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The Irish Exploit

Preparation

“Dad, can I use the boat for my Honeymoon?” The only condition which was imposed on Iain was that he got his Yachtmaster Coastal Skipper shore based certificate. He had had quite a lot of experience, including skippering our previous boat for a 2 week cruise to the West Country with three friends. “*Ariadne*”, however, was a different proposition being a nearly new Rustler 36, a much more powerful (and valuable!) boat. I had done the course myself, and learned little that I had not already acquired through experience, but it does at least formalise the knowledge and put it into a structure. It also forces one to actually learn the colregs instead of just knowing the bits we usually need!

Iain and Clare duly got married, and had a successful 2 week cruise to the West Country in “*Ariadne*”, getting as far as Fowey. But that started an idea running. Iain had often threatened to take “*Ariadne*” out of the Solent, turn right, and call me from the West Indies with the question “Where would you like me to take her now, Dad?” and he was keen to do some longer passages. So I suggested that, if he could get another couple of friends together, that he should take the boat out to Ireland during the summer of 1998, and we would do a crew swap at Cork. This would give me the chance to cruise South West Ireland, and still have time to get the boat back to the Solent.

The eventual delivery crew of Iain, Clare, Bridget and David looked ideal. All four had raced National Twelve dinghies, with some distinction, they had shared accommodation at championship meetings, and three of them held shorebased Yachtmaster coastal skipper certificates. David and Bridget had chartered cruising boats, but wanted to get some distance sailing in too. They worked well together, even at the planning stage. Clare bought all the perishables, and Bridget supplied the dry goods. Meanwhile, Dairne and I had hidden our non-perishable stores and cleared away our bedding and personal possessions into the most remote lockers.

“*Ariadne*” was in good condition, the only weakness being that the main batteries were beginning show signs of age and were not capable of holding a large charge. This meant running the engine to charge them more often than one would have wished. I had added the SW Ireland C-Map cartridge for the plotter, bought suitable passage charts, mainly Imray. David Colquhoun who had cruised the area several times also loaned to me his chart folio of Southern Ireland, which, apart from some very useful current Admiralty charts, included some quite beautiful black and white fathom charts.



Storing at Marchwood YC pontoon

Upgrade

Ariadne is fitted with ST50 instruments on a Seataalk network. Over the main hatch the fit is Speed, Steering compass, Wind, Depth, but there is no GPS or navigational data. The steering compass is invaluable for passagemaking, especially at night.

As there was not really any room to add more navigational instruments in the cockpit, the ST600R remote was added just before the beginning of the cruise. Mounted next to the hatch, it gives those in the cockpit access to a wide range of Seataalk data, especially waypoint bearing, COG and SOG. It also allows the pilot to be adjusted without leaving the shelter of the hood and having to climb over the mainsheet track, which can be tricky in a rough sea, especially at night.

One unexpected bonus was that it also allows the ST4000 autopilot sensitivity to be adjusted without going into calibration mode. We all found it a really useful addition.



Iain, Claire, Bridget & David

So on Saturday, 13th June, all assembled at Marchwood Yacht Club and the stores were loaded – just. Between them, Bridget and Clare had assembled enough stores for a double Atlantic crossing, or so it seemed. I began to worry about whether I would see “*Ariadne*” again! But it was eventually squeezed in and they set off after lunch at the Club



On the way

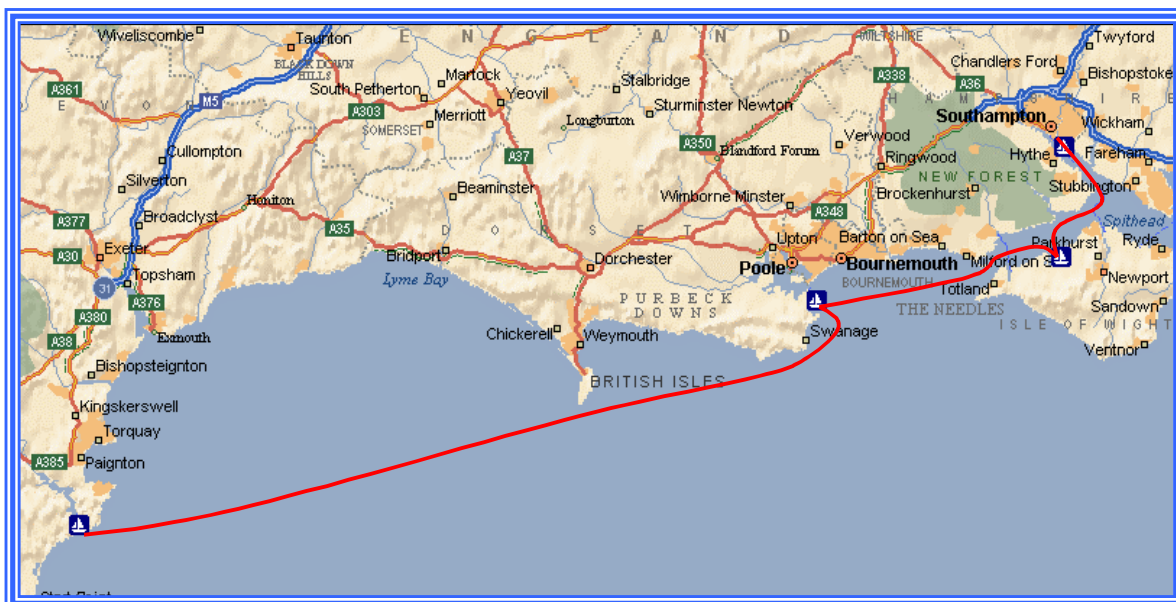
13/6/98 Marchwood to Newtown, IOW

The SW 2 wind increased gradually to F5 as the boat reached down Southampton Water, but a 2-reef beat soon brought “*Ariadne*” to Newtown where she anchored for the night. The crew had all just left busy jobs, had driven a long way and gone through the tedious business of cramming in the stores, so a quiet, leisurely start was welcomed by all.

Quote of the day: “*Its getting brighter over there*” – constant rain all day apart from 2 occasions when this statement was made – followed by torrential rain”

Even at this early stage, the quips in the diary notes are too vulgar to record, but Bridget recorded that “*Iain’s brain is still a mystery – do we p reserve it for science to investigate?*”

14/6/98 Newtown to Studland



The tide through Hurst would not go favourable till the early afternoon, so a lazy morning led to a departure from Newtown at 1300 in a NE4. The wind dropped to F3 before backing to W with variable strength. Good practice reefing and unreefing! “*Ariadne*” anchored at Studland for the night at 1830. The diary records *Lie in at Newtown. Toddled over to Studland. Spag bog and cherry crumble for tea. Bridget picked North Channel route.... And navigated. Clare and Iain left them to it. Giggles heard from forepeak.*



15/6/98 Studland to Dartmouth

Iain knew from past experience that Studland is a good springboard for a passage round Portland. Peter Bruce's useful book, "Inshore along the Dorset Coast" gives detail of all the inshore tidal eddies, and it is possible to ride these close inshore while the main Channel tide is still running hard to the east. This allows one to get to Portland, just as the tide is gathering strength on its westbound journey. However, it often involves motor sailing from Studland to Anvil Point and sometimes a little farther.

Standards are slipping - 1000 departure, Bacon Brunch, "wife swapping day" David and Clare made a start, Iain and Bridget finished. Flannel went over side, so no more washing this year. Tinned potatoes, tinned bangers and beans and plastic plates!

Having left at 1000, they were still punching tide at St Albans with a beat to Portland in prospect. To make matters worse, the Lulworth range safety boat forced them out to sea into stronger tide. The wind dropped and the engine had to be used again until 1330 when they were able to point W again and sail. Tacking inshore to pick up the Portland eddy, they rounded Portland inshore passage at 1615 in a freshening breeze with 2 reefs and 6 rolls in the jib. For a while, the sun shone, but it was a hard beat in F 4 until 2130 when one of the reefs was shaken out. By midnight, the wind had died to a light breeze, all the reefs were out, and they eventually anchored in Dartmouth, off the town at 0100.

16/6/98 Dittisham

Long lie in. Shower day – Bridget and Clare join Iain and David in the showers¹ – consternation at Dartmouth YC!!! Iain – "I can't cope". Bridget's birthday – Clare celebrated by giving David a pint of beer in his lap at the club (now banned from DYC – but Clare and Bridget have been invited back by older (male) Club members).

After a hard day sail, where better to go than Dittisham, that little gem hidden up the Dart? They had fun picking up a buoy, and Bridget told of her Uncle Don who, *when faced with a large round mooring buoy, lost patience with the traditional method of hooking on, jumped over the pulpit, stood on the buoy, put warp round loop and climbed back aboard.*

No doubt a few ales were consumed at the pub.

Postcard from Dartmouth

Its looking brighter ahead. Boat sails well to windward. Running low on supplies. Please send more. Bridget wanted to see a frigate but passed a minesweeper. Her eyes are still watering. Clare was target for Wembury Range (well nearly). Next stop Baltimore??? David still asleep. Iain's still punching tide.

Ariadne



¹ Apparently there was no hot water in the ladies shower!



17/6/98 Dittisham to Fowey

These “youngsters” (they are all about 30!) are a nostalgic lot! They had all enjoyed a National 12 Championship at Fowey a couple of years earlier (when “*Ariadne*” had acted as houseboat for Iain and his crew), so Fowey became the next target.

An 0700 start got them to the Dartmouth pontoon for fresh stores, then straight on toward Start where, by 0930 they still had 2 miles to go *Upwind again* records the log! By 1020, they could tack to weather Prawle and Bolt Head, and 3 hrs later, they were reefing again in F4. The wind direction was kinder and they were able to free sheets a little for the last 2 hrs to reach Fowey at 1945.

18/6/98 Fowey to Falmouth

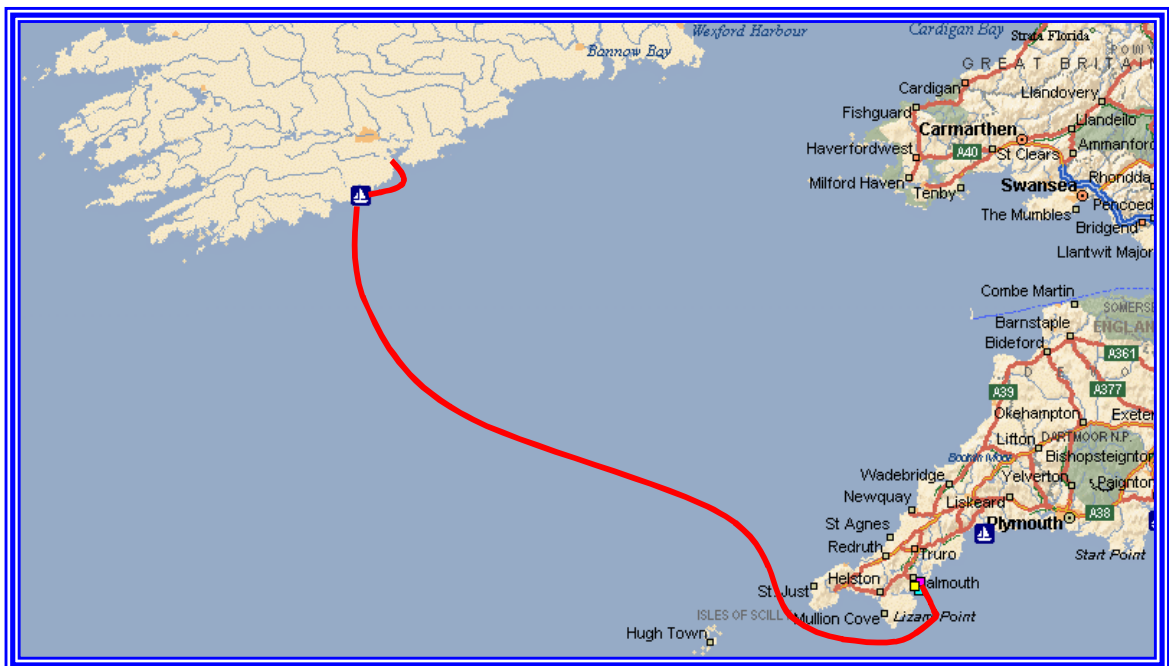
Guess what – upwind again! An afternoon passage with mixed fog and sunshine. By 1845, the vis was below 2 miles and the wind dropping, so the engine went on. The log records *Wind down to 10 kts beating. Tides always seem to be against us even when they should be with us.* But, having left Fowey at 1530 they were alongside the visitors pontoon in Falmouth by 2130 which is not too bad a passage. During the passage *Bridget spread lasagne all over cabin. 10/10 for effort and style. Nav skills improved – reached Falmouth 1 hr ahead of eta.*

The next couple of days were a relaxing potter round the Fal.

19/6/98 Fal

*Breakfast ashore. Bridget insisted on wearing Lark teeshirt. David has now managed P13 of 300pp novel after 3 yrs reading. Girls bought knitting, basket and guillotine! Deck shoes have bred – lots of little ones have appeared (size 2)². Managed to avoid mud at Malpas in “*Ariadne*” by 100mm – but grounded the Avon on way back from pub.*

20/6/98 Fal and Helford



Motored back from Malpas to Falmouth. Sent women ashore to do shopping. Sent David ashore to rescue women (Falmouth men from women) whilst Iain stayed on board smoking, guarding ship and drinking beer– well somebody had to. Wind boxed compass and went from 30kt to 3kt! Sloppy sail/motor to Helford in 3kt wind. It wasn't a beat, at least we think it wasn't – well we didn't tack. Quote of the day “Can you think of anything to do with onion and flour?”

² Clare is about 5ft tall and wears size 2 shoes. But she can hand, reef, and steer as well!



21-22/6/98 Helford to Kinsale

From 1500, when they sailed, until 1900 the wind ranged from 15 to 22kts with reefs going in and out accordingly – the Rustler likes its first reef at 18kts and the second at about 22-23kts. It is definitely a “reef and go faster” boat which does not go well with the deck edge under. At 2100, after successfully doubling the Lizard, the engine had to be run out of gear for an hour to bring up the batteries for the night. There began a sleigh ride where with the boat nearly close hauled, but making 7 kts, the tide helped to gain 20 miles towards Lands End in the next 2 hours. At 2300 David and Clare took over the watch. They allowed the tide to set them well to the North after rounding Lands End to make sure of a good clearance of the Seven Stones, then settled into the slog across the Irish Sea. By now the wind was a fresh westerly, and as the tide turned to set them to the west, the sea built up until it was at least 3-4m. In the rough conditions, the autopilot was overwhelmed, so it was hand steering all the way. The boat felt safe, But David and Bridget were beginning to feel unwell. David found it better to stay up top and helm.



Clare rigged for the weather

At dawn, the tricolour nav light had taken its toll on the battery so another 1 hr engine run was needed.

By noon, the tide had set them back to the west onto the rhumb line, but they held their course allowing the boat to be set further to the west. Dinghy sailors always feel a greater need to be upwind, whereas cruiser men want to be uptide! In mid afternoon, the rain started, even though it was sunny, but from then onwards, visibility deteriorated. By late afternoon, Iain and Bridget had the watch again, and sheets were freed. David and Bridget stood the early evening watch. “*Ariadne*” was now on a broad reach with the wind gusting over 30kts. Iain and Clare took over for the approach to Kinsale in strong wind and poor visibility. The radar and the plotter were a great help in securing a safe approach to the Old Head of Kinsale which they never saw, but which gave a good lee for the final approach to Kinsale where they made fast at 0300. Less that 36hrs for 200 miles in such conditions was a significant achievement.

In total, they had covered 444 miles from Southampton, with the last 8hrs in F 6/7 winds and less than 1 mile visibility at the end.

23-24/6/98 Kinsale

As previously arranged, Bridget and David left the ship and hired a car to tour round Ireland, while Iain and Clare rested on board in Kinsale. Conditions were not conducive to pottering about the area so it was an enjoyable break.

25/6/98 Kinsale to Crosshaven

I had hoped to make the changeover in Kinsale, but Iain and Clare had had enough of staying put, so they set off in a F4/5 with 2 reefs and 6 rolls to go round to Crosshaven, still doing nearly 6kts, just to prove the boat still knew how to go downwind. Jib poled out, in pouring rain, they arrived off Crosshaven, and made fast at Royal Cork Yacht Club by 1345.



26/6/98 Royal Cork YC



Royal Cork Yacht Club, Crosshaven

Iain and Clare spent the day enjoying the hospitality of Royal Cork, and re-stowing the boat to get their gear out of the way leaving space for us. Lists of what was where were prepared, and water was topped up. A shore power connection gave the batteries a good boost. When we arrived the following day, everything was immaculate.

Meanwhile, in Southampton, Sue Wright had driven down from Newcastle, and Dairne and I were preparing to leave. By 1600 we were on the

road to Swansea, where we boarded the ferry for a 2000 sailing, leaving the car at the ferry terminal.

We had left the booking late in case the final passage to Ireland was not possible. As a result there were no cabins available. It was a gentle crossing with a fading F4 wind, and we arrived in Cork at about 0530.

27/6/98 The swapover

Iain and Clare were waiting at the ferry terminal with a wonderful taxi driver. They had been rather early so he had taken them for a tour of the local sights, at no extra charge. We had a cup of coffee, then, while they waited for the ferry, the taxi driver took the 3 new crew back to “*Ariadne*” in Crosshaven. Even at 0600 he had us in fits of laughter with a string of Irish stories!

Iain’s first remarks were to the effect that, next time, I could do the upwind bit, and he would bring the



Approaching Cork Harbour on the Ferry

boat back! He also reckoned he would not really like to do such a passage again without windvane steering. As I agreed with the second (but not the first) comment, a Monitor gear was ordered at the Southampton Boatshow shortly after the end of the cruise!

Bridget and David arrived to catch the ferry and the passage crew enjoyed a more leisurely return across the Irish Sea to Swansea, picked up the car and returned to Southampton where their own cars

were waiting. Bridget had to bail the water out of her car, though!

The changeover had all gone smoothly.

It was now time for the new crew to get going....but why *this* crew?

Dairne and Sue had worked together in the Storrar and Bax sail loft in Tynemouth – more years ago than they care to remember! Put it this way, our sons, Iain and Neil were in junior school then. Dairne wanted a change from teaching, so I suggested the sail loft. When we needed sails for our boat, they just stopped paying her for a while!

While Iain was at University in Newcastle, he worked for Robbie Storrar in the chandlery and used the spare room at Sue’s house when he was not able to stay in the hall of residence.

I had sailed in Tynemouth when at University and often crewed for Robin Steavenson who had won the Burton Cup (for National 12s) in 1948, 1953 and 1967. Later, Iain crewed for Robin, including his final Burton Cup week at the age of 80, when Robin frightened all his many friends by tearing up and down the seafront on Iain’s motorbike (he had his own collection including a Scott trials bike!). Robin owned “Witchcraft” , a National 12 and one of the first batch of three boats ever built using glued



clinker construction. He had also built the first ever cold moulded hull in this country, an International 14 called "Sorcerer", in which he once had a lead of over a mile in the Prince of Wales cup, only to be pipped at the line by half a length. All these escapades are recorded in a beautiful series of books illustrated with his own photographs. He was a magician at getting a boat to go in light weather. After Iain left University, Sue crewed for Robin for several years. Apart from his pioneering he taught all of us a respect for boats, a love of light weather sailing and had given us a respect for the heritage of yachting. After Robin's death, Sue and Iain sailed the Burton Week together in Fowey, using Ariadne as a hotel ship for the week with Dairne as house mother. So we all knew each other quite well!

27/6/98 Crosshaven

We were on board by 0830. The first disaster was that my camera packed up. I hitchhiked to Carrigaline to get new batteries, and was back again by 1030. To no avail, however, the camera was to remain dead for the rest of the holiday. By the time I returned, Dairne and Sue had packed everything away. It seemed from the amount of stores left that the passage crew had tried to feed the 5000 and failed! We had a brunch, followed by an afternoon nap to catch up from the lack of sleep on the ferry. The wind was NW 5 gusting 6 with showers, so we didn't miss much.

The first real Irish Guinness tasted quite good, but not as smooth as some we had later.

A leisurely and enjoyable dinner at the Royal Cork YC, where the Marchwood burgee was prominent in their collection (Ted Hargreaves, I think).



28/6/98 Crosshaven to Kinsale

A short shakedown passage with a forecast of N-NW airflow F3-5 was ideal. We were under way by 0930, with a SE F2 wind. Having motored out and hoisted sail, the wind died, Daunt Rock was reached by 1115 with the wind having gone to SW F3. *Lovely sailing, coffee and biscuits.*

A beat in SW F3-4 went on till 1330, when a major windshift to W forced a tack to clear Bulman, but by 1350, we were able to lay Kinsale entrance, with easy visual pilotage. By 1445 we made fast alongside a Danish Nauticat 30 at Kinsale Marina. The place was crowded and is obviously a stopping point for multinational globetrotters.



Kinsale Marina: Ariadne outside Danish yacht

Following Iain and Clare's recommendation, a magnificent meal was enjoyed at Annelies, only one of many wonderful restaurants in Kinsale. Our Danish neighbours Kirsten and Bjorn Roleglud, were then introduced to Irish Malt (ferry duty free!). They were on their way back from the Caribbean having spent a year away from Denmark. Kinsale was their first landfall after 1000 miles from Horta. Their only reported problem was that their high freeboard aft made life difficult for the Aries vane gear.



29/6/98 Kinsale

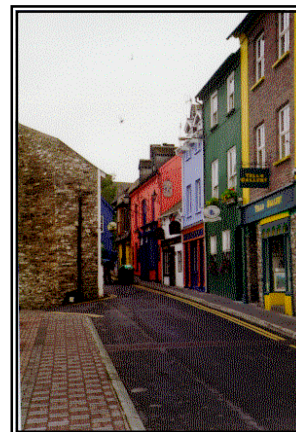
Did it rain! It hardly stopped all day. There was no incentive to go anywhere, but the 'stay put' decision was postponed till the 1300 f/c. It is a lovely town for pottering, so despite the rain, I went shopping with Sue for fresh stores. Our stores were supplemented with a range of lovely Irish breads, garlic sausages, fresh mince, cauliflower and cabbage.



Kinsale in the rain!

What a delight it is to buy bread in a bakers that smells of baking, and wait in the butchers while they make the minced beef on the spot. Kinsale is quaint, courteous and

colourful!



Kinsale

The first dozen postcards were bought and 30 stamps. After lunch the girls made a foray into the

town shopping, mainly of the window variety. It poured with rain, so heavy weather gear was used.

They returned soaked, but smiling, their achievement being more bread and stamps, a camera for Dairne and a catalogue of photos for Sue. Oh they also got some Irish cheeses as well. *Strange what people do for a laugh, isn't it?*

That evening we visited the friendly Kinsale YC, for more Guinness. They were awaiting the return from Cork of one of their yachts which had just won the Round Ireland 2-handed race.

30/6/98 Kinsale to Baltimore

To catch tides and make a good passage we were up at 0715 and away by 0835 under power. Even though the wind was N3, the engine was kept running till the Old Head of Kinsale was passed. A pleasant gentle sail was interrupted off Seven heads by being diverted



Old Head of Kinsale

round nets. By 1300 the wind had dropped to NW1, with Galley Head just over 2 miles to NNW, but it filled in again to F3 by 1320, when course was altered to pass inshore of the impressive Stags. When jumping from headland to headland under power, the autopilot in track mode automatically compensates for any tidal inset. Lazy, but effective! The wind remained fitful so it was a mix of gentle sailing and motoring till the Stags were passed at 1535. Eventually, we motored into Baltimore and anchored off the quay at 1715.



Entrance to Baltimore, Sherkin Island on the right



Sleepy Sue and the Komodo Dragon

Sue *had* warned us beforehand, but her ability to sleep ought to be in the Guinness book of records (Dublin brew edition). On every leg of the trip, without exception, Sue went below for a little zizz. When not on watch, she could sleep in the cockpit too. This would be so repetitive in the log that it seemed worth recording it once, properly. Although she loves sailing and just being on the water, she suffers from incipient mal de mer, and uses Stugeron to combat it, on the whole successfully. She is however one of the small proportion of people who find it makes them very sleepy.



Once we got used to it, it did not matter at all. She was always there when needed, and would take her turn at the tiller. She is not a natural helmswoman and needs to be given clear indicators. Where possible, a fixed point of land to head towards is easiest, and in moderate conditions, she could cope with the masthead windvane. The lazy instrument is the Autohelm steering compass – just follow the pointer. The lag in the system does, however, require

a little anticipation which is greatly helped if one has some feel for what the boat is going to do next, an art Sue has yet to



acquire!



Sue and Dairne worked well on watch together on the return trip. Sue has agility and strength to complement Dairne's greater sailing experience. When only Dairne and I are cruising together, I have to assist in any sail change, but I was able to sleep right through reefing, unreefing and a lot of sail trimming while the two of them just got on with it. Having single line reefing led back to the cockpit helped.

In harbour, Sue contributed a lot to the running of the boat. There was never a need for a washing up rota (we all did our share!), and she could be relied on to buy the right stores – plus a little something extra. Whenever Dairne thought the cabin sole needed a sweep, it had been done. She had no “food fads” except the need to have a squeezed lemon every day, but had brought her own lemons and a squeezer! A cheerful companion, and good company.

Sue is not alone in ability to sleep. When we lived at Tynemouth, Dairne was known as the Dormouse because of her ability to sleep at inappropriate moments. Cries of “Where's the teapot? Dairne's asleep again!” were not uncommon. Nowadays, a slower pace and a greater inertia mean she is often seen curled up somewhere in the sun - like a Komodo Dragon sitting on a rock.

Meanwhile, in Baltimore.....





Dairne retrieving flag halyard



Baltimore – pontoon to the right

The intention was to go ashore as we had been told Baltimore had some good eateries. It was not to be, however. First Dairne went up the mast to retrieve a lost flag halyard. The sail ties were not even on, when a Cornish crabber was alongside, carrying Don and Gigi who had just ordered a Rustler. So they came on board with their son, Alastair, who had only seen pictures of a Rustler, and a few gins were swilled - and a few more! As they had been celebrating Alastair's 21st all afternoon, it was quite a party. They were definitely late for their evening dinner engagement! By the time they had gone, it was too late to go ashore, so we ate on board.

1/7/98 Via the Fastnet to Schull



Approaching Fastnet from the North



The Rock!

July started in a very gentle mood. Long trips were out of the question, so it was decided that we should visit the Fastnet Rock which we had seen in the distance the evening before, and make our way back to Schull on the other side of Baltimore Bay. Leaving at 1015, with a very muddy anchor which seemed to take ages to clean, a gentle run took us past Sherkin Island and Clear island, passing Gascanane Sound at 1115. By 1230, the Rock was rounded close to.

For every yachtsman, the Fastnet has a special place in the mythology of sailing. It marks achievement and triumph, and is the symbol of a great disaster in 1979. David Colghoun, who had lent us his charts, had rounded the rock with Adlard Coles in "Cohoe III" in the 1957 Fastnet Race when only 12 of 48 boats finished the race. We saw it in a benign mood, but we were all just a bit quiet. It is, somehow, a mystical place.

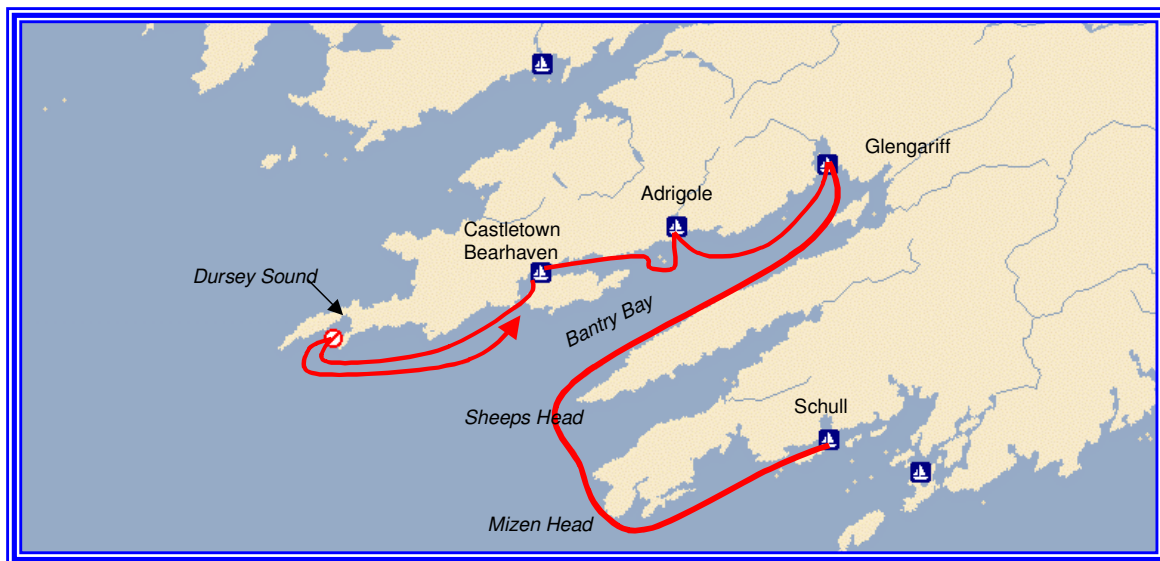


Schull – glassy calm



The motor was used all the way to Schull where we anchored at 1550 in an absolute flat calm. An evening ashore led to some Irish country singing in a pub, followed by dinner in a French Restaurant.

2/7/98 Schull to Glengariff



The pottering was over for a while. A 40 mile leg was planned to get to Glengariff at the top of Bantry Bay. A dead run down Long Island Sound after an 0810 departure, and not a little motor sailing brought "*Ariadne*" to Mizzen Head by 1100. It was hot and sunny, but almost immediately an E breeze filled in at F2-3, moving gently to NE, only to die for a while until a sea breeze developed by about 1135. By 1340, we were round Sheeps Head in Bantry Bay.



Mizzen Head from South



Reach up Bantry Bay

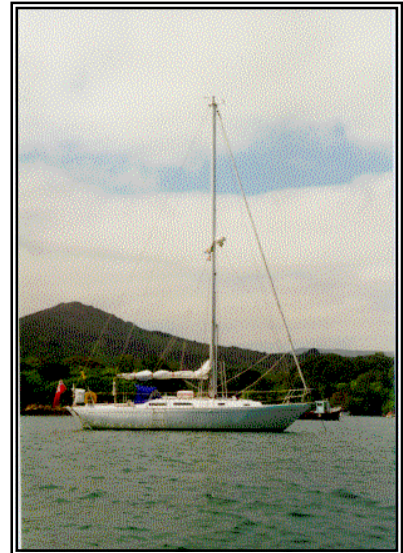




It didn't last, the NE won, so we beat gently up Bantry Bay for 2 hours, until, once again the seabreeze had another go, and the pole went in for a dead run to NE. By 1900 the seabreeze faded, to be replaced only a few minutes later by a sparkling NW3-4, resulting in a sporting beat right into Glengariff. The anchor went down at 2000 in this exquisite bay. The superlatives in the pilot book do not exaggerate!



Beating into Glengariff



3/7/98 Layday in Glengariff



I rose early, and got these magical dawn pictures. Incredibly still, exquisite colours, and a sense of peace. Just to sit in the cockpit on a morning like this, with a mug of tea, must count as one of the great pleasures of cruising. Dairne and Sue slept on, and missed the best of it.



A late breakfast, clean ship, then ashore by dinghy for a stroll through the village. It was a warm sunny day, so lunch at a pavement table outside a homespun café was relaxing. It was all so green, with mountains in the background. There was a walk along the side of the bay, with glimpses of the water through the trees. The sun shone, and it was warm.

There was a shop by the landing point, very touristy, but a Kerryman sold Sue a sweater through his banter. At one point he told her to see how well it looked in the bag!





Early evening drinks were held on “*Ariadne*” with Nigel Clark and Harry Hanagan from “Manatee Voyager”, a Voyager 35 from Hardway SC (Portsmouth). They had more time than ourselves, and hoped to get to Dingle.

Phone calls to Iain, who was shortly to depart to Kuwait, and my mother (her birthday) preceded a quiet evening.

Glengariff is a ‘must’ for any future trip to this area. We later realised that the 4 yellow buoys had been put their by Bord Failte, the Irish Tourist Board (with EU money!). Still, anchoring was no problem.

4/7/98 Glengariff to Castletown Bearhaven, via Adrigole

Another morning of patchy breeze led to a mixture of motoring and sailing from 0930 when we weighed until 1230 when a buoy (also Bord Failte, one of 10 laid by them) was picked up in Adrigole, one of the many natural harbours in the area. An exquisite spot, all to ourselves except for a family of seals, overlooked by a horseshoe of mountains. There was insufficient time to get ashore, but enough time to let the atmosphere of the place soak in. The seals, although some distance away were quite playful.



Beating into Adrigole, Bantry bay



Edward in control!

A late afternoon beat to Castletown, led us past two wrecks, neither of which were shown on our new Imray chart, although the C-Map cartridge was up to date. Apparently they had been there for several years. With F4-5 a reef was pulled in. Grand sailing, but the tacks were a little short. The Laurence Cove marina on Bear Island was given a miss, though later reports suggested it is now a magnificent facility.

Sue’s well travelled teddy, called Edward, has been to, Norway, the Solent and Canada, and he took command as we passed Bear Island.

The surprise on entering Castletown Harbour was that the lifeboat was RNLI, an odd link between the Republic and the UK. We were tired, so did not go ashore in what looked like a typical working fishing port.

5/7/98 To Dursey Sound.... and back!

The limit of our ambitions was Sneem in the Kenmare River, another long trip. By 0945 we were on our way, having motored around looking for rubbish skips and water points. With NW F4, a reef and 4 rolls made beating fast but comfortable for the nearly 20 mile beat to Dursey Sound. At one stage, just after Crow Head, the water became choppy, so a series of shorter inshore tacks found flatter water, and better headway.

At 1400, the jib was rolled as “*Ariadne*” approached the very narrow Dursey Sound. Being in the lee of Dursey Island, and running back towards the Sound, the engine was started, rather than the reef shaken out, to maintain better control in the approaching narrows. The narrows, were just beginning to open up when a rope from a fishing buoy some 50 feet away became entangled in the prop. Indeed, we were so far from the buoy that at first I thought it must be a separate rope anchoring us direct to the bottom.



Now Dursey Sound must be about as far as it is possible to get from civilisation in NW Europe. Irish Coast Radio were advised to see if there was any local help. There was none. They offered to call out the lifeboat (from Castletown, 20 miles away), but I suggested I should try to see what we could do first.

The Lifesling was deployed while I went over the side to see if I could see or do anything. It was almost immediately clear that I could not, so the attempt was abandoned. When I reported to Irish Coast Radio, they again offered to send out the lifeboat, but as it was a Sunday afternoon, and the day of the World Cup Final, I declined as no life was at risk.

By now we had guessed that the rope was attached to the nearby fishing buoy, but we were not totally sure. Luckily the tide was slack (it can run at 4kts in Dursey), so the dinghy oars enabled us to paddle “*Ariadne*” to the buoy. The buoy was lassoed, and pulled to deck level with the aid of the sheet winches. The rope was cut and we were free.



It took a diver to get this off the propeller

Irish Coast Radio asked us to keep them advised of progress as we ran back toward Castletown Bearhaven, giving up the 20 miles to windward, and not expecting to have enough time to get round to Sneem. It was disappointing. But as we passed Crow Head on the return trip, Coast radio said that, as we had been sensible, he would offer a free link call to a diver, an offer which was accepted with alacrity as I had seen no slipping facilities or wall suitable for drying during our earlier visit to Castletown Bearhaven.



Back toward Bear Island, tail between legs

So by 1730, we had rounded up and dropped anchor, and within an hour, Brian O'Rourke, who had driven down from Glengariff with a friend, had gone over the side and cleared a large ball of polyprop rope from the propeller. He charged £50 Irish, but it saved a day of our holiday. He also offered to take us for a tour of

Glengariff in his car if we ever got back there again. He meant it, too! He is trying to re-establish the diving school there.

While this was going on, Dairne and Sue had walked round the town, but not been too impressed with what they saw. We were relieved to be mobile again, and decided to go a few miles back down the route to Dunboy, which we had already passed twice. This was done under power, proving there was insignificant damage to the running gear, arriving at about 2000. There were two other yachts there, and a Dutch Ketch of about 60 feet arrived shortly after us. Quite a crowd for an Irish harbour!

It had been an eventful day, and we were all tired. So a quick supper preceded an early night.



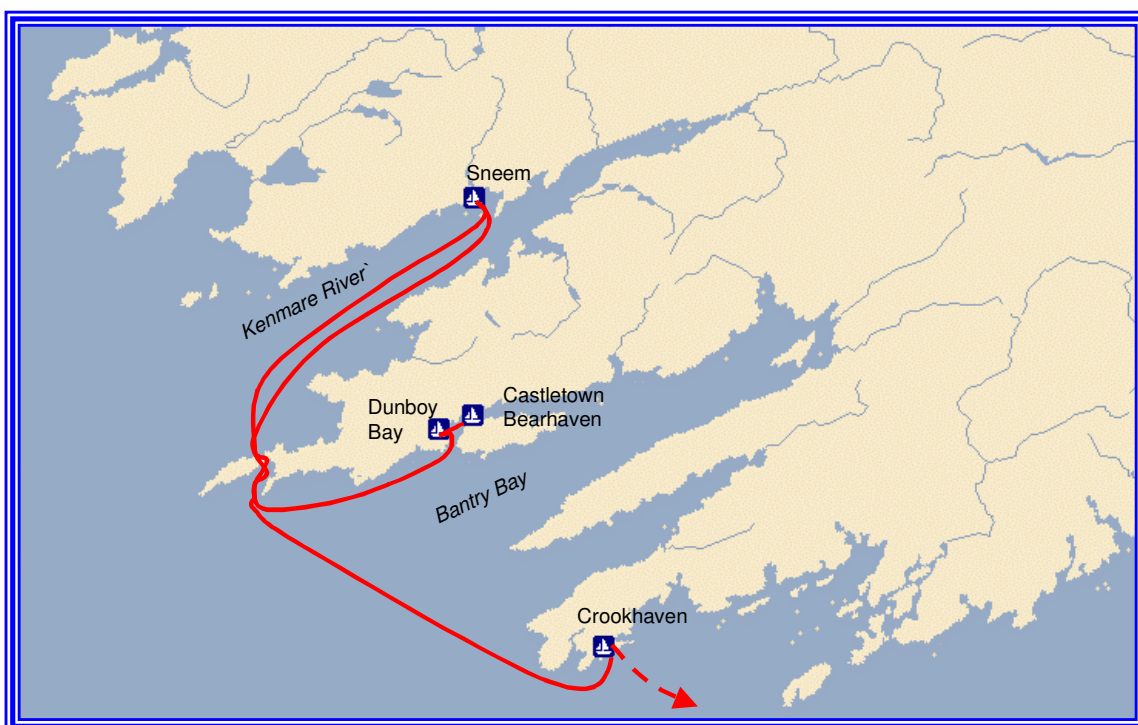
Dunboy Bay



6/7/98 Dunboy to Sneem

Sue and I took the dinghy ashore to get photographs. The crew from “Aries of Hamble” were there too. She is a company-owned 38 ft sloop which is sailed hard. They had picked the sector from Kinsale to Dingle, which must have been one of the best. They had walked up to Dunboy house and discovered it was derelict. Apparently it was bombed in the ‘20s by the IRA during earlier troubles, but is now undergoing restoration.

By 1110, we were on our way. The weather was being kind with N 4-5 and sunshine giving a sparkling reach back out to Dursey Sound, and by 1330 we were approaching the scene of the previous day’s debacle.



Tense stuff, going through Dursey Sound



Quite chop in Kenmare River North of Dursey Sound

It was tense stuff passing the scene of our previous problem, knowing that a tricky and narrow channel, under a cableway with strong tides lay just round the next corner. It took quite a lot of engine help to make it, but gently nosing our way through, punching quite strong tide, we broke through into Kenmare. As the pilot book indicates, it is quite choppy on the N side of the sound in a NW wind, which was now F4 with sunshine. The breeze continued to give a fast reach up Kenmare. *What breathtaking scenery, bare mountains.*



Tension over, sailing up Kenmare River

But at 1630, the wind headed, so the original plan to go inside Sherky Island was abandoned, and we expected a beat into Sneem. However, the wind freed rapidly lifting us up right into Sneem harbour.

By 1740, we were anchored among 4 other yachts. Very crowded! The sun was shining, but clouds were beginning to gather.

What a beautiful anchorage – I can't believe this is so wonderful a cruising area. When you are in one anchorage, you can't believe there is anywhere else more beautiful, but there is. This and Glengariff are



Beating into Sneem

about the best so far, and this has provided an 'expedition' by T/t "Ariadne" first up the river, then into a parallel sided gully extending to sea right through the headland – quite fantastic!

Indeed, it was an amazing expedition. The clouds were gathering in the dusk, and provided a dramatic, if somewhat ominous display as we went upriver in the dinghy. On the way back, we explored a cut from which I had seen a fishing boat emerge, apparently from behind the trees. It turned out to be an amazing rift, absolutely straight for about half a mile and linking Sneem harbour direct to the open sea.



A dinghy trip up the Sneem River



The 'cut', a natural cleft through the headland



A dramatic sky at Sneem, but it wasn't threatening

That evening we entertained the crew of a Scottish boat owned by a couple of academics living in the USA (but the boat, "Runna Mara", is based in Largs). Very interesting! Robin Popplestone and Kristin Morrison regularly cruised in Scotland, but as she was due to give a lecture on some exotic aspect of marine environmental preservation at a conference somewhere near Galway, they had decided to cruise right round Ireland. How lucky can you get!



Kerry mountains, sea and sky in Sneem – typical of the dramatic scenery of the whole area

7/7/98 Sneem to Crookhaven

The beginning of the return trip is always a sad moment. The realization that the cruise cannot go on for ever is inescapable. However, there were signs that the gentle weather was coming to an end, so we decided that we would get back round Mizen Head while conditions were friendly. Weighing at 0630, “*Ariadne*” motored out of Sneem harbour and between Sherkey Island and Inishkeelaghmore, a smaller island inshore. By 0700, a NW 3 breeze had filled in allowing us to reach gently down Kenmare while breakfast was enjoyed in the cockpit. But by 0745, the donkey was working again, and attempts to sail were not very successful until

0900, when a N3 wind took us back to Dursey Sound, which was tackled with engine help against a 2kt current. After gybing clear of the S end of Dursey Sound, the pole was set for a run straight to Mizen head (note in log: *I think it would be warmer at Alice Springs YC*).



It was gentle going, and by 1200 Sheeps Head was

Sheeps Head

due East at 7.45M. (the photo is included here, because there wasn't room on the outward trip log pages, when we had passed it close enough to photograph). Approaching three Castle Head, which is the second headland just NE of Mizen Head, The boat was gybed to clear Mizen Head at 1330.



Three Castle Head, near Mizen Head

A fast dead run followed until we rounded up into Crookhaven, finishing with a smart beat in brilliant sunshine with a F4/5 breeze. There are now plenty of visitors buoys there, and we picked one close to the town pier. The trip had been nearly 40 miles, but was accomplished by 1530.



Another visit to the pub for another smooth

Beating into Crookhaven

Guinness led to us meeting Mike and Sue Phillips from N Wales. Their boat was a sporty 30 footer called "Seren Wib", in which they raced regularly round the cans, but they had also cruised extensively. From N Wales, Scotland or Ireland are equidistant. They have come to prefer Ireland and had returned several times. While we were chatting about fizz boats, I suggested the 'flour bomb test' – if they pass close enough to land one in the cockpit, they deserve it. Mike suggested eggs were better!

Another very different anchorage – lots of Mirrors with Kids.

Crookhaven looked interesting, so we went ashore to explore and prospect for restaurants. There was a good pub on the quay, with excellent Guinness. We liked the look of the French restaurant, but it was too early. Back on the boat, for a while with a few purchases of bread and postcards, the odd sausage and a few veggies.



Crookhaven – "the town!"

The French restaurant was full, so we went into a nearby pub, found a corner table and tucked in. We were eventually joined by a group of three cyclists one of whom was Australian. They had cycled miles, and when the weather got them down, taken a cheap flight to Ibiza for a week! Very enterprising! Our Welsh friends were also there, so they joined us on board for an agreeable end to the evening.

With a wet and windy forecast, we more or less decided to stay put the next day as we liked Crookhaven. Our original plan had been to trickle over to Baltimore, and that would certainly have been possible. But Baltimore will have to wait for a return cruise.

8/8/98 Crookhaven, Layday

We all had showers on board. As we had not been anywhere with easy access to water since Kinsale, I had to ferry water carriers across in the dinghy, and at the same time got a booking in the French Restaurant.

It was blowing quite hard, so a lazy afternoon on board was had by all. As the afternoon wore on, the breeze freshened and it rained. So it was oilskins on before going ashore, routine phone calls, especially to Iain who was off to Kuwait next day.



Crookhaven light

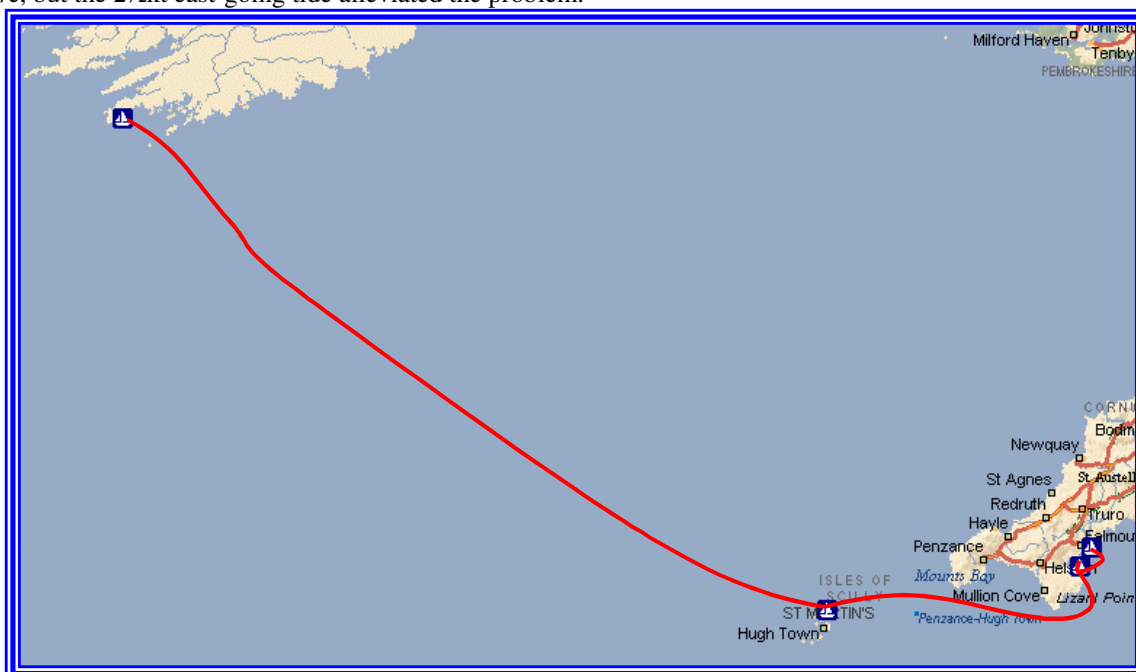
The French meal was superb – it was a Breton style seafood restaurant - and we returned to the boat replete. It was our farewell to Ireland as we could see a weather window and had decided to head direct to the Scillies from Crookhaven.



9-10/7/98 Crookhaven to New Grimsby

By 0700, "*Ariadne*" was under way past Crookhaven Light, then doglegging past Horse Rocks before settling into a very broad reach in a sloppy sea left over from the previous night's blow. The pole was set at the beginning of what turned out to be a rolling journey. At 0900 the Fastnet was passed (completing its circumnavigation), and the breeze freshened to a lively F4. As the boat would make 5.5kts the rig was reduced to 2 reefs and 6 rolls, still poled out.. By late morning, the wind faded and a reef was taken out and the pole removed, steering 150° to keep the sails full. By lunchtime, the pilot was tried again and coped quite well, despite the rolling.

It was a sunny afternoon, with the wind holding a steady F4. Having had adverse tide during the morning, the SOG increased, rising to over 7 kts by 1600, when the wind veered instead of backing as f/c, but the 2½kt east-going tide alleviated the problem.



During the early evening, we crossed the Labadie Bank where many of the the 1979 Fastnet fleet ran into trouble. The biggest loss of life had been from a yacht called "*Ariadne*", and our thoughts were with them.

The wind freshened to F5. I was reluctant to put the pole in because of the risk of accident handling it in a swell, especially at night. This meant it was difficult throughout the whole trip to keep the jib drawing. By 2135, the wind was still F 5 and the jib was rolled to 6 rolls again for the night, still with 1 reef in the main.

By 2200, we were half way, and the wind had dropped a little, but it was comfortable for the night, so no sail increase was made. It was not a bad night, a little cold, but there was some moon diffused through thin cloud – perhaps an ominous warning. As usual, I took the late watch from 2200 until 0600, having slept during the early evening. Tea and toast made by Sue at 0600 was very welcome, and Dairne took over for the morning watch. The wind kept changing and Dairne and Sue rolled the jib, started the engine, took a reef in and unfurled the jib and stopped the engine between 0600

and 0700 while the wind made up its mind what to do, but it eventually settled down as WSW4, and later became SW3.



The Navigator!



Our track was developing the typical 'S' shaped curve as the tide took us first one way, then the other, while maintaining a steady course.

The midday forecast was very discouraging, with the prospect of a strong westerly over the next 2 days, perhaps gale force. One possibility was to keep going and get to a more comfortable harbour on the mainland. But we wanted to see the Scillies, and had ridden out gales in New Grimsby before, so the decision was taken to go into the Scillies. Also, Sue had never been there,

Visibility became poor, dropping to 1½ miles. These were not ideal conditions for an approach to the Scillies, but by 1340, the plotter position was confirmed with a first sighting of the Northern Rocks, although they disappeared again in the murk.

But by 1345, easy pilotage had taken "*Ariadne*" into the calm water of New Grimsby Sound past Shipman Head on which the waves were breaking. After motoring past Hangman's Rock, it was clear there were only two other boats there, and plenty of available buoys.

The trip log showed 145 miles, our longest passage yet in "*Ariadne*" but not nearly matching the 200 mile trip achieved by the passage crew.



The Western rocks, taken from Bryher near Hell Bay

11/7/98 Layday New Grimsby

We had been kept awake during part of the night by rolling as swell worked in from the North, but this only lasted for a couple of hours while the tide turned. However, Dairne managed to sleep from 0530 till 1030, when I returned from the shop on Treco quay with croissants for breakfast.

While going ashore, I realised that one of the other boats there was "Rameling" who we had met the previous year, also in New Grimsby. As they appeared to be in a more sheltered spot, "*Ariadne*" was moved to an adjacent buoy. Owned by two retired doctors, Weena and Skinny, "Rameling" was based in Fowey where they own a cottage behind the Fowey Gallants S.C. We had shared a gale the previous year in exactly the same spot, and got to know them then.



Gales were forecast

A good lunch at the New Inn on Treco was followed by a leisurely afternoon on "Rameling". However, it was a wet trip out in the dinghy, and an even wetter journey across to "*Ariadne*" afterwards. As the motion was noticeable Dairne produced a "throw it in" supper, spiced up with a bottle of Muscadet. Our wine stocks were getting low!



12/7/98 Hibernation, New Grimsby



A very wet and windy morning. Huge waves could be seen marching past Shipman Head to the north, and there were cascades of spray breaking over it. The forecast indicated brighter weather later, with some moderating from gale down to F5/6. We were fairly confident of getting away the next day, but were expecting hilly water.

The forecast materialised, and a pleasant late afternoon walk on Bryher gave spectacular views of the Western Rocks. Sustenance at the Hell Bay Hotel preceded a return on board and a late supper.

This was our third trip to the Scillies, and on every occasion we had sheltered from gales in New Grimsby. *One day, we will get here with settled weather!*

13/7/98 New Grimsby to Helford

The 0535 f/c offered W/NW 4/5, sunny with showers. So by 0830 we were on our way.

At 0915, the time had come to put the pole in, not easy in the lumpy seas. I failed to secure the inboard end properly, so it shot up the mast "*G not happy*" records the log, which is an understatement of monumental proportions. Sue was heard to comment later "*I can see I still have a lot to learn about relationships*". Anyway, we settled down on the run, and everyone was happier.

We had barely left the Scillies behind when we could see Lands End, the first time that had happened. (usually we adopt the "follow the helicopters" school of navigation!)



Helford

By 1400, the soporific run had taken its toll, and both lady crews were asleep in the cockpit. *Time for a beer!*

For about an hour from 1630, Dairne did a magnificent job running nearly by the lee (with no jib up), so we could round the Lizard. It was relief to head NE and get the jib drawing again, and get into the lee of the land, clear of the swell. By 1830, Sue was helming as we enjoyed some of the best sailing of the whole trip. *Storming sunny reach, 1 reef. Coverack 1.64M @ 351 degrees M. This is sailing! F5-6 beam reach. Flat water, sun, G+T!* We roared past the Manacles buoy, and hardened up, 1 reef and 6 rolls, with Sue really getting the feel of the boat close hauled, and doing very well. We even needed the second reef as the breeze freshened.

Off Gillan creek, the engine was started as we wanted to make it to the Shipwrights Arms at Helford before it stopped serving meals. It was a race against time, and it looked like all the visitors buoys were full, but we eventually found one, and got the dinghy out, raced to the pub and just (but only just) made it before last food orders.

We advised the Coastguard of our arrival, only to be informed that "someone had inquired after us". We soon worked out it had been Hilda Russell, a feisty resident of Portscatho, who had been expecting us.



Hilda is remarkable because she is *so* practical. She had been a friend of the family for years; she and her late husband, Jack, had raced Merlin Rockets and later X boats on the Solent before they retired to Cornwall (they even had one built). On our first arrival in Cornwall, we had rung her up unexpectedly, and her immediate reaction was “I don’t want to be personal, but would you like to come round for a bath?” What nicer thing could there be to say to a cruising yachtsman and his wife after a week beating to windward in an old boat with a leaky deck! Unfortunately, our annual bath had to be given a miss this time because Hilda was playing tennis or delivering (yes *delivering*) meals on wheels, even though she is fast approaching 80!

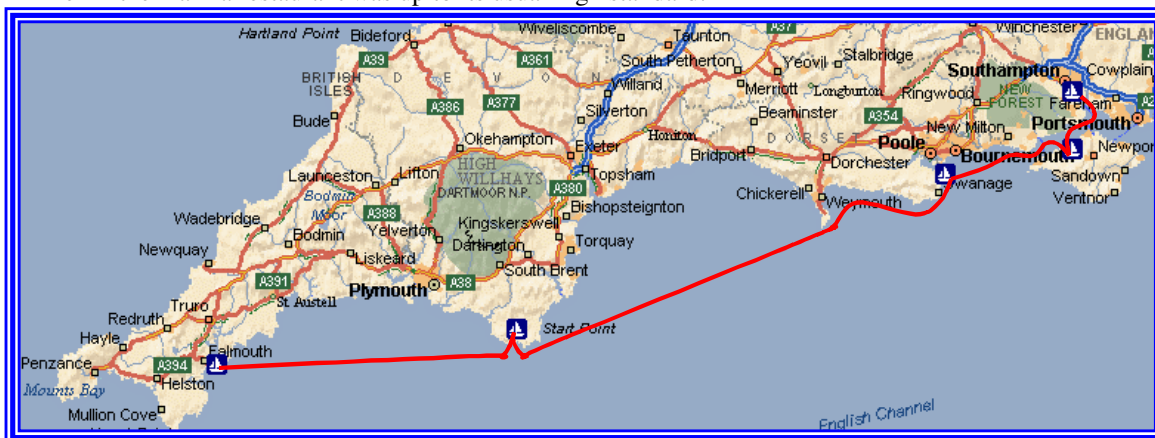
14/7/98 Helford to Falmouth

Motored clear of moorings at 0900 and hoisted main. Noticed two Rustlers anchored in the bay downstream from Helford Passage. Sailed over to identify “Ganymede”, a local boat, and “Two Hoots” from Essex whom Iain had met on the way West. Both looked seriously equipped for cruising. We exchanged a few words with Don and Ann Shepherdson from “Two Hoots”

A short fast reach from Helford, past Rosemullion Point to Pendennis Point, then motored in to Falmouth. I dropped Dairne and Sue at the fuelling berth then stood off while they bought essential stores. By 1230, we were at Penryn marina.

After lunch Chris Owen from Orion where “*Ariadne*” had been built came on board. He kindly drove us up to the works to see the new Rustler 42. There were two hulls in the shop, one getting to a fairly advanced stage of outfitting before the deck was added. It is a huge beast. Although only just over 6 feet more than “*Ariadne*”, it must have double the hull volume. As ever, Chris looks after his existing owners well, making time to chat, and he even ran us back to town afterwards so we still had time for gifte shopping. I got back a little ahead, and found Brian Alexander, the Rustler 36 owners association tame inventor, on the pontoon about to depart for France in his immaculate “Captains Lady”. He was busy with final stores, and aimed to leave at 0300 next day, single handed, for the Chenal du Four and beyond.

Dinner in the marina restaurant was up to its usual high standard.



15/7/98 Penryn to Salcombe

We all overslept, so the very early start failed. But by 0815, “*Ariadne*” was motoring clear of the marina, and by 0900, passing close under St Anthony’s Head under power. It was a slow morning of dead run, motoring and sailing as the wind came and went, but by 1400, the Eddystone was 2M NE. However, at 1430, the breeze filled in and a reef was taken in. By 1730, the tide had turned foul and we were motor sailing on a dead run.



St Anthony's Head, Falmouth



It took a full hour to cover the last 3 miles to Bolt Head where the sails were stowed and we motored up to a mooring in the Bag, that comfortable and quiet area round the corner above Salcombe itself. The rain started as the buoy was picked up, and we settled down, dry and comfortable, to let a wet night carry on outside. It had been a 50 mile trip in 11 hours.

16/7/98 Salcombe to Studland

Another later start to suit the tides. By 0900, "*Ariadne*" was 1 mile E of Prawle Point with a NE F4 wind, hardening up as Prawle was passed to become close hauled.



Lumpy seas! Thank goodness for the autopilot!



Salcombe, above the town

By mid morning the wind had eased to NNE F3. The course over ground was not encouraging being about ESE, but there was nothing to do but plug on.

The girls found the motion annoying, and eventually both took to their bunks and were sound asleep. The waves, though not very big,

were a real nuisance. There was still some underlying swell coming in from SW, and overnight the wind had gone round through SE, so there was a residual swell from that direction, though far smaller. Gradually, the new wind from NNE generated its own waves, going directly against the SW swell. At times all these patterns could be seen, with the inevitable result that crests would meet to produce conical shapes in the sea.

By 1230, sailing was nearly impossible so it was motor sailing (off and on) until 2000 when the forecast westerly breeze at last arrived. A gybe inshore was aimed at picking up the inshore eddy at Portland which was rounded at 2040. It was necessary to hug the E side of the Bill and run the engine to punch foul tide until it turned an hour or so later.



Close inshore at Portland



By morning, it was quite brisk in Studland

It was slow going until the tide turned in our favour. At midnight we deliberately went through the middle of the St Albans Race and picked up 5kts of favourable tide to give a SOG of 9.2 kts.

We fair whistled past Anvil Point and by 0110 we were lowering sail off Old Harry to turn into Studland where we anchored at 0125. Probably the fastest trip we have ever done between St Albans and Studland with SOG never dropping below 7kts.

It had been an 80 mile logged trip and a long day. We were ready for sleep.



17/7/98 Studland to Newtown

Thank goodness the tides get later each day! We needed the sleep. So it was 0950 when we weighed and headed back towards the Solent under jib only in a F 5/6 wind. The jib was gybed twice on the way to North Passage, and we squirted through Hurst in white water at 9.7 kts. The Needles Channel looked very uncomfortable, and North Passage had been the right choice.

By 1320 we entered Newtown at 6kts under jib only and found an empty buoy in Klamarkin Lake for the night. *Slow lunch. Long siesta.*

18/7/98 Newtown to Marchwood YC

As we left Newtown, we were able to exchange a few pleasantries with Roddie Innes of “Jessamy”, another Rustler 36. Roddie was off to the Canaries a few days later, and it was good to be able to wish him luck. He organised a Rustler rally in Alderney a couple of years ago. As he had visited the island about 50 times, he knew everybody, and we got the most magnificent treatment at the best eateries on the Island.

A broad reach against a Solent tide is not a good idea, unless you can make 6kts through the water, which we did. A reach up Southampton Water brought us alongside MYC pontoons by 1230 to begin the tedious process of unloading and packing up



Altogether the boat had logged 1085 miles since leaving MYC five weeks earlier. The passage crew had covered 444 miles in 2 weeks, and we had done 641 in three weeks. The original plan had worked surprisingly well, and all goals had been achieved. Perhaps it could have been warmer – there was only one day when shorts were de rigueur, but once the passage crew had departed, there was little rain and only 2 really lost days due to strong winds (in the Scillies).

Sue wrote in the visitors book *“Edward’s first trip afloat made especially special by the trip round Bear (his own) Island, and he travelled well – only ending head down in the hankies box once. He’d like to come again sometime as this Rustler was his first venture afloat and he was made very welcome indeed. A really super sweet holiday – just what I needed, and thanks for inviting Sleepy Sue – who can still sleep after 3 weeks! It was an honour to be invited, Thankyou both”*

One of our better cruises. Ireland is certainly worth going back to, but time is needed to really enjoy it properly.

Spare a thought for the passage crew. They fought to windward against strong winds and rain for almost two weeks. Without their effort, this cruise would not have been possible. Thankyou Clare, Bridget, David and Iain!

And next time, I will arrange for someone to keep the Daily Telegraph weather maps, and download the satellite pictures of the weather so that the log can be better.

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