



IRISH CRUISING CLUB

2025 ANNUAL

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Irish Cruising Club Annual 2025



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Commodore's Letter by Alan Markey



Dear All,

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful summer of sailing, wherever your adventures took you.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2025 Annual, a reflection of our members' cruising adventures—both near and far—over the past year. This year's edition features an impressive collection of 26 logs, spanning Irish waters, Scotland, Baltic, Atlantic Coasts, Norway and beyond. My sincere thanks go to all who contributed their stories, making this publication a true celebration of our Club's enduring spirit of adventure and camaraderie.

I am especially pleased that three members have submitted a log for the first time and are now eligible for the prestigious Perry Greer Bowl. I hope their enthusiasm will inspire others to share their own experiences in future editions.

A heartfelt thank-you is also due to Máire Breathnach, our dedicated editor, whose meticulous work has once again produced an outstanding publication. I would also like to acknowledge Ed Wheeler for his thoughtful adjudication—completed under very tight timelines. As many of you know, Ed has written numerous logs over the years and has been the recipient of several of the Club's most prestigious awards.

Helen and I are very much looking forward to attending the regional Christmas gatherings and hope to meet as many members as possible over the festive season.

Looking ahead, our 2026 AGM will take place at the Royal Irish Yacht Club on 20 February, and the Annual Dinner Weekend will be held on 20–21 March at the Lough Erne Resort, Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

Further details will be shared in the coming weeks, and I encourage you to book early.

Wishing you and your families a very happy Christmas and a peaceful, fulfilling New Year.

Warm regards,

Alan



Honorary Secretary's Report by Donal Gallagher



2025 was a busy year on the water for the ICC with three main rallies in addition to a program of regional rallies and events. To mark the centenary of the end of Conor O'Brien's circumnavigation, Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore led a cruise from Baltimore to Dun Laoghaire in company with the *Ilen*. The event culminated on the 20 June with a parade of sail from Sorrento Terrace to Dun Laoghaire followed by dinner in the Royal Irish Yacht Club.

July saw the Cruising Club of America Rally in the Western Isles in company with the Clyde Cruising Club, Royal Cruising Club, Royal Highland Yacht Club and the Irish Cruising Club. Over sixty yachts attended with anchor events in Kerrera, Tobermory, Talisker (hosted by the ICC), Vatersay and finishing at Oban two weeks later. A highlight for many was the Sunflower comprising over fifty yachts in Loch na Droma Buidhe flawlessly organised by Tim Trafford, Vice Commodore, Royal Cruising Club.

Encuentro Náutico '25 once again saw a fully subscribed Rally in the Ría de Pontevedra, Galicia, starting on the 11th in Combarro and ending on the 18 July in Beluso.

The January membership election meeting and committee meeting was held in the Royal St. George Yacht Club on the 10 January. Fifteen new members were elected to the club.

The February committee meeting and AGM were held at the National Yacht Club on the 21 February. Eighty-five 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. Séamus O'Connor stood down as Rear Commodore South, having led the ICC Rally to Madeira to commemorate the centenary of the first leg of Conor O'Brien's circumnavigation. Des Brown, Jim O'Meara and James Cahill stood down from the committee and were thanked for their many years of service. The following new elections were duly proposed, seconded and unanimously approved: Sally Cudmore (Rear Commodore), Phyllis Hayes, Cormac O'Carroll and Andrew Kennedy (Committee Members). The names of officers and committee members continuing in post was read. The Commodore thanked Peter Mullan for his service as Subscriptions Secretary, a time during which almost all members migrated to direct debit, greatly simplifying the financial administration of the club.

The annual dinner was held in the Mullingar House Hotel in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Commodore Alan Markey and his team organised a flawless event with a capacity attendance including Nick Chavasse, Commodore of the Royal Cruising Club, Jay Gowell, Commodore of the Cruising Club of America and Fiona Jones, Commodore of the Ocean Cruising Club. The Friendship Cup, a gift of the CCA at the 2023 Annual Dinner, was presented to Hilary Keatinge. The Fastnet Award was presented to Tom Dolan and accepted on his behalf by his manager.

The October committee meeting, which was held in Clifden, Co. Galway, afforded the committee the opportunity to review plans for 2026, the highlights of which are a cruise to the Lofoten Islands, Norway in high Summer and Encuentro Nautico '26 in Galicia. The rally in Norway constitutes a first for the Irish Cruising Club and marks a new level of ambition for club rallies.

January 2026 will see the membership election and general committee meetings to be held on the 9th in Howth Yacht Club with the AGM to be held on the 20 February in the Royal Irish Yacht Club.

2026 promises to be an exciting year on the water 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 2026.

Donal Gallagher



Membership Changes 2025

New Members elected 2025

Bernard McGranaghan - Malahide
Andrew Collins - Killiney
Brian McDaid - Derry
Choryna Kiely- Clonakilty
Conor Barry- Kinsale
Conor Haughey - Malahide
Deborah Evers - Ballyvaughan
Gary Simms - Bangor
Hugh Friel - Tralee
Joe Callanan - Limerick
Katherine Quinlan - Dooneen
Michael Sadlier - Ranelagh
Peter Maher - Sandymount
William O'Connor - Cork
Philip Hutchinson - Belfast

Deceased Members in 2024/2025

Terry Johnston
Séamus Lantry
Michael McKee
Louis Smyth
Bill Brady
Kenneth Price
Brian Law
Liam Bohane
Barbara Fennell
Bill Walsh
Jack Wolfe
Pat Murphy
Donal O'Tierney

Officers and Committee 2025

Commodore:	Alan Markey (East)	2nd year
Vice Commodore:	Julie Chambers (North)	2nd year
Rear Commodore:	Sally Cudmore (South)	1st year
Rear Commodore:	Alex Blackwell (West)	2nd year
Hon. Secretary:	Donal Gallagher	3rd year
Hon. Treasurer:	Kieron Guilfoyle	2nd year

North		South		East		West	
Paul Mc Sorley	(3rd yr)	Paul Taylor	(6th yr)	Tony Linehan	(6th yr)	John Coyne	(3rd yr)
David Meeke	(3rd yr)	John McAleer	(3rd yr)	Harry Whelehan	(3rd yr)	Louis Keating	(2nd yr)
Joanne Magowan	(2nd yr)	Cormac O' Carroll	(1st yr)	Frank O'Beirne	(2nd yr)	Phyllis Hayes	(1st yr)
Andrew Kennedy	(1st yr)			Judy Houston	(2nd 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	Alex Blackwell
Editor Website	Alex Blackwell	Events Controller	Tony Linehan
Honorary Membership Secretary	Paul McSorley		
Chair, Committee Awards Advisory Group	Harry Whelehan		
Chair, ICC Publications (CLG)	David Meeke		
Chair, Centenary Working Group,	Derek White		

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 Brody, Peter, Julian and Patricia 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.

If you are planning to contribute to the 2026 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

Challenge Trophy Awards

Ed Wheeler



RIGHT: Enjoying a birthday gin on board Compass Rose

Joining the Irish Cruising Club is a great way of making and keeping friends all over Ireland and abroad. Being asked to judge the logs for the Annual is a great way of losing some of them. Be that as it may, when the Commodore asked me to be this year's adjudicator, I overcame my qualms and accepted the honour, as indeed honour demanded. Noblesse oblige or sauve qui peut, as they never fail to say in Ballydehob.

This year, 25 logs were received by the closing date and forwarded to me. This is rather fewer than in former days and I am aware of various members who have cruised and not submitted logs. Shame on you. The logs were all, however, of high quality, thus making my job harder.

There is no laid-out procedure for adjudicators to follow, so I read them all several times and used a spreadsheet to allocate points under various categories, such as difficulty, seamanship, cruise interest, quality of writing, useful navigation information and so on. Nevertheless, the choice of award winners is inevitably partially subjective. I hope I shall be forgiven if not everyone agrees with my judgement.

The Faulkner Cup

The Perry Greer Bowl

My arcane system of marking reduced the contenders for the Club's premier award for members to two. Mark Sweetnam's account of four months' cruising on the west and north coasts of Norway was packed with interesting detail and useful information. It was well-written and highly readable and had lat/long coordinates for every port. It was accompanied by a table of distances and port information which even included berthing prices. Modestly, he turned over the account of the first two early-season weeks, during which they sailed east as far as proximity to the evil empire allowed, to Paddy Barry, who wrote it up in his usual entertaining style. However, by a very short head, I award the Faulkner Cup to Brody Sweeney for his southward voyage to Gran Canaria, via Spain, Portugal and little-known and rarely visited ports in Morocco in his Jeanneau 32 *Wodan*. The first leg to A Coruña was single-handed and he had to contend with a dud battery and testing conditions. He sailed the Rías with crew, then solo down the Iberian coast. He doesn't say much about his Portuguese ports, except Porto, and more detail would have been interesting, especially of the bar-restricted river ports in the north. He took on crew in Cascais (which made him 'happy as a trout') and they made their way down to Tangier, then down the Moroccan coast and thence across to Gran Canaria. The rarely-visited Moroccan ports were for me the most interesting and he overcame bureaucratic obstacles and language difficulties. He has left the boat in Pasito Blanco. Two years ago, before joining the ICC, Brody sailed the same boat from Ireland to Madeira for the Conor OBrien centenary event and back via the Azores. This current voyage, he says, is the precursor to what he hopes will be a transatlantic circuit, so we can look forward to reading about his further adventures. Brody also wins the Perry Greer Bowl for the best log by a new member.

The Strangford Cup

From the previous paragraph, it will be apparent that Mark Sweetnam is the deserving winner of the Strangford Cup for his Norwegian cruise in his Najad 420 *Don Carlos*.

The Round Ireland Navigation Cup

This really was difficult. Three logs qualified for this award. Andrew Wilkes and Máire Breathnach started and finished their circumnavigation in the Clyde and took a leisurely two months over it. A lot of time was spent waiting out unfavourable weather but the cruise made excellent reading. *Annabel J*, with her deep draught and 40 tons displacement, is more restricted in where she can visit than Donal Walsh's Ovni 385 *Lady Belle*, which has a lifting keel. Donal and his regular shipmate Clare Morrissey made full use of this facility in overcoming a problem with their rudder. They also took in the Clyde, Isle of Man and north Wales. The third Round Ireland log was a cracker. Robert Henshall set off from Sligo in his Contessa 32 *Maria* single-handed and with a dud depth sounder. His tiller pilot was also on the blink and the weather was wet and windy. He went clockwise and, despite presumably still having no depth sounder, did more than his fair share of rock-hopping in north Donegal. He had to contend with very unfriendly weather and various breakages and outages, plus the discovery of an uncharted rock south of Joyce's Pass. His log has good useful navigation information. For all of this and for his excellent log I award Robert Henshall the Round Ireland Navigation Cup.

The Fortnight Cup

Pressures of work and family increasingly constrain cruise durations so there were several logs in contention for this award. Of these, I chose Conor O'Byrne's short cruise in the west of Ireland in his Sadler 26 *Calico Jack*. Although only one week, his cruise included interesting pilotage, testing weather conditions undergone mostly single-handed and useful information which he passed on to the Sailing Directions Editor.

The Marie Trophy

From 1960 onwards, our past Commodore and much-missed friend Michael McKee never owned a boat longer than 27 feet LOA. These included the 1893 gaff cutter *Marie*, now languishing ashore in Groomsport and longing for skilful restoration. Michael presented the Marie Trophy in her honour, to be awarded for the best cruise by a boat under 30' LOA. Very few of our members nowadays own boats in this category. This in no way detracts from the merit of the consistent winner of this cup over the past several years, Conor O'Byrne. Once again, his is the only qualifying log and I have great pleasure in awarding it to him for his western cruise.

The Wybrants Cup

This is awarded for the best cruise in Scottish waters. Several boats attended the CCA/CCC cruise in company and this is well described in their logs. However, for me the most interesting and wide-ranging Scottish cruise was that by new members Julian and Patricia Morgan in their 46' cutter *A Cappella of Belfast*. The Scottish part of their cruise was almost incidental, as their main objective was the Faroes. It is fair to say that neither the weather nor the ports there appealed very much to them. Homeward bound, they found time to explore the Outer Hebrides, although again hindered by persistent foul weather. I award them the Wybrants Cup.

The Glengarriff Trophy

It was a difficult choice between *Lady Belle* and *Annabel J* for this award but Donal Walsh and Clare Morrissey in *Lady Belle* just shade it for their first rate cruise round Ireland, overcoming various obstacles and difficulties on the way. I award Donal Walsh the Glengarriff Trophy.

The Rockabill Trophy and The Atlantic Trophy

No award.

The Fingal Cup

I was particularly taken by Frank Cassidy's modest but thoughtful dissertation on single-handed sailing, with due deference to various ICC predecessors. His preliminary solo explorations of the Canary Islands built up to a passage to Madeira and back, which he handled admirably. He was beset by alarming numbers of commercial ships at night and seems to have been unlucky in this regard, as I don't recall nearly so much traffic in that area. I award Frank the Fingal Cup for a log which most appealed to the adjudicator.

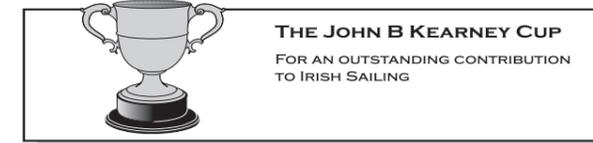
The Wild Goose Cup

Members may recall Sam Davis's splendid account of his single-handed voyage home from Tonga in his Rival 38 *Suvretta*, which won the Faulkner Cup in 2012. I was not aware that Sam owned the West Solent OD *Suvretta* in the 1970s. I sailed in her under her previous owner but Sam sailed her across the Atlantic on his own and cruised the Caribbean. He was reunited with her this year at the Classic Boat Regatta in Cowes, which was also *Suvretta's* 100th birthday. His account of this event, together with reminiscences, wins the Wild Goose Cup for a log of literary merit.

The Dunn's Ditties Salver awarded by the editor of the Annual to Donal Gallagher

Club Awards

The John B Kearney Cup



Bill O'Hara

The best way to illustrate the major highlights of his many and varied achievements is to list them individually:

- Olympic Finn sailor in 1984 and 1988.
- Coach to Irish Olympic team and team leader in 1996 and 2000
- Academy and youth performance manager I.S.A and R.Y.A.N.I 2001 - 2025.
- Mentor to members of the Irish team and 2 members of the U.K team at 2005 Laser Radial Youth Worlds in Brazil.
- Olympic sailing Juror 2004 and 2008.
- World Sailing Rules Committee member 2005 - 2020
- World Sailing International Judge since 2001.
- International Umpire since 2006.
- International Race Officer since 2010.
- Advisor to Olympic Sailing Team 2012, 2016, 2020 and 2024.
- Principal Race Officer of The Ocean Race (formerly the Volvo) since 2008.
- Irish Sailing Performance member since 1989.
- Irish Sailing Board Member since 2022.
- Awarded OBE in 2021.
- RNLI crew member 1985 - 1988

From the above list one can, I hope, easily conclude that Bill has been an outstanding sailor on the water, an outstanding coach mentor and team builder, an outstanding and respected Irish man, who over a long period has been respected, active and trusted with roles in Ocean Racing both as Race Officer and International Judge.

Apart from his personal achievements on the water as a competitor, his skill, commitment and encouragement, over the years, has enabled many young sailors to progress and achieve international recognition and success.

Furthermore, he has enhanced the perception of Irish sailing and Irish sailors by his commitment and his contribution to international events, as Judge, Umpire, Jury and as part of the World Sailing Rules Committee.

H.W





THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

AWARDED BY THE WESTERN COMMITTEE



THE DONEGAN MEMORIAL CUP

AWARDED BY THE EASTERN COMMITTEE



No Award 2025

Dick Lovegrove

Dick Lovegrove has been an exceptionally active and dedicated member of the Irish Cruising Club since 1981. A distinguished competitor with a long and successful racing career in Dublin Bay, he has consistently exemplified the spirit of Corinthian sailing. In addition to his achievements on the water, he has given outstanding service ashore, notably through his tenure as Commodore of the Royal Saint George Yacht Club, Royal Alfred Yacht Club and a Committee Member of the Irish Cruising Club. His longstanding commitment, leadership, and passion for the sport make him truly deserving of the Donegan Memorial Trophy.



THE WATERFORD HARBOUR CUP

AWARDED BY THE SOUTHERN COMMITTEE



James Lyons

James Lyons, ICC, is the co-founder of Sailing into Wellness, a charity which provides educational and therapeutic sailing programmes to support healing of those most in need in our communities and empower them to build resilience and create positive change. The Southern Committee awards James the Waterford Cup in recognition of his care and stewardship of the *AK Ilen*, designed by Conor O'Brien and built in 1926 in Baltimore. James skilfully and enthusiastically skippered the vessel with many ICC crew members in both ICC Conor O'Brien centenary cruises in 2023 and 2025



THE WRIGHT SALVER

AWARDED BY THE NORTHERN COMMITTEE



Frank Smyth

Frank Smyth has been a stalwart of NI cruising since the 1950's and a member of the ICC since 1979. He has sailed in many waters - however his favourite cruising ground is the west Coast of Scotland where he and his wife Muriel cruise in their splendid Vancouver 32, *Wild Otter*. Frank bought the Bangor Shipyard in Ballyholme in 1969 and there he built some wonderful crafted yachts, including the S Class 27' double enders. He also secured the contracts for repairs for the RNLI and later the Belfast pilot cutters. At many ICC gatherings Frank's renditions are notorious, especially the Diagonal Steam Trap. Frank and Muriel continue to attend without fail many sea and land ICC events .



**HITHER AND YON:
A season of
change**

Ed Wheeler

Storm Bert, 23 November

Goodbye to Witchcraft

After 34 years of first joint and then sole ownership of *Witchcraft of Howth*, my much-loved Contessa 35, it was time to move on. First of all, I was getting a little old and creaky to manage the substantial rig on my own. Secondly, the old boat was in serious need of a remake and deserved younger, fitter owners to give her the care she deserved. All this was made more urgent by two gales in succession. The first one collapsed the borrowed trailer she was sitting on in Copelands Marina in Donaghadee, causing the boat to fall over

against her near neighbour, a Nicholson 31. There was little damage to the Nicholson but *Witchcraft* sustained a puncture wound in her bottom from a broken Acrow prop. After lifting her off the wrecked trailer and putting her on a cradle securely lashed down, two weeks later another named storm with sustained winds of over 60kt did exactly the same to the Nicholson, toppling her over against *Witchcraft*. I had already decided to downsize and at this point a couple from Galway, potential buyers, arrived to view the boat. Despite the hole, the sale went through. I had the damage professionally repaired and some months later the yacht and her new owners departed southwards, equipped with a lengthy list of what I considered to be essential work. Thus ended a



Storm Darragh, 4 December

long ownership, the first 16 years of which were in partnership with Winkie Nixon and Harry Whelehan and featured much competitive racing as well as varied cruises. Since 2006, I have been sole owner and cruising has been the main focus. Without going into detailed calculations, I think I must have covered over 25,000 miles in her. Parting with her after such a long time and so many shared experiences turned out to be quite emotional.

Portland Bill



The Longships



Compass Rose

My ideal downsizing boat would be a lifting keel or bilge craft for exploring places where I couldn't reasonably go in the Contessa 35. I liked the idea of gunkholing in drying harbours and creeks and I reckoned that long offshore passages were now for me in the past tense (probably). She also had to have good sailing qualities and she must not be ugly. I liked what I had seen and heard about the Sadler 26 and found one for sale in Poole. A quick sortie over there confirmed that she would do, so I bought her without wasting any time. I also recruited my nephew Keith Gadd as co-owner. We decided to name her *Compass Rose*. The previous owner had a young family and hadn't been able to do any serious cruising in her. She was very well equipped and in first-rate condition.

Delivery from Poole

Keith and I flew over and picked her up the day she was launched, 25 April. A quick shopping expedition courtesy of Hilary Keatinge (ICC) and her car and we were away by 1530 in a light southerly. The little Beta 10 diesel helped us into Lulworth cove and we were anchored there by 2100. It was as pretty a spot as I'd imagined, with only a slight swell getting in. Rounding Portland Bill the next morning, we had a moderate SE breeze and I followed the text-book, keeping the Bill close aboard to avoid the worst of the race. At this point, the first item on the snagging list made itself known. I was doing a fry-up for breakfast and ended up wearing it, as the cooker gimbals jammed, ejecting the breakfast smartly over my trousers. Turned out that the brand-new cooker had never been used at sea and the gimbals had too little clearance, causing the unit to jam at about 30 degrees. The tiller pilot mounting also failed and the fresh water pump wasn't working. The wind freshened to an ESE 4 to 5 and the little ship romped along. We rounded Start Point at 1815 and made our way into Salcombe in a dying breeze, taking a visitor's mooring at 2015. I thought the charge for this was very reasonable for the South coast of England at £10. The next day, Saturday 26 June, we motor-sailed to Plymouth,

Compass Rose in Arklow

taking a berth at Queen Anne's Battery. We were met there by Pete Adams (ICC) who, with his wife Gillie, made us very welcome and extended both hospitality and transport for us to fix the teething problems, all of which were satisfactorily sorted.

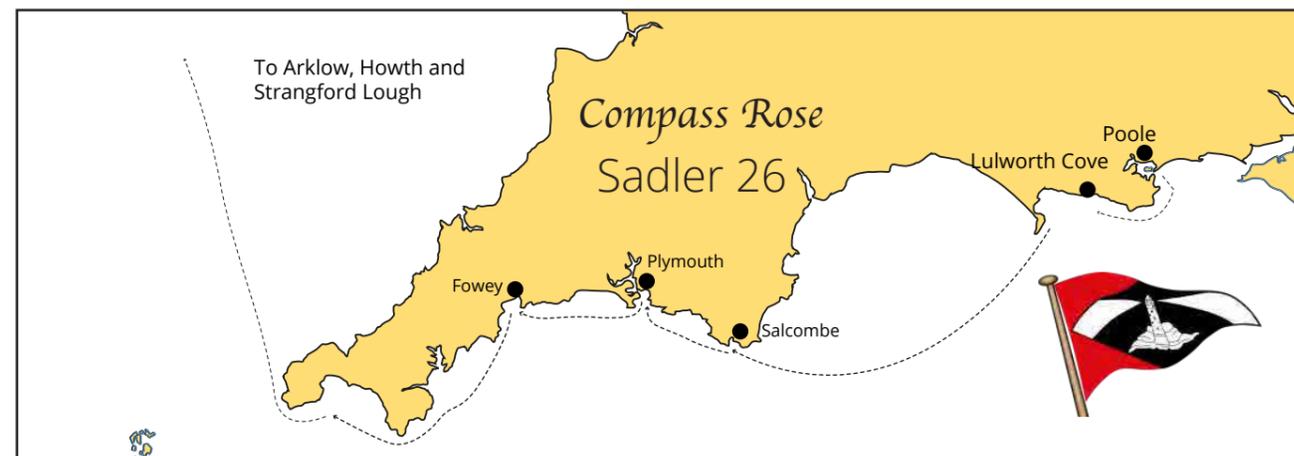


Keith had to return home for work reasons and my son James joined me on Monday 28th, arriving early afternoon. We set off without delay in a light to moderate easterly breeze and got into Fowey in the gloaming. I had hoped to make a cruise of this delivery trip, but the forecast was now for a couple of days of favourable weather followed by persistent fresh to strong northerly winds, so I decided to make the best of it and head directly for the Irish coast. It gradually freshened from the east and by 1730 we had the Longships abeam and two reefs in the main. There was a bit of drama here, as we experienced some strong gusts off the land and were somewhat out of control, so I tried to part-roll the genoa. Unfortunately, the roller furler jammed and the sail flogged hard and threatened to pull the mast out of her. Entirely my fault, as I'd failed to notice that a spare halliard had got wound up in the sail. A few hectic minutes and it was brought to order. By 2315 we had the Smalls abeam and took our departure for Arklow. The weather was fair but light all day on Wednesday 30 April. We carried our tide up the Irish Sea and only had to push a couple of hours of foul tide, arriving at Arklow at 0315 on Thursday 1 May. Arklow marina was packed and we were lucky to find a rafted space where a finger was missing.

As predicted, the northerlies set in and I had to leave her in Arklow for the next week. Robin McKelvey (ICC) joined me a week later and we left Arklow on Friday 9th May, calling overnight at Howth and with an entirely uneventful but windless passage home to Strangford Lough, arriving at our home port, Ballydorn at 21.00 on Saturday 10th May. Keith and I

were pleased with the little boat. She sailed very well, so long as one doesn't try to do too much windward work and everything on her worked, an unusual state of affairs for me. She is of course quite small and the motion is very jerky compared to the Contessa, resulting in me taking flying lessons around the cabin on one occasion at sea. The heads is an open-plan layout, which can entail the non-user taking a short walk on deck from time to time.

Al Fresco heads





Scotland

Compass Rose in Rathlin Basin

The cruise plan was to head for Donegal. I had earmarked some places I'd always fancied visiting, where the little bilge-keeler would be ideal. I set out from Ballydorn on Thursday 19th June at 11.00, having arranged to meet my crew Robin McKelvey in Rathlin. There wasn't much wind and I had to motor-sail most of the day. For passage north from Strangford, the ideal plan is to leave on the late ebb. Because the tide changes in the lough two hours earlier than outside, this means you only have to push four hours of foul tide until it changes, and it isn't very strong until you get up towards Skulmartin. You then have a fair tide through Donaghadee Sound, where it matters. This all worked well and I anchored in Ballyholme Bay at 19.45. An early start next day, still in light winds, got me to Glenarm by 10.45. Similar conditions next day saw me reaching Rathlin by 12.45. Robin arrived on the ferry on Sunday afternoon. Bad weather now set in and we had to stay in Rathlin through Monday. It got so jumpy alongside the pontoon that we took her into the inner harbour, an option which I now had with our draft of 4 feet. The rain beat down and the boats outside on the pontoons tossed about but we were as snug as bugs.

Craighouse from the dinghy



The next morning it was blowing fresh from the WNW and raining, so that was the end of Plan A. Plan B was to go to Scotland, so we left at 0920 with no main and half the genoa, heading for Islay. The rain stopped and the wind gradually eased, so we hoisted the mainsail and had a pleasant passage to Port Ellen. The following day was overcast with light easterly breeze but the forecast put paid to my original idea of going north round Mull. Instead, we went through the Ardmore Islands and sailed the short distance to Craighouse on Jura. We blew up the dinghy for the first time and went ashore for a couple of pints in the hotel.

It was magic the next morning ghosting slowly up Loch Mile inside the Small Isles. Then when we rounded Eileann Bhride and sailed out into the Sound of Jura the wind piped up from south west and we had a boisterous sail up into Loch Craginish and took a marina berth in Ardfern in the early afternoon. It then blew hard and rained all day Friday and most of Saturday. We managed a damp walk but mostly wallowed in the fleshpots of the Galley of Lorne. This spell of weather and the forecast for the following

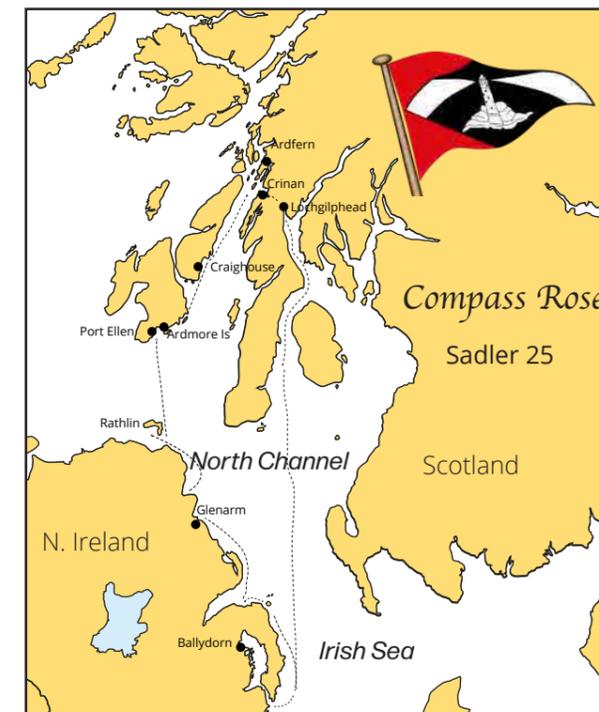


Robin and Compass Rose in Crinan Basin

week put paid to any idea of going farther north. We reviewed our options and decided that the Crinan Canal beckoned. Against the trend, Sunday 29th June was a glorious day and we sailed gently down Loch Craginish again, sighting a sea eagle overhead, wings like a feathered barn door. Our berth in the basin at Crinan was right alongside the coffee shop and pleasantly nigh to the excellent little bar in the hotel, where we had pints with a couple of RCC friends. Walking past the boatyard, we noticed the puffer *Auld Reekie* hauled out on the slip but with steam up, strangely. Going through the canal next day was made easier since my last transit by the students employed in the summer to work the locks. We had intended to stop overnight at Cairnbaan but the pub is closed and it was raining, so we decided to go on to Lochgilphead. There is a pontoon above the town there and it is a half mile or so walk down to the

centre. It didn't look its best, grey and gloomy in the driving rain, but we found a little Indian restaurant which was packed and very good and the curry-fuelled central heating worked a treat.

Emerging from the canal at Ardrishaig on Tuesday 1 July, my birthday, we were again faced with a forecast of contrary winds from Thursday. The only thing to do was to make another overnight passage of it, so we motored down Loch Fyne in a light northwesterly air, which freshened in Kilbrannan Sound to a very pleasant moderate favourable wind. This lasted all night and the tides were right as far as Burial Island. We anchored at 08.00 in Knockinelder Bay to wait for the tide in Strangford Narrows and were back on our mooring at Ballydoran by mid afternoon. While not the cruise as intended, it was enjoyable enough in spite of the weather. Total mileage for the delivery trip and cruise was about 725 miles.



Auld Reekie at Crinan





THE FAULKNER CUP

THE CLUB'S PREMIER AWARD



THE PERRY GREER BOWL

FOR THE BEST FIRST ICC LOG

From Ireland to the Canaries in our 32' Wodan

Brody Sweeney

At anchor in El Jadida under the massive Portuguese Fort

Choosing South over North

Over the winter I debated long and hard about a summer voyage for 2025. A veteran sailmaker offered me blunt advice, 'Turn north from Dublin for pain, and south for pleasure.' Taking his tongue in cheek comments to heart, and with a medium term objective to do a trans-Atlantic crossing, I finally settled on a plan - two months sailing south from Ireland to the Canaries, via Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

My boat *Wodan*, a 46 year old Jeanneau 32, has been steadily refitted over the last couple of years

for ocean passages, and in 2023 she carried us to the Azores and back, via Madeira and the wonderful Conor OBrien rally, organised by ICC and hosted by Club Naval de Funchal. This gave me the confidence to go further afield.

Preparing in Ireland

As many will know, trying to get any serious work done on a boat in Dublin is not for the faint hearted, and so I took *Wodan* to Cork (via Arklow and Kilmore Quay). I fairly flew down the Irish Sea from Arklow around Carnsore Point. The sweet spot for me seems to be leaving Arklow about two hours before HW, to hit Carnsore Point about six hours later. We went to

East Ferry first, where Marshall Marine did a great job on a new dodger, but a nameless marine electrician in Crosshaven made a mess of my boat electronics, which I only discovered when I picked up the boat to make the crossing to Spain. I also couldn't get my Iridium Go to work properly, and it worried me that I mightn't be able to get forecasts enroute.

Crossing the Bay of Biscay

By departure day, I had a knot in my stomach. Gusty winds greeted me as I topped up with fuel at RCYC, worries about failing batteries gnawing at me. Still I pointed *Wodan's* bow south, alone, towards A Coruña.

The first day at sea was rough, and by day two I was queasy, and on the verge of vomiting all day, as is often the case with me at the start of a passage, and so I didn't eat much. It wasn't helped by me being stressed out overnight, with my battery monitor showing no charge in the service battery, confirmed by putting a multimeter on it. I was however able to coax enough power out when the engine was running to keep instruments on. By the third day the seas had moderated, and I had my favourite sea



The battery monitor that stressed me out

breakfast of porridge, with a passion fruit, banana, and honey.

Solo sailing has its own rhythm and once offshore I can relax somewhat and enjoy it, safe in the knowledge that when more than 50M from land, I'm not likely to hit anything rocky, and that most ships that far out carry AIS. My watch system was simple but relentless - sleeping for 25 minutes at a time I wouldn't say that I enjoyed, but you quickly get into a rhythm of setting the alarm, falling asleep quickly and then 25 minutes later getting up, checking for ships on deck, that sails are filling, then quickly checking the chart and AIS, and then back to sleep - all that in a couple of minutes.

Five nights later A Coruña was on the horizon, but about 100M north of the city, the wind went south, and I got pasted for the last 36 hours with a F6 on the nose. I tried motor-sailing through it for a while, but quickly realised it was faster and more comfortable to sail, tacking as necessary. On the fourth night, the seas became very disturbed, and in the middle of the night, I slipped in the saloon, and slammed hard into the sole. By luck alone, I didn't hit my head, and the net result was a badly bruised hip and shoulder.



My hip looked worse than it felt



Crossing the shipping lane NW of A Coruña Galicia and the Spanish Rias

Crossing the shipping lanes was another test. On the chart they looked relatively narrow, but it took me more than eight hours to cross from one side to the other, with not a lot of relaxation during that time. When I finally tied up in A Coruña after over 5 days for 540M, tiredness gave way to relief.

A few days rest in A Coruña brought welcome company - Lulu my Mrs flew out to join me. We met in Santiago de Compostela, and I waited for her at the Cathedral square. I was surprised how emotional it was there. In these summer months about 3,000 pilgrims a day finish their Camino in Santiago and for all of them, they've had a gruelling, testing few days or weeks to get there, where many have faced their demons. The sense of achievement and joy were palpable in the square at the Cathedral as solo, pairs and groups finished their ordeal, to cheers, crying and hugs all round. I finally understood the pull of the Camino.

From A Coruña, Lulu opted for the bus while I sailed *Wodan* to Camariñas, in a nice W F4, past the Torre de Hercules light house, before heading down the Costa da Morte. As *Wodan* turned in for Camariñas, the wind suddenly came up to NW7, and I quickly reefed down for the last couple of rough hours.

Battered and tired, I wasn't able to speak for a while after tying up.

The marina at Camariñas appears to have fallen on hard times, with no security (the gates to the pontoons were jammed open), and a general feeling of neglect. This was more than made up for with the friendly welcome by the marinero (who didn't bother to check the ship's papers), and Lulu and I took ourselves off to a marvellous B&B for a couple of days and enjoyed this beautiful part of the Spanish northwest coast.

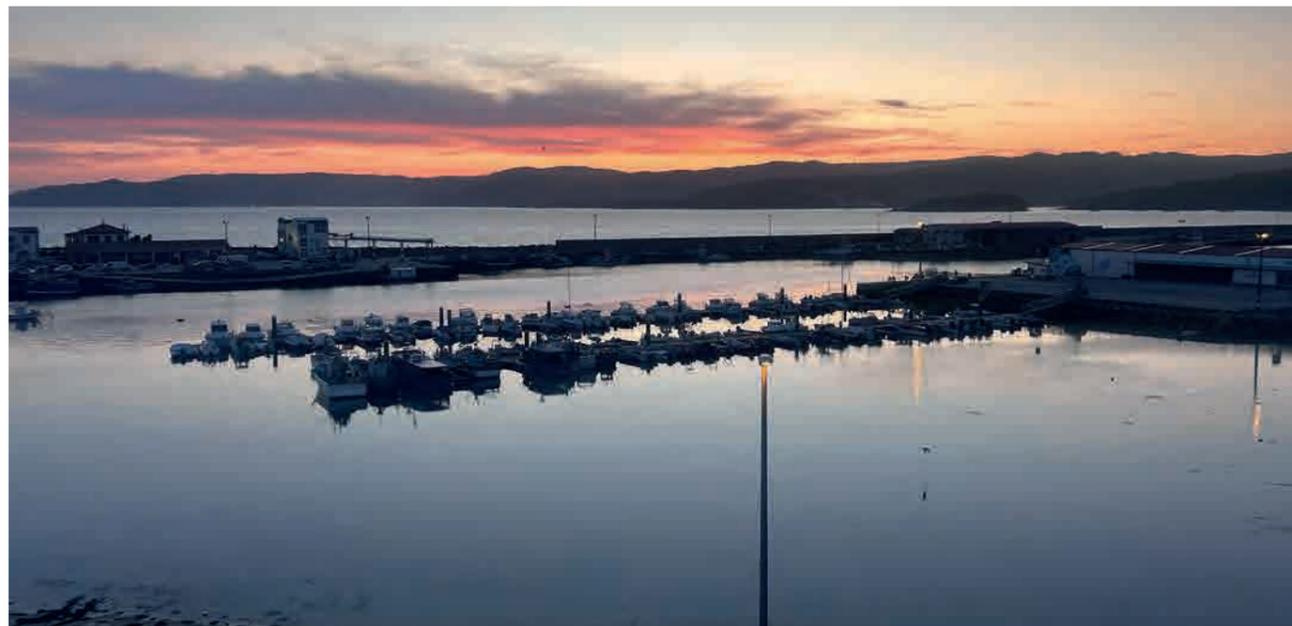
From there, we worked our way through the Rias – Camariñas, Muros and Portosin. Camariñas to Muros was a ten and a half hour sail, and it was very hot in the middle. With a headwind and some very loud noises and vibrations from the shaft of the engine, the last few hours were stressful - but worth it as Muros is so special. Our own John Bourke said it was his favourite town in the Rías and I agree with him. A quick dive under the boat in the morning showed a large hank of rope wrapped around the propeller, and once it was freed, *Wodan* ran fine again.



Lulu helming in fair conditions off Portosin

After a few days in Muros, Lulu helmed a short way to a lovely anchorage off Punta de Agsoltice and over to Portosinuilera. The next day we hopped up to Portosin, where we enjoyed a nice couple of days exploring the area. Lulu departed back to Dublin, and I then headed off on the next leg to Cascais in Portugal. There were lots of short passages on

Summer solstice over Portosin



this leg, as *Wodan* made her way down the coast to Cascais near Lisbon, with stops in Baiona, Povia de Varzim, Porto, Figuera da Foz, Peniche and Cascais. Most of these ports are at the mouth of rivers, and can be very tricky to approach when the swell is up and the tide is ebbing. There are also huge swells on this coast and I passed Nazaré in Portugal which has the biggest surfing waves in the world with some trepidation, and well offshore.

Portosin to Baiona was largely uneventful, but the same F7 blew up in the evening, making for a hairy approach to Baiona at the end of the ten hour trip. The marineros in Baiona were not mindful to assist, and after waiting for them to direct me, I eventually chose my own berth and made fast.

When leaving Baiona and its magnificent castle the following morning, I passed through a line of fishing boats, about 20 of them, fishing for queen scallops. They have these rakes over the side of the boat and they scrape the sea floor for the scallops. They then lift the rakes and empty the baskets. I checked my depth sounder as I passed them and it was 40' deep.

Down the Portugese Coast

Where were the Portuguese trades? The passage from Baione was characterized by S5, which moderated somewhat in the afternoon to S4, and then went East. The last two hours into Póvoa de Varzim were in a flat calm.

I was, as usual, excited with a visit from a pod of dolphins who approached in a line like a military formation. They always cheer me up. I greeted and talked to them (I can only explain this by saying I was on my own) as if they were human.

I had a great day in Porto meeting my lovely cousin Deirdre and family. The port barges on the river were



Dolphins approaching off the Spanish coast. I've never seen them approaching in a line like this before

used to carry port down the river Douro on to the waiting ships for export. I was so taken with Porto that the next morning I motored up the Douro from the marina, through Porto as far as the second bridge and marvelled at the beautiful city, before turning around and heading south again.

Leaving Porto I ran straight into dense fog. At the same time, I noticed on AIS about 30 fishing boats on a heading straight for me, on their way back into Porto after a nights fishing. That was concerning, but what really bothered me was the knowledge that there was at least that number of small fishing boats that did not have AIS, and who I would have to be lucky to miss. And that was before I had to worry about the plethora of pot buoys and associated trailing ropes. I was really scared for the first time on the trip. I had a couple of way too close misses with small fishing boats, and these were only the first of many on the trip.

I hadn't given fog a whole lot of thought for the voyage, but it was a feature of much of the sailing down the Spanish, Portuguese and Moroccan coasts and I grew to hate it. The feeling of isolation, and having to keep constant watch, was stressful and tiring.

It was very hot when I got to Cascais, but despite the discomfort, I was relieved that I was finished sailing on my own.

I couldn't see the headland at Peniche until we were ¼ NM from it



Sara, Kieran and Gerry enjoying the sailing

I was dying to go home and say hello to the family and especially our new (first) granddaughter Nora. I left Lisbon Airport in 38°, only to arrive back in Ireland where it was over 30°! No respite. After a week on my own sailing down the Iberian coast, I was as happy as a trout, when I was joined by our new crew for the leg to Tangier in Morocco. Sara, Kieran and Gerry were a welcome sight. Fresh faces brought renewed energy.

With Crew to Morocco

Sara was a welcome change to having an all male crew on board, and she soon proved herself as an able sailor, especially on the helm. Gerry, who hadn't a lot of experience of offshore passages, revelled in the new adventure. My old shipmate Kieran, who sailed back from the Azores with me in 2023, did what he usually does, and made me feel safer on the boat with his quiet competence.

We left Sines for Lagos, and the south coast of Portugal and Spain, for our next leg to Tangier in Morocco. From Sines we headed for Lagos, and the crew were keen we stay close to land, so that we could pick up the Dublin Cork hurling semi-final. Late afternoon on 5 July, we rounded the great Cape Vincent on the southwest corner of Portugal in a NW7. The Cork Dublin match in full swing, with Kieran and Gerry below watching it online (being ardent supporters of Cork and Dublin respectively),



Catching my breath after the wind blew up to F7 and I quickly went o deck to reef the main. We all had lifejackets on five minutes later

while Sarah and I exulted in the sailing, after we quickly reefed down fully.

In Lagos, Gerry and Kieran got to work on some of our various electrical problems, like some of the navigation lights not working, which had been a worry.

From Lagos we left for the beautiful Vila Real De San Antonio on the Portuguese-Spanish border. It's about 70M, and we had a glorious morning with a strong N4 on the beam. Champagne sailing. Life was good.

Vila Real is a beautiful town in the Algarve, and felt like a real find. We dined on fantastic fish in a local restaurant, and did a little shopping for gifts for the folks back home.



Kieran and Gerry at work on deck in Barbate

Humour

From Vila Real we had a fantastic sail to the very impressive Cadiz, our last proper rest stop before crossing the Straits of Gibraltar. We did more jobs on the boat, before spending the afternoon and evening in the City. It has a magnificent old town, steeped in ancient history, and we were touched by the knowledge that we were sailing the same waters as the expert Phoenician and Roman sailors had, millennia ago.

But as we prepared for crossing the straits, unease crept in. We heard reports of an orca attack only 50 miles away on the VHF, and with Spanish authorities distributing leaflets, advising boats to avoid 'Orca Alley', which is an area of sea right in the middle of the approach to the straits, we went far into the channel, hugging the coast, before crossing at Tarifa.

It was one of the most thrilling sails of my life crossing the Straits of Gibraltar. Sara had left us in Cadiz, and Kieran, Gerry and I left Barbate (where we stopped off to meet our friends the Kennedy family for dinner) at 0530 in the dark. We spent our first few hours, with head torches on, weaving through the tuna nets, which are scattered across the bays in this area. As dawn came up we were barrelling down the straits at 7kts, in a strong westerly, with Europe on one side and Africa on the other. Incredible feeling. We had big confused seas off Tarifa and then we crossed, weaving our way through the crowded Shipping lanes to the Tangier side - about 12M.



Spain and the continent of Europe one side - Morocco and the continent of Africa the other. Barrelling down the straits at dawn. An exhilarating sail

RIGHT: The colourful vegetable market in the Souk in Tangier

It took about seven hours and no orcas spotted although we kept a good eye out. We arrived in Tangier in good order and I headed home for a few days with the lads and to visit injured Lulu (who had badly broken her wrist).

Tangier

Tangier was thrilling, chaotic and bureaucratic at the same time. We had a lot of hassle in the huge Marina, which we should have expected, as *Wodan* is not registered with the Irish maritime authorities, and we had no Irish Registration Certificate. While we can wing it in Europe, I thought we might have to end our trip in Tangier, as the authorities refused to accept the ships papers we had (Bill of Sale and Insurance Certificate). We had to check in with each of mostly friendly Harbourmaster, port Capitainerie, Customs, Immigration, Federal Police and Tourist Police, each of whom need the same form filled out, with the same information, in their different offices. The boat was also searched, but not in a serious way. Eventually they accepted the Ships Radio Licence as proof of ownership (It had a government seal). If I was doing foreign voyages again, especially outside the EU, I think I would make sure I had the registry documents in place before I left.

Down Morocco's coast

My son Jack and his mate Philly now took up the mantle of great crew and together we made our way south in strong N/NW6 winds. We were greatly amused by the Gibraltar coastguard warning Spanish fishing vessels that they were in British territorial waters and to state their intentions. It felt like the Spaniards were deliberately winding them up, as the warnings went on all day. We experienced really big swells, and together with the strong winds, both crew were sick and not having great fun, despite putting a brave face on it. The dreaded fog descended.

Our first stop was in Rabat /Sale - a wonderfully



interesting city, the capital of Morocco, where as the fog we had endured for almost 24 hours lifted, we made a spectacular entrance up river past the old Portuguese bastions. There were thousands of swimmers enjoying the cool of the morning, hundreds of fishing boats, oared ferries (costing 25c for a crossing) and into a small marina where there were only ten yachts. We visited the Medina, the walled town in the Castle and experienced some local culture. Another huge highlight of our voyage, and the start of a feeling that we were really going off piste.

Jack and Philly and the improvised shade from the burning sun



Gerry McCormack

Day 5 ... tensions are running high, the lack of water and provisions and the consecutive 15 hour voyages are taking a toll.

We have noticed Kieran does not respond well to the lash and Gerry is showing signs of scurvy.

I worry for the emotional and psychological health of the crew.. our captain is distant and stern.

We long for the safety of Tangier.

If anyone is affected by this post we have a support group VOW

Victims of Wodan
1-800 number to follow



The crew were having the craic, summarised in this WhatsApp message sent home to our nearest and dearest



Our spectacular approach into Rabat after a day and night in the fog

EL JADIDA

Our next leg was to El Jadida, which was even more off the beaten track for cruising boats. Tough sailing in W5, with thick fog again, but it was the big swells that made it difficult - the boat rolling and pitching for 16 hours caused more mal de mer for the crew, who weren't enjoying their long anticipated trip. Our windvane had been giving some trouble, and so we had been using our electronic Tiller Pilot to do the steering, but in the huge swells, it just couldn't cope, and made that kind of grinding noise you know means trouble - and it did, as it gave up the ghost.

At the height of the sailing season we were the first yacht in El Jadida for three weeks. And it felt like it. Moroccan bureaucrats made us feel like we were the



When I opened the Tiller Pilot, there were many small broken pieces inside, outside my paygrade to fix myself

first foreign boat to ever arrive in their ports. Painful bureaucracy, but lots of jobs created in a country that needs them - so we're ok with that.

We moored under the Portuguese Castle in the harbour, and were surrounded by swimmers taking a cool morning dip. El Jadida is a substantial city which had no foreign tourists that we could see, so it feels very adventurous. Very little English was spoken, but Jack's schoolboy French proved helpful. We checked into a local hotel for the night. On the afternoon of the second day, the harbour master tried desperately to get in touch with me, but I didn't notice until much later. A few local kids had swum out to our moored boat and taken a couple of fenders. The police had spotted them, and arrested four teenagers, who were being held until I could come down to the boat, and confirm nothing else was missing. I arrived down to the boat, dinghied out, and was able to confirm all was OK. The now sheepish boys were released, after I confirmed we wouldn't press any charges. After that a long argument commenced between the customs and harbour police, who then said they couldn't guarantee the safety of the boat, and it would have to be moved. Eventually a precarious space was found on a tiny pontoon in the harbour. We were heartened that the whole set of officials couldn't have been more helpful to us, and were genuinely concerned for our welfare.



The beautiful local fishing boats in the harbour El Jadida

With poor weather to the south, forecast at SW7, and a broken tiller pilot, I felt it was too risky (wind in my experience, has often been higher than forecast) to make the planned next leg trip to Agadir. And so Jack and Philly departed for some surfing south of Essaouira, and I waited for my new crew to arrive. I got to spend an unplanned week there, seeing

a Moroccan city living its life. I'd never heard of it before, but I enjoyed real Arabic hospitality, and liked it very much.

The final passage

After a week, new crew Barry and Kim arrived safely, with a brand new Tiller pilot. Barry is an enthusiastic



Surreal swim 100M from land 10,000 feet deep. One of us always stayed on board

newcomer to sailing, and Kim as experienced as they come, and both good friends of mine. As time was not on our side, we decided to head directly for the Canary Islands, the nearest of which was Lanzarote, about 375M. On the morning of departure, Barry wasn't feeling well, and I worried that I might be foolhardy embarking on a long passage with someone who wasn't 100%. However his bug cleared up quickly, and with lighter winds forecast we set sail.

We had SW4 on the nose for the first 36 hours, but despite a little discomfort, no sickness. The wind then went W, and in between avoiding shipping and a wonderful bio-luminescence display, we were enjoying our sailing. With three hour watches set, we soon got into that enjoyable passage-making rhythm.

The next day there was no wind, so in warm sunshine we had the surreal experience of a 100M from land, 10,000 feet deep swim. What a privilege to be



Barry, Kim and me leaving El Jadida

enjoying what so few will ever get to do. As the wind filled in from the north west, we deployed our wind vane Brenda (a Hydrovane), and enjoyed some champagne sailing.

The next afternoon we saw land, as we approached the northern tip of Lanzarote and the channel between it and the island of Graciosa.

It was great to have made it this far, but we weren't stopping, and had another day of sailing before we got to Las Palmas the next morning. We reefed down as a precaution against the strong katabatic winds that often flow between the Islands. We were really enjoying each other's company, and the passage making.

That night we crossed busy shipping lanes again, between Fuerteventura and Gran Canaria, and during Barry's watch he very correctly called me as he was worried about a potential collision. We called up the ship *Erin Schulte*, and they assured us they would pass ahead.

Morning brought lumpy conditions and on our approach into Las Palmas, we slowed down, so as to arrive in this busy port in daylight. That night we celebrated Kim's big birthday ashore, and the very

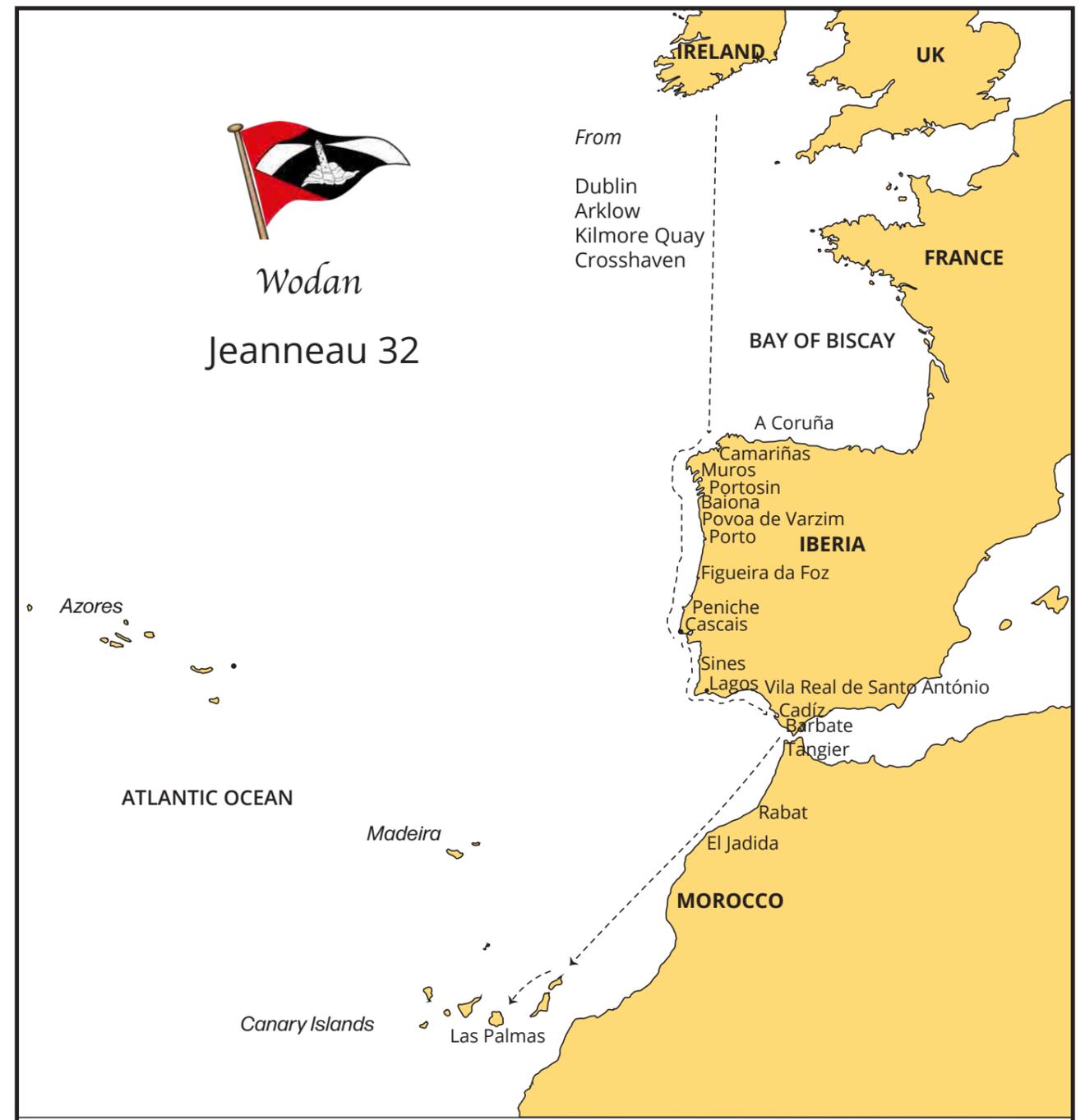
next day departed for our final leg to the marina in Pasito Blanco on the south of the Island, where *Wodan* would be taken out of the water.

We were joined for the very last leg by my friend and old sailing partner Cilian, who fittingly finished the trip with us. He was a great addition. We had strong N5/6, and flew down the east coast to our final destination. We had thousands of flying fish to keep us company, and we marvelled at the length of their glides.

We were met on arrival by the OCC Port Officer for the Canaries Agustin Martin, who couldn't have been more helpful and gave us a great welcome.

It was on his recommendation that we left *Wodan* there for an extended period, and so far we are happy with our choice.

Seven weeks, 2,200M, and eight crew members. From Ireland's green coast to Africa's spice scented ports, to the golden sun of the Canaries. For me it was heaven – and just the beginning of a longer journey across the Atlantic in time to come.



Nordkapp to Hardangerfjorden

Mark Sweetnam



THE STRANGFORD CUP

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE BEST CRUISE

I opened the cockpit tent in the morning to find 20cm of snow on deck, after the overnight temperature dipped to -10°C. It's early April and *Don Carlos* – our Najad 420 built in 1992 – had been on the hard all winter in Tromsø, north Norway. I returned to the boat a month before the launch date to do a few major projects including a switchover to lithium and installing a new autopilot in addition to the usual pre-launch preparations. However, there were shipping delays and the components only arrived after we had launched and a couple of days before we had planned to leave to go north. So batteries, chargers, Battery Management System, cabling and autopilot system were all stowed instead.

Paddy Barry (ICC), Norman Kean (ICC) and Michael Weed arrived, and we departed north for three weeks. That cruise north is covered by Paddy's log elsewhere in this annual.

After Paddy and Michael departed Norman and I spent two days sailing around the Tromsø area before he too departed. A few days later my wife, Dawn, and dog, Skipper, arrived 24 hours late after spending an unscheduled night in Schiphol Airport (you'd wonder how a dog in a crate the size of two large suitcases could go missing in an airport like Schiphol, but there you go).

Dawn and I departed in the direction of Lofoten. En route we stayed at fine anchorages at Skognesbotn (69°19.0'N,017°53.7'E) and Stronglandet (69°05.0'N,017°10.9'E), on a pontoon in the small hamlet of Strolsvika (69°03.9'N,016°48.9'E) and at the small Hurtigruten port of Risøyhamn (68°58.4'N,015°38.7'E) before spending a few days in the larger market town of Sortland (68°41.7'N,015°25.2'E). A fantastic new sheltered municipal guest pontoon was opened in Sortland in 2023, which had not yet appeared in any of the pilot books or online guides. We moored at the older municipal floating pontoon, which was fine but a bit exposed to wash. Sortland is the main operational base of Kystvakten – the Norwegian Coast Guard. I got talking to a retired coast guard captain who was appalled at my inability to catch fish. He said that all boats should be able to feed themselves from the sea and told me the mistake most foreigners make. Anchor in at least 15m of water and use weight of at least 150g. I'm glad to say that the advice worked and we caught over 40 respectable cod since. He also said that he's often asked by Norwegians for advice on the best place to cruise. He said his advice is always the same, just go around the corner from wherever you are!

Leaving Sortland we anchored at Holmsnesøy (68°35.8'N,014°50.2'E) on our way to the little-visited

Dawn, Mark and grand-daughter Aoife off Bodø



OPPOSITE: Early April in Tromsø.



A friendly visit from orca off the northern coast of Vestvågøya in Lofoten.

and remote Sildpollen (68°42.4'N,015°08.8'E). Sildpollen (which literally means the herring pool) was an extremely busy and important bay in the 19th century and is compared to the Klondyke rush. During the herring bonanza as many as 50,000 men and thousands of boats would converge there every year. At its peak 20,000 barrels of salted herring per day were being produced and the telegraph station was the second busiest in Norway, with more telegraph traffic than the cities of Bergen or Trondheim. The herring stopped coming and so did the fishermen and today there is no trace of this former activity. I was reminded of Burtonport.

We spent the following few weeks meandering around and between the islands of Lofoten. We moored at Laukvik (68°23.2'N,014°25.0'E) on Austvågøya, went south through Gimøstraumen and along the south coast of Vestvågøya to an anchorage at Stokkelvikøyan (68°10.9'N,013°59.7'E), north through the sound to Flakstadøya where we anchored at Straumøya (68°03.8'N,013°23.6'E) and then west to the guest pontoon at Ramberg (68°05.3'N,013°13.6'E) on Flakstadøya. We went east along the coast of Vestvågøya where we were visited by a small pod of orca. What a beautiful sight, we thought. But then we thought we probably wouldn't feel the same if we were a few thousand miles to the

southwest! We anchored in a remote bay on Borgvær (68°19.8'N,013°48.1'E) and then worked our way east along the coasts of Vestvågøya and Austvågøya to anchor at Skipøyosen (68°29.1'N,015°12.0'E) on Brottøya. The following day we sailed down the spectacular Raftsundet – the channel between Hinnøya and Austvågøya, where tides can run at over 6kn. We had a great sail with about 2kn under us and moored at Svolvær (68°13.9'N,014°34.0'E). Svolvær is considered the capital of Lofoten and is an attractive and well-serviced town.

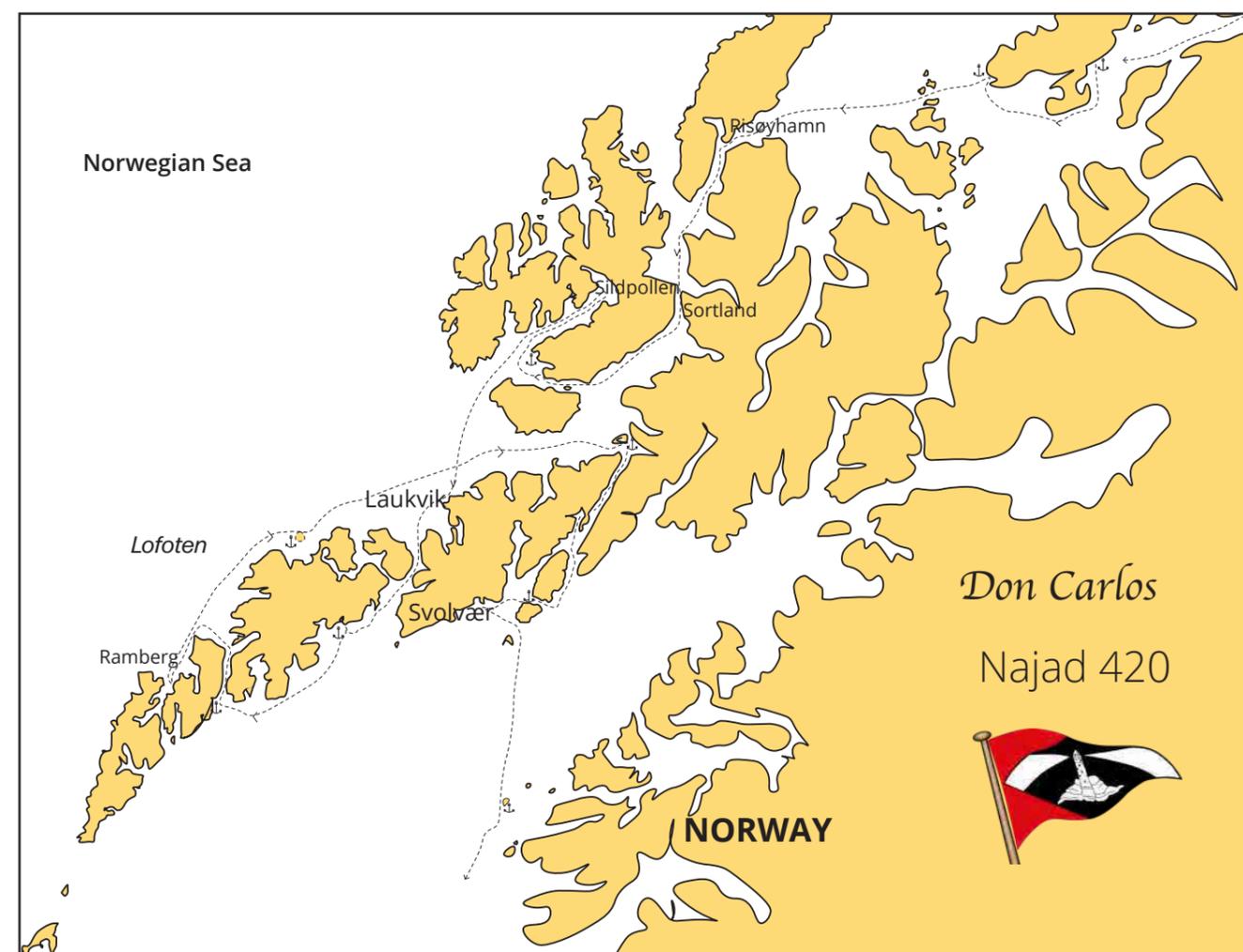
Lofoten is spectacular and memorable. Unfortunately, though, it has become a victim of its own success and is over-touristed, particularly by camper vans. From a couple of miles out to sea you'd see strings of white dots – caravans of 20 or more camper vans – meandering their way over narrow mountain roads. There are around 25,000 residents and over 1 million visitors a year. There is growing local resentment to this influx and some controls (caps and or taxes) will probably be introduced. Even though we visited there before the start of the tourist season proper (which runs from late June to mid-August) we saw many sailing boats every day and anchorages – which are few – were well occupied. Guest pontoons are not as well serviced and are more expensive than elsewhere in Norway

– even the far north. So, spectacular as Lofoten is, it is not conducive to the type of relaxed cruising to be experienced elsewhere in Norway.

Leaving Lofoten we anchored at Litlmolla (68°11.7'N,014°43.4'E) before making the 25M crossing of Vestfjorden – the exposed wide fjord leading to Narvik. We anchored in remote skerries at Gamøya (67°51.5'N,014°37.7'E) and then moored at Sørvær (67°24.4'N,013°54.2'E) in the Helligvær archipelago before making for the relatively large city of Bodø (67°17.0'N,014°22.2'E).

We had a few groups of family visiting us and decided that we would base ourselves around Bodø for a month to facilitate their travel. Although there are numerous regional airports between Bodø and Kristiansund, 270M south, and fast ferries going both north and south from Bodø any option other than Bodø would have required guests to spend an overnight ashore when coming or going or both. Fortunately, there was some great cruising around Bodø. While in Bodø we had the great pleasure of meeting Percy and Áine aboard their HR 43 *Zella* – Percy and Áine are based in Howth.

Our daughter Maeve, husband Rich and 18-month-old daughter Aoife joined us for eight days. We visited Fenes (67°23.4'N,014°14.8'E) on the island of Landegode. Landegode is about six miles long, six miles offshore from Bodø. It has four peaks of



Gallery



ABOVE: Midnight sun - looking north from Laukvik on Austvågøya in Lofoten. Taken at 0010 on 13 June



Looking south through the natural tunnel in Torghatten

BELOW: Mist in Bodø, reminiscent of a Turner painting



BELOW: Don Carlos at anchor at Våg, in an almost completely enclosed bay on the east side of Donna





The anchorage at Småholman on Landegode, just under the 700m peak of Gjura

600 to 800m and its silhouette is a major landmark around the Vestfjord. Landegode has a beautiful pastoral area around Fenes but the rest of the island is rugged and remote. Like many remote Norwegian islands the permanent population is continuously declining. A local told me that there were 60 people resident there in 2002, but that has now dropped to 25 and the school closed three years ago. We proceeded another six miles offshore to the archipelago of Helligvær, where we moored at Sørvær (67°24.4'N,013°54.2'E). Helligvær consists of over 360 islands, about 100 permanent residents and supports both a shop and a school. On then to the island of Bliksvær (67°16.7'N,014°01.1'E), before returning to Bodø where Maeve, Rich and Aoife departed.

We took the opportunity while awaiting our next family visit to fit the lithium system. It took four days of solid and physically hard work to remove the old batteries and containers, build new containers and fit, wire and commission the batteries, chargers, BMS etc. Fortunately, it all went without a hitch and the results have been very satisfactory.

We next spent four nights at a couple of

beautiful anchorages on Landegode. Småholman (67°23.9'N,014°15.6'E) is an intimate and very sheltered shallow sand anchorage amidst a dozen small surrounding islands and – unusually for Norway – no surrounding houses, just under the 700m peak of Gjura. It's not uncommon to see sea eagles but we saw more here, and at closer range, than we have done elsewhere. We then moved to Kjelbotn (67°25.4'N,014°24.0'E) on the north of the island to sit out a southerly blow – another fine anchorage but open to the north.

The official pilot publication by the Norwegian Coastguard is called Den norske los (The Norwegian Pilot Guide). It contains comprehensive information that is considered definitive and is quoted by all other pilot guides. Unfortunately, though, it had been available only as a book (paper or PDF) and only in Norwegian. But in 2024 a completely new and interactive website was introduced which has integrated all Den norsk los information with a very responsive vector chart. The content is also translated by AI into English and we highly recommend it. It is available at <https://dnl.kartverket.no>.

Our sons Darragh and Hugh and Darragh's

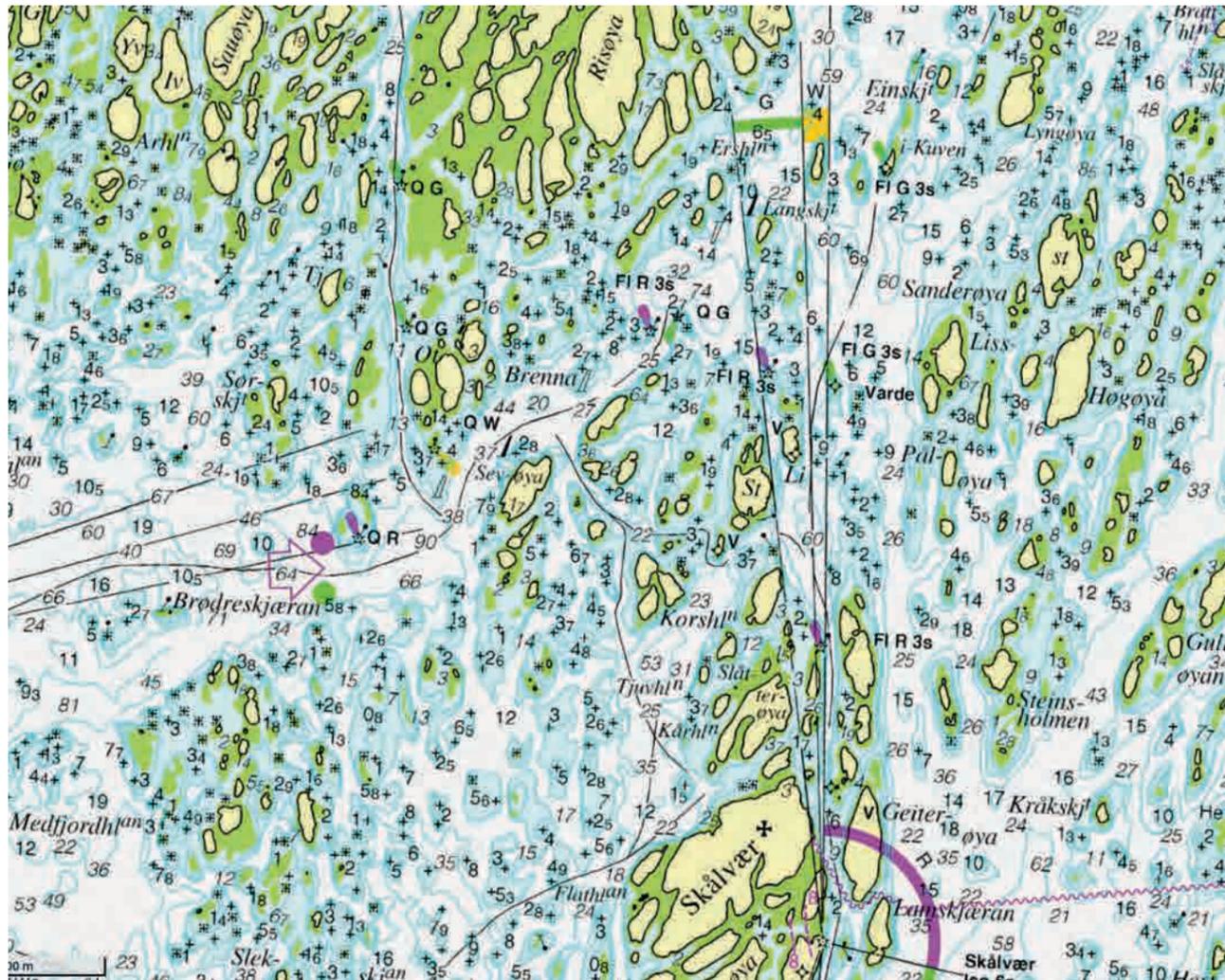
partner Paulina joined us. We sailed to the remote and very sheltered anchorage at Selvågen (67°06.3'N,013°51.8'E) on Fleina before mooring at Sørværet (67°09.8'N,013°46.2'E) on the Fleinvær archipelago. Fleinvær consists of over 200 islands, with about 30 permanent residents but no shop or school. It is a most charming place and contains the famous Arctic Hideaway – a retreat for artists and creatives designed through an international competition for architectural students. We then returned to Bodø via Sørvær and Småholman.

After Darragh, Hugh and Paulina departed Dawn's sister Mona and her husband Tom joined us. We anchored again at Selvågen and then in glorious sunshine rounded the significant headland of Kunna before mooring in the attractive and popular island of Støtt. That day (23rd July) we recorded the highest water temperature of the season at 21.0°C. It had been 5.5°C when we left Tromsø going north in early May, 7.5°C when we left Tromsø going south at the end of May and 16.0°C when we left the boat near Bergen in September.

Støtt marks the northerly boundary of the district of Helgeland – an absolutely magical cruising ground consisting of uncountable islands, fjords, mountains, anchorages, harbours and smaller towns. All within

a day of a decent shop where everything that would be needed – including gas – could be bought. By the way, the name Støtt is not to be confused with the name Statt – the infamous headland on the north of the west coast where the North and Norwegian Seas meet. And to add further to the confusion there is a Honningsvåg a few miles north of Statt and a Honningsvåg a few miles south of Nordkapp at the other end of the country!

Mona and Tom left us in Støtt to take the fast ferry back to Bodø. We spent a week in a series of anchorages and small pontoons in northern Helgeland. Some very remote and isolated, some snugly located between islands overlooked by a few houses and some in more populated bays. During this time the weather was changing and we were experiencing a series of mild depressions. We anchored at Perøya (66°50.0'N,013°13.9'E) and then spent two nights at a pontoon at Selsøya (66°33.6'N,012°50.3'E) on Hestmona – right on the Arctic Circle – to sit out a blow. On then to anchorages at Måvær (66°29.1'N,012°43.9'E), Hestøysundet (66°22.4'N,012°51.9'E) and Brandsnes (66°12.4'N,012°33.5'E) and Våg (66°08.0'N,012°33.5'E) on Donna.



Even impenetrable-looking skerries can sometimes be traversed. We sailed comfortably and safely south-west through this in 25kn winds - after a lot of preparation and planning.

Leaving Donna we made the most navigationally challenging passage I can remember in a long time on the 30M sail to Vega. We had to transit hundreds of islands, many only a few hundred metres long. I had programmed the detailed route into the plotter, we had 20 to 25kn wind abaft the beam and we sailed the entire way under Genoa alone - a most enjoyable sail.

We moored on the guest pontoon at Kjerkøya (65°42.8'N, 011°55.1'E) on Vega. Vega is a really interesting place. Vega itself is an island about 8M by 6M, but it is in the middle of an archipelago of over 6,000 islands. The extensive areas of shallow water between the islands forms a unique habitat and the whole area has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. There is the fascinating practice established over countless centuries of locals building little houses for the benefit of eider ducks, who nest in the houses once the keepers painstakingly gain their trust. The ducks line their nests with the finest of their feathers to incubate their eggs. The day after the chicks hatch the ducks abandon the shelters and the keepers painstakingly harvest and process the

down to produce what's considered to be the finest down in the world. Keepers host 50 to 100 pairs of ducks and each pair produces 15 to 20g - each quilt requires the down of 50 to 70 nests.

Following a night at anchor at Ståttholmen (65°31.8'N, 012°09.3'E) on Brattåsen we moored at the busy little town of Brønnøysund (65°28.4'N, 012°12.5'E). We spent a couple of days there restocking and relaxing.

This year the Norwegian authorities introduced new and demanding regulations for foreign boats or boats with a foreign captain. Boats under 15m are exempt (thankfully *Don Carlos* is 13m). I presume these new regulations are in response to the damage done recently to undersea cables and pipelines in the Baltic in suspected Russian attacks. Foreign boats must seek permission before anchoring, weighing anchor, berthing or leaving a berth. They must also inform the intended next stop before departure. These regulations are being actively and officiously enforced. We came across a British boat in Brønnøysund that had been boarded by the



Don Carlos on a mooring buoy in the natural shelter of Sklinna - site of a very important seabird colony

coastguard and admonished for not reporting their location. They protested that they were only 14.9m long and so were not subject to the new regulations. They were told that that might be so but the length they transmit on AIS is 15m and so they are subject to the regulations. He was frantically trying to determine how to reprogram his AIS system when we met him! We bumped into another British boat in Sørvær who received a call from the authorities when we were talking to him. The previous day he had told them he would depart at 1000, it was now 1030 and they questioned him for not having informed them of his changed plan. I subsequently heard that on another occasion he mentioned on a call to the authorities about his crew returning in the dinghy and he was reminded that he should have informed the authorities of a landing. These regulations would make Norway a less attractive cruising destination for yachts over 15m.

After leaving Brønnøysund we moored at the small community of Toft (66°28.2'N, 012°08.0'E). There is a fish-farming college there, which provides guided tours of an actual fish farm. We had passed so many fish farms - fish farming is now the greatest source of wealth creation in Norway after oil and gas - but of course always observed them only from the outside. It was great to get an understanding of what goes on in them, and to understand the frequent and varied shipping-traffic supporting them. We sailed around to Møyhamna (65°24.2'N, 012°06.8'E) close to the famous Torghatten mountain - the 250m high rock with a hole clean through its centre - and walked through it. On then to an anchorage among low islands at Lyngøya (65°20.5'N, 011°59.4'E), which from the chart promised good holding and shelter. The remains of Storm Floris were forecast to pass that night and a large change of wind direction was forecast. When we had anchored we were not happy that the shelter would be satisfactory after the wind veered and there were no promising anchorages in the vicinity so at 2100 we decided to make back to Brønnøysund. We motored at full speed (usually when we motor we stick to 5kn) arriving in Brønnøysund after midnight, when the wind was already gusting about 35kn.

We spent a few more days in Brønnøysund, and took that opportunity to fit the new autopilot. The old one was the original from 1992 and had given very good service, although it had occasionally froze and had to be rebooted. It performed well, except when close-hauled when it could lose it and unintentionally tack. I fitted the new one (Raymarine EV4) in parallel with the old one - just in case. The installation went like clockwork and there is a noticeable improvement in sailing performance on all points of sail (even though I thought the old one was perfect except when close-hauled).

Going south from Brønnøysund we left Helgeland and sailed to the remote and isolated offshore island group of Sklinna (65°12.2'N, 010°59.6'E). Sklinna has a deep and large bay surrounded by rock and is a world-renowned seabird colony in central Norway. Species breeding there include European shag, common guillemot, black guillemot, great cormorant and Atlantic puffin. We were too late in the season for the great display, but it was still very attractive. Leaving Sklinna we took the inside route, mooring in the fairly large town of Rørvik (64°51.7'N, 011°13.7'E) for a couple of days to sit out another blow. Rørvik has a good range of services and is a useful stop, but it has little to recommend itself otherwise.

BELOW: The coal-fired lighthouse on Villa. The flue rises through the whole height of the three-story building. Note the six air intakes around the base of the building. The flame could be seen 18M away

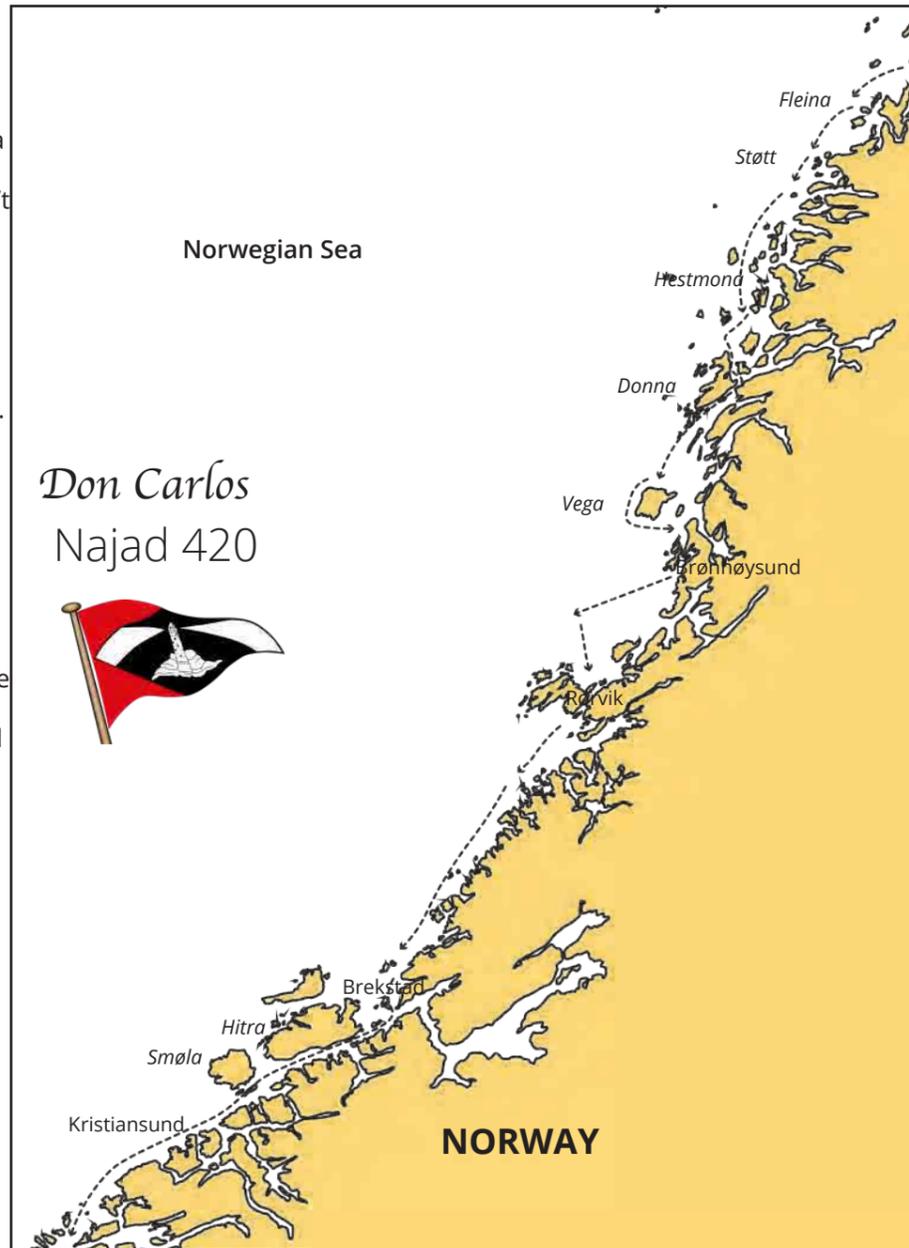


The area south of Rørvik is known as Folda and is one of the areas that is completely exposed, with no shelter from off-lying skerries. Crossing Folda is usually an objective in itself and most visitors therefore don't explore there. Sailing south from Rørvik we moored at Villa Havn (64°32.7'N,010°42.4'E). A lovely setting with no facilities but with great walks on the island, including one to the interesting coal-fired lighthouse. This lighthouse was built in 1839 and it was the last coal-fired lighthouse in the world to be built. It was also the world's most northerly lighthouse at that time. It was coal fired because the lighthouse service wanted an "old and tried and tested" method in such a remote location. The flue was three stories high and the flame could be seen from 18M away.

Leaving Villa we tacked through the inshore islands of Raudøya, Skokkeløya and Ramsøya – delightful cruising – before anchoring at Grisvågen (64°17.1'N,010°16.8') on charmingly pastoral Indre Skjervøya. The next day we tacked through many islands and rocks and anchored off the ferry harbour at Sørvik (63°47.8'N,009°25.9'E) on Husøya. Sørvik served its purpose as an overnight stop, but couldn't really be recommended. The following day we sailed to Brekstad (63°41.1'N,009°40.1'E), at the entrance of Trondheimsfjorden. Brekstad has a large modern harbour built in the '60s to support a major new air base. It's a well-serviced little town. It's about 3km from the end of the runway and around 20 or so F35s take off there daily. We found the noise and sight of them quite a novelty. Dennis and Richard Aylmer joined us and, unfortunately, it rained constantly for the duration of their visit – one Atlantic low after another. We left Brekstad and while sailing close-hauled in 30kn gusts a large wave washed over our bow and silently and undramatically washed the spinnaker and sock away – the holding bag had given way (weakened by UV damage). We dropped sail and doubled back on the exact track – of course we couldn't have done that without GPS – and were fortunate to spot it as the sock was dark blue. We retrieved it undamaged. While sailing in fjords we use it regularly and find it very convenient to have

it readily accessible, but we resolved to lash it more securely in future.

We moored at Hestvika (63°34.2'N,009°11.8'E) on Hitra, continued tacking down Trondheimsleia before anchoring at Taftøsund (63°25.7'N,008°48.5'E), then on to Straumen (63°19.8'N,008°04.7'E) on Smøla. We continued to Kristiansund (63°06.7'N,007°44.0'E). We had had three hard days tacking against 20 to 30kn winds – raining all the time – and were glad to reach civilisation in the busy and interesting town. We lost the following two days sailing due to high winds but made up for it by enjoying the sightseeing in this beautiful town, before Dennis and Richard left for Dublin. It was only after they departed that it struck me that it was quite a coincidence to have had two people aboard in the same season who had made such a contribution to the Galway Hooker. Dennis was one of the first generation to revive interest in the class when, as a young man, he rescued and



restored the *Morning Star* in the early 60s, and of course the exploits of Paddy in the *St Patrick* in the 70's, 80's and 90's are legendary.

The wind moderated and veered to our beam as we left Kristiansund. We had a fantastic beam reach taking the inner intricate route to get maximum shelter. It was particularly exciting to sail through the narrow Stopland route, which saved quite a number of miles. We moored at Nørdre Bjørnsund (62°53.6'N,006°49.4'E) and the following day continued to take advantage of the wind to sail to Runde (62°23.8'N,005°39.6'E), within shooting distance of Statt. Getting a suitable window to round Statt had been on our mind for the previous few days. Leaving Runde we encountered 20kn wind on the beam and a swell of around 2m with a fairly long wavelength. We gave Statt a berth of about 1.5M and rounded it uneventfully – we have had much more unpleasant experiences rounding the Bailey!

We moored on a small pontoon at Klosteravågen (62°03.2'N,005°17.7'E) on Selja. Selja is an enchanting island just south of Statt and a very important monastery site. The legend is that in the tenth century a young Christian princess called (Saint) Sunniva left Ireland because her father was forcing her to marry a pagan Viking. Trusting in the Lord, she let her boat be taken by the sea and wind to wherever the sea and wind would take it. It ended up on Selja and she was martyred there in a cave. The island became a very large and important ecclesiastic centre. Very little remains today but there's a

The view over Seljevågen at night. Selja is just across the sound and the famous monastery is on the far side of its peak facing the open sea. Kviteneset - which is 6M south of Statt - is visible in the distance on the right.



tranquillity or atmosphere on the island reminiscent of Inishglora, Inishmurray or Iona – although there were established over 400 years earlier. We moved on and moored at Seljevågen (62°02.7'N,005°20.7'E). Seljevågen in a small and not particularly memorable little town. While there, I thought that as it is at one end of the ship tunnel being built to bypass Statt it will change dramatically over the next few years. However, subsequently in mid-October the prime minister dramatically announced that the entire project is being scrapped because of spiralling costs.

The following day we motored directly offshore for 12M. A foreign boat can get permission to remain in Norway for up to two years, but that period cannot be extended. Norwegian Customs very helpfully pointed out that if a vessel can prove it left Norwegian territorial waters that that two-year 'clock' is reset. We informed Customs that we were going to temporarily leave and they asked for a photo of the chartplotter when we had left and that we should ensure we were transmitting AIS at all times. We got confirmation from customs within minutes and before re-entering that we satisfied their requirements. All very efficient and convenient.

We continued southwards anchoring at Dombevågen (61°40.4'N,004°50.7'E) on Hovden, mooring at Herland (61°21.3'N,004°53.3'E) on Atløyna, anchoring at Kjellingøya (60°53.2'N,004°44.5'E) and mooring at Hjelstad (60°15.4'N,005°14.3'E), just past the end of the main runway at Bergen airport. We took an inshore route south of Bergen, going through the

narrow Lukksund with its 4 knot tides before the peaceful and isolated anchorage at Terøysundet (59°59.3'N,005°45.3'E). Next day we sailed on to the lower reaches of the Hardangerfjord. We usually enjoy the challenges of fjord sailing – light and flukey winds – but not this time. We found it impossible to make progress in light winds of 5kn but with sudden gusts of 35kn and windshifts of over 180°. Furthermore, we were in a busy shipping channel and felt that our constant changes of heading were dangerous in the circumstances, so we furled and motored to the lovely small town of Rosendal (59°59.2'N,006°00.3'E). This is a very popular destination and the large guest harbour is often full – rafted 3 or 4 deep – during the height of the season, although there were only a handful of visiting boats by the time we got there. Rosendal had been an important shipbuilding centre - Roald Amundsen's ship Gjøa was built there. There is a shipbuilding museum, but unfortunately it shut for the season the very day we arrived. While usually quite sheltered the topography around Rosendal is such that strong SE winds get accelerated. They experienced gusts of over 100kn last year and we experienced gusts of 70kn when we were there.

We motored the 27M up to Norheimsund on the other side of the fjord. Unlike the topology of Rosendal the topology of Norheimsund results in it being extremely sheltered. The water doesn't freeze during the winter, it is a beautiful town surrounded by high mountains and it has a welcoming guest pontoon right in the centre. It is a popular spot with foreigners to leave boats over the winter and that is where we too left *Don Carlos* (in the water) for the winter. The cost of leaving the boat there is a fraction of what we paid in Tromsø the previous winter.

Don Carlos on her winter berth in Norheimsund. Unusually - but very conveniently - the floating pontoons are at deck height. The glacier on the mountain opposite is Folgefonna, Norway's third largest.



There is a good – and extremely scenic – bus service to Bergen city (75 minutes) and Bergen Airport (two hours). There are direct flights between Bergen and Dublin.

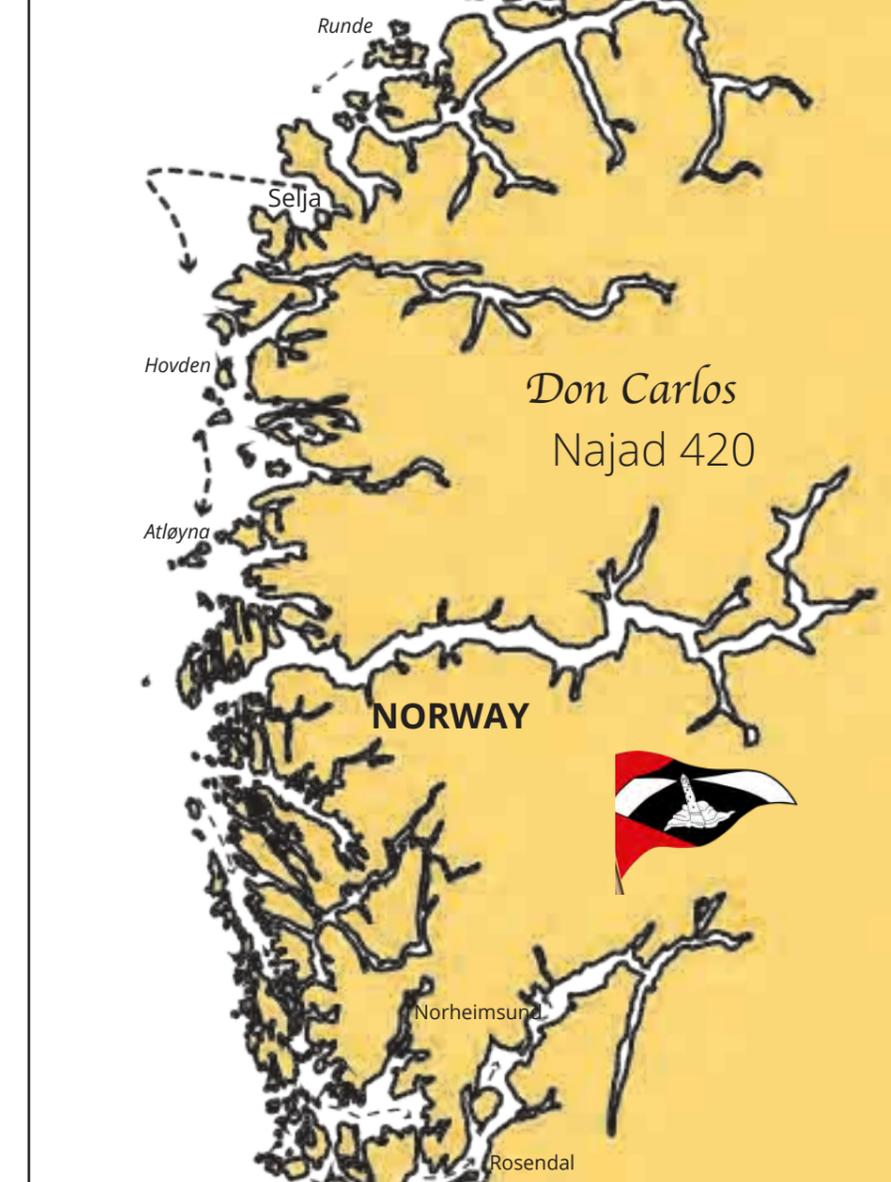
We covered 1,979M over the summer, burnt 802l of diesel and used 235 engine hours. By my estimation we motored or motor-sailed for 960M and sailed for 1,019M. We spent 95 nights on 45 different pontoons, 33 nights at anchor at 32 different anchorages and 1 night on a mooring buoy. The most expensive pontoon we came across was Bodø at 530NOK (€46), the cheapest was Strolsvika at 50 NOK (€4.30) and the average nightly rate of the pontoons we visited was 267NOK (€23). That cost always included water and usually included electricity.

The summer was thoroughly enjoyable. Other than a little engine trouble in Havøysund and a SOB (spinnaker overboard!) near Brekstad it was uneventful, thankfully. We had unbelievably good weather while sailing up the coast of Norway in 2024 – we were really spoilt. In 2025, although we did have some very good weather, we also had our share of bad and miserable weather. Our infatuation with Norway as a cruising area remains intact, in fact it has increased. It is such a beautiful, convenient and interesting country in every way.

What are our thoughts on the various areas we have cruised in Norway? Lofoten is dramatic, iconic and is perhaps the most well-known and targeted area. It is certainly worth visiting, although the number of visiting tourists makes it feel a little like a conveyor belt. The region between Lofoten and Nordkapp, including Finnmark, is more remote. It is stunning and, although exposed in places, there are numerous

islands along the coast. Some of the islands are big and would encourage circumnavigation. Being further north the cruising season is shorter and locals advocate only cruising there after late June, because of the unpredictability of the weather before then. Helgeland is a cruising wonderland. There is an uncountable number of islands extending miles out to sea, most with anchorages or guest pontoons and frequent shops. There is such a diversity in the geology and character of the islands and one could spend years cruising there exploring new anchorages and harbours. Apart from the main route north (basically the route the Hurtigruten takes) there are very few boats and you feel you have the place to yourself. The area south of Rørvik including Folda and the islands off and northeast of Hitra seems to be as varied and less-visited than Helgeland.

We hope to continue south next summer further exploring the fjords on the west coast and working our way around to the Baltic. We are both looking forward to returning to northwest Norway at some stage in the future, and we would focus on exploring the area between Kristiansund and Støtt.

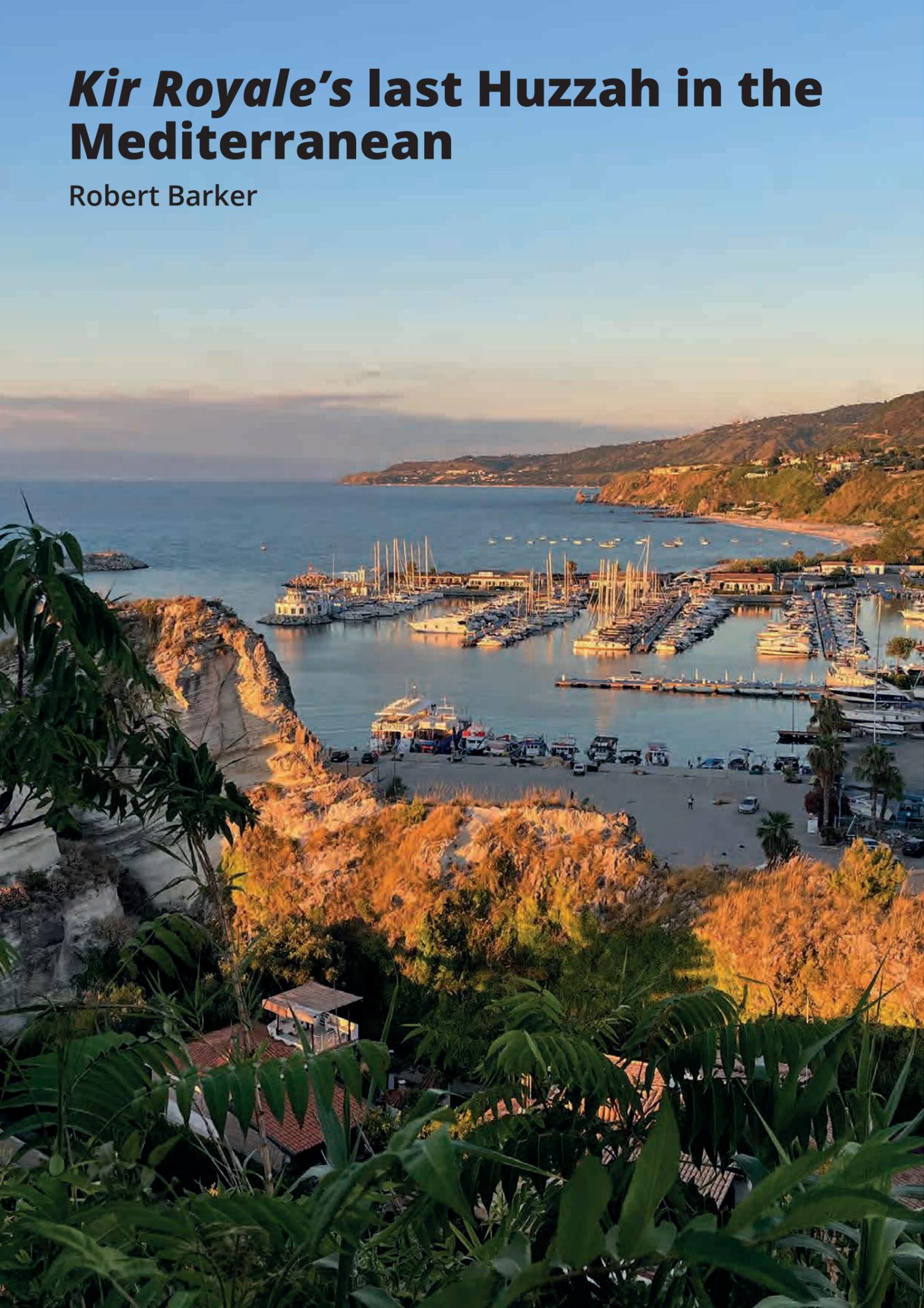


The Norwegian Royal Yacht 'Norge' passed us in Rørvik Sound. The very elegant vessel was built by Camper & Nicholsons in 1937.



Kir Royale's last Huzzah in the Mediterranean

Robert Barker



OPPOSITE: Tropea Marina

We have had boats in the Mediterranean Sea, including *Alchemist*, *Hadrian's Beard* and *Kir Royale*, since 2006. We have sailed the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea, visiting places extending to Sicily, the east and west Italian coasts, Croatia, Montenegro, Greece, Albania, Sardinia, Portugal, Spain, France and Corsica from our base in Malta. This log records our last cruise in the Med which was tinged with sadness as we bade farewell to its crystal clear waters, golden sunshine, vine-laden mountains, ancient temples and exotic languages.

13 June

We cast off our lines from Valetta bound for Syracuse in Sicily at 0900. Crew were Pat, Robert, Bill Walshe and Muireann Ní Dhuigneáin. Wind NW 1 – 2, SS Flat, Baro 1020. We ate marmalade sandwiches en route. We sighted a pod of dolphin, apparently chasing fish into the Malta Channel. We had a nice flat passage with bright sunshine, and arrived at Syracuse at 1715, distance travelled 81nm. We anchored in 5m off the town, but noticed that the marina has been repaired and is now fully operational again following the disaster of 2024. We sighted dolphins swimming around the anchorage as we swam and dined on board. Our tanks were 73% full, so we decided not to refuel.

14 June

We arose early for swims and some exercise with ship-board dumbbells. A nice relaxed breakfast as we watched a pair of large cetaceans circling the boat to greet us. Weighed the anchor at 1050 bound for Taormina. Wind 1 – 2 var, SS Flat, Baro

steady. We kept our speed to 7kn to conserve fuel and arrived Giardini Naxos 1745, in time to see the Leinster V Bull match in Croke Park. Mt. Etna was still spewing quantities of steam and smoke after a major eruption two weeks previously. The anchorage was busy but some day trippers were leaving as we arrived. Total mileage 50 nm. We dined on board. The display panel on the fly bridge went down and some preliminary checking showed nothing obviously wrong!

15 June

Up early for swims and showers. Still no joy with the EVC: eventually we gave up and reconciled ourselves to steering from the main console! The weather forecast through the Messina Strait was fresh and on the nose, but as we left Taormina, the wind was only N 2 – 3. Wind increased through the Strait to N 4 – 5 as we battened down all the hatches. No day for fly bridge steering!! We emailed Tropea to ensure they could accommodate us for the night and they responded smartly in the affirmative. Once through the Strait, the wind abated and we had a flat sea with only a zephyr to puff us north to Tropea – distance travelled 63nm with a heat haze that made visibility tricky on occasions. We tied up, as directed, on the quay wall opposite the shop and the pizzeria. This would have involved an impossibly steep gradient on the passerelle, so we borrowed a plank, the navigation of which provided considerable entertainment to the neighbours who watched with amazement the four old aged pensioners clambering up and down a Mt. Kilimanjaro plank to get ashore!! Very civilised showers, laundry and wc block available. We favoured the pizzeria with our custom and had an excellent dinner.

Cocktails at the old town of Tropea. Mary, Michael, Robert and Joan



16 June

Up very early to assist a 60' catamaran beside us trying to manoeuvre his way out in a very narrow channel – a delight to watch the professional skipper's boat handling. Our neighbour on the left had just bought a new boat in Naples and was headed home with her to Catania. He discovered he had no hose and very gratefully borrowed ours. After breakfast, we took in our lines at 1100 and headed for the fuel dock, which was very efficient. At 1125, with wind W 2 and baro 1018, we headed for Cetraro. We had been emailing them over the weekend, and eventually got a reply that they could accommodate us – sent at 0700 on Monday morning (clearly not a place for working at the weekend!). South of Cetraro, we spotted a turtle with his head stuck in a small plastic bucket. We circled back to see if we could free him, but he wriggled free as we came alongside. We spotted a minkie whale heading south, and arrived Cetraro 1800. We were guided in across the silting area at the entrance, and had a nice welcome onto our pontoon, which was a decent height for stepping on and off. Distance travelled 52nm. Robert made a Mediterranean salad for us, which we consumed in the cockpit as the sun set behind the mountains.

17 June

Up early – Pat had a Teams Board meeting and Muireann had a funeral to attend on line. The marina office was closed and the opening hours were decidedly erratic. Catherine Walshe and Clare Balfe arrived into Cetraro station, which was about 3km down the road, but taxis were very difficult to locate. There were no shops and only one restaurant near the marina. A Lidl is some 2km down the road, but no public transport or taxis to get there. We rang Giovanni to reserve a space in Maratea for

the following day. The single marina restaurant was not open that night, so we had a makeshift dinner of leftovers. Catherine and Clare were hugely unimpressed!

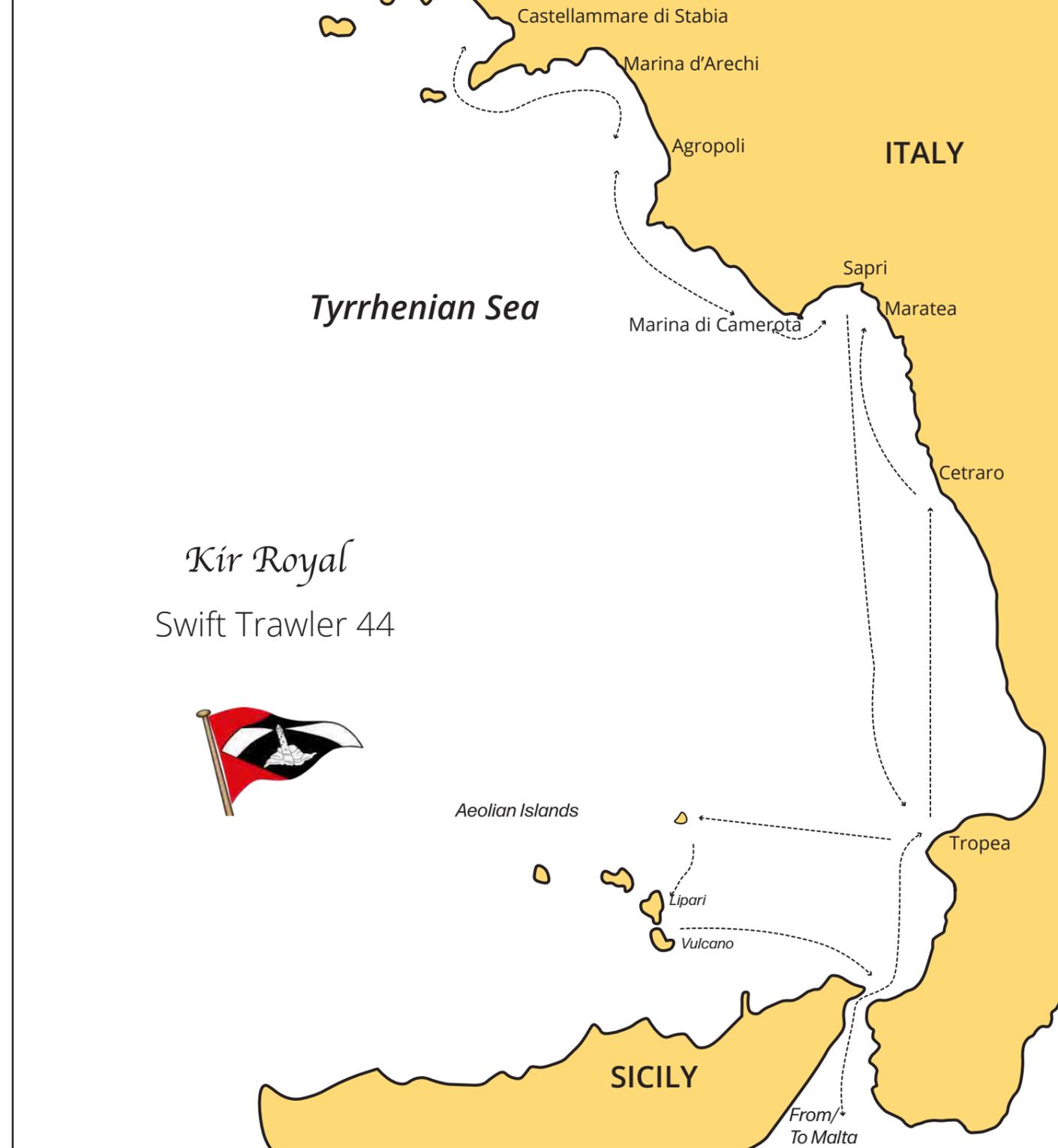
18 June

The barometer took a nose dive and we had spectacular electric storms and heavy rain overnight. During the day, the weather deteriorated and we had to stay put. We walked to Lidl and carried back stores. The restaurant was open and we had a very decent dinner to the accompaniment of lashing rain and howling wind. We rang Giovanni to explain the situation and he was very understanding – clearly it was honking in Maratea too!

19 June

It howled all night, but by 0700 the wind had abated and the rain had stopped, so we decided to make a run for the weather window that was opening up. As we left, SW 4 – 5 but forecasting 3 with skies clearing. As we exited the harbour, the bimini tore and was flapping noisily in the wind. Bill and Robert folded it back and Pat navigated out around the sand bar. Arrived in Maratea 1055, 32nm distance. Pat attended a meeting on line until 1400 hrs and lunch was served on board. It is a lovely little town and Giovanni, who is one of the ormaggitori, guided us right into the centre of the village past the Lega Navali at the entrance. There was a small supermarket in the village or a 2km hike up the hill to Fiumicello. We dined ashore in the one restaurant on the town square, which is popular and busy (booking recommended).

Lunching at the old town of Maratea



Maratea Harbour



20 June

We got up early to catch the local bus to the old town of Maratea, which takes a circuitous route around the area. There was no charge for the bus ride, and the driver was insistent that he wasn't allowed to take a tip, which we were more than willing to pay for his safe navigation of the cliff-face hairpin bend ride! We were able to get good supplies for our planned two nights at anchor and enjoyed the ambiance of the quaint old town before clambering on the return bus to the harbour. A very posh restaurant on a first floor balcony overlooking the harbour provided a delicious dinner enhancing our good feelings about Maratea.

21 June

Departed Maratea 1230 and headed for Sapi. Weather fair, slight shower, wind NW 1 - 2, Baro steady 2019. Arrived Sapi 1400 and anchored off the beach in the west of the bay. Lunch and a lazy afternoon in good conditions, interrupted only by a visit from the Guardia Finanzia at 1745 to inspect our papers. They did not board us, but extended a child's fishing net towards us to pop our documents into. No issues and they whisked off with a cheery wave and left us in peace to continue swimming in the lovely clear blue waters as Catherine cooked up a storm for us.

22 June

Pat was trying to book us ahead as mooring places were a bit like hens' teeth as we approached Amalfi and the Bay of Naples. Porto Davida did not respond to any calls or emails. Agropoli, which has very few spaces on the town side of the harbour, did answer

Maratea harbour



telephone calls and we managed to secure a spot for the following night. Nobody speaks English and some Italian is essential. Luckily, Catherine has fluent Italian which worked well for this leg of the cruise. We had intended to anchor at Scaria, but having left Sapi at 1430, with a fairly fresh breeze onshore at Scaria as we passed at 1630, we observed that it was exposed and anchoring would be in 10m, which was a bit deep; so we motored around to Camerota and, at 1705 anchored in 6.5m off the beach in good shelter, having travelled 14nm. We had a small scend overnight but of the gently rocking- to-sleep type rather than the rolling, persistent, nausea-inducing type.

23 June

We were up early and had a 'walking-around' breakfast (where food is laid out in the cockpit and folk wander about and nibble as they feel inclined!). Anchor up at 1010, wind var. 1 - 2, baro steady, bound for Agropoli, 35 nm distant. We had lunch underway. We avoided Zone A Fishery Protection areas, as indicated and arrived at 1610 hrs. Franco, the mariniero, was waiting for us and directed us into the only spot he had left on his pontoon. We dined in a pizzeria restaurant overlooking the harbour.

24 June

We departed Agropoli at noon: wind SW 2-3, baro steady, bound for Marina d'Arachi. The wind increased to F4 as we entered Arachi after 20nm. The marina is posh and well appointed. Robert had an ear infection, and asked for directions to a medical surgery. He was instructed to return to the boat, and,



Agropoli

within an hour, two doctors turned up to examine him and prescribe medicine, at an exorbitant cost. The medicine turned out to be next to useless! He subsequently visited a small pharmacist who scoffed at the medication and instantly administered antibiotic, costing less than €5, which worked a treat!! The marina collected laundry from the boat for us and returned it, again at a ferocious cost, but beautifully clean and ironed and folded.

28 June

After a couple of days at the beach and exploring Arachi, the crew concluded that it was too hot at 40° to venture into Naples and we just relaxed locally. We bade farewell to Muireann, Bill, Catherine and Clare and cleaned up the boat for the next crew.

29 June

Michael and Mary McCann and Joan O'Grady arrived from Naples Airport and we spent the day assisting a Dutch couple, Paul and Maia, who had been sailing towards Corfu and been dismasted in a sudden wind surge. The wind has been unpredictable and clearly different from the settled patterns we had come to expect from previous years on the Med.

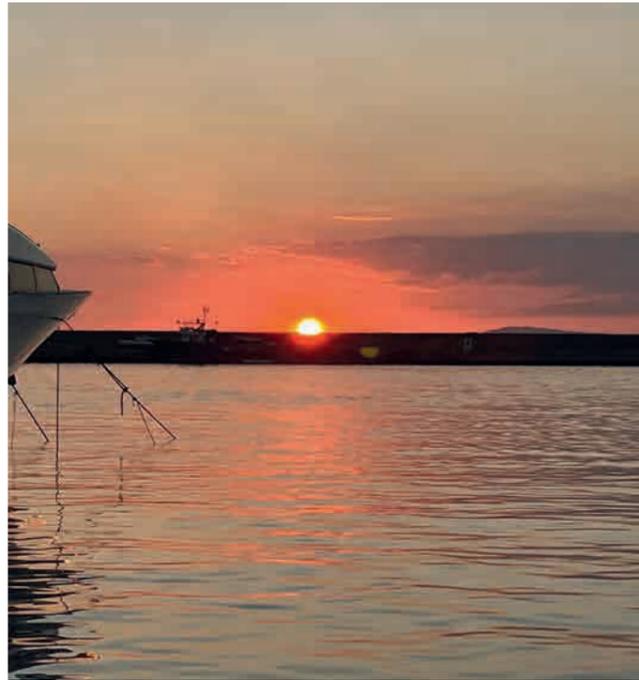
30 June

We cast off at 1030 bound for Castlemare di Stabia - Porto Davide. Wind SW 2-3. En route, past Amalfi, the AIS started to go down intermittently, until it finally failed us as we passed Capri. Then the pilot started to fail and we had to hand steer for the last 15nm. We were unsure if it was a magnetic error emanating from the land, which was alight with fires all along the coast. The wind freshened - gusting SW F5, fanning the shoreside flames. Off the entrance to Castlemare, the Guardia Costiera 'requested' us to stand off while a large Italian naval supply ship exited with the assistance of 3 tugs. Our VHF then packed up and Pat hastily sent WhatsApp messages to Roberto in Porto Davide. He answered promptly and asked us to stand by for him to come out in his RIB.

The wind was strong and gusting across the marina berth, but we had a very helpful escort and four mariners to help us tie up and erect the passerelle. We tied up at 1615 having travelled 36nm. We asked whether the electronic failures were due to general atmospheric or magnetic problems and were greeted with enigmatic smiles and general gesturing towards the firmament.

Clare and Catherine at Porto d'Arachi marina.





Sunset over the Bay of Naples

baroque cathedral and then galloped through the masses to jump into the Metro to get back to Roma Termini to catch the Naples train. Robert was targeted by a gang of young pick-pockets. Fortunately, he spotted them passing his wallet from one to the other. He stood up and shouted at the top of his voice at them and drew everyone's attention to the gang. Suddenly, his wallet appeared on the floor and amidst all the shouting, Robert checked his bag to ensure that nothing else was missing. At the next station, the four robbers leapt off the train and disappeared into the ether. A near miss – there was €1,000 in cash in the wallet. After the drama, we legged it through Termini station to catch the train to Naples. All the trains were delayed with no explanation and minimal information. Rumours circulated suggesting an earthquake or volcanic activity effecting the trains. There was loads of shouting and yelling from the growing crowd of frustrated travellers and not even a chair or seat for the delayed passengers. Eventually, a train arrived two hours late and we sank gratefully into our seats, hoping that the earthquake had subsided.

1 July

We were up at the crack of dawn to catch the stopping train to Naples. We stood for most of the way. We then had to negotiate a different train line to Rome. Ticket acquisition was tricky. There was a long queue, but we spotted machines which we, in our innocence, felt would expedite matters for us. It couldn't be further from the truth and so, we slinked back into the queue to get the assistance of a human. Eventually, we reached the top of the queue to a charming chap with dancing fingers who located seats for us on a 0900 train returning 1830. After the ordeal, we blanched only slightly when he announced that the cost would be €100 each! In Rome, we visited the Spanish Steps, the Trevi Fountain and the Barberini Gardens before our appointed time at the Caravaggio Exhibition which we had booked months earlier. It was hot as Hades and Rome was thronged with tourists. After attending a really exceptional exhibition of Caravaggio's works we went to the Basilica of St. Peter's and walked through the Sacred Door (translated on the sign as The Magic Door) which is opened every 25 years. We strolled through the incredible



Herculaneum

2 July

Up early to visit Pompeii. We had prebooked tickets that assured us that we could skip the queues and just download a guide. This all proved to be nonsense. Pompeii was jammed and it was very difficult to find shade. We enjoyed it, but were glad to get back to the relative cool of the boat, some five hours later. We dined on board.

3 July

The crew took a ferry to Capri and spent the day enjoying the delights of this busy, attractive island. Pat and Robert stayed and hunted for a supermarket. We found SOLE365, deep in the side streets. A comprehensive source of supplies and they delivered to the boat for free. There was a general powercut from 1400 to 1900, attributed to the heat wave.

4 July

We visited Herculaneum, which we all agreed, was better than Pompeii. It was less crowded, with a personal guide and excellent explanations of the impact on the town of the eruption of Vesuvius that also destroyed Pompeii. Well worth a visit. We visited Naples in the afternoon, but apart from the super Museum, we found the city hot, sticky, dirty and somewhat threatening.

OPPOSITE: Entering the 'Magic gate' at St. Peter's Basilica. Joan, Mary, Robert and Michael

5 July

We retraced our steps south, spending two nights in Agropoli. Our plans to spend nights on anchorage at Camerota and Sapi were thwarted by strong winds and electric storms. So we sheltered for three days in Maratea, visiting the beach and the lovely old town; We then headed back for Tropea, navigating the precarious wooden plank to get ashore and aboard. We visited the beautiful old, historic town, climbing the 200 steps to get there – but well worth a visit.

12 July

We fuelled up at 0800 as the fuel dock opened and departed 0940 for Lipari on the Aeolian Islands. Weather was fair, wind NE1 – 2, baro 1016, rising slightly. We travelled with a sizeable pod of dolphins dancing around the bows. The wind increased F3 – 4 and we claimed our space on Lipari Services pontoon (which we had pre-booked). The pontoons were bouncy and three strong lads emerged to assist with berthing. Distance travelled 49 nm. We went ashore to join the Pride celebrations and have a pizza. When we returned, the pontoons were doing Chinese waves with the scend. The wind dropped overnight and we had a comfortable sleep. After stocking up, we took in our lines 1130 and headed for Volcano. The wind was NE, so we headed for the west coast of the island. Wind F3 – 4, baro steady. The anchorage was stuffed and people came and



Back in Malta with double cocktails

went all afternoon, making swimming difficult. The wind freshened to F5 during the day, but it calmed down overnight.

14 July

We enjoyed some quiet morning swimming time before weighing anchor at 0630 bound for Riposto via the Messina Strait. The forecast indicated a rising wind which would not favour a night at Taormina. As we left, the wind was Var 0 – 1, SS Flat, weather fair. We dined on marmalade sandwiches underway. A large pod of dolphins accompanied us along the north coast of Sicily. The wind increased N 4 – 5 through the Messina Straits, gusting later F6, giving us a bouncy passage to Riposto although, with a following wind, it was not uncomfortable. We arrived in Riposto at 1600, where we were greeted by mariners in a RIB. The wind dropped by evening. Distance travelled 80nm. Overnight, the wind rose and it honked all night – gusting gale force. We were glad we hadn't overnighted at Giardini Naxos as planned.

15 July

Up early and it was still blowing NE 4, gusting 5 – 6. We decided to depart for Syracuse as the wind was expected to abate and would be following. A day's delay in Riposto would have cost us three days in Syracuse as the winds were due to increase to gale force from the west – not good for a passage across the Malta Channel. The mariners stood by to assist us out of the berth in the gusting winds, but all was well, thanks to the skill of our crew. The wind abated slowly as we travelled south. We dropped anchor in Syracuse 1500, wind then N 2. Baro dropping 1015.

16 July

We swam before departure from Syracuse. Weighed anchor 0600, wind NE2 – 3. We set our speed at 11.5kn to allow us to reach Valetta before the

forecasted wind wound up from the west. We had an uneventful, if slightly bouncy passage. We stood by at the entrance to Valetta Harbort to allow the MSC cruise ship and the Grimaldi RORO to queue up and get through the entrance. Arrived 1345, distance travelled 84nm. Distance for trip: 844 nm.

The arrival at Valetta had some sadness for us as it was to be our last Mediterranean cruise. But we sat and reflected on all the years of wonderful cruising we had had. We concluded that the increasing blistering heat, the unpredictable and sometimes very strong winds, the cost of fuel and the risk of running into desperate clandestini trying to get to mainland Europe in lightweight RIBs without lights, overloaded and impossible to see in the dark all made sailing in the Mediterranean dangerous. So we sold *Kir Royale* and bought a *Pescadore*, whom we named *Jubilados*. She is now safely ensconced in Carrick on Shannon and we are looking forward to a boating life which is the anthesis of life on the Mediterranean.

Kir Royale was handed over to the new owner in Valetta, but we assisted with the delivery trip to France, leaving 20 July and travelling to Marsala in Sicily, Calletta in Sardinia, Bonifacio in Corsica, Cavalaire sur Mer in France, and leaving her at Les Hauts de Gerlissan. Final log 8,860nm.

OPPOSITE: Robert and Pat bid farewell to *Kir Royale*





Lady Belle rounds Ireland and explores the Irish Sea

Donal Walsh



Lady Belle left Dungarvan on 15 June; aboard were Clare Morrissey and Donal Walsh both ICC. The intention was to sail round Ireland and although the wind was in the west we opted to head west as we thought that we would have more favourable winds when we reached the west coast. In the freshening wind, conditions got more challenging and an overnight at Ballycotton was decided upon. By morning the wind was still dead on the nose and we plugged on motorsailing with the mainsail only.

Once past the Old Head we laid off a bit and headed for Courtmacsherry. It was low water as we made our approach and our rudder took the bottom. Normally this is no problem because our Ovni 385 has a lifting rudder and centreboard which allows her to dry out on her mooring in Dungarvan Harbour. The rudder is operated by means of a hydraulic pump which

drives a piston mechanism which lifts and lowers the rudder blade as required. There is a safety system which allows the rudder to lift in the event of taking the bottom. When we tried to get the rudder back into the down position it appeared to be seized and as we applied pressure on the system we burst a seal in the hydraulic pump.

We anchored in deeper water northwest of Wood Point but now found ourselves in a wind against tide situation due to the strong gusts blowing down the harbour. This was very unpleasant as the anchor chain was snatching as we alternated from tide rode to wind rode. After high water all settled down and we got to sleep.

The snatching started again when the tide turned in the morning we decided to relocate to Blindstrand

Rudder repairs, North Harbour

Bay and anchor there. What a difference! This proved to be comfortable anchorage in the strong westerlies and we remained for a few hours before setting off west again.

Because our rudder wasn't fully extended the autohelm was unable to cope with the pressure and it was a long arduous slog hand steering until we finally made Castletownshend where we anchored in sheltered water. Working from the inflatable we were able to force the rudder back down into the normal sailing position, also attaching a rope to the aft end of the blade to enable us to lift it again should the need arise. An inspection of the hydraulic pump revealed that the nylon housing holding the O ring seal was cracked. I managed to fuse the material using a heated soldering iron. This repair stopped the leak of fluid from the pump but the stiffness in the

mechanism remained. I figured the only sure way to repair the problem was to beach the boat and access the rudder. I needed a sandy beach where I could dry out.

We headed for North Harbour Cape Clear and dried out in front of the pub. There was lots of advice and words of warning from passers-by who were unaware that we could retract our keel and rudder and dry out. One customer said that they thought I was going to come in the pub window! A passing yachtsman commented 'it would be a foolish man that would follow you into a strange harbour'.

I removed the drive piston and found the two nylon bushings holding the seals had seized in the cylinder. Everything was cleaned off and we gave the bushings a fine sanding and reassembled the mechanism and waited for the tide to return. Later we crossed to Schull for stores before overnighing in Crookhaven. Here we met Aedan Coffey ICC aboard *Ar Ais Aris*.

We rounded the Mizzen and headed for Castletownbere where I hoped I would get someone with a lathe to cut a new o-ring groove in hydraulic pump seal. Ger O'Sullivan on Bere Island agreed to do the job so we relocated to Lawrence Cove which was adjacent to his workshop. Ashore we met Michael Madsen and Peter Killen both ICC. The repairs worked well and now the rudder was moving freely. From Bere we headed to Valentia taking the route through the Dursey Sound. This was a mixed passage with some strong gusts which dropped off to light wind at times which required the use of





Connemara coast

the motor. Three days were lost to strong winds in Valentia before we were able to get away. Alongside also was Fergus Quinlan ICC.

The tide was right for us in the Blasket Sound but the visibility was poor which required constant vigilance. There was an overnight anchorage off the pier in Brandon. This is a good stopping place when heading to or from the Aran Islands. We made an early start and had a lively ten hour sail to Kilronan. Another miserable day followed with rain and wind but we battled on to Roundstone where there were several attempts at anchoring before we were satisfied that we were secure. A sunny morning followed and Clare got her swim in Gorteen Bay after which we were

Clare in Clew bay



able to take the passage through Joyce Sound before heading for Inishbofin.

The forecast promised poor weather and in a freshening wind we headed north again to Westport. The pontoon was busy and we had a tight squeeze to fit in but once secure all was fine. The strong winds held us for five days, not so bad as my son Brendan lives here and it was good to catch up. Jarlath Cunnane and James Cahill dropped by one of the days.

It is a long drag from Westport out to Achill Head and we still had confused seas from the strong winds which required that we stood off well clear

when rounding the head. At Blacksod we were able to use a visitor mooring buoy. We went alongside here to fill with water but were disappointed by the amount of abandoned fishing gear which littered the pier. Now we made our way through Duvillaun Sound inside the Inishkeas and Inishglora round Erris Head and into Broadhaven Bay. Although it is a convenient jumping off point for Donegal I don't really like Broadhaven as it is frequently subject to

swell and the visitor buoys are very remote and it is hard to access the road from the beach. It was a good sail across Donegal Bay in mostly fine sunny weather. We opted for Church Bay as neither of us had visited here previously. This didn't work out so well – the visitor buoys seem to have been removed and the anchorage was subject to swell. There was such a run on the beach that we deemed it unsafe to attempt to go ashore for fear of being swamped in

Donal, Brendan and Sonny in Westport





Alongside Blacksod

the surf. Next morning it was calmer and we landed on Inishkeel Island before heading off to Burtonport. Here we had difficulty finding a suitable berth and ended up at anchor near Rutland Island which made for a long run in the inflatable to get ashore. Now we would leave the west coast behind us as we rounded the Bloody Foreland to transit the north coast. This was a pleasant passage in a favourable breeze with some sunshine. At Downings we tied to a visitor's buoy only to discover a notice "Do not use mooring unchecked June 2025". There was a fresh breeze at the time and we decided not to take a chance on the mooring and so we anchored nearby - in hindsight we should have crossed to the anchorage at Ards Bay

Bloody Foreland

where we would have had better shelter. Determined to push on we caught the east going stream and made great progress towards Malin Head. Our plan was to overnight at Malin but when we looked into the harbour space was limited and we reluctantly headed east again. Now the tide would turn before we reached Lough Foyle so we decided to try Culdaff. On arrival we found there was a fresh onshore breeze which was stirring things a bit. It would be too uncomfortable on anchor here so we opted to go alongside. It was very tight and in order to make a fast getaway should conditions change during the night we reversed onto the inside pontoon berth.



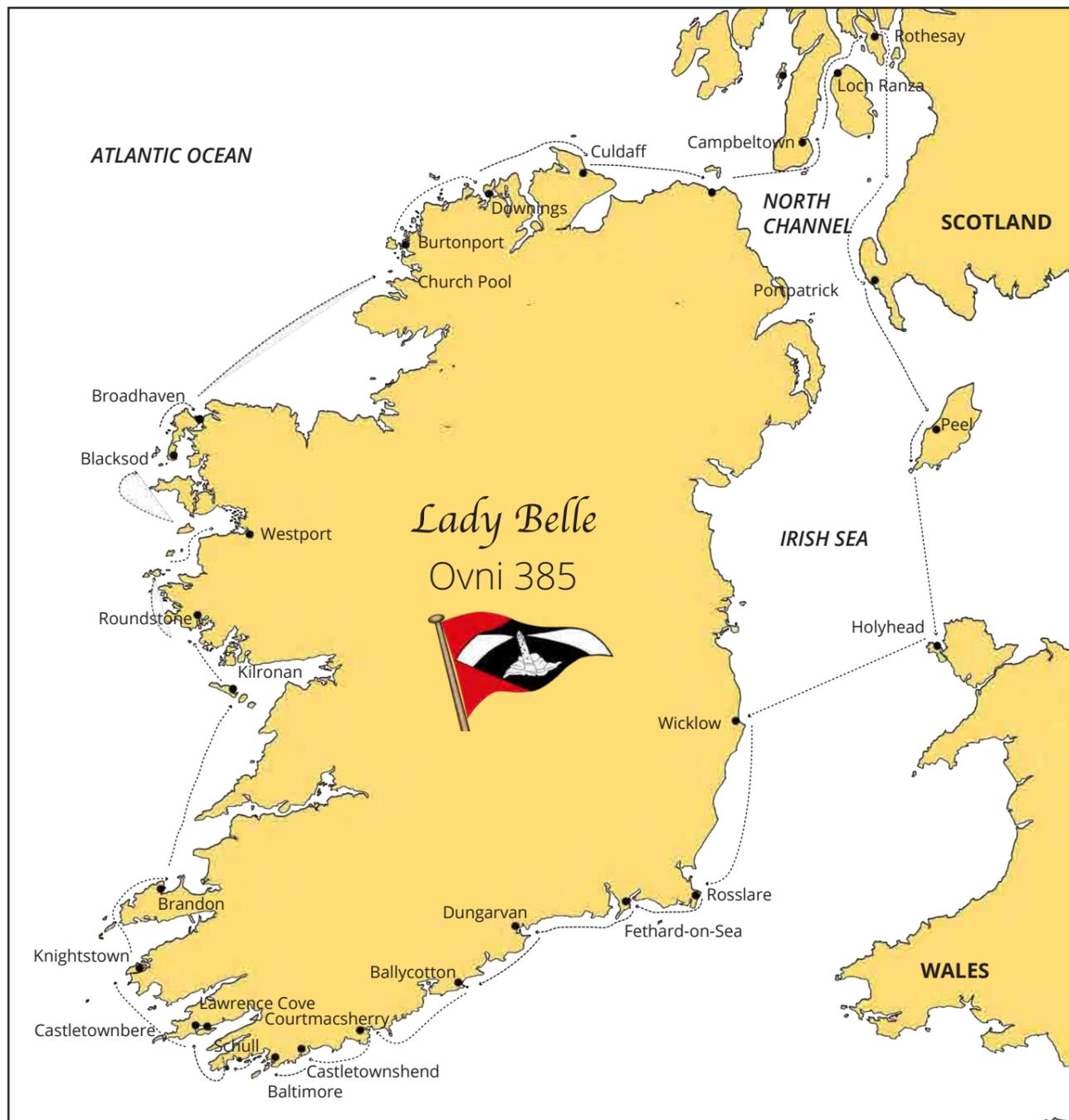
Church bay

It being close to low water we touched the bottom but quickly lifted our keel which enabled us to get alongside. Getting away in the morning required some smart line handling to avoid being pushed back onto the shore before clearing the berth.

Out of Culdaff visibility was poor but we did well speedwise and carried the tide to within a few miles of Ballycastle. The plan was to cross to Scotland and spend a few days in the Clyde. It was a calm sunny day and we flew past Fair Head and through Sanda Sound after which our speed dropped as we made our way towards Campbeltown. We anchored off

the yacht club and ashore found a petrol station where we were able to replenish one of our empty Calor gas bottles, a size which is no longer available in Ireland. Headed north through Kilbrannan Sound along the west coast of Arran to Loch Ranza. A savage draught of wind funnelling down the Loch combined with the depth of water in the anchorage suggested that we would be more secure on a mooring rather than our anchor. This was a nice overnight and in calmer conditions it would be very pleasant. Now we would cross Inchmarnock Water transit West Kyle and East Kyle. It was calm and we motor sailed in the sunshine. The pilotage through





the Burnt Islands was interesting. We made our way south and anchored in Rosthesay Bay just north of the town. Ashore Rosthesay was disappointing – there seemed to be a lot of neglected buildings and a lot of the streets were lifeless. The old Victorian toilets on the quay are interesting. Heading south through the Firth of Clyde we made our way back to the Isle of Arran and anchored off Lamblash for the night. Making our way south we skirted Ailsa Craig close up – it would have been nice to land but time was against us. Off Corsewall Point we picked up the tide again which brought us to Portpatrick. The first part of the passage south towards Peel was painfully slow as we had both wind and tide against us and struggled to make 4 knots at times. Low water on arrival at Peel put us on a waiting buoy and because of the lock opening times we remained there overnight. It was an unpleasant night as the swell was making its way into the harbour and affecting the

moorings. We had to get away and an 80 mile trek south took us to Holyhead. The last few hours of this passage coincided with a strong adverse tidal stream which really slowed us down as we slogged into harbour. Holyhead was disappointing there are few facilities and it is a long walk from the landing at the sailing club to the town.

We wanted to get back to the Irish coast but again we had to fight an adverse tidal stream to get away from Wales. For the first few hours our speed was never over 3.5 knots, it was disappointing. Eventually we started to make better progress and headed for Wicklow where we had a comfortable night. From Wicklow we headed south carrying a good stream under us. The intention was to anchor at Carne as we would not carry the tide any further and it would be very late getting to Kilmore if we choose to plug into it for the last few hours. On arrival at Carne the



Burnt Islands

anchorage was untenable because of the swell and it would have made for a very uncomfortable night. There was no choice but to return to Rosslare and anchor off the boat cove. Next morning we rounded Carnsore Point and found ourselves back on the south coast. Took the marked passage through St Patrick's Bridge at the Saltees and then headed for Fethard. Given suitable conditions this is one of my favourite anchorages on the Irish coast. Now we were in easy reach of our home port Dungarvan and made our way along the familiar Waterford coast and picked up our mooring in Dungarvan Town Quay at 1830 on 28 July. We had been away for six weeks covered 1030 nautical miles visited 33 different harbours and anchorages – mostly on the periphery. We lost eight days to poor weather and strong winds and apart from the issue with the rudder the boat performed well. There was only one new anchorage on the Irish coast – Church Bay and unless it was very settled weather I would not be in a hurry to revisit. Overall it was a good cruise and another successful circumnavigation of Ireland.



ABOVE: Victorian Toilets, Rosthesay

BELOW: Ailsa Craig



Gallery



ABOVE: Ailsa Craig

BELOW: Clare at Fair Head



Wicklow



Horn Head

RIGHT: Clare at Lot's Wife, Baltimore

Donal, Kedge Island Sound



Conor OBrien Rally - Baltimore to Dun Laoghaire

Cormac O'Carroll



13-20 June

We missed the well-attended opening dinner at the Jolie Brise on Friday evening. Fran and I were in Cork, and we got back to Glandore late on Friday night. We were up at 0730 so that we could be in Baltimore at 0830 to join the *Saoirse* and begin the Conor OBrien 'Return Rally' on Saturday morning. *Saoirse* would be on hand for the first day. Fred Kinmonth the owner was not going to be able to make the whole rally to Dún Laoghaire, neither was *Saoirse*, so for the first day of the rally Liam Hegarty of Oldcourt Boat Yard, who built the boat, was able to lead out the rally. The crew aboard for Saturday were Liam, his wife Mary Rose with their son Paddy, one of Liam's boat building students from Denmark, Aedan Coffey, my wife Frances Lynch and myself.

We were on board for 0900 and by 0920 we were off the mooring and sailing in Baltimore harbour

Ilen and some of the Dublin bay 21's as we entered Dún Laoghaire

preparing for the eastward journey toward Kinsale. We were joined on the water shortly afterwards by the *Ilen* which had been chartered for the week by John Crebbin and many of the crew that had sailed *Ilen* on the outward leg of the ICC rally to Madeira in 2023, to mark the centenary of Conor OBrien's departure from Dún Laoghaire in 1923 on his extraordinary circumnavigation made during the following two years. On the water that morning *Saoirse* was joined by Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore, Vincent Guénebaut and their son sailing on *Bubulubus*. John McAleer was sailing *Shukuran* and Joe Callanan was single handing on his new Sunfast 3300, *Kala*.

Conditions were very light for most of the other boats, with the exception of *Kala*, and we were obliged to motor sail. It was a lovely morning with



On the Helm of Saoirse leaving Baltimore

blue skies. High water at Baltimore was about 0745 so we had tide against us for the morning. We enjoyed the sail for the morning leaving the Beacon behind us and sailing south of the Kedges. We rounded Toe Head and passed east of Horse Island sailing into Castle Haven, picked up a mooring just north of the league and that was *Saoirse's* participation in the rally. John McAleer also had to finish on the Saturday on account of some mechanical issues on his boat

That evening Kinsale Yacht Club hosted a well-attended dinner for the rally participants and Vincent Murphy who was sailing on *AK Ilen* gave a very impressive talk on Conor OBrien, his boats, life and times. I joined David Beattie on *Reespray* after dinner and greatly enjoyed the rest of the week as we sailed and motored our way to Dún Laoghaire. The other crew for the week were Alan Algeo, Tom Sanders and Vincent Rafter.

On Sunday *ReeSpray* remained at the marina at KYC, we walked the Scilly walk and visited David Tucker. Based on tides, the plan was to make a very early morning exit at 0200 and have a long day passage to Kilmore Quay where David had booked a berth in the marina.

Kilmore Quay is a compact marina and very popular with Welsh visitors so it is important to give advance notice of arrival. We arrived directly from Kinsale, while the other boats that had left Kinsale

early Sunday had made other stops along the way. On Sunday night *Ilen* had called into Crosshaven where the Traditional Boat festival was being held with a great fireworks show. Others had stopped over at Ballycotton or Helvick on their way to Kilmore Quay. We arrived about 1600 Monday in time to get organised for the rally dinner which was scheduled for Mary Barry's pub and restaurant 3km away in the village of Kilmore. This was an impressively busy country bar for a Monday night in June, the food was very good and the complimentary bus shuttle had us all safely back on board at a respectable hour.

On Tuesday morning having seen *Ilen* safely off her berth - they had to make a tricky exit - we spent the day ashore at Kilmore Quay, a place buzzing with tourist activity, mostly based on day trippers visiting the Saltee Island. It was a dull morning and not a day for the Saltees, I thought, but all the ferries were booked so the opportunity to visit did not arise. There is a good marked walking route west of the marina through the dunes of Ballyteige Bay. That evening though the town was quiet we visited the only open bar and dined ashore at the Saltees Chipper, the first chipper I ever saw that had a wine list.

On Wednesday morning we made an early start from the berth at 0730 to catch the tide. There was slack water as we left Kilmore Quay and not a puff of wind. The water was absolutely flat, we were bang on for catching the rising tide off Carnsore that hurried us

up the Irish Sea. One could see the strength of the tide running on the fishing marks, like a river current. At 1130 the boat was making 7kn when we were off the Raven on the north entrance to Wexford harbour. I had never sailed north towards Dún Laoghaire before, though I had experienced the sail south from Wicklow a few times on the Round Ireland Race. This sail was much more relaxing and pleasant than sitting on the rail working our way down the Irish sea to catch the change of tide at Tusker to get us down the south coast. As we passed Carnsore Point we saw *Ilen* inshore of us and saw *Bubulubus* shortly afterwards, by about 1700 all boats were on the marina pontoon in Arklow. The various crews gathered for a dinner later at one of the Chinese restaurants and we rounded the evening off with a visit to the Arklow Sailing Club where members were socialising following their midweek cruiser racing event.

Greystones was our planned final stopover on Thursday and, to make the most of the tide, we planned to leave Arklow at 1300. Having the morning in Arklow allowed time to visit the very interesting maritime museum on the North Quay. There are exhibits that cover not just the maritime history of the town but also the rich industrial heritage of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Arklow was the stop off point for Alan who left the boat early for an appointment in Athlone. Our passage to Greystones of about 22M was a relaxing motor sail in lovely warm and calm conditions. Wicklow Head was shrouded in mist and we motored on to enter the harbour at Greystones about 1600. It was nice to see the sailing school dinghies sailing outside the harbour entrance as we approached. Greystones marina is an impressive construction, and with the associated club buildings it really supports water access for many users. Other towns on our coast would benefit greatly from similar investment to make water access available to all. That evening we ate at the Harbour Kitchen adjacent to the marina and had an early night.

The plan for Friday was to leave Greystones and to have a muster of welcoming boats gather south of Dalkey Island under Sorrento about 7.3M away. The plan was to arrive into Dún Laoghaire for 1630, the time Conor OBrien logged on his return one hundred years ago to the day. *Ilen* was carrying her square sail from the yard and looked lovely as she was escorted by many other boats all dressed to accompany her into her berth near the Royal Irish Yacht Club. That evening everyone attended an excellent rally Closing Dinner in the Royal Irish Yacht Club and celebrated the centenary of the completion of Conor OBrien's famous circumnavigation.



The Missing Mountains (of Tiree) CCA Western Isles Cruise

Judy and Jimmy Houston

As soon as I learned about the ICC involvement with the CCA regarding a Western Isles Cruise, I knew we had to attend. I had little trouble persuading my long time friend, Clarke Perry, to join in the event, one of the organisers being his own Clyde Cruising Club. *WotNot* is a Beneteau Oceanis 411 and on the basis that there are only two sleeping cabins and two sails we decided that four of us would be plenty. Clarke his partner, Fiona Allen, Judy and myself.

Whilst I have attended a couple of West Highland Weeks over the past few years, I looked forward to the extended itinerary proposed (optimistically) by the CCA. I had not visited the outer Hebrides by sailing boat since summer sailing holidays with my father in the late 60s and early 70s on *Donian*, an Alfred Mylne design, so was looking forward to some nostalgia.

RIGHT: *Donian* finishing a Tobermory Race



Wee Jim





Puilladobhain heather

Judy and I flew from Dublin to Glasgow on the Thursday before the event. Whilst waiting for the train north we managed a drink and a cheese platter, continental style on the street, unusual for Glasgow. Could this possibly be the weather for the next few weeks? Nope! By the time we were on board the train, it was lashing.

Leaving suburbia behind, the journey up to Oban can be stunning, with the clouds hanging off the Sitka spruce on the steep slopes, glimpses of lochs, glittering occasionally when the sun's rays strike through.

Friday 18th – Puilladobhain, 7nm
Victualling was carried out at both Lidl and Tesco in Oban. Cheap compared to Ireland. With Fiona arriving at 1400, the plan was to leave for a shake

down cruise to Puilladobhain. There, we had tea and scones in the sunshine, when I aired my ideas for the Art Show at the finale of the cruise. All agreed to the idea of finding something at each location we visited. How it would go together would depend on what we had collected. We pumped and launched the dinghy, (this was to be a regular occurrence) and went ashore for the walk over to the Tigh-an-Truish pub. This was great memory lane stuff. Nice pint or two but no lock-in these days apparently and certainly not this early! Meandered back through the midges for a pasta dinner aboard, al fresco.

Collection – feather, slate and blue string

Saturday 19th - Kerrera, 6.7nm
Very still, mirror calm although overcast morning. 08.50 engine on and up sticks for motor up to Kerrera. Inside berth on B.



1 egg and 2 Ham 4 us!

Ashore for gas and Lions v Australia first test rugby match. Good first half. The rest is history. Picked up our cruise bags then back to boat for lunch. This was like Christmas, lots of goodies enclosed for each crew member, the most valuable

Tobermory colours



of which was the well presented Cruise Handbook with great information including photos of all participating boats and their crews. So no excuses. A cruise WhatsApp group was set up and early chat included ordering sandwiches for the following day's 'race'. As we were required to dress overall at the key events, we decided to hoist 'I wish to communicate, 1 egg and 2 ham 4 us'. We didn't receive any comment, and no sandwiches were available for us in the morning.

The weather remained dry and the sun came out in the evening for the rum punch and speeches prior to sitting down with our preorganised 'buddies' in the shed all decked out with creative tables and benches. The amazing service and buffet was provided by the marina staff, locals and their teenage offspring. 'Break the ice' games had been set on each table, one of which was a round of surname explanations. ICC member Aisling claims her name is a dream in Irish. 'More like a nightmare' quips her husband, Anthony. For our stateside buddies, I made up a story about rowing the Atlantic, heading west, then continuing on foot 'till setting up camp in Texas!

Collection - prawn claw small feather and seaweed.

Sunday 20th – Tobermory, 23.8nm
0915 slipped out from Kerrera, dry but overcast. Once out from Oban Bay, sails out for a blast over towards Duart then engine on as wind disappeared on the approaches to the sound. Barely a zephyr again all the way to Tobermory. Much entertainment using our recently received Cruise handbook, being able to identify each of the passing fellow cruisers. Alongside by 1315. As it was positively balmy we lunched in the cockpit. That afternoon Clarke and I met up with a sailing friend who now lives part time



Sunflower building

in Tobermory. In the evening we decided to savour the delights of the Spice of Mull.

Collection - key ring

Monday 21st – Sunflower Day. Muck, 25nm. Thick fog greeted the sunrise. Opportunity for great photography, as seen on the WhatsApp group. Whilst waiting for our summons for the raft up we had a stroll around town and the opportunity to fill with diesel. ‘How long is “shortly” ? asked a Norwegian, also waiting at the fuel dock. I explained that shortly gets longer the further north and west one ventures. Once we got the call, we left Tobermory to join the sunflower in the adjacent Loch Drumbuie, taking advantage of the motor across to have our lunch of smoked trout with avocado along with black pudding and haggis scotch eggs, just bought at the morning’s pierhead market. We arrived to instructions around 1300. Port side to *Blue Damsel*, soon to be joined on our starboard by *Bonnie Rye*. Pink bubbles, a lot of noise, ours more of a squeak squeak, then disperse.

With the sunflower losing its petals early, we decided to head north to ease the next few days distances. Two hours wind on the nose, we motored up to Ardnamurchan, the wind then freed to allow us to get the sails up and out. 6.8 knots across to Muck. Anchored in Gallanach Bay around on the northwest side of the island ready to springboard north from there.

On the row ashore, we rescued a hand held VHF, dropped overboard from one of our fleet charter boats. Come aboard? We didn’t but we had good fun teasing them over the next few weeks. Once ashore, Fiona went for a dip, whilst Judy beachcombed, and I walked out to the end of the peninsula. A number of other boats from our fleet arrived whilst we were ashore. Obviously the weather wasn’t conducive for much socialising with no beckoning crews on deck on

our row past. Meanwhile, back in the galley, Clarke knocked up a spicy chicken pasta for our return.

Collection - Wing, shell and sticks.

Tuesday 22nd – Canna, 21.7nm
Woke to the news that Ozzie Osbourne has left us. I had been a fan in my teens and twenties. Vol. 4 still gets a regular spin.
Morning Star was underway first, complete with VHF, then ourselves circa 0900. Bit of a swell from west so decided on a more comfortable course, east about Rum. Viz wasn’t great, couldn’t even see the Sgurr of Eigg, Rum’s peak nor Skye’s Cuillins and most of our cruise colleagues disappeared into the mist. Porpoises joined us briefly and in the distance we saw a minke whale breaching. Eventually, a few miles off, we could make out the outline of Canna. On our approach into the harbour we were entertained first by a flock of gannets dive bombing a fish shoal, then a whale briefly surfaced to join in the feast, only metres from the boat. Amazing to see it roll over so close.

With last available mooring taken by *Pinocchio* we dropped the hook to lie just off the pier. *Big Bear* arrived soon after to anchor just ahead of us. Tomato soup and wraps for lunch down below. Peeking out of the hull window, I noticed two oilskin clad figures returning to a German flagged boat on a mooring just to our port. As they made moves to leave, we leapt into action, retrieved our anchor complete with considerable kelp and a rock which Clarke suggested we keep for the display collection. Happier on the recently vacated visitor mooring – we have history here – we ventured ashore for a chat with other crews. We visited the shop and Canna House for croquet on the somewhat lumpy lawn. Later we walked along coast prior to a few draft Jacks and dinner at Canna Cafe at 1830. Tuesday night here is pizza night, although the toppings are local seafood, caught or grown locally. Delicious.
Collection – squashed can(na), and wee car charm.



Gylen Castle, Kerrera.

Wednesday 23rd – Carbost, 10.2nm
Up at 07.30, Still grey and misty, forecast 11 knots from the SW plus lots of ‘poor’ and ‘occasional’. Dropped mooring line and headed out to no viz and no mountains. We motorsailed due north until the dark mass of Skye loomed, through the mist. The wind headed so furling jib just off Talisker Bay, south of entrance to Loch Harport. Tied up alongside by 1210. Marginal precipitation, more of the ‘poor’ I guess !
Walked to shop, popped into the pub for a quick drink then to boat for sleepy afternoon.
Early evening we returned to The Old Inn for a few drinks with cruise crews, later to sit in for Shetland langoustine and chat with Peter and Tina from *Greenheart*, designed by a distant acquaintance of mine, David Allen-Williams.

On return to the boat we joined in a few verses at the singalong aboard *Ballyclaire* and *Salut*. Other than that, a quiet night aboard.
Collection - old rollock (Carbost)

Thursday 24th - Loch Eynort, 35.5nm
ICC day. Very still, reflective morning. Low cloud still obscured Skye’s jewels. Judy manned the ICC stand and swatted midges with this year’s annuals. On a visit along the road for a coffee, the adjacent loo door required to be tapped by debit card - 50p. As I left, I let in a visiting cardless French lady (so another 50p) who left almost immediately. I enquired ? She needed another card tap for the shower. I thought better than to offer!

Picked up our wristbands for our 1230 Talisker tour with the young Samuel. Well spoken, very nice lad

Talisker and their mash fed residents



who knew his stuff. Nice story of the spent mash being piped out for the sheep to feed on which may explain why they meander, cross legged along the road.

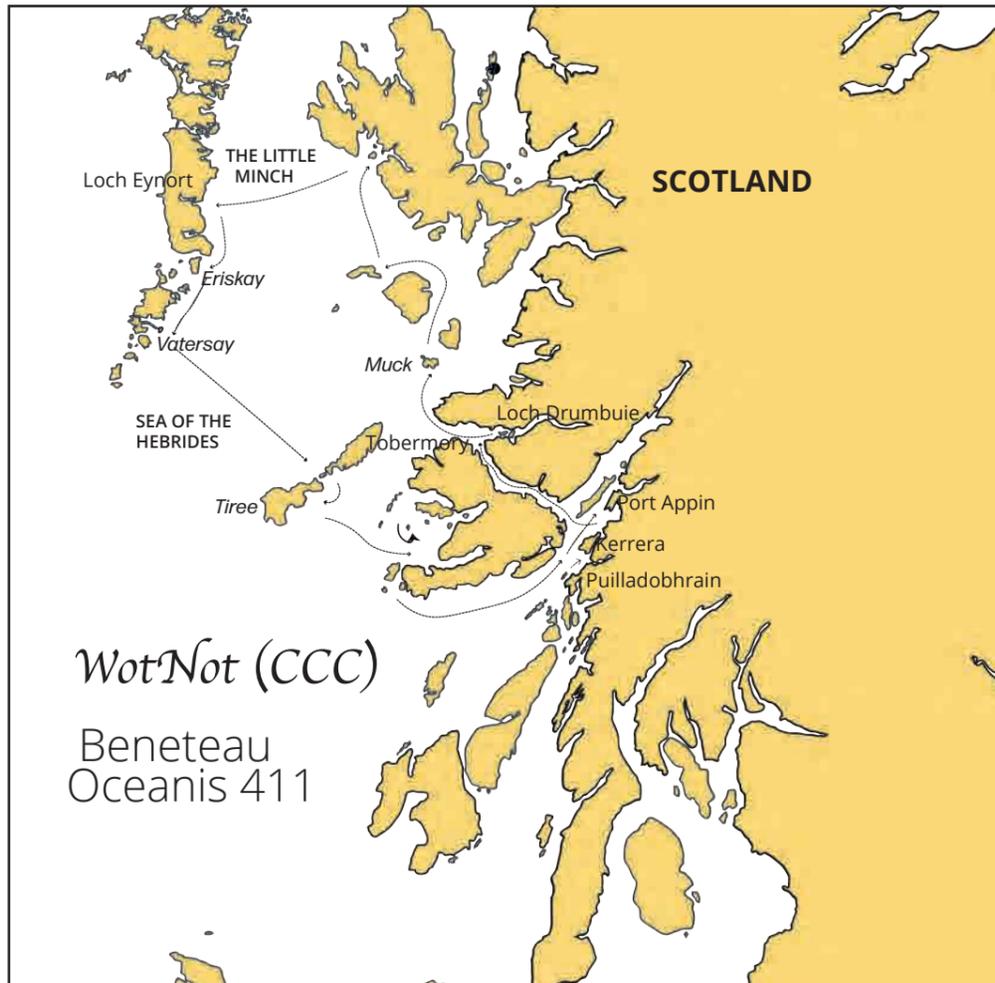
Bought a Port Ruighe and some miniatures for friends abroad. Judy took the opportunity to purchase another layer, having underpacked for the weather. She wore it almost continuously hereafter.

Then to Talisker Cafe run by the famous Three Chimneys for as many oysters that I could eat and a sandwich lunch. 1430 Slipped out from within Coigach (pro. Coy ak) Was that a glimpse of a Cuillin ? Once clear of the loch entrance we enjoyed a great blast across the Minch laying Loch Eynort. Debate regarding whether this is actually The Minch, or just the Sea of the Hebrides. Very brief sunburst, lit up *Greenheart* some miles to weather. Nice comfortable crossing on port tack. Anchor down in 12 metres in Caearcdal Bay at around 2000. G&T followed by salmon and courgette pasta this time by Judy and myself.

Stornoway Coastguard Mayday from Shiantis (Shants) resolved in a few minutes. After all these years I heard how the Shiantis were pronounced by the locals – Shants !

Collection - string of seaweed, float, dry bright green weed, heather. (from Eynort)

Friday 25th - Acairseid Mhor, Eriskay, 12.5nm
Early rise for me attempting not to disturb the others not assisted by the fact that due to a slow leak the dinghy required some extra air prior to launching. Finally along shore line, picked up some heather for table and to refresh the bow. Not much sign of human activity other than flotsam fishing tackle. With no convenient place to land, the short visit to collect the heather was extremely wet and boggy which also kicked up clouds of midges ! Back to make breakfast then up anchor and away by 0930 to head south down the east of South Uist towards Eriskay.



10.00 Stornoway Coastguard 'Strong S SW 6 occasionally 3 Occasional rain or drizzle, occasionally poor Outlook - SW 4 to 6 showers rain later, good occasionally moderate'

A lone sailor on little Swedish flagged RM1050, charged in to Acairseid Mhor ahead of us making our anchor logistics more challenging. Three attempts, twice too close to the Swede. Cruise cohorts *Greenheart* already tucked in. *Tula Mhor* and *Moonstone* arrived shortly after, followed by *Momentum*, who chose to berth alongside the available space at the pontoon. For the 3k walk to the Am Politician pub, I asked Pam from *Momentum* to join us. 'She'll be delighted', suggested her partner, Paul. Whilst the girls visited the local well stocked shop, Clarke and I tried our powers of persuasion on the staff in the pub to open a little earlier tomorrow for the rugby. We'll have to turn up to find out! On the return walk to the boats the girls took the opportunity to get wet at the wee sandy beach, whilst the remainers sheltered.

On return there were now ten boats anchored in the pool. We thought that was a lot.

Collection - wool, rusty shackle, turquoise string.



Erriskay

Saturday 26th - Acairseid Mhor, 0nm

Long lie in. Ashore for walk to the pub and discover if our persuasions had any affect. It was a Western Isles 'NO, we open at 1200'. Ah well, up to the shop for a coffee and back for midday and the second half of the match. We heard on WhatsApp that the Loch Boisdale Hotel had been more accommodating to our fellow cruisers to the north. 'Well, that's Uist for you'. After the final whistle, we lunched alongside other cruise buddies after which another shop visit and stroll back. No dipping for the girls that day.

image of two lads in kilts plus their 1600 Ford Escort with the bonnet up. Luckily the tanks had filled and were overflowing as we were by now quite keen to get away. 'No, its ok, we don't need any lobster' We had a headwind for the short journey down to Vatersay. Also grey, overcast.

1150 anchor down in NW corner 6.5m. The clouds had lifted for an 'occasionally good' with glimpses of blue skies to the west. With the dinghy topped up and launched, we went ashore to explore the dunes and machair of Vatersay. It is a stunning bay. The community hall set up a local produce market specially for the cruise arrival. We didn't disappoint with several purchases. Back on the beach, a short period of sunshine had the girls in for a swim. Once back on board, we lunched on eggs with Stornoway black pudding. I used another sunny spell to use the deck shower. About time, apparently ! We were back ashore later for the organised party, the fleet of dinghies hauled way up the beach to escape the tide, presumably the lower positioned had an earlier departure strategy.

Sunday 27th - Vatersay Shore Party 14.3nm

Dirty night alright. With *Momentum* having moved out earlier, we took advantage of the water tap alongside the pontoon to fill up. Whilst doing so, we were regaled by one of the lads on the pier of stories about Charles and Diana and the Coastguard landy (Land Rover). He was proud to have driven them to catch a plane on the beach at Barra Airport. Other stories of fixing a Citroen starter motor with a length of copper wire he happened to have in his pocket AND he had seen 30 boats in Acairseid Mhor during the 2010 CCC event. He has a photo at home on the wall. Finally his use of AI to create an anniversary

A stroll over the grass to the west beach, amongst plenty of livestock enjoying the juicy machair, revealed blue skies stretching out to the west. At least it may remain dry for a while. Back at the hall, the party was in progress. Fantastic spread by the locals, mountains of oysters, langoustine, gorgeous shredded lamb with crunchy onions alongside imaginative salads. Not just lettuce and tomato. At some point, not sure how, we managed to obtain a leftover take away box full of prawns and another of desserts.

Vatersay Shore Party



With the post dinner presentation of the visiting yacht club burgees in the hall out of the way The Vatersay Boys fired up their pipes and drums to the delight of our transatlantic visitors. Whilst not exactly Scottish Country dancing, there was much leaping about. The youngest band member, the drummer, was seriously enjoying the attention. He may go far. As we headed back to the dinghies, invitations were



Vatersay Boys

out to our buddies on *Salut* for a nightcap. We worried for a while, as they took some time to arrive being the most southerly and we, the most northerly. In the meantime the Maximoose instant party of Catriona and Euan, their piper, arrived to entertain us. Not quite sure when the party broke up, however my recent Talisker Port Ruighe purchase was emptied, and not by me!

Collection - razor clam shells

Monday 28th - Gott Bay, Tiree, 41.7nm

The morning's VHF radio announcement from the *Bear* included a thank you to the *Wotnot* team for the present of an additional bear. (which was actually a wee Heilan' coo)

Up anchor around 0900, main up and out of bay heading southeast to recross the Sea of the Hebrides for Gunna Sound, 35nm distant. Jib out, bowling along with a long line of others in the fleet. Looking to the north east, Skye and the Small Isles could barely be made out. Lots of WhatsApp chat about breaching minke, dolphins and even an orca! Also on WhatsApp we heard that *Blue Damsel*, who continued to have rudder issues, was under tow from Vatersay to Ardfern. That's a long tow. We had a nice quiet run over, wind 10 to 15 knots much of the way. Through the sound with *Maximoose* and *Coigach*, they both headed north up to Coll, us to the south and Gott Bay on Tiree. Some may remember Billy Connolly's sketch - 'Ah, the misty blue mountains of Tiree...'

We picked up the innermost mooring for a short row, after the pump routine. We walked them blue hills over to the pub where I was slightly bemused by the sign on the front of the hotel. It is so small, they must want to keep it a secret. It appeared to be working, it was virtually empty. Back to a more populated anchorage and another chicken Perry pasta AND a creme brulee!

Collection - bone, net, rubbing of pierhead art installation

Tuesday 29th - Bunessan via Traigh na Margaidh Bay, 33nm

Woke to the forecast SE wind. Overcast, with a little viz. Could actually see the top of the wind turbine around the bay.

Once out at sea, the weather cleared up and the wind dropped completely. Our cruise colleagues dispersing in all directions, some heading as we were, towards Staffa and Iona, others back towards the Sound of Mull. With clear skies and sun on the approaches to Staffa, we caught up on a few photos. A number of visitor tour boats jostled around the landing, which has been much improved as evident from the crowds (relative) on the island. The last time I was here, a shore visit was for a privileged agile few.

The sun highlighted a little sandy bay to our south, so we went to investigate. By 1400 we were anchored in 6m at Traigh na Margaidh just out of the wind line. Two empty sandy beaches; with the sun still out we hastened ashore for dip. Even I went in to show off a recent purchase as yet unused. Great little private spot. From here we headed around to drop a buoyed anchor down in Bunessan at 1630. Maybe not surprsingly, no other cruise boats here. The drizzle welcomed us ashore for the walk around to the village, where we decided to dine in on local produce.

Collection - a perfect bit of net, urchin, red weed. Bunessan - small, sea seasoned branch.

Wednesday 30th - Loch Spelve Mussel Party, 34.1nm

0730 alarm - must have rained a lot last night! Up anchor and trip line.

The sun broke through and created dramatic highlights along the coast, and high inland. We motored down through the Sound of Iona, reminiscing on so many childhood and teenage adventures in this area. Passing by the entrances to the oft frequented Tinkers Hole, David Balfour and Ardalanish Bays, many populated by our cruise companions. To the south lay the frightening Torran Rocks. Well, they were back then without the aid of modern navigation equipment. Actually, they still look frightening!

By 1030 we could turn the engine off with 8 knots SW to trickle us along. The visibility closed in and the shore disappeared although every now and then we could feel some heat when the cloud thinned out overhead.



Traigh na Margaidh on the Ross of Mull

Having seen little for a few hours, we got sluiced through the narrows to anchor around 1510 amongst a large number of our colleagues at the head of Loch Spelve. The skies cleared sufficiently to reveal the surrounding mountains.

Then we got to work to prepare our offering for the evening bash. The farm had donated 40 kilos of mussels for the 'Pot Luck Party' where Fiona and Chris Jones of the OCC cooked and served us a choice in two huge pots. Both were delicious. Well done those guys.

Tables had been laid out with the offerings from the yachts' galleys. Quite a commendable endeavour of culinary creativity. We ate very well. As did the midges, which had us retiring early back to the boats, but not before inviting a few, and repelling others, for a nightcap!

Collection - mussel shells

Thursday 31st - Kerrera, 11.1nm

Woke to a bright morning, we could actually see green on the hills.

Once our more than slightly jaded skipper surfaced, we made our way back out of the Loch, across to south of Kerrera and up the sound to the marina. Full circle. By 1050, we were berthed alongside in B2 as before. Judy and I had some logistics planning, then it was onto the collection preparation, Judy's painting, the poem for the Art Show. Bit of fun putting it together in the shed, vying for prime attention.

Fiona made very good use of the available laundry facilities, then we donned our best gear for the bar and action witnessing some imaginative use of tartan attire for the evening, as instructed. Upbeat chat with various crews over the evening and after the short concluding speeches, yet another interesting food selection prepared by the Kerrera Marina staff, purchased using our cruise tokens. I had this most amazing spicy smoked seafood pizza. Once again, hats off to the evening's organisers. Finally, a band fired up, whilst they may not have been as

entertaining as the Vatersay Boys, the dancing was much improved with local Scots showing a step or two.

Note - A lovely watercolour of a Highland Cow got the most votes at the Art Show. Grrr!

Friday 1st - Port Appin, 10nm

Bright and dry, although a very slow start with coffee and breakfast at marina bar, chatting to remaining crews planning their routes south or north. Many of the American boats were heading for European harbours and yards for the winter. One character, when asked when the boat may return stateside, drawled - Ain't returnin' til this administration is over!

We didn't have so far to go, we cast off for Port Appin to meet my sister, Linda for dinner at the Pierhouse Hotel. Lovely spot, and great food, if you have never been.

I am sure there will be many a story, logs and discussions regarding this cruise. Personally, I thought it was superb and a credit to all personnel involved. It was such a great experience and I have no doubts that there will have been many a long term friendship born of this event.

I was also quite proud of Scotland. Locals and staff everywhere were upbeat, smiley, helpful and positive, the produce at the events, top class. Whilst some scenery occasionally appeared we did miss the mountains although the weather played ball when it mattered.

It was great to see some of my early life acquaintances on board some of the local boats and including some CCC hierarchy in Katie Christie and Christine and Sandy Taggart, all still in good health.

Gallery



Some missing mountains



ABOVE: Staffa Belles



ABOVE: Eynort Blossom

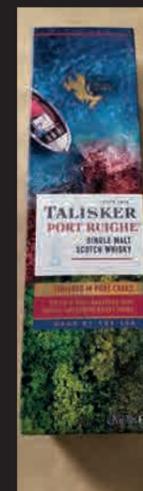


ABOVE Misunderstood Art

Pot luck goodies



Greenheart with our refreshed heather



RIGHT: Katie Christie with old friends

LEFT: Shortlived purchase



Vatersay Hall Flag Presentation by the Commodores





Snapshot of a Baltic Summer

Adrian and Maeve Bell

OPPOSITE: *Oisín Bán* in *Stora Nassa*

Almost a decade had passed since Brian and Anne Craig (ICC) had sailed with us on *Oisín Bán* from the west coast of Sweden through the Gota Canal into the Baltic and up to the Stockholm archipelago. It had been a great trip. Now we faced the challenge of what to do for an encore. A visit to the Åland Islands heading eastwards towards Finland, and especially to the small historic capital, Mariehamn, looked as if it might fit the bill.

These days *Oisín Bán*, our Arcona 430, is based in Sweden at Gustavsberg in Varmdö, about 30 minutes drive east of Stockholm. Gustavsberg is tucked up the end of an inlet, allowing easy access to the middle of the extensive Stockholm archipelago, 100M from south to north and 50M from the city to the outer skerries with the larger islands near the city giving way to smaller ones before petering out into islets and isolated rocks as one nears the open Baltic. The main through route runs in a north easterly direction from Landsort in the south to Arholma in the north and resembles a string of sausages bulging into wider fjards and shrinking into narrow pinch points.

Having been sailing further south the previous week, we arrived back to our berth to get provisioned the day before Brian and Anne's arrival in the early afternoon of Friday 25 July. Once stowed and sorted, we set off for the convenient and popular anchorage of Napoleonviken, about an hour away. Viken or vik in Norse means a cove or creek and is thought to be connected with the word Viking, that is, someone who set off from the creek and went a-viking, or raiding. That evening, all was peaceful with a variety of yachts swinging to their anchors or with a stern anchor and their bows on the rocks in the traditional manner.

Over dinner we shared the plan to head for Åland. A forecast of settled weather encouraged us to forgo the obvious route along the marked channel and instead make our way to *Stora Nassa*, a cluster of isolated small islands in the outer archipelago.

One of the attractions of sailing in the Baltic is that the weather is warmer and drier than at home in Ireland and is also non-tidal so no need to get up at ungodly hours to carry a fair tide on one's passage. Thus we had breakfast at a civilised time before starting out and, once in the main *Namdöfjard*, set full sail and headed north. A dying breeze meant we needed to motor sail for a short time as we neared the busy area around the inter-island ferry terminal of *Stavnäs* and the holiday island of *Sandhamn*, but soon the breeze returned, the engine went off and, leaving the well-charted channel, the seemingly open water of the outer archipelago beckoned. Appearances are, however, deceptive as these waters are littered with random shoals and submerged rocks and the person at the helm has to give close attention to the chart plotter. We enjoyed a sparkling reach in the sunshine out to *Stora Nassa* where it was almost a disappointment to drop the sails and edge carefully up the narrow channel to anchor in the central pool in time for a late lunch. Like most of the other mini archipelagos in this wide, otherwise empty, expanse of sea, *Stora Nassa* is low-lying and rocky with a few stunted trees, heather and lichens and is unpopulated apart from an environmental warden in summer.

From here it was about 50M to our destination with the only recognised exit from these outer reaches of the archipelago being the main buoyed channel in

Sunset in Stora Nassa



and out of Stockholm, some way to the north. The anchor was up at 0700 and, on reaching open water about three hours later, we turned east and set full sail heading for Rödhamn, a small harbour on the south western tip of the Åland Islands. Soon we were creaming along at 7.5 knots in a light to moderate breeze under blue skies, champagne sailing. At midday we were approaching the international boundary and not only changed our courtesy flag for that of Åland but put our watches forward by an hour to 1300 as Finland is on Eastern European time. Åland is an anomaly in many ways. Having been part of Sweden for centuries, the islands came under Russian rule in 1809 and then, post WW1, an autonomous region of Finland. While being part of Finland and having the Euro as its currency, Åland remains Swedish speaking and, despite a total population of only 30,000, has its own parliament, postage stamps and police – not that we have ever seen a policeman in all our visits.

Three more hours brought us to Rödhamn. If anything, the topography is even less distinctive as one heads east and the only helpful feature to be discerned on our approach was a group of giant wind turbines. Once in the sheltered pool, we picked up a stern buoy and took two bow lines ashore to the jetty. Rödhamn's strategic position on the south west corner of the islands and at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia means that it is a busy harbour frequented by those making the passage to Finland and back. By happy coincidence we were able to rendezvous with Jochen and Chris from Germany in their distinctive yacht, *Socorro*, whom we had met previously during Covid. *Socorro* was built in the late 1940s as an 'escape' boat when many feared the extension of the Iron Curtain from East Germany over the rest of the country, and has been in Jochen's family ever since.

Brian, Adrian, Chris, Maeve, Anne and Jochen in Rodhamn



Next morning our German friends headed for Sweden starting the lengthy journey back to Hamburg while we had a short, ten mile trip by the inshore route to Mariehamn and found a convenient berth in the west marina which is owned by the sailing club Ålandska Segelsällskapet (ASS). In the evening Brian and Anne treated us to dinner in the atmospheric wooden restaurant overlooking the harbour.

The top attraction in Mariehamn, a quaint town with many single-storey wooden houses, is undoubtedly the Pommern, a four-masted barque built in Glasgow in 1903 and acquired by Gustavsberg Erikson in the early 1920s to carry grain from Australia to Britain and Ireland. The Pommern won the Great Grain Race twice but, by the 1930s, sailing ships were becoming a relic of a bygone time with Åland as their final hub, partly because of the poverty of the country but also because of the exceptional seafaring skills of the population. On board, there is some downright scary film footage of her sailing in the Southern Ocean. The Craigs visited in the morning and were well impressed. Meanwhile we had arranged to see an elderly friend, Ralph, a long-standing member of the sailing club who had been much involved with their Optimist squads over the years.

It was a good day to be in port as the weather deteriorated and some heavy squalls of rain came through in the afternoon before clearing away to give us a much better day on Wednesday for our return to Sweden. We enjoyed another easy sail back across the Sea of Åland purring gently along either on the wind or a close fetch until we reached the main Stockholm entrance channel; the engine was needed once we turned south towards our chosen anchorage of Paradiset. Despite being very busy as the holiday period was still in full swing, we quickly

found a suitable spot and, having covered the 56M in nine hours, celebrated with a G&T in the cockpit once the anchor was secure.

One of the delights of sailing in this huge archipelago is that an anchorage is never more than a short sail away so, with a few days in hand, we set off to explore some of them. As we headed south in the morning, we had superb views of a sea eagle soaring close by over the island of Möja before setting full sail to beat down the fjard. A couple of years ago we joined the Swedish cruising association, the SXX, which, as well as maintaining some of the traditional day marks around the coast, provides buoys for its members in various strategic locations. One of these is the inlet at Runmarö and, as we were passing it around lunchtime, it seemed a good idea to divert and enjoy our grub on a mooring. One of the four was free so we enjoyed lunch in tranquillity as it was perfectly sheltered from the south and away from the hurly burly of the local ferries plying in and out of Stavnäs. From Runmarö, an hour's motoring brought us to the north end of the island of Namdö, our anchorage for the night. We were not alone, eventually 30 or more yachts came in and either anchored or tied to the rocks; they included two traditional craft crewed by sea scouts so lots to entertain us as we enjoyed a glorious sunny evening with drinks and dinner in the cockpit.

No sunshine however on Friday morning. Grey cloud and mist had replaced the blue skies and caused a rethink on the day's destination. As it was flat calm we would need to motor so it seemed sensible to thread our way south through some of the narrow channels on the east side of Namdö and various other islands rather than head west into the



ASS café in Rodhamn

main fjard. The damp and drizzle also suggested that anchoring in a lonely natural harbour with just the gulls for company was a lot less inviting than being tied up where we could get ashore so we headed for Kyrkviken on the island of Ornö, a large island by

Overview of Mariehamn





Kyrkviken

archipelago standards, 15 kilometres long and about four wide, with a year-round population of about 300 although this increases exponentially during the summer months.

The damp, dismal weather had kept other boats away and we were able to tie alongside the small jetty jutting into the sheltered estuary with its smattering of traditional wooden houses and sheds at the water's edge and a white clapboard church on the small hill immediately above the harbour. Despite the car ferry to the mainland berthing on the western side of Ornö, Kyrkviken (which would hardly even count as a village in Ireland) is the centre for everything else; in addition to the church, it has a two-teacher primary school, a small shop, a library-cum-community hall, a tiny museum, and a summer restaurant. Right beside the jetty during the short summer season, a dockside cafe had been started by Oscar, a restaurant owner from Stockholm, and his offering of coffee, bread and buns, wine and beer and freshly baked pizza had proved a hit with the locals on both Ornö and neighbouring islands. We had visited the cafe earlier in the season and taken a shine to Oscar's offering of pizzas washed down with cava in paper mugs. Cava was once again the aperitif of choice, but we opted to eat our scrumptious pizzas in the comfort and warmth of the saloon rather than huddled under the umbrella on the dock.

By now the trip was coming to an end and we needed to get back to Gustavsberg in order for Brian and Anne to head to Stockholm for a city break. Thankfully the rain and murk had passed and a bright, breezy day greeted us on the Saturday. With lots of islets and rocks to be identified and avoided, a small reef in the mainsail seemed prudent and careful helming was needed to avoid an unintentional gybe. Once we could come onto a reach, the genoa was set. Our course took us north of the island of Mortö Bunsö and then north-west across the busy Jungfraufjard. Speeding along like a thoroughbred with barely more than a light touch on the wheel, we passed close behind a familiar-looking dark green yacht heading south – Socorro. Much waving ensued. We continued homewards up the Ingaröfjard but, frustratingly, the breeze started to come ahead and die away leaving us beating in light airs rather than surging along at seven knots. Once secure in our berth at 1400 we all relaxed, well pleased with the day's performance.

Next morning we enjoyed a traditional cinnamon bun with our coffee in the cafe just across the road before Brian and Anne headed for the sophistication of the city. It had been a modest cruise covering 221M, but managed to take in wild anchorages, chance encounters, maritime history and some sparkling sailing which put a smile on our faces.

Kyrkviken dockside pizza



Adrian and Brian discussing tactics





THE FORTNIGHT CUP
FOR THE BEST CRUISE UNDERTAKEN
IN A MAXIMUM OF 16 DAYS

THE MARIE TROPHY
FOR THE BEST CRUISE FOR A
YACHT UNDER 30' LOA

Calico Jack's short exploration of the Galway-Mayo border

Conor O' Byrne

The inter-county rivalry that exists everywhere on our small island can of course be extended into our coastal waters. ICC members will no doubt have their own prejudices about the best county for coastal cruising. As a Cork man, I consider my home county to be well up there, especially since our Club was founded there. But our short cruise to the Galway-Mayo border this year makes me think this is a serious contender for the country's best cruising grounds.

Two significant family celebrations in July meant that I could only manage a week's cruise this year. My wife Áine had never been to Inishturk so the plan was to sail up to Killary to meet her and then sail out there. A secondary objective was to examine the entrance to Killary more closely than usual, prompted by a conversation I had with Norman Kean about the location of a particular rock.

A friend who was due to join me for the sail up to Killary was unable to join at the last minute due to a family bereavement. So I set off solo from our mooring in Rinville at 1045 on 8 July. As usual, the

prevailing westerly winds meant a nine-hour beat out to Kilronan on Inis Mór, our first stop of the trip. The following day I was planning to head directly for Inishbofin, but light winds from an unfavourable direction meant that Roundstone was a more sensible option. I anchored off Gorteen beach and had a swim in warm and sunny conditions. Then I motored up to anchor off Roundstone pier, passing through the rock-strewn Inishlackan sound en route, and then had a pleasant evening ashore with the usual excellent seafood in O'Dowd's.

The following day I had an easy run up to Inishbofin in sunny conditions and with a SSW wind of 10-15 kn. The harbour was busy when I got there but I found a reasonable spot to anchor. Holding in the harbour isn't great in my experience but I had a new Rocna anchor and it set and held impressively throughout the whole trip. I was not sorry to see the back of my rusty old CQR. I went ashore for a walk around the island and visited both Day's and the Doonmore Hotel for refreshments and to catch up with the other visiting sailors.

Swimming in Leenane



The O'Mallybreaker 1 hour before LW Springs

On the 11th I sailed into Killary with a moderate SSW wind. In order to inspect the rocks closely on my way in I sailed under genoa alone. I sailed inside Illuananima and then as close to Corweelaun West as I could get. It was one hour before low water and my assignment (from Norman) was to view the position of the O'Mallybreaker in relation to Corweelaun West and Crump Island. I took lots of photographs and videos and have duly reported back to Norman. In these conditions the O'Mallybreaker only appeared every half a minute or so. It's a very interesting part of our coastline, with Connacht's highest mountain Mweelrea towering over the entrance to the fjord.

Due to a 180° wind shift in the fjord I had to motor up to Leenane, criss-crossing the border between Galway and Mayo as I went. There I met Áine and our dog Fionn. After a walk and some swims we had dinner back on board and had a quiet night on the visitor mooring, with hardly a breath of air stirring. The following morning after a quick walk ashore with Fionn we sailed out to Glassillaun beach, which guards the entrance to Little Killary. It is one of the most beautiful beaches I know of on the whole west coast. There was a fresh offshore breeze but the Rocna set instantly in the sandy bottom, about one cable out from the beach. We took the dinghy ashore and spent a lovely couple of hours walking and swimming in crystal clear water.





Little Killary

We weighed anchor at 1500 and made for Inishturk in county Mayo, under full sail. We caught five mackerel just before arriving at the visitors' mooring on Inishturk. These went straight in the oven with plenty of butter and lemons and together with some new potatoes boiled in seawater and a glass of vino we were in heaven. We went ashore for a walk and a visit to the community centre, the main social hub on the island. There we met some sailors who were out from Rosmoney and a gang of lads from Northern Ireland touring the whole west coast by road. On our walk back to the pier we heard several different corncrakes calling from the tall grass and nettles that have been allowed to grow around the island – a lovely sound. Back on board there was a stunning moonrise over the mainland that night. We spent a rolly night on the mooring before motor-sailing back in towards Killary the following day. We went into Little Killary, where I had never been before, and anchored for lunch. There was a fine Dutch yacht anchored in there, called *De Verleiding* and flying an OCC pennant. After a walk ashore we sailed back to Leenane for the evening.

The forecast for the next couple of days was very poor, with lots of rain predicted. Áine decided that discretion was the better part of valour and opted to head home the following day, especially considering the prospect of sharing the boat with a very soggy dog. So on the 14th we said our goodbyes and I headed back out to Inishbofin. There were some very heavy showers and strong squalls but on the whole I had an enjoyable beat back out to Inishbofin. There was a fresh north-westerly forecast for the next couple of days so I decided to make the most of this to get the boat home to Galway.

The 45M sail to Ros a' Mhíl was a little more than I bargained for. With a NW wind blowing about 22-25 kn the conditions were moderate to rough, with a

fairly confused 3-4m seas between Inishbofin and Slyne Head. The gin bottles got a good rattle down below! Once I was around Slyne Head I could bear away and the seas became more regular and more from abaft the beam. Once around Golam Head, which guards the north entrance to Galway Bay, the last few miles into Ros a' Mhíl were easy going. I arrived alongside the marina nine and a half hours



Áine and Fionn, Killary

after leaving Inishbofin. I was very happy to find that the new shower facilities are now operational, a badly needed and very welcome addition to the marina. After a pint and a bite in An Chéibh bar I slept like a well-fed lamb.

On the final leg from Ros A' Mhíl to our mooring in Rinville we had a SE3, which meant tacking up along the north shore of the bay. Later in the day the wind

veered to SSE allowing a close reach home. It was a grey day but the rain stayed away and I was happy to have done some very enjoyable coastal cruising in the short time that was available. The coastal border area between Mayo and Galway offers some spectacular scenery, and is as good a cruising ground as you will find anywhere on our island, or maybe better!

Garranty Harbour, Inishturk looking north



Gallery



ABOVE : Entering Bofin Harbour. Gun island Tower

BELOW: Inishturk Helipad



ABOVE : Fionn



ABOVE : Fionn eyeing the skipper's porter, Inishturk



ABOVE : Roundstone

BELOW: Glassilaun Beach



Time to leave Greece

Jim and Katie Corbett



OPPOSITE: Corfu Sailing Club Marina

We decided that it was time to start moving *Dóchas* back towards home waters. When we originally set out back in 2017, we thought that we might go as far as Turkey and up to Istanbul and maybe even into the Black Sea. These options have become much less attractive since then due to the deteriorating geopolitical situation. In particular, many cruisers are now fleeing Turkey due to exorbitant prices and over-zealous officialdom. We felt that we had sampled most of what Greece has to offer and decided to start the journey home. The cruise home would take us from Greece to Sicily, on to Sardinia, Menorca and finally to La Ràpita in eastern Spain.

Our home yacht club the RYC this year organised a charter-in-company based in the South Ionian in early June. Being in the area, we joined them and the number of boats including our own was 15 with over 70 cruising sailors descending on the unsuspecting local population, but that's another tale. After the rally we meandered north from Lefkas to Corfu, taking in Preveza, the lovely town of Gaios on Paxos island, Sivota on the mainland and Benitses on Corfu. With friends Sé and Maeve on board, it was a pleasant, slow week as we retrace our steps from when we first arrived in Greece in early 2023.

Corfu to Sicily

The first stage of the delivery back to Spain is the big leg from Corfu to Sicily. While Katie and I are quite happy to cruise as a couple, we prefer to take on

extra crew for any overnight or extended voyages. In Corfu we were joined by Jonathan and our son Bill for the first stage of the delivery to Sicily. We were berthed in the magical old-world Mandraki Marina of Corfu Sailing Club which is located under the old fort. This involves a long walk through the fort which is about the same size and scale as Charles Fort in Kinsale and then going down a long series of steps to the club marina just outside the walls. We had refuelled the boat in Benitses and over a couple of days in Corfu, Katie provisioned the boat for the cruise. The taxi driver was quite familiar with the set up as he drove his taxi through the various narrow gates and passages to deliver the groceries to the top of the marina steps.

The distance to be covered to Messina in Sicily is about 280M and would take about 60 hours. With a benign forecast, we set off at dawn on Sunday, motoring up the channel between Corfu and nearby Albania. At around 0740 we received an automatic distress message on AIS from a location somewhere nearby ahead of us. In a genuine distress situation, such a message would be followed by a call on the VHF confirming the nature of the distress. However, there was no follow up call. Soon afterwards the Greek Coastguard called us by name (they saw our transponder on the AIS system) and asked if we could see any vessel in distress in the near vicinity; 'no' we replied. That was the end of the matter, probably an accidental 'push the big red button' occurrence.

Dóchas 2025 crew





Caldera on Vulcano Island

During the morning we rounded the top of Corfu under engine and by late afternoon we are plugging out into the Gulf of Otranto which separates Greece from mainland Italy. There was no wind but there was a messy sea running which had some of the crew belatedly swallowing Stugeron. We are running a three hours on, five hours off watch system and later that evening a lovely beam wind kicked in from the north and *Dóchas* took off at 5kn under plain sail. With the engine off, we folded back the bimini to see the vast starry sky. Away from land, it's a 360° experience and with no moon we are all mesmerised. The wind continued all night until 0800 the following morning. It was a night to remember.

The following day, we were kept occupied avoiding big ships which were following the busy shipping lanes from Sicily up into the Adriatic Sea. The second night fell as we are closed the south coast of Italy and were close enough to get phone signal from time to time. However, the wind was not kind to us and filled in from directly ahead resulting in a chop as we motored head to wind. Nobody got much

sleep. All things come to an end and as Tuesday morning dawned we were rounding the south coast of Calabria and turning northward into the Strait of Messina. Motoring along in calm conditions, Katie noticed a large barrel being towed along the surface at high speed - just like the scene in the movie *Jaws*. We have a video of this. A swift left turn avoids disaster as it was a trawl being towed at speed by a fishing boat that was several hundred metres away. We motored on up the coast of Calabria, eventually landing in the municipal port of Reggio Calabria on the Italian side. We were landing here as there is a fuel dock and we needed to refuel. The small marina is home to the Guardia Costiera and only suitable for transit yachts but we were glad to have arrived and to be stopped.

Northern Sicily

Leaving Reggio Calabria behind us, we worked the eddies and tacked back and forth outside the shipping channel northward through the Strait of Messina. The tidal stream is strong and getting

BELOW: Welcome to Vulcano island



the timing right is essential. On the day, the stream turned favourable for us around 1600. The maelstrom provided a rich feeding environment for tuna that we witnessed leaping out of the water. Once through the narrows we met sword fishing boats with their high lookouts and gantries over the bow that are twice as long as the boats themselves. We had at that stage left the Ionian Sea and had reached the Tyrrhenian Sea.

We landed into Scilla on the Italian coast where we had reserved a mooring buoy for the evening. The fee included a water taxi to and from the shore. It is a very pretty town built into a hill. This little harbour is also base to some of the famous sword-fishing boats. Climbing the hills up to the town on our weak sea legs made us feel very virtuous. We ate simply at a roadside cafe, having overindulged the night before courtesy of Saverio in Reggio.



Swordfishing boat, Messina

Next morning, we slipped our mooring and headed west to the Aeolian Islands. Our stop was on the island of Vulcano where we had again booked a mooring buoy. Stromboli lies about 20M to the north. Although not currently active there are many fumaroles (volcanic vents) above and below water. All around the harbour, little bubbles can be seen rising to the surface giving the seawater a white appearance. There was a permanent smell of sulphur in the anchorage and the sea around us was mildly acidic at pH 5.5, great for the skin but hard on the eyes. The sand on the beach is volcanic black and there are mud baths. These were shut when we visited because of an 'incident', i.e. somebody died! The following morning the crew were in high activity mode. Bill headed off at 0730 to climb up to the volcano crater. The temperature for walking at this hour was still very hot. Jim and Jonathan disappeared for a 1km swim commenting that the fumes made it difficult to breathe. While Vulcano is a fascinating stopover, it was not a place that we wanted to hang

around too long because of the pervading sulphur smell and we found it uncomfortable to swim in the acidic seawater. Nonetheless the views of Stromboli to the north made it a unique stopover.

Palermo and crew change

Next stop was Palermo on the northwest tip of Sicily where we had a crew change. It's about 80M directly from Vulcano, and we opted for an overnight run rather than a very long day run to take advantage of cooler temperatures at night. We set off in the late afternoon. Initially we were sailing in a reaching wind which is nice. Overnight, the wind died, and we were motoring again. Palermo has several marinas which can be pre-booked online. We were booked into the local yacht club marina and the attendant was on hand to help us dock. It's a busy place with many ancillary watersports based here: rowing, kayaking and dinghy sailing. The pier we were on is also home to the Guardia Costiera so there are no concerns re security.

Arriving into Palermo city was busy, hot and chaotic. It was Saturday and so there was a rush to get the laundry done as everything closes on Sunday. This included long stops for coffee and ice cream. We also did a provisions run as the next passage to Sardinia would take over three days. With a population of over 850,000, Palermo is the capital of Sicily and the city itself is over 2,700 years old. Palermo has important historical roots and was an independent kingdom for much of its existence. Here Garibaldi declared the island part of Italy, commemorated in the famous Quattro-Canti Square. It is noted for its history, culture, architecture and gastronomy. The 12th-century Palermo Cathedral houses royal tombs, while the huge neoclassical Teatro Massimo is famous for opera. In the centre are the Palazzo dei Normanni, a royal palace started in the 9th century, and the Cappella Palatina, with Byzantine mosaics. Busy markets include the central Ballarò street market and the Vucciria, near the port. We took an official food and history tour of the city which covers many eras

as far back as the Crusades. Sicilian food is obviously Italian although they have some regional variations such as panele (chickpea fritters) and arancine (rice balls). The food tour included tastings of bruschetta, aubergine dishes, exotic pizzas, "pani ca meusa" which is a sandwich made with veal spleen that's boiled and fried, then piled into a soft roll. Of course, any Italian food tour is finished off with gelato and coffee.

While taking this tour the mosquitoes took the opportunity to invade *Dóchas* which we had carelessly left wide open without any screens. They went on a feeding frenzy overnight on our tired bodies. This required a trip to the pharmacy the following morning. The local pharmacist had seen it all before and prescribed the necessary oral and topical antihistamines.

Cagliari, Sardinia

We said goodbye to Jonathan and Bill who were returning home but were happy to welcome Donal. With a good forecast, it was time to head on to Sardinia. This is a long open crossing of over 220M. The main concern was that for much of the trip the nearest land is the coast of Africa; Tunisia and Algeria. These are best avoided, and the possibility of meeting migrant boats is high in this sector. Meeting a migrant boat is fraught with difficulties for a private yacht. There is of course a universal obligation to provide assistance to any soul in peril on the sea. That said, the official protocol is that a yacht must report any such sighting to the coastguard and standby until assistance arrives. Taking migrants on board, even in a force majeure situation, will result in the arrest and impounding of the yacht and a trial to prove that one is not a trafficker. However, the migrant trafficker gangs have (reportedly) weaponised this by deliberately crashing or sinking their boats into or near yachts, thereby forcing a rescue situation. Thankfully our passage was uneventful, but we did receive an AIS distress call from a migrant vessel close to the coast of



Dóchas at Maó Mahón

Tunisia (200M from us), which was followed by radio traffic in English from the Tunisian Coastguard. This appears to happen regularly with migrant vessels being returned to the African coast. Some hope to be picked up by European vessels and landed into the EU. All night we could hear fishermen chatting in Arabic on the radio, demonstrating that life goes on even in extraordinary circumstances. As we entered our second night en route, we needed to slow down the boat in order to arrive into Cagliari in daylight.

Cagliari is the capital of Sardinia with about 150,000 inhabitants. At the head of a large bay and with a fortified hill as a backdrop, it is an impressive site. Sardinia has over 1.5 million inhabitants and is one of the five Italian regions with some degree of domestic autonomy. It is officially bilingual in Italian and Sardinia's indigenous language which is derived from Catalan. This is due to Spanish rule of Sardinia for 500 years. Arriving into Cagliari, we went in search of diesel before eventually locating our pre-booked berth in Portus Karalis Marina. This is a high-class marina with onsite facilities, bar and restaurant. Although we stayed for two nights, we didn't do much touring. We were busy with the boat but mostly we were feeling the plus 30°C heat and it was not conducive to walking around. Tadg arrived as extra crew.

Return to the Balearics

We were watching the weather. In the western Med, the weather is largely determined by what is going on in the Gulf de Lyon up north. There was a Mistral forecast in three days or so which would bring sustained gale or near-gale force winds. It's 250M to Mahón on the island of Menorca and we would need over two days to get there. It was time to get going or we would be stuck. With Tadg now on board, we headed out around 0900. It took us most of the day to get out of Cagliari Bay, first heading south

and then turning west and later northwest at Capo Teulada. On the way, we were forced to make a long detour out around an exclusion zone marking the 5M entrance channel to the oil refinery at Sarroch. It was a nuisance but the reputation of the Italian Coastguard ensured our compliance. We were sailing nicely for most of the day along the south coast of Sardinia but after the SW cape, the wind was NW and on the nose with a rough sea. We were forced to motor-sail west and even southwest for the evening which was well off our course. Dinner was cancelled as the boat bucked up and down in the cross swell. Eventually after midnight the wind veered allowing us to sail on our desired northwest track.

We plugged on the following day which included a swim in mid-ocean, always a thrill. The second night passed quietly and the following morning we were excited to finally arrive into Mahón, hoisting our Spanish courtesy flag for the first time in five years. Mahón has long been important as one of the finest natural harbours in the Med and is well described in the opening paragraphs of Patrick O'Brian's first book 'Master and Commander'. Menorca has a different look and feel to Mallorca, not as built up and very up-market. It has several marinas and a major commercial harbour as well as being a base for the Spanish Coastguard. We stopped at a diesel marina to top up and finally land at our dock.

The Mistral was due to start the following day but we were happy to be in Mahón with time to explore the town. The harbour itself is about 5km long with several bends and is well sheltered. Apart from the usual shore side marinas, there are also floating marinas that you can moor to and dinghy in from – a good use of precious space and presumably no foreshore licence needed. There is a designated swimming area nearby and the usual bars and eateries along the waterfront. The town itself is





LEFT: Jim and Katie at La Ràpita

beautiful with many interesting squares and streets. There are free elevators to get up the cliffs to the town at various points like we have seen previously in Sorrento. We love Mahón and would definitely return for a holiday.

Return to La Ràpita, Spain

We waited out the Mistral wind for three days in Mahon. We were checking the forecast several times a day and noted that there were thunderstorms forecast along the eastern coast of the Spanish mainland. The forecast was improving, and we were keen to get going as this was to be our final leg back to Spain. The distance of this final leg is just short of 200M and would take around 36 hours. The route passed along the south coast of Menorca and then through the channel between Menorca and Mallorca before crossing the 110M wide Balearic Sea to mainland Spain. This last part is very busy for shipping going up and down the Spanish coast.

We set off at first light on Wednesday. Once out of the harbour, there was a fresh wind from the north, remnants of the previous days' blow. It was lumpy but comfortable as we headed downwind, south around the bottom of the island, later turning west along the south coast. It was a cracking sail for the day in reaching conditions. Later we passed close by the northwest tip of Mallorca at Cap de Formentor. We had been here before in 2021 when we circumnavigated Mallorca.

We were sailing out into the Balearic Sea as night fell and we noted a large swell setting in from the northwest, almost like an Atlantic swell. Winds continued to moderate. I went off watch around midnight. Katie called me up an hour later; there was lightning in the sky off to the west. While this was not unexpected, the scale was massive. There were flashes of lightning every few seconds which lit up the entire sky. Soon the rain started, and we hurriedly shorten sail and started the engine in

anticipation of the squalls which followed. Only a scrap of mainsail was left up to steady the boat. Each squall was impressive (terrifying), sheet lightning and occasionally forked lightning lit up the entire sky. The thunder was mostly drowned out by the wind which was gusting over 30 knots. Usefully, the wind was north-northeast, coming from behind the boat and pushing us along at a nice pace. We were all awake now, dressed in wet gear, wearing lifejackets, and clipped on when on deck. We put the EPIRB, a VHF and some phones into the oven, which apparently will protect the electronic devices from any potential lightning strike. Tadg was soaked as the worst of the rain started on his watch and Donal was mulling over the location of the fire extinguishers. We could see the squall lines coming at us every 20 minutes or so preceded by lightning, thunder and then finally wind and torrential rain. The boat handled well, and we were comfortable with the conditions. Indeed, we had no option but to sit back and marvel at nature reminding us of our insignificance. This went on all night and into the early morning. At dawn, we could see the thunder clouds in all their majesty, seemingly jostling and jousting each other around the sky. Occasionally, lightning flashed between adjacent clouds as the storm faded.

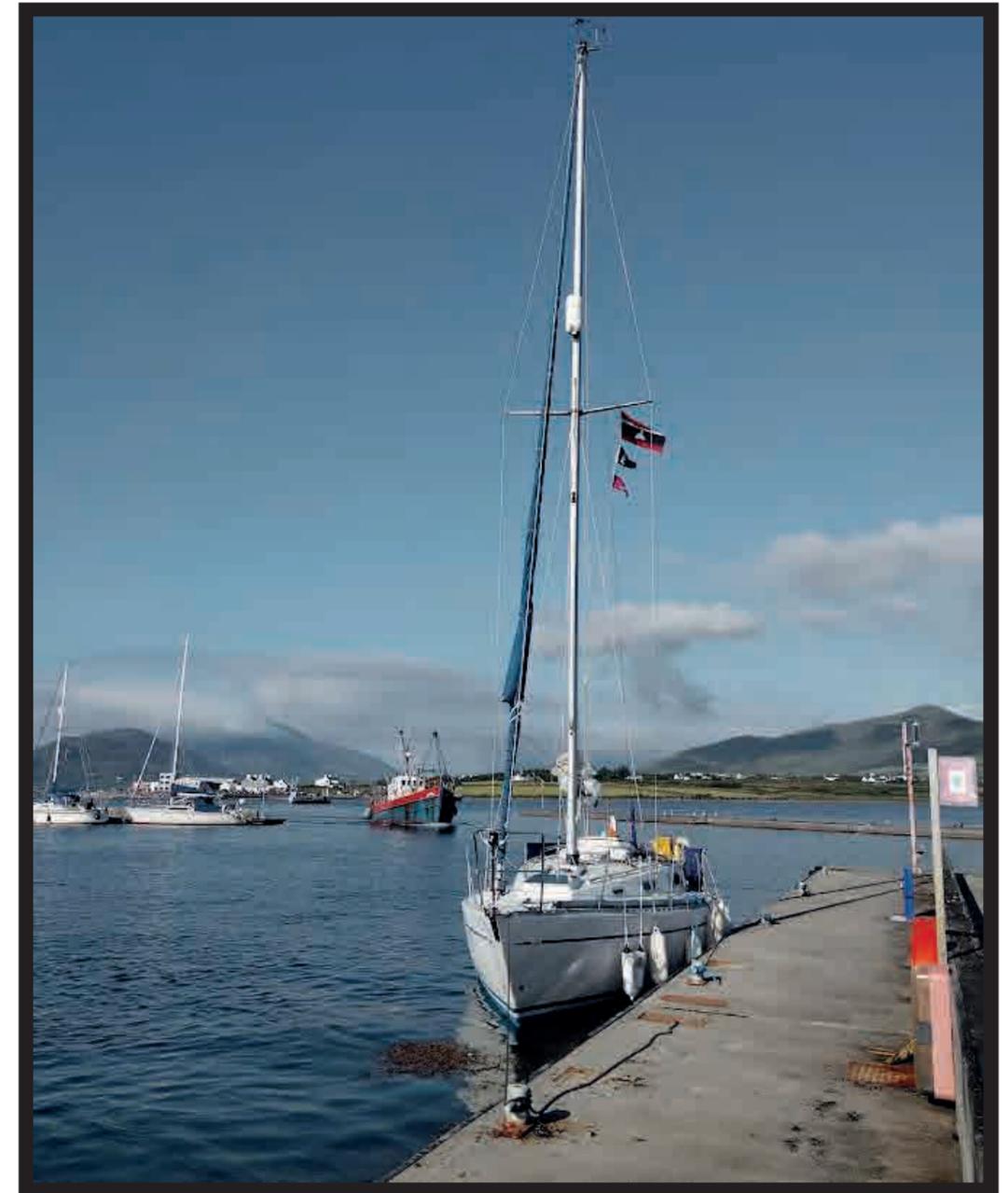
Reflecting back on the night's excitement, we were fortunate not to have been struck by lightning. As standard, the mast is connected by a large electric cable to the metal keel of the boat which would serve to shed the charge into the sea. That said, yachts do get struck by lightning from time to time, usually resulting in the destruction of all electrical items on board. Certainly, there was lightning all around us as the squall lines passed overhead but we never felt the electrical buzz in the air which apparently signals a high-risk situation for the boat. For all four of us, it's been an experience. On reflection, the forecast for thunderstorms was there the previous day and we are guilty of the common mistake of pressing on to get home at the end of a long voyage.

We arrived into our destination of La Ràpita on the Spanish coast at teatime on July 11. It was warm during the day and all our gear dried out. That evening we ate in the salubrious restaurant at the marina. Next day the lift went well, and the boat was parked by midday. Sails off and folded, all gear off the deck and stowed. Water tanks empty. We changed the engine oil, changed the diesel filters and flushed the engine water circuit with antifreeze. Katie supervised the laundry in the marina facility and later we availed of the swimming pool which was a relief from the heat. The boat got a good scrub inside and out and the winter covers were fitted. We know from our previous visit here that this is a windy spot and the mariners fitted heavy tie-down webbing to stabilise *Dóchas* on the hard stand.

The following day, we got a bus to Barcelona airport. Another year's cruise done and for us the end of our great Mediterranean adventure.

Raffles' summer cruise (and some extras)

Sean Norris



Raffles alongside in Knightstown

Weather, work and domestic commitments and hazy summer plans meant that by the end of April this year I had very little done to get *Raffles* ready for the season. However, over the winter fellow ICC member Eugene O'Loughlin arranged to have a bushing made for our rudder shaft's fitting into the skeg shoe. He had also taken away and restored our tiller and a grating in the heads all of which I was very grateful for.

A fine week at the start of May saw me with a burst of activity to get ready for launch, along with the boatyard refitting the skeg shoe, saw *Raffles* going in the water on 22 May. She then spent some time on the boatyard's mooring as I was signed up with Eugene O'Loughlin and his brother Brendan for a delivery trip on *Cahira* from Ireland to Brittany during the first week in June. And a most enjoyable trip it was. It was the first time in 13 years where I was not



Tresco, looking across towards Bryher

the skipper and with the added bonus of setting foot on Tresco for the first time since 1987. I had a first visit to Bryher as well as anchoring at Le Stiff and passing down the Chenal de la Helle before onward passage to Camaret and Brest, where I left to come home on the *Pont Aven* from Roscoff.

Back home Tom Kirby and I had lined up to take part in our first Schull Harbour Sailing Club race on 14 June, with literally just the two of us on board. As *Raffles* had only just been delivered up from Rossbrin the day before we had to bend the sails on and decided that a nice cautious start was in order. We followed the other boats out, I put on the kettle half way through, we had a cup of tea and biscuits and retired! We sailed two further races with one/two extra crew finishing well down the fleet but still getting out.

Eugene and Brendan relaxing after arriving in Camaret



The Fraggle Rock Bar, Bryher

As mentioned above, cruising plans were fluid. I had expressed an interest in joining a cruise in company from Galway to Cornwall at the end of June but found very early in the year that things were not lining up for me. Similarly, I had considered the Conor O'Brien Cruise but again things were not lining up. Eventually a plan was hatched! Irene's Uncle was visiting her home place in Ennis from Australia and she was keen to meet him and his family. I had the brainwave of going to Kilrush where we could base ourselves, be out of the way but yet be there. Given my son James's autism, the busyness of his grandparents house would have been too much, so a win-win for all!

On a bright 9 July I left Schull at 1015 with my cousin Nick Norris as crew, destination Bere Island. Just abeam of Castle Point the breeze filled in so engine off and we beat westwards. A whale surfaced next to



Lining up Dursey Sound

us as we tacked in for the shore near Brow Head. On we went around the Mizen across the bays and into Berehaven from the east. I phoned Lawrence Cove and was greeted with 'Hello *Raffles*'. As always, we got a great welcome from Rachel even though it was four years since our last visit. In Bere Island we met fellow ICC member Rob Henshall on his *Contessa 32 Maria*. He was circumnavigating Ireland and was returning towards Sligo. He told me I was the first ICC member he had met on his cruise.

After having dinner on board and some refreshments ashore in Dessies we left at 0830 the following morning with the intention of going to Portmagee. There was no wind and we had an uneventful passage motoring all the way. It was only my second time passing through the Dursey Sound despite it being so close to home.

Once we had passed Puffin Island I decided to call Gerard in Portmagee as mentioned in the Club South & West Coast Sailing Directions to see the situation about berthing. The hammerheads were not available and we would have to raft up outside the ferries who would be going out in the morning from 0800 onward. Gerard advised that a couple of days notice would be needed to have unimpeded access to the hammerhead. We decided that we wanted a lie-in and opted to push on to Knightstown where we arrived at 1630 and got the last inside berth. We ate ashore in the Royal Hotel, (highly recommended) and had some refreshments. The inside berth in Knightstown was well worth it as that night it blew quite fresh from the south.

Nick and Sean having just passed through Dursey Sound





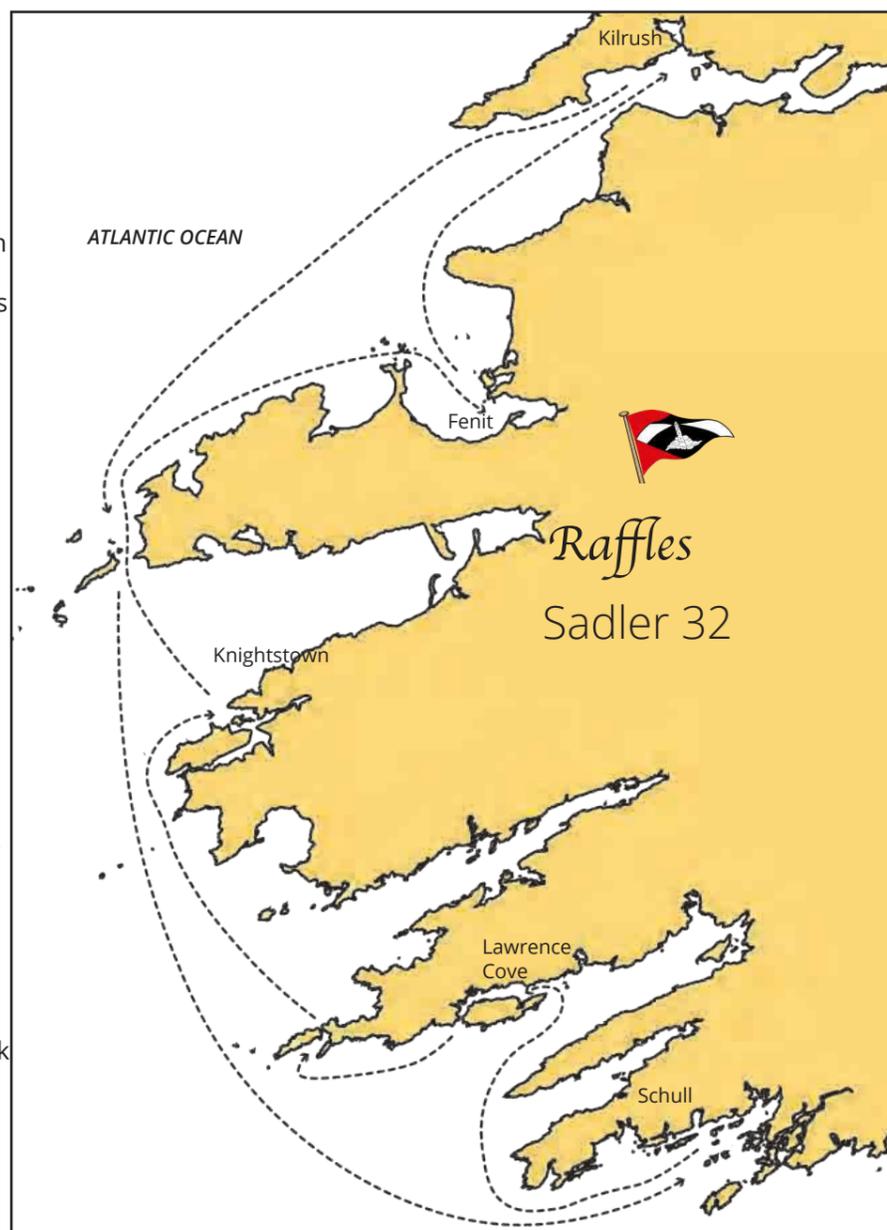
Passing through Blasket Sound

prepared dinner for myself and James. James, while he has no interest in the operations of the boat or sailing matters enjoys being on board and finds it relaxing. I certainly enjoy having him with me. The following morning we left Fenit at 1030 in flat calm conditions with just the mainsail up. Just north of Kerry Head a breeze filled in so we rolled out the Jib and sailed on towards the Ballybunion Buoy. The wind died after about a half an hour so we rolled up the jib again and we motored on into the Shannon proper with a significant tidal flow with us by then. Abeam of Carrigaholt another breeze filled in and we sailed the rest of the way towards Kilrush taking down our sails at Scatterly Island before making contact with the marina office in Kilrush. After some misunderstandings on our part on 'how things were done' we eventually locked in and found a berth.

We were met there by my wife, Irene, to leave me the car as this was going to be base for James and me for the next couple of weeks. James and I ate on board while Nick went ashore to eat before coming back and enjoying some sundowners in the cockpit. We dropped Nick to the train in Limerick the following morning.

The following morning with both of us having attended to some admin work we left Knightstown at 1030 bound for Fenit. On the way out we passed the lifeboat towing in a fishing boat. It was still fresh from the south so we opted to sail on under jib alone with some rolls taken in. At 1300 we started our transit through the Blasket Sound while keeping a sharp look out for fishing buoys which were everywhere. We got through without incident helped by a favourable tide and continued on along the north side of the Dingle Peninsula. The wind died abeam of Mount Brandon at which stage we started the engine and motored on towards the Maharees Sound. Crossing Brandon Bay We were visited by a pod of dolphins who played in our wake for a good half an hour. Later we were passed by several power boats heading out from Fenit towards Brandon Pier. On arrival at Fenit we made contact with the marina by telephone. The man there told us he was heading home as it was well after his finishing time but he gave us directions to our berth and also arranged to leave a key for access to the pontoon and the facilities. I made sure to express my thanks to the lady on duty the following morning. We again met Rob Henshall, who told me he was departing early the next morning for the Aran Islands, far earlier than us!

That night we were joined by my son James which changed the dynamics somewhat onboard. Nick went ashore whereas I stayed and



RIGHT: Locking out of Kilrush. Nick on the bow



There had been a vague plan about taking a trip up the river to Foynes and maybe doing an overnight there. However poor weather and general inertia meant the only movement we made over the two weeks was on one of the days when Tom Kirby called to us and we went to the fuel berth and back, a grand distance of about 200 metres both ways. Otherwise, James and I engaged in some land cruising with trips in and out to his grandparents as well as exploration of places in East Clare, the Shannon Estuary Drive on the Clare side, a trip out to Loop Head and around the coast up as far as Miltown Malbay. During our stay I also met fellow ICC members Tony Casey and Rob Allen on the marina.

During our two weeks in Kilrush we were made very welcome by the marina team of Darin, Breda and Anita, but all good things come to an end. With the local family obligations finishing up on 25 July it was time to think about heading home. I wanted to leave as soon as possible thereafter and so got in touch with Eugene O'Loughlin and Nick who had both agreed to do the trip back with me. Domestic and work commitments on my part meant that this was not going to be a leisurely return like our trip up but instead a one hop dash from Kilrush to Schull. On 26 of July, I collected Eugene and Nick from the train in Limerick. Back in Ennis we swapped cars and James joined Irene. Her father brought us to Kilrush and we cast off more or less after arriving there.

Unfortunately, while I had hoped to have some ebb going out, we were too late. By this stage we were facing a moderate westerly and a flood tide as we made our way out west. At times we were down to 1 kn over the ground. I looked across at the tidal activity on the south side of the estuary. Even with wind with tide on the Tail of Beal I felt the warnings in the Sailing Directions were well justified.

Because of the adverse tide it took us six hours to cover the 15M from Kilrush to Kilbaha. There we dipped into Kilbaha Bay to hoist sails and tacked out southwest. We worked our way west during the night with Loop Head light gradually falling away. My favourite view of a lighthouse at night is 'far away enough low down on the horizon to be safe from shore but yet within land's bosom'. Tearaght came into view before the wind died completely about 8M northeast of the Blasket Sound so it was time to roll up the jib and engine on to make progress, a set up we kept all the way to Schull. This time we had tides with us for the three main gateways (Blaskets, Dursey and Mizen). We arrived in Schull at 1900 on Sunday 27 of July without incident.

The first week of August found us (having been relatively late entrants) competing in Class 4 in Calves Week over the four days that the regatta ran. We had some of our regular crew on board but we were fortunate to be joined by a young Ollie Johnson. Ollie introduced more of his pals during the week which meant we had a strong finish, posting results

of fourth, sixth and two seconds in ECHO to finish second in that handicap out of eight boats. We tied with the winner, but they were able to count a first to win. Not bad for a boat with old sails, and loads of cruising gear on board. The boat also has an IRC handicap and we finished third in that division.

We sailed one further club race in strong winds but between being short-handed and those old sails coming up against modern sails we found it hard to compete. *Raffles* was lifted out on 4 September thus ending the 2025 season. Some of it planned but most of it put together at relatively short notice.

James helps to pack up in Kilrush





Don Carlos leaving Honningsvåg to round Nordkapp. © Roar Jensen, used with permission.

A Fortnight in Finnmark

Paddy Barry

Mark Sweetnam had left *Don Carlos*, his Najad 420, ashore for the winter in Tromsø's Skattora boatyard; well advised by Louis Keating who previously had done similarly. With wife Dawn and Skipper, their dog, he would be sailing southward over the summer – see Mark's log on page 26. But first we three, Norman Kean, Michael Weed and Paddy B. would be having a 'jolly' with him in waters north; mostly Norway's northern county of Finnmark.

Summer comes late to these parts, indeed sometimes not at all. For Finnmark stretches to 71°North and over to the Russian border at 30° East. Because of the current state of that border we wouldn't be going there. Indeed the boat's insurance would not have allowed it, but we did go to Finnmark's uppermost latitude. Our plan was to go outward fairly quickly and then meander back to Tromsø at our ease.

The boat was in first class order, as is anything Mark is attached to. He had visited over the winter. Air fares from Ireland, or the UK, are extraordinarily low at typically less than €200 return; and that's nice

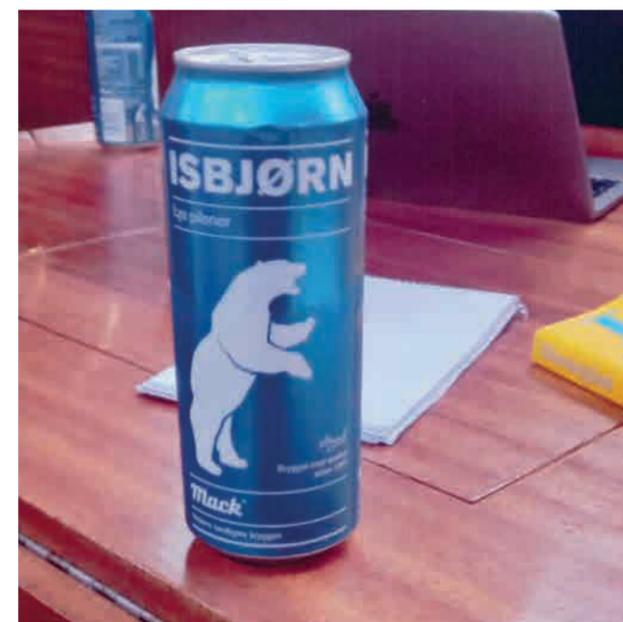
SAS – none of your Ryanair up here. So aboard we went, unpacked the thermals and hot-water bottle, then ashore – not to the nice midnight concert in the Cathedral across the bridge, but to the Train Station Pub, previously a good social scene. No more. Bouncers, loud 'musak' and a hundred kroner, that's a tenner in euro, at the door. Onward we found Ølhallen, 'the oldest pub in Tromsø', and began getting used to Norwegian prices; for convenience, just double what you might expect. We nightcapped in the equally nice Rorbua, closer to the harbour. There some danced, they being about half our ages, which I'll charitably average at seventy 'something'.

On Sunday 4 May, we let go the lines and northward under the great bridge we went. Behind us were a couple of vessels taking skiers on Sail and Ski trips; Norwegians being as familiar with skis as we are with bicycles. They were bound eastward for the Lyngen area, we northward for Skjervøy, or Skierva in Sámi – we'll come to the different people of the area. All day we motored in cool sunshine, magnificent snow-covered mountains all round. Skjervøy, open to the northern Barents Sea, was where the vessel *Fram* and crew had returned in 1896 after their three



Four Eejits of the Apocalypse, as Norman called us. Paddy, Mark, Norman and Michael

year North Pole attempt. By amazing coincidence, their leader Fridtjof Nansen, who a year earlier with Johansen, had left *Fram* to attempt to ski to the Pole, had returned to Vardø a week earlier. (Please excuse the historical stuff, but I'm somewhat obsessed with it). Surprisingly there was no statue, plaque or other reference to this that we could find. This town of 2½ thousand people had a marina – they all have – and gym, shops, church, one café and a road about half a mile in each direction; all spotlessly clean. At the marina Mark paid the fee by card, as is the norm; typically 100 or 150 kroner. We had a 'kitty' going and would all be chipping in for grub, diesel, berthage and of course beer.



The beer we drank

We then had an 0800 start. With two hour watches, two up, this was very civilised indeed. So much so that breakfast earlier had been in the open cockpit. Not so nice was the weather later in the day as mist filled. Eastward we went, going south of the island of Sorøya. All these islands have names ending in 'oy' or 'øya'. In Valbukta we anchored in an enclosed bay, within a bay. We had this very much to ourselves, we thought, until we saw a distant small boat working pots, or more likely nets. We put up our fully enclosed cockpit surround, the heater went on and we poured a little whiskey. In fact it had no 'e', for the bottle was a Scottish 'Famous Grouse'.

All up at 0630 for a 0730 depart. This was a clearer day at 3°C. We were bound for Honningsvåg, 75M distant. We passed Hammerfest to our east, not stopping as we motored into a roughish sea with the apparent wind at 25 knots or so. Later with some sail up, and tide, we made 8 knots through Havøysund under whose high bridge to the mainland our mast had 3m to spare. We're 19m. Just beforehand the exhaust had turned steamy - with no water. A quick 'engine-off' and Mark sailed us into a very convenient pontoon. There he checked and checked, but no clogging of the intake, faulty pump impeller or seawater filter could he find. Until, yes he did find the fault. The inlet pipe had developed a tiny crack at one of the two jubilee clips, thus letting air in and screwing up the system. He fitted a new hose from the ample spares on board and all was well.

As befits a supernumerary crew, I stayed out of the way and walked the island for a few hours, taking in most of it. On the away side out by the graveyard I spoke to a pleasant lady walking her dogs, a pair

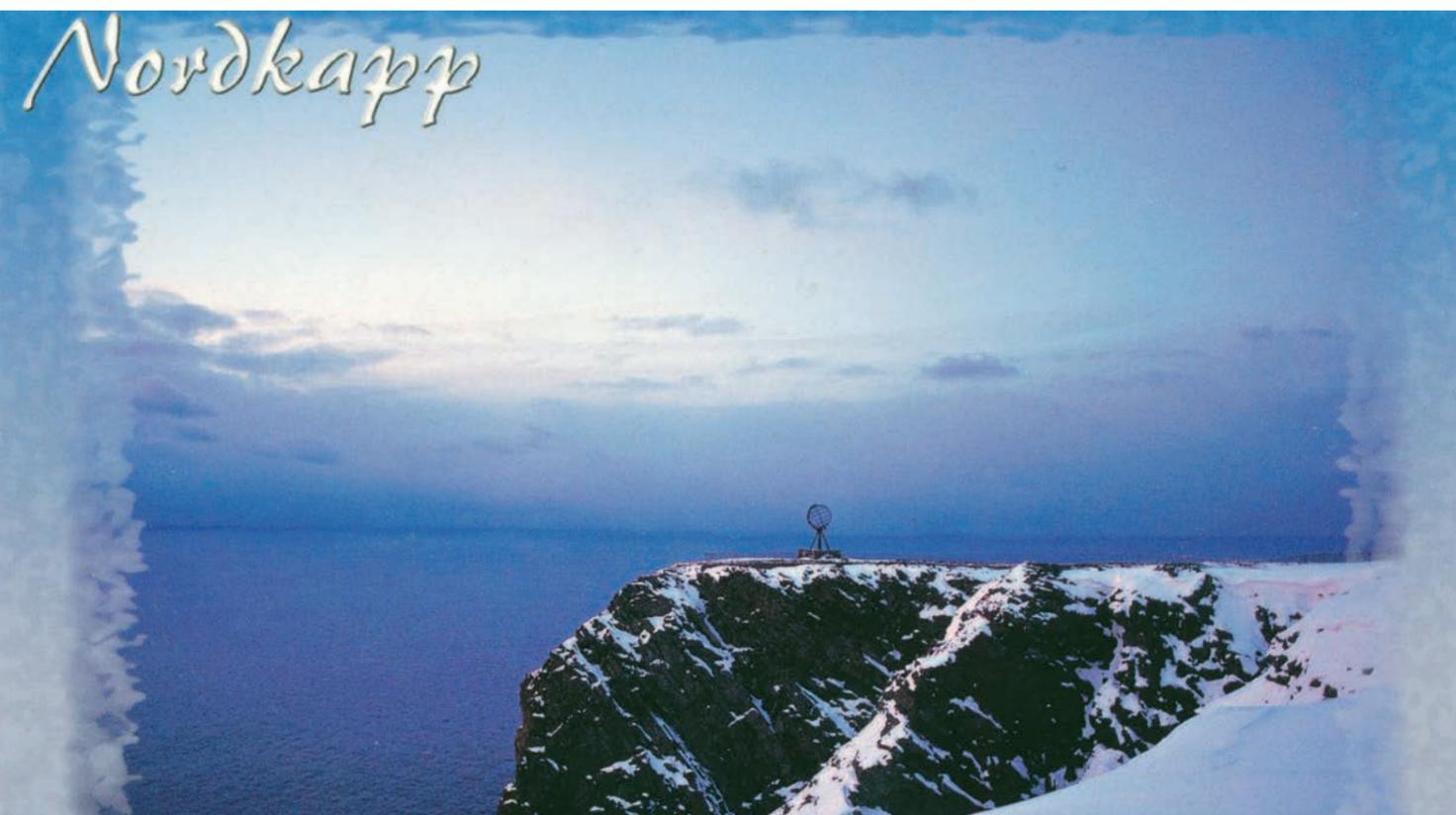


Snow on the Honningsvåg pontoon.

of huskies, very much the real thing. In the spring with the snow still thicker all round, they race them, pulling sledges in teams of six; harnessed in pairs on centre traces, Alaska style. By way of conversation I talked of how in Greenland they harness up in 'fan style'.

Nordkapp. Around here its 'the northest this that and t'other'. We didn't see this midnight sun, there being a week or so to go before the night time sun's 'chord of invisibility' would reduce to nil.

Honningsvåg, which we reached on Friday, boasted a seawater temperature of 4.9° C. Nonetheless Norman had his daily plunge. Here Matt Molloy and I had swum, though later in the year, on our 2012 passage to the White Sea in Northabout. And here I finished the book I had been reading,



Richard Hough's 'The Blind Horn's Hate' This is an unputdownable account of the early Cape Horners-- Magellan, Drake, Sarmiento, Anson and the other intrepid and mostly unfortunate early Europeans to that part of the cold and windy southern world. This town, Honningsvåg, on the east side of Magerøya, is the road entry for North Cape. With the tourist season not yet begun, the town was fairly empty. However we did find a happy local crowd in the Sjøgata Pub. It had no TV and the barman was from Moravia.

Next day, rounding the island anti-clockwise, the sailing was gorgeous, the cruising chute getting a good windful. My feet were cosy in their newly purchased Norwegian woolly socks—actually made in Portugal. And back round past North Cape in sunshine we sailed. The actual northern cape is about a mile or so to the west, but is not so prominently photogenic nor, more importantly for the tourist, is there a road up to it. That evening we pulled into the village of Gjesvær, population about 70. It had an empty look about it. A guy I asked where should we pay for our berth said 'forget it'—my sort of place!

We met others, a couple of guys at their fish racks, where they hang the cod for a few weeks to dry, before selling on. But also we met Erling. He apparently owned the island (tidal and bridged to the shore) complete with jetties, fish factories and store. Uniquely, he also owned the 60-seater Lutheran Church, the only private one in Norway. In Norwegian the churches are owned by the State; he bought this one when it was threatened with closure, and - though not personally religious - he has maintained it for its original purpose. There, when we visited on his invitation, the heat was on, the lights were dimmed and nice music playing. In the rooms beside, once a Seaman's Hostel, he served us coffee and spoke about the big days of the fishing and his ownership and selling fish throughout Europe. He must have made money because then we went to his grandmother's house, where he was brought up, and were shown his collection of earliest printed maps and books which must have cost him millions. Although he did go on and on a bit.

We made our goodbyes and returned to the boat for a few hands of '25', before bunk-time. In the morning we took coffee in the shop, served up by his Russian wife of 25 years, photographer Natalya from Arkhangelsk.

Ingøya was our next stop. This once had 1,000 fishermen but now was practically empty. One large fishing vessel did come in and in the morning was gone. I walked the couple of hours, on tarred, then gravel, road to the very high communication mast, now redundant. In the marsh beside the road I heard loads of squawking birds and saw a white hare.

25M of motoring took us next to Hammerfest, a two-night stop. While I took coffee in the pub across from our berth a half dozen well lubricated lads were interrupted by a loud and angry lady berating and banging her man—most un-Norwegian, I would have thought. The Norwegians, as we know, are reserved, civilised, egalitarian and very open; to the extent that their income tax returns, including their incomes, are open for all to view. I can't see that catching on where we come from.

The four of ourselves, as is the case in relatively confined quarters, were by now pretty open too. Michael from Inis Bofin is a now retired Principal school teacher in Donegal. Norman, with plenty to say in the world of chemistry, having made neoprene for DuPont in Derry, entertains with tales of people and places round the Irish coast. Mark, the most recent of us to have left the world of work, can converse on all matters, and myself - I try to keep my mouth shut, unsuccessfully.

Erling Walsøe. Owner of Gjesvær—and an extraordinary map collection.





Lindstrøm, jovial cook for Amundsen and Sverdrup voyages.

Hammerfest was the home of Adolf Lindstrøm, cook on all of Amundsen's expeditions and described by him as 'his most valuable man'. His statue overlooks the harbour. I must here mention that our own cook (by his own choice) was Norman, and when home I discovered I had put on weight, a compliment indeed. [I love cooking, I get to eat what I like, and you may hate the skipper but you'd better be nice as Amundsen to the cook - N].

Lindstrøm was of Kven origin, the Kvens being a Finnish ethnic minority. A much bigger minority were, and still are, the Sámi. These are a nomadic reindeer based people, living in tents and following their herds. In appearance they reminded me of my recent visit to Mongolia, with very distinctive dress and customs. Now only about 10% of them follow their former life.

Hammerfest Museum deals largely with the time of occupation by the Nazis and their burning of all when

abandoning Finnmark in 1944. The local population had an awful time until reconstruction.

Also it was from near Hammerfest that in the early 1800s the Struve Survey triangulated a line south, through ten countries, as far as the Black Sea; thus establishing the exact size and shape of our planet. Unrelated, as we went southward, I too was having a daily breakfast swim.

A good 30M downwind sail brought us to an anchorage on Stjernøya/ Stierdna, the latter name being Sámi. The Norwegian charts for hereabouts show names in both languages. Ashore the snow lay too thick for a comfortable walkaround. We did see some ski marks where intrepid holidaymakers had been. The big town of Alta lay ahead for the morrow. This was 20 miles in from the main Hurtigruten ship route and best known for its 6,000 year old rock carvings. The lads bussed out to view, but found the area closed off for another few weeks until the snow cover would be melted. Sunset was 2355, sunrise 0051.

Now, as we motored out on a fine calm and sunny morning, we were thinking of where we might best be located two days ahead on Saturday 17th, Norway's National Holiday. On the Friday we were alongside in Bergsfjord, an isolated place with little activity other than some Canadian skiers returning from their hired boat to the Bergsfjord Lodge. Walking out, I saw car tracks, probably some weeks old on a thinning ice-covered lake. The next day we would go to the busy town of Skjervøy, where we had been a couple of weeks earlier.

This time we learned of local man Leonard Seppalla, who, in Alaska with his dog team in 1925, had played a pivotal role in the relief supply of diphtheria serum to Nome. But it was for the Festival Day that we were here. All were dressed in their best, many in traditional costume. At 1100, on the dot - this is

Constitution Day. 17 May



Norway - the brass band struck up at the school ½ mile outside town and began the parade. Many followed. All others watched, cheered and carried Norwegian flags, as did we. Great fun it was as the parade made its way to outside the church. Norman stayed for the speeches (by two very young ladies in beautiful traditional dress. He understood about three words but he got the drift - it was quite moving), and the rest of us went for the café. The owner's wife was from the island of Arnøy, and insisted that we go there some time. She looked typically Scandinavian, but she was a proud Sámi. Now bound 75M toward Tromsø, we had one more overnight in a small mainland village, Hansnes. There I pitched tent, lit a driftwood fire and had a snug night ashore.

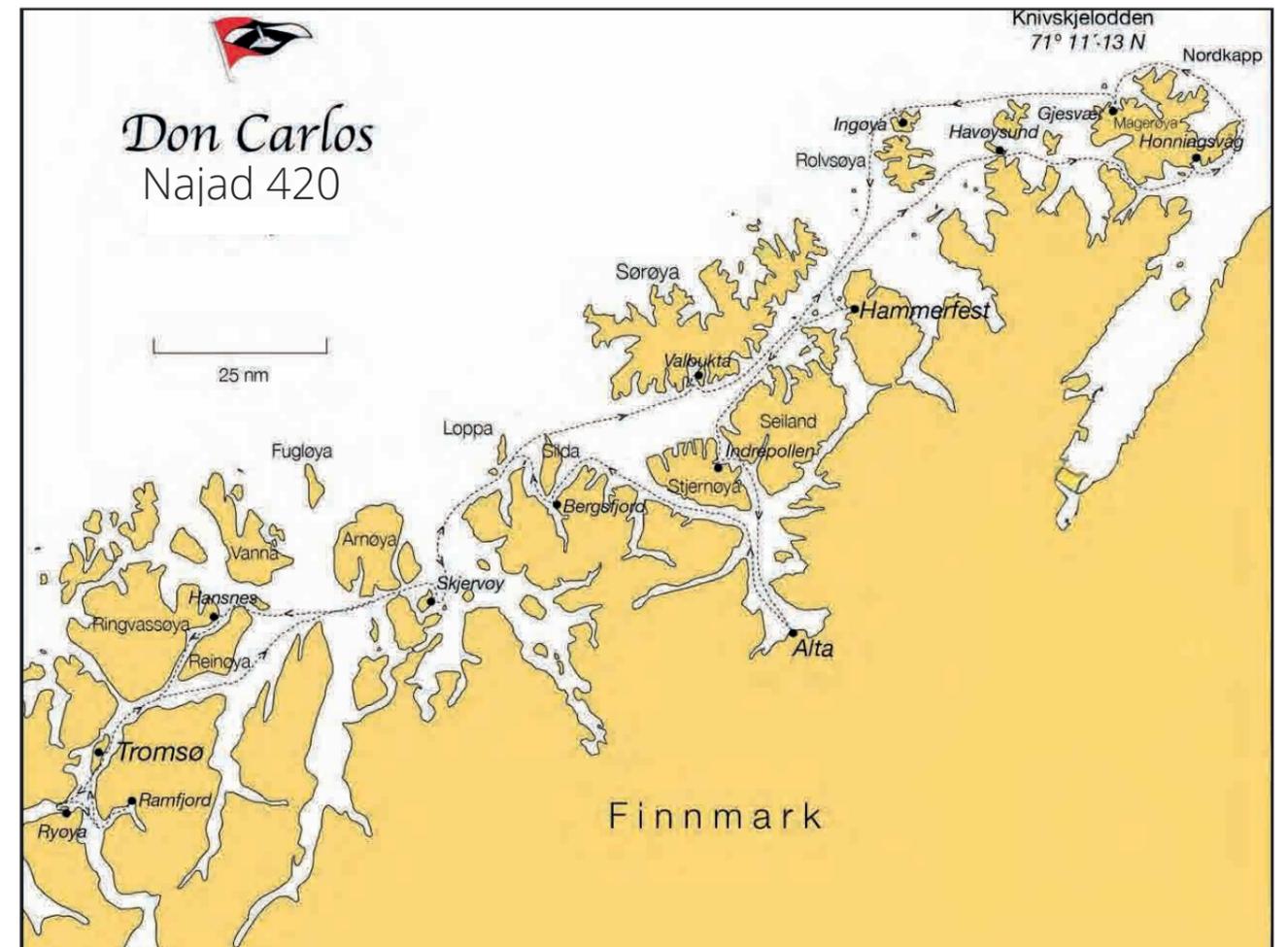
Approaching Tromsø, in gusty weather, we had the not-so-bright idea of taking a photo, from the dinghy, of *Don Carlos* under sail. It wasn't just the outboard engine that got a ducking!

The wrap-up of the 'kitty account' came to 32,500 kroner; that was €675 each, not bad at all; 530M done.

Flying home, at Oslo airport I spotted a Thai Airlines plane. I was back in the wider world.



Camped ashore, all snug when zipped in.



A week south of Lefkás on the Ionian Sea, Greece

Neil Hegarty



The charterers

On 5 November 2024 I attended a skipper's club meeting at the Royal Cork Yacht Club in Crosshaven. The meeting had been posted in the RCYC Newsletter by Patrick D'Arcy ICC, the Rear Admiral Cruising. He said it was the intention of the Cruising Committee to organise a charter club rally in company on the Ionian Sea, Greece, in June 2025. The chosen location was south of Lefkás on the Ionian Sea. Paddy had invited Richard Cooper to give a talk on what to expect from the rally. As it seemed a good option for Anne Kenny and me for the next year, I put my name down with Philip Myers, who was assisting Paddy on the night. Another option for us was the Western Isles Cruise, but we were not attracted to it because the cruise plan was so like the excellent one in which we took part on *Tam O' Shanter* in 2010. The chosen company for the boat charter was Tubber, an agency that partners with established professional charter companies. Boats were to be collected on Saturday 7 June 2025 at 1700 and returned the following Saturday at 0900. The booking deposit is small, followed by 50% within two weeks. The balance is due six weeks before charter. A returnable security deposit of 2000 euros was to be paid in our case.

Anne Kenny and I chartered a 2013 Hanse 345 with three cabins, named *Alkyon*, on 10 November and paid Pantaenius for a damage waiver policy. On the following day I forwarded my contact details to Philip Myers, who was setting up a WhatsApp group.

Things were moving quickly. I uploaded my passport, yachtmaster and radio licence to Tubber and found the website quite easy to use.

My daughter Patricia, son Neil, and his daughter Sophie were booked to come with us. I sent Neil the Tubber boarding pass as he was arriving with Sophie four hours before us. He did all the paperwork and paid the security deposit on arrival.

Sunday 8 June – A beautiful cloud-free day

In all, there were sixteen boats: fifteen chartered and one from Cork, Katie and Jim Corbett's *Dóchas* ICC. As we were getting ready to leave the marina for Sivota on Lefkada, where Paddy had booked a pontoon for the whole fleet, we noticed a smell of gas in the saloon. Istion, our charterer, sent three technicians to the boat who declared it safe. We were delayed until 1500, when we made our way south towards Sivota, where I backed *Alkyon* into a berth on the 12 Gods restaurant pontoon with help from Mario, the owner, on the deck. Son Neil noticed the gas bottle was empty, and we could still smell gas below.

The fleet enjoyed their first meal together. We were sitting with Ann and Simon Brewett and Katie and Jim Corbett and their crews. Over dinner it was suggested that the rubber washer sealing the gas regulator to the gas bottle could be missing. This was exactly what the problem was. Next morning Neil was able to buy a washer in a small chandlery, and that sorted the gas issue to our satisfaction.

Monday 9 June – Another beautiful cloud-free day Some members of our crew stayed up chatting in the saloon until 0100. As a result, only Patricia was awake to make the cruise photograph at 0900. The cruise plan was to go to Fiskardo on Kefalonia next, but a harbour berth for the fleet was not available, so the plan changed: we would go to Effimia on Kefalonia first and then back to Fiskardo later. At 1030 the yachts peeled off the 12 Gods pontoon and headed for a swimming location in Kalo Limení Bay. It was a beautiful location. We considered staying the night but in the end decided to go with the fleet to Agia Effimia. There was enough wind to put up the sails, so Patricia enjoyed helming most of the way. We were a little late arriving in the harbour, so I decided to anchor off and eat aboard while making sure that *Alkyon* would not be in danger of fouling another yacht. The crew enjoyed another swim.

Tuesday 10 June – Again cloud-free

Neil took me ashore in the dinghy for a skipper's meeting in Agia Effimia village at 0900, where the cruise was reviewed and planned for the day. Our anchor was raised at 1030 and, with no wind, we motored to the recommended lunch stop at Foki Beach, Erisos. Upon arrival we decided it was too difficult to anchor among all the yachts without tying ashore, so we continued to Fiskardo. This was a remarkably busy harbour. We anchored near the pier where our harbour chart recommended, while we waited for a ferry to leave and free up the berthing place booked for our fleet.

Another yacht (not part of the RCYC fleet) arrived and asked us to tie to the shore. Our anchoring location was correct and, as our stay would be brief, I saw no need to move. They then dropped their anchor extremely far out, and it looked to be over ours. Neil and Sophie swam to their yacht, and the skipper joined them in the water and confirmed that his anchor was set over ours. While in the water he agreed to lift his anchor and let us away when our berth ashore was available.

Simon Bruett was first in, and I went alongside him. He gave perfect instructions on how to berth bow-first to the smaller yachts in the fleet. The larger yachts anchored off and backed towards the smaller ones, so the fleet was stern-to-stern. Simon kindly made concrete block steps to the quay from his boat. Everyone had to cross our boat and then Simon and Ann's to get to land. John O'Connor ICC had a plank from his stern leading onto our stern, so everyone in the large yachts had to walk this plank from John's yacht to ours before finally crossing Simon's yacht. As we were the second-last yacht on the string, we met many people coming and going that evening.

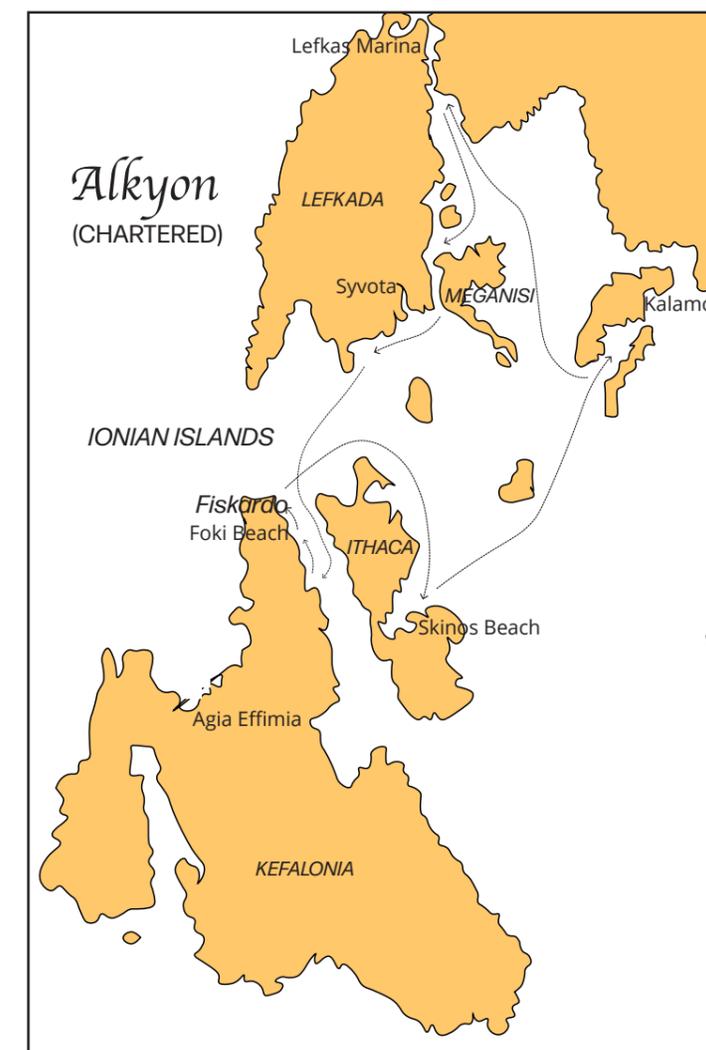
Wednesday 11 June – Clear weather

I attended the skipper's meeting ashore at 0900 while Neil shopped for provisions. 1030 was the appointed time to leave, but yachts started to leave earlier on

the outer group. As we were exiting the harbour, we saw Neil Kenniff's *Imagine*, ICC, at anchor and motored over for a catch-up on Cork news. We then returned round the corner to Foki Beach where we launched the dinghy, and Neil, Patricia, and Sophie swam and explored a large cave. The person in charge of the harbour allowed us to pick up a mooring for an hour.

On leaving Foki we left the north point of Itháki to starboard and arrived at the beautiful Ormos Skinos as most of our fleet were leaving for Vathi. We anchored in the northeast corner of the bay and picked an area of good holding in blue sand near the shore. Another sunny evening encouraged me into the water for my first swim, while Anne enjoyed the scene sitting on the lowered transom, cooling off with her feet in the water.

After dinner aboard, the wind went from flat calm to 15 kn at 2100. Two yachts to the east of us decided to move, looking for more shelter. I started the engine at 2145 and decided that as the holding was so good we would stay, even though in the gusts we would sway about thirty metres from the shore. At



1130 the wind went light again, so we shut down the engine. Anne and I remained on deck until 1200 and then went below. Neil and Patricia remained until 0100, just to ensure everything was fully settled. Rod Heikell's pilot says this area is one of the windiest places in the Ionian in summer.

Thursday 12 June – Again a sunny day

All awake at 0900, so I decided to raise the anchor for the longest passage of the cruise, 18M to Kálamos Port. Halfway there, in almost calm conditions, we gently drifted for a swim to cool down. As *Alkyon* approached the port, John O'Connor ICC phoned to say we could berth just inside the harbour wall behind him, giving us access directly to the quay on the port side rather than stern-to with a plank. We tied alongside with the help of the harbourmaster, George, and John. The whole fleet dined together at George's restaurant that evening. Care had to be taken when walking to the restaurant as the pier was being renewed.

Friday 13 June – Sunny again

Anne and I slept too well and had to be woken by Patricia at 1000, as most of the fleet had departed to visit a final location before returning to base. Neil went to George's for a full fry. Patricia and Sophie used the onshore showers. They returned to the yacht at 1030, and we left the harbour immediately—last to leave. The wind was light, so *Alkyon* motored until our now normal silent drift for a swim halfway back to the marina.

We joined the long queue for the fuel dock, which had to be approached stern-first. There were so many yachts trying to refuel that it was like jockeying for position at a leeward mark while racing. We found

Patricia enjoys our one day of sun



Sophie at the wheel

the crew ashore very efficient, and when our turn came we were away quickly.

On arrival back to Lefkás Marina we were greeted by two staff members of Istion, our charter company, who helped us tie into the berth. We tidied up and started our packing as we were leaving the yacht the next day. That evening we walked to the town for dinner.

Saturday 14 June – Another warm day

Early in the morning we put all our luggage in the cockpit, and the Istion staff came aboard to inspect the yacht. We explained how we had sorted out the gas leak. They inspected the saloon, where we pointed out a dangerous break in the galley counter. Once we were all cleared, we left *Alkyon* for the last time. Neil returned to the charterer Istion's office and reclaimed his deposit while we sat in the shade watching the yacht being prepared for its next charter. I was pleased to see that this included replacing the gas line from the bottle to the cooker. We stayed in the café for an hour more as Neil and Sophie were leaving for Dublin on a late-afternoon flight. Patricia treated us to a taxi for Anne, me, and herself to go to our hotel, where Patricia spent the night. Anne and I remained for a week's swimming, more blue skies, and temperatures never above 30°.

Alkyon covered 92M during our cruise of the islands of Lefkás, Kefalonia, Ithaki, and Kalamos. This one-week cruise was, I believe, the first overseas charter event run by an RCYC Cruising Committee.



Skipper swims with daughter and granddaughter

It was most enjoyable. WhatsApp was used to beneficial effect, with one group for the skippers and a separate one for the fleet. Also, the three 0900 one-hour skipper's meetings ashore during the week contributed to the success. Congratulations to the Admiral, Annemarie Fegan, on her proposal to the members at the AGM of Patrick D'Arcy ICC as Rear Admiral Cruising—an excellent choice.

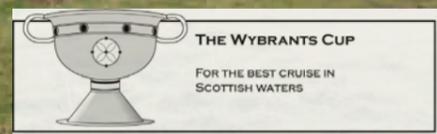
The raft up plank



ABOVE: Anne keeps cool

BELOW: Raft up Fiskardo





Faroes, Outer Hebrides and home to Strangford Lough

Julian and Patricia Morgan

Stunning Mingulay - what a treat!

We left Strangford Lough at the end of June planning to head to the Faroes and return either via the Caledonian Canal, or preferably via the Outer Hebrides. A *Capella of Belfast*, an Allures 45.9, was packed and ready to go. Our friend Johnny was joining us for the trip up to the Faroes. We wanted to do a longer passage, go somewhere different, see some great birds and do plenty of good walking.

We managed to make a pleasingly quick trip up to Stornoway, stopping at Ballyhalbert, Crinan, Lochmaddy and the Shiantas. With some long days and making the most of the tides and winds, this took about two weeks.

We did not wait long in Stornoway for a favourable wind to head north to Vágur, Suðuroy, the most southerly island in the Faroes. We left early and followed the PredictWind passage plan so headed north-north-west, before gybing and heading straight to our destination. As predicted the wind was good all day, died in the evening, and then returned during the night. There was some unpleasant swell early on, but virtually no darkness and the sun shone during the day so it was a pleasant 36-hour trip. We were not sure what to expect on arrival, and the harbourmaster was not answering his VHF radio, so

we moored up against the fishing quay. This seemed the only thing to do. We had notified immigration in advance as per the rules, and forwarded photocopies of passports and various forms via email. Importing alcohol is strictly controlled, and our supplies had been carefully counted. This appeared sufficient and no officials came to see us.

Vágur is a popular stopping point for boats heading to Iceland, but when we were there it was very quiet. We spent some days exploring Suðuroy and did some good walks where we could enjoy the impressive cliffs, and bird life. Local activity by the quay was line caught cod fishing and rowing. We took the bus to Tvøroyri. Not a very interesting place, but we did like the grass roof houses.

Line caught cod fishing boat unloading



From Vágur we travelled north to Miðvágur on the island of Vágar. In the absence of any other information, we attached ourselves to the fishing quay by the fish processing plant. We were to learn that this was to be the norm. Anchoring might be possible but it just did not seem attractive. This was dirty, smelly and generally an unpleasant place to be!

We left the next morning to take the favourable tide north to Vestmanna, on Streymoy Island. The tides are very strong and we found the 'scary red tidal book' lent to us by fellow ICC member James Nixon, and the Rák tidal app essential. By now enormous cliffs and puffins had become normal. We tied onto the fishing quay at Vestmanna. Vestmanna was more interesting with an extensive hydro electric operation, and some good, albeit steep walking. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing the whimbrels which nest on the high plateau. These are like small curlews. We took the bus to the capital Tórshavn. Here, we particularly liked the Old Town and the tiny houses with grass roofs, but decided we didn't want to visit here by boat.

We were hoping for a favourable wind to take us north around the top of Streymoy, but this did not materialise in our time frame, but the tide was, as always, helpful. We headed for Tjørnuvik. This is a spectacular amphitheatre, and given the weather we decided to anchor and had a peaceful afternoon in the sun with arctic terns and fulmars for company. Unfortunately the wind got up in the night and while the anchor held it was extremely uncomfortable. We left early and went across the sound to Eiði, on the island of Eysturoy, where we again attached to a fishing quay. The processing plant here was closed but it appeared that the area was now being used to make up salmon fishing cages.



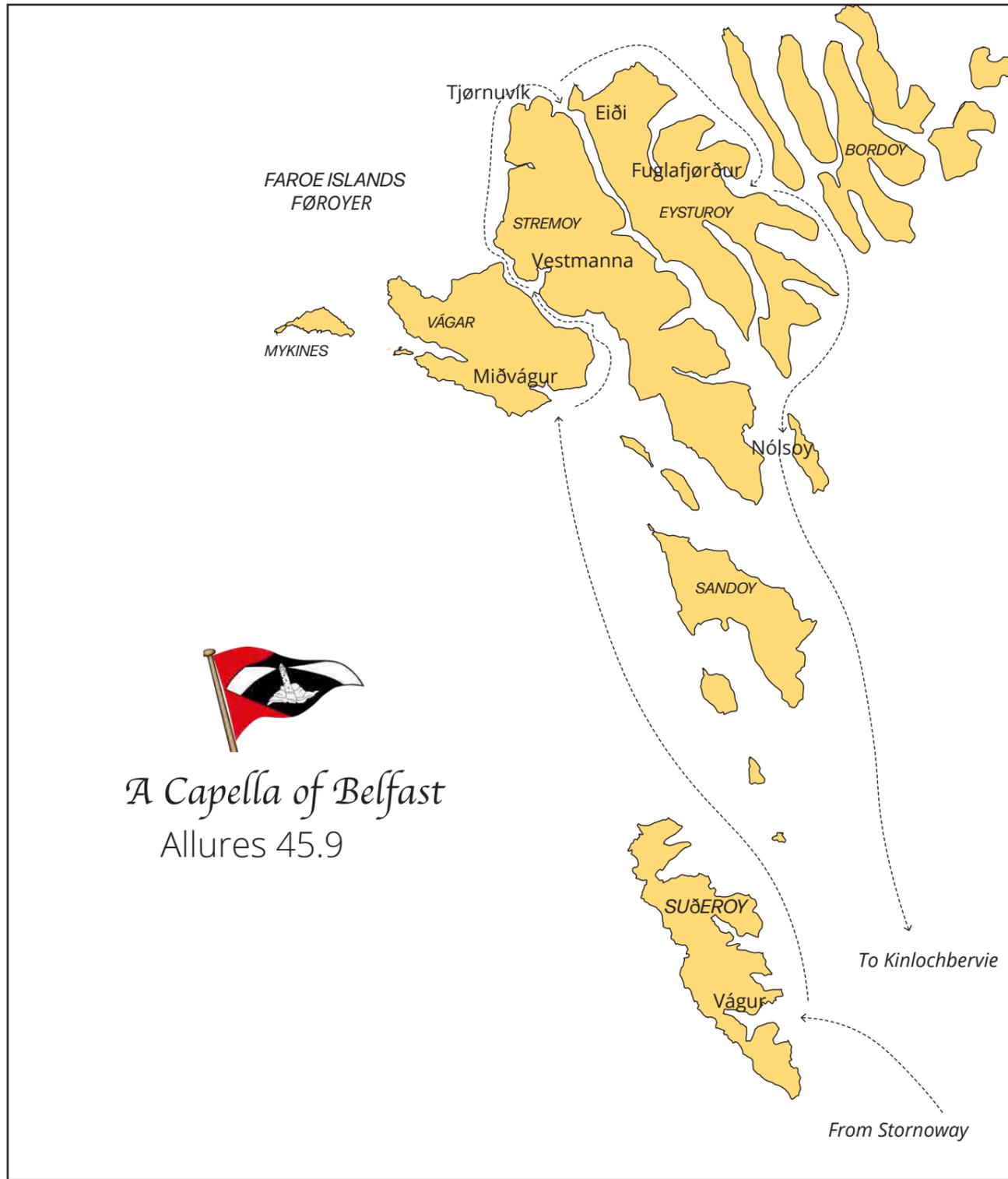
Vágur, Suðuroy

There was not much happening in Eiði so we headed south to Fuglafjørður, on Eysturoy Island. This was a good sail/float with the tide. The high cliffs make any wind very erratic. Fuglafjørður had a bit more about it - a few shops and a restaurant of sorts, but sadly also a huge smelly fish farming food production plant. The weather had deteriorated, and it was raining and very misty.

From Fuglafjørður we headed south to Nólsoy. This is a small island just across from Tórshavn. There was a rare northerly wind forecast in a few days time, and we wanted to be in a good position to make use of this to head home. Nólsoy was delightful. We probably had our best walk in the Faroes, out to the lighthouse and saw some great birds - snipe, golden plovers, whimbrels, arctic and great skuas.

On Nólsoy Island





The westerly and then northerly wind that was forecast did come and we decided to take this opportunity to head back to Scotland. We had a good return trip and arrived in Kinlochbervie, just south of Cape Wrath early in the morning. After a morning boat-shuffle we were pleased to be attached to a floating pontoon.

We reflected on the Faroes. We wanted to do a longer passage and to go somewhere different. We had wanted the big scenery, some good walking and

to see great birds. We certainly had all of that. We found that using fishing quays, the lack of community and facilities tiresome after a while. We hate to complain of the weather but the rain and the cold mist while sometimes very atmospheric is hard work. Scotland felt warm and friendly!

We ended up spending 10 days storm bound in Kinlochbervie. Storm Floris came through, followed by strong south westerlies. There is nothing quite like being stormbound somewhere very remote, and

we will remember Kinlochbervie fondly. The fishermen were very generous and we ate lobster, crab, john dory and halibut. We went to Inverness, a nearly three-hour bus trip and stayed with an old friend. We did some fabulous walking, socialised with our fellow stormbound yachties and did those boat jobs that are so easily put off.

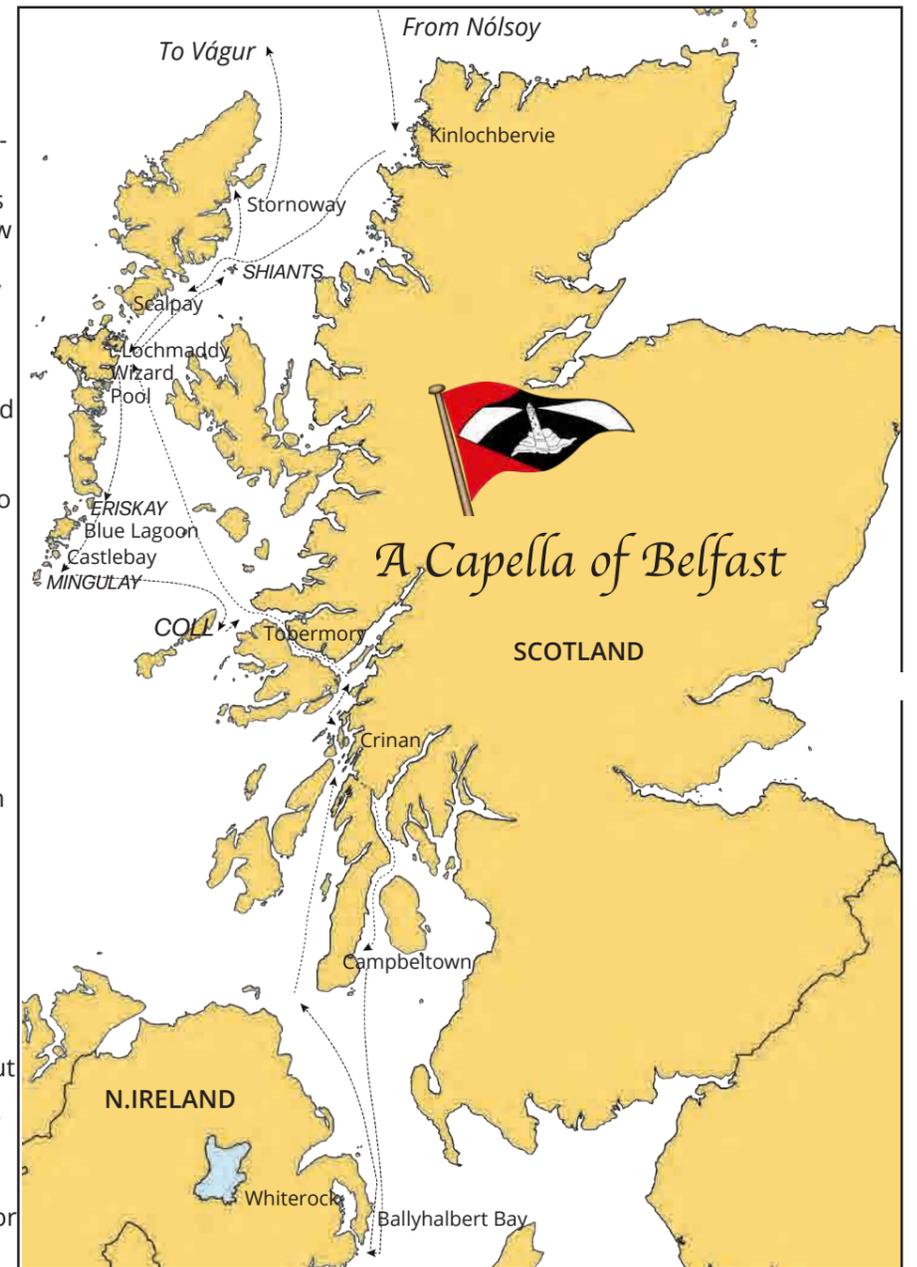
Finally we headed to the Outer Hebrides. We have always wanted to spend more time there and somehow have always been in a hurry, but this time we were in no rush and we had some amazing weather.

We visited Scalpay and anchored in South Harbour. The walk to the lighthouse was delightful, and made even better by the unexpected tea and cake at the lighthouse. A local fisherman gave us some more fish. We then moved on to anchor at Wizard Pool in Loch Skipport, South Uist – stunning scenery, peaceful and quiet, and some great walking. We saw grouse and red deer on our travels.

Eriskay is lovely, but we will forever have mixed feelings about the anchorage at Acauseid Mhòr. After anchoring near the head of the bay, the wind veered and we found ourselves too close to the shore. When we raised the anchor we found that it had picked up a heavy cable. We re-anchored. The next morning when we went to leave we could not raise the anchor. The tripping line was of no help but we managed to drive forward and break out. We had caught ourselves on an ancient fisherman's anchor and associated cables and debris. Thankfully our windlass was up to the task of lifting the old anchor and fortunately the fishermen's' pontoon was free, so we could safely disentangle ourselves. We were relieved to finally leave.

It was a short motor to the Blue Lagoon between Gigha and Hellisay. Antares charts describe the entrance as 'not for the faint-hearted.' We agree, but it is well worth the effort. This was splendid isolation at its best - no 4G, just seals and soaring sea eagles.

The highlight of our time in the Outer Hebrides has to be a night anchored off Mingulay. It felt like the end of the world. Although some tourist boats came



during the day we were on our own for the night, and the feared swell was minimal. The history of these islands, brought to life by the ruins make this a very magical and intriguing place. We were able to motor around Berneray before heading to Castlebay on Barra. The good weather was coming to an end and we wanted to be somewhere safe.

We were storm-bound in Castlebay for ten days, sitting out the legacies of Hurricane Erin and Tropical storm Fernand. We experienced extremely strong winds and relentless rain. Fortunately there is a good bus service and we found plenty to do, and as always with the boating community, it was all very sociable.

After leaving Barra and on our way home, we managed to fit in a stop at Coll to visit some friends, who had just finished a circumnavigation, and then



Cooking crabs on A Capella. We asked for two and were given three

on to Oban. In Oban we were unable to head south with consistent strong south westerlies making life very difficult. Some friends came to join us but unfortunately they had to return home without having a decent sail, such was the weather.

In the end we headed to Crinan and through the canal. This was an unexpected treat. We had a super buddy-boat and despite rain all day, the canal staff were very helpful and cheerful throughout. It worked out well for us and we then had a two day weather

On a beautiful walk from Scourie to Tarbert while stormbound in Kinlochbervie

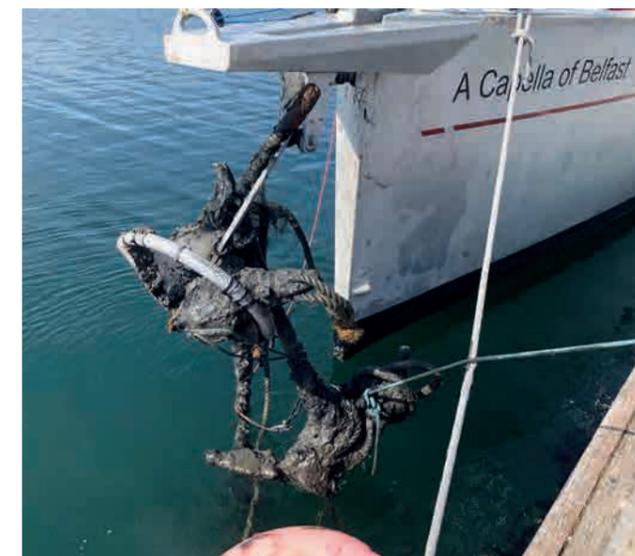


The Blue Lagoon, between Gigha and Hellisay

RIGHT: Our anchor caught up in ancient debris

window to get home. We came through the last lock early in the morning and had a great sail down to Campbeltown. We left the pontoon early the next day and had a long (79M) fast passage all the way back into Strangford Lough. The tide was favourable for entering the Lough and we were on our mooring for supper.

We had a great ten week sailing trip, and are now planning for next year.



BELOW: Storm bound in Castlebay



Gallery



Enjoying the birds on the Shiant



Old Town, Tórshavn



Bound for Nólsoy in the sun

Who doesn't love a night in the Crinan Basin?



Whimbrel flying about Vestmanna



Rounding Bar Pladdy and entering Strangford Lough



Mount Heaval in Castlebay just had to be climbed

Scotland had us beat!

David Beattie



David Beattie, Jerry Dowling, Roger Hatfield, James O'Donoghue and Leo Sheehan at Crinan

Brittany to Kinsale

The year 2025 was to be a gentle year returning to Irish waters with the boat immaculate after a refit in La Roche Bernard on the River Villaine. I had left *ReeSpray* in the hands of one of the yards in that lovely riverside town reassured, after conversations with friends who had used the yard in recent years, that she was in good hands. A list of jobs was agreed with the yard proprietor. It ranged from the replacement of some running rigging, through an extensive list of mechanical, electrical and cosmetic (rust chasing and touching up) work to some woodwork on deck lockers and our doghouse/cuddy. I maintained contact via telephone and email up to Christmas, promptly paid the bill for the running rigging and then radio silence descended. As my spoken French ability is somewhat rusty, I asked a fluent friend to intercede. He too got nowhere.

Thus, it was with some trepidation on 26 May that my wife Aoife (ICC) and I arrived in La Roche in our Land Rover which was jammed full of completed winter maintenance projects, planning to do a clean-up and commissioning in anticipation of the crew's arrival in three days' time. Nothing had been done! Well,

that's not quite true, they had replaced a halyard and the topping lift, but on enquiring why nothing else had been done and asking for our spare keys to be returned, nobody knew 'anything' and they couldn't find the keys! Thus our planned gentle sojourn – you know the scene – a tidy up followed by a good lunch – a little tweaking and testing of gear – followed by dinner ashore, turned into a frantic three-day-long exercise in engine servicing, heads servicing, generator repair (unsuccessful) and so on that was continuing when the crew comprised of three Michaels arrived having been collected by Aoife from Aéroport Nantes-Atlantique. The plan was for Aoife to bring the Land Rover home by ferry and I was joined for the passage towards Baltimore by Michael Pomeroy, (ICC), (christened Mikey for the avoidance of confusion on the passage), an old college friend, Michael Hosford-Tanner, (Michael) who has sailed with me for years and Michael Dooley, (Mick) my racing crew from Lough Ree YC.

We eventually felt confident enough in the practical preparation of the boat (if not the appearance!) to get away early on 31 May, topping up fuel and spare jerry cans at Arzal, then through the sea lock on a rapidly falling tide into the estuary and so to sea. Initially it



Michael Hosford-Tanner, Mike Pomeroy, Mick Dooley and the skipper in La Roche Bernard

was 'Harry Flatters' but by lunchtime having caught the west going tide through Basse de la Teignouse we were able to set 'all plain sail', which in *ReeSpray's* case means yankee, staysail and mainsail, and reach across to Port Tudy, Île de Groix arriving in time for a late supper on board at 2135. On the way we crossed tacks with a traditional Breton Tunnyman. In the morning the joys of being at Groix – my favourite Breton island - were readily apparent. Shelter from the westerly gale that blew all day and left a nasty seaway; oysters (Irish-bred but Breton finished) in the warm embrace of the Café de la Jetée, owned by the always welcoming Erwan Tonnere and run by his wife and family. Erwan is about to be mayor of Groix, following in his father, Guy's footsteps and is closely associated with numerous enterprises in Groix and oyster farming in the west of Ireland. When he sees the ICC burgee he rolls out the red carpet!



Breton Tunnyman

On the following day after a late start (the crew had enjoyed the evening in Erwan's establishment and required unobtrusive encouragement) onward in a

lumpy sea to Concarneau where the delights of the port and old town meant that the crew wanted and deserved a two-night stopover. Mick rediscovered the joys of what he describes as essential re-hydration by consuming 'Duchesse Ann' the splendid local beer. The restaurants may also have been a factor in the duration of the stopover...

Michael Hosford-Tanner, Erwan Tonnere and Michael Pomeroy





LEFT: *Ilen* seen from David Tucker's house, Kinsale

passes we found a berth on the outer pontoon at Castlepark Marina where next morning we were promised a berth. I moved to the fuel berth to fill with diesel following which the offer of a berth was withdrawn. We were lucky to secure the only available town mooring in the river. We were on the home island and could join the *Saoirse* Return Rally (SRR) although farther east than planned.

Conor OBrien's Return Cruise

14 May saw a new crew arrive to partake of the SRR – a superbly organised event ably led by Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore and her multi-talented husband Vincent. I was joined by Cormac O'Carroll (ICC) who came on board having just sailed on *Saoirse* in Baltimore harbour at the start of the cruise in company and by old '*ReeSprays*', namely Alan Algeo, Vincent Rafter and Tommy Sanders. Sally had organised a great drinks party on board *Bubulubus* that was thoroughly enjoyed by all and next morning we paid a visit to David and Meta Tuckers' (ICC) lovely home overlooking James's Fort on the east side of the harbour. It proved to be the perfect vantage point to observe *Ilen* hoisting sail before squaring away for points eastwards. We finally departed for Kilmore Quay at 0100 on 16th, sailed directly to Kilmore arriving at 1715 and squeezed into a berth beside a Cornwall based TSDY (Twin-Screw Diesel Yacht). The Rally dinner that night was in Kilmore village with a minibus service – again superbly organised.

Ilen had been allocated a berth alongside a fishing boat, and the next morning was pinned to her neighbour by the strong westerly. Cormac assisted them in putting out a warp to windward and it was a joy to watch James Lyons's seamanship as he sprung her off without impaling anything with either bowsprit or bumpkin. We had a quiet day and enjoyed the wonderful fish and chips (including a wine offering) at the pierhead takeaway. We left the following morning and endured a variable F3 or less, arriving in Arklow mid-afternoon having

We set off for Baltimore at precisely 0700 on 4 June in a SW2 under main and engine. Through the day the wind increased to a steady F5 and veered westerly giving us a close reach towards Ireland. Visibility was poor but AIS is such a great help except when the watch focusses so closely on the AIS display they omit to look around and thus miss the pair trawling boats not transmitting but getting ever closer in the dark. Skipper's intuition is not infallible. But on this occasion, it roused me and resulted in sharp words and an immediate alteration of course.

The log records the light on Ushant being sighted, and a French frigate passing close astern. By morning we had a NW5 gusting higher with a promise of SW7 later on the Navtex - this is an old but very reliable technology. Of course, it veered rather than backed and soon we were only just laying Falmouth. Anyhow we were making northing and by midnight on 6th, without having tacked we were approaching the Old Head of Kinsale. Entering a port at night after a windward flog with the average age aboard in the mid-seventies replete with all the joys of dodgy eyesight, some fatigue, and much wishful thinking is never easy. Kinsale was jammers, but after several

Cormac O'Carroll helping Ilen spring off



Vincent Rafter busy with ropework

burned some diesel. Then disaster struck! We dined in an adjacent Chinese restaurant and three of us developed food poisoning. Alan was so poorly he had to go home first thing next morning whilst we promptly left for Greystones in thick fog. The following day we were joined by Aoife and by Paul Butler(ICC) for the 'parade of sail' to Dun Laoghaire, all carefully orchestrated to arrive at 1600. Some Dublin based ICC boats, including the Commodore, joined us and a Naval Service vessel powered through the fleet just as we entered Dun Laoghaire. Dinner that night in RIYC was hospitable but the food disappointed.

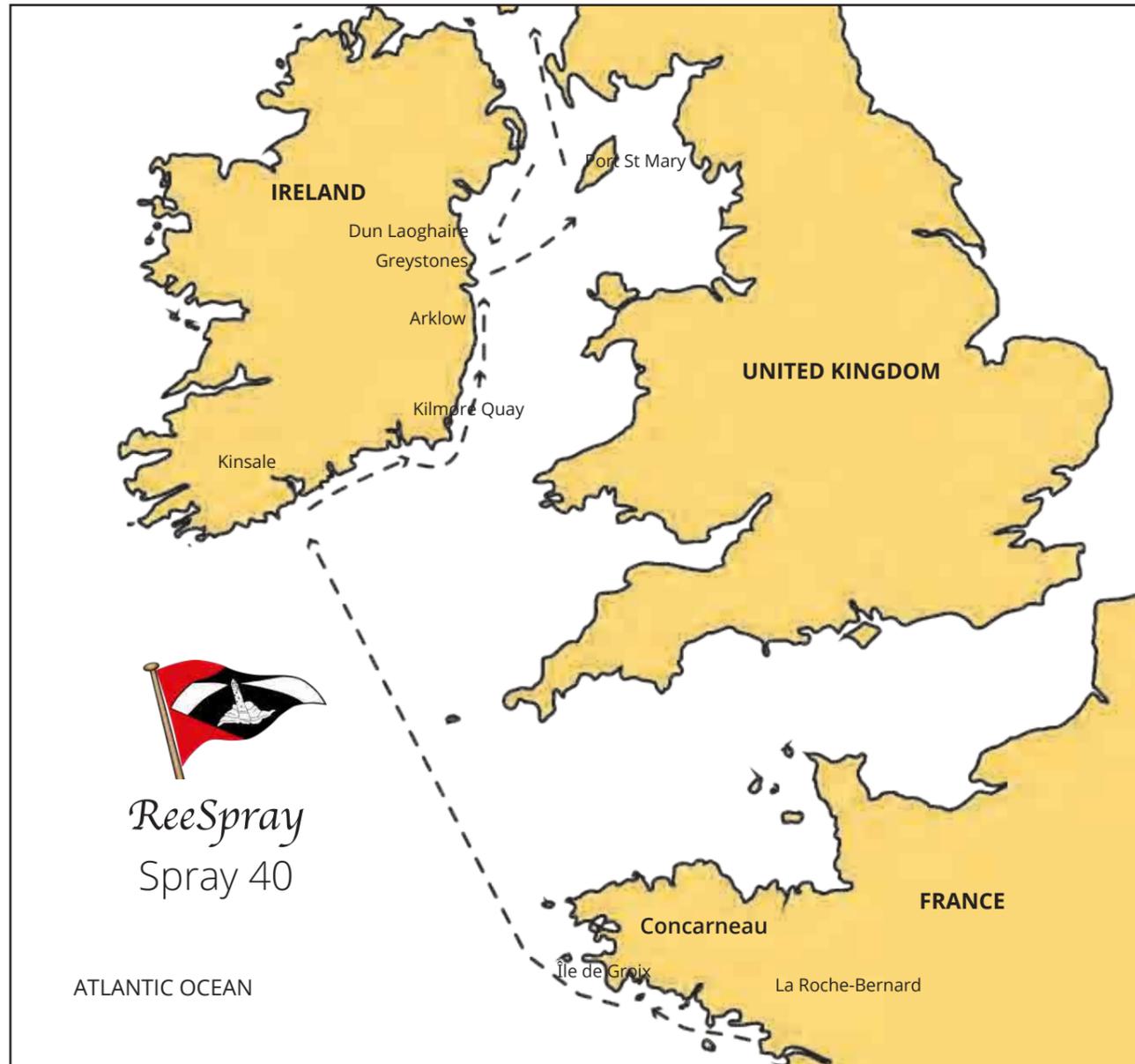
Dun Laoghaire to Oban

A new crew mustered for dinner at RIYC on Friday 11 July. I try never to start a cruise on a Friday so Leo Sheehan, Roger Hatfield and new recruits, past commodore RIYC Jerry Dowling and James

Ilen welcomed by Dublin Bay 21 footer



To /From Crinan Canal



O'Donoghue from Lough Derg YC had a good meal in the 'Irish' in anticipation of a 0530 start on Saturday morning. James's arrival was preceded by the delivery to the boat of his gift of a case of fine wine - a habit that I wish to encourage amongst crew!

The Navtex was offering variable F2-4 becoming E2 so we motor-sailed to Port St Mary, reckoning that 12 July wasn't a good day to arrive in Co Down. Having picked up a visitor's mooring we went ashore heading for the Indian restaurant - very down to earth but excellent by the way - we were passing the Isle of Man YC and heard the unmistakable sounds of a party. I put my head around the door, and we were all ushered in and entertained royally, being unable to put our hands in our pockets for anything. They were celebrating 50 years in their current premises and the party continued in the local pub until late as we were spotted and hijacked on our way home following our Indian meal. Wonderful hospitality!

In the morning, we made a late start catching the tide towards Portpatrick, but as the weather deteriorated and wind headed us, we decided to abandon thoughts of the night there, and indeed of rounding the Mull of Kintyre. We continued up the Clyde, into Loch Fyne, entered Ardrishaig and hence the Crinan Canal. Passage has become much more expensive than it was twenty odd years ago when I last transited, but all locks and bridges are now fully manned. A splendid dinner was had in the, still most eccentric, Crinan Hotel and we left next morning in lovely sunny weather for Ardfern but beating yet again! Departure the following morning was predicated on the tide at the Dorus Mòr but a late start still had us alongside in Kerrera at 1830 on 17 July. Our lines were taken by the Commodores of the Clyde Cruising Club and OCC - there's class! The anchorage and marina were replete with very smart (and big) CCA boats, led by their Commodore- Jay Gowell. Barbara Watson was on hand to welcome us and distribute the 'goody' bags.

Cruising Club of America Western Isles Cruise

The next morning, James, Jerry, Leo and Roger said their farewells and the new crew of Harry Whelehan (ICC), Liz Mullan, Cormac O'Carroll and Joe Conway arrived and we launched into the full-on Cruise in Company, organised with great precision, including even a bugler to remind one of flag times! It was wonderful to meet old friends and make new ones. ICC was well represented and both the Commodore and Hon Secretary attended.

One interesting idea was that the cruise handbook included the usual letters of welcome, navigation notes for the various venues, but also photographs of each participating yacht, its skipper and crew members. This proved very helpful. Following the first supper at Kerrera the next meet up was in Tobermory, then Loch Drumbuie for the RCC organised sunflower. Some yachts did not participate in the sunflower so that the carefully moderated raft up had a few gaps, but all was skilfully handled by RCC vice commodore, Tim Trafford, and his team. *ReeSpray* is notoriously difficult to control in close quarters so we were delighted to come alongside Peter Killen's magnificent *Pure Magic Too* using the lee she created to avoid accidents. All too soon the breeze picked up and the raft dismantled. We attempted to anchor to the south of the entrance to the Loch but our windlass chose that moment to act up so we returned to Tobermory for the night and Joe and I took the thing apart eventually diagnosing stuck brushes. A touch of the emery cloth and all was working fine again.

We then had a gap of two days before mustering at the Talisker distillery in Carbost, Loch Harport. The wind was north westerly but light, with lots of scotch mist about the place. We motor sailed around Ardnamurchan and into Arisaig, where we victualled and took on water. None of my crew had visited Loch Scavaig so we determined to try to spend the night there. The visibility wasn't wonderful, but the mist did lift from time to time revealing the Cuillins and the windlass performed like new. We joined six other yachts in the anchorage and one of them kindly photographed *ReeSpray* at anchor. Underway at 0530 we flogged along the south coast of Skye in poor visibility to Loch Harport and then had a lovely little reach up the Loch to lie alongside *Pure Magic Too* at Carboost. Our Commodore and Judy Houston welcomed us ashore and the distillery visit went very well with a splendid lunch to follow. ICC certainly kept up the standards to which we are accustomed.

The Cruise in Company was then scheduled to cross the Minch to Barra and Vatersay. This would be another noser with fresh to strong winds forecast overnight. Frankly we had had enough upwind sailing so far this year and the idea of skidding around an anchorage with fifty-odd other yachts many with very different underwater configuration to ours



Harry Whelehan and Liz Mullan

(and hence behaviour at anchor) didn't appeal. Having consulted with the crew they agreed and we decided to circumnavigate the Isle of Skye instead, and to rejoin the cruise in company later. We had a delightful and fast full sail reach up the west coast of Skye in overcast weather but enlivened by shafts of sunlight. We passed Dunvegan and gybed around Rubha Hunish, inside Eilean Trodday, hardening up to a close reach as we fetched Eilean Garbh and nosed into Aarseid Mhòr on Rona in the gathering dusk. What a glorious end to a wonderful day's sailing!

In the morning Joe went ashore in the dinghy to pay the harbour dues. When we emerged, he picked up a phone signal and heard, to our sorrow, of yachts dragging and one aground in the outer isles. The yacht had to be pumped out and towed to Ardfern.

Joe Conway and Cormac O'Carroll





Harry tweaking the chute

Luckily nobody was hurt, but a nasty experience. We simply motored over to Portree where having fitted a new alternator belt we sipped pints and dined in the Lower Deck which, despite first impressions, was both good and welcoming.

Next morning we slipped at 0630 and in a light south-westerly (on the nose again!) we potted down the sound, passing under the road bridge at

Kyle of Lochalsh – where a person unknown took a great photograph of the boat and uploaded it to ShipFinder where it graces our AIS details. We came alongside *Ballyclaire* moored off the Duisdale House Hotel just north of Isle Oronsay in time for lunch. It was an excellent lunch – of the standard usually encountered in the company of Viv and Derek White, aided and abetted by Bob Brown and Derek Jones (all ICC).

ReeSpray at Loch Scavaig

The day, and evening passed quickly in a welter of chat, craic and reminiscences. Thus, it was 0830 the next morning when we dropped our mooring but the morning was quickly brightened by visits from porpoises and later many dolphins. Around Ardnamuchan by 1500 we were snugly alongside in Tobermory by 1635 where we topped up the diesel and dined ashore with the *Ballyclaire* brigade – more of the same and great fun.

A quiet night was called for, so I'm afraid we gave the OCC 'pot luck' supper in Loch Spelve a miss and spent the night on a mooring in Loch Aline. It was hard to believe but, emerging from Tobermory, the wind was abaft the beam! Out came the cruising chute for its one and only outing this year – the sun didn't shine but we carried it for all of 90 minutes and then the wind backed 120° and we were close hauled again.

After a quiet night in Loch Aline we had another moored off Heather Island and slipped back into Kerrera for the final cruise party the following day. John Clementson arrived. He was due to join us for the trip home. Unfortunately, that was not to be and he ended up taking a lift home with Liz Mullan who met Aoife in Oban and kindly returned our Land Rover to Dublin.

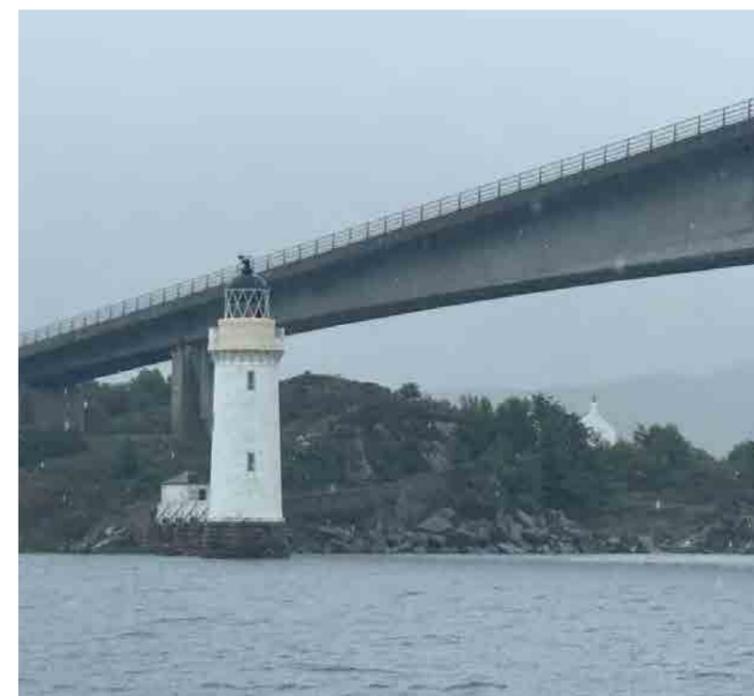
Oban to Dun Laoghaire

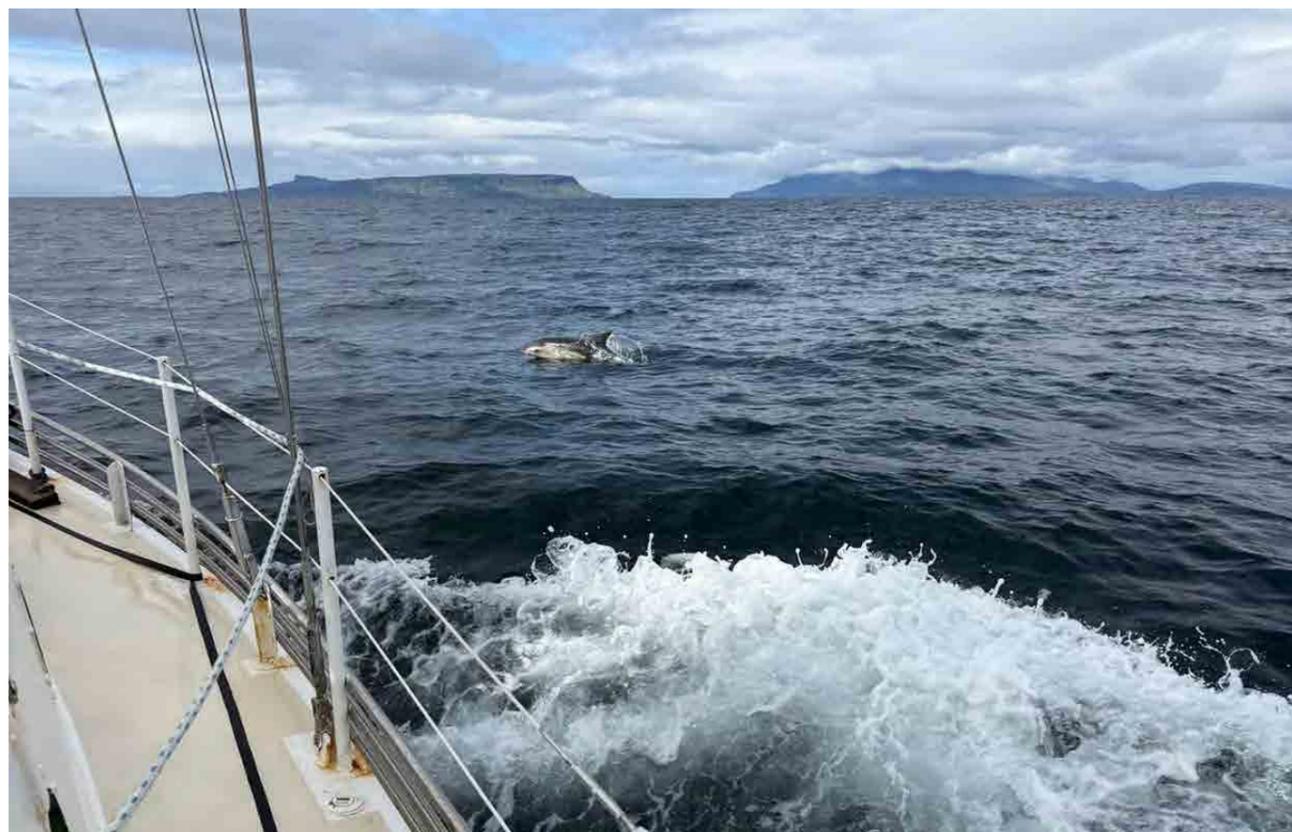
We said fond farewells to our CCA friends and to Cormac, Liz and Joe. I was delighted to have Aoife come on board along with an old school mate – Robert Schouten. Robert is from the Netherlands and still has a traditional gaff rigged, lee board equipped craft. Harry stayed on and we were subsequently joined by Mike Pomeroy (ICC), who having returned *Conundrum* to Dun Laoghaire from the CCA cruise, promptly flew back to Scotland and joined us in Crinan.



ReeSpray off Skye Bridge

Skye Bridge and Kyle of Lochalsh





Visitor in the Sound of Sleat

Aoife meets the locals at Kerrera



I had promised Aoife a gentle two weeks pottering back to Dun Laoghaire with no overnight passages. Sailing south from Oban we were able to watch the third Lions' test on our iPad in the cockpit! It was far from this hi-tech that we were raised! No sooner were we away from Oban than the forecast was for SW 8 occasionally 9 perhaps 10 later – this was Storm Floris. It put paid to my promise to show Aoife the gardens at Gigha and we made for Crinan basin, where we were lucky to get in.

The canal closed to navigation shortly after we arrived because of the wind and we spent four nights in the basin before being permitted to move. The hotel did well! It was so windy they couldn't safely open the doors at the Crinan boatyard. Eventually we escaped down the canal – there being a big residual sea outside the basin that held no appeal.

On the morning of 7 August we locked down into Loch Fyne, aiming for Campbeltown. However, another gale was forecast for later the following day so instead we carried on, keeping up to the Argyll shore aiming to be as far upwind as possible for the North Channel crossing. I had broken my promise of no night passages, but we were alongside in Bangor Marina by 0530 on the 8th.

The northern hospitality was superb. Dinner in Royal Ulster with John and Ann Clementson (ICC) and David Meeke (ICC) and his wife Caroline, then lunch the following day at Clementsons', away at 0700 on the 10th and alongside the Strangford Village pontoon by 1220.

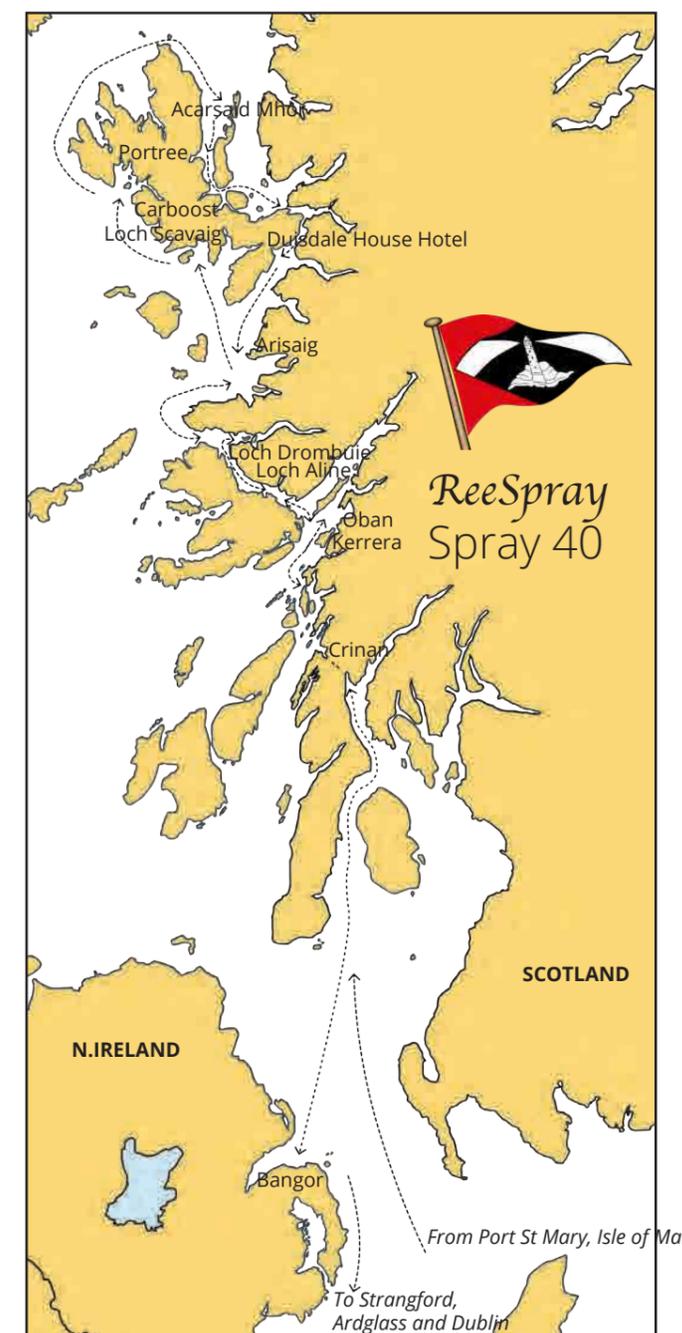
A barbeque at White's home on 11th, lunch on board Julie and Graham Chambers' (ICC) *Bigwig* at Quoile the next day and eventually it was time to head home whilst we still had constitutions!

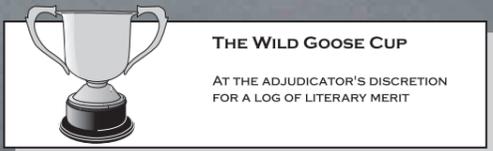
We stopped over in Ardglass for a visit to the golf club for supper then away at 0550 on 14 August into a southerly that prevailed the whole way to Dun Laoghaire where we were tied up by 1800.

Overall, it was a good season. I spent almost nine weeks on board and we covered just over 1600 sea miles. For approximately 80% of that distance the wind was well ahead of the beam. I had thought that last year when the same thing happened en route to Brittany from Kilrush and then pretty much everywhere we tried to go in southern Brittany that I was due some free wind sailing...



Sign in Crinan Hotel





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

**Suvretta's
 100th
 birthday**
 Sam Davis

Glorious running

If you're ever lucky enough to own a classic boat you'll realise that, over and above all the practical stuff, the boat acts as a magnet for you to meet and enjoy the company of all sorts of interesting people,

legends you might otherwise have missed. What follows here is not the typical account of a cruise, but an account of the kindness and characters of many sailing people, all inspired by a boat I'd owned from 1973 to 1993.

That boat was *Suvretta*, a WSOD (West Solent One Design). She was designed and built by Berthon Boat Company in 1924, the first (of the 39 eventually built) to have her keel laid and the second to be launched, hence her sail number W2.

Dimensions: LOA 34ft 5in, LWL 24ft Beam 7ft4in Draft 5.5in; sail area 570 sqft. Tons: TM 6. Now registered as a British historic small ship and qualified to fly the defaced Red Ensign.

A few years ago I was contacted by a couple by the name of Chris and Victoria Preston. It turned out that Chris (who was then chairman of the RYA) and Victoria were the current owners of *Suvretta* and that they were keen to learn more of her past. That in turn led to them visiting me on Conly Island to get my account of all that I knew of her.

Sometime later I was both surprised and delighted to receive an invitation to visit Cowes and the Classic Boat Regatta – the occasion being *Suvretta's* 100th birthday and the centenary of the West Solent class.

The generosity of the Prestons' included not only an invitation to such a prestigious event but also to be their personal guest for my stay. An offer not to be refused!

And so it was that I followed Victoria's directions from Southampton Airport to the Red Jet ferry and on to Cowes where Chris met me and we made our way to their home, practically next door to the Royal Yacht Squadron (RYS) overlooking the Solent.

The weather for that week was forecast to be perfect, as was the hospitality of Chris, Victoria and friends, meeting interesting people and eating out each evening at a different venue.



Chris and Victoria

On the first morning it was a short walk to Squadron Cove where the RYS club launch was ready for boarding, expertly skippered by a young lady. It was a ten-minute passage in and around the marinas down to where *Suvretta* was berthed.

And there she was – picture-perfect in every way, brightwork shining and berthed alongside three of her sister ships. All were preparing to depart for the sail-past of the RYS.

Just before they departed for the sail-past, and while standing beside *Suvretta* taking in all that was going on, Victoria came over and introduced me to one of the crew of another West Solent, a young lady saying, 'this is Sam who sailed *Suvretta* across the Atlantic';

Ready for the sail -past





RYS Cannons

the young lady, looked at me and said, 'you are mad' and I replied, smiling to her, 'yes, fully certified.'

It was only then I realized that it was a well-defined rule of one of the yacht clubs, established in the 1930s, and well before its time, that there had to be one female crew on each WSOD when competing. One of the West Solents was owned by a lady called Claire who was not only a female crew member but was also the owner/skipper and had expert paid hands as crew.

To make sure I didn't miss the action I quickly walked up to the RYS where I was a guest who had been given the freedom to roam at will. I was immediately impressed by the battery of cannons being prepared to celebrate the sail-past.

Preparing the cannons for the sail-past



An official advised me of the most suitable place to stand – so I could capture on camera the smoke from the firing cannons as each class sailed past. And there loading up the cannon was the young lady who had skippered the club launch. It was great to see, at close quarters, the preparation that went into the whole exercise, and to witness the official giving the salute as each class passed and as the cannon was fired. In the excitement of it all my camera malfunctioned, so I missed out on the photos!

With all the yachts actively engaged in racing I decided on a walk around to really get to know Cowes a bit better, and what a lovely place it is with so many antique and book shops, and how many friendly people I met.



Sam and Louisa

When racing was finished I met up again with Chris and Victoria and their crew, Sam and Louisa who had helped *Suvretta* win so much in recent years. The dinner conversation inevitably centred on boats, their owners, their achievements and their provenance.

The following day I decided to drive around the island on a sightseeing trip, racing not being my scene. I passed through Newport, and then on to an attractive thatched village and over to Ventnor on the south-east coast. The area reminded me very much of Ireland's little unspoilt coastal villages some sixty years ago. After an enlightening day, having enjoyed immensely the sights I had seen, I returned to my hosts for dinner: the end of a perfect day.

The following morning saw me down where the West Solents were again preparing for the day's racing where I noticed that one of them had a pine strip-laid deck. This was unusual - it was expertly crafted and a conversation with a bystander revealed he was one of the three shipwrights who had bought the boat and then fully restored it.

My conversation with the shipwright covered a wide range of topics, classic boats and sailors I had met, many from the area around the south coast. We both felt that outstanding sailors of the calibre of Tom Blackwell (of Crosse & Blackwell), Paul Johnston, Noel Bevan, Tony Pickering and several others were at risk of being forgotten with the passage of time. Tom Blackwell, as a case in point, was a destroyer Captain and fought in the Battle of the Barents



All dressed up

Sea. He was on his third solo circumnavigation of the world when I met him in Barbados and had the honour of spending an afternoon on his yacht *Islanderer*, a 54ft G.L. Watson-designed teak ketch, painted in battleship grey with full teak doghouse and decks. He explained to me how none other than Blondie Hasler designed and fitted his self-steering gear, which had served him well. I didn't realise at the time how great a privilege that was, later learning that Tom was not noted for allowing people aboard. I suppose that, like many others, seeing *Suvretta*, a well-known racing boat anchored beside him evoked memories of his time sailing on the Solent. I had passed him mid-Atlantic maybe going a couple of knots faster and had wondered why – he'd struck some semi-submerged obstacle and had sprung a leak. He'd had to reduce sail to allow the pumps to keep up with the ingress of water. He had repairs carried out in Bridgetown. Sadly Tom died in Durban a couple of years later.

Paul Johnston, born on the south coast of England on a Colin Archer design called *Escape*. He himself was the designer and builder of the strip-plank Venus boats. I met him on St Bart's Island where he was building a 32ft Venus, for Lulus Marine. He befriended me, again I think because of *Suvretta*. I accepted and much enjoyed an invitation to sail on his 42ft Venus (designed along the lines of a Colin Archer) which he eventually lost many years later in the Coral Sea. He then built a 38ft Venus which he lived on until his death in Carriacou Island around 2022. Paul built many of these double-ender boats in various sizes. A unique feature of their design was halyard or sheet winches were not required and they were mostly gaff-rigged ketches with a short gaff and no running backstays.

As the shipwright and I continued our conversation it reminded me of the occasion when tacking *Suvretta*

Perfect brightwork



to windward up into Bequia Island anchorage in the West Indies in very light weather under full sail and being approached by a dinghy and the chap shouted over and said that his father said that this was a West Solent and would I join them for dinner. It turned out it was Noel Bevan of *Myth of Malham* fame, and what a time I had with him. His Colin Archer was called *Lista Light* and the last time I saw her was in Puerto Montt, Chile in 2011. She was lying alongside as a derelict and was a sad sight.

I was anchored in Vidgie Cove in St Lucia when Tony Pickering's *Racundra* anchored beside me. The name *Racundra* of course came from Arthur Ransome's '*Racundra's First Cruise*' published some seven years before '*Swallows and Amazons*'. *Racundra* was lost a year later on the Venezuelan coast and Tony himself was lost in a Wharram catamaran while single-handing from Florida to the Med.

Sadly, these legends who made such a contribution to sailing have passed away. My shipwright friend was correct when he said that such people, their achievements and their worth to sailing should be better recorded for the generations yet to come. I promised him to write an account about the people I knew of. I found all the shipwrights that I met quite fascinating, including the one who worked in Lallows Boatyard Cowes where *Suvretta* was maintained every year.

Sailing people don't always get to appreciate the other parts (beyond Cowes) of the Isle of Wight but I was determined to seek them out. I drove down to Alum Bay on the south western point, took the cable car down to the beach and in perfect calm boarded the sightseeing motor boat which brought me around the Needles and back again. Other memorable times included a refreshing pint in

Yarmouth village, a visit to the Maritime Museum (Victoria is trustee and curator), part of which is on the south bank of the River Medina and the other across the chain ferry to the north shore. There I found many unique and unusual craft and was intrigued by the important role played in the Second World War.

In all, the island was relaxing and pleasingly laid-back. I never saw a policeman, traffic warden, bin lorry or any official during my visit, except for the day in the middle of the island, when I did see an ambulance, but that was the only official vehicle I encountered during my stay on the Isle of Wight - officialdom was missing.

Meanwhile the racing had been good, Chris had won races and the prize giving dinner was well organized, well attended and had more trophies and silverware than you can imagine. Not an easy event to follow - but the next day really did surpass it.

And just before the party began Chris presented me with a well-researched book detailing *Suvretta's* history and achievements from her conception to the present day, filled with detail and photos. *Suvretta's* 100th-birthday pontoon party was one to remember. More than 100 guests enjoyed food and drink of the highest order and the dulcet tones of a saxophone on a nearby boat made for a fitting party atmosphere. There were even specially made Margaritas in cans with photos of *Suvretta*, 1924-2024.

It was also the centenary of the WSOD class of which no less than thirteen still survive out of 39 built. Like the River class of Strangford Lough that's quite a record.

The Needles



Peter Brookes, and then by Adrian Riva.

She has since competed regularly in UK classic events, winning class and the Concours d'Elegance at the British Classic Yacht Club in 2016. Since 2020 she has been based in Cowes, where she has been maintained by Lallows, and has continued her racing success in classic and IRC events.

Suvretta is registered on the National Historic Ships Register for small craft and flies the defaced red ensign as a historic yacht. Like her name, her original racing flag is unclear. Lloyds records it as a diagonal red cross on a white background but she was later sailed with an orange 'S' on a blue background.

1924	George S. Burge	Lymington	Built by Berthon WSOD No.2 as Dinah
?	George S. Burge	RLYC & R Solent YC	Name changed to <i>Suvretta</i> as confusion with another Dinah
1925	Mr. Mr Johnstone & Sub Lt. Johnstone		Minutes of WSOD CA
1929	J.M. Clay		Entry in Lloyds Register
1935	J.M. Sebag-Montefiori		
1937	J.M. Sebag-Montefiori	Hamble	Royal Southern Centenary regatta
1939	J.M. Sebag-Montefiori		
1947	Sail Yacht Services	Hamble	
1949	G.W. Robertson	Abersoch	
1962	Smith brothers	Belfast Lough	Moved from Belfast (Royal North of Ireland) to Strangford Lough
	Smith brothers	Strangford Lough	Driven ashore and wrecked
	Smith brothers	Strangford Lough	Taken to Whiterock shipyard
1963	Ivan and Colin Nelson	Strangford Lough	Purchased and repaired by Colin Nelson and freinds
1965	Stoup Carry	Strangford Lough	
1973	Sam Davis	Strangford Lough	Sailed around Atlantic
1979	Sam Davis	Strangford Lough	Damaged in Fastnet Storm
1993	David Wood	East Coast	Recovered from Ireland
1996	David Wood	East Coast	Start of re-build programme by Adrian Riva
2000	Captain Bernard van Dyk	East Coast	Bought by Ben and stored in a barn in Norfolk
2006	Captain Bernard van Dyk		Re-build re-started
2008	Captain Bernard van Dyk		Re-build finished
2016	Tim Yetman	Hamble	Hamble. Winner class and Concours d'Elegance Panurai 2018
2018	David Foster	Chichester	Sat on mooring with little use
2020	Chris and Victoria Preston	Cowes	Facelift by Lallows. Winner Spring Classics and class Hamble Classics

Owners list

I met many fellow sailors there including Harold Cudmore of ocean racing fame who I'd never met before. I also met Peter, the owner of a Solent One Design built in 1890 which was the predecessor of the WSOD, a few feet longer but in great shape. Peter was planning to do the single-handed race to the Azores. I'm looking forward to hearing if he did that and how he fared, I would think he ended up a bit wet.

It was certainly a party I'll always remember. A fitting tribute to a lovely lady of the sea, *Suvretta*, who is now truly in good hands, there can be no doubt that she is looking forward to her next 100 years. With the care and attention that has been given to her the past few years that should be no problem. I was to hear later that she is under the new, but not so new, ownership of Tim Yetman as he was a previous owner of *Suvretta* from 2016 - 2018 when she attained the prestigious Concours d'Elegance award.

Above all it was a week of overwhelming kindness and hospitality from Chris and Victoria who I hope to repay in some way when they visit Conly Island again. It was also a reminder of the special connections between sailing folk everywhere, and an incredible example of how a classic boat like *Suvretta* can make connections and experiences that one will treasure forever.

RIGHT: New owner Tim Yetman



Gallery



Alum Bay



Crew concentration



Green masthead spinnaker

Very special cans for these Margaritas

Maria's cruise around Ireland

Rob Henshall



The sail to Arranmore was to be one of the journey's toughest days weather-wise, covering 55.3M in just over ten hours. The highlight was reaching 8.5kts for a period just north of Rathlin O'Birne. A windy, sleepless night followed rolling on the swell. Bimini off, I prepped the dinghy for towing for the rest of the journey.

The easy 9M two-hour sail under genoa to Gola was delightful with skies clearing a few miles before Owey Sound and the Donegal coast with its islands; golden sandy coves and Mount Errigal backdrop were at its best. I dropped anchor not far south of the pier and as I halted the windlass all I could hear in the dead calm was the croak of the corncrake. It had been over 35 years since I last visited Gola, and then the island had been deserted. I rowed ashore and wandered, enjoying the serenity of the place. I came across a solitary soul, Eddie, resident character, builder, store keeper, story teller etc; he directed me to a house of acquaintances I had. Two of them were in and a lovely early evening was spent chatting over a couple of glasses of wine, and then a glorious sunset in the calm. I slept like a log as if floating on a cloud. Gola's anchorage was blissful, a morning to remember: the sound of skylarks and corncrakes, sunshine, dancing reflections and gulls calling near and afar. I was in no hurry to leave this heavenly place.

I cruised gracefully under motor at 4 knots with no wind. A lone fisherman out of Gola was pulling pots off Inishsirr and gave a joyful wave. The autohelm went on once around the Bloody Foreland. By 1100 only the horn of Horn Head was visible above the encroaching sea mist. Onward to round Melmore Head I followed the shoreline with its lovely beaches, through a huge flock of feeding cormorant, then eastward across towards the Bar Rocks and up to Fanny's Bay, dropping anchor at 1520, an easy 28M under motor. I was exploring Mulroy by water for the first time. Next day I set off under motor and cautiously made my way up Mulroy, under Blaney bridge to Cranford Bay, anchored and chatted to an 'aquaculture' man, then took the strong tide back out of Mulroy at the rate of knots with heaps more confidence than I had entering.

Maria anchored in a lovely sheltered spot just south of Ravedy Island to wait to meet up with my two best friends aboard a 32' Southerly *The Great Escape*. I rowed ashore and walked the headland, took advantage of their headland rounding for photos, and they were safely at anchor before I could return across the terrain to my boat. I invited myself across to theirs for dinner armed with a bottle. The chat flowed with the whiskey. The plan was to sail our boats together to Culdaff and then on to Rathlin. I took advantage while they sailed the direct route to Malin Head for a coastal cruise. From Ballyhoorisky Point to Ringboy Point, across Ballyhiernan Bay to close in to Rinmore Point, around Fanad Head 'till I could see into Pincher Bay, across the Swilly close to



Beginish from the Great Blasket

The adventure appeared to be on track until it came to checking *Maria's* instruments. Her depth sounder was kaput. Lead line on board though! More disappointing, my new autohelm stubbornly failed to commission. Repair would take a month, so my unreliable, underpowered autohelm will have to suffice for calm motoring.

The North

On Thursday 12 June at 0710 warps were slipped from Sligo pontoon. Tide under me I set off down channel out past the recently renovated Metal Man.

LEFT: *The Metal Man*. Indicating safe water to the channel to Sligo

By 0900 the engine was off and *Maria* was careering along under genoa alone. Heavy, incessant rain began. Wind constant such that I continued with genoa alone and frequently reefed to slow her so the windvane self-steering would hold course. The SE6 gusts lifted puddled rainwater from the bimini and dumped it on me.

I arrived bedraggled but safely up Aran Sound and picked up a mooring just south of Calf Island on the second attempt. The end section of my new boathook slipped out and sank before I could retrieve it on my return. Luckily I had kept my old boathook on board.





Melmore Head panorama looking West, South and East

Dunaff Head and onward inside Glashedy Island and in towards the Back Strand at Malin, all parts of the coast I hadn't been close to since kayaking around in 1981.

The wind picked up gusting to 24kts and the approach to Malin Head became pretty rough with 2m seas. Once around Malin the roughness was over and we slid along with wind and tide upwards to and over 7kts. I was gaining well on my friends; hardening up at Glengad Head with gusts to 20kts and arrived ten minutes behind *The Great Escape*, dropped anchor close by at 1345 having had one of my most enjoyable sails covering 32.5M having sailed an extra 6M coastal rock hopping. A feed at McGrory's hotel 2M away was in order. Old boys' legs suffered and after a good feed and pints we asked for help to get a taxi back. None were available so a member of staff, on her very first day at work, kindly offered to drive us back to the pier. What a special service!

On 17 June, I upped anchor at 1040 for the 33M sail to Rathlin with favourable winds forecast. Around 1300 the mainly SW3 - 4 wind died completely, the engine went on in an attempt to reach Rathlin before the tide turned. The wind soon filled in from the NW4-5 and *Maria* surfed along on a broad reach. I arrived off the marina in a big blow, steadily furling the genoa to reduce speed until at the mouth of the marina *Maria* had no sail. She drifted into the calm, came to a halt having been feathered slightly into the wind. Broadside she started a slow downwind drift to the pontoon. Warps and fenders prepped, I returned to the tiller and put the engine into gear

and in one graceful movement we were alongside. I hopped ashore and made fast. I don't always get my docking so perfect; however I was feeling pretty chuffed following superlative compliments from the harbourmaster.

Alan and Roy on *The Great Escape* arrived half an hour later. The following day I said my goodbyes and was a tourist off to view the razorbills, guillemots and a few puffins beneath the West Lighthouse. Later in McCuaig's I bumped into some old friends from Bushmills Outdoor Education Centre from my past outdoor education career.

The East

The wind had turned SE3-4 on her nose and I had a tough beat down to Glenarm marina. On 20 June I motor sailed in light winds out to the Maidens, from where I was able to sail close hauled towards The Gobbins and onward to Bangor marina. There helpful staff guided me to an available finger. I filled up with fuel, did a load of washing, showered to make full use of the facilities and later on a young old friend visited me on his bike for a good chat and a couple of beers.

At 1300 I set off in poor visibility down the Ards peninsula and caught the tide up to Portaferry. I believe inland it was quite a hot day. Not at sea. Two of my sisters and their other halves came to visit *Maria* and me along with a picnic dinner. We dined al fresco on a rather chilly Midsummers Day. Sunday was spent exploring Strangford Lough where I'd seldom sailed before. I anchored off Sketrick Island for lunch and rendezvoused later on David

Faulkner's private mooring in Ringhaddy Sound opposite the 'Blue Cabin'. At 1600 there was a heavy thunderstorm; however it had cleared and the man himself arrived in his lovely old Ark Royal launch for a tour of the 'Blue Cabin' and a few beers and plenty of sail-talk.

On June 23 I had hoped to get to Carlingford, but the winds were getting too strong, so after a long close hauled sail and beat of five hours I motored cautiously into Kilkeel inner harbour as the harbourmaster didn't respond to my mobile phone or VHF calls. Half of the pontoons were empty. They had been vacated for early morning dredging, so had to tie-up alongside a dirty, smelly old fishing boat, having to move three times with boats coming and going. I had to camouflage the wretched smell with half a can of air freshener spray, and with the washboards closed I managed to sleep quite well. There were no further boat movements till 0700. I motored out of smelly Kilkeel at 1200 into S4, a second reef went in as the wind increase F5-6, however the wind veered in my favour and eased to

a fetch at the Skerries on down against the tide to Malahide, arriving 2000, 39M without having to tack. I called for assistance as I knew of tidal issues at the visitor pontoons; however the assistance that arrived didn't take my prepared spring and I bumped *Maria's* bow, only a small chip though to my relief and his apologies.

I found uptown Malahide a bit over-bearing; though pleasantly continental and was well satisfied with an all-day-breakfast washed down with a pint of the black stuff. A short 20M leap to Greystones with wind dead on her nose enabled another visit to a previously unvisited marina. The sailing school was active in the harbour when I arrived as was the club racing, so I called up to the club for a drink and chatted to some friendly sailors.

I departed at 1000 the next day with at last wind with me and with the tide in my favour too made good progress; however by the time I reached Wicklow Head I was fully close hauled. I overhauled a fast looking, black French yacht with reefed black sails

The Maidens in the blue



that wasn't pointing as high as *Maria*. I couldn't lay Arklow, but a timely tack took me down in the easing tide as I approached. I rafted up alongside a Dutch boat, just astern of the French boat that beat me in but not by long! I'd covered the 25M with an average speed of 5.6kn so was quite happy with *Maria's* performance close hauled in the F3-5. I took my Bushmills on board the French yacht by invitation. Their top speed coming out of Dublin that day had been 30kn! Their class of boat was a beautiful modern flying machine, a Pogo 36 called *Blacky*. I enjoyed Arklow, rafted up on the pontoon with French, Dutch, German, Scottish and English boats, and a couple of solo sailors too amongst them. All were holding fast for better weather to continue. A day off with bad winds forecast enabled me to explore the harbour and the town and get my washing and sleeping bag laundered and dried. *Blacky* was trying to head south to then head across to South Wales and I told them of a suitable, sheltered anchorage just before Raven Point.

So the following day, despite the forecast SW 4-5, we set off. It was the toughest day. 38M, a 7.5 hour slog, which became increasingly stressful as the day progressed. A dozen tacks made Raven Point, 3 of which were in the Rusk Channel, two of which were perilously close to the breaking surf in shallows. The wind was gusting to 27kn and I was frequently over canvassed. The sea state, occasionally 1.5m, didn't help progress, though she generally cut through the waves well. On occasion the slam would lose items. Bunk cushions etc. were tossed about below and *Maria's* motions slid open the crockery cabinet above the sink sending its contents flying across the boat.

Two larger boats out of Arklow slowly passed me motoring and I thought perhaps I should give up the bravado sailing and motor too. I briefly lashed the helm and ducked below to start the engine. It was dead. I resumed the helm and fairly stressed-out sailed on. *Blacky* had left well after me and had been ahead through the Rusk Channel and after a couple more hours of hard sailing I could see she had made

Little and Large, Kinsale



anchor where I had suggested. The tree-lined shore gave plenty of shelter and I slowed *Maria* under sail to a stop and went below to retrieve the extension cable to lower the anchor by windlass. Nothing happened, I had no power. On deck I anxiously hailed my French friends that I had no engine and no power. They eventually understood that I needed to tie up astern of them to try to fix the problem. I did so successfully. I was tired, exhausted, frustrated and worried. So, I had a couple of beers and a good feed before tackling my power issues. It transpired that a 'flying plate' had shot across the boat and broken off the lug of the switch for the power to the windlass, but it had done so switching it off at the same time. I turned it on again with a small screwdriver! Partially relieved, I turned my attention to the engine, checked all the battery wiring and terminals and couldn't work it out. I even tried cranking it but to no avail. I cast off from my French friends, assuring them that I'd be okay the next day and would let them know how things transpired. I drifted further astern and dropped anchor to allow them an early start in the morning.

The South

It was a grey, drizzly morning a bit like my state of mind. The wind had dropped considerably. After more diagnostics I found behind the alternator, hidden from view a small fuse case connected to the solenoid. Fuse replaced, I was a happy man again. I was off 1300 in light headwinds, motor-sailed across Wexford Bay and on to Greenore Point from where I sailed around Carnsore onto the south coast. Skies cleared to sunshine and the wind held to take me round the Hook and on to Dunmore East where I anchored close to the moorings. I upped anchor 0820 and away into drizzle that cleared by midday and had a pleasant cruise past Mine Head and Ram Head around into Youghal. I initially anchored off the town but it was very tidal, so moved across the bay to a far less tidal anchorage. Up at 0630 and away having booked into Crosshaven Boatyard Marina primarily to thank in person Judy for her kindness and support re. *Maria's* last few miles assist to Courtmacsherry

with her broken mast a couple of years previous. Secondly I needed to get my genoa No.1 repaired at Doyles. Reaching most of the 20M I had to beat the last 1.5M from around Roche's Point against the tide. Judy was pleased to meet me, and Doyles had my sail back within 24 hours with UV strips, leech line and a few patches repaired. The day off gave me the opportunity to service the engine, give *Maria* a general clean-up, shop, and still left time for a bike ride around Crosshaven and out to Myrtleville Bay for a swim - well, up to my knees anyway, and back for a shower at the Royal Cork by invite!

I was on my way again at 0900. Weather fine for the day, blue skies, but the forecast for the next few days wasn't looking so good. 18M to Kinsale was covered by lunchtime and *Maria* was at anchor opposite the Castle Park Marina looking diminutive close to the massive 54.6m ketch *Marie*. The next three days I was 'storm' bound. I ate well ashore (notably at The Spaniard) and wandered, cycled, met up with old friends and made new friends. A 2.94kg camping gas cylinder was replaced at Mylie Murphy's bike shop, and I took a taxi to get a couple of cans of diesel. I watched a Lions match over a great breakfast in The White House. One evening returning to *Maria* I was shocked to see she wasn't where she should be. She'd dragged anchor across the channel and was bearing down on *Marie* a mere 30m away! I hurriedly motored out and moved her back across the channel and re-anchored closer to the wharf with an extra 5m of chain. On Monday 7 July 0510 I sailed off anchor out of Kinsale onto a broad reach towards the Old Head with a beautiful sunrise behind me and wind picking up NW3-4. Then Seven Heads, Galley Head, and Toe Head. With wind dropping we slipped inside Kedge Island onward to the wonderful anchorage of Horseshoe Harbour on Sherkin Island. Arriving at 1230 we'd covered 41M and I felt fresh,



Rob enjoying a pint on Sherkin Island

the day was still in front of me. I got back to the boat at 1800 having spent a sun drenched, but windy afternoon, with a visit to the Jolly Roger, and then a cycle on every track on the island.

I lifted the anchor 0710, well, almost! The chain had jammed in the windlass so I lashed the anchor and the last 2m of chain. Reefed, with the wind gusting over the back of Sherkin and Cape Clear I made my way out through the drizzle toward where the Fastnet should be. To my delight two fin whales surfaced close by; however at the exact same time my anchor dropped its lashing and I had to go forward to re-tie. Around the Fastnet for a few selfies and then sailed on toward Crookhaven where the sailing school was running a number of chaotic races in very blustery conditions with the moorings centre of their

Horseshoe Harbour, Sherkin



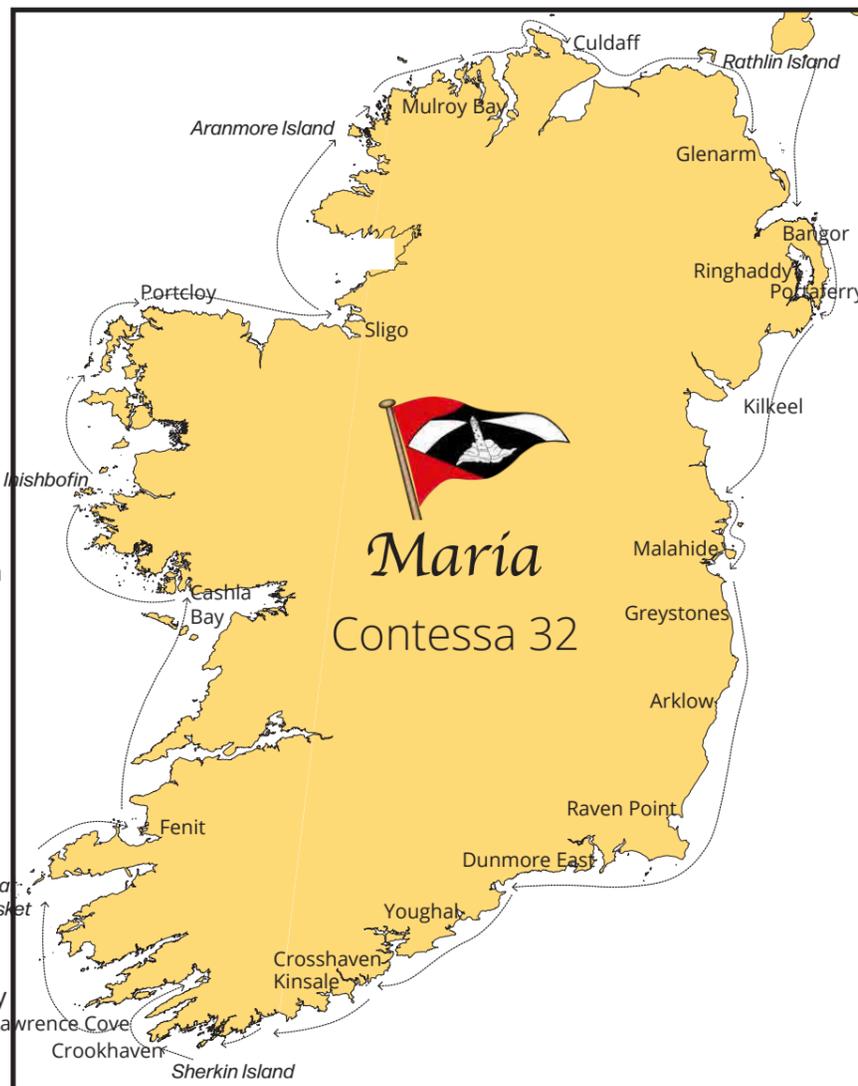
course. I motored up and managed to pick up an available mooring. It was only 1045 and set about disassembling my windlass whilst amused by multiple collisions. With my old teaching hat on I gave many instructions regarding the collision regulations and advice on better sail trim, some of which was gratefully received and other advice ignored! Chain freeing took over an hour but eventually with a lot of hammering on improvised levers it became free. I took a blustery walk to Galley Cove, visited O'Sullivan's bar before motoring back out to *Maria*. The wind was howling down Crookhaven up to 26kn. I fitted anti-chafe to her mooring lines before an early night.

The West

I cast off 0540 into a beautiful sunrise. Following a bumpy ride around Mizen Head bottlenose and common dolphin escorted me into Dunmanus Bay as if to welcome *Maria* and say 'we haven't seen you here before' and shortly after two Cuvier's beaked whales surfaced very close. (This is a rare sighting in Irish waters, and tragically there were many stranded in the months to come on the Irish and Scottish west coasts). I motored into Dunmanus Harbour in a dead calm to view the castle, and then across the bay to Ahakista to anchor for breakfast 0940 in Kitchen Cove. Before I could get the kettle on I was invited on board the McCann's boat *Earendil* out of Kinsale for pancakes and coffee. I departed at 1130 after much chatting about Sailability.

By the time I rounded Sheep's Head the wind filled in W3-4, I shook out the No.1 alone and had a lovely

And around the Fastnet



sail NE across Bantry Bay to Lonehort Point. In two tacks in blustery conditions I was in Lawrence Cove Marina. I have to say it is the best, friendliest marina in Ireland with everything on your doorstep. I fuelled up, had my washing and drying complete, water filled, showered and had my bike on charge in no time at all. Sean Norris, ICC out of Schull welcomed me when he saw the burgee and I was later to meet him again in Fenit. Once charged I was off around the Rerrin Loop for a cycle to take in the views and history of the place.

The next day I had planned to sail up Kenmare then to Valentia to visit the diminutive Church Island; however aware my time was limited, I set off 0640 10 July and motor sailed beneath heavenly sunshine for the Great Blasket 56M away via the Great Skellig. I was through Dursey Sound 0920. The Skellig was open again to tourists. I counted 12 boats, where in the past there may have been only four, though not all were landing tourists on the island. Another visiting yacht relayed to me that they had been told firmly that only those on boat tours could land. Having motored around the island I begrudgingly departed 0130 toward the Blaskets. Dolphins, puffin rafts, gannets and a lot more dolphin visits all day filling the soul, breaking the tedium of motoring. I



The Three Sisters, Ballydavid Head and Brandon Head in the morning light.

dropped anchor off the beach at 1720 after ten hours of motoring. The silence was deafening. I rowed ashore to the small landing place, glanced back at *Maria* as a huge bottlenose dolphin leapt beside her. Some folk ashore asked if I had just seen the minke whale beside my boat! I walked and talked to the few folk that were on the island, not many. July 11 0610 I lifted anchor without disturbing too many of the 100's or so seals on the beach and slipped away west of Beginish broad reaching in the light S3. It was a beautiful morning accompanied occasionally by groups of dolphins. The morning light over the Three Sisters was spectacular. The wind dropped just before Sauce Creek so motored across Brandon Bay to Illauntannig. I dropped anchor 1130 and rowed ashore for a walk and to view the Early Christian monastic site. The wind now behind me I set sail across Tralee Bay for Fenit marina. Another early start 0500, spectacular sunrise and opposing full moon introduced another stifling hot day. The wind was variable in strength and direction, but managed to keep her sailing past Loop Head towards Gregory Sound where it became too light so motored across to Cashla Bay, Rossaveel 1700. 64.4M in 1145 hours. A great day's sail, mostly!

I left Cashla Bay at 0740 and the sky had a bit of foreboding about it. A change of weather was on the way. I broad reached to Golam Head followed by a series of long gybes through the Inner Passage to explore. Through Macdara Sound toward Gorteen bay, into Dog's Bay then out towards Slyne Head. I was really enjoying the navigation and coastal 'rock hopping' until *Maria* and I came to a shuddering halt in chartered 'white' not far off Priest's Rock. We had hit solidly and grounded on an uncharted rock at 4kts. Her mast and rigging shuddered violently and I shot forward and were caught by the mainsheet. Fortunately *Maria* pivoted around, gybed and sailed herself off! Shaken but unharmed we sailed on cautiously and put the engine on for Joyce's Sound and furled the genoa. With an hour of flood under us the pass wasn't too daunting except for a lobster pot right in the middle of the exit with metres of excess rope! Wind astern we progressed with a few more gybes to Friar Island. I had seen it coming and thought it would avoid us, but the heavens opened a torrential thunderstorm. In shorts and T-shirt I didn't bother with my waterproofs as torrents poured off the sails and boom. Two miles short of Inishbofin I put the engine on and put the boot down! By 1700 the rain had abated, and the anchor was down close to three other boats in the bay. With dry clothes on I put the engine on the dinghy and motored ashore for a feed and a pint in Day's pub. There followed two days off with strong winds forecast. They were enjoyable days, meeting the same folk on numerous

occasions on different parts of the island. I think I re-anchored three times, first due to the other boats I was close to being too close for comfort, then *Maria* dragged in the wind. Finally having repositioned *Maria* a little bit too inshore I was awoken in the early hours to her keel bumping and resting at about a 20 degree angle, which despite the initial realisation that I was aground, gave a blissful angle for a couple of comfortable hours sleep until the tide rose again. I moved her to deeper water in the morning. 5G wasn't available in the anchorage so a lot of the departure delay time was spent in Day's pub studying the Predict wind app!

I left Bofin 0620 16 July through Ship Sound by Inishshark, and set sail and windvane for the long crossing to Achill. By 1100 I cleared the confused seas off the Achill Head and I was on a gentle broad reach towards Duvillaun excited about landing on the Inishkeas for the first time. It was a good 'dolphin day' too. I anchored off Inishskea South at 1300 and took a couple of hours walking the island, exploring the old ruins and chatting to the Marsdens, who had a boat in Sligo at Rosses Point and were renovating a cottage on the island. The next day, visitors had left, as did the Marsdens, and I had the island to myself. Alas, I too had to push on gratefully and gracefully at 7.5kts on a flat sea and eventually close reaching 6-7kts across Broadhaven. I put the engine on at Buddagh Rock and motored into Portacloy Bay to drop anchor off the pier having sailed 58M. There was a good forecast wind-wise for tomorrow but unfortunately it would be raining too. I was happy, though sad to be soon finishing. I had had a great day. To catch the tide I had my earliest start 0400. July 17, it was still dark, wind SSE3-5. I thought I'd be on a close reach for the last 47M; however it was a tight last sail and hard work. Squalls off the land to 25kts kept me busy. Once past Downpatrick Head the rain began, increasing rain and squalls crossing Killala Bay but eventually abated off Easkey. The Metal Man was soon in sight. Trusty engine fired up for the last time *Maria* glided her graceful lines up the channel to dock at the Sligo pontoon marina at 1310. The West had been the best by far. Best weather, best scenery, and above all best potential for further adventure. No need to go around again. That was my sixth circumnavigation, solo circumnavigation number five. Enough of that. But to the west I'll be back again on-board *Maria*.

Summary

I believe Ireland is reckoned to be a 700M round trip or thereabouts. *Maria* logged 955M. She was away with me for five weeks and a day, 28 days of which were sailing and exploring days, and 8 were days at rest with poor unfavourable sailing weather.

Gallery



Illauntannig Island, an early Christian monastic site



Ahakista (Kitchen Cove) after pancakes



Sunrise over the Sovereigns



RIGHT: The landing place at the Great Blasket

Loop Head falling!



Little Samphire Island just before sunrise



Panorama of the Inishkea Islands



A calm Dunmanus Harbour and castle



The Three Sisters, Ballydavid Head and Brandon head in the morning light



Cruising Denmark, Kiel Canal and Eider River

Jarlath Cunnane

Copenhagen

Gieselau Canal entry

On the 18 August, I arrived at night by plane in Copenhagen to join *Sheeaun*, Louis's Southerly 47, for the next stage of its European Odyssey. With me were Maeve and Louis Keating, and their friend Orla. Over the last couple of seasons *Sheeaun* had cruised Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and now Denmark. Louis and I spent the next day preparing for a two-week cruise, while our hard working crew women stocked up, and explored the shops of Copenhagen. With everything shipshape, we had a pleasant short sail south past the spectacular white chalk cliffs to Køge and the marina of Mons Klint. This area is now on the World Heritage List and well worth a visit.

Vordingborg, on the island of Zealand was our next destination, and here our nerves were tested while attempting to berth in the windy conditions. The only available berth was occupied by a double-parked Ovni 47. The owner eventually grudgingly moved forward to allow us in, though not without our firm persuasion and help. Thankfully, this unhelpful

attitude is rare, and most mariners will willingly assist. Once secured we explored this important medieval town with its old castle and gardens. The town has a rail link to Copenhagen, which was one of the reasons for our visit. Sadly, Maeve and Orla had to leave us here to resume work back home, and Michael Brogan (ICC) joined us. The Kingdom of Denmark incorporates over 400 named islands, most interconnected with spectacular bridges. Navigation can sometimes be very tricky in shallow channels while avoiding low overhead bridges.

With Michael established as new volunteer cook, we sailed under the gigantic 50 span Storstrøm bridge, with the new cable-stayed bridge under construction nearby. An interesting sail in shallow channels brought us to the island of Femø and the marina at Femø Havn. Here, while out walking, Michael 'lifted' some corn on the cob growing in the nearby fields. In payback for his crime the corn proved inedible no matter how long it was boiled. It transpired the



Orla and Maeve in Copenhagen

corn was animal feed and not suitable for human consumption. Later we served Michael some mouth-watering corn without telling him it was Aldi's best and he is still trying to work out our secret method of cooking!

A fast sail brought us to Langland island where we overnighed in Spødsbjerg, an old fishing and tourist town. In sunny weather the next day, we had a pleasant sail to Laboe Marina near the entrance to the Kiel Canal. The huge marina was crowded despite the numerous other marinas in the area. In the morning we visited the old town and stocked up with food in preparation for the Kiel canal.

Kiel Canal

The Kiel canal also known as the Nord-Ostsee-Kanal (NOK) is approximately 98 kilometres long, was constructed between 1887 and 1895, and has since undergone several widening and deepening projects. It is a busy waterway linking the North Sea to the Baltic Sea, with over 30,000 vessels passing through it annually.

After paying the transit fee at the office on the north bank, we got a green light to proceed and entered the canal lock at the eastern end at Kiel-Holtenau. The lock has a sliding regulating lock gate, we were

surprised that the lock lowered us by a mere 300mm. In the huge lock we were accompanied by a couple of large ships and twelve yachts, once through and into the canal the ships and yachts dispersed at their different speeds.

Whilst the canal was wide and with considerable signs of industrialisation, in general it had a rural appearance not altogether unlike the Shannon. By evening we arrived in Flensburg a shipbuilding town located in a quiet backwater off the canal, where we overnighed in the marina.

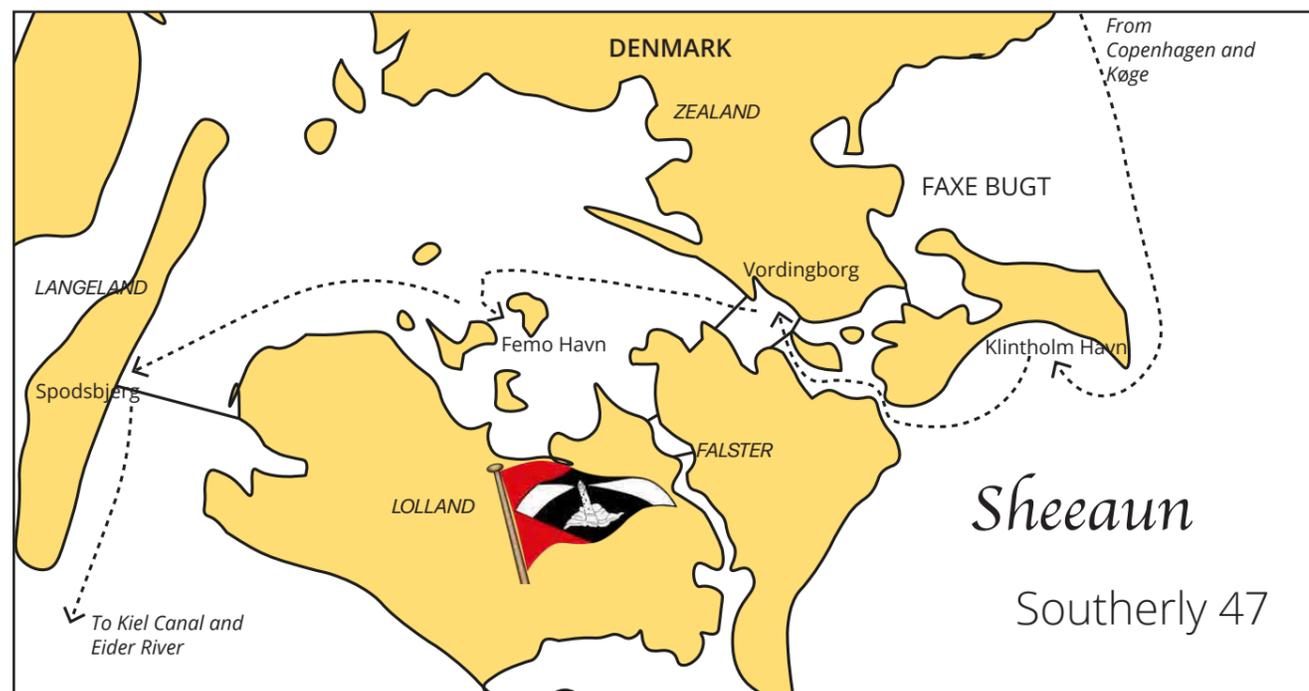
Eider River

Looking at the charts we decided it would be more interesting to divert off the Kiel canal and take the more scenic (though longer) route through the Eider river.

The short 2.9km Gieselau canal, which was completed in 1937, links the Kiel canal to the Eider. The Eider has five locks and four bridges. A phone is essential to call ahead to notify the lock and bridge-keepers of time of arrival. Careful planning is required to co-ordinate lock and bridge openings to arrive at the North-Sea exit lock at high tide, and take advantage of the outgoing tide in the estuary's channels.

Louis and Jarlath, Kiel Canal





Sheeaun entered the Gieselau lock which raised us up about two metres to the summit level of the Eider river. We had a short wait while the bascule bridge was raised and a downward bound yacht exited. The Eider meanders slowly westwards, passing lush green banks and quaint villages on the river's very contorted course.

The low embankments gave a great view of the countryside, with Holstein cattle and sheep grazing in the lush agricultural fields. At Rendsburg a spectacular rare transporter bridge spans the Eider. The railway crosses at high level, on the photo the train is barely visible on the top left, which gives a sense of scale, and underneath a gondola is slung at low level which traverses with cars and passengers, while leaving high clearance for ships.

For Michael, with his interest in birdlife, this river was his fascination, huge flocks of brent geese and greylag geese abounded with sightings of the occasional eagle, buzzard, ducks, curlew and marsh harriers. Despite the river name, eider ducks, being a sea bird, were not sighted till we sailed out into the sandy estuary of the German Bight.

We had an 0600 start on Saturday 30th to get through Nordfeld lock. Having got through we then had to wait till evening for next lock opening - the locks have limited opening hours. While waiting, *Sheeaun* was secured to the quay wall in Friedrichstadt. This charming town is reminiscent of Holland and with good reason; the town was founded in 1621 by Dutch settlers who were invited here for their expertise in reclaiming fen and marsh land in the vicinity of the town. Canals and dykes abound. Dutch became an official language. The old town provided an interesting sightseeing interlude while awaiting lock and bridge opening in the evening. Once through the lock we motored the short distance to the town of Tönning, the last town before the sea.

There, moored to the quay wall, we dined in a café conveniently located nearby, while downstream a Phil Collins concert blared loud music with dazzling lights. Afterwards we entertained some curious sailors aboard, with Michael giving a rendition of some traditional sean-nós songs.

In the early morning, taking advantage of the tide, we proceeded through the Eidersperrwerk Sea Lock and flood barrage out into the North Sea's estuary's tidal flats in the sandy navigable channel, sailing towards Helgoland.

The massive Eidersperrwerk storm surge barrier was completed in 1973 at the Eider river mouth to protect the inland area from flooding. The estuary channel demanded very careful navigation; in fact, despite our care we touched bottom. Fortunately *Sheeaun's* lifting keel was raised quickly before any harm was done. This was pure Riddle of the Sands navigation. We had a fast sail at over 10kts with strong wind assisted by the tide, and were very happy to get shelter inside Helgoland's massive protected harbour walls, and secure to a pontoon.

Helgoland

Helgoland (or Heligoland) is a small group of islands in the North Sea with a very interesting history. Unlike the sandy east Frisian islands to the west, Helgoland is composed of red sandstone with spectacular rock formation.

Helgoland was controlled by Denmark from 1714 to 1807, when Britain captured Helgoland during the Napoleonic Wars, and controlled it till 1890. It was then ceded to Germany, through the Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty, swapping it for Zanzibar.

Maybe Donald Trump was inspired by this deal in his plan to buy Greenland! Heligoland is located 70 km from the German coastline and actually consists



Mick and Louis enjoying sundowners

of two islands: the triangular-shaped main island to the west with a population of 1,650, and the island of Düne in the east.

Helgoland played a significant role in world war two. The island was heavily fortified, with naval and air defences and submarine pens. In 1945 British forces captured the island. After the end of World War Two, the submarine pens, coastal batteries and tunnels were all blown up by the Royal Navy, using 6700 tons of surplus explosives. The massive explosion marked the end of Helgoland's role as a military fortress in the North Sea.

The island's duty-free status now brings ferries with thousands of visitors daily from mainland Germany, who come to admire the wildlife, seabirds, beaches, trails and iconic rock formations. By evening all the visitors have departed, the duty-free shops are closed and the streets deserted. The island is now a base for the many work boats servicing the offshore marine industry.

Bremerhaven

On 1 September, we awoke to heavy rain, and set sail towards the German mainland and the city of Bremerhaven, where Louis had arranged to lay-up *Sheeaun*. Despite much shipping and a traffic

separation zone, the passage went smoothly. The rain cleared later as we entered the lock through the flood control barriers and into Germany's second longest river, the Weser. In the harbour basin we were delighted to meet again our old friends, the Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise*, which we last met in Northern Greenland in 2001.

We secured *Sheeaun* to the harbour wall while concluding arrangements for lift-out and winter storage. The sails were removed, folded and stored below, and we cleaned our ship, winterised the machinery, and removed all perishables. Satisfied that everything was ready for winter we took a taxi into town for a meal, only to find that we were too late - everywhere was shut; apparently Germans go to bed early.

The two weeks passed quickly, the sailing was glorious and leisurely, the weather excellent for the most part. I can truly say this was my most enjoyable cruise ever, thanks to Louis and Maeve and crew who took great care of their senior passenger. I look forward to reading Louis's entire log - this may take some time as he has quite a number of countries to visit yet before the European circuit is complete.



A Summer-long Rally: Azores to Vigo via Scotland

Alan Markey



Moonstone Photo by Andrew Armstrong HQ

I had always planned to take part in the Cruising Club of America (CCA) Western Isles Rally, intending to depart Howth in mid-July to join the event. However, plans changed for the better when I received a very kind invitation from Jay Gowell, Commodore of the CCA, to join him aboard his beautiful Tayana 52, *Moonstone*. As a result, my rally adventure began much earlier than expected in the Azores in early June and concluded in Vigo in mid-August, turning the rally into a summer-long event.

Passage Ponta Delgada to Dingle

I arrived in Ponta Delgada late on 3 June 2025, after a long transfer in Lisbon. As it was my first time in the Azores, I arrived a couple of days early to explore São Miguel prior to our planned departure. We spent the next couple of days conducting last-minute maintenance checks and provisioning for the passage. I managed to squeeze in a couple of tours, including a jeep tour around the crater of a volcano. The scenery was amazing and reminded me of the west of Ireland.

On our final evening, we met Kirsten Neuschäfer, recipient of the 2023 CCA Blue Water Medal. She was awarded the medal for winning the 2022 Golden Globe Race, single-handed, non-stop around the world. In addition to her victory, she famously rescued fellow racer Tapio Lehtinen in the Indian Ocean after his boat sank. We spent a great evening with Kirsten and her crew Tommy, who were double-handing the delivery of a rare 1969 Gallant 53, *Aglaia*, to the Clyde. Kirsten shared amazing stories about the Golden Globe and was a remarkably understated character.

After much discussion about weather, we decided to depart on 7 June at 1830 despite a slowly eastward-moving high-pressure system that promised light winds for the first couple of days. Our crew included Jay, myself, and Phil Thorn, a CCA member and Jay's long-time crewmate. Phil completed the full 5,700M passage with Jay on various legs from Rhode Island to Oban via Bermuda, Antigua, the Azores, and Dingle. Our routing took us NNW for two days; we motored 240M until we crossed the ridge of high pressure. The wind then backed to the SW and strengthened to F4-5. *Moonstone* was in her element, and we made good progress towards Dingle. We enjoyed favourable conditions for the next few days, only having to motor-sail again as we approached Ireland and the wind dropped. We arrived in Dingle at 1030 on 15 June, completing the 1,260M passage in seven days and 16 hours. This resulted in an excellent average speed of 6.8kts, especially considering the slow progress during the initial 48 hours.

After some sleep and a tidy-up, we had a great evening in Dingle, visiting the various haunts, including Foxy John's, part hardware store, part

pub and part music venue, a must for any visitor to Dingle. I reluctantly left *Moonstone* the following morning. Jay's wife, Elizabeth, rejoined the boat, and they enjoyed a pleasant sail up the west coast of Ireland and across to Scotland.

Meanwhile, Barbara Watson (ICC and CCA) had set up a WhatsApp group for the Cruise, and we received regular updates from boats heading to Oban, including those still crossing the Atlantic. CCA Vice Commodore Chace Anderson aboard *Bonnie Rye* and CCA member Carol Harrington on *Ice Bear* did a cruise in company from Rhode Island directly to Crosshaven, where they were welcomed to the RCYC by Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore. After a couple of days of R&R, they began making their way up the Irish coast and arrived in Howth on 9 July in glorious sunshine, where Donal Gallagher ICC Hon. Sec. and I were there to take their lines. That evening, Helen and I hosted a wonderful cocktail party aboard *Altaria*.

The CCA Western Isles Rally

Howth to Kerrera

We postponed our departure for Oban until 15 July to take advantage of more favourable winds. Aboard *Altaria* was Stephen Harris (ICC), a good friend and long-time neighbour. Helen planned to join us in Oban for the first weekend and the start of the Rally. We left Howth at 1230 in a WNW F3-4 in showery conditions. We sailed and motor-sailed until we were east of the Maidens, then caught a favourable tide all the way to the Mull of Kintyre. We arrived at the pontoon in Gigha at 1345 on 16 July in beautiful sunshine and tied up alongside a large French

Altaria crew enjoy an evening of cocktails with our US friends from *Bonnie Rye* (CCA) and *Ice Bear* (CCA) at Howth





Wonderful lunch courtesy of our French friends in Gigha catamaran, whose crew were barbecuing freshly caught mackerel. As soon as we tied up, their skipper arrived with a plate of mackerel for our lunch—wonderful hospitality! Later that afternoon, Donal Gallagher, who left Howth after *Altaria* on *Catalina*, arrived. We had pre-dinner drinks and a swim off *Catalina*, in Mediterranean-like conditions followed by an excellent dinner at the Boathouse. The evening concluded with a nightcap on *Altaria* with the *Catalina* crew and our French neighbours, who told me earlier there was no such thing as a free lunch!

We left Gigha at 1030 on 17 July after greeting *Ice Bear*, who had arrived during the night. We sailed up the Sound of Jura with a favourable tide and decided to overnight at Sound of Seil north of Easdale Island, picking up a mooring at 1830. We ate an excellent dinner at the Oyster Bar and got an early night. On 18 July, we slipped the mooring at 1030 for the 10M run to Kerrera, where we refuelled and watered before heading to our allocated berth. That afternoon, I used the dinghy to pick up Helen in Oban and take her across to Kerrera. That evening we had a great party on *Catalina*, followed by pizza at the Waypoint Restaurant.

Oban Opening and The Sunflower

Saturday, 19 July, saw the first Lions match, which was well-attended at the Waypoints restaurant. Commodore Jay Gowell officially opened the rally and presented Transoceanic Pennants to those who had crossed the Atlantic to participate. Following the opening drinks reception, we had a terrific buffet dinner with our allocated buddy boats. *Altaria* was buddied with *Big Bear*, owned by Jonathan Brewin (CCA and event co-chair). Also joining us at the table for dinner was David Denholm, Clyde Cruising Club Commodore. The following morning David showed me his beautifully restored 1963 McGruer Yawl, *Coigach*.

On Sunday, 20 July, we skipped the planned race from Oban to Tobermory, which was wise given the very light conditions. Instead, we enjoyed a pleasant motor-sail and arrived at the marina at 1400. We berthed alongside David Beattie (ICC) on *ReeSpray*, who kindly invited us for lunch. Later, we were joined on *Altaria* by the *Catalina* and *Salut* crews for pre-dinner drinks, followed by dinner at Macgochans Restaurant.

On Monday, 21 July, the 0900 am briefing confirmed a short weather window for the Sunflower formation, a traditional cruising club manoeuvre at larger rallies. We immediately sailed to Loch Drumbuie. Thanks to Royal Cruising Club Vice Commodore Tim Trafford and his team on *Calypso*, the anchor boats were in position, and the Sunflower was constructed with military precision. We quickly dismantled it as the wind began to increase. As it was still early, we decided to make our way to anchor off Rhum. We had a wonderful reach for the 25M passage and dropped anchor at 1930. Rhum is a National Nature Reserve famed for its scenic beauty, spectacular cliffs, and wildlife. Unfortunately, thick fog prevented us from seeing anything. The next morning, we could just about make out Kinloch Castle in the distance, but poor visibility meant we will have to return to experience the spectacular scenery.

Canna and Skye

Our next stop, Canna, was only 11M away. The trip was unpleasant; we motored against a strong headwind, tide, and rain, picking up the last available mooring just before lunch. I think it was the first time I ever had lunch on *Altaria* with the heating on. Fortunately, the weather cleared in the early afternoon, and we went ashore. We were impressed with the new, excellent shower block and bought fresh eggs from the unmanned 24-hour honesty shop beside the award-winning Café Canna. We ate on board that evening, and the following day we were told the seafood pizzas from the Café was amazing. A must on my next visit.

On Wednesday, 23 July, we motor-sailed across from Canna to Loch Harport on the Isle of Skye. This was my first visit to Skye, and the entrance to the loch was spectacular. We had expected to anchor and were surprised to see a newly installed pontoon—so new, in fact, they had yet to install cleats, and there was no electricity or water. Having said that the pontoon saved us several dinghy trips to a mooring, so we were happy to improvise on berthing without cleats. Onshore, we had a great lunch at the Old Inn, and Stephen and I were invited for a wonderful dinner on *Big Bear*. On our return to the pontoon, we found the 'Ballyclaire musical society' in full swing, with contributions from *Pure Magic*, *ReeSpray*, *Salut*, and *Catalina* entertaining our American visitors. Thursday, 24 July, we enjoyed the Talisker Whisky tour, followed by lunch at The Three Chimneys. Later, several crews, including those from *Catalina*, *Altaria*,



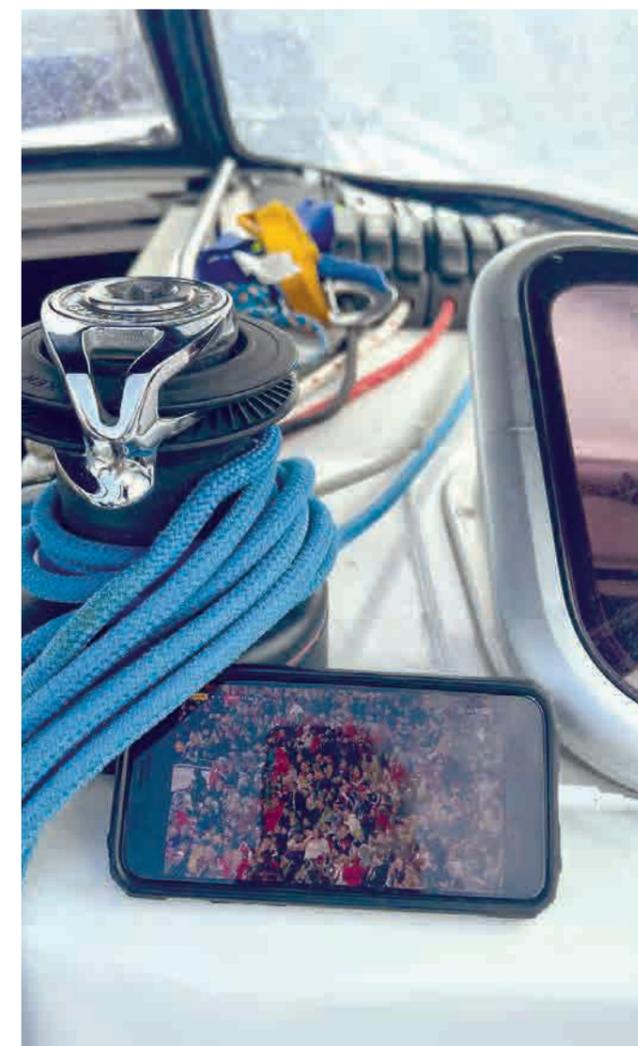
The Ballyclaire musical society performing at Loch Harport with help from the crews of *Pure Magic Too*, *Salut*, *Catalina* and *Locheil Lady* (RHVC)

ReeSpray, and *Locheil Lady*, assembled back at the Old Inn for dinner, followed by some great traditional local music.

South Uist and Vatersay

On Friday, 25 July, the fleet dispersed from Loch Harport, with some deciding to skip Vatersay and head to alternative anchorages. We were advised that Loch Skipton was one of the best anchorages on South Uist, and it lived up to expectations. On arrival, only *Big Bear* was anchored, but we were soon joined by Colin and Kate Crosby's *Topspot Too* from the Royal Highland Yacht Club and *Aurora*, a chartered yacht with CCA members Andrew and Julie Kallfelz, Paul Hamilton, and Patricia Young. Jonathan was again very generous, inviting everyone for cocktails and canapés on *Big Bear*—great fun!

We left late on Saturday, 26 July, hoping to watch the second Lions test match, but we lost the signal just before the start and tried to follow it on an iPhone while motor-sailing in wet, lumpy conditions towards Lochboisdale. Boisdale is not the most exciting place, but we were grateful to be on a marina that evening, as the wind and rain frequently woke me. The next morning, we heard that one of the CCC boats had dragged anchor and was washed onto the rocks at Vatersay. Staying in Boisdale was a good decision. On Sunday, 27 July, a small armada of boats left Boisdale and enjoyed a great fetch toward Vatersay. As we approached the beautiful beach, the weather continued to improve, and we arrived in perfect conditions for the Shore Party, which included a fantastic meal of local seafood, meats, and vegetables.



I think we needed a bigger screen to watch the 2nd Lions test

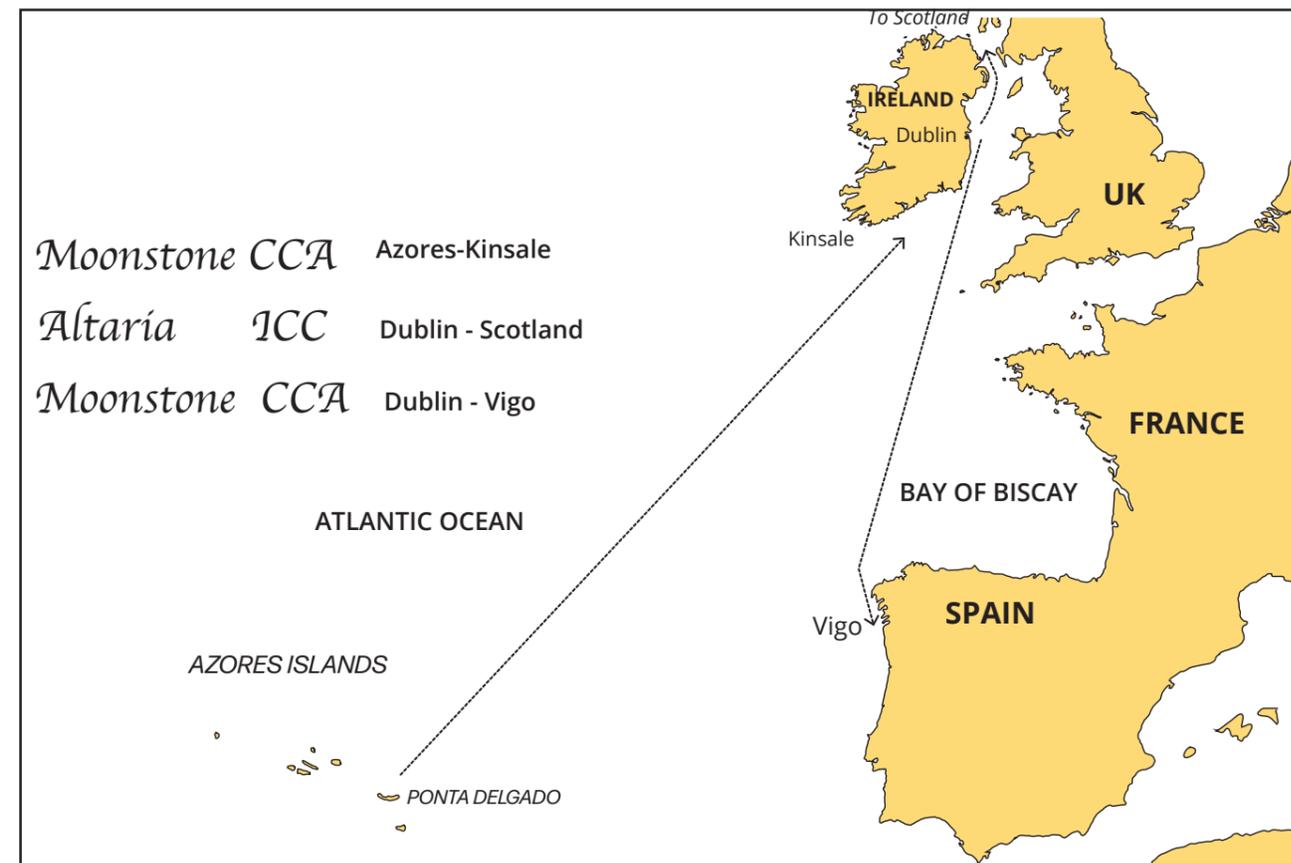
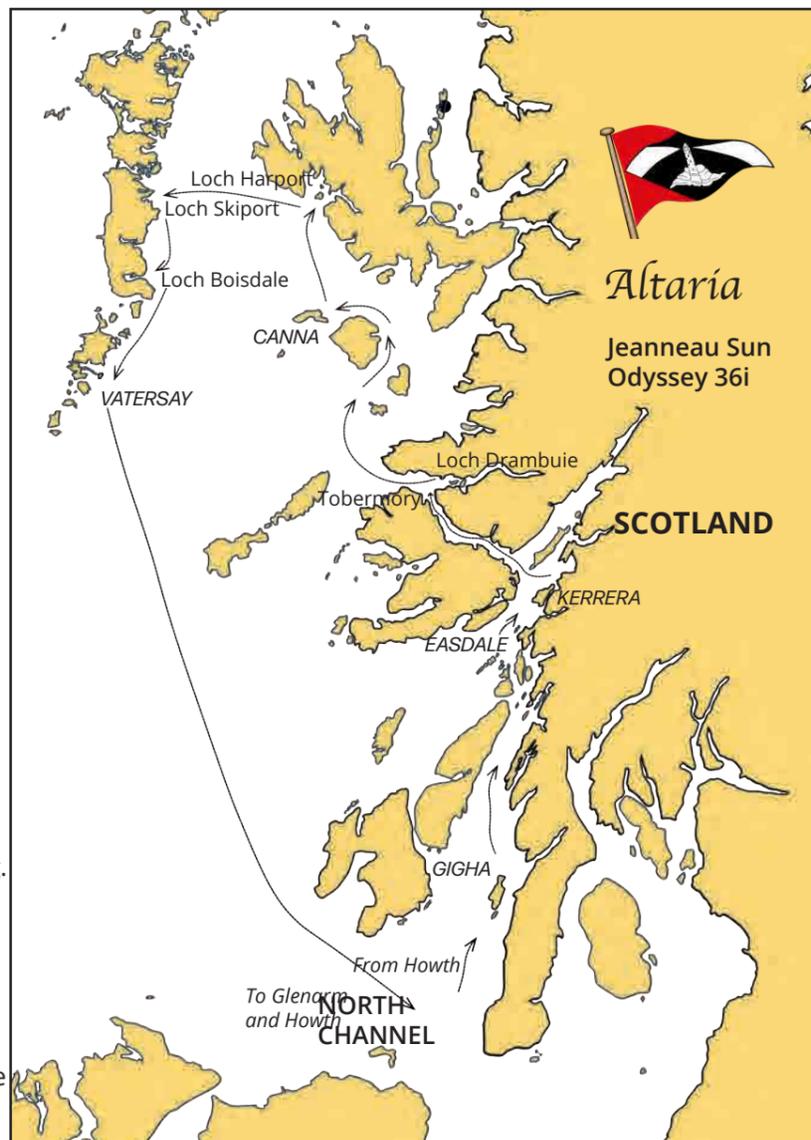


Cocktails at anchor at Loch Skipport on Jonathan Brewin's *Big Bear* (CCA), with crew from *Aurora* (CCA), *Top Spot Too* (RHYC) and *Altaria* (ICC)

The Final Legs

Looking at the long-term forecast, we decided to cut the cruise short and return to Howth immediately after the Vatersay party, bypassing Tiree and Port Ellen to head directly to Glenarm. We were joined in Glenarm by *Catalina*, and we had an excellent dinner aboard, created from the residual contents of our respective fridges. On Tuesday, 29 July, we caught the tide at 0700 and carried it almost to St. John's Point in very flat conditions. We bypassed Ardglass and arrived back at Howth Marina just before 2300. The Western Isles Cruise was a great success, and we covered 635M in two weeks. Having got a taste for the Outer Hebrides, I will definitely return.

While we were sorry to miss the rest of the rally, we were glad to be home before Storm Floris. *Moonstone*, *Bonnie Rye*, and *Big Bear* had planned to return to Howth after the rally, but had to wait in Bangor for a few days for Storm Floris to blow through, only arriving on Wednesday 6 August. We had a group dinner at Howth Yacht Club that evening. On Thursday, we exchanged burgees with the Vice Commodore of Howth Yacht Club, and Winkie Nixon wrote a nice article about the event in *Afloat*. The following day, Jay, Chace, and I took the DART to the Royal Irish Yacht Club to exchange burgees with Vice Commodore Winifred Kelleher, where we enjoyed an excellent lunch.



Later that evening, we started one of the highlights of the Howth calendar—the Howth 17s 'World Championships.' Donal Gallagher and I sail together on the newest 17, *Orla*. We were having a respectable championship until we broke our jib halyard in the third race, which ended the event for us. We were delighted that Jay, Chace, and Jay's daughter Emily were able to join the post-championship dinner and celebrations at HYC on Saturday evening.

Chace decided to winter *Bonnie Rye* in Howth, while Jay was keen to get *Moonstone* to Vigo for some

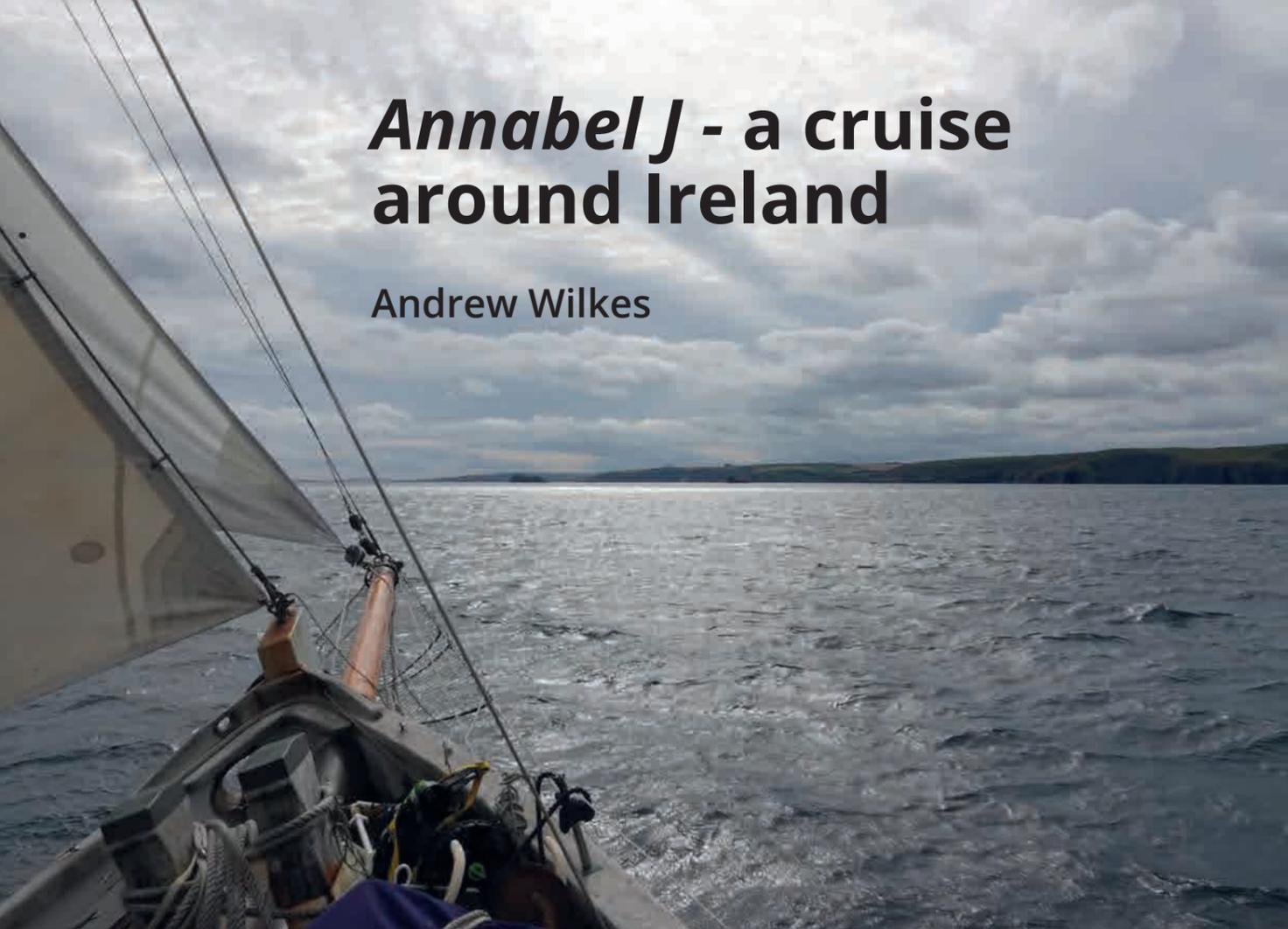
maintenance before the return transatlantic in late October. The final leg of my 'Western Isles Cruise' was a passage from Howth to Vigo. We left Howth on Monday, 11 August, in very light conditions. Aboard *Moonstone* were Jay, his daughter Emily, Ed Mayo (a friend from Boston), and myself. We completed the 760M passage, arriving at Marina Punta Lagoa in just under five days, where *Moonstone* was hauled out until Jay's return in early October. In all, it was a terrific summer of sailing, spread over ten weeks and 2,655M.

The CCA exchanging burgees with Howth Yacht Club. LEFT TO RIGHT: Alan Markey, Commodore, ICC, Jay Howell, Commodore, CCA, Gary Cullen, Vice Commodore, HYC and Chase Anderson, Vice Commodore, CCA Photo by WMN



Annabel J - a cruise around Ireland

Andrew Wilkes



Approaching the Sovereigns

Our 2025 plans to sail around Ireland had been much discussed and launch day was eagerly anticipated. We eventually achieved 'splash-down' from the Clyde Marina travel hoist on 9 June. The next week was spent in the marina reeving the running rigging, bending on sails and the host of other jobs we sailors occupy ourselves with. The weather was fine so we varnished when we could. The brightwork we didn't have time to address could, we were confident, be put right during our summer cruise around the Irish coast.

The snug anchorage at Loch Ranza



Lines were cast off on 18 June and we motor-sailed the 18M to Loch Ranza on the north coast of Arran. The mooring buoys there were all occupied and, in any case, would probably have been a bit light-weight for our 40 ton displacement, so we motored past all the boats and found a snug anchorage to anchor in. When departing the following morning, we discovered that our anchorage was a little too snug and we were aground! We spent the following three hours tip-toeing around the boat and hoping our neighbours would not realise what fools we'd been.

We should have read the pilot book!

The rising tide eventually did its job and we sailed the 23M onto Campbeltown near the Mull of Kintyre where we anchored off the NATO pier and there we stayed for five nights awaiting an improvement in the weather. It was a joy to be on the boat with the whole summer stretching before us. We deemed Wednesday 25th to be a suitable day for departure so we sailed and motor-sailed across the North Channel in S and SW F3-4 winds to the next anchorage at Ballyholme Bay, Bangor. The following day we sailed through Donaghadee Sound and took the passage inside South Rock keeping Tara Hill south of Kearney Point to clear The Breast.



Our dinghy at Strangford Sailing Club slip, Audley's Roads

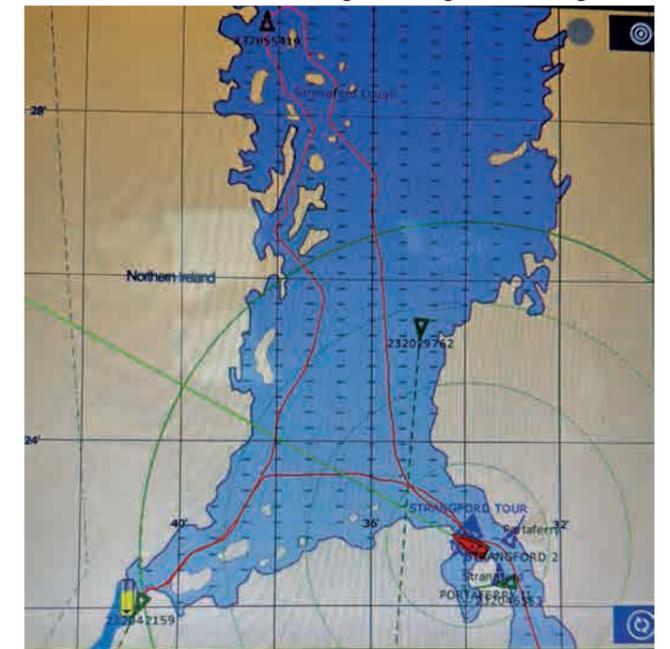
The next stop was a special one - Strangford Lough. The lough is a bit of an ICC hotspot and is, famous for many things, not least its very strong tidal streams. Happily, we got our calculations right and sped through the East Channel to the anchorage Alan Leonard had recommended at Audley Roads.

A fine anchorage it was too, just a few metres away from the tide coursing through the northern end of the Strangford Narrows. The anchor had hardly set when a phone call was received from Derek and Viv White who keep a very good lookout from their living room window - would we like to come to lunch the following day? We would and we did. The word 'lunch' is totally inappropriate for the feast which followed and we rowed back to the boat just as the sun was setting. Derek and Viv had told us all about the lough so we set off the next day to explore more. Our log book records passing the Quoile YC (where we had to make a very tight turn amongst the moorings there), Ringhaddy Quay, White Rock, Mahee Roads and Long Sheelagh. It would have been easy to spend another week in the lough and we resolved to come back at the end of the season. Sadly, we didn't.

Angus Rock, Strangford Entrance



Annabel J's Strangford Lough wanderings



Leaving Strangford Lough required more tidal calculations and, despite getting them right, we had a pretty lumpy sea as we crossed the Bar bound for the Skerries where we anchored for the night.

The following day we had a fine sail in a SW 3 - 5 to Dun Laoghaire where we thought we'd invest in a marina berth for the night. It cost €90 and I don't think we'll be back again soon.

No complaints about 'value for money' at our next stop though. This was to be our home port of Dungarvan and we sailed overnight to get there on 1 July. On passage, Máire got a phone call from Seán,



Sunrise at Carnsore Point

the son of her good friend Margaret: very sadly, Margaret had died unexpectedly.

We had hoped to take Annabel J up to the town quay but the neap tides meant there was a possibility of being 'neaped'. Discretion is the better part of valour so we anchored off Helvick for four nights. Máire rowed ashore to attend Margaret's funeral. In fact, we rowed ashore every day. Our friend and a great fisherman, Michael Foley, came past most days and gave us fresh bass. Máire's sister, Stella, filled our stomachs and lockers with cakes, fresh eggs and homemade marmalade. Evening forays were made to Murray's pub.

Our friend Michael brings another bass



Fully provisioned, we sailed on 6 July to Oysterhaven and then on to Castletownshend. It was quite windy (23 knots from the NW). Máire, being a Pilot, assured Andrew that we could go close enough to the Old Head of Kinsale to strike a match off it, so we did! (well, almost). On passing Seven Heads, the wind moderated and we could shake out our reefs. We tested the Stags-Flea Sound transit on our way and I'm pleased to report it works! We stayed at our anchor there for a couple of days and had the obligatory pint at Mary Anne's pub. Like so many pubs, it is now more of a restaurant but the staff gave us a warm welcome and they were happy to serve us drinks.



Rowing back to Annabel J from Helvick Pier

We like to anchor and row ashore (we haven't used the outboard engine since before the Covid pandemic). This year we had the added fun of a sail for the dinghy and we had a lovely sail around the harbour and up towards Rineen.

We left Castletownshend on Wednesday 9 July and, escorted for some of the way by a whale and dolphins, we sailed to Crookhaven stopping off for lunch in beautiful South Harbour, Cape Clear. We

Striking a match off the Old Head of Kinsale



rounded the Mizen in very light winds and entered Bantry Harbour by the western entrance using the transit of Reenbeg Point and the HW mark on South Beach. We anchored for the night and swam in the bay which was a tropical 20 °C. The following day the Harbour Master directed us to the Railway pontoon which is used by larger vessels or when the marina is full. I had to fly back to the UK for a week but Máire had a very happy time there with friend Bridget Hynes joining her for the Bantry Literary Festival - a thoroughly worthwhile event.

Friday 18 July saw us motoring around the corner to Glengarriff where we sailed around the harbour in the dinghy and 'pinted' in the Eccles Hotel. The forecast for Saturday wasn't great but we motored the 15nm in what turned out to be a 'grand soft day' to Lawrence Cove where we rowed ashore for one at Sullivan's Bar.

The next stop was Sneem. Máire's cousin, Don, is the Pharmacist there, and we always anchor for a few days in the Oyster Bed whenever we're passing. We were lucky this time as Don's daughter, Selina, was there too and the four of us had a lovely sail up the Kenmare River and across to Bunaw, Killmacalogue where we had a delicious lunch at Helen O'Sullivan's pub. On the way back Máire and Don played tunes on deck before attending a session ashore. Máire rowed up the river from the Oyster Beds to Sneem, we swam every day with Don and explored the harbour by sail in the dinghy - all time very well spent.



Selina, Máire, Don and Andrew at Bunaw

All good things come to an end and on Wednesday 23 July, we motored onto Derrynane. There were so many moorings there we decided there wasn't enough room for us so we continued on to Ballinskelligs Bay for the night. Our departure the following day in light airs was supervised by lots of puffins, many dolphins and a basking shark. We passed through Blasket Sound, pouring a wee dram into the water for the *sean bhean* of the Sound who grants vessels a safe passage there. We sailed close to the coast and peered into Brandon Creek, St Brendan's departure point for the New World and, many years later, Tim Severin's too. A quick row ashore to Brandon village saw us enjoying a drink in Murphy's pub.

Following a very pleasant sail in light to moderate southwesterlies we anchored in Kilronan where the 'Wild Atlantic Way' lived up to its name so we stayed there for three days. Then we had a good sail to Ardmore Bay (sadly no room to anchor because of the fish farm there) and on to Kilkieran where we spent another three days at anchor whilst the wind blew and rain rained. We did manage to fit in another dinghy sailing adventure though and met some lovely people - Robert who sold us lobster and crab claws, Colm and his father Colm, and John & Máire on their boat, *Still Magic*.

It was a 60M passage to Achill Sound and I have to confess we motored there against the strong NNW

Slyne Head



winds. It wasn't the most comfortable of trips but we were anchored beneath the castle at Kildavnet in South Achill Sound before eight that evening. The approaches gave us some interesting pilotage in a strong flood tide. We anchored in 8m off the quay. The strong tides, uneven bottom and many close-by fishing buoys gave us an indifferent night's sleep. Our departure the next day was also interesting and we 'touched' once. A fisherman pointed out the deeper water. We left Achill Sound into a lumpy sea and sailed to an anchorage at Broadhaven. From there we needed two reefs to sail past the Stags and on to an old favourite, Killybegs. Storm Floris had been forecast and we knew we would have good shelter at the new marina there with shore-side distractions for a few days. Micheal, the owner and MD of Mooney's, kindly gave us a tour of the yard which was very impressive. Highly recommended for anyone needing skilled repair work.

Having been weather-bound for ten days, we left Killybegs bound for Arranmore Island on 10 August. Sails and anchor were handed at Cruit Bay that evening and we enjoyed excellent shelter and good holding in a fine sandy bottom. A late morning start the following day started with some fine pilotage through Carnboy Channel and Gola Sound. However it was LW springs so we decided not to chance the passage through South Inishmeane and Inishsirrer. We passed the Bloody Foreland at 1330 and dropped the anchor just after six at Portsalon in Lough Swilly.



Sailing the tender in Kilkieran Bay

Croagh Patrick as seen from Achill Sound





The Stags of Broadhaven

We used a full favourable tide the following day to take us to the Giant's Causeway and, when the tide turned foul, ducked close inshore to continue onto Ballycastle. We found tidal eddies just off-shore which gave us 7 knots SOG. We almost came a standstill when tackling the overfalls whilst transiting the headlands but we were at anchor in Church Bay, Ballycastle before 1700 that evening - a fast 44M passage.

Sadly, time was running out so we made our way back to Campbeltown, Máire playing the concertina as usual as we rounded the Mull of Kintyre. On arrival, a quick row ashore was rewarded with celebratory ice creams. The following day dawned wet with strong westerly winds so we stayed at anchor and, a sure sign of cabin fever, read passages from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to each other. The Log also records 'chocolate muffins'.

Killybegs Regatta

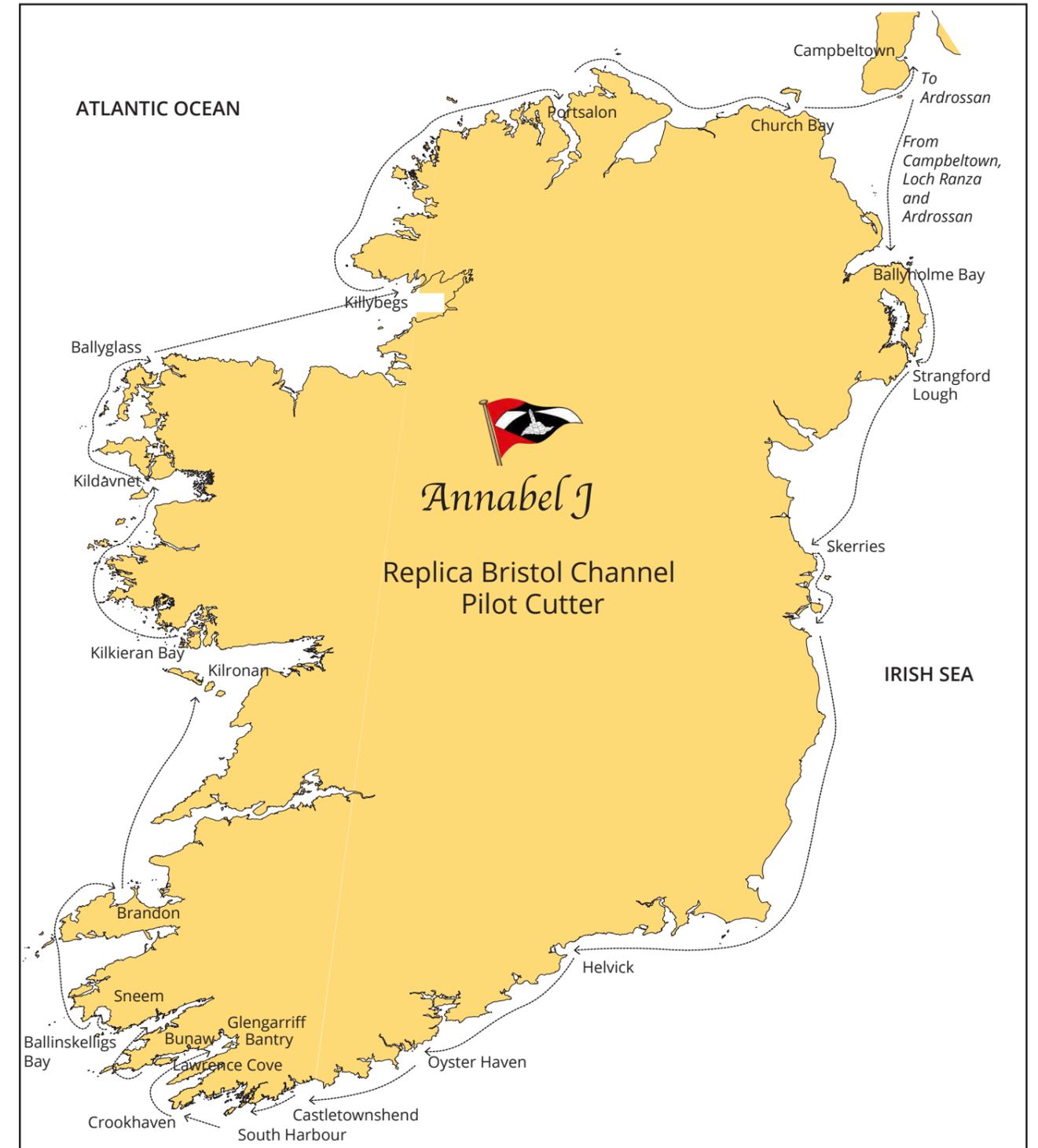


On Friday 15 August, much, much sooner than we would have liked, we berthed alongside the western wall of Clyde Marina in Ardrossan and started unbending the sails to prepare for the winter lift out ashore. The weather was glorious and we finally got around to varnishing our bright work.

It was a short, but very sweet, circumnavigation of the finest of cruising grounds - Ireland.



Fanad Head



Gallery

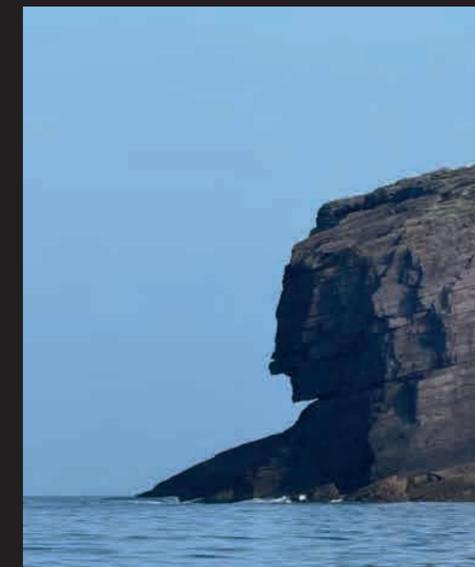


Leaving Helvick

Teampall Bheanáin, Inis Mór overlooking the anchorage at Kilronan



Reflections beneath the bowsprit



Bolus Head

RIGHT: The dramatic Sauce Creek, (An Sás) east of Brandon Creek. Here three 19th century families farmed on the steep slopes. The last family left in 1910



Mount Errigal, reminiscent of a Paul Henry painting



There are significant benefits for berth holders based in Rubicon Marina in Lanzarote. The wonderful restaurants, bars, swimming pools and local beaches, repair facilities, not to mention proximity of the extensive sailing grounds around the Canary Islands; all of which encouraged me to extend my stay for a further year. Adventures have included several cruises with friends, including members of the ICC Choryna Kiely, Andrew Collins and David Lawlor. So rather than recounting a simple narrative of those adventures for this year's log, I thought I would focus on a single context, the dubious pleasures of sailing alone.

Standing on the shoulders of giants

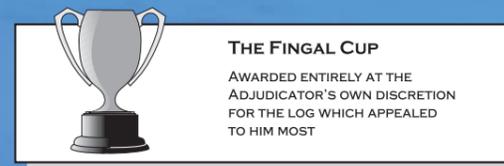
I have always been drawn to those logs of single-handed sailors, often related in ICC annuals; the understated narrative of Sam Davis's passage in *Suvretta* from the South Sea Islands to Howth Yacht Club, via Cape Horn; the quiet determination and courage demonstrated by Robert Henshall on *Maria* when his mast broke on his passage home from Portimão to Ireland, via the Azores; Brian Law's participation in the AZAB in his 77-year old 28', Gaff rig yacht *Redwing*; not to forget the many varied trips of our former Commodore, Cormac McHenry, culminating in his single-handed Atlantic circuit. Of those offshore sailors, it was only Cormac that I knew personally, both of us being members of the National Yacht Club, and he being my sponsor for membership of the ICC. So his single-handed voyages were of particular interest, and inspiration, to me. I have always been curious as to what the attraction is.

The distinguished solo sailor Sir Alec Rose, who famously circumnavigated the globe in his small ketch *Lively lady*, a year after Sir Francis Chichester, sought to address the question 'why alone?' in his autobiography, 'I suppose one must be basically of a certain type; a sort of "dark horse", if you like; a thinker; a dreamer; an idealist; an individualist. A man prepared to stand or fall by his own decisions.' I questioned whether that is necessarily the case today, especially when you consider the wide range of technical tools available to all sailors, in particular solo sailors. His answer I consider to be more 'of his time'. The advance of technology must make the experience significantly different nowadays, arguably easier. The gender dichotomy is also very much 'of its time'.

So, as Jeremy Clarkson might put it 'in order to find out for myself', I undertook three trips over the course of the last year, forsaking all company, except my own. Here I must emphasize, in the strongest of terms, these short trips do in no way reflect the extensive voyages of those narratives mentioned above. Like John the Baptist, I am 'hardly fit to tie their shoelaces'.

Going Solo

Frank Cassidy



THE FINGAL CUP

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

Madeira in the distance

Graciosa

The first, described in my last log, was a simple circumnavigation of the island of Lanzarote, enjoying a day at anchor at the beautiful Playa Francesa on the island of Graciosa, followed by a trip to the marina at Arrecife and finally home via Playa de Papagayo, a shade under 100M. All sorts of small things went wrong, sometimes requiring a certain ingenuity to solve. It was easier than I had anticipated, in particular as I did not sail at night.

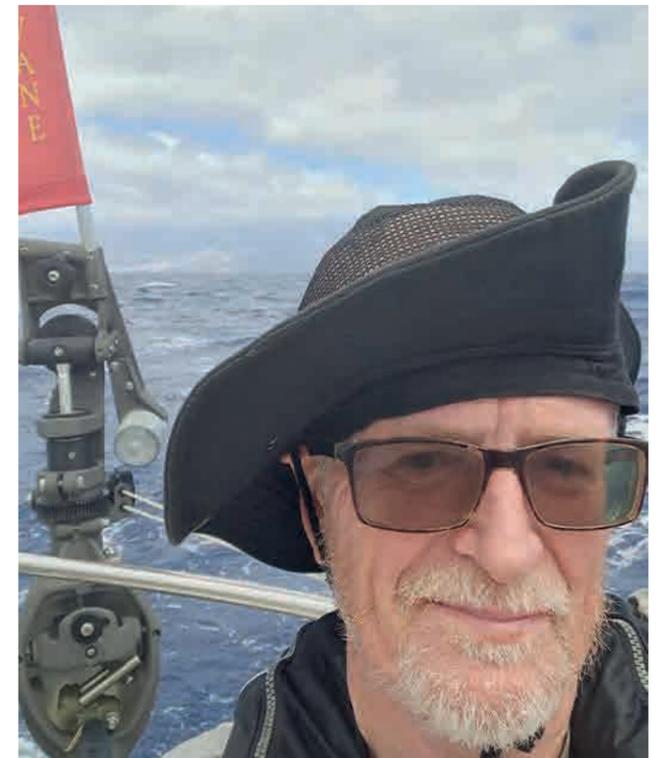
Tenerife and Fuerteventura

Emboldened by this trip I decided to venture further afield, hoping to explore some of the other Canary Islands. So one evening in November, I slipped lines in the marina, motored out to the anchorage in Playa Blanca and bedded down for the night. Sunrise found me up and about early, sipping a cup of tea and a bowl of porridge, en route to Santa Cruz in Tenerife, 130 miles away. Once passed the southwest point of the island, I began to feel the warm northeasterly Portuguese trades, facilitating a gentle beam reach in 14kts of breeze and a slight swell. Ruby, the hydrovane, was guiding the boat beautifully. Despite a drop in the wind in early afternoon,

requiring the use of the engine for an hour, everything went perfectly until sunset, when everything went to pot. It became pitch black, no moon; the wind changed in direction and strength and I couldn't get the sails balanced, Ruby refused to steer and even the electric autohelm refused to work. I could not see anything except the navigation lights of large cargo ships in the distance, none of which were now being seen or identified on the AIS. I was back to basics, a luminous hand bearing compass, binoculars, old fashioned navigation lights and compliance with international collision regulations. I switched on the engine and altered course to starboard to avoid one cargo ship coming directly amid-ships. I must admit I was little disconcerted, and disappointed in the AIS.

Eventually a waning moon appeared, allowing me to see and balance the sails better, so Ruby started to behave. By this point, the sailing conditions had settled into a rather beautiful 18kts broad reach, so I so slowly regained my composure. That being said, the profusion and speed of the cargo ships around me, and the fact that I couldn't identify them on the AIS, limited my sleep cycles to about 10-15 minutes.

Leaving Madeira

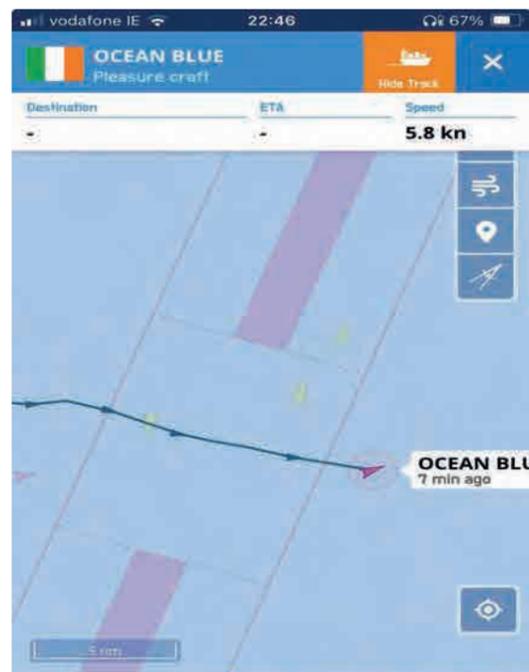


Unexpectedly, I emerged at around 0900 reasonably refreshed, dropped anchor and breakfasted 10M north of Santa Cruz. It was an unprepossessing and uncomfortable anchorage, so the afternoon found me comfortably berthed in Santa Cruz, a wonderful town where I stayed a couple of days.

Obtaining visitor berths can be quite difficult in this area, as I found when I sought to make a booking in San Sebastián de la Gomera. I must admit I wasn't too upset by their refusal as I wasn't relishing the challenge of the forecasted wind acceleration zones en route. I headed instead for Morro Jable, on the southwest corner of Fuerteventura, enjoying the challenge of sailing *Ocean Blue* as high and fast as possible in the fitful northeasterlies along the north coast of Gran Canaria, Ruby being given a rest for the afternoon.

Dodging cargo ships at night

As darkness fell we passed close to Las Palmas, a busy shipping port, and headed towards the traffic separation zone (TSZ) between the two islands. Large ships abounded. As expected, the AIS flattered to deceive, being quite selective as to the ships it identified, and when. I was in for a difficult night. My course, directly from the northeastern point of Gran Canaria to the southwestern point of Fuerteventura, brought me through the gap in the TSZ which allowed ships to either join, leave or cross the channel. The wind picked up a little allowing for a fast beam reach between the islands, the boat behaving herself impeccably as if aware I had other things with which to contend. It was old-fashioned navigation, simply identifying and following the navigation lights, and relatively straightforward. However, having slowed before entering into the second, north going, shipping lane to let all ships go through, two lights appeared way to the south, followed by another two. Initially I wasn't particularly worried as, while I was required to hold my course, I was crossing diagonally at close to 7.5kts and they were a long way off. What I wasn't aware of was quite how fast the two ships were approaching. As you will see from the attached marine traffic photo (note I passed in front of them), they came quite close, one was within 3M of me, travelling at 22 kts, before the AIS registered an alarm. It was definitely going to get a technical examination when I got back.

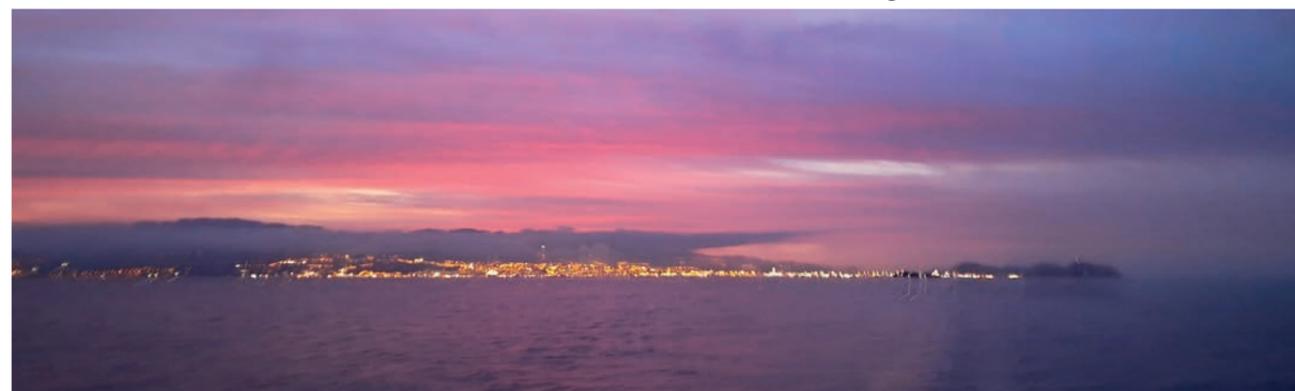


Even after passing through the shipping lanes, the number of ferries and cargo ships rounding the south of Fuerteventura heading for Las Palmas, and vice versa, made it difficult to leave the cockpit, and accordingly I made no attempt to sleep that night. Around 0500 I approached Morro Jable and crept in carefully as I closed on the beach in the dark until I found a spot between two silent yachts in about 7m, when I dropped anchor. I waited until dawn to ensure no dangers and promptly went to sleep. Despite the distractions, it really had been a wonderful sail, with a perfect warm breeze and enough light from the moon to see the background of the island as I approached.

Laziness

All reports of Morro Jable recommend a visit, and here was I on an anchored yacht, a panoramic view of a beach to starboard and high cliffs to port, debating whether to inflate the dinghy. Laziness won out, I had everything I needed on board. I watched the sunset to the strains of Ennio Morricone, a nice meal of pan fried sea bass and buttered spuds, washed down to a Cuba Libre (OK, ice would have been nice).

The lights of Las Palmas



Leaving Playa Blanca, en route to Madeira.

The following morning I was up with the dawn hoping to catch a promised and unseasonable light southeasterly, bound for Gran Tarajal on the west coast of Fuerteventura. That southeasterly never arrived, however a more seasonable light north/northwesterly made for a lazy close-hauled passage, where the GGR sailor Pat Lawless grabbed my lines on arrival. A retired deep sea fisherman from Kerry, Pat competed in the 2022 GGR, holding position in the top four until having to retire at Cape Town with autohelm problems. He is entered in the 2026 race. Following a very sociable interlude with Pat and his wife, Rita, I headed home along the east coast of Fuerteventura, much of it under motor, happily concluding with a fresh blast across the Estrecho de La Bocayna. All in all a most enjoyable passage of around 300M, and I was learning.

Madeira

Even though these two passages were completed solo, much of it was within easy reach of rescue and each individual passage no longer than 24 hours. I hankered for a deep sea passage. The Azores might be a little too far at this point but Madeira and back, a 600M round trip well into the Atlantic, seemed perfect. A new antenna was installed at the top of the mast which seemed to bring a significant improvement to the AIS reception. The new sails were bent on and a shakedown trip to La Gomera and back was completed. By late August all the family had flown home, I had the boat to myself and time on my hands; and no excuses. Yet I was apprehensive.

Declan and Philip, two Irish sailors with boats based in Rubicon, helped me slip lines at 0630 in the morning and I headed out to sea, almost in a daze. The wind forecast was a reasonable F5-6, with a significant easterly component allowing for a course to be made on a fine reach, 10° off close-hauled. Some element of the storm that was battering Ireland at the time, Erin, promised a strong swell, something that was evident as I rounded the point and headed northwest, destination Funchal, 282M away.

It was as I was preparing the boat for the ocean passage, putting away the fenders and coiling warps, that a conversation I had with Cormac in the National Yacht Club, came back to me. We were discussing single-handed sailing when I asked what was the most important advice he could give me. Cormac's answer, characteristically concise and pithy, was 'Don't fall off'. Now while I had the most up-to-date of life-jacket and a PLB that could communicate with satellites, I was still quite fearful, viewing the pushpit and lifelines with an uncharacteristic distrust. I plotted an alternative course which would bring me to the island of Graciosa, where I thought I might spend the night and reconsider.

But it was the boat itself, as if sensing my concern as it cowed the conditions with such mastery and comfort, that slowly restored my confidence. By late afternoon, well past the point when I should have tacked for Graciosa, the decision to proceed had been made, almost unnoticed; And what a beautiful

Ocean Blue leaving Playa Blanca, bound for Santa Cruz, Tenerife.





A relieved skipper as the sun rises after the first night at sea

afternoon it turned out to be, the yacht plunging into the long ocean swell in the fresh breeze and bright sunshine; But as the evening drew in, clouds appeared on the horizon, followed by a misty rain and ultimately squalls. The resultant reefs put the boat slightly out of balance, so while we were sailing high, she had slowed significantly. I was more worried about missing the dangerous rocky islands, Ilhas Selvagens, a few degrees to port of my direct course, than making miles, so I left well enough alone and settled down for the night. With 22/26 knots across the deck, the occasional wave breaking across the bow, lights appearing on the horizon that weren't always recognized by AIS, it was not a relaxing night.

Dawn brought significant relief, as much psychological as physical, as can be seen by the photograph above. With the first night out of the way, Ilhas Selvagens now 20M abeam, I shook out some reefs, balanced the boat better, bore off a touch and she took off. The trip turned into a joy. The second night, with fewer ships about, was much easier (although the knot in the first reefing line

Funchal



had come free and had to be rethreaded), and by morning Ilhas Desertas appeared in the distance. Landfall ho! The last 20M into Madeira were a blast under well reefed headsail alone, white horses all around me courtesy of the wind acceleration zone. With no berths available, I was instructed to drop anchor. Tiredness made me irate, so I rowed in, using a bucket as a seat, and successfully pleaded for a berth later on that evening.

Madeira unaccompanied can be a joy, wandering around the mountains on a scooter, changing routes or stopping as I pleased, eventually reaching a peak and taking photographs of the sea through the clouds below me. For those of you who haven't visited it before, it is quite different to Lanzarote, with high mountains, steep gullies, luxurious vegetation, a halo of clouds, and very few beaches.

And back.

The trip home was delayed for 24 hours, following reports of 4m swells and 28kts en route. After a lazy breakfast overlooking Funchal marina, I slipped lines at noon the following day and pointed *Ocean Blue* towards the delights of Playa Blanca. Once clear of the wind shadow of Madeira, a fresh breeze kicked in and the yacht took off at a fair lick in the bright sunshine; champagne sailing, to the strains of Sgt Pepper and Abba's greatest hits; not a dissenting voice to be heard!

It was not to last, as the swell kicked in and breeze freshened once past Ilhas Desertas. That easterly component in the wind, so welcome on the way up, now turned what should have been a relaxing downwind romp into a more challenging beam reach. Yet, I was more confident on this homeward bound leg, settling into shipboard life much quicker. I managed to get the boat balanced more easily and prepared a hearty evening meal.



Setting sun on first night of the return passage

At night everything on a boat feels louder, stronger, larger and wilder. That's how it felt the first night out. The swell was occasionally breaking over the boat, the winds increased to 26kts, so I was down to two reefs in both main and yankee, and full staysail set. Yet the boat felt hard pressed, and there was this unusual and regular bang that echoed loudly through the mast every so often, putting me in fear for the rig. I decided to put a third reef in the main, something that can only be done on deck. Sitting there at the foot of the mast beneath the boom, hauling in and securing the third reef while waves broke over me, as the boat blasted downwind in the bright moonlight and strong breeze, felt absolutely wild. The third reef was not the solution, the banging persisted, and the boat felt the lack of that mainsail. The reef was shaken out, following which I hunted around the boat minutely and eventually discovered the banging was caused by a block from the kicker, which was held too tight. Kicker eased, I made a cup of tea and suddenly everything downstairs was peaceful. Weird! The boat knows what it wants, and gets it.

The following morning I found that the topping lift had broken, limiting my ability to reef in the mainsail. To make matters worse the block had wrapped around the foresail meaning that I couldn't reef that either. The three hours it took me to fix that topping lift, requiring certain ingenuity to release, catch and re-thread that block, often having to re-thread lines already fixed, and the precarious balancing on the pushpit, do not bear relating here in detail. It would take too long and identify far too many errors. With daylight, I did a full check of everything on the boat and, feeling much more confident in her, I settled down to enjoy the day's sailing.

But it was that fourth night that was the joy of the whole trip. Everything may have been bigger and louder, but it was exciting. Blasting along at over 8kts in a boisterous sea under a full moon, white horses and spray everywhere and the music of the breeze in my ears, the boat all to myself in the middle of an ocean, I felt really alive. I spent an age standing on the cockpit seats holding on to the spray dodger rail, surveying the entire scene. The whole rig would appear to roll savagely from side to side in the bright moonlight, as the long keel and hydrovane cooperated to hold the yacht on course, as if to say 'All is in hand, you are surplus to requirements'. Another passage from Alec Rose's book came to mind. 'But why alone? you ask again. My friends, I was happy and content. I had all I needed. I had a good ship under me and I felt as free as the birds that circled above. I was king of my little world. I walked around the decks and admired everything. Then I looked at the sea. It was boisterous and playful. I admired it, but respected it, acknowledging king Neptune as king of the sea. Would he allow me to remain king of my sturdy yacht? Only time would tell.'

But all good things must come to an end! My carefully choreographed late departure designed to ensure I would arrive around mid-morning in daylight, was being undermined. Not for the first time *Ocean Blue* was going too fast, At this pace I was due to arrive at 0500, in the dark. The lights at Pta Pechiguera (FI(3)30s) duly appeared ahead of schedule and it was only by reefing early that I was able to delay rounding that point to 0600, 42 hours point to point. I covered the last five miles, just south of the island, slowly under engine, as the first glint of dawn appeared

over the eastern horizon. In fairness to them, Declan and Philip had been tracking me on Marine Traffic and were there to take my lines and give me a cup of tea. Despite all my years sailing, this was a whole new experience.

Conclusions

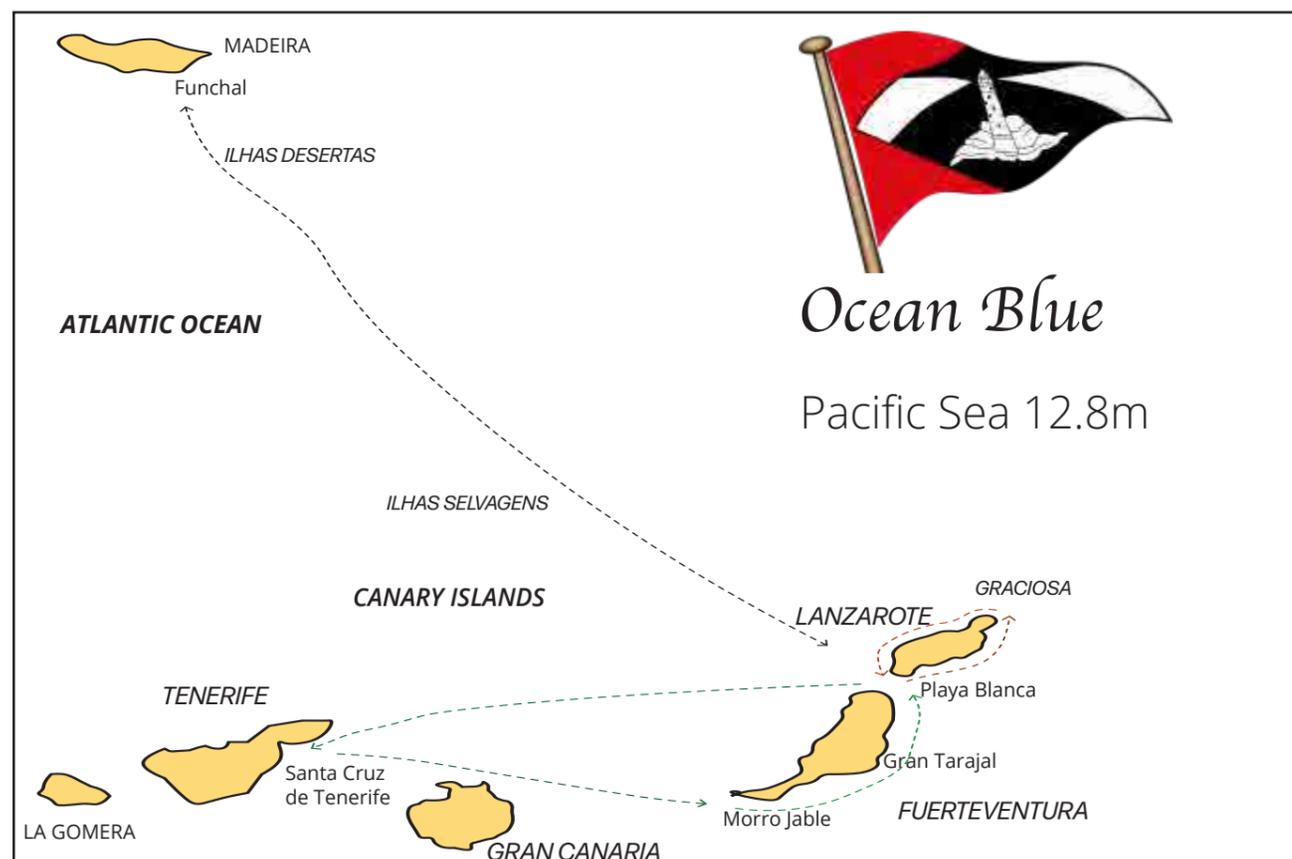
Modern boat building technologies, GPS chart plotters, onboard satellite communication facilitating up to date weather reports and route planning, solar panels allied with modern battery banks, EPIRBs, lifejackets armed with satellite personal locator beacons all contribute to enhancing the safety of this pastime we all enjoy so much, increasing the number of sailors who are now confident to venture offshore, even single-handedly. Perhaps the most important development is the advent of automatic identification systems (AIS) which, when it works, should allow single-handers to be more easily identified and avoided, a clear bonus when sleep is required.

A concern I have is whether such developments and the increase in global marine traffic create a different risk, an over-reliance on innovations to the detriment of old-fashioned seamanship. Watch systems on ships may be becoming slack, greater reliance being placed on radar/AIS alarms rather than rules and skills honed by generations of sailors. We are of course all sailors, and sailors by their nature embrace the risk implicit in any form of sailing. All sailing is a risk, single-handed sailing simply a little more so. No

modern technology can alleviate a simple accident or falling overboard, something which regrettably still occasionally occurs.

None of that, I am afraid, gets away from the pure joy of it, and the sense of achievement. Since embarking on these trips, I have discovered that there are many wishing to explore single-handed cruising. Somewhat like Cormac, many start with short trips, slowly extending their range as experience and skill develops. Yet no matter how long or short the voyage, it takes a certain audacity to simply let slip the lines and venture out of the marina bereft of any support or back up, relying exclusively on one's own resources and being 'prepared to stand or fall by his/her own decisions'.

If anything, my limited experience has led me to appreciate more the courage, resolution, seamanship and achievements of those ICC narratives I have mentioned above.



Mollihawk's Shadow in Norway

Eddie Nicholson

Smögen

After several years in the Med, it was decided that it was time to go north to the Baltic. I received an excellent piece of advice from a fellow ICC member: rather than sail the boat all the way from Croatia, I should trailer her overland from Slovenia. This proved to be a great suggestion, and several days after haul-out the boat was back in Sweden, in the yard where she had been built. After two winters of maintenance and repairs - and 15 years of sailing over 22,000 miles - she was as good as new again.

6 June

We left Henån, Sweden, for Smögen, 25 nm north. After a bit of motoring we managed to get the sails up, though it was a chilly, wet day. We were glad to be tied up early to the quayside, as it blew 20 knots all night.

The next morning we continued north in a rolling sea to Grebbestad, recommended to us by some locals. This is where Henry Kingston stepped off to meet family sailing commitments back home. He had been

aboard helping get *Mollihawk* ready for launch before the rest of the crew arrived—his job was done!

8 June

From Grebbestad we turned west directly for Norway with Harry Harbison, Mike Walsh, Mark James, and myself aboard. We made for Risør, 66 nm, taking 10 hours, mostly motor-sailing. Sea temperature: 6.3°.

9 June

Off again the next morning for Lyngør, a national park also recommended by locals. We overnighted on a small mooring surrounded on all sides by Norwegian trees.

10 June

We continued to Arendal, 20 nm south, stopping at the island of Merdø for a swim and a walk. No coffee, as the café was closed, but at least the rain had finally stopped. The weather in general was very like home in Ireland.

11 June

Motored on to Lillesand.

12 June

Carried on down to Blindleia, took a 6 km hike through the wooded island, then cooled off with an 8° swim before finally anchoring between four islands: Sandøya, Helløya, Grimsholmen, and Steinsøya (as recommended in the pilot book).

13 June

Arrived into Kristiansand marina, where we stopped and headed home for three weeks until 6 July, when the family took over.

6 July

With Susie and our three daughters - Jessie, Carla, and Ella - we visited many of the local islands near Kristiansand and revisited earlier stops. Disaster struck on 10 July when we tried to raise anchor and discovered the engine battery completely flat, despite having worked perfectly up to then. The battery charger was also dead, as it hadn't been charged before departure. So we had the portable generator charging the battery charger to restart the engine... four hours later it still wasn't enough. We eventually called the rescue service, who jumped us—and the engine fired within two minutes! I'm afraid to put in writing what they charged for



Lillesand

dropping by on their route... We later found the 12v battery was simply at the end of its life, so it was replaced. A disappointing end to the family trip, but not disastrous.

13 July

New crew heading up the west coast for Ålesund: ICC members Dermot O'Morchoe, Mike Hodder, Pat Dorgan, and myself. We set out from Kristiansand for Ny-Hellesund with the aim of rounding Lindesnes headland with the northeast wind behind us, a 35 nm trip. The pilot book gives many warnings about being caught out offshore here, with no shelter. Fortunately there's plenty of shelter among the countless small islands. After rounding the headland we anchored in Seløy Bay, all alone, and enjoyed a calm, quiet night.

14 July

Onwards to Haugesund, 120nm north. We planned a 24-hour run, passing Egersund and Stavanger on the way. We arrived at Røvær Island at 0400 and tied up to the commercial wharf until daylight. Then we continued weaving through the islands to Leirvik



Kristiansand

on Stord. The western Norwegian coastline is full of offshore islands. Heading north you can either go outside, hoping for some clean sailing, or weave through the islands - much more interesting and totally different from the Irish coast. Most of our time was spent motoring (or 'cruising,' as I preferred to call it), because navigating through this landscape requires constant lookout and focus on the chart. Sailing isn't really feasible in such tight, rocky waters.

17 July

Bergen was our next port of call. We docked on the Bryggen side of Vågen Harbour - a busy, touristy spot with great views seawards and toward the seven mountains surrounding the city.

Continuing north past Holsnøy, we stopped at Fedje for a midday break to watch the Lions match, then moved on to Sandøyna. We tied up at a small but busy marina, ate dinner at the fish market on the pier, and did a 5 km walk the next morning—followed by a swim in 22°!

20 July

Motored north again to Rutledal Bay, where the ferry departs for the fjords. The fjords are visually stunning, but we calculated it would take two full days to reach the top and two days back. A tourist ferry there and back in a single day seemed the best option - so that's what we did, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Next day we set off for Frøya Island, stopping at Reksta for lunch and to watch the next Lions match. We tied up that night in Kalvåg Marina on Frøya.

Rutledal Bay, Sognefjorden





Bergen

23 July

Left at midday for a 20 nm run north, arriving into Måløy at 1700.

24 July

From Måløy to Runde Bay: three hours motoring, then five hours of mixed sailing and motor-sailing around the dreaded Statt/ Stad Headland, highlighted in the pilot books as dangerous in bad weather due to lack of shelter. Our passage was pleasant and we reached Runde Bay, departing the next day for Ålesund Harbour, 15nm north - final port for the current crew.

26 July

New crew, John Walsh, JP Reilly, Kevin O'Morchoe joined and we left Ålesund bound for Kristiansund. Stopped first at Brattvåg, 15nm inland, tying to a floating pontoon, then off again early after our mandatory morning swim. Onward to Molde: same weather routine - wind, then no wind, sails up, sails down, motor on, and plenty of rain. Tied to a quiet pontoon. Up here there are very few masted boats; motorboats dominate, and marinas are quiet as most small boats aren't lived aboard. We left early as weather was building, and headed for Averøy. Cruised (motor on!) for 5½ hours past Bud into Røholmen Bay. Cleared under a 23m bridge with 2m to spare—those bridges always make me nervous; it never looks like you're going to clear until you're through.

Then we continued to Kristiansund, our eventual winter home. After meeting our winter manager and confirming our berth, we spent a few more days exploring nearby islands. First stop: Grip. The harbour was extremely tight, and we had to tie alongside the ferry. We were told it was leaving at 1300., so we did a quick walk around the island - fabulous views - and returned just in time to move before the ferry departed. Then on to the fjord at Vågaland and anchored in Kløvset Bay. Our shoreline walk attracted a whole colony of ticks, so a long swim and full de-ticking ceremony was required before getting back aboard!

1 August

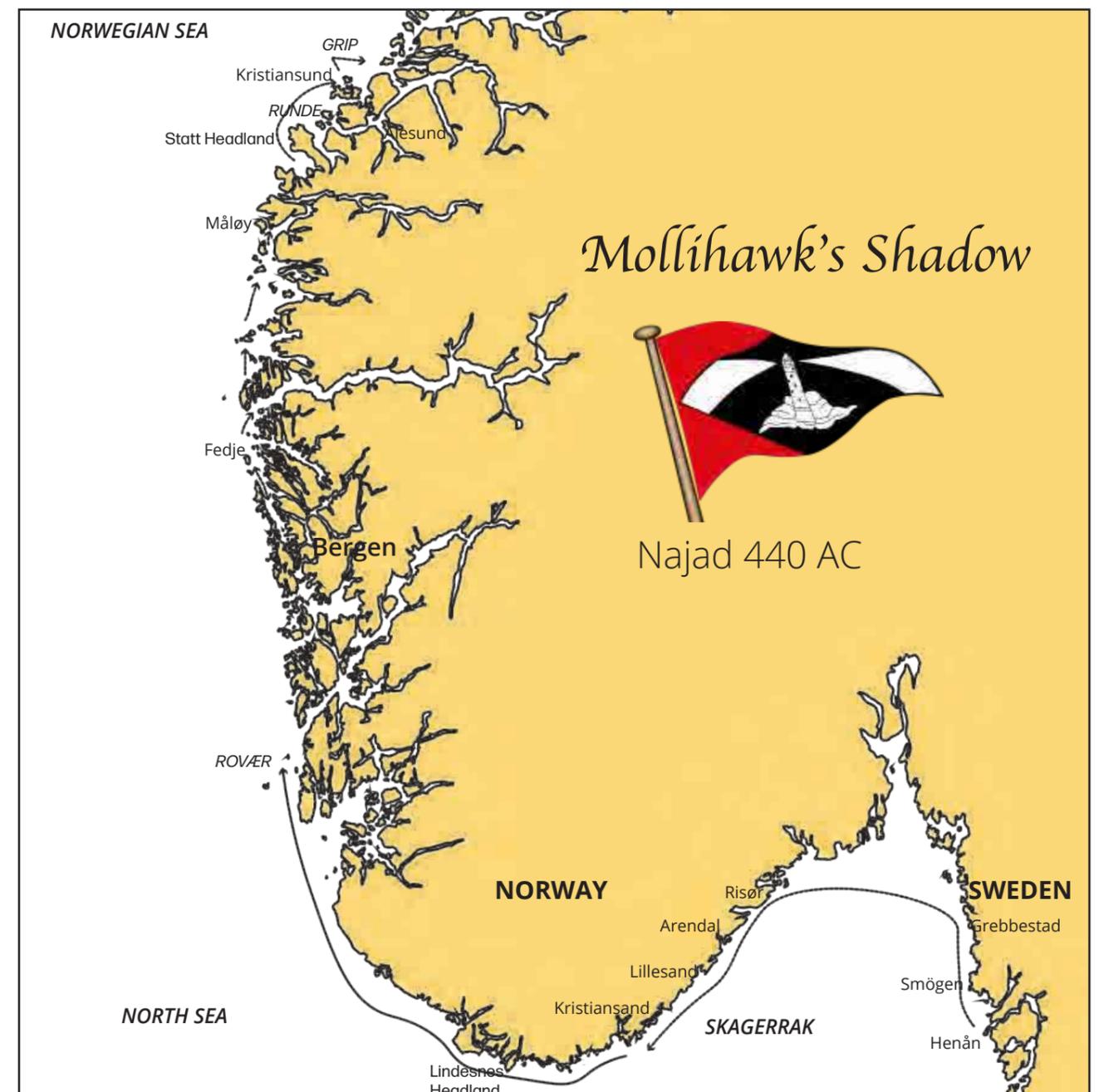
Motored around to Eide, which was so quiet we were the only people on the marina that night.

2 August

Cast off for Plassen Bay to watch the Lions match at noon. We anchored that evening off Averøya on the east side of Gullsetholmen Island. Finally we crossed the bay back to Kristiansund to put *Mollihawk's Shadow* to bed for the winter. She is now in a winter marina where seawater doesn't freeze. The water systems and engine have been flushed with antifreeze. A heater and dehumidifier are running below, and regular checks from the marina staff should keep her happy until we return early next summer.

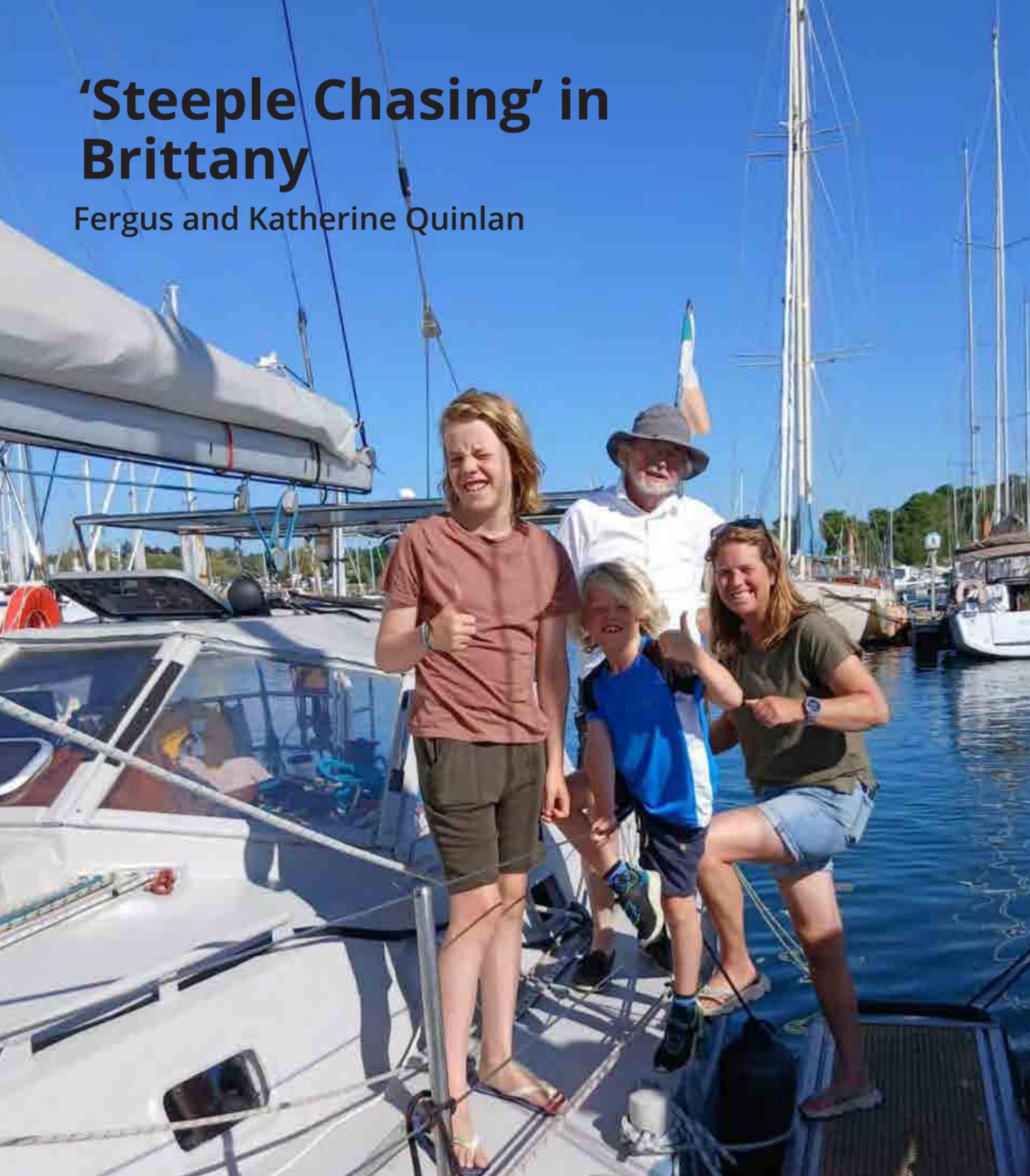


Måløy



'Steeple Chasing' in Brittany

Fergus and Katherine Quinlan



Fergus, Sarah and the grandchildren in Falmouth

14 April: Motoring from the winter mooring at Bealnaclugga to the Galway Cut, from there, we were transferred by Mark Purcell's trusty tractor to the yard. Weeks of glorious weather saw us replacing dodgy seacocks with TruDesign plastic. Much internal steel was prepped and painted; the external livery got a revamp. Antifoul and anodes were renewed, thankfully no leaks were apparent at launching.

Galway docks facing windward is a fine location to replace sails including our new genoa.

8 June: We test the new Watson headsail while close hauling to Kilronan - our windward ability improved big time. On arrival the headsail roller rope jumps from the drum and tangles, a battle ensues, resolved by dropping the flogging sail, rewinding the

control rope within the drum and rehoisting. The feed fitting had misaligned with the drum; it was sorted later. Tied at Kilronan, we found bilge water where it shouldn't be, with help from skipper Tommy Flaherty we removed a water tank to track the source and make good. Hookers come and go alongside, all adding to the fizz of the harbour. We chill with wine and walk the island.

At the boarded-up Lucky Star Bar the skipper recalls an evening 37 years previously. The accordion was damaged and wheezing, nevertheless the player was lashing out sets, and a grossly overweight man at the counter was persuaded to dance a battering. Surprisingly nimble he started, slowly building speed and height, reaching a frenzy which was maintained for some minutes, the sheer violent physicality of the dance appearing to exceed human possibility. The door opened, the dancer slid out, returning when normal breathing was restored. That bar, once our 'in' place for craic, is now fading to ruin, only the haunting echoes of long-gone music and memory waft from its shuttered façade.

17 June: Probably having too much fun we take navigation for granted and leave at 1200. The lumpy sea in Gregory Sound eases further south. The wind backs somewhat, and our course now is bringing us east of Brandon Bay. As we motored toward the Blasket Islands the truth dawns that if we enter the Blasket Sound in pitch darkness, we are sure to snare a pot marker. We left the Arans five hours too early. Lying ahull in a 1.8m seaway is not a comfortable way to spend a night in our B&B north of Sybil Point - sleep was fitful. At 0430 first light, *Pylades* motored against the tide in the sound. It was stunningly beautiful and yes, pots aplenty. By 1130 tied in Dingle we rested and resolve to focus a bit more on navigation. The delights of the town and the warmth of the dock master always hold us a bit longer than expected.

25 June: A dash to Valentia before another burst of overly fresh westerlies. Lots of yachts hiding. Neil Hegarty, my Architectural tutor of many years back and Anne Kenny visited (both ICC) and invited us to dine and stay at Anne's house in Portmagee, all very enjoyable. It became a very sociable dock when Colm and Cepta of *Stars Are Out*, arrived.

Feisty conditions ease south of the Dursey Sound. Tying bow-on at Castletownbere to stock, later we exited and picked up a much-neglected mooring east of the harbour bridge. A fine sail brought us around the Mizen to Crookhaven and Cape Clear with its crowded but sociable harbour. Entering Baltimore via the north channel we tied at the pontoon and had excellent pints in Bushe's Bar and a not so excellent seafood platter in the adjacent restaurant.

8 July: 1100 exit Baltimore making good progress south in fine breeze, by 1300 the main and headsail

were reefed, *Pylades* making 9kts in bursts. We fell back into old ways with three-hour watches. Only two fishing craft were observed on the Labadie Bank. The Isles of Scilly emerge after dawn and before mid-day we picked up a mooring in New Grimsby Harbour. The weather turned tropical, walks ashore and swimming become the order of the day. The mooring field filled.

Another mistake, the weather was to deteriorate, we should have moved to Penzance or Falmouth on 13 July. Late on the 14th the wind and swell arrived, but one could still, with some dexterity, board the dinghy and go ashore, which we did over the days. The main revelation was the behaviour of various yachts. Adjacent was a very old timber yacht about 32' with low freeboard and restricted internal space - it rolled, but slightly. We certainly rolled more but not too bad. The majority of the yachts were modern, with high freeboard and voluminous, they rolled savagely for days. The Lifeboat arrived at the anchorage to take someone off their boat in a stretcher for hospitalisation.

16 July: Exiting, a fine breeze helped us deal with a deck - washing sea, but with the dying of the wind, our ship rolls a great deal. The sea eventually eased but visibility faded behind a screen of damp mist. The Lizard light was dim and erratic through a swirling drizzle. The Manacles fog signal howled somewhere off to port. Falmouth entrance buoys slid out of the gloom and we picked up a heavily weeded mooring near the marina. A visit by daughter Sarah whizzing down in her tin boat from Restronguet Creek made the £65 a night worthwhile. Ambling around the town, we concluded it must be the capital of dogs and tattoos. Over the next few days, we cruised to a pontoon up the Fal river, explored by dinghy and dined with Sarah and the grandchildren.

A visit from daughter Sarah



22 July: 1630 exit Falmouth. During the night the AIS warned of constant threats from erratic fishing craft. However as we ploughed south with two reefs in the main and a chunk of headsail rolled, the fishing boats eventually disappeared. A few hours later shipping bore down on us from the port, and hoping our lamp and sailing rules are observed, we held course despite copious AIS collision warnings. Thankfully, they all altered course to slide by our stern. After a few hours rest the shipping attacked from the starboard, this time beckoned by our green lamp, and we dodged and weaved. Eventually the sea emptied, darkness dissipated and in the slow gathering of the light La Vierge lighthouse appeared. By 1300 we had rounded Le Libenter cardinal and tied at L'Aber-Wrac'h Port. Dining that evening at the 'Captain' we raise a toast to each other and *Pylades*. This is a nostalgic venue, as in this restaurant on the 3 June 33 years ago we celebrated our first open sea crossing from Baltimore on the Sabre 27, a voyage that was to be a milestone for our subsequent projects. The maître d' sensed our emotion and presented us with a 'Captain' T-shirt.



A setting at the Bar Tabac.

27 July: Via the Passage du Fromveur, we landed on Ushant. Two previous attempts had been aborted due to weather, so we finally got to go walkabout on this gorgeous island. The weather was forecast to go southwest so we ran for Camaret-sur-Mer. Subsequent to visiting our favourite sea-connected church we found a Bar-Tabac. These watering holes are our favourite, they generally avoid food, pretensions, and are inhabited by a rawer edge of French society. We have found them a great place for people watching. In many marinas the immediate surrounding are chic with yacht focused boutiques and restaurants. They are not the sort of environment to wallow in, find the soul of France, or imbibe. Thus, we raise our eyes to the heavens and search for the steeples of the town. We have found churches indicate the origins of a town, here one finds the cobbled square and alleys and the most likely location of the Bar-Tabac. We now concur that steeple-chasing is key in the pursuit of a decent pub! After carefully planning to pass south through the Raz de Seine, we do not get it quite right. We planned to arrive at slack water, and did, the eight knots before our arrival at the gate quickly turned to less than two, as we were struggling to leave. The white monsters tumbling in the race crept ever closer. We eventually slipped away, but next time will arrive with an hour of favourable tide to spare.

Tying at Audierne was quite an adventure. While we were cautiously preparing to raft, the dockmaster insisted we tie at a moored motorboat further downstream. Approaching, too late we saw the tide was ripping diagonally into the side of the motor boat which had a flared bow, we were trapped, we crashed. Two of our guardrails were badly bent and the motor boat was scuffed. The dockmaster disappeared like smoke. The harbour office called for

insurance papers; we were contemplating a call for the dockmaster's head but settled for stiff lectures on misdirection. After a few days relations settled, but on leaving, Katherine insisted that he tow us out and away from our overly intimate motor boat.

31 July: Concarneau, with so many boats to browse, is a fine walled town of many delights, but attempts to dine out were foiled by musak. Our final night saw a fiesta drowning the entire town in a million watts of drumming. At Port Louis on the entrance to Lorient, daughters Sarah and Vera (ICC) called, and we enjoyed a great evening in an adjacent restaurant.

The shallow bar at Étel is controlled by a signal station. When we called, they told us to follow the yacht in front - we love simple instructions. Vera and Sarah had been foil-boarding in the estuary and

Fergus et aperitif in Port Louis



Eyes on the Southern Ocean

spotted our arrival and were there to take lines at the pontoon. What service! They were camping nearby, and we shared drinks later in the Bar la Chat. Over the next few days, they dined on board and kept in touch, all very enjoyable.

9 August: We departed for La Trinité and La Crouesty, interesting towns with much to offer including steeple chasing. The skipper and crew spent time gazing at gigantic French racing machines and figuring out how to run one alone in the Southern Ocean! Edging out of our berth in Crouesty a young man called from a yacht offering to help in our departure from this crowded tight marina. On reflection, why did we agree to his help? From lessons learned we usually decline such well-meaning offers. It was something in his demeanour that told he was reading the situation well and indeed he did. Reality returned passing through the Golfe du Morbihan. Hundreds of boats from ferries to sailboards swished past in all directions. We zig zagged our way around mooring buoys, marks, rocks, rushing rips and islands towards Vannes. One had to keep a calm head and attempt to follow the collision regulations, something that all French sailors might not agree with. Met by a dory at Vannes port we were directed to a 'No Berth Sign' and tied at the office of the Capitainerie. Vannes is a fascinating walled town packed with beautifully appointed shops selling high-cost clothes from cheap labour countries. It has excellent patisseries, and bars, but not a tool shop in sight. A Pan-Celtic festival was in full swing with music of all kinds, some great and some not so.

19 August: Three days in the hot city encourages us back to sea, we anchor at Île de Houat, one of Brittany's 'secret' anchorages, with seventy-five other yachts! The weather was glorious, and the skipper jumped in many times over the two days. At Île de Groix there was a traffic queue, the harbour dory sorted each one out at a time. Directed to the inner harbour we tied to a wall; lines required adjustment to suit low water which was controlled by a sill. A French skipper rafted outside us at next high water. A

comment that his tight lines should allow for a falling tide brought a hostile response, 'I have been a sailing instructor in these waters for twenty years and I do not need your advice.' Later we found that indeed, he had slackened his shorelines. A gang of energetic young men had recognised our boat as a Van de Stadt and intercepted us in the local tavern. Two of them were building Van de Stadt yachts and the third a Wharram catamaran. Stories of our boat building and our meeting with James Wharram in London ensured a lively evening.

24 August: As we passed down the coast, we had requested costs from boat yards to dry store

Alongside at Vannes



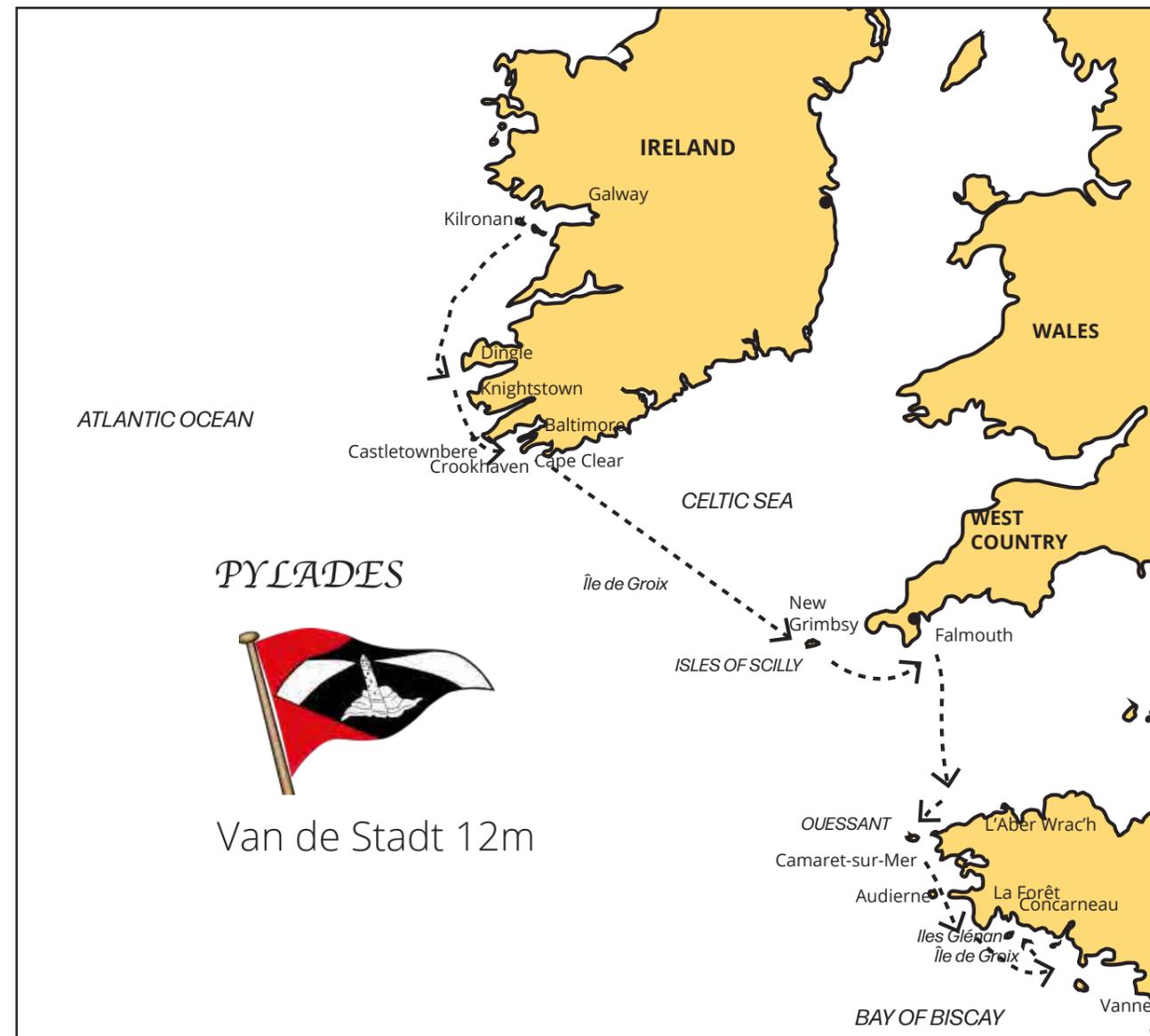
Pylades for eight months, the most reasonable appeared to be with PLYachting at Port La Forêt. We sailed back north to that marina. The next morning, we were boarded by daughter Sarah and her sons Ben and Finn and had a fine sail out to Îles de Glénan and anchor. Sarah lands on Penfret with the children while we plunge in the sparkling clear waters. Returning to La Forêt our visitors departed for home.

We commenced stripping the sails and winterising. As the work progressed, columns of black smoke rising ashore caught our attention. Horror of horrors, it was the sheds and offices of our destination boatyard, PLYachting. Four fire brigades attended, but most structures were destroyed. After panicking for a few days, we eventually met the shaken owner who assured us that all would be well, lift out and storage would proceed as planned. On the appointed day, *Pylades* was lifted, transported, power-washed and chocked in a most efficient manner. Eric, the boatyard owner assured us that the boat was safe and well cared for. This was the first time in 28 years since launching we had left the boat, ashore, in a foreign land. Feeling a bit deflated and emotional we caught a taxi to Quimper, and with trains, planes and buses found our way home. Our main consolation now, is when winter storms sweep over Dooneen we need not peer out into spume and rain to check on our beloved ship, *Pylades*.



Through the streets of Camaret-sur-Mer

Van de Stadt Boat Builders gathering on Île de Groix.



Fire engulfs the boatyard at Port La Forêt



Pylades High 'n Dry in Port La Forêt



Bimini or Cockpit tent? The first half of Norway

Matthew Wright



Blue Way under Spinnaker in Lysefjorden.

Amid the darkness of the winter months, there was much deliberation over this year's cruising plans. Debate centred around the temptation to mount the bimini and head south for an attempt at a Biscay crossing or packing the cockpit tent for the more temperate climes of the North Sea. After some conversation with ICC members and inspiration from previous logs, Dad was persuaded that we really needed to get some value for money from our new cockpit tent.

Blue Way departed Strangford Lough on Wednesday 11 June and thanks to Kyle who helped Dad with

the familiar run up the Down and Antrim coasts to Glenarm. We departed Irish shores on the morning of Saturday 14 June and circa 90% of the subsequent passage, as far as Banavie Top Basin in the Caledonian Canal, was endured through persistent precipitation. I could sense Dad's mutterings that we could be halfway to sunny Spain by now.

Not to worry, as I departed to Kildare, the rather uninspiring weather also took its leave of absence. Later that week, my brother Fraser, Mum and Dad transited the remainder of the Caledonian Canal in

a blaze of heat. Such was the turnaround that there was swimming at the Laggan Locks, the new BBQ was broken out at Fort William and dinner was served in the cockpit (without the need for a tent).

I returned to join Dad onboard *Blue Way* on Tuesday 24 June and we were pushed out of the Moray Firth by the outgoing tide early the next morning. We found Wick to be welcoming and functional before catching tide again the next morning, finishing up at the captivating Fair Isle. We enjoyed watching the island ferry being hauled out in a much more timely fashion than we manage the same operation with *Blue Way*.

Our next landfall in Lerwick, Shetland, saw the cockpit tent soon begin to earn its corn, as we spent a long weekend rafted alongside some friendly Scots who shared their experiences of two years in Norway. While a gale passed over us, we enjoyed excellent meals ashore at No.88 and The Dowry and we took the bus to Scalloway and walked to the lighthouse at the Point of the Pund. Fraser rejoined via rather expensive air travel to Sumburgh Airport on the Sunday night. The next morning there was a large film crew on the dock shooting the next series of *Shetland* as I struggled through my first 5km run of this year's cruise.

Nick & Fraser cooking Portugese steaks in Bergen.



The Norwegian courtesy flag emerges from hibernation

As we departed the small boat harbour on the morning of Tuesday 1 July the sun shone on the impressive National Geographic *Endurance*, a robust looking cruise liner with a distinct inverted bow designed for passage making in the polar regions. A W4 gradually receded throughout the morning and we had the perfect forecast to break out the spinnaker for the first time. The North Sea didn't seem so bad as we ran eastwards in t-shirts and shorts and conditions continued benign for much of the 180M passage.

Notably, I came up the companionway at midnight to find the lights dimmed and the horizon clearly in sight. We did get some more sailing as we closed on the mountainous Norwegian coast and landfall was made on the island of Fedje. The experience was quintessentially Norwegian, a seaward approach through a narrow and winding rock strewn channel into a protected lagoon bordered by waterside properties. We enjoyed what would be a rare meal out to mark the beginning of our Norwegian adventure.

The next day we had one of the most memorable sails of the cruise, a 25M spinnaker run in the flat waters of the Hjeltefjorden. It was like being back on the race track, playing wind shifts, dodging traffic and keeping *Blue Way* on her feet through the gusts. By mid-afternoon we were rafted alongside at the picture postcard Bergen Bryggen. Perennial crew member, Nick, arrived off a flight from Faro and came bearing the gift of four large Portuguese steaks which quickly made their way onto the BBQ. The evening finished with the novelty of shuffleboard in the sports bar overlooking the city centre harbour. Bergen is well known as the rainiest city in Europe and, true to form, Friday morning began damp and dreary. We did try to get our passports stamped at the police station but were told that we would have to go to Bergen Airport. Before lunch we made a short passage under the Askøy Bridge to the steep forested sides of Strusshamn, sitting out the 36 hours of unrelenting rain that followed. From there, we took a taxi to Bergen Airport and had no difficulty in clearing in.

The undulating landscape of the village of Strusshamn made our Saturday morning 5km run both wet and weary. Just as well there was plenty of Summer test rugby to pass the time as the cockpit tent repelled the rain. The Scandinavians are quite some way ahead of the sauna and plunge movement that is establishing itself in Ireland and the whole crew enjoyed a couple of visits to the floating sauna in the harbour.

The next morning we took the innermost lead on our passage north. Straumane translates as 'the currents' and describes the narrow and winding passages



Blue Way in Hestenesvågen

north from Alversundet to Fensfjorden. Under a blue sky, we negotiated the inaccurately charted entrance to the spectacular Hestenesvågen and we dropped our anchor in the middle of the innermost pool. This was the wild west of Norway, a deep water pool with the benefit of 360° protection provided by a mixture of spectacular green and barren rockface. We scrambled across the rocks and through the gorse for a swim at the next bay before returning to *Blue Way* for an idyllic night on board.

The King of the Fjords

Next morning we were up and away early to begin the climb up Norway's longest fjord, the mighty Sognefjord, with some of its branches stretching over 100M inland. 25° heat and a background of snow-capped mountains was all a bit surreal. The fjord narrowed as we turned into a branch known as Fjærlandsfjord. Here, the water had a distinctive green hue influenced by the glacial melt water flowing into the fjord.

The view from inside the sauna at Fjærland was quite something. *Blue Way*, tied alongside the pontoon, stood in front of a steep valley distinguished by an

arm of the Jostedalsglacier running down its face. The subsequent plunge from the roof of the sauna into the glacial fjord was definitely the coldest and most refreshing water we swam in. We had noticed a classic steamer standing off and, as we made the short walk back to *Blue Way*, two highly varnished launches, each with a crew in naval uniform, tied alongside. Next, a tinted glass mini transporter pulled up and the Norwegian Royal family stepped out, returning to their motor vessel *Norge* having visited the glacier museum as part of their summer holiday.

We set off the next morning on e-bike and foot aiming for the Supphellebreen glacier. We somewhat underestimated the 1000m ascent and it was over three hours before we reached the spectacular views from Flatbrehytta cabin. Later, a dip in the icy waters of the fjord eased the limbs before an excellent dinner with an even better view from the sitting room of the Fjærland Fjordstove Hotell.

On Wednesday 9 July, we proceeded deeper into the Sognefjord, tying alongside at the head of Aurlandsfjorden, and the busy town of Flåm. Whilst

the scenery remained stunning, I did not take to Flåm. The town was overrun by thousands of cruise ship passengers and it seemed that the various shops and eateries were established solely with this in mind. We were left wondering where was the real Flåm.

Dad, Nick and I departed in a rental car the next morning to Bergen Airport from where Nick would fly home to Dublin. At Hjellevstad, the Royal Yacht *Norge* came motoring into the bay fully dressed in international signal flags. The Norwegian Royal family duly disembarked and I was worried that their security team might think that they were being stalked by two Irish sailors. Mum landed later that afternoon and we took the scenic route back to Flåm.

Dawn to dusk blue skies continued and Friday morning brought us up the breathtaking Nærøyfjord, the most spectacular branch of the Sognefjord that we visited. It is easy to understand why it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site as it narrows to a mere 250m, shadowed by peaks rising to over 1700m. The tiny village of Bakka seemed a world away from Flåm, with its traditional white wooden-clad Norwegian church, blessed with the best view of any place of worship I have come across. We finished the day retreating down the Sognefjord to Vik where we accepted the hefty prices of a meal ashore to mark Fraser's last night on board, for now.

Fraser, Mum and I all managed a run the next morning before the mercury began to rise and it was,

once again, a day for the bimini, helpfully packed away in the loft at home. Fraser ended up jumping off the bow onto a private pier at the head of the

Blue Way at Kyrkøyna, Rutletangen



Nick, Matthew, Fraser and Graham at Supphellebreen glacier

Risnesjorden from where he caught a bus back to Bergen. That evening we anchored inside Kyrkøyna in the Rutletangen archipelago with a sunset backdrop over the wooded islands and hillsides.

A slower pace

I suspect there are a multitude of factors at play in determining wind in the fjords and we found it to be wholly unpredictable. At bed time there wasn't a breath and by 0300 there were 20kt gusts blowing through the narrow entrance to the anchorage. After some disturbed sleep, we made the most of the following breeze and enjoyed a sunrise run around the corner to Dingja. Next was the beautiful lagoon of Hardbakke where swimming continued to be a necessity to provide relief from the heat.

The pace and pattern of the next three days stand out as one of the many joys of cruising this particular coastline. The plethora of natural harbours, hidden pools and scattering of islands, all only a short distance apart, mean that passage making need not exceed a few hours each day. We enjoyed leisurely departures, lunchtime anchorages and a new destination each evening, enhanced by the benefits of continued high pressure.

Lunchtime anchorages included the complex maze of islands surrounding Ospå and the safe haven of Dombevågen, both of which were sufficiently complex to act as hiding places in WWII. Hamnaholmen provided another lunchtime stop where we swam within view of the towering Hornelen, Europe's highest sea cliff.

Leaving Ospå



Evening destinations started with Bulandet, marketed locally as 'Venice of the North', where I ran 5km among the winding and interconnecting islands. Next up was Kalvåg, which seamlessly combined its fishing harbour with an upmarket dockside restaurant. Further north was the car-free island of Silda where we enjoyed a modestly priced but excellent meal ashore at Skjærbuda, a former herring saltery standing in the middle of the harbour. The remarkable run of weather showed no signs of breaking and at 62° north we dug out fans from underneath the v-berth, last used in the Mediterranean.

North of Statt

Having been spoilt by the shelter of the fjords and outlying skerries since departing Bergen, a passage around the notorious headland of Statt (Stadlandet) now beckoned. This is a headland that was highlighted in every pilotage book and log I had managed to consume in researching this cruise. I would certainly not wish to be there in a gale but, such was the build-up, it felt like it would make Slyne look like a bath tub. Perhaps it is framed in this way since the inner leads of the remainder of the coast are so protected. Conditions were benign and we were pleased to see the 48M passage in the rear view mirror when we tied up in the pretty town of Ålesund.

Whatever it was about the streets of Ålesund, I managed my fastest 5km run of the cruise before Dad and I went door-to-door on the town's barber shops trying to find a reasonable price for a haircut.

The best we could do was the equivalent of a total of £59 which included an OAP discount for Dad. We tried to pick a moment when the sun was hidden behind the occasional cloud for our climb of the 418 steps to the viewpoint at the top of Mount Aksla. The intention was to now make for the much vaunted Geiranger fjord but local and pilot book advice suggested that the spike-like snow covered peaks of the Hjørundfjorden possessed the same dramatic scenery minus the cruise ships. Indeed, the scenery was of such magnitude that radio commentary of the Lions' first test v Australia was sufficient as we ran into the fjord. We hung a left into a side arm known as Norangsfjorden and tied up at Øye where swimming was the best source of refreshment. In the rather aristocratic Hotel Union Øye we were struck by the prices on the drinks menu which certainly included a premium for the view.

Next morning, we made a hefty 2M retreat to the town of Urke. It was a bit like base camp, with a busy campsite marking the beginning of several trails to the peaks of the surrounding Sunnmøre Alps. Unashamedly, we chose the smallest of the peaks, with a manageable 525m of altitude. The panoramic view from the top of Leknesnakken was a bit like standing at a crossroads, with clear views up and down the various branches of the sun-kissed fjord. At this point we needed to start to think about heading back south with some crew changes at Bergen in mind. That evening, we backtracked and finished up at the modern facilities of Sandshamn. Passing Statt the next day was eerily quiet and we enjoyed a lunch stop in view of the monastery at Klostersvågen before a further short hop to the village of Selje. This coastline has just about everything the cruising sailor could ask for but white sandy beaches are in shorter supply and so we took the opportunity to spend the late afternoon at Selje's pretty beach.

Same place, different views

We had now enjoyed over three weeks of stunning weather, perfect for showing off the magnificence of this coastline and ideal for keeping the cockpit tent buried under the forepeak. That said, wind had been at a scarcity. At least the cost of the greater fuel consumption was offset somewhat by diesel being duty free.

On Wednesday 23 July, a giant cruise liner chased us down Ulvesundet and we were grateful for the bridge at Måløy to prevent the ship and its hordes of passengers following us any further. In what felt like somewhat of a novelty, we unfurled the genoa as we headed east to tie up at the restored trading post of Rugsund. We found this an utterly charming location with a wooden staging and a small café amongst the very traditional Norwegian properties. In the afternoon I trailed



Patricia and Matthew at Hotel Union Øye

through meadow, across valleys and up the rockface to the top of Sundstua. The modest 549m climb gave a lot of bang for your buck in terms of panorama.

The next day was notable for two things with which we had become unfamiliar. Firstly, there were clouds in the sky, with the peak of the mighty Hornelen obscured as we passed. Secondly, there was a gentle breeze and we enjoyed a pleasant fetch southwards towards Florø. Here we enjoyed a meal ashore in the closest thing to a pub that we had encountered in Norway. It seems there isn't the same demand for hostelry in Norway which is unsurprising given the price of alcohol. Nevertheless, the fish and chips in Hjørnevikbua Pub felt a bit like home.

Having enjoyed a different inner lead south from Florø, we stopped for afternoon tea in Gladvær, another wholly protected deep water anchorage inside a maze of rocks. I found this one on the very useful 'Harbour Maps' app which provides drone photography, pilotage notes and a historical description of many anchorages. Later, the very pleasant berthing master at Skjerjehamn met us on his jet ski and politely explained that it would be the equivalent of £100 for the night if we wished to stay amongst the local boats enjoying a music festival. A polite no thank-you. Place names in Norway do not make easy work and to add to the confusion many places seem to have more than one name. We

Rugsund

subsequently finished the day at Kjelstraumen, also referred as Trollholmen or Ulvøyna!

We found the intricate navigation of the inner lead to add considerable interest to passages. We particularly enjoyed admiring the selection of Norwegian summer cabins that were creatively built into the surrounding rockface, many with a motorboat tied alongside a private dock. As we entered a particularly narrow channel in the Straumane on the morning of Saturday 26 July we met the express ferry coming charging towards us. It felt a bit like pulling into the hedge on a country road as we hugged the rockface while the ferry steamed past at 20+ kn flashing its lights in acknowledgement. Morning coffee was in the forested surrounds of Vestre Eidsvika, which had a rather torturous entrance, only to be recommended at 1kn of boat speed and with a rock spotter on the bow. Later on, we tied up in Litlebergen to spend the afternoon successfully fitting a replacement seal to a leaking raw water pump. That evening we tied alongside at the previously visited Strusshamn. We had just finished dinner when we had a knock on the hull and Mum peered through the saloon window to see two men in black uniforms looking over *Blue Way*. Two policeman had come alongside in the type of vessel that should probably not come as a surprise given Norway's sovereign wealth fund. After satisfactory inspection of our stamped passports they were quickly on their way. How grateful we were that we made that trip to Bergen Airport the last time we visited Strusshamn.

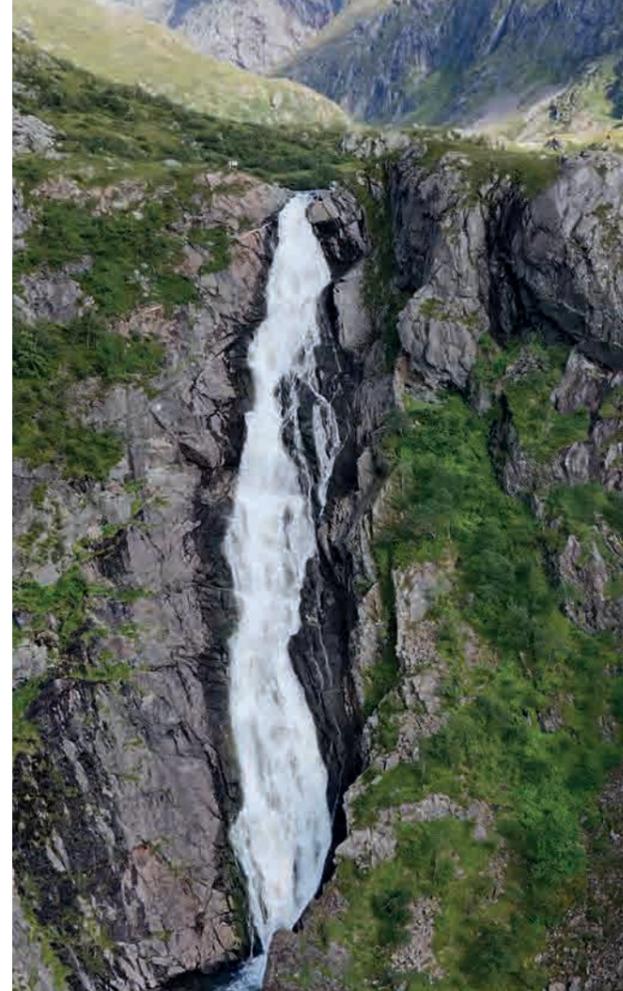
A new crew and a whirlwind

The next day, Mum and Dad stepped off in Bergen with the intention of taking the ferry back across to Askøy to their AirBnB. We had previously noticed that Norway is committed to Sunday observance and we should have known that the ferry would not be running. While Mum and Dad reverted to plan B on the bus, I was joined by seasoned campaigners Robert and Jonny, who arrived at Bryggen on e-scooters. First up was to walk the winding path

to the head of Mount Fløyen and an impressive view over the city. After taking the lazy option of the funicular back down, we were tempted by three whale steaks at the Byrggeloftet restaurant, they received unanimous approval. Robert claimed the winning honours on that evening's shuffle board in the sports bar.

With only three full days of leave granted by their respective spouses, Robert and Jonny were keen to pack in as much as possible. We headed south early the next morning to Våge from where we taxied to the starting point for a hike of Tysnessåto. In truth, we cheated a bit on the 753m ascent since the taxi seemed to do a good bit of climbing before we got going. Robert claimed to win the race to stake his flag at the top first. The 1,000 stone steps installed by Nepalese Sherpas meant there was also a race back to base, Jonny claiming the honours this time. Sails were aloft early on Tuesday 29 July as we took a shortcut through Lukksundet and the new crew were struck by the impressive landscape as we navigated the approaches of the Hardanger Fjord to Rosendal. With the benefit of a siesta under our belts, we ignored the advice of the tourist office and set out for the off-piste challenge of Ringeriksfossen waterfall.

There was no cheating in a taxi on this one and we had a 2km walk just to get to the beginning of the 450m ascent. A German couple advised that it was steep and we certainly needed the ropes that were in place to haul ourselves up. The path was lesser spotted and the drone was required at one point to reassure us we were on the right track. The view from the top, as water cascaded down, including one section with 100m of a fall, was worth the adventure. We were tempted by a group of more experienced climbers to complete a loop and return via the other side of the valley. This led to a lot of scrambling across loose boulders, traversing mini-valleys and a preference to look up rather than down. When we did return to ground level, Jonny insisted on turning the 2km return leg into a race. I managed to redeem myself on the flat.



Can you spot Jonny, Robert & Matthew at the top of Ringeriksfossen waterfall?

Two climbs in two days had taken its toll and Wednesday wasn't quite as high octane. On a windless morning we made passage to the Austevoll Archipelago, rafting alongside in the new guest harbour in Bekkjarvik. Austevoll is marketed as a region to 'enjoy the good things in life' and sitting having a drink on the terrace of the charming old harbour in Bekkjarvik certainly felt that way. In the evening we made passage to Hjeltestad where a sauna helped loosen out the stiff legs on board. Robert and Jonny departed early the next morning and I welcomed Mum & Dad back onboard with Fraser rejoining from Dublin via Edinburgh. We stayed the night at Bergen Sailing Club, a very useful location for crew changes given its proximity to Bergen Airport. Mum taxied to the airport early on Friday 1 August to conclude her Norwegian adventure.

Less sunscreen but more sailing- Fraser and I rigged spinnaker sheets with the promise of NW 4 gusting to 5. Dad, reluctantly, excavated the spinnaker from underneath the forepeak and when the fresh breeze rapidly filled the kite's broad shoulders we set off for a sleigh ride down the Lysefjorden at over 8kn. After a surprisingly neat drop, we headed down the Selbjørnsfjorden into a North Sea swell under main and stay sail. The 24m bridge at the narrow entrance to Gisøysund did not prove a problem but the 8kn speed limit did and we powered underneath to tie up

OPPOSITE: Robert Jonny Matthew at peak of Tysnessåto

at the rather rickety floating stage at Brandasund.

Brandasund felt like authentic Norway. Too many ferries and bridges for the average tourist to get there and not accessible to the cruise ship circuit, it is left for the cruising sailor to enjoy. There was a traditional grocery store, run by its seafaring proprietor, with a nautical themed bar and restaurant upstairs. After a short hike to Gisøya lookout and a drink on the balcony, the penetrating North Sea swell forced us to press on deeper into the Bømlo Archipelago. The pilotage was fascinating and we weaved our way through narrow channels around the island of Goddo to a sheltered lagoon at Barmane.

Norway's wealth is obvious by its infrastructure but the government has also chosen to invest in facilities to encourage outdoor adventure. Barmane had a brand new floating concrete pontoon, against which we found excellent shelter from the now gale force NW. At its head, a junction marked the beginning of a series of trails in different directions across Goddo. We chose a short evening walk up wooden steps to the 'Kurebu', a recently built day trip cabin located at the top of the hill with a wood burning heater, books to read and an outdoor toilet. The next morning we walked another well marked trail, to the outdoor recreation area of Plassaholmen. Here there was another two pontoons, an enclosure for BBQing and an overlooking hammock in the trees. All of these facilities were found in excellent condition and are available for boaters and hikers to use free of charge.

On Saturday afternoon we retraced our path around the south end of Goddo where rock dodging demanded more of our attention than the Lions' third Test v Australia. We raced down the Stokksund under genoa against a large Bavaria, beating him to Sagvåg. Norway is the world's largest producer and

Fraser in the nautical themed bar at Brandasund





Blue Way bows-to at Skipavik Huftarøy

exporter of salmon and Fraser BBQ'd a few delicious steaks under yet another blue sky. The next day was a stark contrast and we made a short hop around the industrial coast of Stord to the large town of Leirvik where we sat out a grey and dank day.

With Storm Floris tracking over Ireland, and Norway now in its sights, we needed to find a safe haven to hole up for a day or two. The next morning, in the calm before the storm, we finally got a chance to deploy our new Fortress kedge anchor. Skipavik is a deep water lagoon on the south side of the island of Huftarøy and is another council resourced outdoor area. A couple of friendly Norwegians guided us towards a short wooden jetty and, while I laid out the kedge, Fraser jumped off at the bow to make fast to a couple of rings. Morning tea and buns on the rocks felt truly Scandinavian.

Having been quite impressed with the delights of

Bekkjarvik on my previous visit, I thought it might be a good choice to sit out Storm Floris. We found more sherpa steps to the 'gapahuk', a newly installed wooden shelter, at the top of Kongsfjellet (185m). After dinner on board, and with close to 40kn gusting over the breakwater, we went in search of a local hostelry.

Our search stumbled upon an impressive art gallery over-looking the old harbour. The host was keen to chat and turned out to be a member of a family with a prominent fishing and property business in the town. Upon realising that we had come by sea, all the way from Ireland, the very kind Ella insisted that her husband would take us onboard the family's flagship vessel, *F/V Slaatterøy*, the largest pelagic fishing vessel in Norway. We had a fascinating evening, guided around the ship by the chief engineer. It must be said, we found the Norwegian people to be most

Graham, Matthew, Fraser and Chief Engineer F/V Slaatterøy.



welcoming over the course of the cruise. Tuesday 5 August was wet, windy and altogether forgettable, a day for the cockpit tent. On Wednesday morning we buried the toe rail, under a reefed mainsail, to fetch through the Austevoll archipelago and back North as far as Bergen Sailing Club. Unfortunately, Fraser's time was up but we were delighted to be joined by David on board *Blue Way* that evening.

Season's end

At this point, our luck had run out with the weather but the fresh southerlies made for easy passage to Bergen on Thursday and, with a handkerchief of genoa, as far as Eivindvik on Friday. The forecast promised a gap in the rain early on Saturday morning and by 0815 we had climbed up to Dagsturhytta cabin to enjoy breakfast overlooking Gulafjorden. The previously visited Dingja provided hospitable shelter for the remainder of the day and a good base for a final 5km run of this cruise.

We were thrilled to see the sun again on Sunday morning and, as we reached across the entrance to Sognefjord, I couldn't resist the temptation of adding some more drone footage to a growing album. Unfortunately, the drone was to receive a rather unceremonious burial at sea as it suffered catastrophic engine failure during take-off. A thrilling fetch to the conspicuous Alden helped us overcome this sobering loss.

It must be said, if combining sailing with hiking is your thing, then the west coast of Norway is the destination. We found so many harbours marking the beginning of spectacular hiking trails. Aldevågen was yet another example where we hiked the 481m to the top of Den Norske Hesten. On this occasion, our planned panoramic picnic was entirely ruined by

the damp cloud that clung stubbornly to the peak. Of course, by the time we had enjoyed the customary post hike swim and motored across to Hamnen on Værlandet there wasn't a cloud in sight.

Hamnen provided perfect shelter from a short lived SW gale. After a stop in Askvoll on Monday, I was determined to see the final member of our downwind wardrobe aloft and so the gennaker, with its various shades of blue, powered us north towards the outer islands of Kinn and Reksta. Rognaldsvågen was to be our last new port of this year's cruise and, in many ways, reflective of our Norwegian adventure. A warm welcome in a well-sheltered and deep-water harbour with mountainous views from the cockpit and good walking on our doorstep. Later that evening we had one final sail to return us to the Hjørnevikbua Pub in Florø.

David, very kindly, helped us to dismantle *Blue Way* the following day before we motored the short distance to Kinn Marina on the morning of Thursday 14 August. I had sent countless emails to yards along this coast looking for indoor winter storage, Kinn Marina was the only yard that I could persuade to be bothered with a sailboat and *Blue Way* is snug inside their large 'Båthotell'.

And so we called half-time on our Norwegian adventure. For over six weeks of cruising, plus the passage out, the log read 1573M. This mileage, I feel, places the Norwegian coast within reach of Irish waters for an achievable yet adventurous summer cruise. The prolonged period of good weather through July proved to be the icing on the cake. And yes, the conservatory of the cockpit tent was appreciated, but not mounting the bimini stands as the most significant oversight.

Blue Way in Barmene Goddo



Gallery



Blue Way Nærøysund



Graham Nick and Fraser Swimming at Hille.



Blue Way at Hornelen



Blue Way at Urke



Back to the Hebrides

Viv White



Viv on watch



Following an invitation from the Cruising Club of America to the Irish Cruising Club to join their Western Isles cruise in company we agreed to take *Ballyclaire* to Scotland once again. This time we were lucky to have two good friends on board who joined us for the trip, Bob Brown and Derek Jones, both ICC members and skippers in their own right.

Bob was tied up with meetings for a week so the two Dereks and I departed Strangford Harbour on 10 July an hour before low water. As we approached the Bar Buoy motor sailing, we were met by thick fog which persisted until we crossed Belfast Lough. Off South Rock the skipper checked the engine compartment to discover that lots of seawater was leaking through the prop shaft Deep Sea Seal. We reduced revs and considered abandoning the trip. A draught of wind filled in off Portavogie and we were able to pull out the headsail and stop the engine. With the engine

stopped the water ingress also stopped and the skipper was assessing our options. He suddenly remembered that the inboard seal needed a 10mm thrust against the plate to maintain pressure and it may have moved. He slackened off the shaft jubilee clips and with crew carefully applying the correct pressure on the seal with the boathook the jubilee clips were tightened. To the relief of all this solved the problem and not a drip from the shaft seal since. Thankfully the rest of the trip was trouble free and we tied up on Rathlin island at 1930.

11 July - Rathlin Island

Next morning we cleared Rathlin at 1200 and motored to the Ardmores on Islay, one of our favourite anchorages. We spent a peaceful night in this wonderful spot watching the seals and birds and savouring the solitude.

12 July - Ardmores Islands

On a glorious 12th we lifted our anchor and weaved our way out of the Ardmores pool. Despite knowing the passage very well the skipper forgot about the small shoal at the north end of the passage as we normally continue north. The lesson is do not cut the corner at the north end of the passage as we did. Luckily only a small chip was removed from *Ballyclaire's* keel. We picked up a mooring on Gigha at 1530 and were happy to eat on board and enjoy a small malt before bed.

We spent the next three days on Gigha as our son and family had brought their new motorhome to the Gigha campsite. They were having a ball riding their bikes over this lovely island and swimming off the many beaches. Our granddaughter was badly stung by a jellyfish lurking in seaweed and was in great distress. Her young brother bravely offered to pee on the sting but his kind offer was refused. She still bears the marks on her arm but was back in the

White family on Gigha



The Skipper

water next day. We took everyone out for a fishing trip but no luck so bought scallops from the Nook which our skipper cooked and we devoured. That evening we tied alongside the pontoon and dined in the Boathouse where the food was lovely but quite expensive. That night the wind increased dramatically and we had to double warp and adjust fenders well into the night. I had forgotten the joys of a sleepless night and a bleary-eyed morning.

16 July - Gigha

We cleared Gigha at 0830 heading towards Oban. We had light northerly winds and flat seas so motor sailing again. Around 1300 our old diesel bug reappeared and clogged the main fuel filters. We limped into Lussa Bay which has always been one of our favourite anchorages and had lunch. After the skipper changed all the filters and got us running again we took the fair tide up the Sound of Luig and anchored in Ardnencaple Bay. This was our first time in the bay and with the southerly wind direction found it much more pleasant and scenic than the other option Puilladobhrain.

17 July - Ardnencaple Bay

We had a late breakfast and lifted our anchor at 1300 and motor sailed towards Oban up Kerrera Sound. We luckily found a space on the Oban Transit pontoon which was now full of very large expensive yachts. The CCA had produced a very extensive Cruise Book which contained pictures of yachts and crew attending the rally and with this we were able to recognize and exchange greetings with several of the American crews and others who were joining the cruise. Sadly, the rain began to fall and we all retreated to



Skipper's favourite Oban watering hole

the shelter of our respective cockpits. Later we were invited on board *Lyric* by Tom and Patty Ray CCA and we sampled several malts they had bought to date and all agreed that they were very acceptable

17 July - Oban

Most of the American yachts made their way to Kerrera early but we potted up to Tesco where we bought a ridiculous amount of food as was evident from the face of the taxi driver who transported our groaning trolleys back to the marina. As usual our huge shop was miraculously stowed in *Ballyclaire's* many lockers and bilges and our wee boat was neat and tidy again. Bob Brown arrived and our crew was complete. That evening the young Whites took us out to the fleshpots of Oban where we dined and danced in Markie Dan's but were still tucked up in our bunks by 2300.

We were up early on the 18 July and motored across to Kerrera where we were greeted by three charming men who took our warps and welcomed us to the rally. The marina was quite a spectacle with so many yachts dressed overall and sailors strolling up and down the pontoons greeting friends and making new friends. I was delegated to trot up to the big mast shed where Barbara Watson was holding court, handing out our goody bags and rally caps and dealing with many issues with her usual good humour and efficiency. Following the many speeches of welcome that evening we had our first cruise dinner which was a wonderful buffet of seafood, meats, salads and vegetables. We were assigned a table with a charming American family who had chartered a local yacht *Iota*



Some ICC Members at the Kerrera Reception



Sandy Taggart and Viv

and we thoroughly enjoyed their company. We were delighted to catch up with our old friends, Christine and Sandy Taggart, stalwarts of the Clyde Cruising Club, whom we have known for many years. Sandy was as usual dressed in full CCC rig. Note the size of the Kerrera whisky containers.



Visions of Johanna and Ballyclaire

20 July - Kerrera

Up early to blue skies and bacon baps courtesy of the rally. Left Kerrera in a flat calm but wind arrived and we had a very pleasant sail up the Sound of Mull arriving in Tobermory at 1330. Many of the rally yachts were on the pontoons and we socialized with our neighbours. The weather was sizzling hot and we sheltered under the bimini unlike our last visit to Tobermory, when we endured howling winds and torrential rain. I ventured to the Co-op (yes, we needed more food and the skipper had run out of port) and chatted to a local lady who informed me that a new series of *Balamory* was being filmed in the village. I had always loved watching this children's series. When I gleefully told my grandchildren the good news they looked at me and said kindly 'that's nice Granny'.

21 July - Tobermory

Lots of activity on the pontoon as we made our way to Loch Sunart to prepare to join the *Sunflower*. A steady drizzle had begun and soon became a downpour. We were invited to raft up alongside *Visions of Johanna*. This was a very sleek American yacht owned by Bill and Johanna Strassburg. They had called into Strangford Lough in June on the way to the rally and we welcomed them. Trying to raft alongside this craft was not easy with various organisers in dinghies shouting contrary instructions.

We did feel very small, our 34' alongside their 65'. When boats began to blow their horns and cheer, we gathered that the *Sunflower* was complete. The crew of *Ballyclaire* and *Visions of Johanna* were distinctly underwhelmed as we had not yet made fast and the rain was quite heavy. Immediately after the horns blew the yachts abandoned the *Sunflower* and all the various boats dispersed to their chosen anchorages. Out came the malt. We were invited to dine on *VOJ* and had a wonderful evening with them and their very varied crew. We discovered a mutual liking for the Eagles and sang *Hotel California* very badly. Not to be outdone Bob Brown recited/sang *The Old Orange Flute*.

A good Scottish forecast





Lady Pipers welcome

22 July - Drumbuie

We left Loch Sunart in the rain and made a long miserable passage to Canna. Of course, the Skipper insisted on toasting the Ardnamurchan lighthouse keeper. We were able to sail but the seas were very big and we were uncomfortable. We anchored at 1530 feeling very tired and cold. So cold we had to have a wee dram to cheer and warm us up. The skipper made a tasty chicken curry and to my amazement Bob fell asleep while eating. We gently tucked him into his bunk and quietly put ourselves to bed.

23 July - Canna

We woke to grey skies and a chorus of howling seals. Quite atmospheric if you like that kind of morning. We lifted our anchor at 1100 and spotted a minke whale as we left the anchorage. Bob also spotted a sea eagle in Loch Harport. Full oilskins for the trip and it was somewhat galling to be overtaken at speed by Peter Killen on *Pure Magic Too* with the crew waving gaily from their cosy saloon. We tied up on the pontoons in Loch Harport at 1520 and were joined by ICC members Anthony and Aisling McCarthy on *Salut*. They came aboard for a delicious duck dinner cooked by Bob.

Later in the evening the skipper produced his squeeze box and Anthony his guitar and in no time, we had a raucous singsong with many people trying to join the party and even more listening on the pontoon. I think at one stage we had 20 on board and I was thrilled when Lena from *Locheil Lady CCC*, sang Lizzie Lindsay, one of my favourite Scottish songs. In true Irish fashion we kept everyone awake and only stopped singing when the band got tired.

Next morning Skipper and ICC Commodore Alan Markey liaised with the Talisker distillery staff as the ICC were hosting the event. Our slot in the distillery was for 1330. Of course, we had a jolly time and enjoyed tasting several malts. We were then treated to a fine lunch with generous helpings of oysters.

26 July - Loch Harport

The weather forecast for the next few days was a bit uncertain in terms of wind strength and knowing the Vatersay anchorage our Skipper was a bit concerned with anchoring space in lively conditions. After weather, wind and sea condition checks on the various phones we collectively decided not to go to Vatersay and ran for shelter in the Sound of Sleat where there would be many choices of anchorages and visitors' moorings. Mallaig was also a bolt hole if necessary. We left Talisker at 1000 in fair conditions and had a wonderful day's sailing along the south coast of Skye. The crew were warm and happy and *Ballyclaire* was charging along singing her own song through the rigging. We picked up a visitor's mooring in Armadale, dined on tender steaks and good red wine and were rocked to sleep by gentle waves.

26 July - Armadale

We awoke to thick mist so skipper cooked boiled eggs and bacon for breakfast to lift our spirits. Left Armadale at 1030 and motor sailed up the coast to Isleoransay where we picked up a visitor's mooring in Camas nam Mult. We were very well sheltered and spent a very wet day reading and snoozing which passed the time nicely. Skipper of course was playing with his multimeter looking for an annoying loose connector on the instruments and for other things to fix.

27 July - Isleoransay

Another very very wet morning which slowly improved and towards noon we were delighted to see *Reespray* coming out of the mist of the Kyle Rea towards us skippered by our dear friend and past commodore David Beattie and his motley crew. They rafted alongside and when the sun appeared Harry Whelehan served pink gins and canapes followed by lunch on *Ballyclaire*. We managed to lose the day very nicely. No Sunday would be complete without the traditional *Ballyclaire* leg of lamb. An early bed was in order and *Reespray's* lights were off well before ours.

28 July - Isleoransay

We awoke to a very pleasant morning and motor-sailed towards Tobermory. We were joined by a huge pod of dolphins and I think they were enticed by the aroma of sizzling sausage baps drifting from the galley. The baps were served with the traditional *Ballyclaire* dram to toast the Ardnamurchan lighthouse keeper. We tied up on the fuel berth at 1500 and moved to the inner pontoon which was very sheltered. *Reespray* appeared shortly after us and after cocktails on board we repaired to the Macgochan's Pub where a fine dinner was consumed over several pints and many exaggerated tales of past nautical exploits from the various skippers. A whisky tasting was suggested but only the very brave or foolhardy took part.

29 July - Tobermory

Bob and I hit the Co-op for more food and had to fight our way through the crowds of campers also replenishing their stocks. I accidentally bought

David Beattie thanks CCA





Lots of ICC scarves

crunchy nut cornflakes with chocolate bits and realised to our horror that we all loved them. We won't tell our children! We departed Tobermory at 1300 and motored down the Sound of Mull to Loch Aline, our skipper fishing. He caught three mackerel which we ate for lunch in the warm sunshine. It is such a lovely anchorage and also one of our favourites.

30 July - Loch Aline

With blue skies and a quiet sea we had a very pleasant trip down the sound and tied up in Kerrera at 1230. This was the final day of the rally and we had lady pipers to greet us on going ashore and several bars serving exotic drinks.

Once again there were pizza, burger and seafood options and later Scottish dancing in the huge mast shed. Lots of speeches by the various cruising club commodores. David Beattie made the response speech to the CCA as Alan Markey had returned to Ireland after Vatersay.

I presented an ICC scarf to Elizabeth Gowell, Barbara Watson and to several other lovely American ladies we had met over the course of the rally. All of the ICC members of the nine ICC boats who attended the rally were full of praise for the arrangements and attention to detail by the CCA cruise committee.

1 August - Kerrera

Storm Floris was forecast for the following four or five days. We discussed options of either heading into the shelter of Loch Melfort until it passed or running for Ireland. The final decision was to head for Ireland as far as we could get over the coming days as both Bob and Derek had commitments at home.

We left at 0800 in fine drizzle but the weather gradually improved and we had a fabulous sail to the Ardmores Islands, dropping our anchor in the inner pool at 1640. We saw several pods of very large dolphins en route. Only one other yacht joined our anchorage, *Greenheart* CCC, who were on their way back to the Clyde. I woke during the night and was enchanted by the starry sky and black rocks against the silver sea as *Ballyclaire* gently grumbled on her anchor. The old cliché but still true - this is why we go to sea.

1 August - Ardmores Islands

We had the anchor up by 0800 and motor-sailed to Bangor arriving into the marina at 1930. A long slog and only enlivened by another main fuel filter blockage off the Maidens which was quickly sorted by our skipper who had rigged up an emergency bypass to the fine engine filter. What would we have done if our esteemed skipper was not an engineer and knows the *Ballyclaire* systems like the back of his hand? In Bangor Marina we found lots of rally participants but our crew were partied out - we had some dinner and retired.



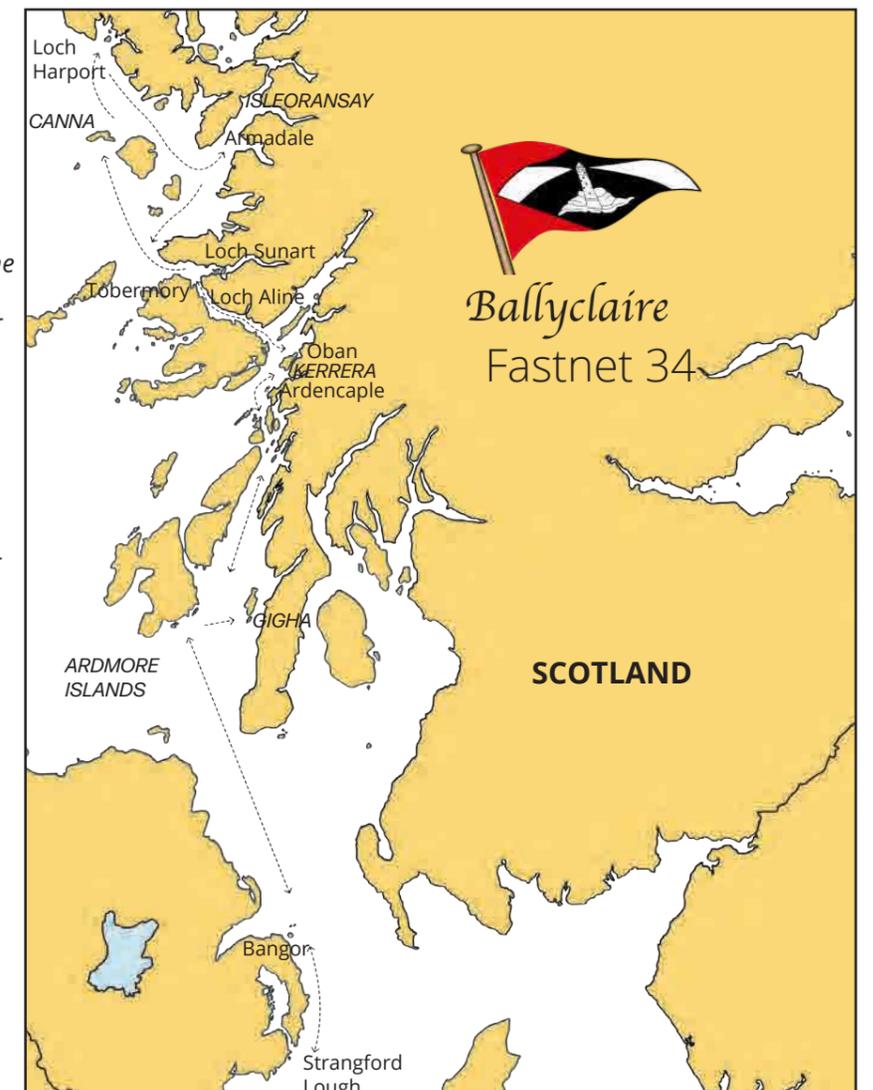
Bob, Derek, Skipper and Viv

2 August - Bangor

On leaving Bangor Marina we said goodbye to Anthony and Aisling McCarthy on *Salut* and to CCA commodore Jay Howell on *Moonstone* and his VC Chase Anderson on *Bonnie Rye*. We got the tides right for Donaghadee Sound and motored towards Strangford Lough through very lumpy head seas. We crossed Strangford Bar at 1500 as the tide turned in our favour.

We drank a dram on our way up the Narrows and our son Jamie took our lines as we arrived on the pontoon at 1550. As usual we did not want to leave the boat until we had toasted our trip and thanked *Ballyclaire* for taking us there and home safely.

Storm Floris arrived the next day.





Radiance II cruises to Sardinia

Peter Maher

Cala Figuera with Radiance II stern to the pier wall

2025 was our first full season in the Mediterranean with *Radiance II* having spent three years cruising the eastern Atlantic islands of the Canaries, Madeira and Azores. In Autumn 2024 we cruised the Balearic Islands and then returned south to Marina de Bajadilla in Marbella for the winter.

The plan was to sail north to Valencia, berth there for three weeks, then return in May for cruising in Mallorca before sailing to Sardinia in late May. After four weeks of cruising southern Corsica and northern Sardinia we intended to sail south for July and August hardstanding in Carloforte on Isola di San Pietro in the southwest of Sardinia. The Autumn plan was to return to *Radiance II* in early September, continue anti-clockwise around Sardinia and up the east coast of Corsica, and then, finally, make a 400M October passage to Port di Ragusa in southern Sicily for wintering through 2026.

The Spring and Summer plans came to fruition but a chronic lower back problem for the skipper meant an extended stay in the boatyard in Carloforte with only

a few days sailing to a winter berth in Castelsardo enjoyed in late October.

Marbella to Calpe

So, the first leg of the season was to sail the 300M from Marbella up to Valencia in early April. For this passage, I had a highly experienced crew in veteran ICC member Guy Johnson and Malahide/Howth sailor, Dave Owens. This leg threw up three mechanical issues to test the resolve for the season. The first was a sea water pump leak discovered in port. The impeller installation was the obvious suspect but it turned out to be a seal at the back of the pump with new seals to be ordered by the helpful Marbella Marina Boatyard.

Late afternoon on 2 April we departed Marbella for the 100M passage to Almerimar with a one hour stop 20M down the coast at Benalmádena to pick up some forgotten essentials. We slipped our lines at 2100 for the night passage to Almerimar. The passage was downwind with winds blowing up to F4 and we settled into our 2.5 hour watch system. During the night, I discovered a second mechanical issue - the

alternator was not charging. This would need fixing in Almerimar but was not a problem for the immediate passage because of the 720 amp battery bank which was more than adequately charged for the overnight power draws.

Early morning on the 2 April, we tried out the new gennaker set up. Over the previous winter, I had put the sail on a furler with a torsion cable in a fixed luff sleeve and a robust Ubi Maior ratchet furler supplied by UK Sailmakers. Some downwind capability has been lost with the straight luff but the ease of hoisting the furled sail on the bowsprit before leaving port means the sail will be deployed more frequently.

We arrived into Almerimar c. noon on Wednesday 2 April. An investigation of the alternator, and a call to the Balmar help desk in the United States, revealed that parts for that series were no longer in production and that the alternator was beyond repair. A standard 65 amp alternator, which I had purchased in Waterford in 2018, was reinstalled and all was sorted. I was glad finally to see the end of the pricey, underwhelming Balmar alternator with its temperamental external regulator.

At 0630 on 4 April, we slipped our lines and departed for Valencia 250M away. Sunrise saw us sailing under main and gennaker for some hours but for most of the day we alternated between motor sailing and sail only. Just before sunset, we encountered our final mechanical issue - failed steering. We deployed the emergency tiller and quickly found the cause of the failure - a rod end on the Whitlock steering had worn. We repaired it best we could and on we continued.



RIGHT: ICC veteran, Guy Johnson, presenting the skipper with the ICC Club colours



Healthy snacks for crew on passage to Calpe

For the next five or six hours we sailed and motor-sailed on a run/broad reach with a preventer securing the boom on the port side. By 0100 we were experiencing heavy commercial traffic rounding Cabo de Palos near Cartagena. Around 0400, we jibed and lay a course for Cap Negre 75M to the northeast.

During the following day, it became apparent that there was no berth available for a three week period in any of the marinas in Valencia so I opted for a berth in Real Club Nautico Calpe, south of Valencia.

The Club has a magnificent setting, at the foot of the Peñon de Ifach, a 330m towering limestone rock, at the quieter end of the town. The facilities are excellent and it is a very relaxing place. After nine days of good sailing, fun and dining, skipper and crew departed *Radiance II* on 8 April for Valencia airport for our onward journeys home.

Calpe to the Balearic Islands

I returned to the boat on 27 April and was joined by my wife Ruth and my brother Conor. An interesting



Real Club Nautico Calpe at the foot of Peñon de Ifach

experience was encountered the next day when the entire Iberian peninsula power grid went down. Rarely has the butane gas stove on *Radiance II* been appreciated as much.

The weather had turned by 29 April which delayed our departure to Formentera in the Balearics, 64M ENE of Calpe. We got going early on 1 May and had quite an unpleasant passage through an unsettled sea. We planned to take a mooring buoy in Badia de s'Alga off the island of S'Espalmador but it was early season and they were not in place yet. We anchored instead.

The plan the following day was to weigh anchor at 1730 and sail through the night to arrive up the east coast of Mallorca. However, there were lightning warnings from all of the Predictwind weather models for that evening and night. That prompted us not to be the only boat on anchor and instead we sailed the short distance up to Ibiza town, staying in one of the marinas.

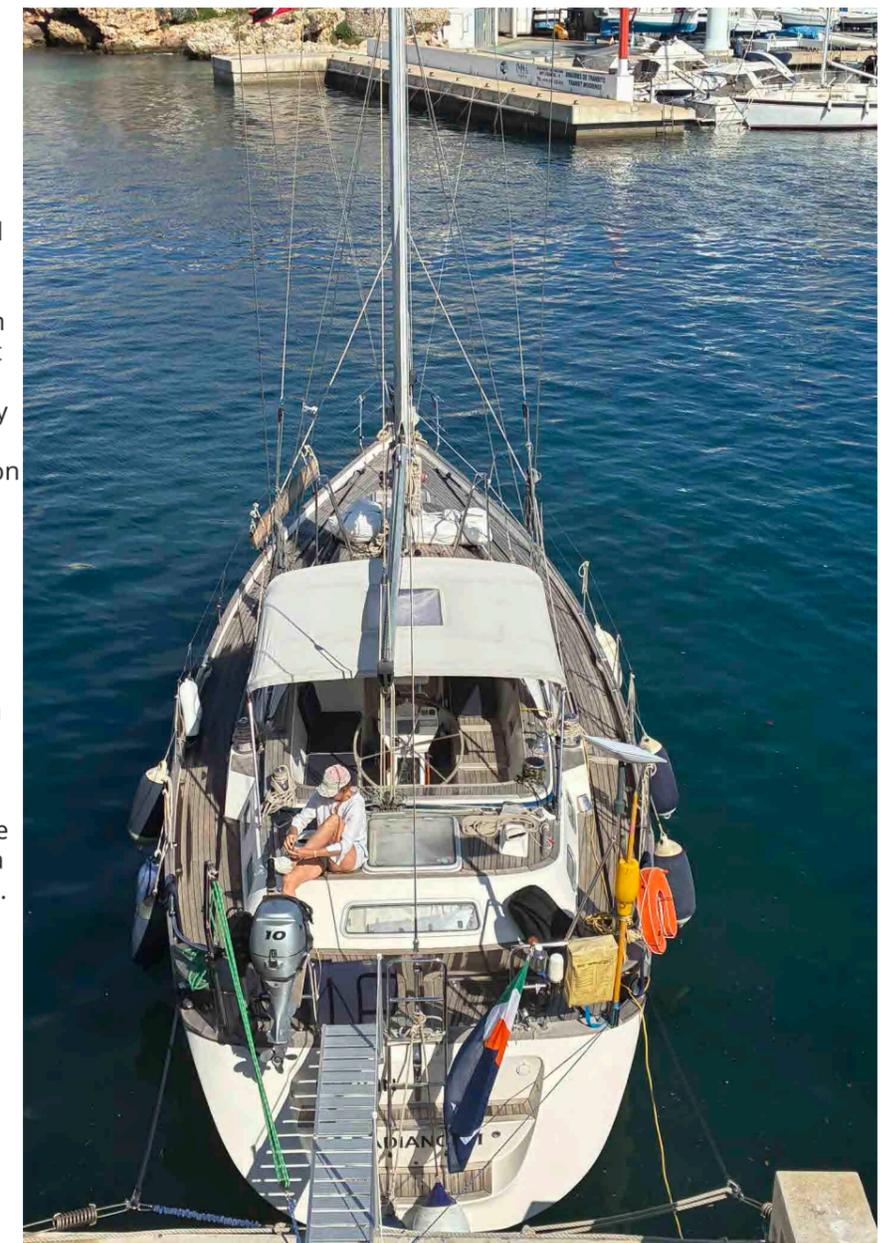
The updated Predictwind models at 2130 were no longer forecasting lightning, so we planned a 0330 departure on 3 May for the 80M passage to Cala Figuera on the SE of Mallorca. Although the weather models were all free of warnings, the early hours of that passage did provide an impressive electrical display in the skies astern.

Thanks to our Starlink, we tuned in, on passage, to the Champions Cup semi-final between Leinster v. Northampton and shared in the disappointment of many Leinster fans.

Mallorca & Menorca

We entered Cala Figuera that afternoon, a beautiful creek part fjord. IB Ports, the State owned entity that runs various ports and marinas in the Balearic Islands, operates the pier wall with room only for a few yachts. With the underwater ledge near the rudder and the constant swell, taut lazy lines and vigilance are essential. It is not a place I would leave a boat unattended for long. Conor departed here.

On 4 May Ruth and I had a short downwind sail to Portocolom. IB Ports have laid floating pontoons here. Ashore, we enjoyed the town and the fine walks and beaches available. Bar Blau Restaurant beside l'Arenal Cove, became a favourite serving the best



Radiance II berthed in Cala Ratjada

paella of the cruise. Cala Marçal is a fine beach, half an hour's walk from the pontoons.

Cala Ratjada was the next stop. It is the most northeasterly of the marinas in Mallorca operated by IB Ports. It is prone to swell which can make it uncomfortable but the showering facilities are new, the mariners are helpful and the town is an interesting spot with lots of good restaurants. There is a huge German tourist population. We loved the proximity of a magnificent beach - Cala Gat - 10 minutes from the pier wall.

On 6 May we carried on to Port de Pollença on the NW corner with variable winds of 4-24 knots and a 2m beam sea making it uncomfortable at times. The town is charming, with a good bus service to the beautiful inland cultural town of Pollença which is a must see. *Radiance II* berthed there for the full five



Chris Howard and Peter Morrissey on passage with skipper to Maó-Mahón, Menorca

nights, the maximum allowed at any one time by IB Ports.

By 11 May, we were on our way again, retracing our steps eastward to Cala Ratjada for a second visit and then south to a new location – Porto Cristo. We noted soon after arrival a number of people on the pier wall beside us taking photographs of a 24m black hulled power catamaran, *Great White*, opposite us. This was the hometown of tennis star Rafael Nadal, and the cat was his toy.

Ruth departed from here but new sailing crew, Peter Morrissey and Chris Howard, were soon to arrive. We provisioned the boat and headed for Maó-Mahón in Menorca. We had a pleasant sail over. Marítimo in Mahón is an attractive base.

Ruth and Peter on the city walls of Alghero



Maó-Mahón to Alghero (Sardinia)

At 0700 on 20 May we cleared Mahón destined for Alghero, 190M to the NE. A fresh breeze pushed us along on a port broad reach during the morning at 5-8 kts before dropping. We unfurled the gennaker but eventually resorted to the engine and motor sailed for most of the evening and through the night at 7-8 knots. Wave height was 2m + on the aft beam making for an unpleasant roll throughout the evening and night. Around midnight the wind veered and we gybed, finding comfort and a direct course for Alghero. Making good speed, we arrived before 1400.

Alghero, known as 'Little Barcelona', is a great town with direct Ryanair flights from Dublin throughout the Summer. We berthed at Ser Mar Marina on the northern side.



Radiance II on a mooring buoy in Cala d'Oliva, Asinara National Park

Northern Sardinia and Southern Corsica

After a week back in Dublin, I returned on 7 June with Ruth and a friend, Eilis Tobin. We sailed north and through the Fornelli Passage to Asinara National Park picking up a mooring buoy in Cala d'Oliva. This place is stunningly beautiful. We went ashore in the dinghy and visited the old penal colony prison, Fornelli Prison, which was converted to a high-security facility for mafia bosses and political prisoners in the 1970s and 1980s.

On 8 June we sailed south to Castelsardo, a popular tourist town with its medieval charm and stunning coastal views. The marina is excellent and also provides a reasonably priced alternative to the very expensive marinas to the east. The staff here are some of the best that we have encountered on our travels.

For the next couple of weeks, we sailed east enjoying the beautiful cruising grounds of northeast Sardinia and southern Corsica, anchoring at night in Cala Liscia and Cala Bitta in Sardinia and Plage de Sant'Amanza on the southeast of Corsica and berthing in Bonifacio Marina in Corsica and Schiumara Marina in Cannigione, Sardinia. All were memorable but Bonifacio was certainly one of the highlights - a beautiful town, full of razzmatazz and a good location to test parking skills in a 20-knot cross wind! We spent a couple of the days at anchor in the Maddalena Archipelago which is a stunning place. New 2025 rules forbid overnighing in the Archipelago which was a shame but understandable nevertheless.

Entering Bonifacio





Ruth catching the sunset

Passage south to Carloforte

It was time to head west again to Alghero to meet our son, Peter, for the passage south to Carloforte on the small island of Isola di San Pietro in the south west corner of Sardinia. Here, *Radiance II* would spend July and August on the hard in the boatyard of Marine Sifredi.

On our way, we returned to Castelsardo and the following day we ran under headsail to Cala Reale in Asinara, picking up a mooring buoy for the night. Access to, and navigating within, Asinara National Park is strictly regulated with zoning governing what is permitted. The waters here are pristine although Ruth did encounter a scorpion fish which landed a very painful sting.

On 20 June we recrossed the Fornelli Passage for Alghero, berthing this time near the old city walks in Aquatica Marina. From here we day-sailed to Bosa. Nautica Pinna provided a berth and, oddly, a 3-wheel tuk-tuk provided the taxi transport for the 3 of us up to the lovely town for dinner.

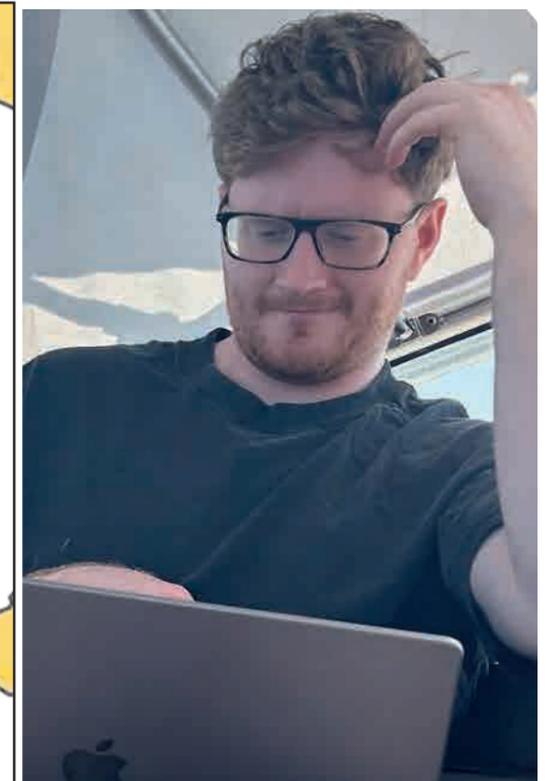
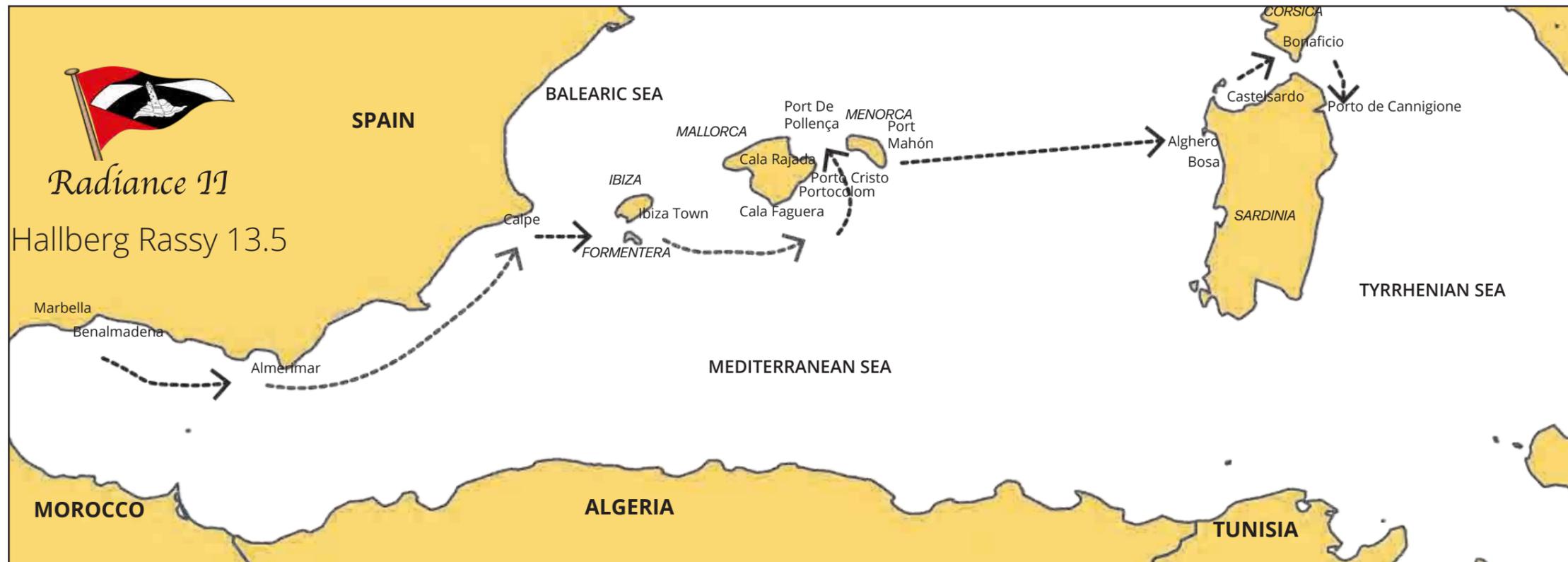
The following day we anchored off Isola di Mal di Ventre before our final 50M passage to Carloforte. We entered Carloforte and berthed at Marina Sifredi. Depths are shallow here and we stuck to the transit line. The town was founded by Ligurian fishermen and is famed for tuna fishing tradition.



Ellis Tobin with Ruth and me in Cala d'Oliva

On 26 June we motored to the adjoining harbour, with only half a metre under our keel. *Radiance II* was lifted for storage ashore for July and August and, as it turned out, for September also and most of October.

Son, Peter, double jobbing on passage to Carloforte





Mayor's Welcome Party, Combarro. Señor Angel Moldes, the Mayor welcomes Peter Haden and Peter Fernie

Encuentro Náutico 25

Peter Haden

Following the 60 boat ICC rally to the Rías Baixas of Galicia in 2017 there were many expressions of interest from members in continuing the Ireland/Galicia connection. Strong encouragement came from the Real Club Náutico Portosín and Carmela Nuñez (Hon ICC Port Officer) gave us the event name 'Encuentro Náutico' (Nautical Gathering). 15 boats registered for 2018 rising to 22 the following year and have now settled at a manageable 22 to 30 every year.

Each year we choose a port with a good marina which then becomes our base for five to seven days. Combarro at the top of Ría de Pontevedra, nestling behind Tambo Island and opposite the principal Spanish Naval College offered to help us with the event arrangements this year and led by marina manager Manuel Martinez this proved to be a fruitful partnership.

The format followed the well-established pattern with the emphasis on enjoying visits to various attractions, a good walk, luncheon at restaurants with good food, tasting the best local wines and pontoon parties. Over the years, our club has become very well known in the Rías Baixas and Ireland is the only country with members forming a national well regarded group. As a consequence the club has made a lot of local friends, all willing to advise and help with our events.

The area is very attractive especially for sailing and has become more widely known. The weather mostly depends on the position of the Azores high pressure system and once that settles in, fine warm weather with winds from the north and little or no rain can be expected. This year there was a great scarcity of rain and forest fires even reached close to the shores of the Rías in some places.

Warm summer weather prevailed for our event and indeed through most of the season. Even well into October midday temperatures reached well into the twenties with fair sailing winds.

On 10 July large ICC and Encuentro Náutico flags were raised on the marina flag poles as the first of twenty three ICC boats arrived. New member Conor Haughey's magnificent yacht *Hibernian*, a Moody 54, attracted a lot of attention, as did William Morrison's very pretty 27ft Cutlass *Isobar*

Next day an informal party on the marina terrace quickly became the first event as generous quantities of local wine were consumed. Jim Sammon and his helpers distributed the generously filled beautiful goody bags, which even included a bottle of high quality Granbázan Amber Albariño. As well as pre-ordered first class club clothing and new Encuentro battle flags designed by Moira Haden, the goody bags

themselves, also expertly sourced by Jim, were much admired and sought after.

The programme for our first official day of events included a welcome by the local mayor, Mayor Angel Moldes. Some changes to plans had taken place - a large troupe of local musicians, richly and quite magnificently attired, arrived to parade amongst our yachts. This drew everybody towards the Welcome Reception and kept everyone well entertained whilst we waited for the mayor who had gone to solemnise a local wedding. On his arrival speeches were made and customary gifts exchanged. Impressively the mayor spoke through an interpreter about Irish/Galician connections, culture and history. Luncheon followed and was made entirely of local specialities and copious quantities of wine. Traditional boat enthusiasts amongst our members were able to meet and discuss the local traditional boat scene with their owners. Dinner for 78 had been arranged with help from John O'Connor at an excellent family owned restaurant, La Nueva Parada, overlooking the beach and ría and only a five minute walk from our boats. ICC friends Manuel and Monika Capeans arrived and made a presentation to everyone of Salvamento's latest comprehensive marine safety guide. Included was Manuel's personal phone number to be used if you are in trouble at sea.

Sunday was designated for relaxation and a bus had been arranged to take many into the nearby beautiful city of Pontevedra to enjoy the churches, squares, river walk, street musicians and restaurants. We even joined the locals for a late afternoon promenade along the huge tree lined alameda.

It was another beautiful day on Monday as a bus brought us further inland to the start of rather special walk Ruta de la Piedra y del Agua. This beautiful tree sheltered trail, wanders up hill beside a softly gurgling stream and fifty or more waterfalls. It then emerges at the entrance to the active yet peaceful Cistercian monastery founded by the knight St. Ezro in 1168AD. The walk is challenging for the casual walker and not everyone stayed the course. There are many interesting aspects, especially the carefully preserved water driven woodwork tools, each in their own hut. At the top of the climb the restaurant and bar with cold drinks were welcome before we visited the abbey. Rested and recuperating, we returned on the bus to Salnés valley and on to Cambados which is often described as the wine capital of Galicia. At the Palacio de Fefiñás everyone was let off to explore the delightful small town and find somewhere special for another sun soaked luncheon.

Tuesday was designated 'Wine Tasting Day' and we travelled miles through the beautiful vine filled valleys directly to the huge vineyard of Granbázan. Here at the magnificent bodega we were welcomed in the sun drenched courtyard by Clara who showed us the vines, described the wine making process and

led us through tasting of their principal wines. This was followed by a most enjoyable luncheon at long tables in the large and graciously furnished dining room. Sleeping on the bus back to Combarro was not a problem.

Our new friend Mayor Angel surprised us again the next day. The local ferry boat appeared at the marina and we were invited to board for a private visit to Tambo Island courtesy of the Mayor. Guides and a photographer joined us for a most pleasant stroll on the island with explanations of the interesting history. The island is midway between the Spanish Naval Academy in Marin that we had visited in 2017 and Combarro. The massive Argentine sail training ship *Libertad* lay at anchor.

The final event of the week was a late luncheon at the especially charming village of Beluso and its famous A Centoleira seafood restaurant. There was a choice of sailing there or taking a privately arranged small bus. An ICC friend Capt Manuel Golmayo Hafner had negotiated all the restaurant arrangements and Bea Menduiña at Cangas had privately reserved the pontoon for boats staying overnight. With no passing traffic, the street level terrace outside the restaurant, just one step from the beach, was a perfect place for enjoying a few welcome glasses of chilled wine in the warm afternoon sun. Jim Sammon read the usual ICC 'Grace' and we settled in to a superb afternoon luncheon followed by the usual sincere Thank You speeches. Tony Linehan read a special letter from our Commodore Alan Markey who was in Scotland representing us at the CCA Cruise.

Letters of thanks have been written to Spanish friends, but especially a letter to Manuel Martinez marina manager at Combarro. who with all the marina staff and the Mayor gave us such a generous and genuine welcome. Special thanks are due to Jim Sammon for his work on our own regalia, all of the highest quality. John Bourke helps and advises every year and we missed him and his forever steady hand that had been diverted to help with the important Fastnet celebrations in Cowes. My wife Moira is also due thanks for advice on flag design.

Peter Fernie excellently shouldered a heavy amount of the technical work, much unseen. A very private heartfelt presentation was made to Peter Fernie by Ann Lyons and friends for Peter's help to them over many years.

The general feeling is that 2025 Encuentro Náutico turned out to be perhaps the most enjoyable of all since the big Rías Baixas rally of 2017. A great sense of fellowship has built up during the years of the Encuentros, now well established in the summer sailing calendar.



The almost complete Sunflower Raft Up

Cruising Club of America Western Isles Cruise Report

Alan Markey

The 2025 Western Isles Cruise, hosted by the Cruising Club of America (CCA), was a truly international gathering, made all the more memorable by the enthusiastic participation of members from five distinguished sister cruising clubs: the Irish Cruising Club (ICC), Royal Cruising Club (RCC), Clyde Cruising Club (CCC), Ocean Cruising Club (OCC), and Royal Highland Yacht Club (RHYC). A total of 58 yachts and 259 members and guests took part in the cruise. Notably, five yachts made

the Atlantic crossing to join the rally, including CCA Commodore Jay Gowell aboard *Moonstone* and Vice Commodore Chace Anderson on *Bonnie Rye*. Another seven CCA yachts based in Europe also participated, including those of event co-chairs Jonathan Brewin (*Big Bear*) and Rob Childs (*Dragon*), both currently berthed in the south of England.

In addition, 12 yachts were chartered by CCA members, bringing the total CCA representation to

24 yachts.

These were joined by 34 yachts from our partner clubs, broken down as follows:

- 9 from the Clyde Cruising Club
- 9 from the Irish Cruising Club
- 9 from the Royal Highland Yacht Club
- 4 from the Ocean Cruising Club
- 3 from the Royal Cruising Club

Irish Cruising Club Participation

The Irish Cruising Club made a strong showing, contributing 9 boats with members from all regions:

From the North:

- Ballyclaire* – Derek and Viv White
- Cornflower* – Tony and Rosemary Irwin
- Salut* – Anthony and Aisling McCarthy

From the East:

- Altaria* – Alan and Helen Markey
- Catalina* – Donal Gallagher
- Pure Magic Too* – Peter and Bev Killen
- Conundrum* – Mike Pomery
- Wotnot* – Jimmy and Judy Houston

From the South and West:

- Silver Bow* – Stephen Hyde
- ReeSpray* – David Beattie

19 July

Opening Reception – Kerrera Marina

The fleet gathered at Kerrera Marina for the official opening of the Cruise. The day began with registration and distribution of generous swag bags—a delightful and appreciated surprise that set the tone for the two-week voyage.

The marina restaurant buzzed with excitement as crews gathered to watch the first British & Irish

Lions Test match against Australia—a win that lifted everyone's spirits before the evening festivities. CCA Commodore Jay Gowell officially opened the cruise, followed by a warm welcome and programme overview from co-chairs Jonathan Brewin and Rob Childs. Dinner followed, with seating thoughtfully arranged by boat and 'buddy boat' pairings, encouraging early connections and new friendships. Special thanks to Tim and Gill Vollum and their outstanding team at Kerrera Marina and Clubhouse. Their warm hospitality and attention to detail helped make the launch event seamless and welcoming.

20 July

CCC's Oban to Tobermory Race

Under the leadership of CCC Commodore David Denholm and Ken Andrews, several yachts from the fleet participated in the annual Oban to Tobermory Race, including *Catalina* (Donal Gallagher). Despite a lack of wind turning the event into a bit of a 'floating match,' a few boats managed to finish the course after a long day.

Those not racing enjoyed a glorious motor-sail to Tobermory, where most found berths in the welcoming marina.

July 21

Sunflower Raft-Up – Loch na Droma Buidhe

At 0800, Vice Commodore Tim Trafford (RCC) gave the go-ahead for the Sunflower raft-up, declaring conditions suitable. With remarkable coordination and efficiency, the Sunflower—measuring 104m in diameter—was assembled in under three hours. The first phase began at 0900 with the placement

A 'constellation' of Commodores. Left to right. Jay Gowell CCA, Martin Clarke RHYC, Alan Markey ICC, Fi Jones OCC, David Denholm CCC and Nick Chavasse RCC





Flag presentation by the Commodores in Vatersay hall



The ICC welcome guests to Vatersay

of eight 'cardinal' boats, each over 15m LOA. Other yachts were marshalled into position in a steady stream. Sadly, just before the formation could be fully tightened, weather conditions forced an early deconstruction of the raft. Nevertheless, it was an impressive and memorable feat of seamanship. The fleet then dispersed to explore the stunning islands and anchorages en route to the next rendezvous point on the Isle of Skye.

**24 July
Talisker Distillery Visit - Loch Harport**

This ICC-hosted event was a highlight of the cruise, generously sponsored by Diageo. Guests enjoyed a private guided tour of the Talisker Distillery, followed by a tasting session and a superb lunch at the newly reopened Three Chimneys Restaurant. The newly installed pontoon at Loch Harport, accommodating up to 30 yachts, proved an excellent stopover. With weather conditions forecast to deteriorate, some boats set off early for the Outer Hebrides, while others stayed to further explore Skye.

**27 July
Vatersay Shore Party - July 27**

Organised by the Royal Highland Yacht Club, with invaluable support from local residents, this shore party at Vatersay Hall was a fantastic celebration. Fortunately, the weather was kind on the day of the party, but some boats that arrived early and anchored Saturday night faced strong winds. One vessel unfortunately dragged anchor and sustained rudder damage on nearby rocks. The food was the highlight: locally reared beef and lamb, fresh seafood, vegetables and salads, followed

by delicious island-baked tray bakes and cakes. After dinner, Martin Clarke, Commodore of the RHYC, presented a festoon of burgees to Sarah McLean and her team in appreciation of their warm welcome. The night ended with dancing to the lively music of the Vatersay Boys, rounding off a joyful evening.

**30 July
OCC Beach Party - Loch Spelve**

OCC Commodore Fi Jones led the way for the Pot Luck Supper and Mussel Feast, feeding over 100 hungry cruisers with 40kg of freshly cooked mussels, prepared using two mouthwatering recipes. Held at Loch Spelve, the event was generously supported by local mussel farmers, Donald and Helen, who donated the mussels from their farm free of charge, in return for donations to the RNLI. The evening raised over £700 for the charity—a fantastic effort by all.

**31 July
Finale Party - Kerrera Marina**

Back at Kerrera Marina, the cruise concluded with the Finale Party, attended by 215 participants. Earlier in the rally, an Art Competition had been announced, and over 25 artworks created during the cruise were displayed. Josie Anderson, CCA Vice Commodore Chace's wife took first place with her captivating Highland Cow painting. Cindy Croft-Wisch's 'Cruise Bouquet' was awarded an honourable second, and Chris Jones's evocative watercolour placed third. Commodore Jay Gowell delivered his closing remarks, followed by the Kerrera Finale Food Fest. The evening

culminated in a fantastic Ceilidh, where a tartan-clad fleet of sailors danced late into the night under the guidance of a lively band.

Final Thoughts

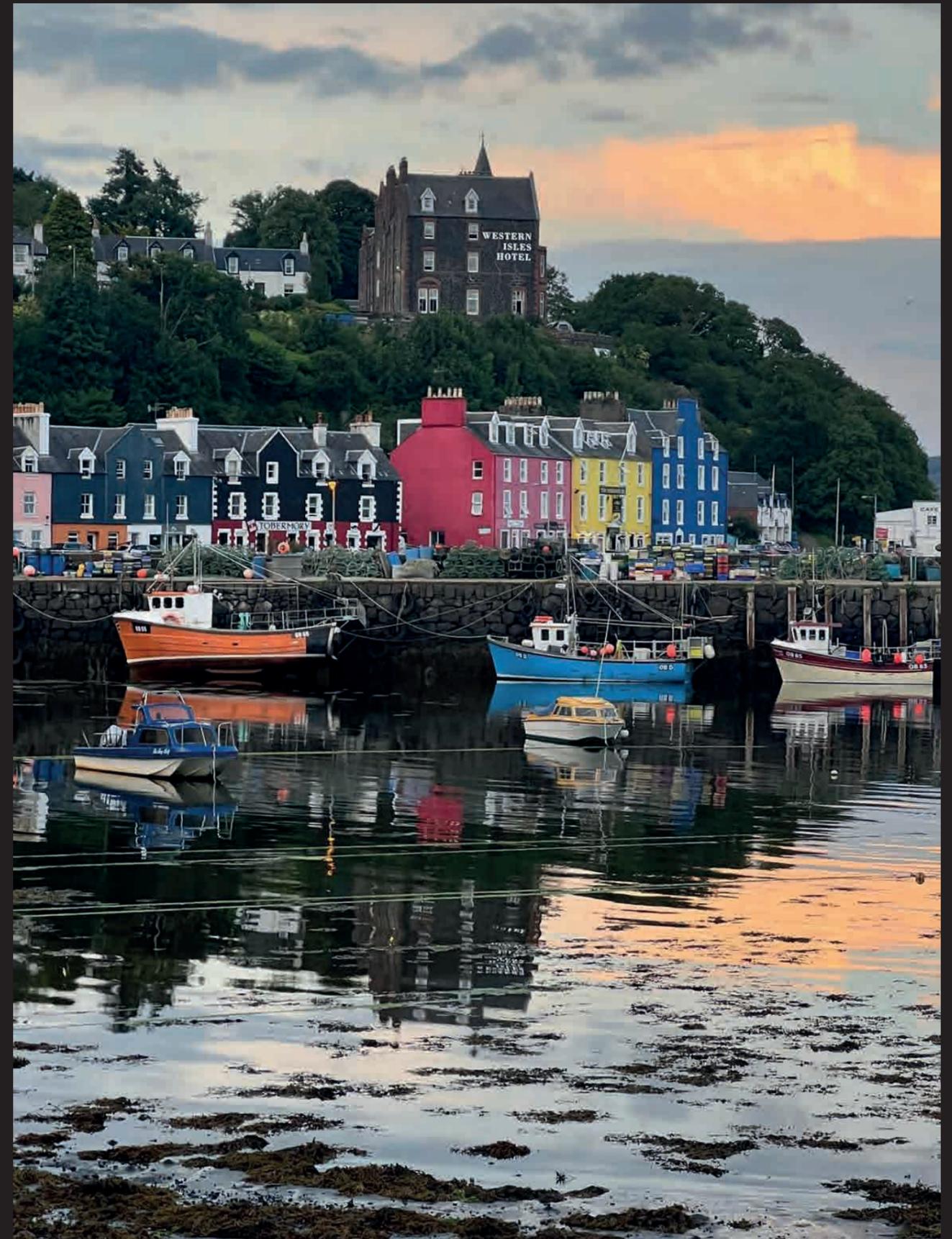
The 2025 Western Isles Cruise was a celebration of international friendship, seamanship, and shared love for the sea. It highlighted not just the beauty of Scotland's rugged coastline, but the enduring bonds between kindred sailing communities.

Sincere thanks to all who helped organise, host, and participate in this remarkable event. A special mention goes to Barbara Watson, whose efforts on the organising committee greatly enhanced the coordination of the event. Barbara is a valued member of the Clyde Cruising Club, the Cruising Club of America, and, of course, the Irish Cruising Club—an excellent example of the bonds that connect our clubs.

It was a cruise to remember—and one that has set a high bar for those to come.



Highland Cow by Josie Anderson, winner of the Art Competition



ABOVE: Sunset over Tobermory

OPPOSITE : The WotNot crew, Fiona, Judy, Jimmy and Clarke, dressed for a Scottish beach party

Dunn's Ditties

In 1975 as a result of the provocative wording of a circular sent out by Aidan Dunn, the Honorary Secretary, 30 members sent in a contribution for the Annual beginning with the words:

'I can not'

'I will not'

'I am too lazy to write a full account'

These brief reports of members' activities were an instant success and by 1976, on the suggestion of Rory O'Hanlon, they became known as Dunn's Ditties; a prize was first awarded in 2001.

Dunn's Ditties are still very relevant. If you dont have time to write a full log or article please consider writing a Dunn's Ditty for the 2026 Annual. (Editor)

A minor inconvenience in Mystic's Galician cruise

Peter Fernie writes

CONTENT WARNING. This article contains references to, and images of, marine toilets, also known as lavatories, heads, sea-privies, contrivances and buckets, which some readers, particularly those of a delicate disposition, may find distressing and possibly traumatic.

I have heard it said, that carrying a rabbit's foot on one's person ensured good fortune, and according to Google, this practice is prevalent throughout Europe. Personally, I never came across anyone prepared to admit to carrying a severed bunny's leg in their pocket. My grandchildren would be horrified at the idea. In fact, it sounds like a most insanitary tradition, which leads me via a circuitous route to the *idée fixe* of my cruising in 2025. Insanitation.

The launch of *Mystic* went perfectly. Both the engine and the white things all worked. Cruises to many favoured locations were achieved and of course, Encuentro Náutico 25 turned out well. But then my hitherto compliant marine toilet, apparently installed in 2003 ceased to function. Now I appreciate that this is something of a 21st century problem. I was at the time reading 'Sailing with Mr. Belloc' by Dr. Dermod McCarthy (an excellent read by the way if you can locate a copy of the book, now out of print), which documents his cruises in a Channel Isles pilot

cutter, the *Jersey* in the 1930s with the writer, poet and former Westminster MP, Hilaire Belloc. The line drawing of the *Jersey* shows the 'Heads' complete with bucket and rudimentary seat behind a simple partition. Nothing 21st century about that. To quote McCarthy: 'In spite of the extraordinary efficiency of pumping lavatories in modern yachts, I often hanker after the good old bucket which was simple and healthy.'

Rather like the rabbit's foot, I had innocently come to regard carrying a full set of Jabsco marine toilet spare parts as a sort of talisman to magically ward off the various indispositions and maladies to which, I now know, these contrivances are subject. I have assumed that the magical properties of the kit of spares has worn off with time.

I was advised of the blockage by an apologetic recently arrived guest on the boat - he, I add was not responsible. This problem had been 22 years in gestation. The Jabsco manual was located, industrial quantities of vinegar purchased and the contrivance gradually broken down into its non-working component parts. We were finally led to the conclusion that the all-important exhaust pipe was blocked with a calcium carbonate deposit, caused, according to Google, by a chemical reaction between

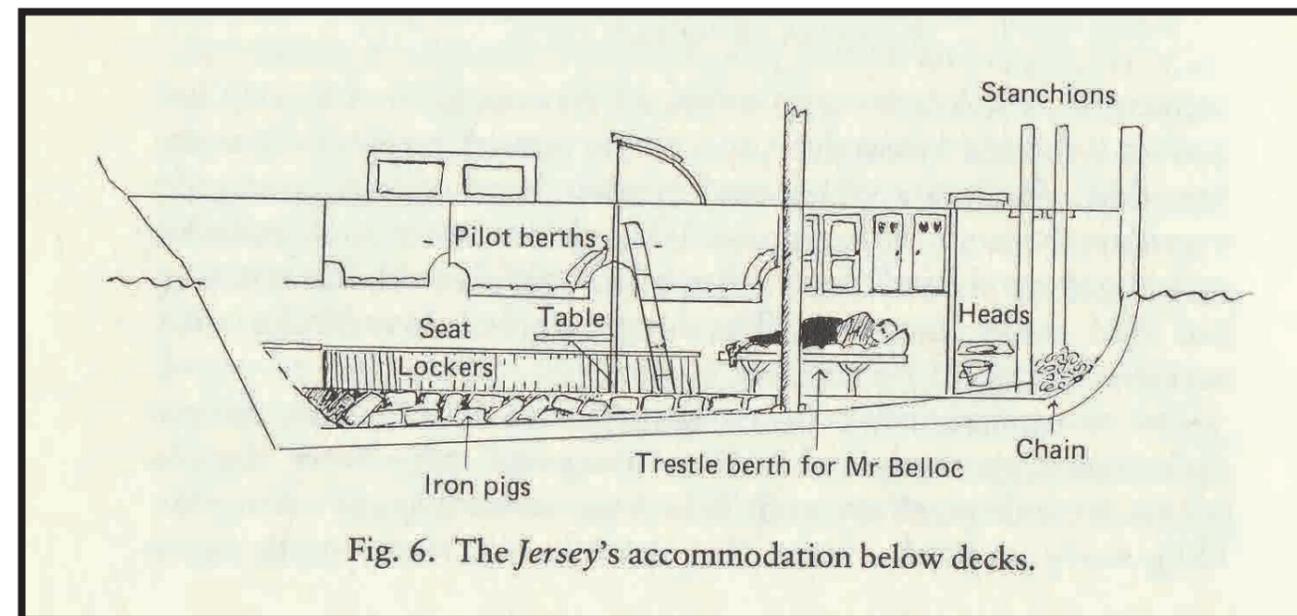


Fig. 6. The *Jersey's* accommodation below decks.

carbonate containing seawater and the ammonia in uric acid (don't ask). Various ICC members, previously afflicted similarly, agreed with this diagnosis.

Diverse advice and solutions were suggested. A favourite one seemed to be taking the pipes off and beating them on the ground to dislodge the deposits. I didn't think however that my neighbours in the Pobra de Caraminal marina would be overenthusiastic about uric acid infused carbonate flying in their direction. Another member had no useful information to impart but suggested we stay down wind of them. Happily the latter contributor was hoist with his own petard as his own electrical contrivance developed a similar indisposition some days later.

However he subsequently reported that his problem had been solved with the aid of an unwound wire coat hanger. Moreover he was gratified to be able to restore the coat hanger back to its rightful place in his clothes locker after the unblocking process. It takes all sorts.

A casual mention of our issues to another venerable ICC member elicited the alarming confession that he had had three major contrivance indispositions in his sailing career, one caused by a glass shattering into pieces (the mind boggles slightly). All of them needed

total renewal of pipework. Even the great *Moonduster* was blighted with a contrivance on the starboard side which was unusable in a blow and had been known to catapult crew members through the door and across the boat. My interlocutor preferred the time-tested method of Mr Belloc, wedged to leeward.

Mystic's misfortune had become widely known in the locality and I was the recipient of much gratuitous advice. Some swore by caravan-type chemical contrivances. Someone else had installed a composting system which required a Chinese-sourced starter to initiate the composting process. It all sounded rather too agricultural for me. The composting skipper enthused that it didn't need any pipes at all. I presumed it came with a shovel and a wheelbarrow.

I suppose on reflection, as I wait for new pipes and seacocks to be installed, that I should be thankful that *Mystic* was built before holding tanks became compulsory. During the 2017 Rías Baixas rally, our modern charter boat had a holding tank which could not be emptied. The ladies accompanying us threatened to move into alternative accommodation if we did not sort the problem forthwith and reasonably explained that they had not signed up for a cruise with a brimming septic tank. Yes, the thought of a holding tank full of odoriferous carbonate deposits with additional complicated pipework puts my minor inconvenience in perspective. As someone once said: 'Gratias agere oportet pro parvis misericordiis'. (Let's be thankful for small mercies) I shall also invest in another spares kit with reinvigorated magical properties.

With acknowledgement to 'Sailing with Mr. Belloc' by Dermod McCarthy, Collins Harvill 1986 .

LEFT: *Impenetrable*



Laughing all the way! Tortola to Bermuda

Cormac O'Carroll writes

On 21 April I joined Tim Zimmerman aboard *Laughing Gull* at Nanny Cay in Tortola. Tim had been cruising in the Caribbean over the winter months having left Chesapeake last November on the first leg of his transatlantic crossing to Glandore via Bermuda and the Azores, planning to arrive there in mid-July. *Laughing Gull* is a wonderful Apogee 50 offshore cruiser/racer with a boom furling main and cutter-rig designed by Chuck Paine, a fabulous boat, wonderfully kitted out for the intended crossing that would start from Tortola. The plan was to break the voyage into three legs, each with different crew. Tim, Choryna Kiely and myself for the first leg to Bermuda, Tim and James for the Azores leg joined by Steve and Henry. Finally, from Ponta Delgada to Glandore, Tim and James would have on board my wife Frances Lynch and two of her sisters Eileen and Louise.

I arrived Monday evening by way of St Martin. I had seen so many videos of the jets landing at there that I made sure that it would be the last stop over for the final leg of the journey to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands. Choryna arrived the following evening to complete the crew of three for the passage to St George in Bermuda. As Tim had been living aboard *Laughing Gull* all winter, and he had sailed to Nanny Cay about two weeks earlier, he was anxious to get going as soon as possible. Choryna and I were keen to, at least, have a day or so on Tortola before setting off so that we would have an opportunity to savour the flavour of the island. The best exposure to the island that we had was the roller coaster taxi ride from the airport to Nanny Cay and the taxi to Road Town and the Riteway supermarket for the big shop before we set off. Once all tasks were completed; dinghy stowed, water tanks topped up and galley packed - we were ready to slip the lines, refuel at the fuel dock and get underway, which we did at about 1100 on Thursday 24 April.

Tim had been watching the weather for an optimal departure time. He was also in touch with Chris Parker, an established marine weather forecast and routing service for the Caribbean and the US East coast, and they provided a comprehensive routing outlook to the following Tuesday. Light north easterly winds for the first 500M or so, then upwind for the last 300M. We set off in light NNE wind with little expectation of nice off-wind south easterlies for the passage. The first day we were



View from the mast

in company with two large catamarans also going north; naturally they disappeared during the first night and we saw very little other traffic for the rest of the voyage. We expected a good deal of motoring for the first few days and a weather deterioration sometime late Saturday. Thursday and Friday were mostly intermittent motor-sailing on starboard tack. My saloon berth was on the leeward side, so I was comfortable off watch. In general, we had winds of 7 to 10kn through to late Saturday and Sunday morning when the wind did increase as forecast. We sailed with two reefs for most of Sunday evening; it was a dark and cloudy night with lightning close by.

Tim is mostly vegan/vegetarian and therefore the shopping and victualling was somewhat different than usual. There is a full fridge and separate freezer unit on *Laughing Gull*. Both were set to chill as there was no need to maintain any chilled or frozen meat, fish or dairy. Before setting off I had a list of vegan and vegetarian meals that I could prepare, and while I am not vegetarian myself, I think the vegan dinners worked out very well. My favourite was a lemon pasta, no cream or cheese but relying on good olive oil and zesty lemon to give it great flavour. During the voyage we baked vegan yeast bread and vegan brown soda bread using flour and porridge oats with lemon juice and oat milk instead of buttermilk. Both were eaten but would not win any prizes! The meal I was concerned about was the vegan lasagna, how to make white sauce without milk or butter. It worked with oat milk and olive oil!

Early Monday again we needed to motor, but by evening the wind picked up again and on Tuesday we were sailing directly towards Bermuda. We tacked north northwest and held that for a short while before resuming our course. The trip had been going well to that point, but at about 0530 Wednesday as the sun was rising Tim discovered we had an

unwelcome attachment. The boat had snagged something! There was a long thick bright green line streaming behind *Laughing Gull*. Luckily, we were sailing, using boat hooks we retrieved both ends of the line, it was a thick bright green nylon mooring hawser, while we managed to get both ends on deck it was not possible to pull all the line in on one side. *Laughing Gull* has a deep rudder, it seemed that the rudder was holding the line and preventing us from retrieving it. With few other options, Tim had to go in the water. We hove-to, to slow the boat and Tim went in tethered to the boat. After some effort he freed the line from the rudder using the boathook. We were lucky, but this highlights the risk of floating lines or fishing gear in the middle of the ocean. Had we been motoring the propeller could have been fouled and freeing that would have been a completely different story. Going in the water is always a last resort.

Early Thursday, in the night approaching Bermuda we picked up the first lighthouse about 0230 hours this was the Gibbs Hill Light on the southwest coast as we approached the eastern end of the Island St. Davids Light appeared. This is the light that so many on the Bermuda race from Newport have their sights on as they close to the finish of this classic ocean race. First raced in 1906, it is this oldest of the three Classic Ocean races, the Fastnet race was started 1925 and the Sydney Hobart race was inaugurated in 1948. We arrived from the south rather than from the Newport direction. We entered the town cut and easily found a spot to anchor off the main town marina near the St George's Dinghy and Sports Club. The harbour was surprisingly quiet for the time of year. However during the week I spent there the harbour did fill with some very impressive motor and sailing yachts, for the most part these were northern European boats. We did meet one American sailor who was sailing single-handedly. He had arrived from Savannah on *Spindrift* having bought the boat there earlier in April. As things turned out I met the same man, Kendrick, in Tobermorey on the Isle of Skye in July when I was sailing with David Beattie during the CCA Cruise.



The big green monster thing

We had been at sea just under seven days and travelled about 910M with an average speed of 5.6 kn. We took things easy on the first day there in St George's and went ashore to freshen up at the St George's Dinghy and Sports Club and later ate at the White Horse that evening.

During the next few days, we had a few jobs clearing the boat, not least of which was getting rid of the big green monster thing. We had a few days to spare before returning home and had the opportunity to visit some of the main sights in Bermuda. The main town, Hamilton, is a lovely bus ride away on the other end of the island. While there, by coincidence, I met Ruairí Brown, who I know from Glandore. He is grandson of Warren Brown whose yachts *War Baby* sailed many Newport Bermuda races as well as cruising and racing in Europe in the eighties. From St George's a ferry runs all the way to the old Royal Navy Dockyard giving great views of the northeastern coast of the Island. Choryna headed home on 5 May and I returned to Cork a few days later.

Tim and *Laughing Gull* arrived in Glandore on the morning of 10 July having had a good stopover in the Azores with visits to several island anchorages. They picked up their final crew in Ponta Delgada and enjoyed a fast, comfortable eight-day passage back to Ireland.

Laughing Gull crew in St George's; Cormac, Tim and Choryna





Wiki Wiki on the pontoon at the bottom of the garden

As Neil was preparing to retire in June 2003, the ICC gave notice of a cruise to the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Neil thought it might be an enjoyable way to celebrate retirement; however, his wife Angela prudently reminded him that *Shelduck* was under construction in La Rochelle, and that the new boat was the retirement celebration. No booking for the cruise was made.

The cruise was organised by the Cruising Club of America, who had invited the Royal Cruising Club and the Irish Cruising Club to join them. Participants were to gather in Santiago, Chile, and then fly to the Falklands to join a cruise ship. A dinner for about sixty people opened the event in Santiago, Anne and Brian Kenny among them. During the meal, it was announced, into a very noisy room, that the cruise was cancelled. The cruise ship had been severely damaged in a storm while on her way from Argentina to the Falkland Islands. Incidentally, the same ship sank the following year on a passage back from Antarctica; thankfully, no lives were lost.

The tour company employed by the CCA promised that everyone would have their costs repaid within three months. They also offered an alternative

A fourth visit to Southwest Harbor Maine

Neil Hegarty writes

holiday to those who did not want to return home: a week touring the Atacama Desert north of Santiago, followed by a one-week cruise of the Beagle Channel. The cost, which included food, drink and the return flight home, had to be paid upfront. About half of the original participants accepted the offer, including Anne and Brian, who did not want to go home. They met Mary and John Treanor (CCA, OCC) in the desert and enjoyed one another's company throughout the trip. The friendship continued afterwards, and they later went skiing together once in America and twice in Italy. John recalls being introduced to Prosecco during those days - something he still enjoys.

Neil first met Mary and John at the 2010 Western Isles Cruise, to which John had sailed his Hinckley 51 *Wiki Wiki* from Southwest Harbor, Maine. It had been an exhilarating crossing, once covering 860 miles in three days. This was John's third Atlantic crossing from Maine, having commissioned the yacht at the Hinckley Boatyard in Southwest Harbor in 1989. On leaving Scotland, *Wiki Wiki* and *Tam O'Shanter* were both bound for Norway, and so a rendezvous was arranged for the following year, 2011. We met as planned in Kristiansund in mid-July, *Wiki Wiki* in harbour first and *Tam O'Shanter* tying alongside before all of us accepted a dinner invitation from Mary Treanor - a meal we thoroughly enjoyed. As both yachts were staying in the Baltic for the 2012 season, we planned another meeting. This took place toward the end of May in Copenhagen, where we again enjoyed dinner together, this time in the Tivoli Gardens. Over dinner, John persuaded us that it would not be difficult to sail a 34-foot boat across the Atlantic to cruise the Caribbean and the east coast of North America. 'You will not be disappointed,' he said. The following year, 2013, we crossed in *Shelduck*, and John was always available with advice and help throughout.

Our first visit to Southwest Harbor came in June 2015, when we invited Neil's daughter Patricia to America to celebrate a significant birthday. *Shelduck* was then in Falmouth, Massachusetts, where she was to spend the summer while we planned to sail *Tam O'Shanter* to Saint Petersburg, Russia. Hearing of Patricia's birthday, John invited the three of us to his summer home in Southwest Harbor for a few days. We

joined him - via his aeroplane - by taking a taxi from Falmouth to the small airport near Hyannis. John invited Patricia to sit beside him in the front seat as he flew the plane, while we sat behind. The flight took an hour and included a low tour over his house and the harbour before landing at Bar Harbor Airport, where John had a car waiting.

Patricia went sailing in John's Nutshell pram and Neil accompanied John to the Hinckley Boatyard to arrange the overwintering of *Shelduck*. Anne had a good catch up with Mary. In September, as we were leaving Falmouth in *Shelduck*, we noticed a vibration when the engine was put into forward. John decided to fly down again to help and quickly identified the cause: the propeller, removed for antifouling, had been incorrectly refitted. We continued on to Southwest Harbor - our second visit in 2015 - where *Shelduck* was laid up as arranged. At the beginning of June 2016, we returned for our third visit and began *Shelduck's* sail home from Treanor's pontoon. We planned to meet again at the first OCC AGM in the USA at Annapolis in 2020, but the event was cancelled because of Covid. Sadly, Mary died in August 2022.

In January this year, Anne received an email from John complimenting her on her picture in the 2024 edition of the OCC's Flying Fish. It had been included in Neil's 2023 log of *Tam O'Shanter's* cruise to the Azores. John invited us back to his home to sail again in Southwest Harbor. We arrived on the 18 September for a week, one of the highlights being a sail on *Wiki Wiki* from the pontoon north into what John told us was the only fjord in the USA, up to Somesville and back again - a day with a cloudless blue sky and a light wind.



Anne looks out for lobster pot buoys

For our return to Boston to fly back to Shannon, John travelled with us as far as Camden, where Neil looked out for John B. Kearney's 100-year-old *Mavis*, once owned by Paddy O'Keeffe ICC of Bantry, but failed to find her.

John, Neil and a friendly gull





The bottom of the wind: Bunagee finishing the opening-day race in F7 at Fahan in April 1985 - stand-in skipper Norman and supernumerary crew Geraldine, on the first day we met. Photo finishing beyond, Andy McCarter and John Wasson's then new (to them) Sigma 33 Gwili, coming second on corrected time. Picture from the Derry Journal.

The height of the Wind

Norman Kean writes

Back in the 80s at Lough Swilly I sailed for a few years with an American colleague. Pete Richmond was on his second tour of duty with DuPont in Derry, and no sooner had he arrived in Ireland in 1981 than he bought a boat, a Centurion 32 which he renamed *Bunagee*, just because he liked the name of the little village in Inishowen. We raced her like mad in the Swilly, and it happened to be aboard *Bunagee* in 1985 that I first met Geraldine, though it would be seven years before we became a couple.

In 1986 I helped Pete bring his next boat from Troon to Carrickfergus after she'd been road hauled from Dover. She was a 1980 Swan 371 called *Maid of Unst* (Unst as in Shetland - don't ask me). We were boarded off Belfast Lough by three soldiers from a RIB, one of whom left his rifle on the cabin table when they left (fortunately we noticed in time). Looking for a new name for the boat, Pete consulted Geraldine. She said well, since you called the last boat the bottom of the wind (or even the arse of the wind), how about calling this one the height of the wind - *Ardnagee*? And so she became. By this time, I had launched my home-built Sadler 25 *Eriskay* and I didn't set foot on *Ardnagee* again until 2000.

Meanwhile Geraldine raced regularly on her for two years, mostly from Carrickfergus, until Pete sold her in 1988 when DuPont transferred him to Düsseldorf. *Ardnagee* stayed in Northern Ireland, and the next owner but one was our own James Nixon, who owned her from 1996 to 2000.

One evening in Limavady our phone rang. James was curious about the origin of the name, and (if my memory serves) had consulted a Gaelic scholar who suggested that maybe it referred to the boat's ability to point close to the wind. I passed the phone to Geraldine and she told James the rather more prosaic truth.

In 2000, Pete (by this time retired, and living in St. Simon's Island, Georgia) chartered *Ardnagee* from James to celebrate a friend's significant birthday. A fortnight's cruise was proposed, from Bangor up the west coast of Scotland. I was invited - we were still living in Delaware at the time but I had cashed in my chips at DuPont - and I insisted on being the cook (see page 102 for my reasons). One early morning before the cruise I was driving my rented car past the big Tesco on the Holywood Road and thought,

this would be a good time to buy the supplies, but I haven't got my list, never mind, I'll buy the drink. So I ended up with a trolley piled high with booze, I mean, seven men on a boat for a fortnight? Now, in Delaware, the checkout conversation goes 'How are you today?' 'I'm good'. Zap zap zap. 'That's \$46 and 50 cents'. \$50 changes hands. 'Three fifty is your change. Have a nice day'. 'You too.' Never varies. Humourless. Formulaic. And compulsory.

Not in Belfast! I hove up to the checkout and the operator (she was 19 years old at the most) took one look at the groaning trolley and, with a dead straight face, said 'Watching the match tonight, are you?' I thought, I'm home, I'm home! I love it!

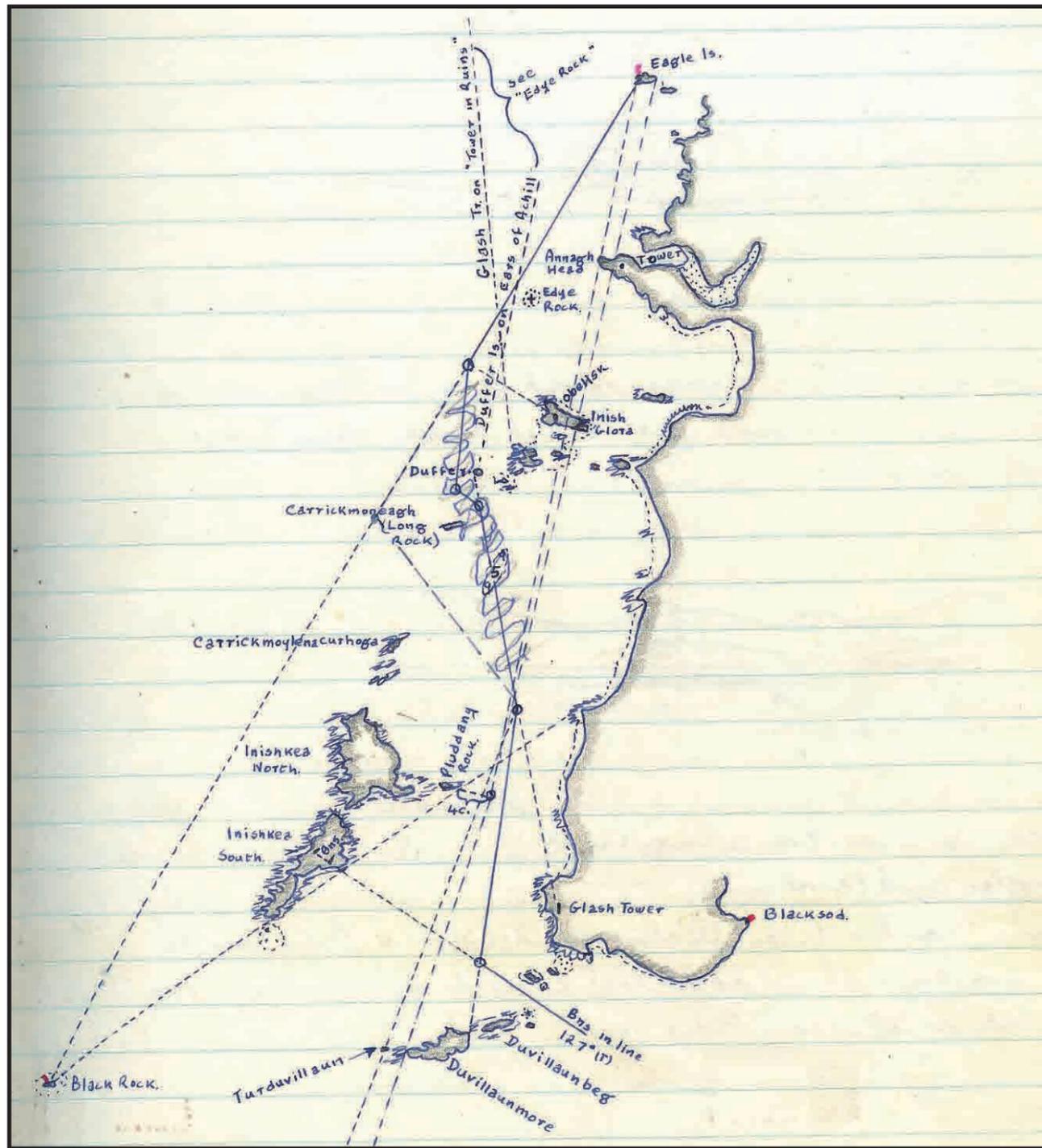
Fast forward 18 years, to 2018. We were making our way slowly home to Ireland from Galicia. Viveiro, in the Rías Altas on the north coast, is a lovely place, a picturesque town in a sheltered Ría. An old friend

from the *Bunagee* and *Ardnagee* days at Lough Swilly, Caroline Dickson, was with us. As we inched our way into the marina, there, to port, was a boat called - *Ardnagee*, flying a Finnish ensign. It can't be. It was! The same. Complete circle. Built in Finland, and now, 38 years later, Finnish-owned. The owner Michael and his friend Kenneth came by later and we had a great night's craic sharing the history of their boat and the memories of us three of her crew from the 80s. Unbelievable coincidence.

But *Ardnagee*, a Ron Holland design, could never win a race. Couldn't sail to her handicap. She drove Pete Richmond mad, fiercely competitive as he was, and may he rest in peace. I used to say she was designed by Ferrari and built by Volvo. Bigger Swans were competitive, but the 371, sadly, wasn't. But a fine solid boat, beautifully built and everlasting.

Caroline and Norman with *Ardnagee* in Viveiro, 2018





Pilotage Notes

Donal Walsh writes

I have an old book of pilotage notes which was kept by a master serving on the Irish Lights vessels *Isolda* and *Granuaile*.

It is a fascinating collection of notes on local tidal streams, times of slack water, and labour requirements for landing stores on the rock stations. Nowadays oil is pumped ashore from the ship by hose. Back then oil was landed in 40 gallon drums which were winched ashore by a derrick from a cutter. There are sketches and drawings of

anchorages and transits which were used before the advent of GPS and dynamic positioning.

The pilotage notes for the passage from Eagle Island to Blacksod inside Inishkea Island are wonderful and the accompanying sketch is a treasure in itself.

'When abeam of Inish Glora which has an obelisk on it (somewhere near the dot of the "i" on chart 2704) head in to pass close to Duffer Island. The rock visible west of Duffer is steep to. Keep inside

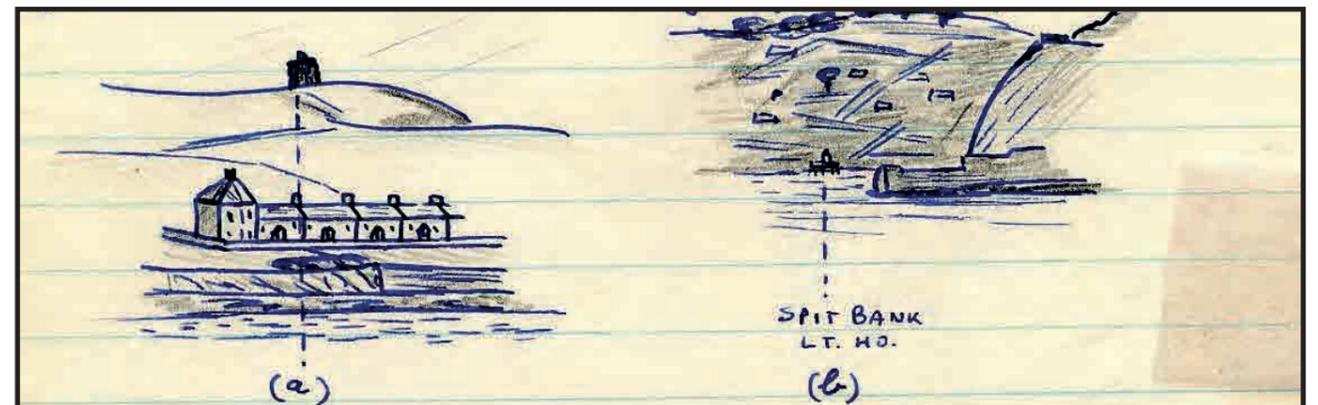
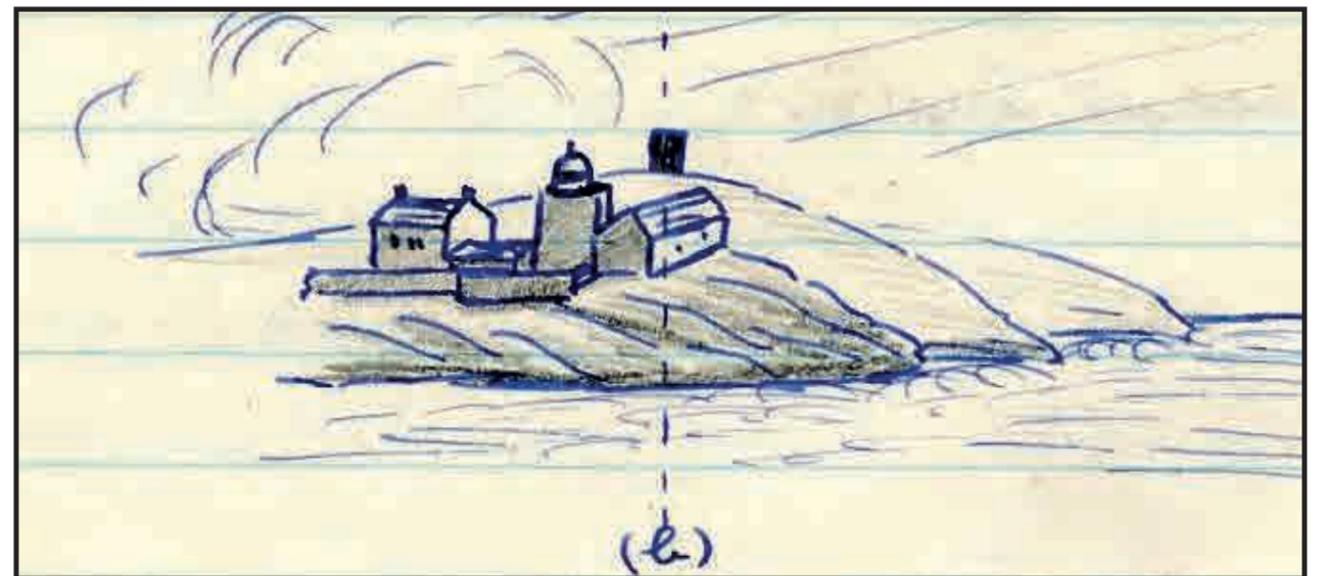
Carrickmoneagh (Long Rock) which always breaks, and head for Glash Tower (conspic). The 9fm Bank S.E. of Long Rock has a depth of 5fms (*Isolda* 1962) over it and is a good mark in poor visibility. When Achill head tucks in behind Turduvillaun, head for the east end of Duvillaunmore. Duvillaun beg is very low lying and inconspic at this distance. Pluddany Rock does not always break so may not be visible. When the south end of Inishkea opens the east point of that island (Black Rock is open off Inshkea) one is almost abeam of Pluddany Rock. If one goes from here to the west of Turduvillaun there is no saving in distance although one keeps out of the westerly swell. At or near high tide one may go through the Duvillaun Sound. White piles on Inishkea Island lead through 127°. The upper pile is very conspic being on the summit of the hill. The lower one is conspic in sunshine but may be inconspic on a dull day'.

And for Cork based sailors:

Roche's Point
'Anchorage in mid channel Roche Tower just open outside Roche's Point Lighthouse.

Inner Anchorage (Landing and Loading Buoys)
(a) Roche Tower Ø north end of CG houses
(b) East of the leads:- Spit Bank Lighthouse showing outside Dognose Quay
(c) Post in line with flagstaff at Lighthouse.

Buoys:- Just enough water to float off the Bulman (tube fast to cutters stern) Buoy and the other can buoys at HW springs -3½H.
Buoys are to be slung on their sides as the keepers have no means of tripping an upright buoy onto its side in order to move it about'.



Cruising Notes

Harold Cudmore writes

On 11 August I joined *Sophia*, a Frers designed 42', Brindisi, Italy, - San Foca, a fast sail under a code 1 to Ammos, island north of Corfu, followed by Erikousa another island nearby. We passed west of Corfu to Lakka, Paxos and back to Corfu via Sivota. One of my favourite cruising areas.

On 1 September I sailed from Monaco to Porto Istmo, Sardinia via Propriano, Corsica, on the 42' *Bear Hug*. We had an unpleasant night of thunder and lightning - which I do not like - as so many friends have had lightning strikes recently.

I joined Royal Thames YC 250th Rally from Porto Cervo. We enjoyed a joint dinner with NYYC Rally at Yacht Club Costa Smeralda. We spent nights in Madelena, Bonafacio, and Propriano Bay. With a Mistral forecast we did a non stop passage to Calvi and spent a happy three days while the weather passed. I took the narrow guage rail 'Trinicellu' to L-Île Rousse. We avoided more storms on the way back to Monaco under double- reefed main and staysail - no water on deck!

Superyacht Le Ponant



Harold's selfie



Calvi, Corsica



The Mad Boaters Whisky Party



Jim Houston writes

A poem of sorts, using the list of boat names attending the Western Isles Cruise 2025 Submitted as part of the Art Show. Boat names shown in bold type.

This is the **First Draft**.

I thought to write a **Bluefin** song but Havana lotta of a Lyric.

Altarianutively...

Bramble, **Chantilly** and **Watnot** with **Cornflower** could make a **Topspot Zuz**a of a **Whimbrel**. After a few, did we see a **Big Bear**, an **Ice Bear** or was it a **Maximoose** ?

Pure Magic Too to see the **Morning Star** at **Sunrise** to catch the reflection of a **Moonstone**.

Was that **Ariadne**, with **Aphrodite**, her **Argento**, **Silver Bow** or am I just **Pinocchio** ?

No Momentum at the Sunflower as **Redwings** flew through the **Leumadair**, a **Flamingo**, a **Kestrel** or perhaps, a **Calypso**.

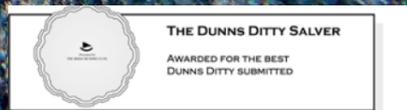
Warisha had a **Vision of Johanna**, although for me **Coigach** ? Was she **Deja Vue** or **Conundrum** ?

Did the **Blue Clipper**, her **Damsel of Velvet from Sark** witness the **Aurora** of **Big Blue** over **Ballyclaire** ?

The **Maverick** did **Drag-on** about a **Reespray** in **Rongevaer**. **True** said **Pyewacket** and **Raphy G** surely better in **Tulla Mhor**, with the **Locheil Lady**, her **Seahawk** and **Bonnie Rye**.

We surely missed **Seraphia**, as **Catalina** flew like **Pendragon**, her **Greenheart Tangaroa**

Finally, we **Salut Eloise**, the **Blue Wanderer**, **Explorer of Sleat**.



Wreck in Minerva Reef

Minerva Reef Yacht Club

Donal Gallagher writes

I found myself embarking aboard *Stardust* on 4 November in Nuku'alofa, capital of the Kingdom of Tonga, on the island of Tongatapu. It being the beginning of the wet season in the tropics, it duly rained warm rain continuously for the next 48 hours.

My old college roommate, John Ward, had decided several years ago to up sticks from Fort Wayne, Indiana and embark on a circumnavigation of indeterminate length. It was the realisation of a project he had on his list since at least the early 1990's when we first met. After much research, John had commissioned a new Outremer 45 blue-water catamaran named *Stardust* for the purpose and departed Mediterranean France in March of 2024 bound for the Caribbean via Ireland and onwards through the Panama Canal. The name is not coincidental, John is an astrophysicist.

Some 18 months into his voyage with his wife Frédérique and the rest of the family returning to Indiana for the Christmas break, John had recruited your author and Rick Zwann of the British High Commission in Wellington to join him for the proposed 1,100M passage from Nuku'alofa to Opua, Bay of Islands, New Zealand where *Stardust* was to be laid up until January.

Sailing conditions in the South Pacific at the turn of the seasons are non-trivial. This is not trade-wind sailing as John frequently reminded us. November brings the onset of cyclone season in the tropics on

the one hand, and further south, the possibility of a late season extra-tropical storm. We were destined to suffer from neither problem but rather the opposite, a forecast with a long period of slack winds before a high-pressure system east of New Zealand would bring us breeze to speed us south. We elected to take advantage of the short-lived winds generated by a shallow passing depression for the first two days and aimed for Minerva Reef, an entirely isolated coral atoll, some 275M along the rhumb line from Tonga to New Zealand.

Minerva Reef is a miracle. The reef is entirely circular, 2M in diameter, with a single entrance pass to the west no more than a hundred meters wide. At low tide the passing swell breaks over the coral outer perimeter but it is otherwise invisible to passing marine traffic. The reef sits atop a dormant and now submerged volcano lying on the Pacific Rim of Fire. Inside the reef the depth is a uniform 15m with shallower coral sands towards the edges littered with isolated coral heads. The outer oceanic side of the reef falls off rapidly in coral cliffs into deep ocean water. Being remote and entirely devoid of human development, the waters are pristine and the sea-life a remarkable collection of healthy coral, giant clams, lobster, brightly coloured fish, reef shark and ocean turtles.

The Minerva Reef Yacht Club is the constantly varying club consisting of those at anchor in Minerva Reef awaiting onward passage. The reef is well known

among those regularly making the annual passage to the South Pacific islands from Australia and New Zealand and back. We arrived on the 7th to find three yachts at anchor, and we were joined in the following days by another four to make eight yachts in the club that week. The previous weeks had seen up to 40 members as the peak of the migration south passed through.

Life at the Minerva Reef Yacht Club passes by on a very relaxed cadence. Mid-morning generally sees a VHF call to coordinate plans for the day which seem to alternate between a communal expedition in the tenders to snorkel or fish for lobster on the reef and an evening sundowner gathering, usually hosted on one of the several catamarans in the club.

Our first evening gathering was aboard *Not All There*, a 42 ft Lagoon catamaran owned by Steve and Lizzie from Canada who have been circumnavigating since 2018. We found ourselves chatting with the Mike, Duncan and Bruce from *Tianti*, a 37ft Bavaria from Vancouver engaged in a wager that they couldn't get to the southern tip of New Zealand. It turns out that Mike is Michael Crean, grandson of Tom Crean a member of Earnest Shackleton's 1914 Antarctic expedition. Whoever was on the other side of that wager was likely to lose.

We whiled away our days at the reef in a haze of swimming among the coral, exploring the outer reef and diving a nearby shallow wreck. I found my interest in underwater activities declining as a number of rather large black tipped reef sharks joined the school of more benign looking fish

Stardust crew



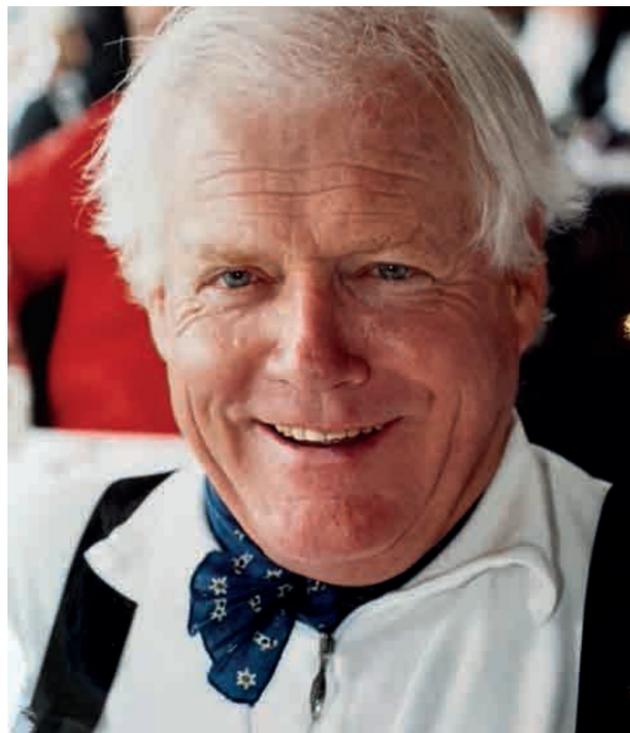
Minerva Reef Y.C

circling around *Stardust* in hope of a meal. While our skipper insisted that the sharks were harmless and much more scared of us than we of them, this insistence was somewhat undermined at the second sundowner gathering where we met Frédérique who was sporting a rather vivid reef shark bite scar acquired while circumnavigating with her husband Guillaume and three young girls aboard *Taimiti*. John attempted to allay my concerns by explaining that he had heard the bite took place in turbid water where the shark was unable to discriminate between a fish and a human.

And then our stay came to a swift end. The forecast changed and showed a trough containing convective cells and lightning approaching from the west. Rather than stay in place and present a static target we decided to push through the trough at its thinnest point with the aim of picking up a strengthening easterly flow to the south. We weighed anchor on the morning of the 12th, picked our way through some very active lightning storms and sailed southwest for five days enjoying two days with 24 runs over 220M. Catamarans move when the wind is just behind the beam.

The Bay of Islands at the north end of New Zealand is a sub-tropical paradise of giant ferns, majestic old growth Kauri trees and sandy beaches. We reached land on the 17th, and dropped anchor at Russell after clearing customs. The crew retired to the Duke of Marlborough, New Zealand's oldest pub and hotel for some light refreshment, but we will never forget Minerva Reef and its yacht club.

Terence Johnson



Terry passed away in his early 80s. His family had a successful business in Ireland, which in due course he joined. Although always attentive to the business, he was thus enabled to actively pursue his love of sport, and sailing in particular. He was a keen rugby player, and later he continued to enjoy golf, fishing and shooting. His true love however, was anything to do with the water and those on it. He became an expert yachtsman, while also contributing to the organisation of sailing generally and to the preservation of safety at sea. He had in addition, a splendid ability to mix, make friends and retain them.

Arandora was one of seven elegant 38' sloops, which having been designed before the War, were by the 60s racing as a one-design fleet in Dublin Bay. The owner, who lived in the west of Ireland, needed a crew whenever he came up to race. Hopefully they might also look after the boat as well as use it in his absence. Terry was one of those recruited, all of them young members of the Royal Irish Yacht Club. They stayed together, both racing and cruising, for some decades. The boats had been painted in seven different colours. *Arandora* was in yellow, and was known across the waterfront as the 'banana boat'; it was also well known as the most convivial.

When the owner died, he bequeathed his boat to the crew. They carried on for a while, before jointly purchasing a Nicholson 33, followed by a Nicholson 345 and finally a Sigma 38. They adopted the name *State o' Chassis* from a famous Irish drama, all by now thinking of themselves as fully fledged racing skippers. They also cruised widely, but not always together.

Eventually the racing had to stop, and while still good friends, they all went their own way. Terry acquired *Nyabo*, a Contest 46. He sailed her down to Gibraltar and over the following years, he covered the Mediterranean to Turkey and back with old and new friends. Invited by others, he also sailed in many other parts of the world. To give some flavour of his scope and versatility, it could involve a transatlantic passage or as non-sailing Captain of the Irish Admiral's Cup team.

With his outgoing nature, Terry inevitably became a member of many Clubs. He was the youngest elected Commodore of the Royal Irish Yacht Club as well as a member of the Royal Thames Yacht Club, the Royal Ocean Racing Club and the Royal Yacht Squadron. He enjoyed many Cruises in Company with the Cruising Club of America and also with the Irish Cruising Club, the Royal Cruising Club and the Ocean Cruising Club. He did once confess that he might perhaps have joined too many, but what could one do when so warmly invited?

In 1988, Terry was invited to become a Commissioner of Irish Lights, in which he served until 2012, including three years as Chairman. In that time, he travelled extensively, much of it on the ship which serviced the buoys, lighthouses and lightships around the coast. It was a time of enormous change in that vital service, in all of which he was deeply involved. In 1989, he also joined the Irish Council of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. He became Chairman there as well, remaining in that role for an amazing ten years. The many lifeboat stations needed visits too, and sometimes he could combine the two. For three years, he was also Vice-President of the RNLI in England. Having cruised on his boat and he on mine, I can vouch for the intensity of his voluntary commitment to both roles.

Like us all, Terry had his reverses in life. He lost his lovely wife Gay all too early, but there were two fine sons to compensate. Later, his second wife Diana accompanied him on many cruises and to many events. She was extremely well known in the equestrian world, as well as being a serious golfer. Although not previously a sailor, she took to the wavy ocean with great charm and forbearance, and ran a superb galley.

The family, old shipmates and competitors, will all miss Terry and his ability to bring people together. We will remember also his special contribution to the safety of all who go to sea.

John P Bourke

Michael McKee



Members of the sailing fraternity were greatly saddened to hear of the death of Michael McKee in December 2024, aged 94. Michael was a much respected member and office-bearer in a number of sailing clubs. This included being a past Commodore of the ICC. He had a wealth of friends of all ages who enjoyed his company immensely.

At Michael's funeral I had the great honour of being asked by his daughter Alison to read a moving tribute she had written about her father. With her agreement I have summarised below what she wrote:

Michael was a man of extraordinary character, strength and warmth—a devoted father, loving husband, cherished brother, and loyal friend to so many. Born on 4 May 1930 to James and Edna McKee, he was the youngest of three siblings. The McKee family roots ran deep in Bangor, a connection Michael cherished throughout his life. Proud to call himself a Bangorian, he embraced his heritage and its history. His family name was indelibly etched into the town's legacy through his great-uncle James McKee, who commissioned the iconic McKee Clock in 1915. Tragedy struck early in Michael's life when his mother, Edna, passed away when he was just 16. Some time after that he obtained his qualifications in fine arts and valuation in London and in the 1950s joined his father, who was the proprietor of Alexander Spence's Auction Rooms in Belfast. This marked the start of Michael's lifelong love affair with antiques and fine art. His passion for the business was evident, and he became a force to be reckoned with in the industry.

Although the family business was an auction house in Belfast, seafaring was in the blood, as his grandfather had commanded square-riggers. Michael's introduction to sailing began at the age of 17 with the purchase of one of six new Insect class boats at Ballyholme Yacht Club. His was named *Moth*. This marked the beginning of a lifelong passion for sailing. Sailing also brought Michael to his greatest love, Anne. The two met at a regatta in Donaghadee—a brief encounter that turned into a lasting romance. Their love story blossomed, and they built a beautiful life together, welcoming their daughter Alison in 1968. Michael's first cruising boat was *Ente*, a 31-foot engineless Bermudan sloop and a WWII German prize. Restoring *Ente* was no small feat, and he took on the challenge with characteristic determination. It wasn't long however before he returned to his beloved gaff rig, acquiring the 27-foot cutter *Marie*, built in 1893.

Michael's love for sailing wasn't limited to personal adventures; he became an integral part of the sailing community. He was Sailing Secretary of Ballyholme Yacht Club (BYC), and thus began a long series of leadership roles at BYC, Royal Ulster Yacht Club (RUYC), and the Irish Cruising Club (ICC), which he joined in 1962.

Michael extended *Marie's* legacy into offshore racing, winning his class in the inaugural Ailsa Craig race in 1962. He sailed and cruised in her extensively through the 1960s.

In the mid-eighties, Michael became the owner of *Isobel*, a modern gaffer. He was awarded the ICC's Round Ireland Navigation Cup for a circumnavigation in 1996. His log of that cruise in *Isobel*, published in the ICC Annual, remains a masterclass in witty, engaging, and informative writing—a testament to his storytelling abilities.

Isobel was replaced with *Carragheen*, a Westerly Griffin. Dining aboard *Carragheen* was an experience in itself. Michael set high standards, eschewing plastic plates or glasses in favour of fine china, proper napery, and crystal glasses for pre-dinner pink gins. Every meal was an occasion, and the conversation—accompanied by Michael's ready wit—was as memorable as the sailing itself. He was always in demand as an after dinner speaker.

Michael was more than his accomplishments; he was a kind and generous soul who brought warmth, light, and laughter to everyone he met. It was no surprise, then, that he found a wonderful companion in Carol, with whom he shared the joys and challenges of later life. Together, they navigated this chapter with love and grace.

In saying goodbye to Michael, we honour a life well-lived—a life marked by resilience, love, and a deep connection to the people and places that shaped him. His legacy lives on in the memories he created, the lives he touched, and the family who loved him dearly.

Stanton Adair

Brian Law



Afloat.ie regrets to record the death of Brian Law of Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland, after a long illness which he defied by sailing to the end. In fact, when the terminal diagnosis was confirmed, he resolved to spend his final years as owner-skipper of as many different boats as possible, most notably a classic Laurent Giles 25ft Vertue, a type which had been the dreamship of his youth.

However, it was with the Sparkman & Stephens-designed Finisterre Class 39ft yawl *Sai See* that he first came to attention in sailing circles by racing her in the three-stage Round Ireland race from Ballyholme in 1975. Distance sailing became a primary interest, and he subsequently sailed *Sai See* to the Mediterranean and back with Dickie Gomes, who was to become his longtime partner in many high seas ventures, most notably in 1982-83 with the 36ft Dick Newick-designed trimaran *Downtown Flyer*, which they built themselves.

Subsequently with the 83ft catamaran *Novanet*, they established a Round Ireland Record in November 1986 which was to stand until September 1993, when it was finally toppled by Steve Fossett's remarkable 60ft trimaran *Lakota*. Brian Law meanwhile continued working his way steadily through a varied fleet of personal boats, and his slightly eccentric mode of approach to sailing challenges was to be found in his campaigning of the small Albert Strange yawl *Redwing* in an Azores & Back Race.

Ashore, he was in the core team which — from 1968 onwards — developed Down Cruising Club into the hugely attractive setup which sees the club based in a former lightship in the snug channel at Ballydorn. With his sailing home secured, in later life one of the boats he focused on was a Strangford Lough YC 28.5ft River Class of 1921, which — like all his boats — he meticulously maintained personally in a well-equipped shed beside his home above the lough.

Although a member of Strangford Lough YC, the Irish Cruising Club, the Royal Ulster YC and the Old Gaffers Association, there's no doubt that Down Cruising Club — in which he served in the officer board at all levels — was his home-from-home ashore. He knew how to relax, but equally when he had some task in hand, his application, efficiency and capacity to get the job done — and done very well — were a wonder to behold.

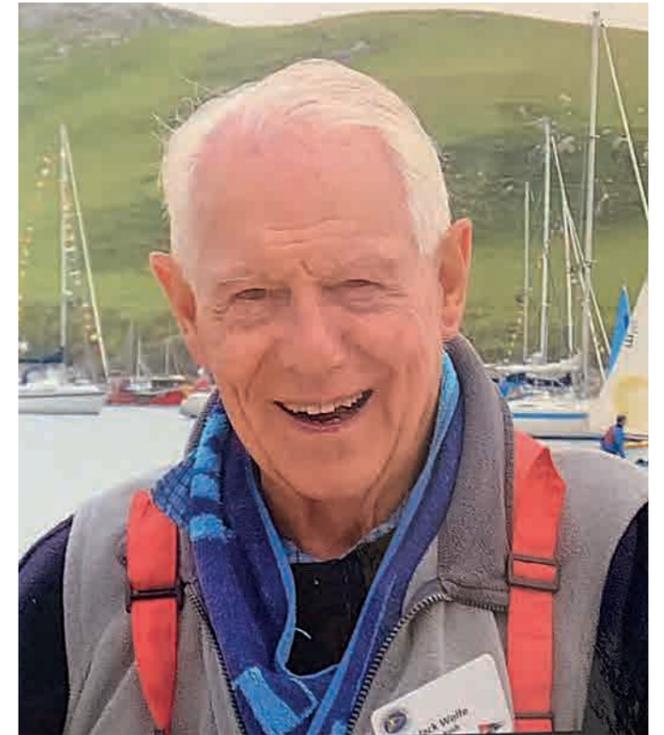
Having been in the building and property development business in a very hands-on way all his working life, his approach to any major 'retirement' restoration project in the boat-shed near the house was to have his lunch made up and boxed in the kitchen at home, and then spend the entire time working down in the shed for normal working hours.

An excellent seaman and considerate shipmate, he could turn his hand to any task, and was a real pleasure to sail with.

Our deepest sympathies and profound condolences are with his wife Rosie and family, and his very, very many friends and former shipmates.

WMN

Jack Wolfe



Jack Wolfe, who died on the 3 September in his 102nd year, had been a member of the Irish Cruising Club since 1959. Throughout his long life he had many interests. He enjoyed music, from classical to jazz, he played the piano by ear, he played badminton into his 50s, and he competed in motor sports in car trials and mud plugging in the 1950s. All of this despite having contracted polio at the age of 21 and thereafter needing to wear a heavy caliper every day. His enduring passion, however, was sailing and for over 90 years he was absolutely in his element when in the world of boats and among sailing people.

He grew up in Rathfarnham and went to St Andrew's College. He excelled in all sports there and later in Trinity, setting records in athletics that lasted for many years. From 1934, and through his teenage years, the family would spend the summers in Donabate where Tommy Cobbe had given them the steward's cottage at Newbridge House for a nominal rent. Tommy had seen the potential in Jack, this teenager with boundless energy and zest for the outdoor life, and immediately enlisted him as crew aboard *Charm* his elegant 29ft Albert Strange yawl (1927), sailed out of Malahide. Thus commenced Jack's sailing career and a lifelong connection with the Cobbe family.

Ironically, it was on board *Charm*, alone on the moorings in Malahide, that Jack woke one morning in 1945 feeling the first symptoms of polio. He managed to drag himself on deck, fall into the punt and row himself ashore as the paralysis increased. He spent three months in hospital, but had lost the use of his right leg. However, Jack being Jack, this never stopped him living a full and hyper active life, thanks to his extraordinary physical and mental strength, to the unfailing encouragement of his family and friends, and to Tommy Cobbe in particular, who was instrumental in getting him 'back on board', in every sense of the word.

He went on to have a share in *Estelle*, a Dublin Bay 21 (1903) in the 50's. In the early 60s, then with a growing family in Malahide, he acquired his first cruiser, *Kyrenia*, a Yachting World 5 tonner with which he was to win the coveted Lambay Race in Howth Regatta 1965. Then came *Gay Gannet*, an 8 ton Holman Sterling 28, in time for the ICC 50th Anniversary Cruise in Company in Cork in 1969. This was joined by trans-Atlantic boats from the Cruising Club of America, and participants from the Royal and Clyde Cruising Clubs. It was an exceptional event at which many new and lasting friendships and yachting connections were forged. Jack had ten years of great sailing with *Gay Gannet* including numerous cruises to the Hebrides with family crew and shipmate Keith Wilkinson. He was awarded the ICC Fortnight Cup in 1974 and when the family had flown the nest,

Gay Gannet was happily retired to the ownership of Mungo Park.

Jack's sound seamanship, sense of humour and ability both in the cockpit and the galley then led him to becoming a close friend of John and Jen Guinness and a permanent fixture aboard *Deerhound* and later *Alakush*. Together they made adventurous cruises to Lofoten, the Azores and the Baltic and many other challenging destinations. They regularly relied on the irrefutable fact that the sun was always past the yard arm in some part of the world, to justify breaking out the Aquavit at any time of the day, as circumstances demanded! He brought the same good-natured attitude wherever he went as on Peter Bunting's *Gulkarna* when they cruised to the Galapagos Islands via the Panama Canal.

Jack was bright and fully engaged through his entire life of one hundred plus years. In his latter years he was more appreciative than ever of the many friends who used to visit him for a chat when they would enjoy often hilarious conversations and crystal clear reminiscences of past events and voyages. He repeatedly said how lucky he was as he would discuss with anticipation the next big rugby match or ICC event. He would always say 'It's so important to always have something to look forward to.' It was only in the last few months of his amazing life that he acknowledged, in his own words 'I think I am getting a bit old'! May he find and enjoy fair winds, calm waters and good shipmates.
H.W.

Past and Present Officers of the Irish Cruising Club



Commodores

1929 H.M. Wright
 1942 A. W. Mooney
 1950 M. A. Sullivan
 1953 J. B. Hollwey
 1954 R. P. Campbell
 1958 F. Cudmore
 1960 H. W. S. Clark
 1963 P. H. Greer
 1966 R. L. Berridge
 1969 J. D. Faulkner
 1972 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1975 D. N. Doyle
 1978 J. H. Guinness
 1981 P. J. Bunting
 1984 C. J. FitzGerald
 1987 J. Gore-Grimes
 1990 H. P. Kennedy
 1993 D. Nicholson
 1996 L. McGonagle
 1998 M. McKee
 2000 D.H. FitzGerald
 2002 A.R. Baker
 2005 C. McHenry
 2008 Peter Ronaldson
 2011 David Tucker
 2014 Peter Killen
 2017 Stanton Adair
 2020 David Beattie
 2024 Alan Markey

Vice Commodores

1929 H. P. F. Donegan
 1941 A. W. Mooney
 1942 H. E. Donegan
 1947 P. O'Keefe
 1948 M. A. Sullivan
 1950 J. B. Hollwey
 1953 R. P. Campbell
 1954 B. C. Maguire
 1956 F. Cudmore
 1958 H. W. S. Clark
 1960 P. H. Greer
 1963 C. Riordan
 1965 W. H. D. McCormick
 1967 J. D. Faulkner
 1969 D. N. Doyle
 1971 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1972 P. J. Bunting
 1974 G. B. Leonard
 1976 J.M.Wolfe
 1977 A.D. Macllwaine
 1978 P. J. Bunting
 1980 G. Kenefick
 1982 C. J. FitzGerald
 1984 L. McGonagle
 1986 J. Gore-Grimes
 1987 H. P. Kennedy
 1989 D. H. B. FitzGerald
 1990 Arthur S. P. Orr
 1993 Brian Hegarty
 1996 Michael O'Farrell
 1997 Arthur Baker
 1999 T.C. Johnson
 2001 Donal Brazil

2002 Peter Ronaldson
 2004 Cormac McHenry
 2005 James Nixon
 2007 David Tucker
 2009 David Whitehead
 2011 Joe Phelan
 2012 Alan Leonard
 2014 Dan Cross
 2016 Peter Fernie
 2018 Tom Fitzpatrick
 2020 Derek F White
 2023 Alan Markey
 2024 Julie Chambers

Rear Commodores

1929 H. R. Wallace
 1930 A. W. Mooney
 1941 H. E. Donegan
 1942 D. Mellon
 1947 H. Osterberg
 1950 K. McFerran
 1951 R. P. Campbell
 1953 B. C. Maguire
 1954 F. Cudmore
 1956 H. W. S. Clark
 1958 P. H. Greer
 1961 C. Riordan
 1963 W. H. D. McCormick
 1965 R. L. Berridge
 1966 J. C. McConnell
 1968 J. H. Guinness
 1970 R. H. O'Hanlon
 1971 R. J. Fielding
 1973 H. Cudmore
 1974 G. B. Leonard
 1975 J.M.Wolfe
 1976 A.D. Macllwaine
 1977 J. M. Wolte
 1978 G. Kenefick
 1980 M. McKee
 1981 J. Gore-Grimes
 1982 C. Fitzgerald
 1983 L. McGonagle
 1984 M. McKee
 1986 H. P. Kennedy
 1987 M. R. Sullivan & D. H. FitzGerald
 1988 B. Hassett & D. H. FitzGerald
 1989 B. Hassett & A. S. P. Orr
 1990 Clayton Love Jnr & D. J. Ryan
 1992 Brian Hegarty & David Nicholson
 1993 Michael O'Farrell & David H.B. FitzGerald

1994 Michael O'Farrell & P. Walsh
 1995 L. McGonagle & P. Walsh
 1996 Arthur Baker & Jarlath Cunnane
 1997 J. Cunnane & P. Ronaldson
 1999 P. O'Sullivan & J.C. Bruen
 2000 J.C. Bruen & P. Ronaldson
 2001 P. Ronaldson & P. Killen
 2002 T. Clarke & P. Killen
 2003 T. Clarke & C. McHenry
 2004 J. Nixon & G. MacMahon
 2005 D.Tucker & G.MacMahon
 2006 D.Tucker & D.Whitehead
 2007 C. Magennis & D. Whitehead
 2008 C. Hilliard & B. Kenny
 2009 C. Hilliard & E. Cudmore
 2010 J. Phelan & E.Cudmore
 2011 A. Leonard & F.Ranalow
 2012 P. Courtney & F. Ranalow
 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
 2025 Sally Cudmore & Alex Blackwell

Award Winners

Honorary Treasurers

1929	W. MacBride
1948	G. B. Moore
1964	N. Watson
1973	Leonard Sheil
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.

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'Keeffe	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	Cuilaun 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	Máire 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	Máire Breathnach	Annabel J
2018	Donal Walsh	Lady Belle
2019	Daragh Nagle	Chantey V
2020	Vera Quinlan	Danú
2021	Robert Henshall	Maria
2022	Duncan Sclare	Quibus
2023	Ed Wheeler	Witchcraft
2024	Andrew Wilkes	Annabel J
2025	Brody Sweeney	Wodan

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
	D.J. Ryan	Red Velvet
1982	W.A. Smyth	Velma
1983	J. Guinness	Deerhound
1984	J. Gore-Grimes	Shardana
1985	A. Morton	Sung Foon
1986	Paddy Barry	Saint Patrick
1987	Brian Dalton	Boru
1988	Hugo du Plessis	Samharcin an Lar
1989	David Nicholson	Black Shadow
1990	Tommy O'Keeffe	Tir na nOg
1991	David FitzGerald	Peigin Eile
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	Cuillin
1998	David Park	Alys
1999	Peter Mullins	Cuilaun
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 Woulfe-Flanagan	Beowulf
2008	Michael Coleman	Oyster Cove
2009	Donal Walsh	Lady Kate
2010	Máire 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	Slí 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	Máire Breathnach	Annabel J
2024	Donal Walsh	Lady Belle
2025	Mark Sweetnam	Don Carlos

THE ATLANTIC TROPHY

1978	R. Cudmore	Morgana
1979	A. Doherty	Bali Hai
1980	David Nicholson	Black Shadow
1981	M.H. Snell	Golden Harvest
1982	David Nicholson	Black Shadow
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	Cuilaun
1989	Dermod Ryan	Sceolaing
1990	Jarlath Cunnane	Lir
1991	Ronnie Slater	Tandara
1992	David McBride	Deerhound
1993	Jarlath Cunnane	Lir
1994	Jonathan Virden	Twayblade
1995	Henry Barnwell	Hylasia

Award Winners

1996	Cormac McHenry	Erquy
1997	Brendan Bradley	Shalini
1998	Adrian Spence	Madcap
1999	Bernard Corbally	Rionnag
2000	Henry & Ivy Barnwell	Hyslaia
2001	Susan & Peter Gray	Waxwing
2002	Peter Killen	White Magic
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	Waxwing
2004	Noel Casey	Kish
2005	Marilyn Kenworthy	Flica
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	
2025	No Award	

ROUND IRELAND

NAVIGATION CUP

1941	E.J. Odlum	
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 Beirne	Rila
1982	W.M. Nixon	Turtle
1983	A. Doherty	Svegala
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	Sceolaing
2007	Brendan Bradley	Afar VI

2008	Fergus Quinlan	Pylades
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
2017	Garry Villiers Stuart	Winny
2019	Norman Kean	Coire Uisge
2020	Paddy Barry	L'Iroise
2021	Ed Wheeler	Witchcraft
2022	DF and Viv White	Ballyclaire
2023	No Award	
2024	Matthew Wright	Blue Way
2025	Rob Henshall	Maria

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
1965	W.M. Nixon	Ainmara
1966	H.W.S. Clark	Wild Goose
1967	Miss E. Leonard	Lamita
1968	P. Dineen	Huntress
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	Dermod Ryan	Sceolaing
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	

Award Winners

1941	D. Keating & R. O'Hanlon	Evora
1942	J.B. Cotterell & J.F. McMullan	Minx
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	Greylag of Arklow
1964	T.F. Doyle	Elsa
1965	S. O'Mara	Oisin
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 Beirne	Givusa Kuddle
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	Dermod Ryan	Sceolaing
1992	Bernard Corbally	L'Exocet
1993	Sean McCormack	Marie Claire II
1994	James Cahill	Ricjak
1995	Paul Butler	Red Velvet
1996	Frank Larkin	Elusive
1995	Dick Lovegrove	Hobo V
1996	Donal Walsh	Lady Kate
1997	Michael d'Alton	Siamsa
1998	Jim Slevin	Testa Rossa
1999	Jim Slevin	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	Verdi 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	Oisín 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
2025	Conor O'Byrne	Calico Jack

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 &	Huzure

1941	D. Keating & R. O'Hanlon	Evora
1942	J.B. Cotterell & J.F. McMullan	Minx
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	Greylag of Arklow
1964	T.F. Doyle	Elsa
1965	S. O'Mara	Oisin
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 Beirne	Givusa Kuddle
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	Dermod Ryan	Sceolaing
1992	Bernard Corbally	L'Exocet
1993	Sean McCormack	Marie Claire II
1994	James Cahill	Ricjak
1995	Paul Butler	Red Velvet

1996	Brian Black	Cuillin
1997	James Nixon	Ardnagee
1998	Peter & Evie Ronaldson	Scotch Mist
1999	No Award	
2000	Adrian & Maeve Bell	Réalta
2001	Sean McCormack II	Marie Claire
2002	Paget McCormack	Saki
2003	Adrian & Maeve Bell	Réalta
2004	Norman Kean	Xanadu
2005	Alan Leonard	Ariadne
2006	Harold & Vivienne Boyle	Gentle Spirit
2007	Adrian & Maeve 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'Iroise
2022	Fergus Quinlan	Pylades
2023	Colin Leonard	Ariadne
2024	Harry Whelehan	Sea Dancer
2025	Julian and Patricia Morgan	A Capella of Belfast

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

Award Winners

1994	Wallace Clark	Wild Goose
1995	W.M. Nixon	Witchcraft
1996	Richard Lovegrove	Shalini
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	Máire Breathnach	Young Larry
2012	W.M. Nixon	Ainmara (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	Máire Breathnach	Annabel J
2022	Andy McCarter	Gwili 3
2023	Daragh Nagle	Chantey V
2024	Jim & Kate Corbett	Dóchas
2025	Frank Cassidy	Ocean Blue

THE GLENGARRIFF TROPHY

1993	James Nixon	Sea Pie
1994	Robert Barr	Pen Men
1995	Bill Rea	Elysium
1996	Maeve Bell	Réalta
1997	Máire Breathnach	Romist
1998	Brendan Travers	Sea Maiden
1999	Máire Breathnach	SeaDance
2000	Paddy Barry	Saint Patrick
2001	No Award	
2002	Brendan Travers	Seodín
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	Oisin Ban
2013	Harry Whelehan	Sea Dancer
2014	B. O'Callaghan	Katlin
2015	Paul McSorley	Wild Cat
2016	Máire Breathnach	Annabel J
2017	Clare Morrissey	Lady Belle
2018	Peter Mullan	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 Lord
2025	Donal Walsh	Lady Belle

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 Olver	Moody Blue
1987	J.B. Law	Redwing/Spirit of Shell
1988	No Award	
1989	Colin Chapman	Deerhound
1990	Colin Chapman	Deerhound

1991	Wallace Clark	Aileach
1992	Peter Bunting	Gulkarna II
1993	Bernard Corbally	L'Exocet
1994	Peter Hogan	Molly B
1995	Brian Smullen	Zaberdast
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	Agivey
2010	Tom Foote	Picnic
2011	Norman Kean	Xanadu
2012	Brian Black	Séafra
2013	Sam Davis	Suvretta
2014	Norman Kean	Aircín
2015	Paul Cooper	Drumbeat
2016	No Award	
2017	Michael Madsen	Gabelle
2018	Paul McSorley	Viking Lord
2019	Donal Walsh	Lady Belle
2020	Máire Breathnach	Annabel J
2021	No Award	
2022	No Award	
2023	Paul Conway and Gillian Fletcher	Cevantes
2024	John Sweeney	Island Lass
2025	No Award	

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	Cuilaun
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	

Award Winners

2011	Bruce Douglas	Spirit of Jacana
2012	No award	
2013	Martin Breen	Discover Ireland
2014	No award	
2015	No award	
2016	No Award	
2017	Michael Boyd	
2019	Conor Doyle	
2021	Rónán Ó Síochrú	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	Eleanda
2008	Patrick Dorgan	Verdi III
2009	Declan Connolly	Khepri
2010	Anne Kenny	Tam O'Shanter
2011	David Jones	Tidal Dancer
2012	Ann Lyons	Stardancer
2013	Peter Mullan	Sancerre
2014	Justin McDonagh	Selkie
2015	Michael & Anne Madsen	Gabelle
2016	Darragh Nagle	Chantey V
2017	Ailbe Millerick	Hecuba
2018	Jim O'Meara	Second Chance
2019	Frank O Beirne	Samphire
2020	Sally Cudmore	Dame De Jade
2021	Vincent Guénebaut	Dame De Jade
2022	Jim and Katie Corbett	Dóchas
2023	Tony Linehan	Sea Witch
2024	Mark Sweetnam	Don Carlos
2025	Brody Sweeney	Wodan

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	Agivey
2008	David Beattie	Reespray
2009	WM Nixon	Capriole
2010	Paddy Barry	Ar Seachrán
2011	Mick Delap	North Star
2012	Garry Villiers-Stuart	Winifreda
2013	James Nixon	Meander
2014	John Duggan	Hecuba
2015	Winkie Nixon	Ainmara, etc
2016	Brian Black	Séafra
2017	Bob Brown	Narnia
2018	John Duggan	Astraeus
2019	Daria Blackwell	Aleria
2020	Margie Crawford	Europa
2021	Robert Fannin	Capa111
2022	Alan Leonard	Ariadne
2023	Frank Cassidy	Ocean Blue
2024	Andrew Wilkes	Annabel J
2025	Sam Davis	Suvretta

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 Sclare	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	Seolín
2024	Conor O'Byrne	Calico Jack
2025	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
2025	Donal Gallagher

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: Yachtsperson
1995	Ronan Beirne, Editor Annual
1996	No Award
1997	'South Aris' team. Shackleton escape from Antarctica
1998	Malachi & Evelyn O'Gallagher. Sailing directions
1999	No Award
2000	David Burrows: Olympic performance
2001	Carmel Winkelmann. Services to Junior Sailing
2002	Tom McSweeney. Services to Maritime Ireland
2003	The Jeanie Johnston Project
2004	David Tucker - 75 Anniversary Cruise
2005	Paddy Barry - 10 years as Honorary Editor of the Annual
2006	No Award
2007	William M. Nixon - outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2008	Norman Kean - outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2009	John Killeen - outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2010	The Irish 'Commodore Cup' winning team
2011	Jerry Smith - for rescue of crew of Rambler 100
2012	Annalise Murphy, Con Murphy and Cathy McAleavy
2013	Brian Craig - organisation of Irish Sailing, etc
2014	Joe English, posthumously - for outstanding sailing career
2015	Justin Slattery - for excellence in offshore racing
2016	No Award
2017	Peter Haden -Organising highly successful Rally in Galicia
2018	Gregor McGuckin
2019	Clayton Love Junior-Outstandin contribution to Irish sailing
2020	Stanton Adair- Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2021	Hal Sisk - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2022	John Clementson - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2023	Ed Wheeler - Outstanding contribution to Irish sailing
2024	John Bourke - A Sailing Life
2025	Bill O'Hara - Outstanding Contribution to Irish Sailing

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	Ithurial	
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 C.J. Fitzgerald	Senta 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	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	
2025	James Lyons	Sailing into Wellness

THE ARAN ISLANDS TROPHY

1993	Dave FitzGerald	2009	Anne Kenny & Paddy O'Sullivan
1994	Brian Lynch		
1995	Paddy O'Sullivan	2010	Fergus Quinlan
1996	Jarlath Cunnane	2011	Fergus Quinlan
1997	Pat Lavelle	2012	Brian Sheridan
1998	Brendan Travers	2013	Anne Kenny
1999	John Cunningham	2014	John Coyne
2000	Jack McCann	2015	Justin McDonagh
2001	Roger Bourke	2016	David Whitehead
2002	Dave FitzGerald	2017	Peter Haden
2003	Frank Larkin	2018	Gary Mc Mahon
2004	Dick Scott	2019	No Award
2005	David FitzGerald	2020	No Award
Year	Winner	2021	No Award
2006	Peter Haden	2022	Peter Fernie
2007	Seamus Salmon	2023	Tom Foote
2008	Michael Craughwell	2024	Michael Brogan
		2025	No Award

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	Euphazel	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 Carribean Cruise
2002	David Park Atlantic Islands
2003	James Nixon Round Ireland
2004	Wallace Clark Ireland West Coast & The Hebrides
2005	Brian Black Greenland Cruise
2006	James Nixon
2007	Andy McCarter
2008	Hugh Kennedy Services to Irish Cruising Club
2009	Trevor Lusty
2010	Derek White Organising Club events
2011	Sam Davis Single-handed voyage from Strangford Lough to Puerto Montt
2012	Mike Balmforth Co-auThorship of Cruising Ireland
2013	John Clementson Webmaster and Green Book auThor
2014	Brian Black Arctic Cruising and Exploration
2015	Robin & Denise Wright Cruise in Scottish Waters
2016	Ed Wheeler Editor, Annual and Chairman ICCPL
2017	Tony Weston Outstanding subscriptions treasurer
2018	Michael Mc Kee A lifetime of service to sailing and to the ICC
2019	No Award
2020	No Award
2021	No Award
2022	Andy McCarter
2023	Adrian and Maeve Bell
2024	Peter Mullan
2025	Frank Smyth

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 Laoire/Cork
1959	Severn II	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1960	Severn II	D.N. Doyle	Dun Laoire-Cork
1961	Cu na Mara	D. Barnes	Irish Sea Race
1962	Vanja IV	I. Morrison	Irish Sea Race
1963	Fenestra	S. O'Mara	Morecambe Bay
1964	Susanna	J.C. McConnell	Irish Sea Race
1965	Cu na Mara	D. Barnes	Morecambe Bay
1966	Orana	P.D. Pearson	Irish Sea Race
1967	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1968	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1969	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1970	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Cowes/Cork Race
1971	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1972	Tritsch-Tratsch	O. Glaser	Irish Sea Race
1973	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Morecambe Bay
1974	Assiduous	C. Love	(1st ICC Boat)
1975	Dictator	D.M. Irwin	Morecambe Bay
1976	Tam O'Shanter	J.C. Butler	Irish Sea Race
1977	Red Rock III	O. Glaser	Morecambe Bay
1978	Moonduster	D.N. Doyle	Irish Sea Race
1979	Korsar	R.E. Mollard	Morecambe Bay
1980	Standfast	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1981	Bandersnatch of Howth	R. Courtney	Morecambe1
1982	Joggernaut	D.J. Morrissey	Irish Sea Race
1983	Imp	H.B. Sisk	Morecambe Bay
1984	Little Egypt	R.B. Lovegrove	Irish Sea Race
1985	Demelza	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1986	Rob Roy	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1987	Demelza	N.D. Maguire	Irish Sea Race
1988	Red Velvet	M. O'Rahilly	Irish Sea Race
1989	Comanche Raider	N. Reilly	Irish Sea Race
1990	Woodchester Challenge Ireland	H.R. Gomes	Round Ireland
1991	Finndabar of Howth	P. Jameson	Round Ireland

1993	P. Hogan	Circumnavigation of the Globe
1994	Brendan Bradley	Brittany Rally Organiser
1995	Barbara Fox-Mills	Distributor of Publications
1996	Evelyn O'Gallagher	Sailing Directions
1998	Bruce Lyster	Tall Ships Committee Chairman
1999	Susan & Peter Gray	Pacific cruising
2000	Arthur Orr	ICC Publications
2001	Mungo Park	Sailing into his 80s
2002	Cormac McHenry	Holland to Dun Laoghaire
2003	Susan & Peter Gray	Capetown to Dun Laoghaire
2004	Bill Rea	Trophy & Annual distribution
2005	Hal Sisk	Restoration of a Classic Yacht, Peggy Bawn
2006	Grainne FitzGerald	Cruise organisation
2007	Michael Holland	Cruise from Arctic to Antarctic
2008	Cormac McHenry	Spain to the Canaries
2009	Terry Johnson	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
2025	Dick Lovegrove	Longstanding commitment, leadership, and passion for sailing

THE FASTNET AWARD

2005	Paddy Barry & Jarlath Cunnane
2006	Willy Ker
2007	Robin Knox-Johnston
2008	No Award
2009	Bill King
2010	Killian Bush
2011	No Award
2012	No Award
2013	No Award
2014	Máire Breathnach and Andrew Wilkes
2015	No Award
2016	Nikolai Litau
2017	No Award
2018	No Award
2019	Royal Cork Yacht Club
2020	No Award
2021	No Award
2022	WM Nixon
2024	Tom Dolan
2025	No Award

TRANS OCEANIC PENNANT

Auchincloss, Les	Coleman, Michael	Hyde, Stephen	Musgrave, Stuart	Snell, Michael
Barnes, Sean	Corbally, Bernard	Kean, Norman	Nicholson, David	Spense, Adrian
Barnwell, Henry	Craughwell Michael	Kenworthy, Marilyn	Nicholson, Eddie	Viriden, Jonathan
Barry, Paddy	Cudmore, Ronald	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, Máire	Drew, Bob	Leonard, Alan	Osborne, James	
Bunting, Peter	Espey, Fred	Lusty, Trevor	Osmundsvaag, Arve	
Cahill, Bernie	Glaser, Otto	McBride, Davy	Petch, John	
Cahill, James	Gore-Grimes, John	McClement, Donal	du Plessis, Hugo	
Casey, Noel	Gray, Peter	Mc Donagh Justin	Prendeville, Neil	
Chapman, Colin	Gray, Susan	McHenry, Cormac	Quinlan, Fergus	
Clementson, John	Greer, Perry	Mullins, Peter	Smullen, Brian	
Coffey, Jack	Hogan, Peter		Smyth, William	

THE FRIENDSHIP AWARD

2023	Peter Haden
2024	Hilary Keatinge

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATE

2015	Conor O'Byrne
2016	Brian Black
2017	Máire Breathnach
2018	Bruce Fennell
2019	Daragh Nagle
2020	Margie Crawford
2021	Ed Wheeler
2022	Ross Boyd
2023	Patricia Nixon
2024	Chris Bateman

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	No competition

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IRISH CRUISING CLUB 2025 ANNUAL

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Front cover: Commodore Alan Markey and Stephen Harris (ICC) sailing *Altaria* to Vatersay. Photo by Mary Childs.

Back Cover: Harold Cudmore. Selfie at night in Calvi (his first ever selfie).

Frontispiece: Sunflower, Loch na Droma Buidhe (CCA)

Inside Back Cover: Irish Cruising Club Photographic Plate.

Submissions for the 2026 Annual

To reach the Honorary Editor, Máire Breathnach, annual@irishcruisingclub.com by Friday 16 October 2026. 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, for the current season, should typically be of 1,000 to 4,000 words, or for major cruises up to 5,000 words. 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 editors Andrew Wilkes and Máire Breathnach, editors@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.

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 2024

WINNER: *Bowsprit view* by Chris Bateman

Jap, a Cork Harbour OD, sailing in the Les Voiles de St. Tropez. The photographer perched on the crane iron with his phone camera.

