladin*, which had last been observed miles astern of *Fulmar*—now a mere "speck of white in our wake." At noon, *Jolie Brise* bears S.E., distant five miles, and is not making much progress, but for that matter neither are we, though it is a mighty great consolation to be ahead. We, who know the *Gull* and her greediness for strong wind, are now prepared to carry on in as much light wind as can be, with the "cruisers." When the wind comes, we will no doubt give place to the "biguns"—*Jolie Brise* and *Saladin*. *Fulmar* does not seem dangerous today. 3:00 p.m. Discussion still rife as to whether the yacht is *Saladin* or not. She carries a jackyard topsail, a very white jib, and a brown spinnaker, and appears to have more of a rake in her stem, but is going away with a fresh breeze of her own. 4:00 p.m. *Jolie Brise* has apparently caught some of the stranger's wind and is gaining on us. Altered course to due West.

Start Point



6:00 p.m. No longer any doubt, it is *Saladin*, and she is ahead of us but a long way to the southward, gaining. Wind better outside. *Saladin* bears S., *Jolie Brise* bearing S by E 1/4 E. *Saladin* seemed to carry a consistently good breeze throughout the evening, and when last seen was ahead of us, but still to leeward. *Jolie Brise* drew up on us, and after dark, came quite close. For about two hours, we sailed level, after which she drew slightly ahead and crossed our bows by about a hundred yards. We were then in the vicinity of the Start Point.

Monday 17th August 1925 The middle watch reported seeing *Saladin's* starboard light at sea, and that she had evidently lost the wind, for both *Jolie* and ourselves had passed her. All hands were called on deck to gybe ship south of the Eddystone and the starboard watch took over when the manoeuvre was completed, as the time was nearly up. At early dawn, eyes were strained astern, abeam, and ahead, but no *Saladin* was sighted, nor any sign of the mysterious ship passed in the night.

We can't make out what became of her unless she went into Plymouth, but we all tried to believe we were mistaken yesterday and that the mysterious stranger was some craft other than our opponent. It was certainly strange that a boat, which seemed as far astern as *Fulmar*, could have worked into premier position, so we felt easy about her for a while. At breakfast, we further debated the mystery ship, and the notion that it was *Saladin* was pooh-poohed. Needless to say, it mattered a great deal to us, and it was a relief to think that *Jolie* was still our only rival, particularly as we seemed to be good enough for her in moderate weather. The nine hours she was conceding to us was a very comforting consideration. Notwithstanding our joy at finding a clear horizon, that uncanny spook from yesterday left a certain amount of doubt in our minds. When we approached the Lizard, we were glad to be reassured by the owner of the yacht *Barque* (who had evidently come out from Falmouth to see the race) that *Jolie* and ourselves were the only two yachts yet observed, and we drew much consolation from that. We looked upon it as a race thenceforward between *Jolie* and ourselves.

On the 17th, the log shows the wind fresh, E.S.E., in the morning, but this is a moderate estimate of its force. The *Gull* had about all she wanted with the canvas carried—mainsail, jackyard topsail, yankee-jib topsail, and balloon staysail—in fact, all her kites, but then she needed them, for *Jolie* was going along as steadily as a house, with her spinnaker giving her a wonderful lift. The Commodore gave the Lizard a wide berth, which we promptly took advantage of, and shaved the Stags by a narrow margin. We gybed and reset our spinnaker in record time. *Jolie* took sixteen minutes for the job, but then she has heavy gear and a small crew. We gained on her as a result. At the Runnelstone Buoy, when we streamed the log,



Jolie Brise

she was only ten minutes ahead of us. Both yachts carried spinnakers to starboard, and we romped into the Atlantic, helped by the strong outgoing channel tide. We were abreast of the buoy at 12:58 p.m., with the wind getting lighter, S.E. by E. At 2:00 p.m., relative positions were not much changed. The log reading was 5½. By cross bearings, we were four and a half miles N.W. of the Longships. Shortly afterwards, *Jolie's* spinnaker was taken in, and she seemed to have the wind all up and down the mast. We soon got into the doldrums similarly and, for about half an hour, made little headway, barely drifting with the tide. We noticed what we took to be a French "crabber," a long way west of the Longships, coming along with an S.S.E. wind. Just then, we picked up a light northerly air and filled on the port tack, with *Jolie* heading back on her track. Later, we got a breeze astern and went away on a N.W. course. Re-set spinnaker to port. The French "Crabber" again came under observation

Land's End



when, lo and behold, it was *Saladin*, now most certainly our mysterious friend of yesterday. She came along with a wind of her own, with a brown spinnaker to port and a bone in her mouth. *Jolie* did not get the wind until we passed her, and we again took the lead and started for Ireland in premier position. *Jolie Brise*, however, soon passed us when the wind got light. It was surprising how quickly she seemed to get underway in the light puffs. We hoped to get the wind *Saladin* was bringing up, and when we felt it, we squared away.

Saladin then bore S.W. by S., and *Jolie* W. by N. We checked our position at 4:00 p.m. by cross bearings. Pendean Point bearing S.E. by E. ½ E., and Longships bearing S.E. by S. ½ S. We sailed N.W. (Westerly) until 6:00 p.m., then N.W. *Jolie* on the same course. *Saladin* was dropping behind again. Later, we gained on *Jolie* and observed her alter course to the westward, which puzzled us. But the reason soon became apparent: we had to do likewise to avoid a gybe. At 8:00 p.m., we stood N.W. ½ W. as best we could, safely avoiding a gybe. By 9:00 p.m., we were back again on the old course, N.W. We drew close up to *Jolie* at midnight. The log then reading 54½. Rather a troublesome sea, the yacht rolling a good deal. Little wind. Lazy guys on the boom and spinnaker boom, taxed to their utmost in the roll.

TUESDAY 18th August 1925

At about 12:40 a.m., the lacing of the main boom carried away. Took the weight on the port lift and hitched the lacing as far out on the boom as we could. The night was very dark and overcast. *Jolie's* starboard light visible on our port beam. At 1:45 a.m., a lazy guy came in along the boom, carrying away all the lacing. We had to ease the spinnaker forward and haul in the main sheet, rig a new guy through the reef cleat, and fix a new lacing—a difficult job with the heavy rolling, which took some time to complete. At 2:00 a.m., log reading 59, the wind very light, with misty rain. We logged only 1/8 of a mile between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. and, in the whole of the morning watch, only 6 miles. At breakfast, the three boats were practically together, with *Gull* leading.

George making dinner





Saladin and Jolie Brise becalmed

The wind remained very light, and the log reading was 67 miles. We had been becalmed, having sailed 338 miles from Ryde. At 10:30 a.m., we got a little wind from the S.W. and sailed away on the weather of *Jolie*, but lost the puff shortly afterward.

We had a pleasant chat with the Commodore, who commented on the extraordinary fact that we had been together for such a long time. We greatly appreciated his salutation of "Well sailed *Gull*," to which we complimented him on his wonderful spinnaker. Shortly afterward, he hailed us and pointed, as we thought, to a little wind to the west. However, we discovered to our dismay that he was calling attention to our jackyard topsail, which was hanging by the sheet. The wire halyard had parted the eye of the splice.

It was a troublesome job for one of the port watch to get to the topmast head to haul down the end, as there was a fair amount of sea, and the boat was rolling a good deal. There wasn't enough length to splice a new eye, which would have been a difficult operation in any event, so we hitched the end of the halyard through the eye of the jib header and sent that sail aloft. *Jolie* got a breeze in the meantime, but we soon followed in her track, with *Saladin* about half a mile on our weather beam, becalmed.

At about 11:00 a.m., we saw a sail in our wake, apparently carrying a fresh WSW breeze and heeling over to it. Surely this is *Fulmar*—if so, it's bad for us, as we thought we stood a good chance with *Jolie* and *Saladin*, which were giving us nine hours, and two hours and forty minutes, respectively. At 11:30 a.m., gained on *Jolie* with a light westerly air. *Saladin* to windward but not sailing. The stranger (surely *Fulmar*) was still on the port tack, carrying a good breeze.

Considering that we had been practically in the doldrums since breakfast, it was clear that we must have had more than our time off *Fulmar* (if this were *Fulmar*—a craft we hadn't gazed on since Sunday, when she was a mere speck in the distant east off

Portland). Yet, it's a long way to Tipperary and also to Plymouth, so were not downhearted.

At noon, *Fulmar* was still gaining and was about two miles astern, heading N.W. At 12:30 p.m., she seemed to be running into our calm patch. At 3:00 p.m., *Fulmar* closed up with us, sailing fast. We had been hung up, barely moving for some hours. She sailed to our lee and went ahead of us. Later, we picked up a little breeze and sailed up to her and had a talk. They said they had passed the Runnelstone at 11:00 p.m. last night, which put us 9 hours ahead of her there. She saw no sign of the rest of the fleet behind. When becalmed during the previous night, we lost our log. For the convenience of reading it from the cockpit instead of crawling aft, we had a stanchion rigged to which the Bliss American log was attached. The line was up and down in the calm, and the hook must have worked itself loose by touching the side of the rail, and we lost the line and propeller. Fortunately, we had another log aboard, which we streamed later when we got the wind. There was a difference of over 6 miles between *Fulmar*'s log and ours, but as the Bliss was always very accurate, I preferred to rely upon our own, knowing our own track, but kept her figures in mind.

At about 5:00 p.m., all four boats were becalmed, heading in all directions. *Saladin* away to the NE, *Jolie* to the north, *Fulmar* close alongside of us. Her crew fired revolver shots at two inquisitive basking sharks that came close enough to attract their attention. A school of playful porpoises did great stunts, leaps, and jumps close to us.

At about 7:00 p.m., we noticed that *Saladin* was moving with a light NE breeze. Some of *Jolie*'s crew who were away in a dinghy evidently taking photographs, rejoined their ship and she picked up the breeze and moved away to the NW. Unfortunately, it never reached *Fulmar* or ourselves until about 8:30 p.m., when we both got going, but we only logged about 1½ knots per hour. Crew jaded from shifting spinnakers and resetting balloon canvases.

The leaders, *Jolie* and *Saladin*, lost sight of us at dusk, but were only a few miles ahead. At about 9:00 p.m., we stole a march on *Fulmar* by gybing to starboard in response to a slight S.W. breeze and got away from her. We saw her about half a mile in our wake. From then until midnight, we were rolling with sails slacking and only a little more than steerage way. This was a most disappointing day. Periods of calms and light catspaws resulted in little progress. Since midnight last night, our run was only 37 miles, and yet no sign of a change.

WEDNESDAY 19th August 1925 The middle watch had a glassy calm, total log 3¼ miles. The morning watch logged 4¼ miles, while the forenoon watch showed the enormous total of 13¼ miles. We were all depressed at not seeing our big rival *Jolie* at dawn. This was the first morning that we were not cheered by her proximity.

The port watch tackled the problem by resetting jackyard topsail by taking a couple of turns on the end of the wire halyard around the yard and hitching it on its own part, and seizing it securely, the sail was reset. The drawback is that we cannot lower the yard sufficiently to unbend the sail, and the hand must cast off the halyard where it is fastened to the yard as described, by standing on the starboard light screen. Not an inviting proposition if we have to hand the sail in a strong wind.

However, it means a lot to us to have our sky-scraper aloft, and, as if our luck was out while we were without it, a light W.N.W. wind arrived about 2:00 p.m., and we stood away on the port tack, sailing full and by on a N.W. by N. ½ N. course. This put us well to windward of *Saladin* and *Fulmar*, and our prospects are generally better. If this holds, we ought to be in sight of land between the the Galley and the Stags before dark. Even though we only do 3 knots per hour, we should get into the visible sector of the Galley Light and have the comfort of the the light until we pick up the Fastnet visible sector. After all the calms and shifts of wind, and box hauling around for the last few days, to say nothing of the loss of our log, it would be a comfort to get a certain fix.

At 6 o'clock, one of the indomitable port watch sighted land on our weather bow, viz., Cape Clear. Our estimate of our position was not so faulty, as on the course we were steering since two o'clock, we were heading for High Island.

At 9 o'clock, *Saladin*, a long way to leeward, tacked and seemed to carry a strong northerly wind, well up along the land. *Fulmar* was about three miles in our wake. Counting that this wind would reach us, we tacked ship and stood W. by S., but it soon became obvious that *Saladin* lost the wind and we drew away from her.

We made another tack in the vicinity of the Stags at 9:45 p.m., heading N. by W. ½ W., sometimes looking up to N.N.W. No sign of *Saladin*. She cannot be burning her lights. We took a cross bearing of the Galley and Stags, which fixed our position and



Skipper, Harry and Jim

showed an error in our reckoning of only 2 1/4 miles. Not so bad after all the box hauling and light winds. Met the wind very light up to midnight.

THURSDAY 20TH AUGUST 1925 In the middle watch, we picked up a light, S wind and were able to head W. ¼ N. for the Fastnet. At 4:00 a.m., we picked up the Baltimore Light, and later we opened up the red sector of Crookhaven.

Fulmar and *Saladin* were fairly close together, about two miles astern of us, when we rounded the Fastnet at 8:35 a.m. *Fulmar* went around at 9:20 a.m., and *Saladin* five minutes later.

We made the wind at about S.E. and stood towards the Calves, working the slack tide as far as The Bill of Clare and went away from the other two boats. We were off Bream Point at 11:30 a.m., heading E. by S. ½ S. Rain.



Fastnet Rock



Skipper Harry Donegan

All hands were depressed at the prospect of a dead beat to windward towards Longships, which was by no means inviting. Our wireless being out of action, we had no means of knowing the weather forecast. Although we did a lot of signalling and flag-waving at the Fastnet, we completely overlooked this all-important question. We decided we would work eastward.

Almost as soon as this resolve was made, the wind came in from the S.W., and later veered more westerly, eventually firming up from W.N.W. When off South Harbour at 12:40 p.m., we got this wind and sailed away on a course S.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S., with the shy spinnaker to starboard. *Saladin* and *Fulmar* got the wind from the same point later, but by 2:00 p.m., they were a very long way astern. At that time, the Fastnet bore N.W. by W. $\frac{1}{4}$ W., the



Baltimore beacon N.W. by W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W. This puts us 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles on our course, while the log reads 121 miles. Allowing for a slight inaccuracy in the hand bearings, this seems good enough. We allowed 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles eastering for tide. We carried the spinnaker to port up to 3:30 p.m., when the wind backed and we switched to the yankee jib topsail and balloon. We carried the sail until 4:45 p.m., when the wind became too much ahead for the yankee, and we had to hand it. The wind continued to back to the south, and we refrained from setting the working jib topsail. Plenty of wind, with prospects of more to come tonight. At 9:30 p.m., a few heavy squalls hit, which buried our lee-deck, so we swapped the balloon to the staysail and set the working staysail.

FRIDAY 21st August 1925 Relieved of my watch on deck owing to a scald (which raised a nasty blister on my left instep) incurred when making tea in the forecabin, I am resuming this narrative under exceptional difficulty. The cabin swing table is doing its level best to assassinate me. I have been struck in the chest and chin, while the weighty box beneath is making frantic efforts to amputate one or both of my legs. My notebook is at one moment close to my face and the next almost out of reach, and it seemed hard to believe that the wretched article of furniture is only trying to obey the laws of gravity. One could more readily assume that some fiendish mechanical force was engaged in the pleasant occupation of thwarting my heroic efforts to chronicle our progress. At 6 p.m. we are still plowing along, thank the Lord, and the log tells us hourly seven and a half and 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles have been sailed. As I write, it is exactly 9 hours since we got the first of the wind, and our log reads 63, so we are logging the miles consistently, and there is a good prospect of a finish perhaps late tomorrow night. One hesitates to prophesy in the face of the calms and cat's paws we have encountered since Saturday last, but this wind seems as if it has come to stay. God grant that it has, for it may mean that we still have a chance with *Jolie*. We did a lot of calculating at meals, particularly throughout the day, as to how far *Jolie* got after rounding the Fastnet last evening. The wind must have been very light, judging by the weather we had, and it seems hard to believe that she could have logged more than an average of 3 knots for the 11 hours she rounded ahead of us. Assuming she made good thirty miles to the southeast before we rounded, and that she got this wind that we have now, simultaneously with us, we still seem to have a tolerable chance of saving our time if the wind holds as it is. We are buoyed up with the hope that she had not even as big lead, for a topsail schooner. We worked this out after all our deliberations: that *Jolie* would only be three hours ahead of us at the Longships, leaving us a comfortable margin of 6 hours. So, we are prepared to carry all we can as we are doing at the moment. There is one thing very certain:

LEFT: Working clothes

if we were not racing, we would be under a nice comfortable trysail and a No. 3 jib. As it is, we are into the rail with the whole mainsail, big jib and staysail, and a cabin table eloquently suggests that we are carrying even more than is prudent. At sundown, we could just make out *Saladin* in our wake. We had lost sight of *Fulmar* an hour or so earlier, so if this wind holds until we get to Plymouth, we'll have at least a sporting chance.

Having given the ship's company very optimistic views on the situation, it only remains for me to add that, as we have been wrong in so many of our surmises since the start, we may be equally wrong now. *Jolie Brise* may be at her moorings in Plymouth, or she may be only a few miles ahead of us. Who knows? Anyhow, we are not becalmed tonight, and it's a good job, for we are all fed up with calms and the blow and movement of the ship is a consolation if we never had a chance. One last word on the subject: we regard this wind as giving us a look-in.

Friday August 21st, 1925, Middle Watch had no cushy watch. Heavy rain and squalls, and a big tumble of southwesterly sea made things a bit too lively and *Gull* was buried in the bad ones. We had to hand the staysail and, at 1:30 a.m., lower away the peak and a bit of the throat of the mainsail to ease her. A bad two hours ensues: more trouble from the sea than from the wind. At 3:30 a.m. the wind moderated somewhat and we hoisted the mainsail again. *Gull* was inclined to gripe a good deal with only the jib, so we gave her the foresail and hope to add something to each hour's run. Glass dropped to 29.6. Sky overcast. Heavy rain and squalls. At 9 a.m., we made out *Saladin* many miles in our wake. We set the balloon foresail. At 11:30 a.m., we sighted land on the lee bow, log reading 150. More rain and squalls, wind backing. The land completely blotted out with rain. The wind backed further. Only able to head S.E. We did not again get a sight of the land until 3 p.m., when we made out Pendennis Point on our lee bow. Wind still backing us off. We carried on so as to get the northern set of tide under our lee before staying.

There was a very considerable swell and broken water in the vicinity of the Brisons, over which the seas were breaking white. We could see a big boll off the Longships and between the rocks and the shore. A fleet of French crabbers were standing down by the land.

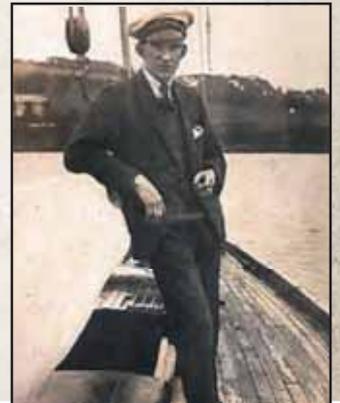
The wind at this time was not very strong, but the sea appeared to be getting much worse. When we threw round on the port tack, we were able to fetch the Longships, but we found the tide very strong. In the trough of the sea, we did little, but as we rose, we got the wind on the crest of each wave, with quite enough force to bury us to the rail. *Saladin* met the same fate as we did, but was a long way to leeward and astern. *Fulmar*, last evening, was so far astern that perhaps we need not concern ourselves about her.

RIGHT: Shore going clothes



Skipper Harry, Jim and Brendan Sullivan

As we approached the Longships with the flood making up the channel, we noticed the race looking very angry. The enormous swell was making a clean breach over the rocks and halfway up the Lighthouse, owing to the flood tide. We had to keep well away owing to the flood tide. It was not until 9:30 p.m. that we came abreast of the Runnelstone, just to windward of the two leading crabbers. (all of which were making for Newlyn). We then altered course to the N.E., strong and squally. Around 11 p.m., we got some very heavy squalls which buried our lee deck, so we had to tie down two reefs in the mainsail. This operation was successfully executed in the dark in excellent time, and the course resumed. It was very difficult to estimate the distance off the Lizard, as the swell was very high and the night intensely dark. As we were not towing the log, we could not gauge it by a forepoint bearing. In safety therefore, we had to stand off to the steamer track before altering course to E. N.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ N. for Penlee Point, which we did at 1:50 a.m. The wind freed us a bit, and we were able to check sheets on this course and shake out our reefs. We set the jib-header and later the balloon foresail and jib topsail. At daylight, a suspicious craft was sighted well ahead. Could it be *Fulmar*? Of course, everybody said, "Nonsense, *Fulmar* could never have got ahead of us." The





helmsman declared that he had seen that sail for some time and that she was very far to windward at first, having evidently come out of Falmouth. It was obvious that we were overhauling the craft very quickly, and at breakfast time there were few of us that doubted the "sappers" had wiped our eye, but how they did it was the puzzle.

One spokesman voiced the feeling of all hands when he declared our intention of giving *Fulmar* (if that was *Fulmar*) a cheer, the like of which she had never heard before. *Saladin* showed up a long way astern, but we seemed to be sailing faster than her. *Fulmar* was about a mile ahead of us at Ramepoint, and as she seemed to be standing well clear on a more easterly course than us, there was a momentary feeling of excitement when it looked as if she was passing eastward of Plymouth. It should be mentioned that we were never quite sure, despite our excellent glasses, that this was actually *Fulmar*. But we were not then long in suspense, for she hauled up for Penlee and showed us more of her red side than we had previously seen. Sailing between the Draystone and the point, she disappeared from our view.

A steam pilot boat passed us close to the Draystone, and in response to our hail as to how many yachts had finished, the pilot told us, "First only *Jolie Brise*," which left us again in doubt. But one of the hands on her afterdeck yelled out, "There is another yacht one up ahead of you!" Then we knew for certain.

When approaching the breakwater, we flew our code flag "E" from the peak, and a naval pinnace came off to us. We noticed that Commodore E.G. Martin, owner and helmsman of *Jolie Brise*, was aboard. They came quite close alongside, and we exchanged greetings. When we crossed the finishing line, the pinnace stood by us and gave us every facility for mooring. Before doing so, we sailed close to *Fulmar*, then at her moorings, and gave her a rousing cheer, which her bearded and jubilant crew responded to with every evidence of the best goodwill.

Queensdown



So ended the Ocean Race for us and it was gratifying to learn that we were awarded a very handsome silver cup for finishing third. Cheering the winner was postponed owing to the fact that she was in dry dock, but we later cheered her owner in his launch.

The compliment of the *Gull* was six all told, and we had three hands to the watch. Our navigational methods were very simple, as we relied throughout on "dead reckoning." Each hour, the officer of the watch logged the run made and ticked off the position on the chart, often under difficulties, and it doesn't seem that we fared any worse than our better-equipped opponents, for our landfalls were invariably accurate.

Good helmsmanship, together with constant attention to the compass course and careful recording of the distance run, made up for any want of sextant or chronometer when the distance is such as that from the Longships to the Fastnet.

As for food: we carried fresh meat, which all hands enjoyed for the first three days. Soups, stews, and potatoes provided acceptable dinners throughout the voyage, while there was always cold meat, cheese, etc., for supper. I always made a point of having Bovril or tea served at the change of watch, and it proved an excellent "pick-me-up." Our fresh bread lasted to the finish, though one could scarcely call it "fresh" when we reached Plymouth.

Though practically a "dry-ship," I think it will be admitted that, at the finish, we were as fit a crew as sailed into Plymouth, although we underwent a pretty severe test of endurance, particularly during the last two days of the race. None of us was any the worse for what was at times a very trying experience, and I can say without doubt that all of us enjoyed every moment of the voyage.

It was an experience not soon to be forgotten, and the determination to take part again next year, expressed by the competitors when assembled in the Royal Western Yacht Club at the dinner given by the popular winner, Commodore E.G. Martin, shows that the crews of all the boats equally enjoyed the rather novel experience of a week's ocean racing.

Happy 100th birthday Jack Wolfe

On May 31st, 2024, Jack Wolfe of Howth marks an extraordinary milestone—his 100th birthday. As the first centenarian in the Irish Cruising Club's history, Jack's life story is as remarkable as it is inspiring.



A man of many passions, Jack's early years were filled with adventurous pursuits, from car rallying to hill climbs, before his love for sailing took center stage. One of his earliest sailing experiences was with the Dublin Bay 21 *Estelle*, a spirited racing boat from the Royal St George YC in Dun Laoghaire, which set the tone for his lifelong connection to the sea. Jack's first offshore experience came as a schoolboy, sailing back to Dublin from the Solent aboard *Huzare*, a Bermudan sloop, alongside notable ICC members such as Desmond Keating and Keith McFerran.

But it was through his enduring friendship with Tommy Cobbe of Newbridge House that Jack truly embraced cruising. On Tommy's gaff yawl *Charm*, Jack learned the ropes of traditional cruising, even after he was struck by polio at age 21. The polio left him with a disability, but Jack's resilience transformed him into a one-legged sailor, known for his excellent cooking, good humor, and unwavering spirit. His immaculate boat maintenance and love for the sea made him a beloved figure in the sailing community.

Jack's home for many years was Robbs Wall, an ancient tower house guarding the south side of Malahide Estuary. There, he hosted lively Easter fitting-out parties, a highlight of which was a keg of Guinness and a roaring fire in the castle's ancient hearth. Despite his disability, Jack was a master at getting boats ready for the season and was always the life of the party.

A member of the Irish Cruising Club since 1959, Jack has been a cherished friend and mentor to many. His zest for life, sharp mind, and generosity of spirit have made him a beloved figure in Irish sailing and beyond. Even now, at 100, Jack remains a unique and vibrant presence, telling tales of a rich, rewarding life in

RIGHT AND BELOW: Tommy Cobbe's *Charm* in Howth Harbour 1944. Jack is on the starboard deck



All but Stornoway

In 1974 log adjudicator Dennis Faulkner awarded Jack the Fortnight Cup for a well executed West Coast of Scotland cruises where a considerable distance was covered and a large amount of anchorages visited in a remarkably short time. Following below are extracts from the log of *Gay Gannet*.



Gay Gannet is a 7½ ton Sterling. The crew consisted of four Wolfes - Jack, John, Peter and Harvey; and also Keith Wilkinson who acted as a sort of U.N. Observer and, from time to time, an invaluable Henry Kissinger.

We duly arrived in Craighouse on Jura for breakfast on Monday 5 August having made a short refuelling and Customs clearance stop in Donaghadee. We spent the morning catching pollock at the anchorage. Another perfectly calm and sunny day, where in the afternoon, we moved to our old favourite anchorage Loch Tarbert on the west side of Jura, sweeping through the Sound of Islay on the 5 knot tide. Loch Tarbert was delightful and completely unchanged over the twelve months since we had seen it last except that it seemed crowded with the three other yachts already there ahead of us. The evening was spent with short reconnaissance trips ashore just to check that everything was still there - the spectacular raised beaches, the small trout lochs and the beautiful swimming pool into which it tumbles as inviting as ever.

We lazily remained there the following day when we should have been flogging northward as it was blowing the full of your hat of SE wind and rain. We made the best of the bad weather that evening over a bucket of boiled cockles, followed by a fine entree of "pouched" trout and, of course, a toast or two to lend even more cheer to the festivities.

Next morning 7 August we sailed out early under friendlier skies bound for Tobermory but any hopes of a good breeze disappeared as the smart easterly moderated and left us with no alternative but to motor for some 20 miles into the Sound of Mull where we again were able to sail. In fact the pleasant run up the sound developed later into an exciting gallop over the last few hours of the 50 mile trip and we fairly scorched into Tobermory under main and

Jack the Centenarian. All photos courtesy Peter & Jill Wolfe



LEFT: *Gay Gannet* in the Hebrides



Heading south through the Kyles of Lochalsh. Jack (centre), with Keith Wilkinson and sons John and Harvey Wolfe

boomed-out genoa arriving at 1755 - just in time for Keith to jump ashore and get a hob-nailed boot in the door of the butcher's shop before he could close. It poured rain that night while we dined in the MacDonald Arms and the forecast was enough to encourage us to stay there for a week - a string of depressions were queuing up in the Atlantic or so they said. It was certainly pleasant to spend the evening in the warm and sriokly security of the crowded pub without having to think about "the lonely sea and the sky" outside.

It was still pouring in the morning but this didn't detract from the flavour of Scaly McTavish's kippers. By mid morning the skies cleared and a breeze picked up so away we went having decided to go to Rhum which would then leave our options open to continue on to the Hebrides direct or, if the bad weather really materialized, to go north inside Skye via the Sound of Sleat. By the time we reached Ardnamurchan point and so gained our coveted laurels (or more correctly, bunch of heather) the



Gay Gannet at anchor in Scadabay, Harris

wind failed and so back to motoring. However, Ardnamurchan point was also memorable because a pair of peregrine falcons, as if to congratulate us, put on a display of aerobatics high over the cliffs which made the Farnborough Airshow seem tame.

We motored into Loch Sresort on Rhum just as the sun was about to slip behind those gloriously named mountains Askval and Ainshval both over 2500 ft., having passed between Egg and Muck on our way. We were just about to hand our mackerel lines after a fruitless day when we caught the most enormous mackerel yet recorded by *Gay Gannet* - it was certainly bigger than a piece of wood although not quite the size of a stone. What a bit of luck! And after a few more passes over the area we had our supper of a very large variety of mackerel indeed.

Later in the evening, we made an expedition ashore to inspect the monstrosity, Kinloch House. This proved to be a painful mistake but it quickly explained why we saw no one out of their houses "taking the evening air". We had only gone 200 yards from the dinghy when millions of tiny midges attacked us. They filled the air like smoke and we fled in pandemonium.

From Rhum, we had a good sail out to Loch Maddy on North Uist in brilliant sunshine but with a chilly S.W. breeze. Our promised depressions were not being as fierce as we expected and the weather seemed at least momentarily settled. What splendid scenery the Little Minch offers on a clear day like this. More than a dozen islands, all in view at the same time, would merge lugubriously into each other and reappear again with a new shape as we sailed along. Loch Maddy was the scene of a fairly heavy celebration and I can only say that I for one was most appreciative of the quiet morning following this debacle. The clear crisp air and bright sunshine

had such a therapeutic effect that by lunchtime we were able to move to Loch Parten 3 miles away to catch brown trout. We also acquired our sprig of heather there, the size of which was nothing short of ostentatious.

From Loch Partan the following morning we took a leisurely run past the Sound of Harris to the tiny anchorage hidden in the rocks called Scadabay. It is just south of East Loch Tarbert on Harris and is a perfect natural haven with an entrance only 10 yards wide that looks even narrower as you approach it. Suddenly you are through the gap and find yourself in an inner basin which would be safe in any weather. In fact something like a hurricane had been forecast and that was why we chose to stop there. As it turned out, the forecast maintained its untarnished reputation for being wrong but by not tempting Providence we spent a day in Scadabay and it was delightful.

This being the Sabbath, Keith would not allow us fish in any of the multitude of lochs and tarns that dot the Hebrides. Instead, we went for walks, while he with immense hypocrisy, laboured in the galley to make "drop scones" for afternoon tea. Although the first few off the production line "dropped" like lead, the remainder were a gastronomic triumph of considerable magnitude. It did seem a little incongruous however to be enjoying a tea party in the exact spot where viking longships may have sheltered and feasted too, although somewhat less delicately than our polite event.

Since we were meant to be in Howth by the following Saturday, at this stage it was decided to turn homewards. This decision caused near mutiny because we would have felt real heroes to have

made Stornoway on a short cruise like ours, but it was always just a storm away (ugh!). Perhaps another year.

On the Monday we motorsailed in light head winds the 50 miles to Plockton in Loch Carron going north of Skye and through the narrow Rona sound. On Tuesday, after John had saved the threatened time schedule by repairing a leak in the engine cooling system we left Plockton at lunchtime and caught the tide through Loch Aish and down the Kyle Rhea. Again light headwinds and much motoring but this was amply compensated for by the glorious sunshine and magnificent scenery. By 2000 we were out of the Sound of Sleat and the sunset that evening as we passed the Small Isles with Benbecula and South and North Uist on the horizon was truly unforgettable. At midnight we rounded Axnamurchan Point and again caught a fair tide down the Sound of Mull. By dawn we had successfully groped our way down the sound to Loch Aline where an easterly picked up and held. At last, a good breeze to quieten the engine and away we sped down the Firth of Lorne through Pladda and Dorus Mor amid dozens of seals. Our first foul tide of any consequence was making 6 knots and no matter how we tried we could not break through it. After sailing hard but nowhere for 40 minutes we finally forced through as the current started to slacken. The wind was by now very fresh and we scurried into the sea lock at Crinan almost to the second as the full force of the gale arrived from the east.

It blew so hard that the water in the canal fairly boiled. We locked through to Cairn Baan, the halfway house, in torrential rain and tied up at last at 1800 for breakfast, lunch and dinner all in one, well pleased with our 28 hour hop from Plockton. And what smug, contentment glowed in the ship as we lay safe in the canal for the night while the gale wore itself out

trying to lodge every field of barley in the country. Next day after the gale had blown over we trolled a spinner slowly, down the canal. To everyone's delight, Harvey did catch a fine 1141b brownie and promptly lost the spinner a few minutes later when trying for a repeat performance.

We locked out of Airdrishaig in the evening and sailed to East Loch Tarbert which seemed very crowded after the wild Hebrides. By now it was leaving it late to meet the deadline in Howth and with Friday morning's forecast for SW gales in virtually all sea areas, there didn't seem much hope of getting home before Christmas. So, the skipper opted to fly from Glasgow and left us 'holding the baby.' Of course, the moment he had gone the forecasts changed for the better and that very evening we left also.

As luck would have it, the promised N.W. wind Fo 4-5 didn't arrive until 24 hours later and as we motored down the Kilbrannan sound at midnight we felt quite hostile towards the Met's Office who normally do us - ungrateful mob - such a fine service.

By morning we were beating in a light S.W. so we gave up the idea of flogging on to Howth and called in to Bill and Heather King in Port St. Mary instead. Arriving there at 1900, 23 hours out from East Loch Tarbert, we were welcomed into the harbour by the now famous friendly dolphin. At midnight the N.W. breeze came through and Bill and Heather immediately shanghied John from our diminishing crew so that they could sail in convoy with us to Howth.

This was a lively and enjoyable sail although we were quite tired and the two boats only parted company at dawn, arriving back to Howth in mid morning to a brilliantly sunny Sunday gave us the impression of having overshot the mark and hit Spain instead. I would not have complained if we had, but Spain, like Stornoway, will have to be put on *Gay Gannet's* list of things to do.



Gay Gannet homeward bound via the Crinan Canal. Jack and Keith.

Past and Present Officers of the Irish Cruising Club



| Commodores | Vice Commodores | Rear Commodores |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1929 H.M. Wright | 1929 H. P. F. Donegan | 1929 H. R. Wallace |
| 1942 A. W. Mooney | 1941 A. W. Mooney | 1930 A. W. Mooney |
| 1950 M. A. Sullivan | 1942 H. E. Donegan | 1941 H. E. Donegan |
| 1953 J. B. Hollwey | 1947 P. O'Keefe | 1942 D. Mellon |
| 1954 R. P. Campbell | 1948 M. A. Sullivan | 1947 H. Osterberg |
| 1958 F. Cudmore | 1950 J. B. Hollwey | 1950 K. McFerran |
| 1960 H. W. S. Clark | 1953 R. P. Campbell | 1951 R. P. Campbell |
| 1963 P. H. Greer | 1954 B. C. Maguire | 1953 B. C. Maguire |
| 1966 R. L. Berridge | 1956 F. Cudmore | 1954 F. Cudmore |
| 1969 J. D. Faulkner | 1958 H. W. S. Clark | 1956 H. W. S. Clark |
| 1972 R. H. O'Hanlon | 1960 P. H. Greer | 1958 P. H. Greer |
| 1975 D. N. Doyle | 1963 C. Riordan | 1961 C. Riordan |
| 1978 J. H. Guinness | 1965 W. H. D. McCormick | 1963 W. H. D. McCormick |
| 1981 P. J. Bunting | 1967 J. D. Faulkner | 1965 R. L. Berridge |
| 1984 C. J. FitzGerald | 1969 D. N. Doyle | 1966 J. C. McConnell |
| 1987 J. Gore-Grimes | 1971 R. H. O'Hanlon | 1968 J. H. Guinness |
| 1990 H. P. Kennedy | 1972 P. J. Bunting | 1970 R. H. O'Hanlon |
| 1993 D. Nicholson | 1974 G. B. Leonard | 1971 R. J. Fielding |
| 1996 L. McGonagle | 1976 J.M. Wolfe | 1973 H. Cudmore |
| 1998 M. McKee | 1977 A.D. MacIwaine | 1974 G. B. Leonard |
| 2000 D.H. FitzGerald | 1978 P. J. Bunting | 1975 J.M. Wolfe |
| 2002 A.R. Baker | 1980 G. Keneflick | 1976 A.D. MacIwaine |
| 2005 C. McHenry | 1982 C. J. FitzGerald | 1977 J. M. Wolte |
| 2008 Peter Ronaldson | 1984 L. McGonagle | 1978 G. Keneflick |
| 2011 David Tucker | 1986 J. Gore-Grimes | 1980 M. McKee |
| 2014 Peter Killen | 1987 H. P. Kennedy | 1981 J. Gore-Grimes |
| 2017 Stanton Adair | 1989 D. H. B. FitzGerald | 1982 C. Fitzgerald |
| 2020 David Beattie | 1990 Arthur S. P. Orr | 1983 L. McGonagle |
| 2024 Alan Markey | 1993 Brian Hegarty | 1984 M. McKee |
| | 1996 Michael O'Farrell | 1986 H. P. Kennedy |
| | 1997 Arthur Baker | 1987 M. R. Sullivan & D. H. FitzGerald |
| | 1999 T.C. Johnson | 1988 B. Hassett & D. H. FitzGerald |
| | 2001 Donal Brazil | 1989 B. Hassett & A. S. P. Orr |
| | 2002 Peter Ronaldson | 1990 Clayton Love Jnr & D. J. Ryan |
| | | 1992 Brian Hegarty & David Nicholson |
| | | 1993 Michael O'Farrell & David H.B. FitzGerald |

Rear Commodores

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 1994 | Michael O'Farrell & P. Walsh |
| 1995 | L. McGonagle & P. Walsh |
| 1996 | Arthur Baker & Jarlath Cunnane |
| 1997 | J. Cunnane & P. Ronaldson |
| 1999 | P. O'Sullivan & J.C. Bruen |
| 2000 | J.C. Bruen & P. Ronaldson |
| 2001 | P. Ronaldson & P. Killen |
| 2002 | T. Clarke & P. Killen |
| 2003 | T. Clarke & C. McHenry |
| 2004 | J. Nixon & G. MacMahon |
| 2005 | D. Tucker & G. MacMahon |
| 2006 | D. Tucker & D. Whitehead |
| 2007 | C. Magennis & D. Whitehead |
| 2008 | C. Hilliard & B. Kenny |
| 2009 | C. Hilliard & E. Cudmore |
| 2010 | J. Phelan & E. Cudmore |
| 2011 | A. Leonard & F. Randalow |
| 2012 | P. Courtney & F. Randalow |
| 2013 | T.S. Foote & P. Courtney |
| 2014 | Stanton Adair & T.S. Foote |
| 2015 | Peter Fernie & Stanton Adair |
| 2016 | Richard Cudmore & Derek White |
| 2017 | Tom Fitzpatrick & Richard Cudmore |
| 2018 | David Beattie & Lonan Lardner |
| 2020 | Alan Markey & Ann Lyons |
| 2023 | Julie Chambers & Séamus O'Connor |
| 2024 | Séamus O'Connor & Alex Blackwell |

Honorary Treasurers

| | |
|------|------------------|
| 1929 | W. MacBride |
| 1948 | G. B. Moore |
| 1964 | N. Watson |
| 1973 | Leonard Shell |
| 1979 | R. Shanks |
| 1984 | Donal O'Boyle |
| 1993 | Donal Brazil |
| 2001 | Arthur Baker |
| 2002 | B. MacManus |
| 2005 | M. Kirby |
| 2007 | Tom Fitzpatrick |
| 2013 | Robert Barker |
| 2019 | Tom Kirby |
| 2022 | Patrick Blaney |
| 2023 | Kieron Guilfoyle |

Hon. Secretaries *

| | |
|------|------------------|
| 1929 | H. B. Wright |
| 1933 | D. Keatinge |
| 1935 | R. P. Campbell |
| 1937 | K. McFerran |
| 1941 | D. Keatinge |
| 1944 | M. F. Hally |
| 1948 | T. J. Hanan |
| 1960 | P. D. Morck |
| 1965 | A. Dunn |
| 1977 | P. J. D. Mullins |
| 1981 | B. Hegarty |
| 1990 | C. P. McHenry |
| 2003 | R. Cudmore |
| 2008 | G. FitzGerald |
| 2011 | C. Hilliard |
| 2015 | Alan Markey |
| 2020 | Harry Whelehan |
| 2023 | Donal Gallagher |

* NOTE: From time to time there were acting Honorary Secretaries: the names listed are where the incumbent has held office for at least one year.

Award Winners

THE FAULKNER CUP

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| 1931 | Keatinge & McFerran Marie |
| 1932 | A.W. Mooney Nirvana |
| 1933 | D. Tidmarsh Foam |
| 1934 | Mrs Crimmins Nirvana |
| 1935 | H.D.E. Barton Dauntless |
| 1936 | A.W. Mooney Aideen |
| 1937 | D. Tidmarsh Foam |
| 1938 | H.P. Donegan Gull |
| 1939 | Miss D. French Embla |
| 1947 | A.W. Mooney Aideen |
| 1949 | L. McMullen Rainbow |
| 1950 | H. Osterberg Marama |
| 1951 | Wallace Clark Zamorin |
| 1952 | P. O'Keefe Mavis |
| 1953 | Wallace Clark Caru |
| 1954 | B.C. Maguire Minx of Malham |
| 1955 | C. Love Galcador |
| 1956 | N. Falkiner Euphazel |
| 1957 | R. O'Hanlon Harmony |
| 1958 | R.P. Campbell Minx of Malham |
| 1959 | P.H. Greer Ann Gail |
| 1960 | R.D. Heard Huff of Arklow |
| 1961 | N. Falkiner Euphazel |
| 1962 | R.D. Heard Huff of Arklow |
| 1963 | T.H. Roche Neon Tetra |
| 1964 | R. O'Hanlon Tjaldur |
| 1965 | L. McMullen Rainbow |
| 1966 | R. O'Hanlon Tjaldur |
| 1967 | R.P. Campbell Verve |
| 1968 | R. O'Hanlon Tjaldur |
| 1969 | J. Virden Sharavogue |
| 1970 | J. Virden Sharavogue |
| 1971 | R. Sewell Thalassa |
| 1972 | J. Virden Sharavogue |
| 1973 | A. Leonard Wishbone |
| 1974 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1975 | J. Eves Aeolus |
| 1976 | G. Leonard Wishbone |
| 1977 | B. Law Sai See |
| 1978 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1979 | M.P. O'Flaherty Cullaun of Kinsale |
| 1980 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1981 | J.F. Coffey Meg of Muglins |
| 1982 | E.P.E. Byrne Beaver |
| 1983 | R. Cudmore Morgana |
| 1984 | O. Glaser Verna |
| 1985 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1986 | B. Bramwell Tor |
| 1987 | Paddy Barry Saint Patrick |
| 1988 | Terence Kennedy Icarus of Cuan |
| 1989 | Cormac McHenry Ring of Kerry |
| 1990 | Paddy Barry Saint Patrick |
| 1991 | Peter Bunting Gulkarna II |
| 1992 | Michael Coleman Stella Maris |
| 1993 | Paddy Barry Saint Patrick |
| 1994 | Michael Coleman Stella Maris |
| 1995 | Peter Killen Black Pepper |
| 1996 | Hugo du Plessis Samharcin an Lar |
| 1997 | Cormac McHenry Erquy |
| 1998 | John Waddell Heather of Mourne |
| 1999 | Brian Black Caelan |

| | |
|------|--|
| 2000 | John Gore-Grimes Arctic Fern |
| 2001 | Paddy Barry & Jarlath Cunnane Northabout |
| 2002 | John & Ann Clementson Faustina II |
| 2003 | John Gore-Grimes Arctic Fern |
| 2004 | Maire Breathnach King of Hearts |
| 2005 | Peter Killen Pure Magic |
| 2006 | Mike Alexander Katielok II |
| 2007 | Michael Holland Celtic Spirit |
| 2008 | Ed Wheeler Witchcraft |
| 2009 | Trevor Lusty Seafever of Cuan |
| 2010 | Fergus Quinlan Pylades |
| 2011 | Fergus Quinlan Pylades |
| 2012 | Fergus Quinlan Pylades |
| 2013 | Sam Davis Suvretta |
| 2014 | Neil Hegarty Shelduck |
| 2015 | Alan Rountree Tallulah |
| 2016 | Daragh Nagle Chantey V |
| 2017 | Maire Breathnach Annabel J |
| 2018 | Donal Walsh Lady Belle |
| 2019 | Daragh Nagle Chantey V |
| 2020 | Vera Quinlan Danu |
| 2021 | Robert Henshall Maria |
| 2022 | Duncan Scare Quibus |
| 2023 | Ed Wheeler Witchcraft |
| 2024 | Andrew Wilkes Annabel J |

THE STRANGFORD CUP

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 1970 | R. O'Hanlon Clarion |
| 1971 | M. Park Kitugani |
| 1972 | R. Gomes Ainmara |
| 1973 | J. Beckett Dara |
| 1974 | J. Guinness Sule Skerry |
| 1975 | G. Leonard Wishbone |
| 1976 | Wallace Clark Wild Goose |
| 1977 | J. Guinness Deerhound |
| 1978 | J. Villiers Stuart Vinter |
| 1979 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1980 | M. Villiers Stuart Winifreda |
| 1981 | J. Guinness Deerhound |
| 1982 | D.J. Ryan Red Velvet |
| 1983 | W.A. Smyth Velma |
| 1984 | J. Guinness Deerhound |
| 1985 | J. Gore-Grimes Shardana |
| 1986 | Paddy Barry Sung Foon |
| 1987 | Brian Dalton Saint Patrick |
| 1988 | Hugo du Plessis Boru |
| 1989 | David Nicholson Samharcin an Lar |
| 1990 | Tommy O'Keefe Black Shadow |
| 1991 | David FitzGerald Tir na nOg |
| 1992 | David FitzGerald Peigin Elle |

| | |
|------|--|
| 1992 | Cormac McHenry Ring of Kerry |
| 1993 | W. M. Nixon & E. Wheeler Witchcraft of Howth |
| 1994 | David Park Alys |
| 1995 | Bernard Corbally Rionnag |
| 1996 | David Park Alys |
| 1997 | Brian Black Cullin |
| 1998 | David Park Alys |
| 1999 | Peter Mullins Cullaun |
| 2000 | Michael Balmforth Greenheart |
| 2001 | Bernard Corbally Beowulf |
| 2002 | David FitzGerald White Heather |
| 2003 | E & B Cudmore Ann Again |
| 2004 | James Nixon Scilla Verna |
| 2005 | B & E Cudmore Ann Again |
| 2006 | James Nixon Scilla Verna |
| 2007 | Bernard Corbally & Ann Wouffe-Flanagan Beowulf |
| 2008 | Michael Coleman Oyster Cove |
| 2009 | Donal Walsh Lady Kate |
| 2010 | Maire Breathnach Young Larry |
| 2011 | Stephen Hyde A Lady |
| 2012 | Jarlath Cunnane Northabout |
| 2013 | John Duggan Hecuba |
| 2014 | E. Nicholson & P. Dorgan Mollyhawk's Shadow |
| 2015 | Paddy Barry Ar Seachrán |
| 2016 | Seamus O'Connor Sil Eile |
| 2017 | Donal Walsh Lady Belle |
| 2018 | Derek White Ballyclare |
| 2019 | Paddy Barry len |
| 2020 | No Award |
| 2021 | Daragh Nagle Chantey V |
| 2022 | Paddy Barry & Adrian Spence El Paradiso |
| 2023 | Maire Breathnach Annabel J |
| 2024 | Donal Walsh Lady Belle |

THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

| | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 1978 | R. Cudmore Morgana |
| 1979 | A. Doherty Ball Hal |
| 1980 | David Nicholson Golden Harvest |
| 1981 | M.H. Snell Black Shadow |
| 1982 | David Nicholson Meg of Muglins |
| 1983 | J.F. Coffey Meg of Muglins |
| 1984 | J.F. Coffey Meg of Muglins |
| 1985 | J.F. Coffey Meg of Muglins |
| 1986 | Hugo du Plessis Samharcin an Lar |
| 1987 | James Cahill Ricjak |
| 1988 | Brian Smullen Cullaun |
| 1989 | Dermod Ryan Scoolaing |
| 1990 | Jarlath Cunnane Lir |

Award Winners

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1991 Ronnie Slater | Tandara |
| 1992 David McBride | Deerhound |
| 1993 Jarlath Cunnane | Lir |
| 1994 Jonathan Virden | Twayblade |
| 1995 Henry Barnwell | Hylasia |
| 1996 Cormac McHenry | Erquy |
| 1997 Brendan Bradley | Shallini |
| 1998 Adrian Spence | Madcap |
| 1999 Bernard Corbally | Rionnag |
| 2000 Henry & Ivy Barnwell | Hylasia |
| 2001 Susan & Peter Gray | Waxwing |
| 2002 Peter Killen | White Magic |
| 2003 Susan & Peter Gray | Waxwing |
| 2004 Noel Casey | Kish |
| 2005 Marilyn Kenworthy | Fica |
| 2006 Peter Killen | Pure Magic |
| 2007 Seamus Salmon | Saoirse |
| 2008 Máire Breathnach | Arctic Tern |
| 2009 Frank Ranalow | Shady Maid |
| 2010 Michael Coleman | Oyster Cove |
| 2011 Stephen Hyde | A Lady |
| 2012 Máire Breathnach | Young Larry |
| 2013 Sam Davis | Suvretta |
| 2014 John Coyne | Lir |
| 2015 Peter Killen | Pure Magic |
| 2016 Neil Hegarty | Shelduck |
| 2017 Mike Hodder | Jasmine |
| 2019 P.MC Sorley | Viking Lord |
| 2020 No Award | |
| 2021 Robert Henshall | Maria |
| 2022 Máire Breathnach | Hunza |
| 2023 Ed Wheeler | Witchcraft of Howth |
| 2024 No Award | |

ROUND IRELAND

NAVIGATION CUP

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1941 E.J. Odium | |
| 1951 Brendan Maguire | Minx of Malham |
| From 1954 the Navigation Cup was awarded for the best cruise around Ireland. | |
| 1954 Wallace Clark | Caru |
| 1955 Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon | Ancora |
| 1956 R.C. Arnold | Maid of York |
| 1957 R.P. Campbell | Minx of Malham |
| 1961 C. O'Ceallaigh | Julia |
| 1963 W. & B. Smyth | Wynalda |
| 1964 N. Falkiner | Euphanzel |
| 1965 L. McMullen | Rainbow |
| 1967 C.H. Green | Helen |
| 1968 J.D. Beckett | Dara |
| 1969 R.E. Mollard | Osina |
| 1871 M. Tomlinson | Pellegrina |
| 1973 J. Gore-Grimes | Shardana |
| 1974 R.P. Campbell | Verve |
| 1975 J.B. Law | Sai See |
| 1977 G. Leonard | Wishbone |
| 1978 R.P. Campbell & J.R. Osborne | Verve |
| 1979 J. Guinness | Deerhound |
| 1980 P. Gray | Korsar |
| 1981 Ronan Belrne | Rlla |
| 1982 W.M. Nixon | Turtle |
| 1983 A. Doherty | Svejala |
| 1984 J. Guinness | Deerhound |
| 1985 T. O'Keefe | Orion |
| 1986 B. Hegarty | Freebird |
| 1987 Wallace Clark | Wild Goose |
| 1988 W.M. Nixon | Turtle |
| 1989 Tony Morton | Lamorna III |
| 1990 Bernard Corbally | L'Exocet |
| 1991 Robert Barr | Ar Men |
| 1992 No Award | |
| 1993 G. Nairn & M.D. Whelan | Lola |
| 1994 Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 1995 Cormac McHenry | Erquy |
| 1996 Michael McKee | Isobel |
| 1997 No Award | |
| 1998 Paddy Barry | Saint Patrick |
| 1999 Ed Wheeler | Witchcraft |
| 2000 Harry Byrne | Alphida of Howth |
| 2001 Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 2002 Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 2003 Brendan O'Callaghan | Brandon Rose |
| 2004 Alan Rountree | Tallulah |
| 2005 No Award | |
| 2006 John Delap | Scoolaing |
| 2007 Brendan Bradley | Afar VI |

2008 Fergus Quinlan

2009 No Award

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 2010 John Madden | Bagheera |
| 2011 Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 2012 Paul Butler | Muglins |
| 2013 Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 2014 No Award | |
| 2015 No Award | |
| 2016 Donal Walsh | Lady Belle |
| 2017 Alan Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2018 Garry Villiers Stuart | Winy |
| 2019 Norman Kean | Coire Uisge |
| 2020 Paddy Barry | L'Troise |
| 2021 Ed Wheeler | Witchcraft |
| 2022 DF and Viv White | Ballyclaire |
| 2023 No Award | |
| 2024 Matthew Wright | Blue Way |

THE FORTNIGHT CUP

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1958 L. McMullen | Rainbow |
| 1960 R.I. Morrison | Vanja IV |
| 1961 J.W.D. McCormick | Diane |
| 1963 W.M. Nixon | Ainmara |
| 1964 W.M. Nixon | Ainmara |
| 1966 H.W.S. Clark | Wild Goose |
| 1967 Miss E. Leonard | Lamita |
| 1968 P. Dineen | Lumtress |
| 1969 R.C.A. Hall | Roane |
| 1970 N. St. J. Hennessy | Aisling |
| 1971 J.R. Olver | Vandara |
| 1972 C. Green | Helen |
| 1973 M. Tomlinson | Pellegrina |
| 1974 J. Wolfe | Gay Gannet |
| 1975 J. Gore-Grimes | Shardana |
| 1976 A. Morton | Sung Foon |
| 1978 R. Dixon | Oberon |
| 1979 B.J. Law | Sai See |
| 1980 R. Paul Campbell | Verve |
| 1981 S. Orr | Den Arent |
| 1982 D.J. Ryan | Red Velvet |
| 1983 C.P. McHenry | Ring of Kerry |
| 1984 B.H.C. Corbally | Puffin |
| 1985 R. Barr | Joliba |
| 1986 W.M. Nixon | Turtle |
| 1987 Dermot Ryan | Scoolaing |
| 1988 John Ryan | Saki |
| 1989 Brian Hegarty | Safari of Howth |
| 1990 Seamus Lantry | William Tell of Uri |
| 1991 Brendan O'Callaghan | Midnight Marauder |
| 1992 Clive Martin | Lindos |
| 1993 Brendan O'Callaghan | Midnight Marauder |

Award Winners

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1994 Frank Larkin | Elusive |
| 1995 Dick Lovegrove | Hobo V |
| 1996 Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 1997 Michael d'Alton | Siamsa |
| 1998 Jim Stevin | Testa Rossa |
| 2000 No Award | |
| 2001 Gary Villiers-Stuart | Winefreda of Greenisland |
| 2002 Andy McCarter | Gwili 3 |
| 2003 W.M. Nixon | Witchcraft of Howth |
| 2004 Roy Waters | Sundowner of Beaulieu |
| 2005 Bill Rea | Elysium |
| 2006 Alan Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2007 Pat Lyons | Stardancer |
| 2008 David & Grainne FitzGerald | Ajay |
| 2009 Patrick Dorgan | Vordi III |
| 2010 Derek White | Ballyclaire |
| 2011 Neil Hegarty | Shelduck |
| 2012 David Williams | Reiver |
| 2013 Nigel & Heleen Lindsay-Fynn | Eleanda |
| 2014 Fergus Quinlan | Pylades |
| 2015 Harry Whelehan | Sea Dancer |
| 2016 Adrian & Mave Bell | Olisin Bán |
| 2017 Nikko Duffin | Nautilus |
| 2018 John O Rahilly | Rike |
| 2019 Peter Fernie | Naias |
| 2020 Mick DeLap | Agathos |
| 2021 Colin Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2022 Vincent Guénebaud | Dame de Jade |
| 2023 Alan Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2024 Dermot Cronin | Encore |

THE WYBRANTS CUP

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1933 J. B. Kearney | Mavis |
| 1934 Dr. L.G. Gunn | Albatross |
| 1935 J.B. Kearney | Mavis |
| 1936 Leslie Chance | Britannia |
| 1937 A.W. Mooney | Aideen |
| 1938 Dr. O.P. Chance & R. Storey | Sapphire |
| 1939 J.B. Kearney | Mavis |
| 1940 K.McFerran & Dr. O'Brien | Huzure |

1941 D. Keating & R. O'Hanlon

1942 J.B. Cotterell & J.F. McMullan

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1943/45 No Award | |
| 1946 J.B. Kearney | Mavis |
| 1947 H. Osterberg | Marama |
| 1948 Dr. R.H. O'Hanlon | Evora |
| 1949 P. O'Keefe | John Dory |
| 1950 A.W. Mooney | Evora |
| 1951 P. O'Keefe | John Dory |
| 1952 H. Osterberg | Marama |
| 1953 No Award | |
| 1954 T. Crosby | If |
| 1955 R.P. Campbell | Alata |
| 1956 S.F. Thompson | Second Ethuriel |
| 1957 Col. W.S. Knox-Gore | Arandora |
| 1958 D.N. Doyle | Severn II |
| 1959 G. Kimber | Astrophel |
| 1960 J.C. Butler | Happy Morning |
| 1961 S. O'Mara | Fenestra |
| 1962 D.N. Doyle | Severn II |
| 1963 Lt. Com. T. Sheppard | Greytag of Arklow |

| | |
|--|----------------|
| 1964 T.F. Doyle | Elsa |
| 1965 S. O'Mara | Oislin |
| 1966 D.N. Doyle | Moonduster |
| 1967 P.H. Greer | Helen of Howth |
| 1968 D.N. Doyle | Moonduster |
| 1969 R.I. Morrison | Querida |
| 1970 Hugh Coveney | Dalcassian |
| 1971 J.A. McKeown | Korsar |
| 1972 J.C. Love | Fionnuala |
| 1973/77 No Award | |
| From 1978 onwards the Wybrants Cup was awarded for the best Scottish cruise. | |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1978 Chris Green | Norella |
| 1979 D.J. Ryan | Red Velvet |
| 1980 D.A. McMillan | Goosander |
| 1981 W.M. Nixon | Turtle |
| 1982 Ronan Belrne | Givusa Kuddell |
| 1983 M.M.A. d'Alton | Siamsa |
| 1984 R. Barr | Condor |
| 1985 B. Hegarty | Freebird |
| 1986 M.M.A. d'Alton | Siamsa |
| 1987 Paul Butler | Arandora |
| 1988 Paul Butler | Arandora |
| 1989 Roddy Monson | Mazara |
| 1990 Roddy Monson | Mazara |
| 1991 Dermot Ryan | Scoolaing |
| 1992 Bernard Corbally | L'Exocet |
| 1993 Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 1994 James Cahill | Rigjak |
| 1995 Paul Butler | Red Velvet |
| 1996 Brian Black | Cullin |

1997 James Nixon

1998 Peter & Evie Ronaldson

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1999 No Award | |
| 2000 Adrian & Mave Bell | Réalta |
| 2001 Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 2002 Paget McCormack | Saki |
| 2003 Adrian & Mave Bell | Réalta |
| 2004 Norman Kean | Xanadu |
| 2005 Alan Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2006 Harold & Vivienne Boyle | Gentle Spirit |
| 2007 Adrian & Mave Bell | Eala Bán |
| 2008 David Williams | Reiver |
| 2009 Richard Lovegrove | Rupert |
| 2010 John Crebbin | Ocean Gypsy |
| 2011 Dick Lovegrove | Rupert |
| 2012 Harry Whelehan | Sea Dancer |
| 2013 Joe & Trish Phelan | Lydia |
| 2014 Matthew Wright | Thor |
| 2015 Derek & Viv White | Ballyclaire |
| 2016 Robin & Denise Wright | Geronimo |
| 2017 Robin & Denise Wright | Geronimo |
| 2018 Harry Whelehan | Sea Dancer |
| 2019 Fergus Quinlan | Pylades |
| 2020 No Award | |
| 2021 Paddy Barry | L'Troise |
| 2022 Fergus Quinlan | Pylades |
| 2023 Colin Leonard | Ariadne |
| 2024 Harry Whelehan | Sea Dancer |

THE FINGAL CUP

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1981 Robert Barr | Condor |
| 1982 W. Walsh | Carrigdown |
| 1983 J. Gore-Grimes | Shardana |
| 1984 R.M. Slater | Tandara |
| 1985 P. Barry | Saint Patrick |
| 1986 B. Corbally | L'Exocet |
| 1987 Frank McCarthy | Scilly Goose |
| 1988 Robert Barr | Joliba |
| 1989 Bernard Corbally | L'Exocet |
| 1990 Michael d'Alton | Siamsa |
| 1991 W.M. Nixon | Witchcraft of Howth |
| 1992 David Park | Alys |
| 1993 Stephen Malone | Symphonie |
| 1994 Wallace Clark | Wild Goose |

Award Winners

| | | |
|------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1995 | W.M. Nixon | Witchcraft |
| 1996 | Richard Lovegrove | Shallini |
| 1997 | Alan Rountree | Tallulah |
| 1999 | Peter Killen | Black Pepper |
| 1999 | David Park | Alys |
| 2000 | Tony Clarke | Velella |
| 2001 | Michael Balmforth | Greenheart |
| 2002 | Dianne Andrews | Great Escape |
| 2003 | Grainne FitzGerald | Mountain Mist |
| 2004 | Michael & Alison Balmforth | Greenheart |
| 2005 | Clive Martin | Beowulf |
| 2006 | Peter Haden | Papageno |
| 2007 | Andy McCarter | Gwili 3 |
| 2008 | John Madden | Bagheera |
| 2009 | Michael Brogan | Mac Duach |
| 2010 | Eddie Nicholson | |

Mollihawk's Shadow

| | | |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2011 | Maire Breathnach | Young Larry |
| 2012 | W.M. Nixon | Alnmara (Capriole) |
| 2013 | Paddy Barry | Ar Seachrán |
| 2014 | Ian Stevenson | Raptor |
| 2015 | Donal Walsh | Lady Kate |
| 2016 | Peter Fernie | Mystic |
| 2017 | John Clementson | Faustina II |
| 2018 | Ed Wheeler | Pembroke |
| 2019 | Stephen Hyde | Cruachan |
| 2020 | Sally Cudmore | Dame de Jade |
| 2021 | Maire Breathnach | Annabel J |
| 2022 | Andy McCarter | Gwili 3 |
| 2023 | Daragh Nagle | Chantey V |
| 2024 | Jim & Kate Corbett | Dochas |

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

| | | |
|------|------------------|---------------|
| 1993 | James Nixon | Sea Pie |
| 1994 | Robert Barr | Pen Men |
| 1995 | Bill Rea | Elysium |
| 1996 | Maeve Bell | Réalta |
| 1997 | Maire Breathnach | Romist |
| 1998 | Brendan Travers | Sea Maiden |
| 1999 | Maire Breathnach | SeaDance |
| 2000 | Paddy Barry | Saint Patrick |
| 2001 | No Award | |
| 2002 | Brendan Travers | Seodin |
| 2003 | No Award | |
| 2004 | David Beattie | Schollevar |
| 2005 | No Award | |

| | | |
|------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 2006 | Alan Markey | Crackerjack |
| 2007 | Sal & Jeffrey O'Riordan | Adrigole |
| 2008 | Harry Barnwell | Hylasia |
| 2009 | David Whitehead | Joyster |
| 2010 | Ed Wheeler | Witchcraft |
| 2011 | Mick Delap | North Star |
| 2012 | A & M Bell | Oisín Ban |
| 2013 | Harry Whelehan | Sea Dancer |
| 2014 | B. O'Callaghan | Katlin |
| 2015 | Paul McSorley | Wild Cat |
| 2016 | Maire Breathnach | Annabel J |
| 2017 | Clare Morrissey | Lady Belle |
| 2018 | Peter Mullán | Oyster Bay |
| 2019 | Stephen Hyde | Cruachan |
| 2020 | Fergus Quinlan | Pylades |
| 2021 | Jim O'Meara | Second Chance |
| 2022 | John Park | Pegasus |
| 2023 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2024 | Paul McSorley | Viking |

THE ROCKABILL TROPHY

| | | |
|---------|----------------|----------------|
| 1959 | P.H. Green | Ann Gail |
| 1960 | R.I. Morrison | Vanja IV |
| 1961 | R. O'Hanlon | Harmony |
| 1962/63 | No Award | |
| 1964 | J.D. Faulkner | Angelique |
| 1965 | J.H. Guinness | Sharavogue |
| 1966 | P.H. Greer | Helen of Howth |
| 1967 | No Award | |
| 1968 | P.H. Greer | Helen of Howth |
| 1969 | No Award | |
| 1970 | J.P. Jameson | Ganiamore |
| 1971 | R. Courtney | Bandersnatch |
| 1972/73 | No Award | |
| 1974 | J.P. Bourke | Korsar |
| 1975/78 | No Award | |
| 1979 | J. Gore-Grimes | Shardana |
| 1980 | J. Wolfe | Deerhound |
| 1981 | No Award | |
| 1983 | K. & C. Martin | Estrellita |
| 1984 | No Award | |

From 1985 the Rockabill Trophy was for 'A Feat of Exceptional Navigation/Seamanship.'

| | | |
|------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1985 | J. Gore-Grimes | Shardana |
| 1986 | John Oliver | Moody Blue |
| 1987 | J.B. Law | Redwing/Spirit of Shell |
| 1988 | No Award | |
| 1989 | Colin Chapman | Deerhound |
| 1990 | Colin Chapman | Deerhound |
| 1991 | Wallace Clark | Alleach |
| 1992 | Peter Bunting | Gulkarna II |

| | | |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1993 | Bernard Corbally | L'Exocet |
| 1994 | Peter Hogan | Molly B |
| 1995 | Brian Smullen | Zaberdest |
| 1996 | Tom Foote | White Heather |
| 1997 | P Barry/J Cunnane | Tom Crean |
| 1998 | No Award | |
| 1999 | Donal Lynch | Laroha |
| 2000 | Susan & Peter Grey | Waxwing |
| 2002 | J. Gore-Grimes | Arctic Fern |
| 2003 | Ed Wheeler | Witchcraft |
| 2004 | Jarlath Cunnane | Northabout |
| 2005 | Brian Black | Caelan |
| 2006 | John Clementson | Faustina II |
| 2007 | No Award | |
| 2008 | Paul Bryans | Odysseus |
| 2009 | Wallace Clark | Aghey |
| 2010 | Tom Foote | Picnic |
| 2011 | Norman Kean | Xanadu |
| 2012 | Brian Black | Seafra |
| 2013 | Sam Davis | Suvretta |
| 2014 | Norman Kean | Aircin |
| 2015 | Paul Cooper | Drumbeat |
| 2016 | No Award | |
| 2017 | Michael Madsen | Gabelle |
| 2018 | Paul McSorley | Viking Lord |
| 2019 | Donal Walsh | Lady Belle |
| 2020 | Maire Breathnach | Annabel J |
| 2021 | No Award | |
| 2022 | No Award | |
| 2023 | Paul Conway and Gillian Fletcher | Cevantes |
| 2024 | John Sweeney | Island Lass |

THE GULL SALVER

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1971 | Otto Glaser | Tritsch-Tratsch |
| 1973 | Mungo Park | Tam O'Shanter |
| 1975 | Otto Glaser | Tritsch-Tratsch II |
| 1977 | Otto Glaser | Red Rock III |
| 1991 | Donal Morrissey | Joggernaut |
| 1995 | Donal Morrissey | Joggernaut |
| 2001 | Denis Doyle | Moonduster |
| 2003 | D & T Andrews | Amethyst |

From 2004-2006 this Trophy was awarded for distinction in an international event by

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| a member sailing his/her own boat. | | |
| 2005 | Brian Smullen | Cuiláun |
| 2006 | No Award | |
| From 2007 | reverted to its first designation. | |
| 2007 | Ger O'Rourke | Chieftain |
| 2008 | No award | |
| 2009 | Mick Cotter | Whisper |
| 2010 | No award | |
| 2011 | Bruce Douglas | Spirit of Jacana |
| 2012 | No award | |

Award Winners

| | | |
|------|-------------------|------------------|
| 2013 | Martin Breen | Discover Ireland |
| 2014 | No award | |
| 2015 | No award | |
| 2016 | No Award | |
| 2017 | Michael Boyd | |
| 2019 | Conor Doyle | |
| 2021 | Rónán Ó Siochrú | Desert Star |
| 2022 | No award | |
| 2023 | The Murphy Family | |

THE PERRY GREER BOWL

| | | |
|------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1995 | Alan Rountree | Tallulah |
| 1996 | Jimmy Conlon | Saint Patrick |
| 1997 | Hilary Keatinge | Kilpatrick |
| 1998 | No Award | |
| 1999 | Jack McCann | Mary Lee |
| 2000 | David Beattie | Aeolus |
| 2001 | Noel Casey | Chartered |
| 2002 | No Award | |
| 2003 | Paddy McGlade | Sabrone |
| 2004 | Sean Fergus | Estrellita |
| 2005 | Robert Barker | Alchemist |
| 2006 | Ian Stevenson | Raptor |
| 2007 | Nigel Lindsay-Finn | |

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 2008 | Patrick Dorgan | Eleanda |
| 2009 | Declan Connolly | Verdi III |
| 2010 | Anne Kenny | Khepri |
| 2011 | David Jones | Tam O'Shanter |
| 2012 | Ann Lyons | Tidal Dancer |
| 2013 | Peter Mullán | Stardancer |
| 2014 | Justin McDonagh | Sancerre |
| 2015 | Michael & Anne Madsen | Selkie |
| 2016 | Darragh Nagle | Gabelle |
| 2017 | Albe Millierick | Chantey V |
| 2018 | Jim O'Meara | Hecuba |
| 2019 | Frank O'Beirne | Second Chance |
| 2020 | Sally Cudmore | Samphire |
| 2021 | Vincent Guénebaut | Dame De Jade |
| 2022 | Jim and Katie Corbett | Dame De Jade |
| 2023 | Tony Linehan | Dochas |
| 2024 | Mark Sweetnam | Sea Witch |

THE WILD GOOSE CUP

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1995 | Robert Barr | Pen Men |
| 1996 | James Nixon | Ardnagee |
| 1997 | D & J Nicholson | White Shadow |

| | | |
|------|------------------------|--------------|
| 1998 | No Award | |
| 1999 | Ray O'Toole | Lotophagi |
| 2000 | Bill & Hilary Keatinge | Rafiki |
| 2001 | Robert Barr | Oyster River |
| 2002 | Peter Fernie | |
| 2003 | Paddy Barry | Ar Seachrán |
| 2004 | Peter Fernie | |
| 2005 | Dick Lovegrove | Vivace |
| 2006 | John Madden | Bagheera |
| 2007 | Wallace Clarke | Agvey |
| 2008 | David Beattie | Reespray |
| 2009 | WM Nixon | Capriole |
| 2010 | Paddy Barry | Ar Seachrán |
| 2011 | Mick Delap | North Star |
| 2012 | Garry Villiers-Stuart | |

| | | |
|------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2013 | James Nixon | Winifreda |
| 2014 | John Duggan | Meander |
| 2015 | Winkle Nixon | Hecuba |
| 2016 | Brian Black | Alnmara, etc |
| 2017 | Bob Brown | Séafra |
| 2018 | John Duggan | Narnia |
| 2019 | Daria Blackwell | Astraeus |
| 2020 | Margie Crawford | Aleria |
| 2021 | Robert Fannin | Europa |
| 2022 | Alan Leonard | Capa111 |
| 2023 | Frank Cassidy | Ariadne |
| 2024 | Andrew Wilkes | Ocean Blue |

THE MARIE TROPHY

| | | |
|------|----------------|-----------------|
| 2008 | Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 2009 | Bill Rea | Elysium |
| 2010 | Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 2011 | Sean McCormack | Marie Claire II |
| 2012 | Mick Delap | North Star |
| 2013 | Mick Delap | North Star |
| 2014 | Peter Fernie | Mystic |
| 2015 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2016 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2017 | Duncan Sciare | Freebird |
| 2018 | Peter Fernie | Mystic |
| 2019 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2020 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2021 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2022 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |
| 2023 | Paddy Barry | Seolin |
| 2024 | Conor O'Byrne | Calico Jack |

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 | |
| 2024 | Alan Leonard | |

Award Winners

JOHN B KEARNEY CUP

| | |
|------|---|
| 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: Yachtperson |
| 1995 | Ronan Keane, 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 Galicia |
| 2018 | Gregor McCuckin |
| 2019 | Clayton Love Junior-Outstanding 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 |
| 2024 | John Bourke - A Sailing Life |

THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP

| Year | Recipient | Yacht | Race |
|---|---------------------------------|--|--------------|
| 1950 | R.A. Hall | Flica | |
| 1951 | R.A. Hall | Flica | Islands Race |
| 1956 | D.N. Doyle | Severn II | Islands Race |
| 1957 | S.F. Thompson | Ithuriel | |
| 1958 | J. Ronan | Wye | Islands Race |
| 1959 | J. Butler | Happy Morning | Pollock Race |
| 1960 | R.I. Morrison | Vanja IV | |
| 1961 | D.N. Doyle | Severn II | |
| 1962 | D.N. Doyle | Severn II | |
| 1964 | A.E. Pope | Susette | |
| 1965 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1966 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1967 | S.F. Thompson | Wye | |
| 1968 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1969 | F. Cudmore | Setanta | |
| 1970 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1971 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1972 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | Islands Race |
| 1973 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | Islands Race |
| 1974 | G. Radley | Cecille | |
| 1976 | J.C. Butler | Tam O'Shanter | |
| 1977 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | Islands Race |
| 1978 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | Islands Race |
| 1979 | B. Cudmore | Anna Petrea | |
| 1980 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1981 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1982 | C. Love Jnr | Rebel County | |
| 1983 | S. Mansfield | Luv Is | |
| 1984 | D.N. Doyle | Moonduster | |
| 1985 | J. Donegan | White Rooster | |
| 1987 | T.E. Crosbie | Santa | |
| 1987 | C.J. Fitzgerald | Mandalay | |
| 1988 | J. Donegan | White Rooster | |
| 1989 | B. Cudmore | Anna Petrea | |
| 1992 | Michael Coleman | Stella Maris | |
| From 1993 awarded by the Southern Area Committee: | | | |
| 1993 | Kevin Dwyer | S. and W. Coast Aerial Photography | |
| 1995 | Arthur Baker | S.W. Coast Rally Organiser | |
| 1996 | Donal Brazil | Services to ICC as Hon. Treasurer | |
| 1998 | Gary McMahon | Ilen's return from Falkland Islands | |
| 1999 | Vincent O'Farrell | Fastnet Dancer | |
| 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 and | Contribution to maritime culture and Community sailing | |

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| 2011 | Dan Cross | Organising of Brittany Rally 2011 |
| 2012 | Norman Kean | Co-authorship of Cruising Ireland & 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 | |
| 2023 | Tom Kirby | |
| 2024 | Stuart Musgrave | |

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 | 2024 | Michael Brogan |
| 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 | Marama | H. Osterberg |
| 1945 | Whit | Mavis | J. B. Kearney |
| 1949 | Whit | Evora | A.W. Mooney |
| 1950 | Whit | John Dory | P. O'Keefe |
| 1951 | Whit | Alata | R.P. Campbell |
| 1952 | Whit | Setanta | F. Cudmore |
| 1954 | Whit | Euphanzel | N. Falkiner |
| 1955 | Whit | Suzette | A.E. Pope |
| 1956 | I.O.M. | Zephyra | S. Cresswell |
| 1957 | Cork-Schull | Severn II | D.N. Doyle |
| 1959 | Cork-Schull | Happy Morning | J.C. Butler |
| 1960 | I.O.M. | Harmony | R.H. O'Hanlon |
| 1961 | Cork-Schull | Severn II | D.N. Doyle |
| 1962 | Howth-Port | | |
| | St. Mary | Cu-na-Mara | D. Barnes |
| 1963 | Cork-Fastnet-Schull | Happy Morning | J.C. Butler |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| 1964 | Dun Laoghaire -Holyhead | Twayblade E. Tweedy |
| 1965 | Cork-Fastnet-Schull | Moonduster D.N. Doyle |
| 1966 | Dun Laoghaire-H/head | Fionnuala R. Courtney |
| 1969 | Cork-Fastnet-Castletownshend | Moonduster D.N. Doyle |
| 1972 | Dun Laoghaire-Arklow | Tryphena F. Ryan |
| 1973 | Cork-Fastnet-Schull | Cecille G. Radley |
| 1974 | - | Korsar J.P. Bourke |
| 1976 | ICC | Querida of Howth I.R. Morrison |
| 1977 | Crosshaven-Fastnet-Baltimore | Tam O'Shanter J.C. Butler |
| 1978 | Howth-Strangford | Leemara W.R. Cuffe-Smith |
| 1979 | - | Four Seasons L.G.F. Heath |
| 1980 | - | Deerhound J.H. Guinness |
| 1981 | - | Korsar R.E. Mollard |
| 1982 | - | Tritsch Tratsch IV Dr. O. Glaser |
| 1983 | - | Deerhound J.H. Guinness |
| 1984 | - | Beaver E.P.E. Byrne |
| 1986 | - | Misty M.W. Knatchbull |
| From 1993 Awarded by the Northern Area Committee | | |
| Year | Recipient | |
| 1993 | J. Russell | Service to Sailing |
| 1995 | Adrian Spence | |
| 1998 | Adrian Spence | Greenland cruise |
| 1999 | Brian Black | Greenland cruise |
| 2000 | Roy Waters | |
| 2001 | John & Ann Clementson | Caribbean Cruise |
| 2002 | David Park | Atlantic Islands |
| 2003 | James Nixon | Round Ireland |
| 2004 | Wallace Clark | Ireland West Coast & The Hebrides |
| 2005 | Brian Black | Greenland Cruise |
| 2006 | James Nixon | |
| 2007 | Andy McCarter | |
| 2008 | Hugh Kennedy | Services to Irish Cruising Club |
| 2009 | Trevor Lusty | |
| 2010 | Derek White | Organising Club events |
| 2011 | Sam Davis | Single-handed voyage from Strangford |
| 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 | |
| 2024 | Peter Mullan | |

List of Award Winners

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 Laoghaire/Cork |
| 1959 | Severn II | D.N. Doyle | Irish Sea Race |
| 1960 | Severn II | D.N. Doyle | Dun Laoghaire-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 | Howth R. Courtney | Morecambe Bay |
| 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. Comes | 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 | Hai 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 | 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 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 |
| 2024 | Seán McCormack | Outstanding cruising career |

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 | Maire 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 |
| 2024 | Tom Dolan |

THE FRIENDSHIP AWARD

| | |
|------|--------------|
| 2023 | Peter Hayden |
|------|--------------|

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATE

| | |
|------|------------------|
| 2015 | Conor O'Byrne |
| 2016 | Brian Black |
| 2017 | Maire Breathnach |
| 2018 | Bruce Fennell |
| 2019 | Daragh Nagle |
| 2020 | Margie Crawford |
| 2021 | Ed Wheeler |
| 2022 | Ross Boyd |
| 2023 | Patricia Nixon |

THE GOLF TROPHY

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| 2015 | Paddy McGlade |
| 2016 | Bev Killen |
| 2017 | Bev Killen |
| 2018 | Bev Killen |
| 2019 | Finn Lyden |
| 2020 & 21 | No competition |
| 2022 | Helen Markey |
| 2023 | Finn Lyden |
| 2024 | Frank O'Beirne |

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 | Virden, Jonathan |
| Barry, Paddy | Cudmore, Ronald | Killan, 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, Maire | 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 | |

Index of Cruising Grounds past ten years

Africa

| | |
|---|--|
| America – North | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023, 2024 |
| America – South | 2015, 2020 |
| Antarctica | |
| Arctic | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019, 2020, 2022 |
| Atlantic | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| Atlantic Islands | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Australia | |
| Black Sea | 2019 |
| Baltic | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2024 |
| Brittany & Biscay | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Canada - East Coast | 2015, 2016 |
| Caribbean | 2014, 2015, 2020 |
| Channel Islands | 2021 |
| Clyde | 2014, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 |
| England – East Coast | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2021, 2022 |
| England – South Coast | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| European Waterways | 2019, 2022, 2023 |
| Faroe Islands | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| France North | 2017, 2022, 2023 |
| Greenland | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019 |
| Hebrides | 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 |
| Holland, Belgium, Denmark | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| Iceland | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2023 |
| Ireland – Circumnavigation | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024 |
| Ireland | 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Irish Sea | 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Mediterranean – East including Aegean | 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2023, 2024 |
| Mediterranean – West including Adriatic | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Norway | 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2022, 2024 |
| Orkney Islands | 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2024 |
| Pacific | |
| Portugal | 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Russia | 2015, 2016 |
| Scandinavia | 2014, 2022, 2024 |
| Scilly, Isles of | 2014, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2021, 2022, 2023 |
| Scotland | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Shetland Islands | 2017, 2019, 2022, 2024 |
| Spain – North Coast & Galicia | 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| Spain & Portugal | 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 |
| World Cruising | 2018, 2019, 2020 |



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 2023

In 2023 the adjudicators were Peter Mullan, Julie Chambers, John McAleer and Alex Blackwell.

WINNER *Patricia Nixon*

'Quintessentially ICC, This photo of a Howth 17 rounding the Fastnet tells it all. Never mind that the Fastnet Light is our symbol, here we have a very small and old boat, six years older than the Fastnet Light, out there. It captures the essence of sailing. It tells the whole story of adventurers in a lovely small boat tackling a rounding of the Fastnet. Great colour, composition, and light. It scored highly with all the adjudicators'



