



*Round Ireland 2003
.....very slowly*



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Round Ireland

..... very slowly

....to windward (mostly)

This was a tough trip, but the scenery was magnificent, the people wonderful, and the boat worked well all the way through.



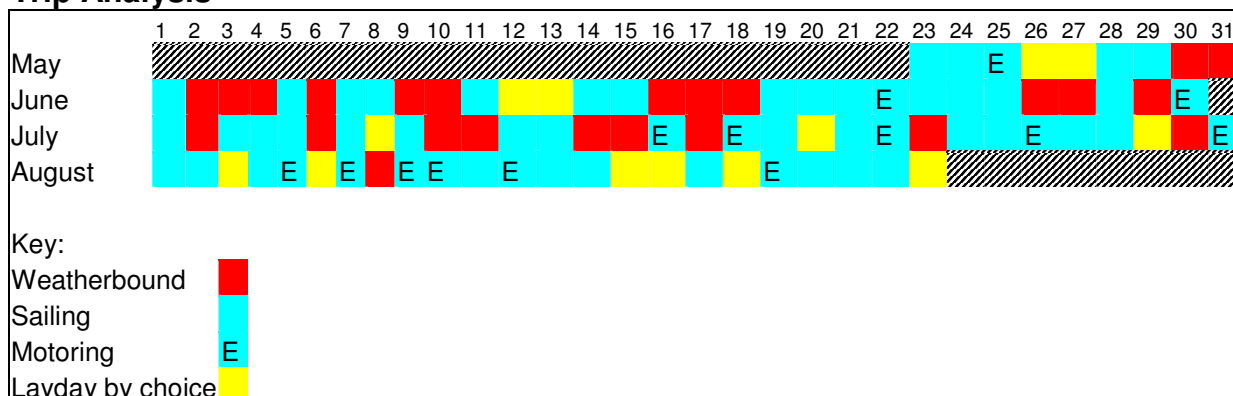
Fastnet, Shannon, Rockall, Malin, Irish Sea. Even the names send a shiver down the spine. This was our cruising ground. When England was basking in crippling heat, we had strong winds, and occasionally a long Atlantic swell to contend with.

We left in late May, delaying our start by nearly a week because of strong winds. These westerlies persisted all the way down Channel, and we were held up several days in the Falmouth area. At the second try, we made the Scillies where the weather relented for a couple of days... then turned northerly when we wanted to go to Ireland. Then SW winds again, from Kinsale as far as Mizzen Head. Unbelievably it even went northerly as we

turned the corner. We won that round, though, because northwesterlies are quite pleasant when sailing in Bantry and Kenmare, the 20 mile sea loughs that drive into the SW corner of Ireland. But the north westerlies returned as we left Dingle for the long passage across to the Aran Islands and Cashla Bay.

It was to be 3 weeks before we would be able to go alongside a pontoon. Connemara is wild, remote and savagely beautiful. The history of the people of the area is by turns violent and tragic. It was from here that Kate O'Malley, the Irish pirate queen, emerged in Elizabethan times

Trip Analysis



Throughout June we were losing days to bad weather, (some 12 days in total) but the situation improved in July. Even so, we lost 9 days. Fortunately the weather started to



be kinder as we crossed Donegal Bay to the north coast of Ireland, which can be difficult in bad weather.

We were tempted to visit Islay in Scotland, which we could clearly see as we rounded the NE corner of Ireland at Rathlin Island, and where we could also see the Mull of Kintyre.

After replenishing at Bangor, we hid from bad weather for nearly a week in Strangford Lough where we enjoyed wonderful hospitality from local clubs.

After that, the winds were, on the whole, gentler, but we occasionally suffered from poor visibility, motoring much of the length of the east coast of Ireland. The trip back from Kilmore Quay on the SE corner of Ireland included another pleasant stay in the Scillies, and some good sailing back up the Channel. We had been away 3 months.

In addition to our stock of Imray charts, and the C-Map plotter cartridges, David and Mary Bailey had loaned to us a total of 115 Admiralty charts of the coast of Ireland. These detailed charts were extremely useful to supplement our other information, which included the two volumes of the Irish Cruising Club pilot.

During the trip, we came across another MYC boat. They humbled us by showing that you do not need many of the gadgets that we had fitted. But for a pair of young geriatrics like us, they do make life more comfortable. This caused me to speculate on the differences between a Solent weekender and an Atlantic Coast cruiser. It is actually quite difficult to define!

On our list would go

- Vane steering gear
- Some independent means of getting weather maps
 - o Internet via mobile phone
 - o Navtex fax (we do not have this year, but will next year)
- Radar
- Navtex
- Good electric autopilot
- At least 3 gas cylinders (we carried a Camping Gaz cylinder, plus adapter, as a fourth)
- Deckwash pump (for dirty chain and anchors)
- Heavy weather sails
 - o Small staysail
 - o Trysail (good downwind with genoa)
- Electric anchor windlass
- Chain hook
- Bosco hook (or equivalent) for picking up buoys
- Single line reefing
- Lazyjacks and Stakwrap
- Perspex washboards
- Cockpit table (for the occasional warm summer evenings! Not needed on west coast of Ireland!)
- Cabin Heating
- On board shower
- Second main anchor, spare chain and warps



- Some electronic navigation (we have Raymarine plotter)
 - o backup handheld gps
- Additional power generation (we have an Air-X wind generator)
- Adequate fuel and water tanks
 - o 25 litre fuel and water carriers
 - o Back-up water (we are now using redundant 2 litre plastic water bottles)
- Baggage trolley (if only to carry water and fuel carriers!)
- At least two long warps (100' plus). We have
 - o 50 metres of Ankoralina
 - o 200ft 12mm anchor plait
 - o 100ft retired main halyard
- Ability to charge 'rechargeables' (we have 12v 'cigar lighter' and 150watt inverter)
 - o Handheld VHF
 - o Camera batteries
 - o Electric toothbrush! (Oh Yes!)
 - o Power beam
 - o Laptop
- Failsafe log (e.g. Walker log)
- Failsafe position fixing (mainly DR, but we carry a sextant)
- 'Get you home' sails
 - o hank on headsail on inner forestay
- Light weather sails
 - o Cruising 'chute (known as cursing chute)
- Mackerel line
- Lots of tools
- Plenty of spares, especially bulbs.
- Plusgas or WD40
- Gaffer tape
- Snatch blocks
- Electric dinghy pump
- Spare VHF aerial
- Handheld VHF
- Lots of pilot books and charts
- Extended Medical kit
- Safety equipment
 - o Liferaft
 - o EPIRB
 - o Usual flares, danbuoy and pickup equipment

The fascinating thing is that many Solent weekenders have quite a few of these things, and many boats cruise the Atlantic coast without many of them. But if you are going to cruise the Atlantic coasts, often with little recourse to outside assistance, then the good boats carry most of them. Certainly, short handed boats (like *Ariadne*) need most of them.

Yet look at *RetarrierII*! No radar, no wind pilot, limited water and fuel tanks. But they went round the west coast of Ireland when we did! It was a significant achievement. Look also at *Siwa* (a French yacht that we met in Northern Ireland). Here is a boat that has adopted a completely different philosophy to power use. Every effort has been put



into power demand reduction. Despite which, this is a boat that relies heavily on electronic navigation. She is an object lesson in clarity of thought!

What was pleasing that we had no major gear failures, and the boat worked well. I had been a little concerned about getting weather maps when in the remoter parts of Ireland. Mobile phone (if it worked at all) would be very expensive if I kept my UK Vodafone. My solution was to sign up to a website called Iberpass, which has local phone numbers in every country. I then got an Eircom simcard for my mobile, so I could connect to the internet using a local call. The total cost was of the order 15p per minute in offpeak hours. This was good enough for weather maps, but the system is too slow to deal with email where there is a lot of junk mail. For that I would have to rely on internet cafes. We were to find that they are not as common in Ireland as in France, but there were access facilities in some unlikely places (such as Roundstone) whereas others where one might have expected facilities (such as Bangor) were without facilities at all. Next year I am going to set up an email account for the laptop that will only allow selected addresses to be received. I also intend to add an MF receiver so that I can download Navtex weatherfax direct, free of charge. I already have the software.

The box that Greg, my brother in law, had made to hold the laptop was a great success. It enabled me to use the computer at sea safely. So I was able to take sunsights and get the computer to do the calculations. We didn't need to, but I want to know that I can do it. Next year I will connect the computer to the instruments, as route planning on the laptop is easier than on the plotter. It also means I can transfer waypoints to and from the plotter, which will make the log more accurate.

Coupled with a digital camera and a chart cartridge reader, I was able to produce the entire log while on the cruise. I hope this gives it a freshness that would otherwise be difficult to achieve. When we were frustrated, it shows; when the sun shone, that should come through too.

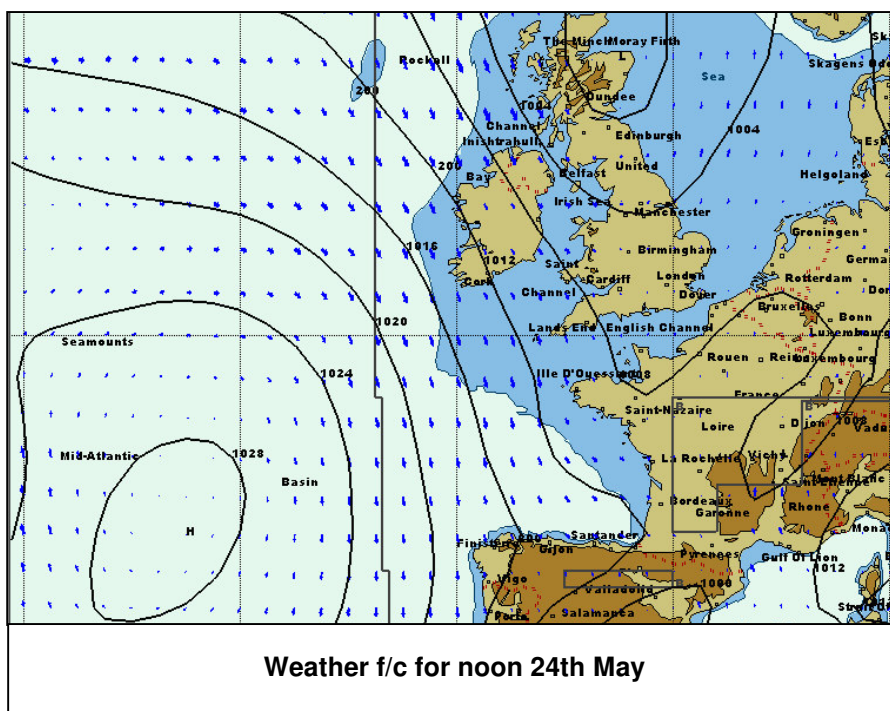
When it got rough, the Rustler felt safe, and was not too big to handle. The long keel configuration made her very steady when we were running in large seas. It remains a near ideal boat for 2 people to cruise the Atlantic coast – or beyond for that matter.



23rd May: Marchwood to Cowes

A slow start. The previous evening we loaded the last fresh stores, and closed up the house. John & Mary helped shuttle the cars, so we relaxed with a few bottles of wine before adjourning to the mooring for supper and an early night.

This morning we trickled down Southampton Water under genoa to find SW 5 in the Solent. We were able to lay Cowes on one tack. The plan was to top up with fuel (which we did) then wait on a mooring till the tide turned in the late afternoon. But it blew hard all afternoon so we opted to stay put and await calmer conditions in the morning.



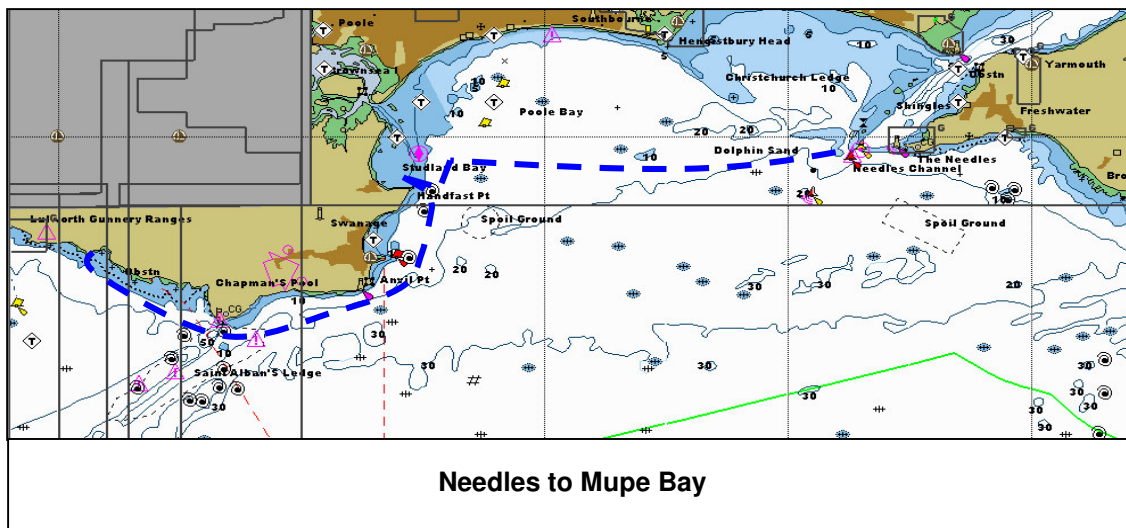
That evening I got the weather maps from the internet. We were optimistic that if we pressed on we could get a good NW wind to cross Lyme Bay

24th May: Cowes to Mupe Bay



Early start from Cowes

We dropped the buoy at 0540, and motored out to find almost calm conditions, so motored all the way down the West Solent, passing Hurst at a mere 7.5kts, so weak were the neap tidal streams. Then past the Needles to the Bridge, where there was a gentle breeze that enabled us to lay into Studland with only a short hitch.



Passing Hurst



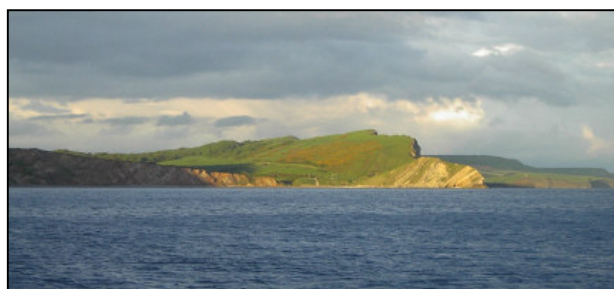
Needles

Lunch, and a catch up on sleep while the tide was adverse, then away again, motoring once more, past Old Harry, and along the coast. Even after St Albans the wind was on the nose, so sailing was quickly abandoned.

For pilotage, we used the excellent “Inshore Along the Dorset Coast” by Peter Bruce – plus the plotter!

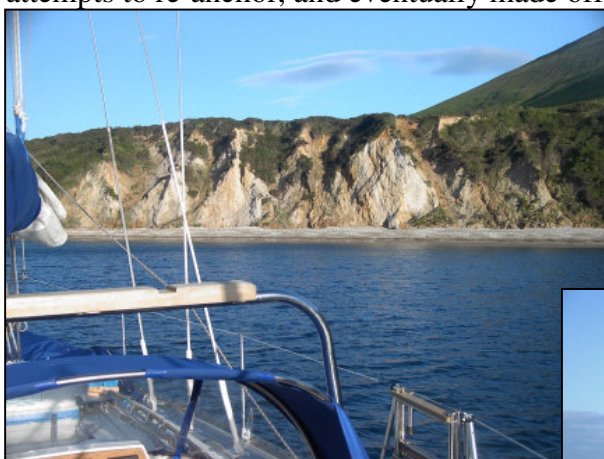


We had decided to try Mupe Bay, at the Western end of Worbarrow. It had been recommended to us by David Colquhoun as a good passage stop without the need to go into Weymouth or Portland.

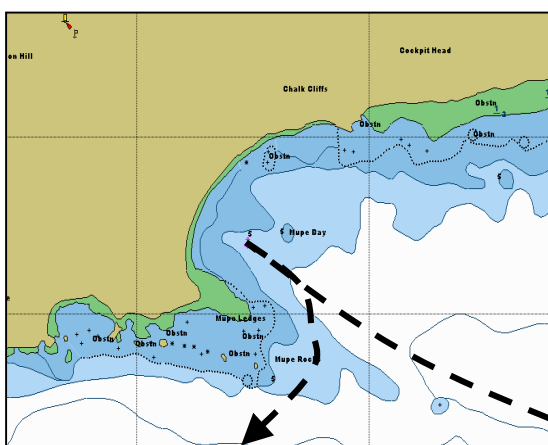


Worbarrow Bay from Mupe Bay

Mupe Bay is certainly an attractive spot, with high cliffs alongside the boat. But the holding is rocky. During the night the chain rumbled over the bottom and the snatching made it sound as if the boat was dragging. There was a very gusty westerly wind, which made things worse. I paid out more chain and kept a periodic anchor watch through the night, taking bearings on one of the off-lying rocks. A Legend that had been anchored when we arrived dragged badly and they made two or three attempts to re-anchor, and eventually made off into the night, probably to Weymouth.

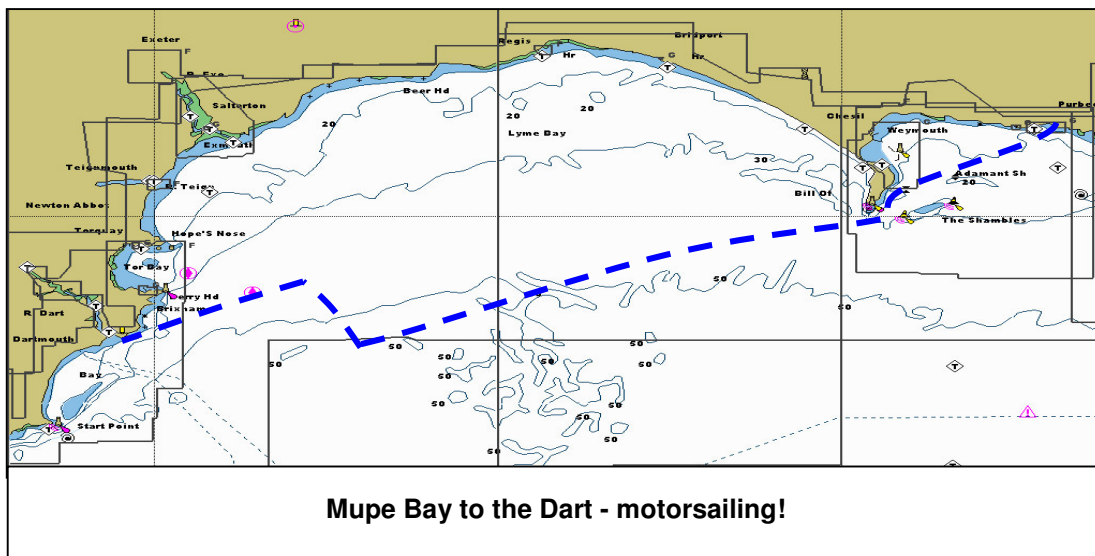


Mupe Bay





25th May: Mupe Bay to Dittisham



We had intended to leave at 0630, but because of the disturbed night, we eventually left at 0705. We could have sailed to Portland Bill, but kept the engine going to keep the speed up, and after rounding the Bill at 0900 on the inside passage, we settled into a long motor-sailing slog across Lyme Bay. Our hopes of a NW wind never materialised. If the wind had had even 10° more north in it, it would have been worth sailing, but the f/c northwesterly was not to be, so we motor-sailed the whole way, tacking a couple of times to find flatter water and putting the adverse tide on the lee bow. At 1750 we were off the Dart entrance, and by 1900 we were rafted against a motor-sailer on a buoy at Dittisham.



Mewstone and the Dart daymark

On the way in, we had motored alongside David Clements in his Bowman 40. He had been one of the founders of the Rustler 36 owners association. We also spoke on VHF to Steve and Michelle Walker who keep their R36 in the Dart.

At least the motoring meant there was plenty of hot water for

showers, and we retired to bed for much needed sleep, looking forward to a lay-day in this beautiful spot.



Berry Head in the distance



Entering the Dart

It has been a disappointing start to the cruise. Both of us have colds now, and we have had headwinds. But by pushing on under iron topsail we have cracked Lyme Bay, and can now potter our way through the West Country with the prospect of improving weather.

I stood in the cockpit in the still evening. I could hear rooks, but on the shoreline I could only see seagulls. Earlier in the day I had watched a cormorant drying its wings sitting on a mooring buoy.

It takes nearly an hour to motor from the entrance of the Dart to Dittisham. As you go up the river the banks get higher, and you end up in a wooded dell with rich deep green trees falling down the hillside almost to the water.



Rafted in Dart

After plodding across the steel grey waters of Lyme Bay, this is an unusual place for a seagoing yacht. But it is a haven of peace; a gentle green inland haven. It is a place to rest, to top up the batteries.

On other occasions, it has been a place to shelter from gales, but now, we are content just to be here; to watch the river traffic go by; and to enjoy the peace and quiet of one the most beautiful places.

As we sat there, the tide turned, the boat swung round, and the aspect changed...



Dittisham



26th-27th May: Laydays in the Dart



Dittisham Village

Neither of us was particularly well, and the weather was cold with a tendency to rain. So we spent the 26th on the mooring at Dittisham not doing very much at all.

On the morning of the 27th, we motored down to Dartmouth for water, and to get more Day Nurse from the chemists! While there we met Richard and Tessa who had bought *Rosinis*, the Rustler that had been sunk by a dredger on charter to ABP at Ipswich. They were on their way to Spain where they had got a mooring.

We then retired to the anchorage for more rest and recuperation! There was a large cruise ship on the buoys that looked like a square-rigger called Silver Cloud II, registered in Valetta. A fine sight as she left.



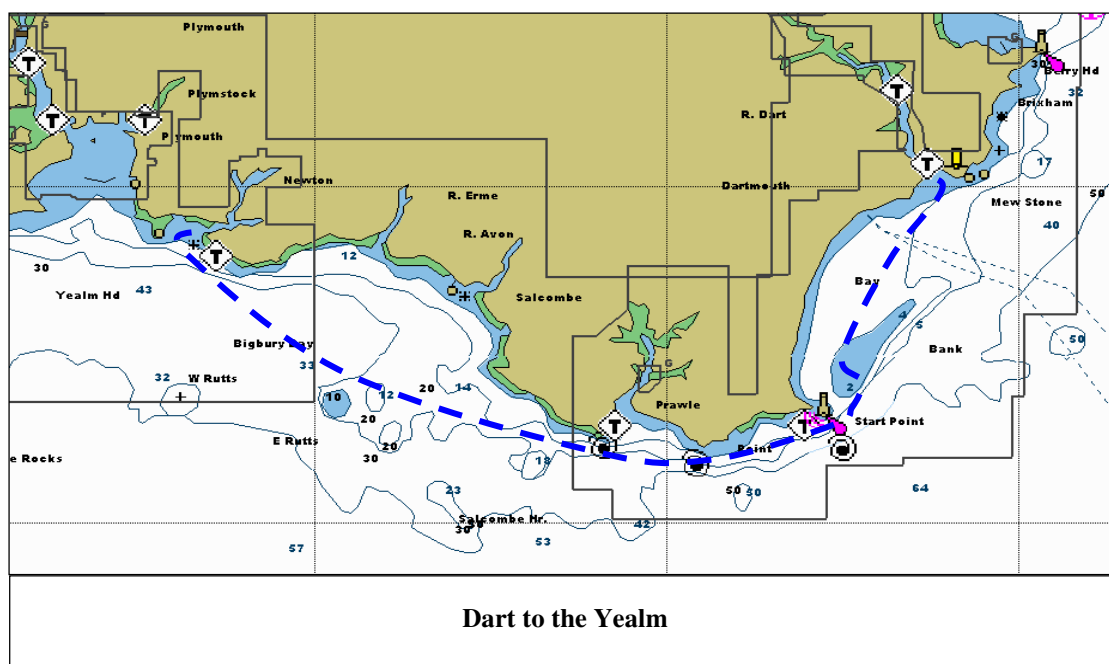
Kingswear



Silver Cloud II



28th May: Dartmouth to the Yealm



The forecast was for light easterlies, but with fog patches. We had to delay departure for an hour, but it looked as though visibility was slowly improving, so we left and motored in about 400 metre visibility all the way to Start Point.



Passing Salcombe

Only as we approached Salcombe did the visibility clear to a couple of miles, but the gentle breeze filled in and the sun shone, so we set the genoa goose-winged and plodded on to the Yealm, a gentle warm run on a flat sea.

NavPac software. At first the plot showed an intercept of 123 miles! Once the time of sight was corrected to UT this dropped to 7.5 miles, a much more acceptable result given the slight haziness on the horizon.

We were able to sail right up to the final leading marks into the Yealm, where we dropped all sail and motored in, finding an empty buoy.

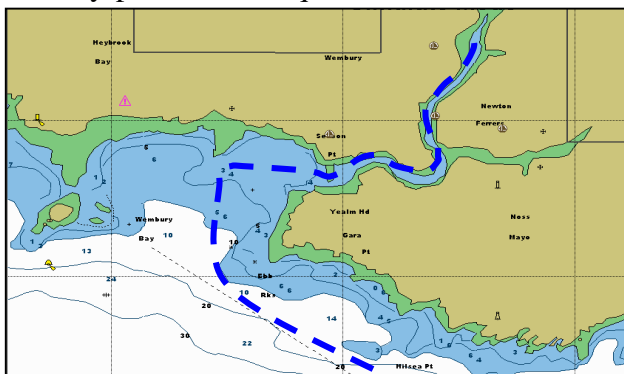
While we were stowing the boat, *Harvard*, the Rustler owned by Steve and Michelle Walker came in and picked up an adjacent buoy. The harbourmaster, however, informed us that the owner of the mooring we were on was due to return, so *Harvard* and ourselves



Yealm Entrance

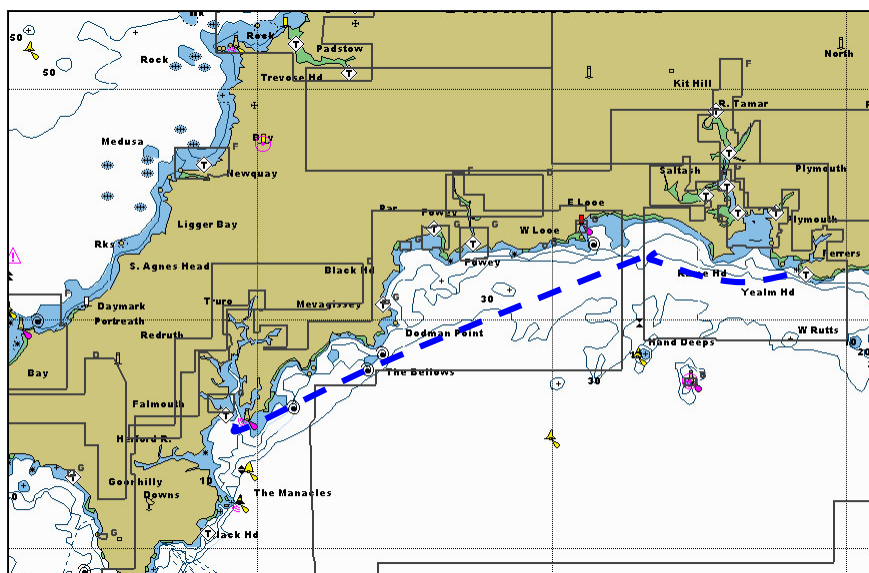


motored up the river to Kitley which is very peaceful and quite beautiful. Steve and Michelle came on board and we exchanged gossip.



Up the Yealm to Kitley

29th May: Yealm to St Mawes



Yealm to St Mawes

The easterlies persisted, so we were away early at 0720. Once clear, the main was set and we ran gently past the Mewstone while we had breakfast. Then the pole was set. It was a dead run, so we gybed inshore for a while until well past Rame Head. At 1130 we gybed out, set the Cursing Chute and bowled along nicely until we were approaching the Dodman.



Naval Exercises!

We had seen several warships going out on exercises, and they were to be seen dashing around in and out of the haze throughout the morning. At one point I saw a surfaced submarine a couple of miles away.

The horizon was so hazy that no sunlight was possible.



Passing Picture

The sea became a bit lumpy (as it so often does off Dodman). The wind freshened so that we decided to hand the Cursing Chute and revert to running goosewinged. Of course, the wind promptly dropped and we slowed a lot (down from 6kts+ to about 4kts).

We flopped along with the rig banging about. Twice the pole jumped its stops and had to be reset. We were almost off Portscatho when the shackle securing the mainsheet to the boom came undone. That was the last straw. At that point, we furled the

genoa, recovered the mainsheet, and motored the last hour into Falmouth.

With easterlies, St Mawes looked like an excellent prospect, so we picked up a visitor buoy off the beach. We rang Hilda, our friend in Portscatho who joined us for an excellent meal ashore in St Mawes. A delightful evening in a delightful place.

Things were looking up!



St Anthony



Ariadne at St Mawes



30th May-5th June: Falmouth

There followed some laydays in Falmouth, with distinctly 'iffy' forecasts developing. We got the shopping and washing done on the first day, then discovered that the shore power was not charging. Even though it was a Saturday, an electrician agreed to come out, but did not arrive till 1830 so we stayed an extra night.



De Zwarte Walvisch

Having gone out for fuel our berth alongside was lost, but we had the pleasure of laying alongside a tough Dutch ketch, *De Zwarte Walvisch* which was on its way to the Azores with Gerrard Hageman¹ sailing single handed. He was an interesting character!

Then *Rosinis* arrived, and this time we went on board and had a look round.

By the afternoon of the 1st, we decided to get out of Falmouth and hide in the Helford.

On arriving there, we found *Vivage*, the very first Rustler we had ever been on board on a buoy. Carla and Gerrard Tavernier immediately invited us on board for drinks. We showed them their 1990 entry in our visitor's book.



Rosinis



Vivage and Ariadne

We had spent three days alongside them in a gale at Falmouth Town marina. When we still had *Fay-A*.

Dairne produced a mixed grill by way of a return match during the evening.

The weather forecasts were getting worse with force 7, and even gales forecast for the Scillies, Lundy and Fastnet. So we stayed put.

The next day the new *Spirit of Rosinis*

¹ Gerrard later emailed us to say he had had a rough trip to the Azores. The trip back was better, but he lost a spinnaker pole on the way.



arrived, with David Sadler and his son on board. We acted as host boat for evening drinks, with the crew of *Svecia* a Malo 36 also trying to get to Ireland becoming an 'honorary Rustler' for this impromptu rally.



Svecia's crew

On 3rd of June we sat out a real blow. For the 4th, another depression suddenly rushed up from Fitzroy to Lundy. Everyone was going to stay put. By chance, all the crews had decided to dine at Helford River SC, so another social developed.

It turned into a lovely evening. We agreed that no one would believe that we were weatherbound!



Carla and Gerard



Weatherbound?!

The evening f/c on the 3rd had promised F7 in west Plymouth, but in the morning, this had been downgraded to F6.

Both *Vivage* and *Svecia* set off for Newlyn, but it was very wet so we decided to be lazy and stayed put and listened to the rain.



Vivage Leaves Helford



6th June: Back to Falmouth`

We could see no immediate prospect of improvement in the weather, so decided to go back to Falmouth for a day or two.

It was a gentle trickle back under genoa at between 4 and 5.5 kts. The town marina was filling up with other boats waiting for weather and the assembling AZAB fleet. Both the Dutch Ketch and *Rosinis* were still there. We made fast outside a large sloop, planning our day. Then the phone bleeped, a message from Iain in New Zealand. Problems with the bank that needed urgent solution. This altered our plans a bit. In the end, we were able to get NatWest to provide us with the necessary information, and by messaging and email, I hope the problem was sorted out.

A little shopping, top up with water, and then a trip round the new National Maritime Museum. It was impressive. We also saw an International 14 designed by Phil Morrison and built by Richard Woof, with whom we have lost touch. Richard's father Don helped me build *Polynya*, which became the plug for the first-ever grp National 12. Richard is also Neil's godfather. We were able to get a phone number and ring him.

Back at the marina, I prepared some emails and then went to the Quench café in the square that has 2 internet screens. I got rid of all the junkmail, sent a confirming email to Iain, and got the weather maps. Not very promising.



Patience

needed a good dose!

Next morning we woke to rain and wind, as forecast. I was on deck when a small gaff cutter came past under sail. "Where have you come from?" I enquired. "Antigua" was the laconic reply. "You will be glad to stop then". He nodded, sailed past, neatly rounded up to the next buoy. He walked casually along the deck, knelt down and picked the buoy out of the water. His mainsail was shattered to ribbons. Falmouth is like that!

Once all was tidy, we crossed the harbour and picked up the Rustler mooring for the night, settling down to read, listen to the radio and play patience – a quality of which we



Where from? Antigua!



Frustration!

I nearly called this essay “The Low Point”. Then I realised that it might not be the low point! That is the first positive thought about our situation.

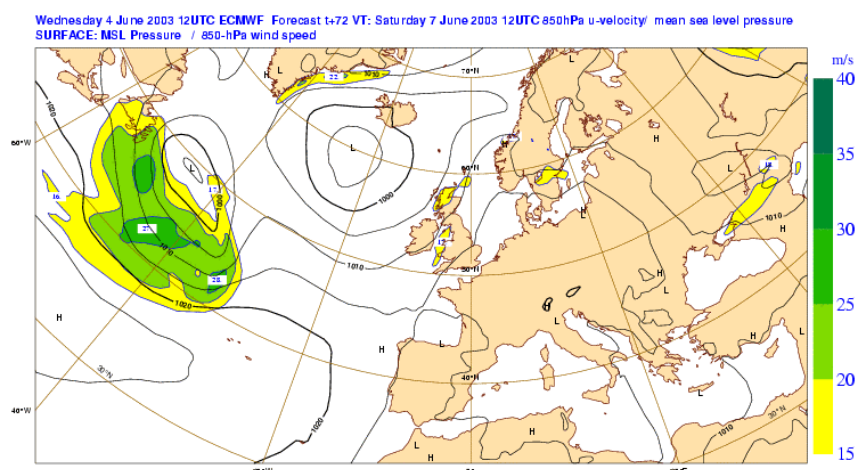
We are on the Rustler Yachts buoy opposite Falmouth town. That means it is free, another plus point. But this is after three nights in Falmouth Town Marina, and four nights in the Helford, where we met up with two other Rustlers and another boat that became an ‘Honorary Rustler’ for the purposes of our impromptu rally. It was fun, and entertaining. But we were all trying to go round the Lizard and on to Ireland, having already fought our way down Channel against contrary winds.

Of course, it is never all bad. As we had got back into Falmouth there was a series of text messages from Iain in Auckland, New Zealand. He is now ready to buy a house, but NatWest were being obtuse about providing evidence of his assets in the UK. If we had been able to go on to Ireland, we would not have been in a position to help. As it was, the local Falmouth NatWest branch was very understanding (eased by the fact that Dairne holds Power of Attorney for Iain). We were able to get the balances, and, we hope, unlock the problem. Yet another plus.

But we still feel frustrated! For nearly a week we have been in Falmouth Bay waiting for suitable conditions to go round the Lizard and on to Ireland, possibly via the Scillies. Others, such as *Vivage* have moved on, but we would guess they are now stuck in Newlyn after a bumpy, wet sail. But we didn’t fancy it. We do this for fun!

The root of the problem is a complex low that has been sitting off Ireland for nearly 2 weeks already. The bloody thing will not go away and allow summer to start. The Dutch Ketch has now spent a week here waiting for a weather window to go south to the Azores, and *Rosinis*, another Rustler is beginning to get despondent about the possibility of a weather window to cross Biscay.

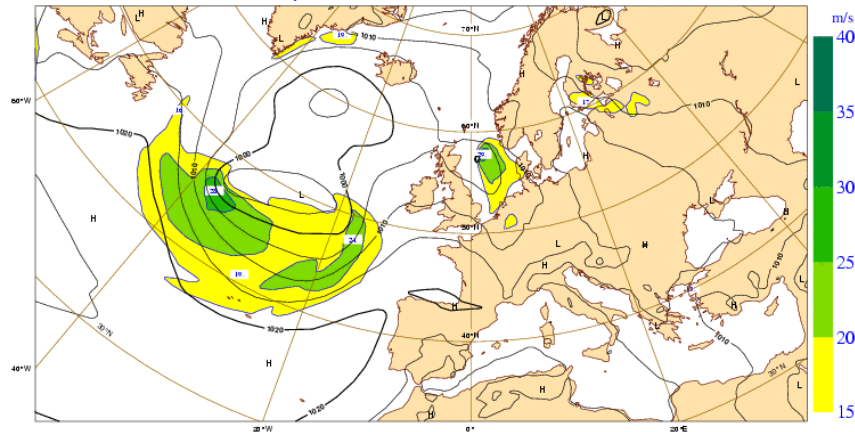
Even now, after a week, the prospect is not wonderful. Tomorrow (Friday) there is talk of S-SW winds going up to F7. The longer range is dodgy. Just look at the ECMWF maps!



So Saturday looks reasonable, even if the wind is on the nose.

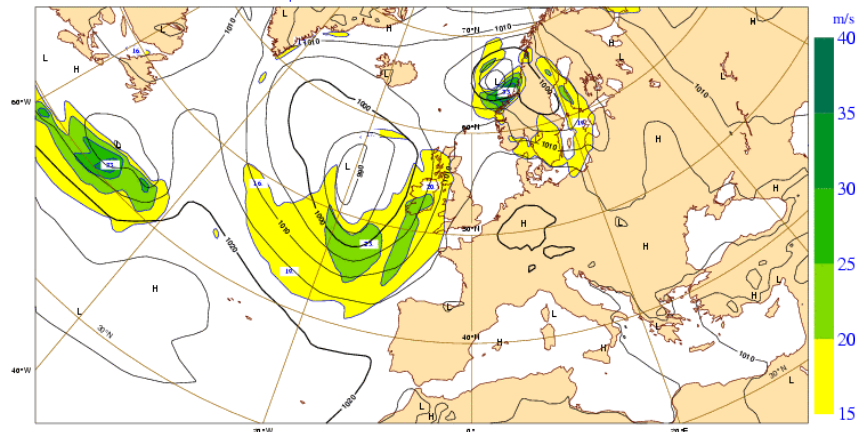


Wednesday 4 June 2003 12UTC ECMWF Forecast t+96 VT: Sunday 8 June 2003 12UTC 850hPa u-velocity/ mean sea level pressure
SURFACE: MSL Pressure / 850-hPa wind speed



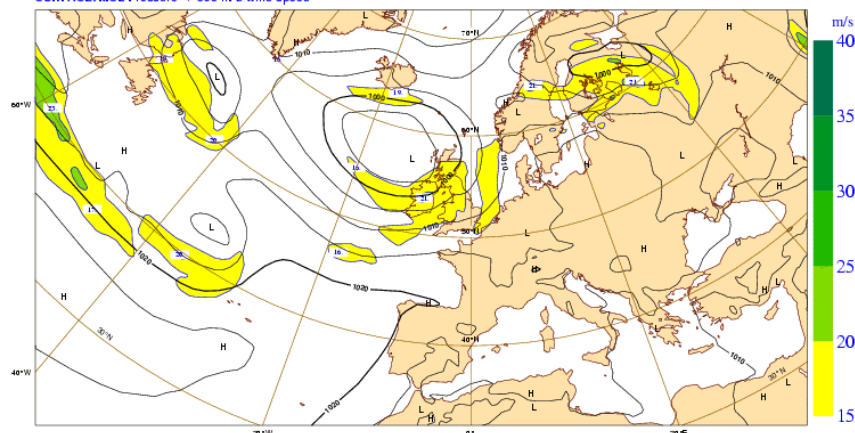
Sunday shows a ridge. Very tempting! We reckon that over Saturday and Sunday we can get to Newlyn, and probably to the Scillies, but, as you will see, the risk of worsening weather on Monday makes one cautious about striking out for Ireland.

Wednesday 4 June 2003 12UTC ECMWF Forecast t+120 VT: Monday 9 June 2003 12UTC 850hPa u-velocity/ mean sea level pressure
SURFACE: MSL Pressure / 850-hPa wind speed



Give or take a bit, the yellow areas are F6-8. If this is going to happen on Monday, I do not want to be approaching the Irish coast, which will be a lee shore. Hiding in Newlyn, or New Grimsby looks like favourite.

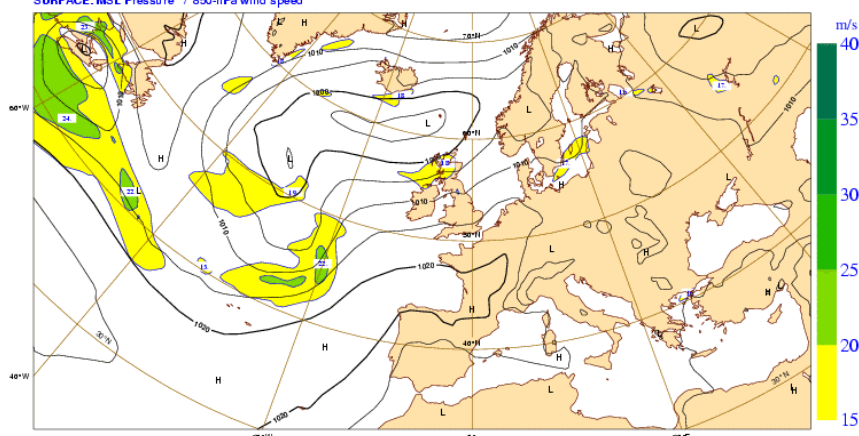
Wednesday 4 June 2003 12UTC ECMWF Forecast t+144 VT: Tuesday 10 June 2003 12UTC 850hPa u-velocity/ mean sea level pressure
SURFACE: MSL Pressure / 850-hPa wind speed



By Tuesday, it should be moderating. Perhaps we could set off for Ireland in the evening.



Wednesday 4 June 2003 12UTC ECMWF Forecast t+168 VT: Wednesday 11 June 2003 12UTC 850hPa u-velocity/ mean sea level pressure
 SURFACE: MSL Pressure / 850-hPa wind speed



Now this is really tempting! If you were in the Scillies, it offers a reach to Kinsale, or a fetch to Baltimore. But that high pressure bulge into Biscay looks very fragile. We shall see. It is at the outer range of the ECMWF forecast. An optimist would say it signals the start of the real Atlantic summer!

So we shall sit here for yet another day tomorrow, monitor the forecasts, and make up our minds. These are the interesting issues in cruising.

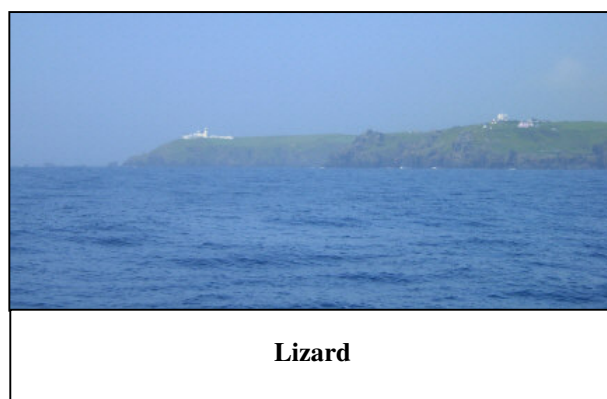
I thought it would be interesting just to set out the issues that go through the mind. We are stuck, but stuck in a nice place. We shall move on when it is fun to move on. Some challenge is acceptable, but pounding into rough seas does not constitute fun, if wait we must, wait we will.

As the wind, even in this sheltered spot, passes 18 kts, the wind generator is knocking in 10 amps. We don't have to worry about battery charge, the fridge is happy and we can use lights in the cabin. This is one of the situations it was intended to address, and it is working well. It is nice when you have anticipated the problems, and equipped yourself to handle them easily.

As Dan², our wonderful lawyer in Buenos Aires when I was with A&PA, would say "For us, this is good".

7th June: Falmouth to Newlyn

Needless to say the wind was southerly, and light. So we motored past the Manacles, and round the Lizard. Then had very pleasant sail to Newlyn where we arrived at 1650. Moored alongside a fishing boat undergoing alteration, we were sure it would not want to leave at 0300!



Lizard

² He was sometimes known as Dan, Dan the abogado man!



A bit later, a very small but well equipped yacht arrived. This turned out to be *London Apprentice* from Hythe SC. They joined us for coffee. They were bound for the Scillies, and like us wanted an early start.

8th-10th June: Newlyn...and back to Penzance

We were away at 0645. At first it was a smart beat, with one reef. We stood well out to be sure of being well South of the Runnel Stone on the next tack. We reckoned we would nearly lay the Scillies, so opted to head for there rather than straight to Ireland where fresh winds were f/c later in the day.



Classic company!

All was going well until the second rainsquall hit with gusts of 33kts. This looked uncomfortable, so we dropped the main and ran back towards Newlyn, but as the gates were open opted to go into Penzance, which we had never visited before.

We laid alongside four classic fishing vessels, with lovely low bulwarks, so it was easy to get to the ladder on to the quay. Next to us was *Ocean Spirit*, a restored Newlyn smack. The owner

was a real Cornishman, and his crew, a tall, portly gentleman, was the town crier. He gave an expert description of where the shops were, the library (for free internet access), and how to get there. A real gentleman! We were also graced with a visit from a square-rigger.



Ariadne in Penzance



Chapel Street, Penzance

We were to spend three nights in Penzance while the weather settled. We were beginning to think we were suffering from a bad dose of harbour sickness. The temptation to move on and chance it is always there. But we stuck to our guns, and stayed put while it rained, and it blew. The wind generator was whizzing away keeping the batteries up, even though the fridge was running. Interestingly, on the first day, the wind had a lot of SE in it, and the air coming over the harbour wall was turbulent, and the generator did not perform too well. Once the wind

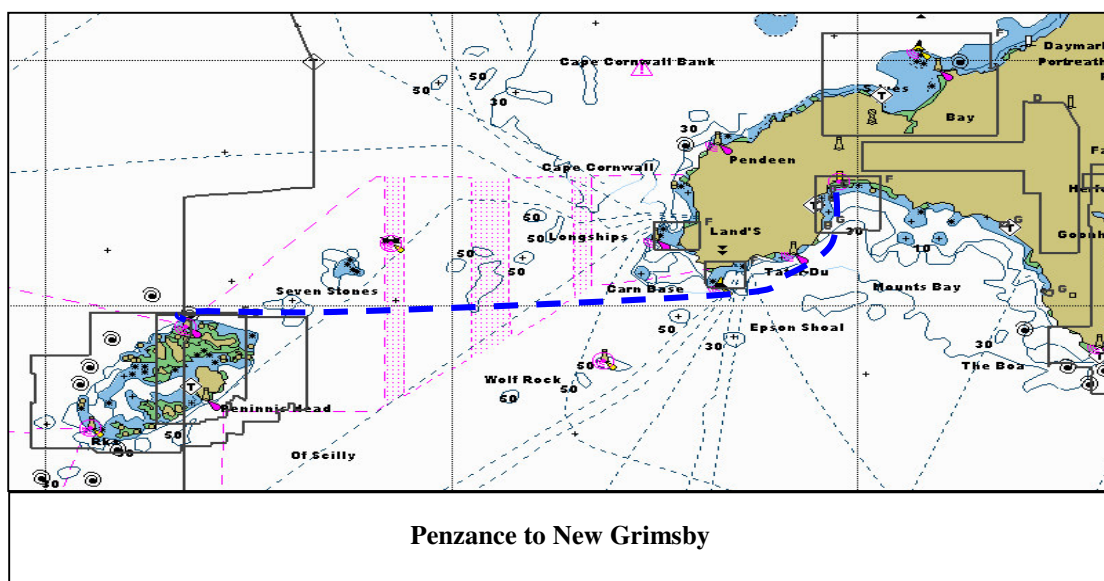
veered and was coming down the street past the pub, all was well, and we were cracking in 10 amps!



Penzance is a delight. It is a classic fishing town converted to tourism. There are many craft shops, but most important, there are local butchers and bakers who offer really delicious local produce. We really enjoyed our stay, and the free Internet access at the library meant I could clear away all the junk mail and monitor the weather closely.

Each day we viewed the forecast with growing impatience. On the 9th, we could see that the weather should be OK the next day. We should have moved out of Penzance to Newlyn so we could make an early start the next day. It was blowing. It was raining. We stayed put.

11th June: Penzance to Scillies



On the face of it, we could go direct to Ireland, but strong winds were forecast for Lundy and Fastnet. We decided that if we could lay the Scillies, we would go there and give the weather more time to settle. If we could not, then we would risk going to Ireland.

As a result of waiting in Penzance, we could not move till the gate opened at 1300hrs. By the time we had picked up water, it was 1345 before we were under way. We motored out almost to the Runnel Stone, then came about. We could lay the Scillies, and took that option.

To reach New Grimsby in daylight, we had to motor sail to maintain speed, although we did sail the last two hours when the wind freshened and freed off enough. It was a good passage, though there was quite a big swell. By 2045 we were on a buoy in New Grimsby.



New Grimsby Sound- Cromwell's castle



12th June- 13th June: New Grimsby



New Grimsby - Hangmans Rock

These were two idyllic days. We heard that the southern Irish coast had had a bashing with winds up to F7. Maybe our wait and see strategy was the right one! On the 12th, we had lunch ashore at the New Inn on Tresco, and the following morning, we went for a walk on Bryher over to Hell Bay where the hotel has been virtually rebuilt.

The strongest impression of these islands is always bird song and flowers. We also never fail to be impressed by New Grimsby as a terrific anchorage.



London Apprentice

Our friends in *London Apprentice* arrived. We learned that they had pushed on when we turned back to Newlyn. With their bilge keel draft they had tucked right into a bay in Old Grimsby sound, but apparently the boats on the moorings further out had bucked around a bit. They had tried Watermill Cove on St Mary's but the swell had worked in. We quietly concluded that by waiting in Penzance we had had the better bargain. Another point scored for 'wait and see'!



New Inn Garden, Tresco



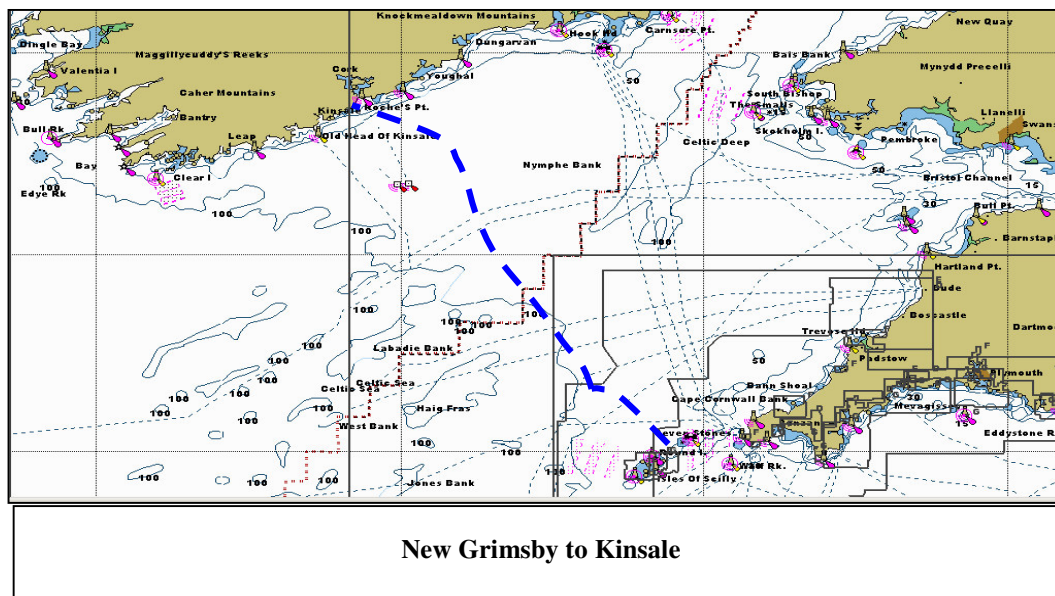
Chaffinch stealing our lunch!

On the 13th, we tried to go to St Agnes, over Tresco Flats, but we could see the boats in both anchorages rolling, so we went back to New Grimsby and anchored for the night. The forecast for the next day was looking interesting.

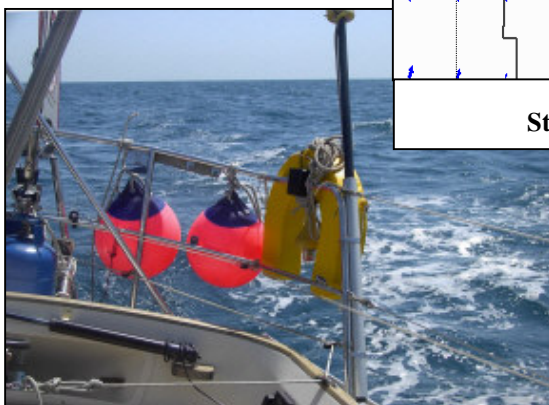
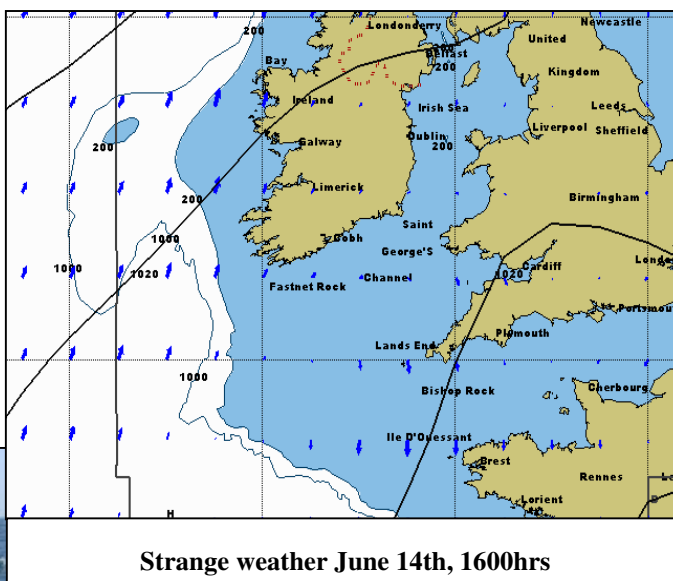


14th – 15th June: New Grimsby to Kinsale

At 0530, the sun was up. The weather forecast was weird. For most nearby sea areas it was east with light and variable winds f 3/4, with an occasional F5 possible. But, the winds would be northerly near the Scillies, and southerly on the Irish coast, suggesting a big calm patch in the middle. We didn't fancy motoring most of the way, and the prospect of a long beat was not attractive either, so we rolled over and went back to sleep.



But by 0800, a nice NE breeze had filled in, the sun was shining, so we changed our minds, and set off at 0945. Initially, we could lay 320°, but the west going tide made our COG only 300°. At 1130 we put a reef in, and the boat went faster. The sea was fairly flat with only a suggestion of swell,



Celtic Sea in benign mood

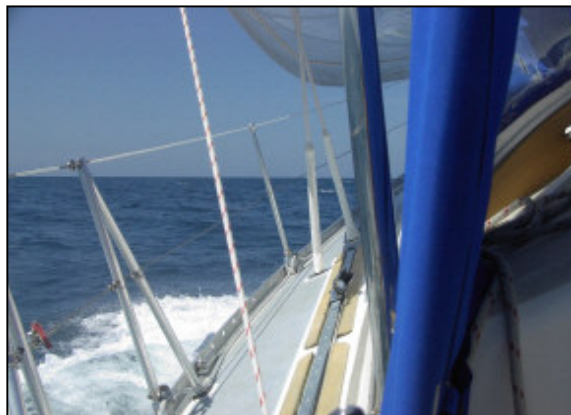
so unlike the passage from Penzance when there had been quite a few watery hills!

We pressed on through the afternoon, taking out the reef at 1600. Was this, we thought, the beginning of the calm patch? But the wind held up. It began to look as though we would have to head for Baltimore. But at about 1900, the wind began to back quite strongly, so we



tacked, now laying 025° on the port tack.

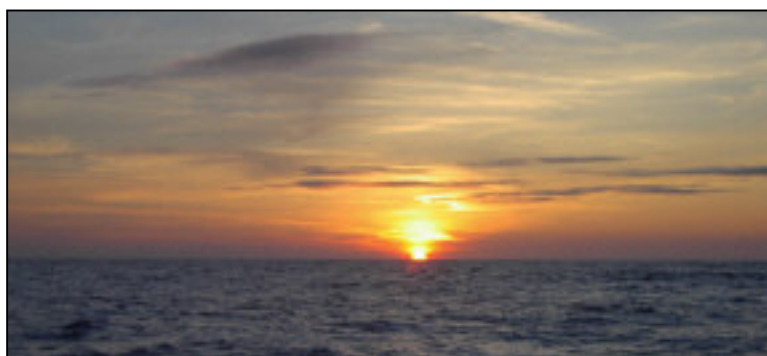
Progress was slow, but comfortable. Dairne stood watch from 2000 until midnight, when I took over. During her watch, Dairne notice gulls hovering over our fishing line, so she hauled it in to find our first mackerel of the season. It was a brilliant moonlit night, which never got fully dark.



Who minds beating like this?

At 0300, the forecast front came through, but the wind never rose beyond 17kts, and there was no rain. At 0420, the wind rose again, and a reef was popped in, but shaken out less than an hour later. Gradually, we were being headed off towards Cork, but the f/c suggested southerly winds on the Irish

Coast. It was a beautiful sunrise at about 0530 when Dairne took over again. The wind was fading. Dairne was entertained by gannets diving at our fishing paravane, surfacing, shaking their heads and looking surprised!



Sunrise

At 0740, the engine was started, and would run most of the morning. Our course was shaping for Cork (to keep the main driving). This also took us well to the east of the Kinsale gas platforms, which we could see in the distance.



Into Kinsale

At 1225, we found the new breeze, which was from the SW, only F2, but enough for us to sail, gradually freeing the sheets for a lovely reach into Kinsale. Sadly, I missed this beautiful sailing in order to catch up on sleep. Dairne sat in the cockpit and read in bright sunshine with a smooth sea, while the boat burbled its way toward the coast.



By 1700, we were alongside in Kinsale. It had probably been the easiest and most enjoyable long(ish) passage we had ever made. Our waiting had definitely paid off! Although most of the 150 miles we had logged had been to windward, with about 6-7 hours under engine, the sailing had been pleasant throughout, and the sun was glorious!

16th June- 19th June: Kinsale



Kinsale

If you have to be stuck by weather, there is no better place than Kinsale. Oh yes! It is a tourist town, but it is attractive, and it lives up to its reputation as being the gourmet capital of Ireland.

Michael and Helen's introduction (*Unda*) helped us to make a good relationship with the harbourmaster, Capt Phil Divett. He guided me to Billy Long who runs the Kinsale YC marina (recently doubled in size). Billy put me on an inside berth near one of the only two power pylons that was working. Luxury!



Kinsale

We shopped for the local bread, quiche, and meat. Dairne looked at the gifte shoppes, and I found a couple of good Internet cafes to keep up to date with email and weather. After that we just enjoyed the place. One evening we went out for a meal – a **MUST** in Kinsale. We also met Elizabeth on the pontoons – she is over 80 and insists on keeping her motor sailer. With Ron (a relative we think) she had been as far as Dingle but decided the weather would not settle in time to go further so was on her way back round Ireland with the aim of getting to Bangor.



Kinsale 2



Dairne with Elizabeth on Mist of Malin



Kinsale 3

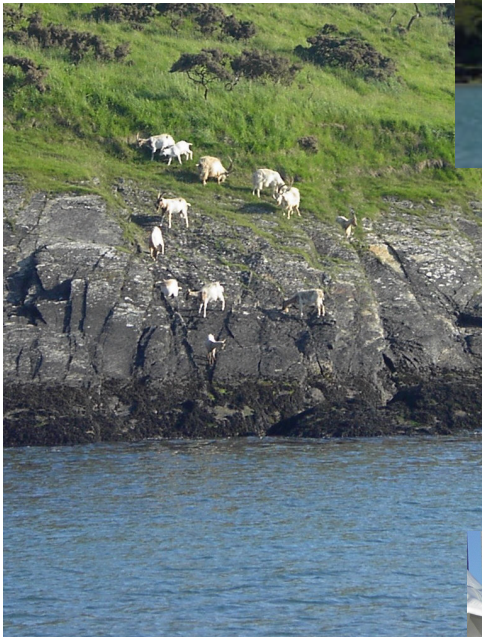


Good Food!



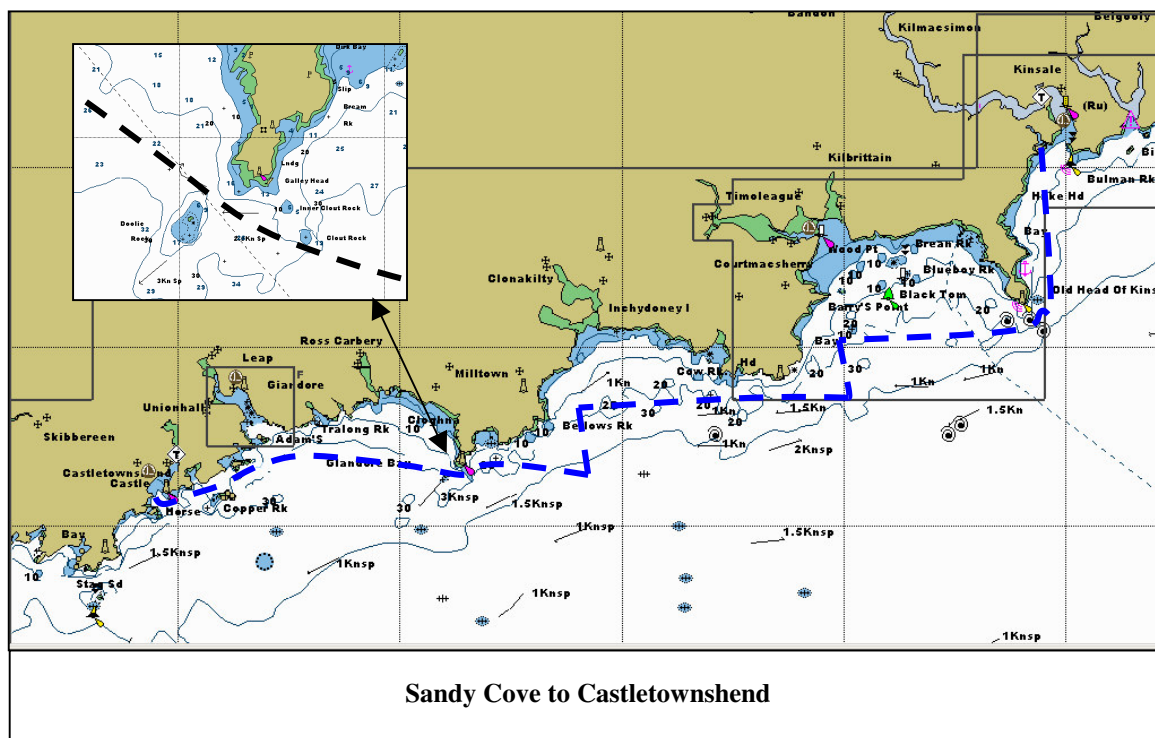
19th June: Kinsale to Sandy Cove

After four nights in Kinsale, we were keen to move on, but the weather was still too brisk to go west, so we went for a sail in the bay and anchored for the night in Sandy Cove. Less than 3 miles from Kinsale, it could not be a greater contrast. Utterly rural!





20th June: Sandy Cove to Castletownshend



Old Head of Kinsale

It was a delightful day. We motored out to the Old Head of Kinsale, then set off to the west.

The wind was between 11 and 15kts all the time, so even though it was a beat, it was enjoyable. There was some swell, about a metre, but it was long and gentle. Above all, the sun shone.

We tacked to clear Seven Heads, and again to clear Galley Head, but the wind headed. It looked as though we would have to put in a clearing tack, but the wind vane found the path between Galley Head and the off lying rocks!



Galley Head



Rocks off Galley Head



The sensible thing would have been to go into Glandore, but Michael and Helen had insisted we go to Castletownshend and sample the pub food, so we did!



Approaching Castletownshend



Castletownshend 1



Castletownshend 2

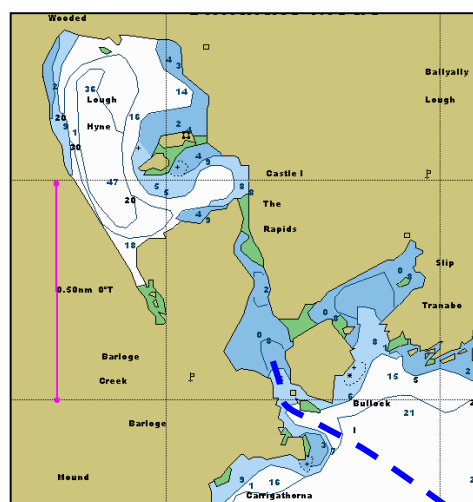


21st June: Castletownshend to Barlogue and Baltimore



Barlogue Creek entrance

Anybody who thumbs through the Irish Cruising Club pilot cannot fail to be fascinated by Barlogue Creek, a tiny indentation just east of Baltimore. With a NE wind f/c, conditions seemed ideal. We were away by 0925, but the sea outside was confused. There was a residual swell from the SW, but a new SE swell had built overnight. These, coupled with reflected waves from the cliffs made sailing a little uncomfortable. Despite this we decided to go in close and, as expected, we just got enough shelter from the nearby headland to attempt an entry to Barlogue.



Barlogue Creek



Barlogue Creek

Inside, it was peaceful. The dinghy was launched, and we went up through the rapids, which shot us into Lough Hyne. There we landed, and chatted to a local who was escorting a gang of lads canoeing. They were a little disappointed because it was high tide. Apparently on a spring ebb, the level difference between the Lough and the creek can be nearly 4 metres! It must

be quite a sight.

We sat on the grass in the warm sunshine until the tide – quite suddenly – turned. Then we paddled back on board for a lazy lunch.



After clearing a huge glob of weed from the anchor, we nosed out to sea to find the easterly wind had reached F5 or more, so with just a single reefed main we ran down to Baltimore and anchored for the night.



Barlogue Creek

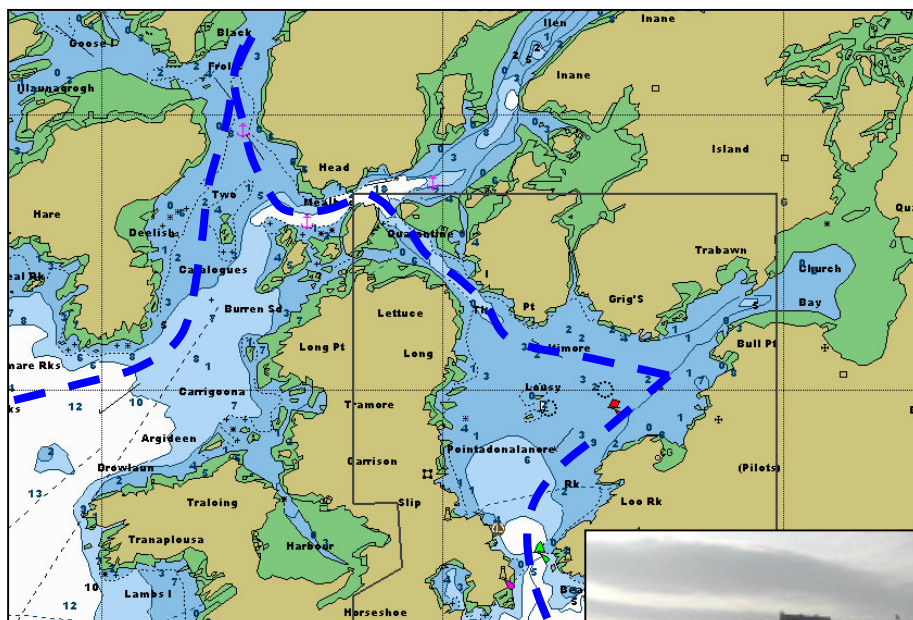


Looking out of Baltimore Harbour



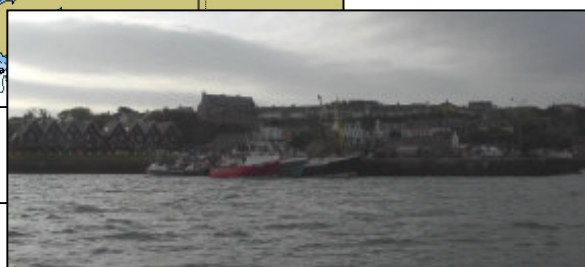
Ariadne in Baltimore

22nd June: Baltimore



Baltimore

The wind was almost due west, but the anchorage was comfortable enough, so after breakfast the dinghy was made ready and we went ashore for a quick look



Baltimore



round. We had already contacted Peggy Townend, the mother of an ex colleague, who lived in a cottage at the tip of Turk Head. We had arranged to meet her that afternoon, so there was not enough time to sample the famed delights of the local café. After an early lunch we motored slowly through the islands, having waited till an hour after high water. We thought we would have to go under a cable with 18m air draft. Our mast is 15m, stepped about 1.6m above the water, with a $\frac{3}{4}$ metre aerial on top, i.e. nearly 17.5m air draft! When we got to the place where the cable should have been (between Turk Head and Sandy island) it was not there. We later learned that it had been replaced by an undersea cable after being brought down three times by yachts. There were rumours that it had sagged below 18m.....hmmmm!



Peggy's Parlour

In Rincolisky Harbour we were able to anchor well in because of very neap tides. A permanently moored Dehler 36 gave us the clue that this was a safe anchorage.

Peggy drove over to a nearby rocky slip and picked us up from the dinghy. There followed a delightful afternoon admiring her cottage, with a view out to the Fastnet Rock, which stood clear on the horizon. We walked down to the haven where Peggy kept her 'punt', a robust looking dinghy with outboard.



Peggy's Garden – Fastnet on horizon



Peggy & Dairne

This served as a tender to her brand new gaff sloop, a new class about 16 ft long that had just been developed, with some 8 or so boats already in commission. We had seen them sailing the previous day. Sadly, Peggy had got a slight tear in her mainsail, which would have to be looked at by a sailmaker the next day.

Peggy joined us on board for supper, and we took her ashore at 2130, it still being nearly full daylight – an advantage of being so far west. It had been a delightful



interlude, and we could well see why Ian Townend enjoyed visiting Baltimore.

23rd June: Baltimore to Adrigole

It dawned sunny. We would be beating against a lethargic tide out to Mizen Head before bearing away into Bantry Bay. So we decided to leave at 0930. The plan went awry when I thought Dairne had the anchor off the bottom, and I dragged into the mooring of the Dehler nearby. It took a great deal of dragging with a chain between two ropes to get anything free. In the end, we rattled the groundchain out of the mud and we were able to lift it to the surface. What we saw was the best bit of anchor crochet work I have ever seen. It took over an hour to get it all untangled. It was nearer 1130 by the time we got under way motoring through the tricky channel round Hare Island into open water.



Fastnet



Mizen Head

A long seaward tack took us out toward the Fastnet before tacking back in to Mizen Head.

With one reef, the boat was going fairly well into a gentle swell. For a while, we took a roll in the genoa too, but shook this out as we approached Mizen Head. After that, it was a sleigh ride sail, surging up to 7kts at times.

After passing Dunmanus Bay we rounded Sheep Head and were able to bear away onto a more comfortable broad reach up Bantry Bay, passing the lighthouse on the end of Bere Island, Roanncarrigmore.



Roanncarrigmore



Sheep Head

We opted for Adrigole, a breathtaking harbour set against the mountains where there are free visitors buoys. It was 1940 by the time we picked up the buoy and settled down to supper. A very good day despite the inauspicious start.



Approaching Adrigole



Adrigole Entrance (from inside)



Hungry Hill



Sailing Centre, Adrigole

Adrigole remains a stunning spot, but compared to our last visit, it was busy. There were two yachts and a number of dinghies on moorings. What looks like a new sailing centre has also opened.



24th June: Adrigole to Glengariff

The morning was still, with forecast of sea breeze for the afternoon. However, we decided to get on, so motored gently to Glengariff and picked up a visitors buoy. A trip ashore replaced bread and milk, then we settled down to enjoy what must surely be one of the world class yachting gems.





Glengariff Reflections

25th June: Glengariff to Lawrence Cove

After motoring clear of Glengariff, we had a delightful F2 fetch all the way to Lawrence Cove on Bere Island, passing *Midday Sun*, an elegant Tradewind 35 on the way. We were later to spend quite a lot of time with Marc and Anne from that boat when they arrived in Lawrence Cove the next day. They are true live-aboards, and had been cruising the summer and earning in the winter since 2001. Marc's family have been sailing for years, and his experience was impressive, through a thick layer of modesty. Typically, he was telling



Midday Sun off Adrigole

another boat owner of his trip out to Ireland. He had started off from Falmouth, where they had wintered, in thick fog. After deciding that he would divert to Penzance if the fog failed to lift by the Runnel Stone, he saw the light at the bottom of the fog gradually increase until it was clear, with a light breeze all the way to Ireland. "But



you have radar” said the listener. “Yes” said Marc, “But that is for getting me out of trouble, not getting me into trouble”



Bere Island

As we came inside Bere Island, the light on the water was magically translucent, and Dairne really enjoyed sailing the boat in.



Dairne

This was our first visit to Lawrence Cove, about which we had heard good reports. It is small, very well sheltered, and has wide pontoons plentifully supplied with shore power and water. Essential stores are available.



Ariadne in Lawrence Cove

We were to spend several days here because of very uncertain weather. The surroundings are beautiful, and the island full of interesting walks.

After getting settled, we decided to go for a walk to get some views while the sun shone (it was forecast wet and windy the next day).



Lawrence Cove Marina



Heron

We were not disappointed. It was like walking in a picture postcard, with wildflowers in the hedgerows, glimpses of the sea, and the mountains all around.

Walking in to the village there were a pair of Herons working an almost enclosed pool.



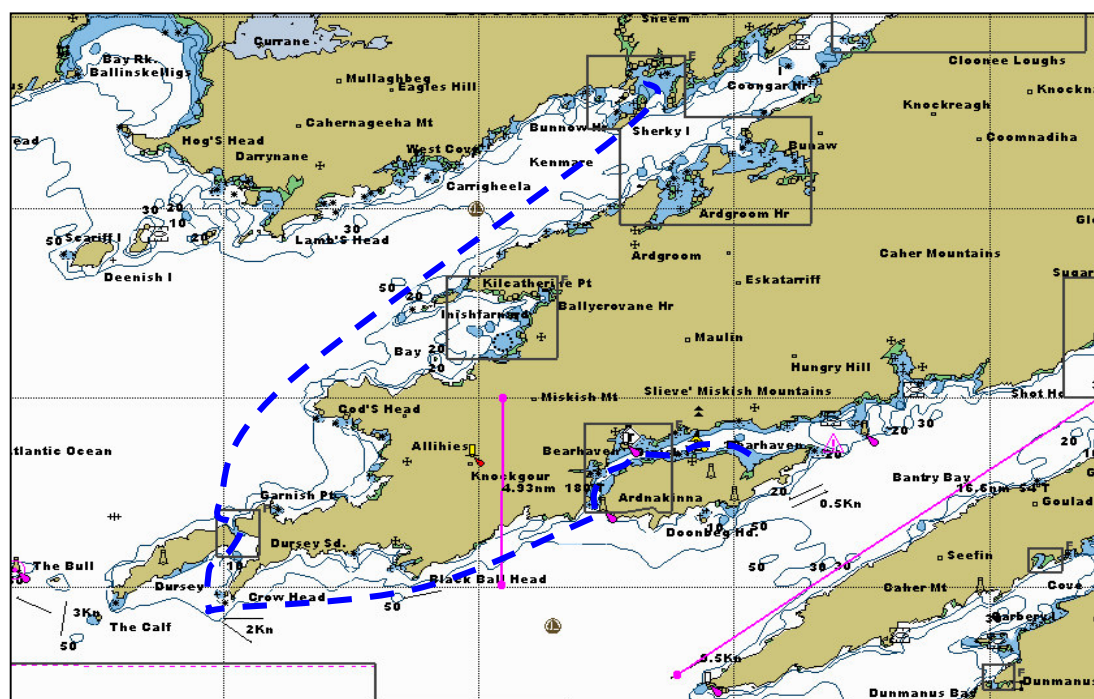




We treated ourselves to meal out at Kitty's. Prices were much less than Kinsale, and the quality was superb. After pate and deep fried brie starters, Dairne had monkfish while I had a very good sirloin. By Irish standards, the wine was cheap (Wine is expensive in Ireland).

28th June: Lawrence Cove to Sneem

For some days we had not had access to weather maps because there were no internet cafes, and the mobile signal in Lawrence Cove is weak. Normally this doesn't matter because the Irish weather forecasts on VHF are so good, and the Navtex is very detailed. However, there had been a discrepancy between the BBC radio 4 forecast and the Irish forecasts. But during the night of 27th/28th they converged. It looked likely that we would have a force 3-5 SE during the morning, strengthening in the afternoon. On this basis we decided to make a bid to go through Dursey Sound.

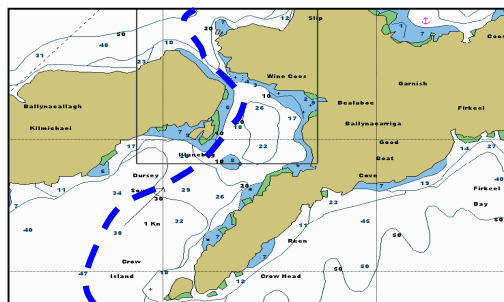


Bere Island to Sneem via Dursey Sound

The forecast worked out well. The 0535 BBC forecast confirmed it, and we were under way by 0640, motoring past Bere Island into a lumpy sea. With a double reefed main and 3 rolls in the jib we charged out to Dursey. It is always tense reaching along



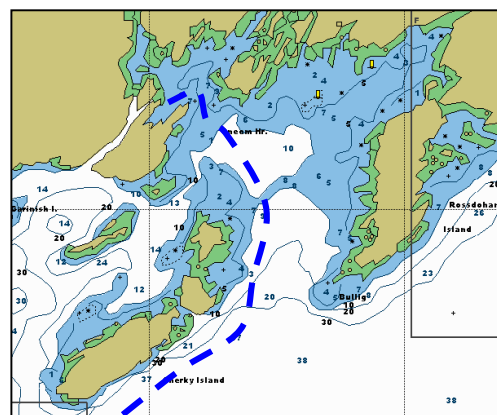
a rocky lee shore, but we rolled the jib and ran into Dursey under main only. The tide was still with us through the sound itself.



Dursey Sound

wind generator except in fits and starts.

We had judged the weather right.



Approach to Sneem

Once through the Sound we set the heavy weather jib to meet any weather. On the lee side of the peninsular, there was only the residual swell from previous days, and it would have been a sparkling sail if the sun had shone. But it didn't.

By 1210 we were anchored behind the peninsular in Sneem. It was weird. 100 metres away the trees were thrashing, but we were in a near calm – not enough to spin the



Leaving Dursey

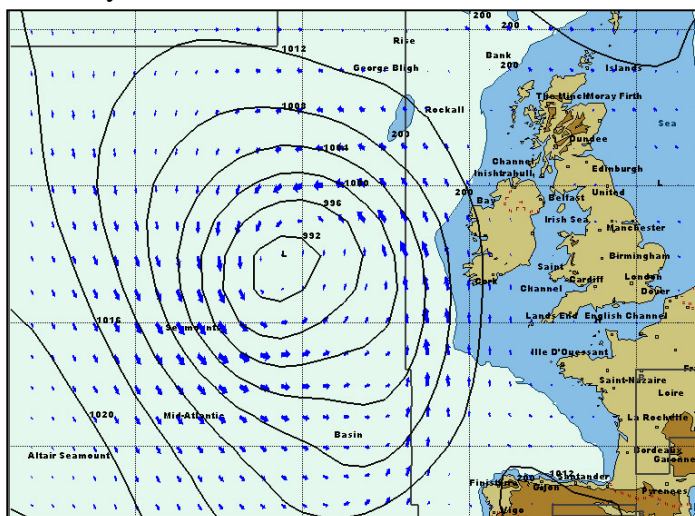
At long last we could get a mobile phone signal and download a weather map. It was

unexpected, and we could see how lucky we had been to find a weather window.

We now face a few grey days near the centre of this massive low as it tracks down into Biscay, but with the prospect of moderate winds.

Maybe we can explore some of the Kenmare harbours.

But the next morning it was still blowing hard. The wind had shifted so we were less protected, but our anchorage was still comfortable. We hibernated after a large 'brunch'.



Weather at Noon 28th June



29th June: Sneem



Sneem

It blew. It rained. There was nothing for it but to snug down and enjoy a rest. The scenery was still impressive, but much of our time was spent out of the wind, watching the skylight!



Skylight

It is surprising, but there are many ways to pass the time. The basics of meals, and clearing up after them; checking the anchor; reading up the pilot books for the next few legs; passage planning on the plotter, and so on. Then of course, there is the World Scrabble championship, and a lot of reading and sleeping!

30th June: Sneem to Kilmakilloge and Blackwater River



Sneem

At last, it was still. A peaceful morning greeted us. We decided to go across the estuary to Kilmakilloge.

I thought it was pronounced **Kil-mackill-ogee**, but it is actually **Kil-mack-ilowg**. However, the Irish are pretty offhand about their spelling, so I think I can choose my pronunciations!

Having buoyed the anchor because of the risk of ground chains (that we had learned have now been removed), it was a relief when it came up easily. No crochet work this time! There was a lot of soft mud, but the deckwash pump soon dealt with that!



Deckwash pump



When we anchor, we use a short rope strop and a chain hook to take the weight off the winch. It also reduces chain rumble. However, it had been blowing so hard that I had put a length of anchor plait laid onto the chain and back to the winch as well. Its length meant it acted as a large shock absorber.

Once all was clear, we motored slowly out, first making a loop to look down the amazing cut, nearly ¼ mile long that splits the peninsular. Then gently out of the entrance.



Clearing away the anchor plait

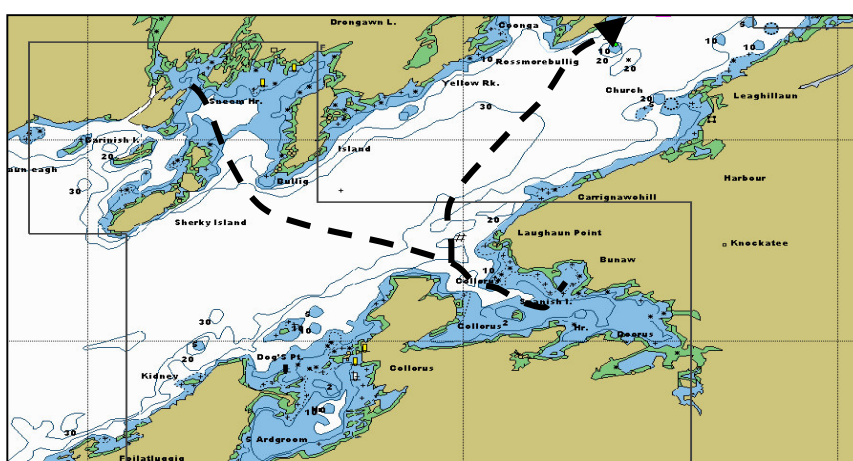


Sneem Cut



Sneem Entrance

It was only an hour of gentle sailing into Kilmakilloge, but the pilotage was made more interesting by fishfarms being



Sneem to Kilmakilloge

established virtually on the pilotage line.



Kilmakilloge is a very small fishing village with a pub/shop/café. We enjoyed a Guinness sitting in the sun chatting to groups of not so young Americans who were on a cycling tour. The boat was safely anchored off, and it was tempting to stay, but we had been advised that the Blackwater River was an attractive spot, so we decided to go there for the night. It was good advice.



Ariadne anchored off Kilmakilloge



Kilmakilloge pub/shop/cafe

It was a gentle drift up the river, with the tide doing a lot of the work. But it was warm, and scenery was just amazing.

The Blackwater River estuary turned out to be a small tree-lined alcove on the north shore, where we anchored for the night.

While I stood off in the dinghy to take pictures, two dolphins surfaced just behind me. Dairne saw them, but I was facing the wrong way. So no good photos were shot. However, I certainly

heard them blow, probably less than 10 feet away.

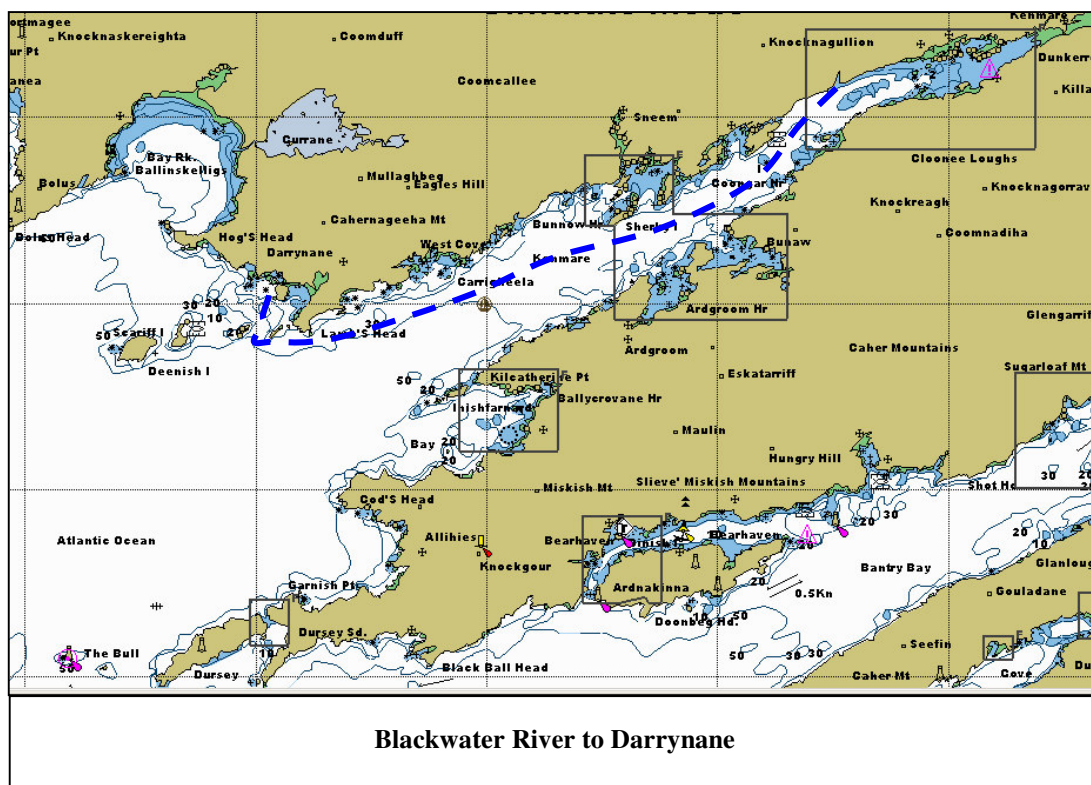
After the battering by the wind of the previous two days, it was peaceful and very still night.



Ariadne anchored off Blackwater River



1st July: Blackwater River to Derrynane



As we set off after breakfast, our plan was to go into Ilaundrane, a small anchorage behind a rocky islet. However, the gentle reach was so enjoyable that we decided to go on to Derrynane, a harbour we were determined not to miss. In support of this move was that the forecast for the next day indicated strong northerlies, which could make the approach to Derrynane more tricky.



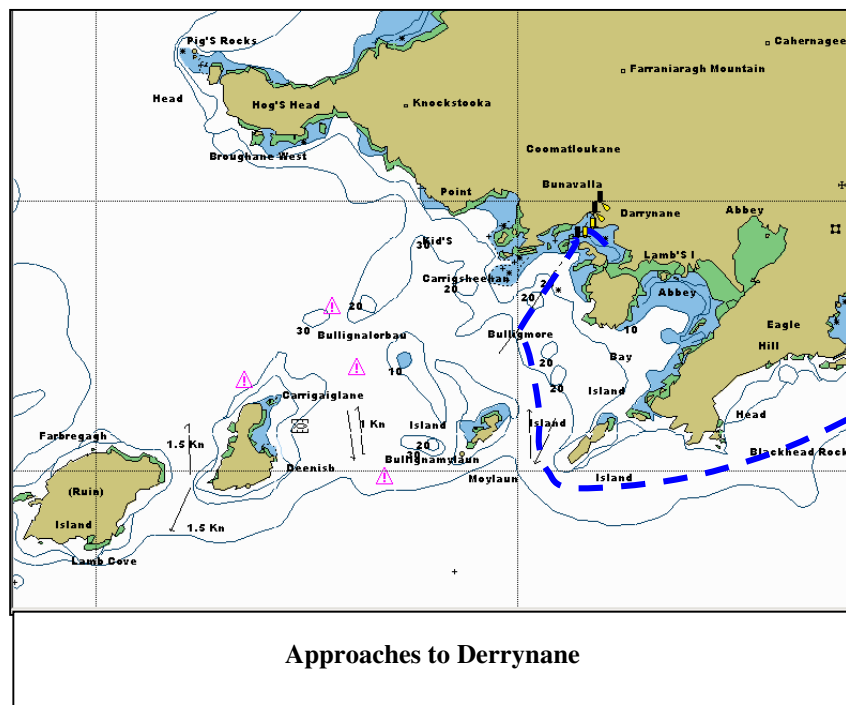
Approaching Lamb Head and Scariff Island

Gradually we edged down to Lamb Head and turned the corner. An impressive group of offlying islands appeared, with the massive Skelligs in the far distance out to sea.

The entrance to Derrynane was as tight as we had expected, but once inside, a generous harbour opened up. To our surprise there were three visitors buoys available, so we gratefully took one.

Derrynane is a gem. It is every bit as good as it appears on the cover of the Irish Cruising Club pilot, and it even kept its reputation for being gusty in northerlies!

Our next passage would involve about 7 miles due north then a NW leg over to Dingle. The forecast of N-NW 5/6 was not encouraging. As this was a delightful spot, we decided to stay put.



Derrynane



2nd July: Darrynane



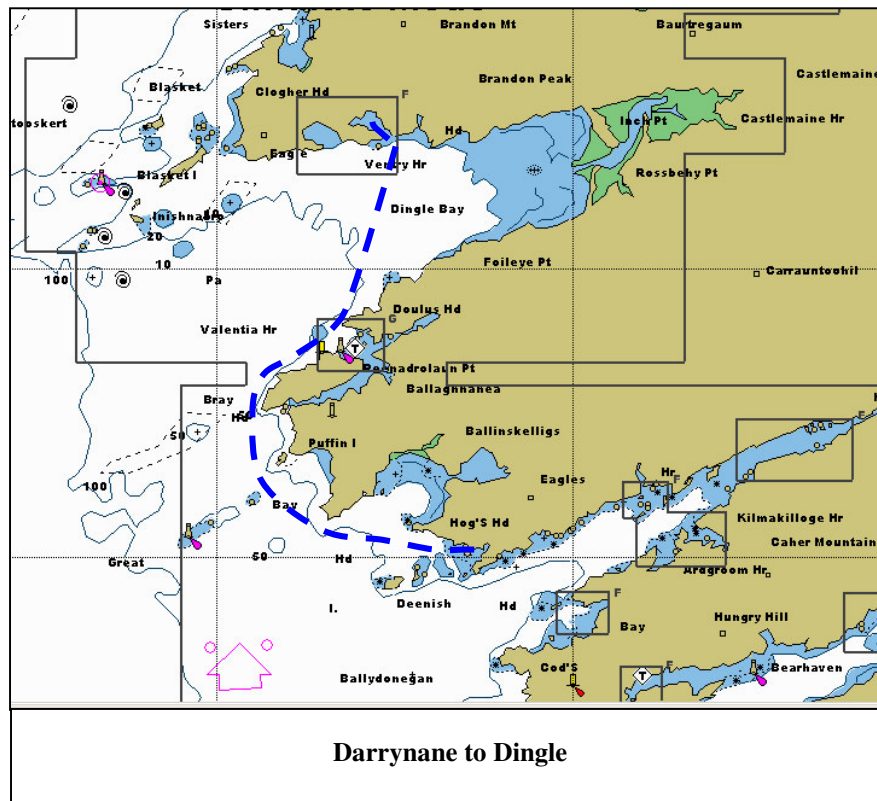
The morning dawned with sunshine and a stiff breeze. The dinghy was already over the side, so I went ashore and took lots of photographs. Then Dairne came for a walk too to see the breathtaking vistas. Lunch at the pub and stroll along the flat sandy beach.

Surely this must be one of best natural yacht harbours anywhere?





3rd July: Darrynane to Dingle



Although the wind was north of west, this seemed the best chance we would get to round the corner and get across to Dingle. In the event, we were pretty well close hauled passing between the coast and the impressive Skellig Islands.



The Skelligs



Dingle

For a couple of hours we had to motor sail because the wind was not sufficient to push the boat through an uncomfortable lop on the water. Once we had weathered Valentia Island, however, we were able to crack the sheets a bit, and with the wind backing in our favour managed to lay Dingle in one tack.



The famous Dingle Dolphin, who surfaced close alongside, then dived away to entertain the tourists on the tripper boats, met us.



Dingle Entrance

Dingle harbour is set across a shallow bay just round the headland shown in picture. There is a dredged channel, mainly for the benefit of an active fishing fleet. The marina is tucked away in one corner, but has all the facilities. Unfortunately, they were due to receive the

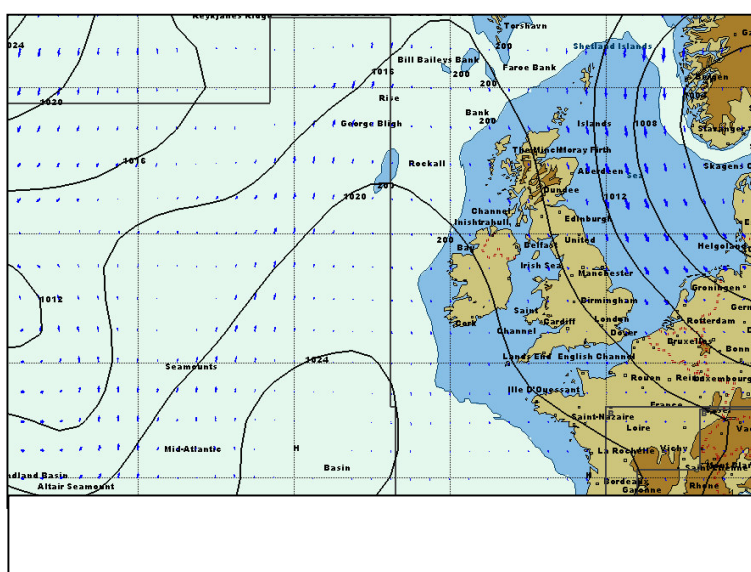
fleet from the Dun Laoghaire to Dingle race, and were not accepting visitors. We got away with it because by the time the harbourmaster came over to us, we were moored up rafted 3 out against a motor sailer, out of everybody's way. "As you are here, you may as well stay" he said. I also suspect he liked the more classical yacht, and was genuinely wanting to be welcoming to a foreign visitor with husband and wife crew.

What the congestion showed up, however, is that there is a good anchorage on the south side of the bay (just go straight on instead of turning into the dredged channel). There were several boats there, so we were lucky! The racing fleet duly arrived. They had been lucky with downwind sailing all the way from Dun Laoghaire to Mizen Head, and then a long beat outside the Skelligs. It had taken them 48 hours!

I rushed ashore to find a bank and managed to get some shopping. Later Dairne came for a stroll, and we found the supermarket still open, so more or less completed the restocking we needed.

Dingle is an attractive town, with all the usual tourist attractions, but it also has good supermarkets and other shops and facilities.

We were alongside a Seastream motor sailer called *Muscadet*. It is a very functional pilothouse design with good sailing qualities too. Easily handled with a ketch rig. Ivan and Mary invited us on board and we chatted about not a lot. Later they came on board *Ariadne*, with a bottle of wine, and we showed them our internet access to weather.





Ivan is an artist of some note. He had a leaflet of some of his paintings. They were impressive, capturing the mood of the country. His affection for things Irish shone through in the pictures.

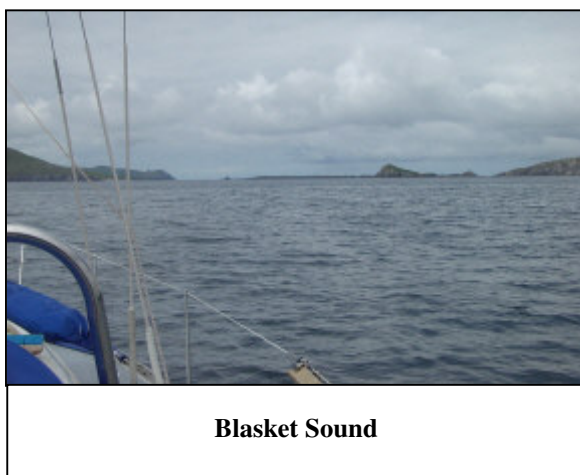
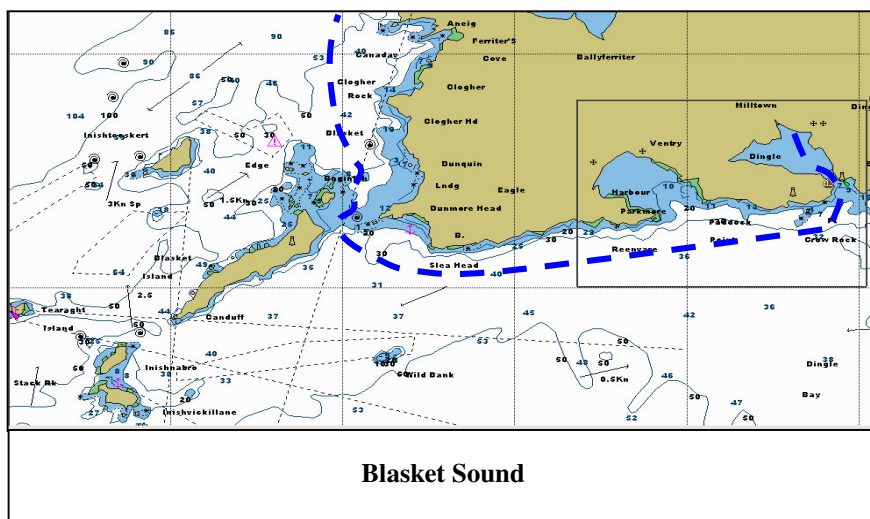
Early the next morning, I went all round the town trying to locate a stockist of boat size gas cylinders. This is a problem all over Ireland. I think you could get calor cylinders at Castletown Bearhaven, but at the third attempt, I located Foxy Johns, a bar cum general hardware store right at the top of the hill that stocked Camping Gaz. In anticipation of this problem, I had an empty Gaz cylinder (and an adapter to allow us to use it). The little sack barrow was invaluable as it was quite a walk to the shop.

The weather map (coupled with the VHF and radio 4 forecasts) indicated that if we stayed, the ridge of high pressure would move over and we would have strong southerly winds. We decided to push on in the more moderate north westerlies. Our course past loop Head should allow us to ease sheets a bit.

We would have liked to stay in Dingle a bit longer, but we were facing the longest coastal hop, nearly 70 miles, and could not pass up an opportunity to make it in tolerable conditions.

4th –5th July: Dingle to Cashla Bay

The first obstacle on this long passage is Blasket Sound. One reason for choosing to go was that we would tackle this obstacle with a relatively flat sea. However, in order to pass through the Sound with the



first of the northgoing tide, we would have to wait till 1300hrs, which in turn meant we would be approaching the Galway and Connemara coast in darkness. So be it!

Leaving Dingle at 1030, we found a brisk northerly that gave us a good fetch to the Sound, where we rolled away the genoa and motorsailed through, keeping under power until we could bear away to a close hauled course.

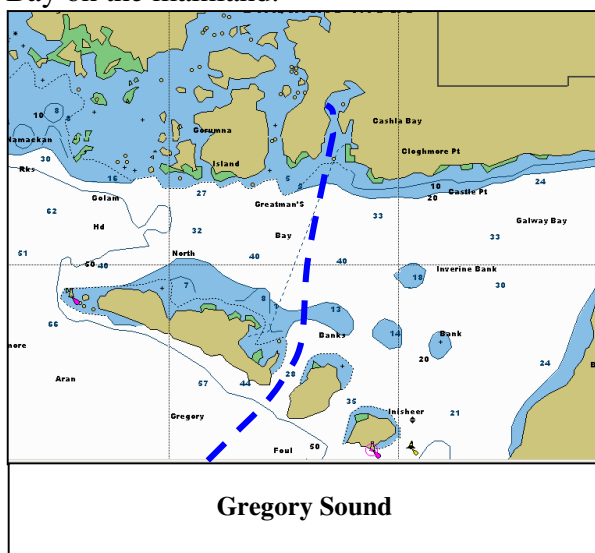


Under single reefed main and full jib we were making better than 5 kts and just about laying our course. The land fell away to Starboard into a magnificent coastline with high mountains falling almost direct into the sea. We watched *Muscadet* (who was heading for Fenit) go along the coast, and the tiny dot showed the scale and grandeur of Mt Brandon falling straight into the sea from nearly 4000ft. It was, however, impossible to photograph.

Loop Head appeared over the starboard bow, and stayed with us all afternoon, with an offing of about 7 miles.

As evening came, a reef was taken in the jib as the apparent wind was up to 19/20kts. Dairne took over the watch, and with sheets very slightly eased our speed was generally over 6kts as night fell. At midnight, I took over again.

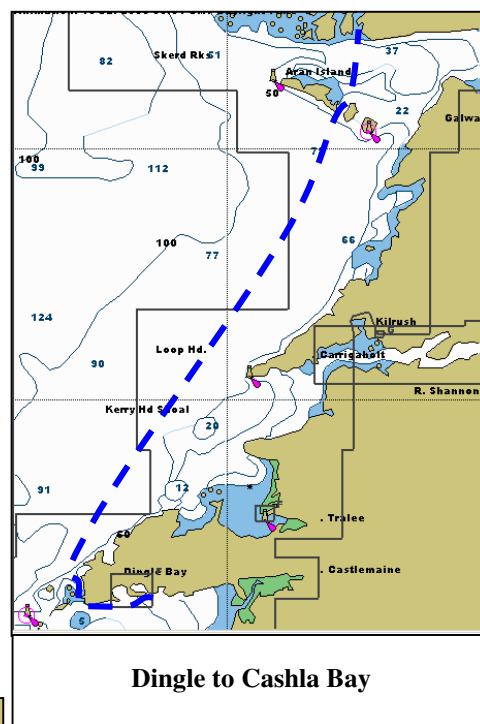
Our original plan had been to go through Gregory Sound between the Aran Islands, and anchor in Killeany Bay on Inishmore, the largest island. However, the wind had not backed as much as we expected, and we feared that there would be a swell working into the harbour. We replanned for Cashla Bay on the mainland.



As we had expected, the forecast for the next day was for strong winds, so we decided to stay. There is very little at Cashla, so we did not go ashore.

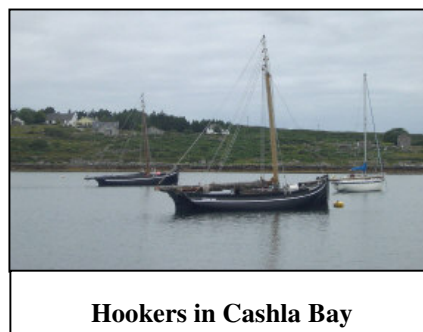
6th July: Cashla Bay

We were not alone. A Nic 35 arrived, southbound, and he too stayed for the day. There was also a French minitonner on another buoy. Both were single handed.



It was about 0130 when we went through the narrow Gregory Sound, where there are no lights, using the plotter and radar to guide us. An interesting experience!

By rolling up the genoa, speed was reduced to 2.5kts so that we had full daylight entering Cashla Bay, where we picked up a visitors buoy at 0615. Then we slept!





Cashla Bay

It blew hard all day. Apart from the vedettes going out to Aran, there was little sign of activity, except when one of the local hookers went out for a sail, but returned in less than an hour and picked up a mooring.

Toward evening, the wind started to abate, and a 'harbourmaster' came to collect 12 euros for the 2 nights we were there, the first time we had been charged for using visitors' buoys. While we were talking about the weather forecasts, and their occasional

inaccuracy, he said that scientists often did not know what they were talking about. "They say the world is round. Well of course it is flat. If it was round, all the rubbish would fall into the corner".



Turf Hooker in Cashla Bay

7th July Cashla Bay to Roundstone



Golam Head

It looked like there would be a few days of bad weather, with just a small window. We decided to move on to Roundstone, which many people had recommended to us. This would be a better place to stay and there are several alternative anchorages with a series of connected bays. But, as can be seen from

the passage chart, the approaches are littered with rocks and shoals. We concluded that Slaherty O'Bartfast had

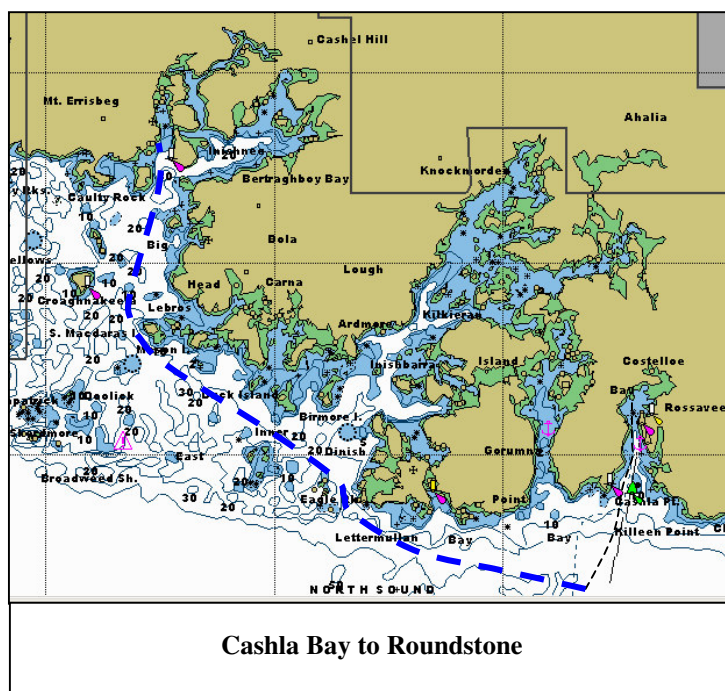


made this coast when he was young, and had not cleared up the bricks when he had finished.

In fact, it is not as difficult as it appears at first sight, as Golam Head is easy to identify and there is an easy transit through the Inner Sound (although it became difficult to see in the prevailing moderate visibility). Of course, we had the chart plotter that made everything a lot easier.

This was to be our respite day. After the first port tack to clear the coast, we came about and could easily lay Golam Head, and thereafter it was a pleasant reach.

As we needed to sail accurate compass courses, the ST4000 tiller pilot was secured to the Monitor (instead of the vane). This greatly reduces the strain on the equipment, and massively reduces power consumption. It worked well.



By 1425 we were anchored in Roundstone, not using the visitors buoys as these are outside the bar in a more exposed position, and further from the town.



Ariadne in Roundstone

We went ashore for some essential shopping, and discovered an internet café – the first we had seen since Kinsale. We had an excellent seafood meal in O'Dowds restaurant, followed by a Guinness in the bar. There the barmaid knew the skipper of a large Nelson motor cruiser that was moored in the bay. This was a boat we had boarded at Bucklers Hard. Martin O'Malley had been the first person to recommend Roundstone to us, and we had hoped to meet him again on his home patch. However, he had left that day for 2 weeks holiday.

Toward evening, the sky lifted and we were able to see the surrounding mountains properly. Roundstone is beautifully set, and has many attractions. Most facilities are available, including Gaz and diesel in cans – though we needed neither this time.



8th July: Layday in Roundstone

We liked Roundstone. We decided to have a day there, even if the weather was going foul later. Our first stop ashore was the internet café where we got rid of over 200 junk messages and cleared out about 300 spam messages. We also got a good view of the weather, which looked pretty dire from today (Tuesday) until the weekend. So what! We could stay if we had to, and explore the other anchorages in the nearby bays.

The 1000 hrs f/c had indicated F6 overnight, so we were resigned to a long stay in the area, and did not mind. We had a Guinness in the bar, and chatted to our friendly barmaid.



Towards evening, the sky lifted, and we had some great views of the surrounding mountains, including the Twelve Pins. Then the late evening f/c was interesting. It suggested SE 4 going SW 4/5. That was do-able. We began to think that we could move on the following day. What appealed was that we would be downwind to Slyne Head, then offwind to Inishbofin.





first backup if the instruments fail. Then we went on. A second reef was taken in the main, and in the jib. We were still doing 5.5-6.5 kts.

We never saw Slyne Head after that, passing 2 miles off. The sea was lumpy, so once SW of Slyne Head we bore away as much as we could while keeping the genoa drawing. The quartering sea was about 1.5metres, and eventually the large corrections needed by the autopilot caused it to fall off the Monitor.

As a first step, the autopilot was brought down to act directly on the tiller. The small vane was set on the Monitor, and eventually windvane control was established, enabling us to sail more downwind, the windvane being much faster and more powerful to contain the quartering sea.

It looked as though our course on the other gybe would be 040°, but allowing for the extra tide that would set us north, we gybed with High Island bearing 030°. Our plan was to go into Inishbofin, but the wind and swell held from a southerly direction, which can be dangerous going into Inishbofin, so we re-planned into Ballynakill.

Nothing was visible except lumpy waves, and lots of seabirds including puffins, guillemots and (we think) some Manx Shearwaters. Obviously the sea off Slyne Head is very productive!

Our gamble paid off, and by careful use of the plotter, supplemented with radar and some hand steering at the end, we found our way through the gap between High Island and Friar Island, both of which we saw in the mist.

After that we rounded Cudoo Rock and reached in behind Claggan Point. Then the sea was flat, and the only



Friar Island



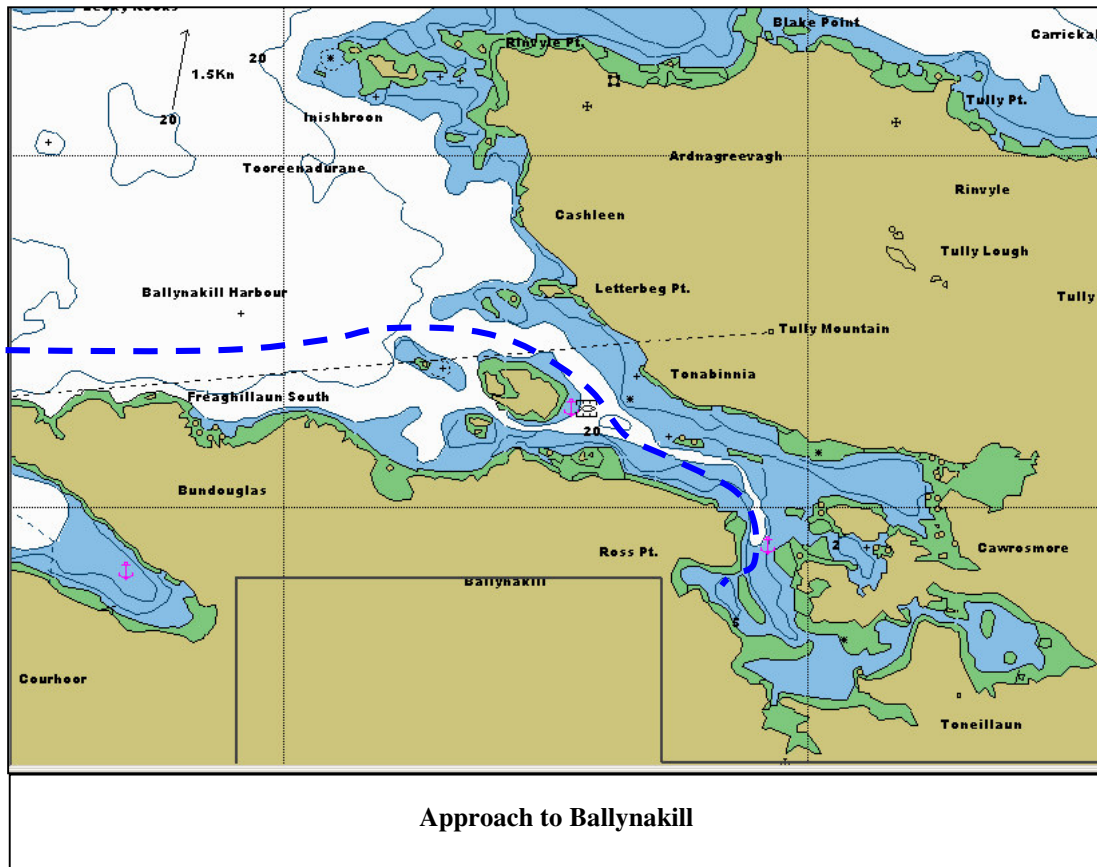
High Island

complication was that we had to divert round two set nets, guided by the fishing boats.

Then it was pilotage into Ballynakill Harbour where we found 8 excellent visitors buoys, all unoccupied. Yet again the pickup using the Bosco hook was remarkably easy, even in the strong wind. Does nobody else come here?



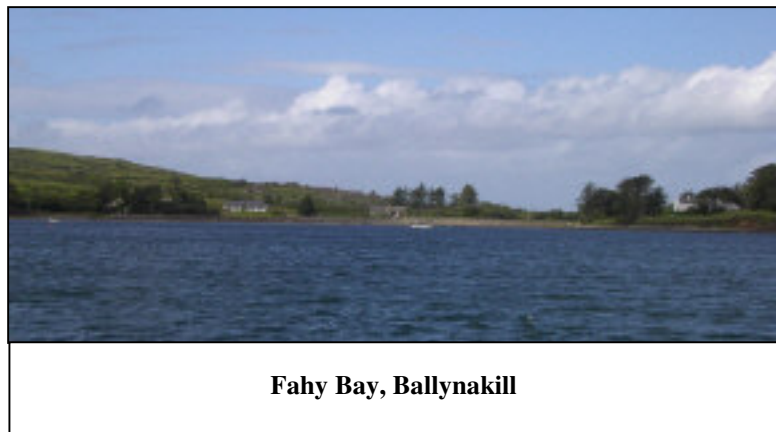
This passage had been a fine example of all the benefits, and all the risks, of electronic navigation. Had we not had plotter and radar, we would have opted out when the visibility clamped down. But had we done so, we would have wasted a



favourable wind, and been stuck in Roundstone for several days. As it was, we had moved on to a new cruising area. We had always had the option of reverting to the hand held GPS if our instruments failed; or we could have stood out to sea.

10th July: Ballynakill, Fahy Bay

It blew hard all day. We were very snug in Fahy Bay. The wind had little fetch so there was very little movement. The availability of plenty of wind power (up to 20 amps in the gusts) meant I could recharge camera batteries, and bring the log up to date.





Later the cloud lifted a little and we had some really good views of the Twelve Pins, mountains set in two distinct groups.



During the afternoon a large dinghy with an outboard came past, and we invited the occupants to join us for tea. Ruth and her husband owned a nearby cottage, and her brother Jeremy was visiting. They told us about the fish farm, which had gone bust, and the local tripper boat. We were invited to visit them the next day if we stayed. With continued strong winds forecast, this looked increasingly likely.

11th July: Fahy Bay, Ballynakill

Unlike the UK Coastguard, who only update their forecasts every 12 hours, the Irish Coastguard issue a new weather forecast every 6 hours, repeated after three hours. In addition, they give reports from a number of coastal stations all round the Irish coast. But the most important aspect is that they give the reports from four met buoys. M1 is west of Galway, M2 in the Irish Sea, M3 SW of Mizen Head, and M4 off the NW coast of Ireland.



Today M1 and M4 were giving wave heights in excess of 3m and winds of 20kts gusting to 30-35kts.

The decision to stay put was NOT difficult.

Dairne finally got round to looking at a 2 day old copy of the Irish Independent and found a crossword. The idea of Dairne doing an Irish crossword is mind-boggling.

There was now time to go ashore and make a return visit to Ruth and meet Peter. He was brought up in the area, and had fulfilled his ambition of retiring here. You can see why!





12th July: Ballynakill to Killary Bay and Salruck

SW-S 4/5 was the forecast. This would probably leave a swell in the approach to Inishbofin, so we opted instead to visit the great fjord-like Killary Bay and its small companion, Little Killary Bay.

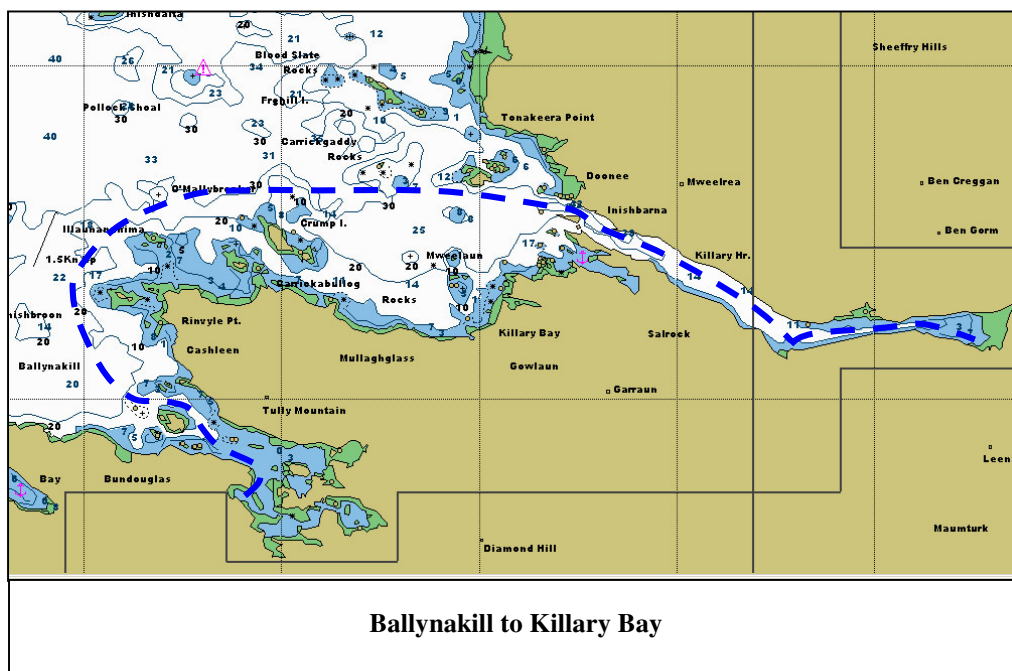


Downwind a la Thoyts!

As we would be offwind all the way, and there was a prospect of some stiff gusts, we experimented with a rig that Mike Thoyts had recommended. We set genoa and trysail. The idea is that the boat is never overpowered, and the trysail steadies the boat, but does not blanket the genoa on a broad reach the way a mainsail does.

At first, the wind was too light for it to be a fair test, and we just trickled out of Ballynakill at a couple of knots. Outside, however, was a different matter, and it was an extremely comfortable rig. Because the boat was not heeled, it did not need much power, so kept going at more than 6 kts even when the wind was below 14kts. At one stage the apparent wind exceeded 20kts, so a few rolls were put in the genoa. The boat bowled along, upright, at speeds frequently touching 7kts.

Very interesting! And a good passage rig for a downwind leg in a stiff breeze.



Ballynakill to Killary Bay



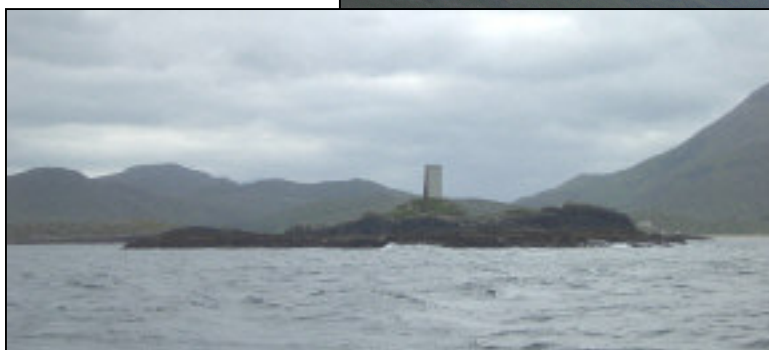
We were also sailing among rocks, so maintaining accurate course was important. So, instead of using the vane on the Monitor, the autopilot was once again connected, reducing wear and saving power.

As might be expected, the approach to Killary was spectacular, with a pair of the finest transit beacons I have ever seen, easily visible at 4 miles. These are needed to guide past the O'Mally Breaker, an evil looking bit of boiling white sea in the middle of nothing, and inside two groups of rocky islets.

We motorsailed up the lough (it isn't really a bay), where we found a buoy off the activities centre. But we did not find all the facilities described in the ICC book. I did get some water from their kitchen, but it was brown and peaty, so did not go in the tank.



Monitor/autohelm



Leading Marks, Killary Bay

After lunch we sailed up to the head of the loch, where it broadens out, to find 8 visitors buoys. We went ashore again, and walked into the village for some essential stores.



Killary Bay



Anchored off Killary Lodge



Top of Killary Bay

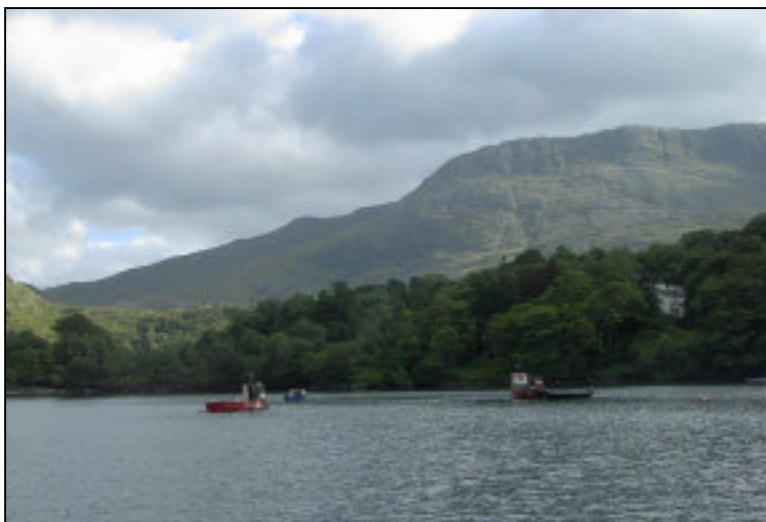


Moorings, Killary Bay



Head of Killary Bay

It was tempting to stay on a nice secure visitors buoy, but the gusty wind was coming off the hills, so we motored down the loch, between the islands with the transit beacons on, and into Salruck in Little Killary Bay. It is moderately rock strewn, but with the aid of the plotter it is easy to find the way in.



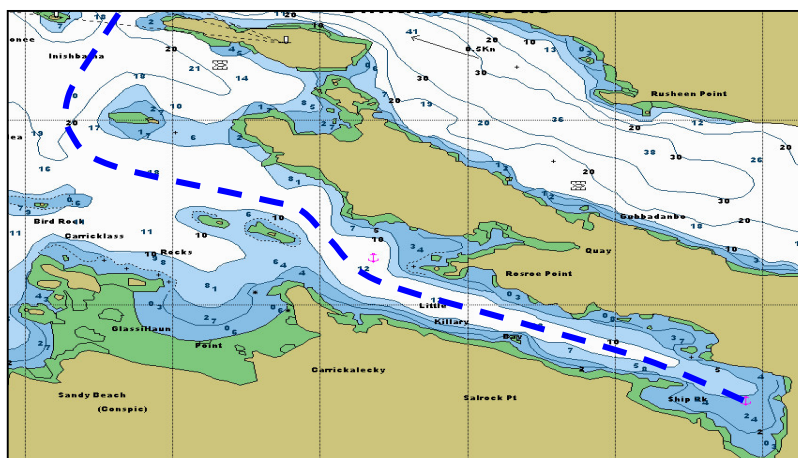
It was about at this stage in the cruise that I realised the Irish Pilotage Philosophy. Roughly speaking, if you can see a hazard and know there no other dangers adjacent, then go as close to it as you can to make sure you are not near the other dangers you can't see! It works! Think about it!



If you can see two hazards, go between them however small the gap if there are no hidden hazards between.

Salruck is a gem. We found the holding good for CQR, despite the pilot book warnings.

Salruck



Route into Salruck



just how tough life has been in the past for the local people. Even now, John has had to go away and dive on the North Sea rigs, and work in London. Since he returned, he has worked on the fish farms, diving and generally maintaining the equipment. As he put it, the farms may not be very pretty, but they represent an income for the local community.



Inishbofin

Underlying it all, there is a deep sense of sadness, and injustice relating to the past. In the distant past, the depredations of Cromwell are not forgotten. Even in Inishbofin, he took over the castle and used it as a prison. Then there were the iniquities of the absentee landlords, enforced by often-heartless factors. No wonder there was extensive emigration to the USA! But the pivotal event in this area was undoubtedly what is known as the

Cleggan Bay disaster. In November 1927, several local boats were out fishing on a still evening when, apparently with little warning, a storm hit that was to blow for several days. The boats were currachs, about 25ft long, made of wood and canvas covered in tar. They used drift nets to fish, a vital part of the diet for these men and their families, who eked out a marginal existence in the shoreline communities.

John's view was that they would have been OK if they had abandoned their nets and run for shelter. But, he felt, they couldn't do that as to lose their nets would be to lose the means of feeding their families. The result was that many were lost that night, including 16 from Rossadilisk on the mainland, 9 from Inishbofin, and 21 from the islands further north, including Aran and Inniskea. The resulting outcry became international, but as usual bureaucratic inefficiency prevented the funds flowing properly from the appeal fund to the people. Many families were left destitute, including relatively young widows with 9 or 10 children.

John also told the story of the community that lived on Inisshark, the small island adjacent to Inishbofin. There are few landing spots on the island. One year, the eldest son of a family, who was essentially the breadwinner, fell ill with appendicitis. The winter storms prevented anyone reaching the island to take him off, and he died. The community decided that enough was enough, and the island was evacuated. It is still uninhabited.



Inishbofin entrance, Shark Island in background

The local museum on Inishbofin rewards a visit. We bought a short book on the Cleggan disaster that largely confirmed John's views.



Talking to John had been a real education, and helped us to understand the area and view it and the abandoned cottages in a new light.

14th – 15th July: Inishbofin

The morning of 14th was spent finding out where to get water, some stores from the shop, and locating Days, the local pub/restaurant/ off licence. In the mid afternoon, another yacht arrived, and turned out to be *Retarrier II* from Marchwood YC! Such is the change of membership that this was the first time that we had met Margo and Dick. *Retarrier II* is a 33ft Centurion, designed (like our Rustler) by Holman and Pye. She does not carry radar, or a plotter. Dick and Margo have only owned a boat for a few years. We were really impressed that they had tackled this coast, which, they agreed, is quite challenging. Like us, they had been a bit disappointed by the weather. They had left at about the same time as we had, got to Ireland before us, and then gone in to the Shannon (Kilrush) so that Dick could go off and help his friend bring a Rustler 36 back from the Azores on the second AZAB leg. During the 2 weeks that took, Margo went off on a cycling holiday! Then they came on, calling at Roundstone and Clifden. So, by pure fluke, we met.



Retarrier II



Mussels at Day's pub

The conviviality went on during the early part of the evening at Days pub where some Guinness was consumed, accompanied by a few very tasty mussels.

Just prior to meeting in the pub, Dairne and I had walked up the hill. It was too misty to get really good views, but we did see a magnificent bull, who could probably qualify as the Minotaur, and would thus have an association with *Ariadne*!

We decided to stay an extra day as the wind was due to be a brisk northerly. Margo and Dick went on to Killary, which would be a fast reach.



Minotaur!



Ruined boat harbour, Inishbofin

That morning, we landed on the island that forms the outer breakwater of Inishbofin Harbour. While strolling along the shore, we chatted to a lone archaeologist mapping the little harbour. Apparently it had been used to serve the castle, the large vessels anchoring off, and being unloaded by curraghs into this harbour.

He told us a little of the history of the area. Apparently the castle had belonged to a formidable lady called

Granuaile, who lorded it over a large part of this coast – there is another Granuaile castle on Clare Island. He put her in the same league as Boadicea and Queen Elizabeth I. He reckoned there were many uncharted sites all round Ireland, and only now is there sufficient interest to record them.



The castle, Inishbofin



Strolling round the castle

Later the castle had been sacked by Cromwell's forces, and used as a prison.

We strolled round the castle, among the sheep and took in the views from the top of the island.



Local inhabitants



16th July: Inishbofin to Blacksod Bay.

It was a grey day, but the forecast of N-NW 3/4, backing later to W-NW offered the best prospect of making progress northwards. So we set off at 0615 to get best advantage from the north going tide.

In the event, it blew F4 from the north all the way to Achill Head, so we motorsailed. Just after leaving Inishbofin, the visibility shut down to 1 mile, and stayed that way. We motor sailed all the way.

As we passed Clare Island we emailed Clare and Iain in Auckland (New Zealand): “Clare Island 6 miles; visibility 1 mile; Pity”. Within minutes the reply came “Clare 1 metre; visibility fine”!

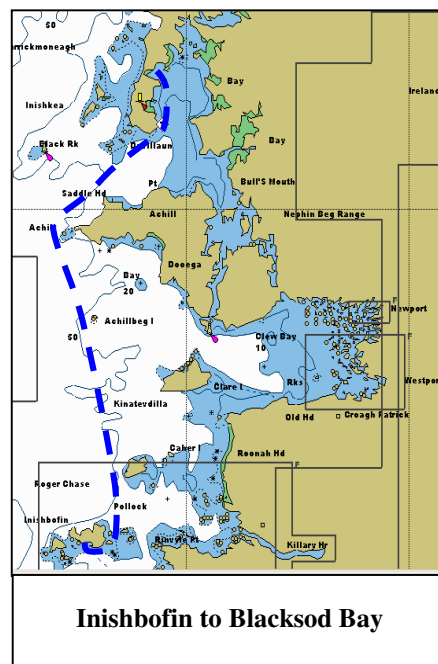
After passing Achill Head (seeing only the bottom of the headland dimly in the mist), we bore away expecting a fine broad reach into Blacksod. But the wretched wind died to almost nothing, so the engine went on again until Blacksod Head was reached, following which we had a gentle fetch into Elly Bay (with the luxury of flat water) where we found 3 empty visitors buoys, and some activity at the local outdoor activity centre.

We had however caught two small mackerel off Achill Head, and then the largest mackerel either of us had ever seen as we approached Blacksod Head. Breakfast was assured!

We did not see the magnificence of Achill Head, and saw nothing of the 2000ft Slievemore. It was disappointing, especially as the ICC pilot book contains this statement:

“FOG: Ireland as a whole is lucky in this respect and complete days of persistent fog occur on average less than once in ten years. Fog generally occurs with winds between SE and SW and is much less common on the west coast than elsewhere.”

For the second time, we had made a passage in very poor visibility, missing much of the coastal scenery.





17th July: Blacksod Bay

It was so grey with such little visibility that we decided to do nothing except demolish the mackerel and catch up with the log. Only in the mid afternoon did the visibility lift sufficiently to reveal Achill Head and Slievemore. Even then, their heads were capped in grey cloud.



Dairne and Monkey

18th July: Blacksod Bay to Broad Haven



Achill Head

The day dawned a lot brighter. The prospect was for fair weather and a very light S-SW wind. We woke early and were under way at 0720. It was a gentle beat down Blacksod Bay, now revealing the truly magnificent surrounding mountains as the sun gained strength.

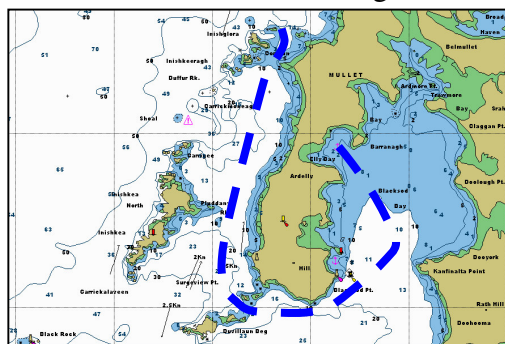


Slievemore

But the wind faded, and the engine had to go on.



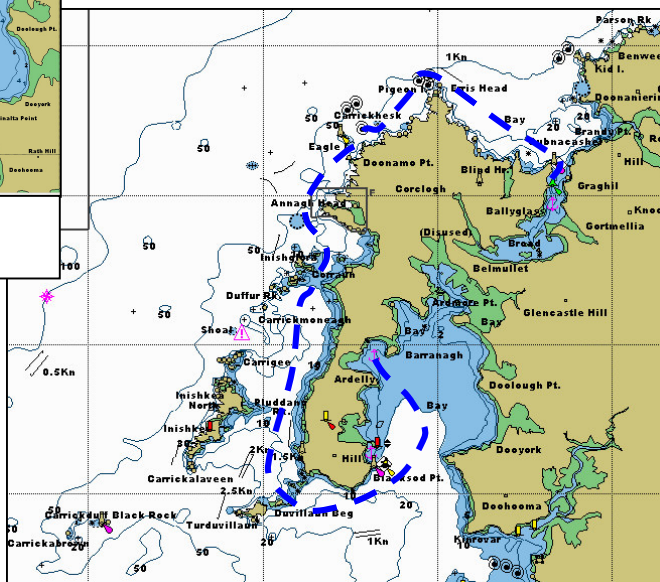
There followed a fascinating and intricate passage though the islets off the Mullet Peninsular. The first narrow gap was marked by two extremely clear leading marks on Iniskea South.



Passage inside Inishkea

Then there was a long passage up inside the islands. We tried to sail, but the speed, even with favourable tide, was too slow to make the tide at Erris Head, so the genoa was furled and the engine went on again.

Passing Inishkea we could see the ruined cottages. The island is now uninhabited, but had been one of the communities to suffer loss at the same time as Inishbofin in the Cleggan Bay disaster.



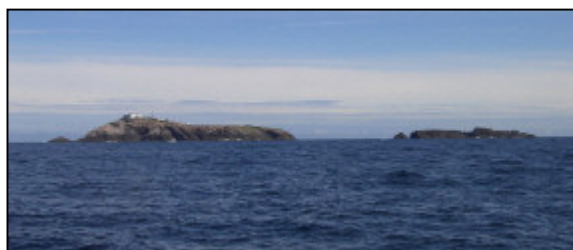
Blacksod Bay to Broad Haven



Duvillaun

After clearing the final rocky Islet, we motored inside Eagle Island and other

The pilotage was interesting. We used the plotter, but were able to see all the safe transits too.



Eagle Island and Crow Rock



Unforgiving Coast

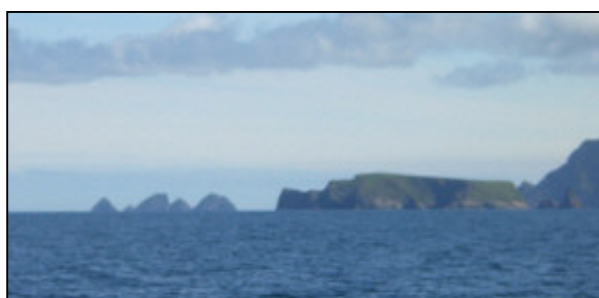
rocks. This is normally not recommended, but there was very little swell and virtually no wind. We could see why it could be a problem. The cliffs are steep to, and as a result, even in the gentle swell we experienced, there were many reflected waves, making the sea lumpy.



Erris Head

We were also able to pass close to Erris Head (about 1 ½ cables) before turning into Broad Haven Bay. Looking across, we could see the magnificent Stag Rocks, looking like the Sydney Opera House.

For an hour we were able to sail in a gentle F3, comfortably laying the Broad Haven entrance.



Stag Rocks



Erris Head – offlying rocks

Rounding into Broad Haven, we found visitors buoys in each of the three recommended mooring areas. Unlike others we had seen, these had

pickup ropes. These tended to get wound round the buoys, and although we used one for a while, the condition was such that we left the Bosco hook on the buoy with a doubled rope as additional security. (The next morning we crossed to the east shore mooring which was better protected. The pickup there was seriously tangled and made it difficult, even with the Bosco, to get hold of the top shackle). These buoys were well coated with weed and mussels, and one is forced to wonder when they were last serviced!



Ariadne at Broad Haven

We had been settled down for some while when we saw *Retarrier II* arrive. They proceeded up river to a different anchorage without coming across making contact and exchanging notes. Oh well!



19th –20th July: Broad Haven to Burtonport

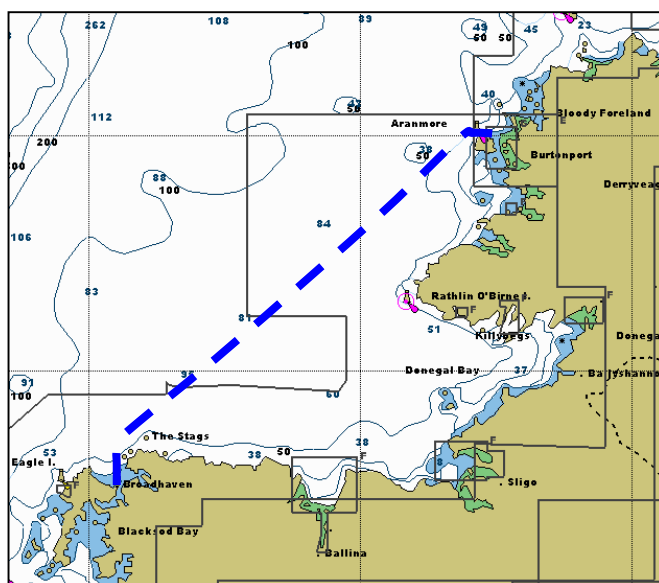
Crossing Donegal Bay is the second long leg on the journey round Ireland (the first being the trip past the Shannon). Early in the morning we saw *Retarrier II* leave, presumably heading for Killibegs. We had chosen not to adopt this approach, partly because the f/c for SE fresh to strong winds would probably make it an uncomfortably long close hauled passage of nearly 50 miles.



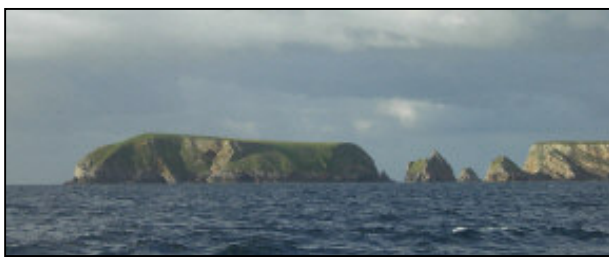
Sometimes you just watch the weather

The forecast was for the wind to remain SE for most of the day, then veer to S or SW and moderate toward evening. Our choice was to make an overnight passage to Aranmore. We needed to be sure of full daylight when we got there, partly because the channels are intricate, and partly because Irish Coastguard had reported several of the leading lights as defective.

But the SE wind meant our mooring, which had been comfortable all night, became rather noisy, the wind over tide causing quite a lot of pitching with the boat snatching at the buoy. We decided to anchor on the other side of the river where there was less fetch. Having got over there, we found that there were two visitors' buoys there too! One was occupied by a French boat and we took the other, not without difficulty as the pickup rope was tangled and holding the shackle at an awkward angle. Eventually we got the Bosco on, and after that it was straightforward.



Broad Haven to Arranmore



Kid Island, Broad Haven Bay

It blew hard all day. Eventually, continuous difficult weather gets to you. Dairne was again having a Black Day, and I got a little cross with her. However, both of us did not relish the prospect of strong winds through the night. But we decided that we had to go on, so I prepared the boat to use both trysail and small staysail.



At 1920, we dropped the buoy and motorsailed clear of the haven with 18kts apparent wind from behind. Within 30 minutes, the wind had faded. The trysail was replaced with the main, and eventually the staysail was replaced with the genoa. As a precaution, one reef was kept in the main, but by 2030, that had been shaken out too as we sailed past the impressive Stags.



Stags

There followed a broad reach of 60 miles, mainly a 5.5-6.5 kts on a relatively flat sea, and with wind between 12 and 16kts all night. Even at midnight, there was a glow on the northern horizon, and in the small hours the cloud cleared sufficiently to reveal a brilliant neap moon.



Rinrawros Point, Aranmore

Rathlin O'Birne light appeared where it was expected and slowly trailed astern as Rinrowras light on Aranmore appeared ahead. It seemed these lights were there for our sole use. Nothing else was seen at sea.



Aranmore

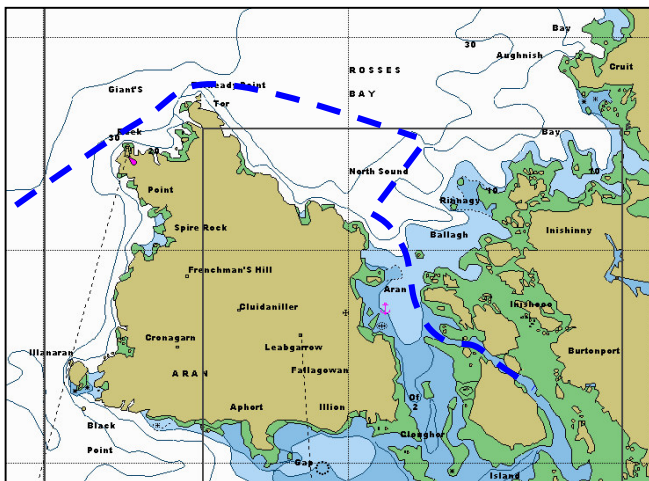


Rutland Channel

Rounding the north side of Aranmore at about 0700 required a reef in main and genoa as the wind freshened slightly for the beat in to the narrow channel past Inishcoo to Rutland Island where we managed to find a clear sandy bottom to anchor just at the end of the dredged channel to Burtonport. It had probably been one of the most pleasant night passages we had ever had. It was certainly a relief to be sailing downwind, and to be free

of perpetual Atlantic swell.

The area reminded us both of Ploumanach in Brittany. Quite different to anything else we had seen in Ireland. Clearly the whole area is a holiday centre with holiday homes on every islet and rock, many with private quays or slips. Sadly this meant there was



Inishcoo and Rutland Channel

considerable traffic from ribs and jetskis, as well as the regular ferries to Aranmore and some fishing boat movement.

We were content to catch up on sleep, then sit in the sun and watch the local activity. I took the dinghy into Burtonport.



Ariadne in Rutland Channel

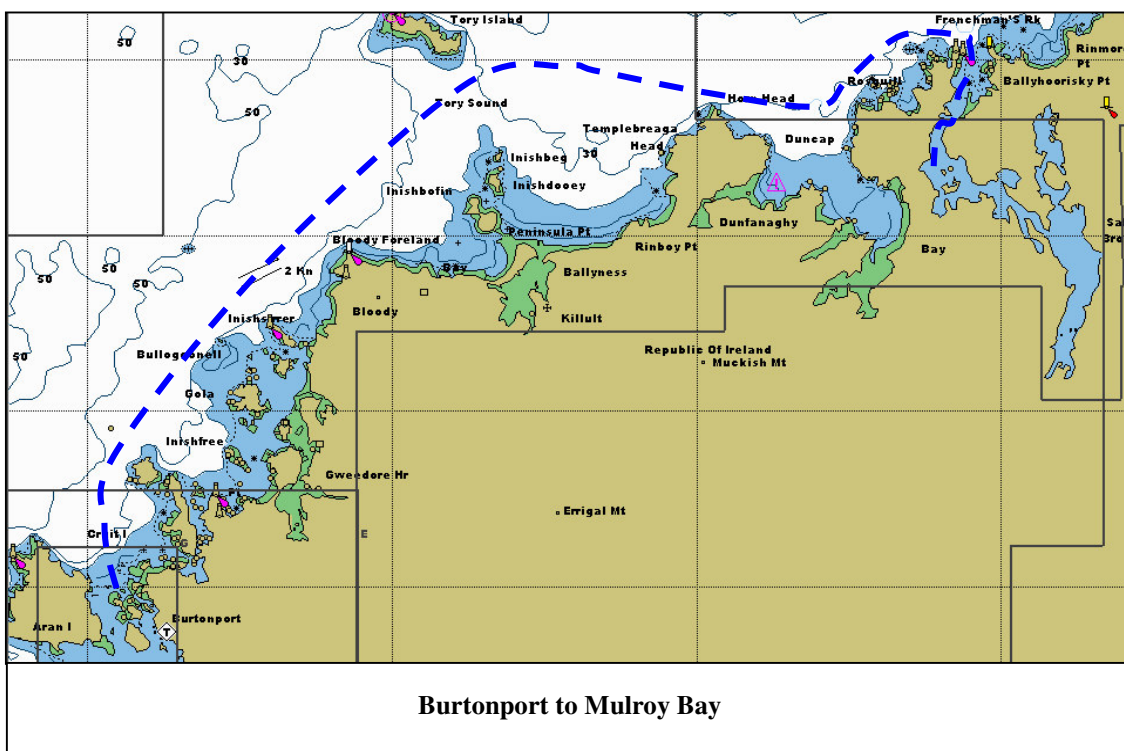


Burtonport

We were in urgent need of some stores, but it was a Sunday. I located the supermarket and decided that the quay was too congested to come alongside for water, which meant a using the water carriers.



21st July: Burtonport to Fanny's Bay, Mulroy



Inishcoo Channel

Once back on board, Dairne stowed the stores, and I emptied the carriers into water and diesel tanks, then deflated the dinghy.



Tory Island

The forecast was for moderate W-SW winds, an opportunity not to be missed. A rapid foray ashore to the supermarket (where the sack barrow was invaluable), another load of water carriers, 5 gallons of diesel, and the dinghy was full!



Bloody Foreland

It was nearly 1100 before we got away, motoring down the narrow channel. Once full sail was made, we bowled along on a broad reach and

occasional sunshine until Bloody Foreland was reached. For a promontory with such a fierce name, it was an innocuous looking, low lying affair.



Once level with the eastern end of Tory Island, we gybed and put in the pole. All afternoon we were watching out for drift nets. Each one meant rolling the genoa, starting the engine and motoring round the end of the net guided by the fishing boat. Usually this worked well, but as we approached the second net, the fishing boat was working the gear and did not alert us. We sailed into the net and stopped. Sail was lowered, and we realised the net was caught round the toe of the keel. It did not look too bad, but I was not tempted to start the engine. The fishing boat came down to us and I threw him a line. A gentle pull on our stern and we were free, having passed over the net, and then we were on our way again.



Horn Head

By 1700 we were approaching Horn Head on the edge of Sheep Haven, and by 1800 we were turning into Mulroy Bay. The interest here is that the charts are wrong! The entrance is quite different, and you just have to trust the ICC directions! It worked out well as the tide was low and we could see the rocks in the middle of the bay that mark the turning point. After that it was a gentle motor up though the first narrows, in pouring rain, finally anchoring at Fanny's Bay at 1900hrs.

This was a comfortable anchorage, even when it blew hard during the night. We had not noticed such a blow being mentioned in the forecasts.

22nd July: Exploring Mulroy

We thought the weather was going to blow hard from the SE at the end of the day. This would have given us a long beat into Coleraine if we attempted to go round Malin Head. On that basis we decided to explore Mulroy Bay.



Fanny's Bay, Mulroy

Mulroy Bay is a bit like the Norfolk Broads. Large lakes, mainly very shallow, connected by narrows. We quickly discovered that the large scale layers of the C-Map cartridge were completely inaccurate, and we already knew that the charts were wrong in the approaches. At 1400, two hours and a half before high water at the third narrows we set off under power. It took a while to find a deep path from our anchorage across to the next bend, but after that it was fairly easy going to the second narrows, where we found depths far less than expected. After the second narrows we found the anchorage full of fish farm and not as well sheltered from the southerly winds. We motored a little way towards the third narrows but with the



prospect of strong winds and dropping tide for our return the next day, we decided this was all getting too difficult. If we got into difficulties, there were no other boats around to help. We gave up, bottled out and returned to our anchorage.

The evening saw light winds, dropping to nothing. We could have gone round Malin Head after all. Now we were stuck with the possibility of hard weather for a day or two. I rang the number given by ICC for a contact in Lough Swilly. He put me on to Angela Crerand who runs the pontoon. She said there was space, but that if it blew very hard from south, then we might be better in Macamish Bay. This confirmed my thoughts. We would wait and see what the weather brought the following day. If possible, we would move on to Lough Swilly, it being unlikely the weather would allow a comfortable passage round Malin Head.

Catering for the Back of Beyond

The last time we found a fairly good supermarket was Dingle but even so it did not have the range that we are used to in Sainsburys or Tesco.

Before we left in May we had stocked up with tins of steak, mince, Fray Bentos steak pies (thanks to Mike Thoyts suggestion), corned beef for corned beef hash and sandwiches, tuna, and a few tins of curries, chilli, etc. We have a few tins of potatoes and peas although we're not keen on tinned vegetables, fresh vegetables can be hard to find. However we brought lots of tinned tomatoes, good in any pasta dishes. We also have a few tins of custard and rice pudding (comfort eating!).

Although in the past we have not used a lot of pasta we also stocked up on spaghetti, lasagne etc and rice, all of which we have already had to replenish. It all depends on the weather!

Eggs and bacon are a must for obvious reasons and those bacon sarnies. Sainsbury's Bacon Brunches are a good standby for any light meal so we bought up their stock.

We also stocked up on long-life milk and orange, not to mention the wine, which is expensive in Ireland, whisky, gin, etc.

Then there was the perishable food which all lasted far longer than expected. Maybe we can put that down to the weather too. The most surprising was the Sainsburys long life bread that should last a whole week. We opened the last loaf this week and it was still good after two months although once opened only lasted three days.

Needless to say we have a goody cupboard, which we tend to resort to more in these climes than in the south of England or France.

I did the usual cooking before we left, shepherds pie, lasagne, stew and a couple of cut-and-come again cakes, all of which have long since disappeared. I have cooked shepherds pies and lasagnes since, when able to buy mince, the lasagnes lasting two days. These can also be made with tinned mince but as yet there hasn't been the necessity. When available, Irish minced beef is of high quality.



One of the delights of Ireland is the bread. We have had some really good rolls, and the soda bread is something quite unique. One speciality has been the brack, a kind of fruit bread. We have also had fruity soda bread.

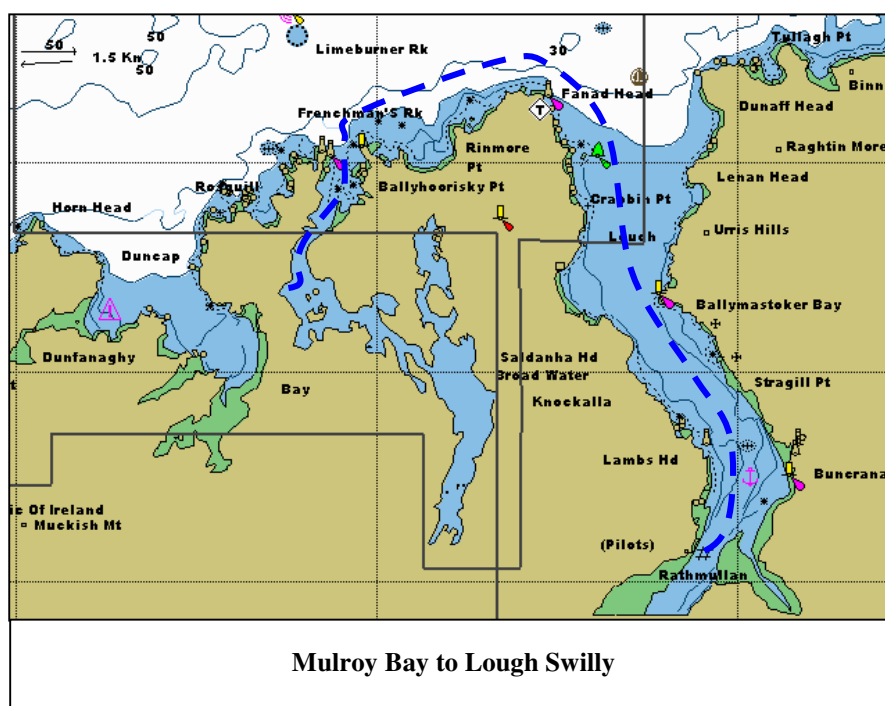
We have found that the vegetables bought in Ireland have not lasted very well at all, and of late have been few and far between. Even potatoes have gone bad. We realise how lucky we are in the south of England with quality and choice. We have managed to buy some prepared frozen meat, sausages and the odd very good pizza lately but no fresh meat since Dingle, three weeks ago.

The local shops in the small towns of Ireland carry a range of useful bits and pieces, but things like cooked meats, other than sliced ham, or such things as chops, steak, or even minced beef can be hard to find. Every now and again one finds a local butcher. This is pure heaven!

When we are passage making we find a certain amount of food preparation makes life a lot easier. If it is just a day sail then sandwiches are sufficient, maybe with a cup-a-soup. If we are doing an overnight then we also make a tin of curry or chilli and some rice easily accessible, so all that has to be done is throw them into a couple of pans, and is easily eaten out of our new pasta bowls, a birthday present from John and Mary.

Although we seem to be in the back of beyond as far as provisioning goes we still seem to be having a varied and fairly well balanced diet.

24th July: Mulroy Bay to Lough Swilly



In the pilot books, Mulroy Bay looks the more interesting, so our plan had been to give Lough Swilly a miss. How wrong can one be! In fact, exploring Mulroy in a Rustler is a bit like taking your ocean greyhound on the Norfolk Broads, whereas



Lough Swilly is deep, and the character of the shoreline is different in very direction one looks.

Our visit to Lough Swilly was dictated by the weather. We had been held up in Mulroy, and were not sure of a weather window to round Malin Head. By going round to Swilly we would see something new (instead of just sitting around in Mulroy), and knock 10 miles off the journey round Malin Head.

We took the last of the ebb down Mulroy (which meant an early 0615 start), so the obstacles were all visible. The sea passage between Mulroy and Swilly was a lumpy run, which we tackled in two broad reaches, passing close to Fanad Head at 0820.



Fanad Head

For an hour or so we had a pleasant close hauled sail up Swilly, but then the wind died so we motored for a while, but as we came up to Macamish Bay, it filled in again, and we had a really enjoyable beat up the Lough to Rathmullen where we made fast to the pontoon at 1125. This was the first time we had been moored alongside since Dingle.



Rathmullen

I went on an exploratory walk, and found a supermarket (for bread, booze and some vegetables). There was even a butcher, where I found some really good chops, steak and mince. The pub even sold Calor gas, which we needed.

Rathmullen is a surprisingly good place for restocking, and the facilities are better than the pilot book suggests, there being a good hose at the head of the pontoon. There is talk of building a 100 berth marina there.

After a pub lunch, we set off under main only and ran back to Macamish. Rathmullen would not be comfortable with much south in the wind, as was forecast, whereas Macamish is sheltered from all usual directions.



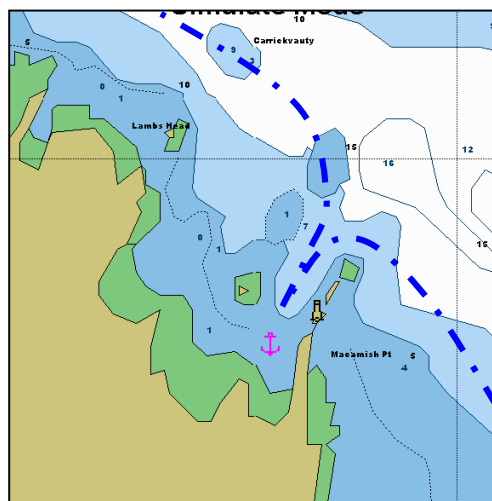
Macamish



Retarrier at Macamish

The forecast and tides for the next day suggested to me a mid morning departure with a view to going round Malin Head to either Coleraine or Portrush. I sent a text message to Penny, my sister (who is a ‘weather tart’ for BBC Radio Solent) stating that “we need 48 hrs of settled weather to round Malin Head. Please Arrange”.

It was raining when we anchored there, so we did not notice that in the other half of the bay *Retarrier* had picked up a buoy. We tried calling them on VHF and phone, but without success. We resolved to go over to them in the morning to see what their plans were.



Macamish

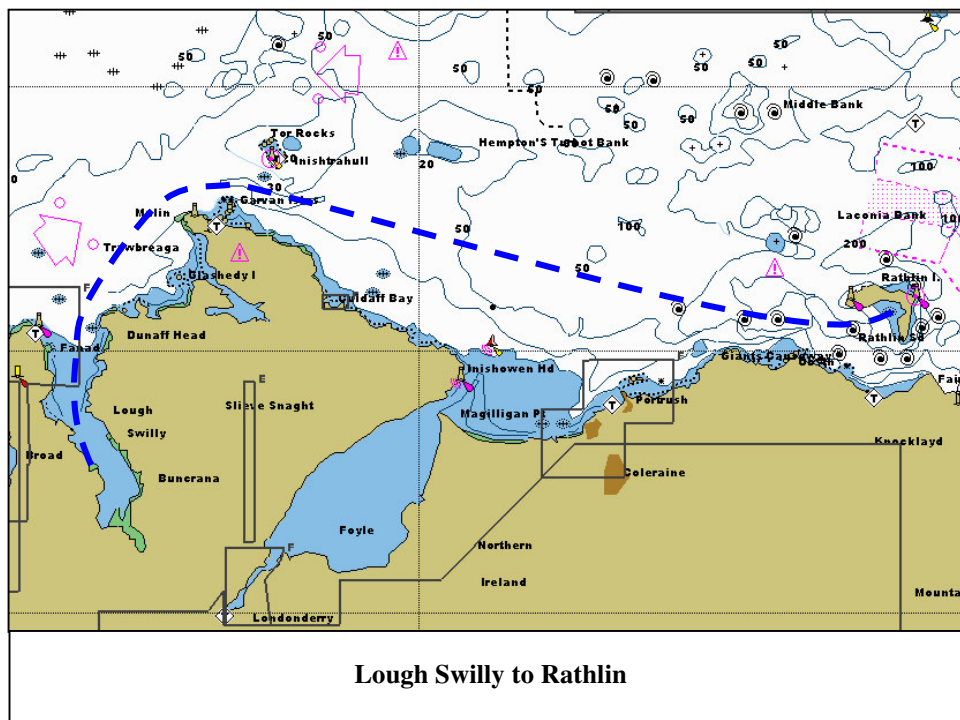
25th July: Macamish to Rathlin Island



Macamish

I lay in my bunk for nearly an hour after the 0530 shipping forecast had indicated that going round Malin Head was feasible. It seemed Penny had done her stuff. When I finally crawled out, I noticed that *Retarrier* had already departed. He had read the signs better than I had, and was taking the last of the morning tide round Malin Head.

It was a beautiful morning, and I reckoned we might just get to Malin Head at slack water, so we rushed about and got under way at 0630. The engine was needed to maintain speed until we were well past Dunaff Head at 0815. After that, it was a fast reach to Malin Head. We had failed to beat the tide, but with a freshening NW wind, and because the tides were neap, we were able to push slowly past the headland, inside Inishturk Island, (“round the rugged rocks”) and settle into a long run.



With the early start and settled conditions we aimed to make Ballycastle near Rathlin Sound.



Malin Head

The jib was poled out, and the sun shone. A glorious day running in a slight sea at 5-6kts, easily beating the 0.5 – 1 kt adverse tide (once clear of Malin Head and Inishturk where the tides varied from 1- 2.5 kts adverse).

Until late afternoon this pleasant sailing continued, passing the imposing entrance to Lough Foyle (where we lowered our Irish courtesy flag as were now in Northern Ireland).

We could now see Islay away to the north, and the Mull of Kintyre far to the east.

By about 1600, the wind had faded, and the engine went on. We now had an opportunity to visit Rathlin Island for the night, and this we decided to do, entering the tiny harbour in Church Bay at 1805, where we rafted against the French yacht *Siwa*. We had logged 63.7 miles, and got past this potentially difficult stretch of coast in one hop. Very pleasing!



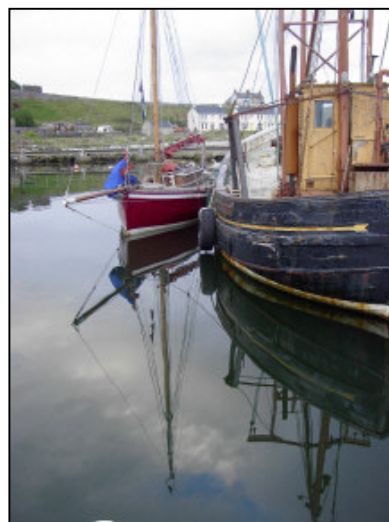
Lough Foyle



Ariadne and Siwa at Rathlin

including the centreboard which intruded very little into the accommodation; the almost pilot house effect of the coach roof, and the refrigeration system. Bernard uses a mechanical compressor to chill water and make ice when the engine is running, and he claims that this will keep the fridge cold for 3 weeks, because he has concentrated on effective insulation. In many other ways, he has also minimised power usage. Considering that they had sailed in the Med for a season with their family, been to Spain several times, and are based in Lorient and cruise a full 8 weeks every year, this sounded to me like the voice of genuine experience.

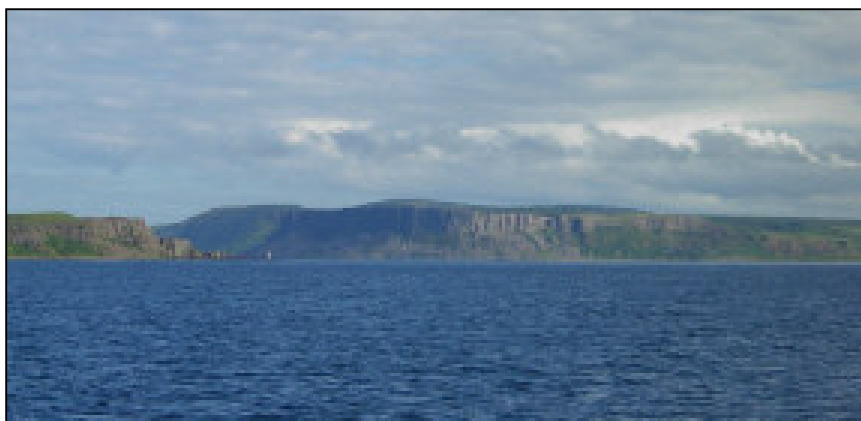
During the evening we strolled on the quay and chatted to two gaffers who were on a short cruise out of Bangor, which was to be our next destination. We were invited aboard *Siwa* by Anne and Bernard. She is a fascinating vessel which Bernard had built from scratch, taking a year over the aluminium hull, and 3 years to fit out. There were many interesting features,



One of the gaffers at Rathlin

26th July: Rathlin Island to Bangor.

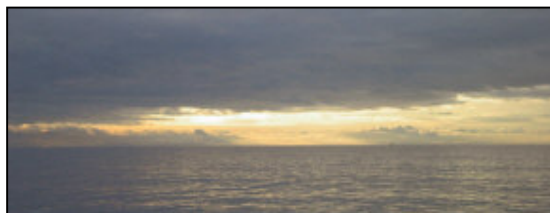
The gaffers we had spoken to clearly had enormous respect for Rathlin Sound and were to leave at 0400 the next morning. On the basis that local experience is worth a lot, we were away by 0445 when it was just fully light. *Siwa* would follow about an hour later, having changed their plans in the light of the local advice.



Rathlin Sound and Fair Head

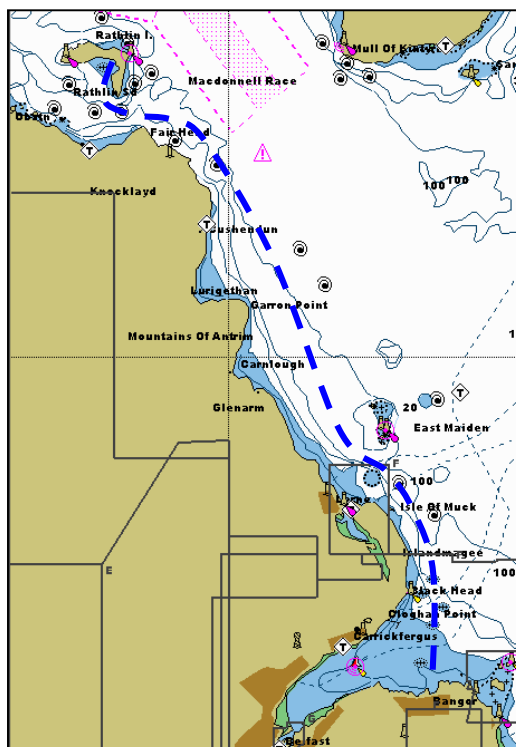


In many ways, Rathlin Sound is like the Needles Channel. It is wider, but bounded by cliffs on both sides. It is probably longer and there is no 'North Channel' option. If docile, it is easy, but in adverse conditions can clearly be a very dangerous place.



Sultry weather rounding Fair Head

After leaving the snug little harbour, one is immediately swept up by the tide and swished into Rathlin Sound. It was very still, and we were motoring at 5.5 kts, but our ground speed was nearly always more than 8 knots, and twice touched 10 kts as we swept past Fair Head and on down the coast. This strong current stayed with us for nearly an hour, and then gently dropped until we had only 1 knot of favourable tide at the Maidens, the tide almost being slack as we passed Muck Island.



Rathlin Island to Bangor 0



Muck Island

Attempts to sail failed, so we motored all the way into Bangor, arriving at 1120. And who should be on the next berth but *Vivage*?! They had left Helford several days before us, but they too had found the weather on the west coast tough going. Moreover, their antifouling was designed for brackish water and they had now collected a 2" beard of weed which they reckoned was costing 1.5kts. Their plan was to lift out on the Monday, scrub and antifoul.

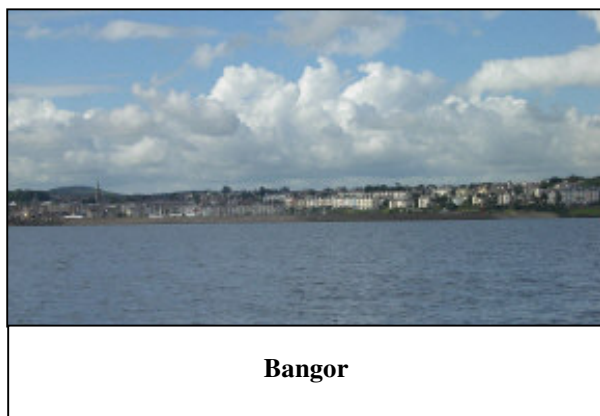
Our early arrival gave us a choice. It was a Saturday afternoon, so if we did not get everything done we would be stopped for a further two days (listening to the forecast). On the other hand, if we rushed about getting shopping, haircuts, and doing the washing, we would be free to go on to Strangford the next day. As there seemed to be some bad weather on the way after that, we decided to try and get everything done. It was a rush and a struggle, but we just about made it before Anne and Bernard from *Siwa* came on board for a sociable evening.

Somewhat exhausted, we turned in having replenished fuel and water, and restocked with many essentials.



27th July: Bangor to Strangford Lough

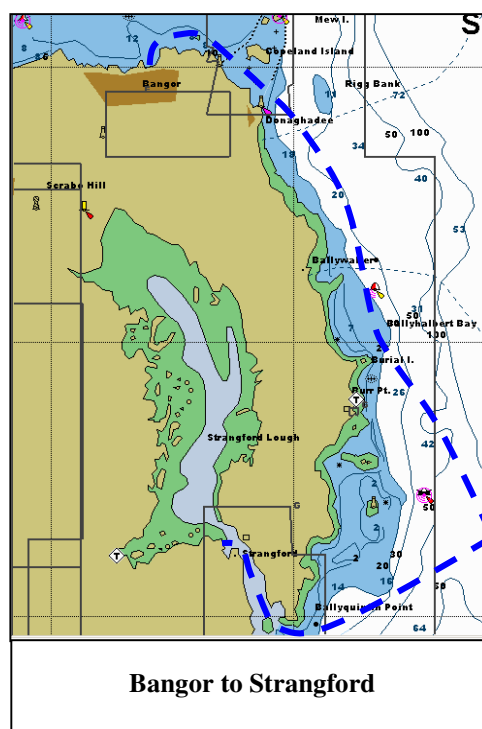
The limiting factor at Strangford is the fierce tide in the entrance. For us, it did not look convenient, turning to run into the Lough at 2000, which was a bit late. So we planned to go down the coast as far as Portavogie, a small fishing harbour.



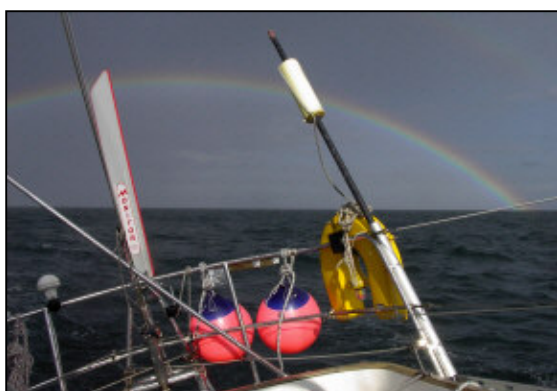
Bangor

It was a gentle run to the Donaghadee channel inside the Copeland Islands. There was a strong adverse current, which required judicious use of the engine. Once through, however, it was a pleasant reach down the coast. By about 1300, we were coming up to Burial Island, the easternmost point of Ireland. The wind fell light, and we were motoring. Dairne suggested that this would be a good time to have lunch. Such an utterance has the same potency as saying “It’s looking brighter up ahead” after which it always rains. On this occasion the wind backed, and freshened, and suddenly we were beating in 16kts apparent wind.

Having availed ourselves of the magnificent showers at the marina, we were away by 0955. No one was astir on *Vivage* or *Siwa*. We knew *Vivage* was staying put, but we thought *Siwa* could join us at Portavogie.



Bangor to Strangford



Heavy showers make rainbows!

Moreover, the forecast indicated strong SE winds for the next day, making exit from Portavogie unattractive. We decided to go on to Strangford. We could see what we thought was *Siwa* some way behind us. Attempts to contact them by VHF failed, but we reckoned that with all their experience they would sort things out anyway. It was a long, hard F4/5 beat, with reefs going in and out. At times we had two reefs in main, and a well-rolled jib. Large rain showers were passing, and precautionary reefs were taken in as they approached, but there

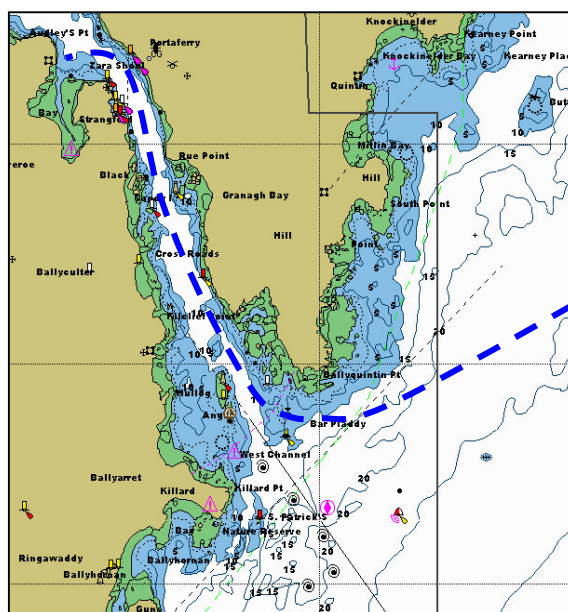
was only a slight increase to about 23kts in most cases, and once the rain had passed we went back to only one reef. Thank goodness for single line reefing!



As the tide was adverse, the sea never became severe, but it was uncomfortable. Dairne had a long visit to the loo that did not help, and she eventually turned in with a quilt. Fortunately, *Ariadne* is set up to sail single handed, so it did not create any problems.

To keep clear of all hazards, we took a long seaward tack. Then the wind backed a little, so we stood inshore to arrive at Ballyquintin Point on the entrance to Lough Strangford at 1700. We could now free sheets, and with some judicious steering up the edge of the tidal race we got into the smoother water inside the entrance without mishap and blasted our way over 2-3kts adverse tide on a comfortable broad reach, picking up a buoy in Audleys Roads at 1915.

On an adjacent buoy was a Starlight 35 called *Ariadne*. We shouted 'snap', and were told that the boat that owned the mooring we had picked up was at Ringhaddy, so we were safe to stay. They were going back to Whiterock.



Strangford narrows



Siwa at Audleys Roads

An hour later, *Siwa* arrived and picked up an adjacent buoy.



Audley's Roads



28th July: Audleys Roads to Whiterock

It was blowing hard from the south, as expected. *Siwa* set off early “to explore the low” they called out, not realising the ‘lough’ and ‘loch’ have the same pronunciation! We eventually grasped what they were saying.



Tidal swirls in Strangford Narrows

In more leisurely fashion, we set off after breakfast, reaching under genoa round the point. We rolled the sail and motored up to Quoile, which was incredibly sheltered, but we wanted to visit Strangford Lough YC where we had been so well received two years earlier.

Turning round, we set the genoa again, worked our way out to the main area of the Lough and ran up towards Whiterock. We had more than 20 kts apparent wind, touching 6 kts under genoa only. We rounded up into

Whiterock to find *Siwa* already moored on a buoy, with an empty mooring just ahead which we picked up.

As luck would have it, the wind was in the only direction (other than north east) to which the Whiterock moorings were exposed, with a direct fetch between the islands. We spent a relatively uncomfortable afternoon bouncing on the mooring until the wind veered and we started to get protection from the islands. The weather was so miserable, no attempt was made to go ashore.



Whiterock

29th – 30th July: Whiterock

The weather remained bad, so we decided on a lay day. I went ashore to make contact with the yacht club. They gave me a key, and the run of the place as they had done before. Don, the boatman, confirmed that the moorings we were using were both adequate and not required immediately.



Strangford Lough YC



Anne and Bernard from *Siwa* joined us for coffee after a trip ashore, then we went for an excellent lunch at Daft Eddys on Sketrick Island. We managed to avoid the worst of the rain.



Daft Eddy's



River Class

Although the wind was northwesterly and it was sunny the next day, we decided to stay put, partly because we wanted to thank the club for its hospitality when the bar was opened that evening after their midweek racing, and partly because I was concerned about the long plug up Carlingford Lough against a strong NW wind – but that was more of an excuse. *Siwa* left for the Isle of Man, where they could easily

take the ground in Peel with their lifting keel.

That evening, after watching the local River and Glen class boats racing we went to the club. These boats were designed by Alfred Mylne. The River class, about a dozen boats, were mostly built in 1921 with pitch pine planking, and are still in excellent condition. The Glens are 'only' about 50 years old, and still going well.

While in the Club, the owner of the other *Ariadne* found us, and we spent a long time comparing notes. He had had a North Sea 24, a forerunner of the Rustler, and had



Glen Class



Ringhaddy

nearly gone for a Rustler when he finally decided to get the Starlight. He was obviously a significant local yachtsman and had been consulted about revisions of the Strangford chart.



He told us of the leading lines for using the west channel in the entrance, something others later told us not to even attempt!

31st July: Strangford to Quoile

We knew we would have to move on soon, and needed a change of scene. So, even though it was blowing hard, we decided to move to Quoile, where we would get better shelter from the forecast southerly blow. At 1330, just before high tide we set off, motoring into a strong and gusty wind. For protection, we chose the route inside the islands, past Ringhaddy.

Just as we were leaving Ringhaddy sound, an engine alarm screeched out. A quick check showed we had shed the alternator belt. We were in a reasonably protected spot, and not too deep, so we anchored. It only took 15 minutes to fit the spare alternator belt, and we were on our way again

By 1600, we were alongside the Quoile pontoon where club members made us welcome. It is a really delightful spot, and very well protected from everything except N through NE winds.

Just after arriving, a large French cutter arrived. *Lady Maud* was built in Hamble in 1907, and looked not unlike *Nepenthe* in hull shape, but her traditional gaff cutter rig made her an impressive sight. The owner had just had her remasted and the spars were gleaming with new varnish. She was on her return journey from Scotland, where they had had difficult weather, but to which they want to return. We know that feeling.



Quoile YC



Quoile – Ariadne and Lady Maud

One of the locals was muttering dire warnings about the narrows, so we decided to delay our planned time of departure the following morning until a bit later so we did not get sluiced out too fast by the tide. As we would be going at low water, the option of using the west channel at the end of Strangford narrows was not available to us.



1st August: Quoile to Ardglass



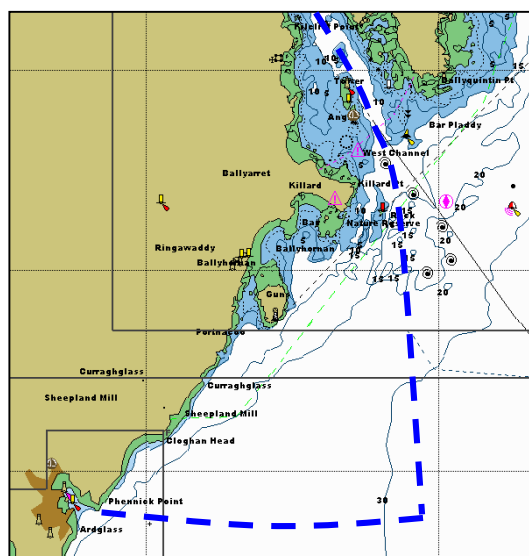
Motoring clear of Quoile

Eventually we were clear, and settled into a gentle beat. There was no chance of catching the tide at Carlingford, so we had only a short passage to Ardglass, a small fishing port with a marina built among the boulders. It was quite a sight at low water!



Angus Rock, Strangford Narrows

Our departure from Quoile at 0910 was in sunshine and a gentle SW breeze, a complete contrast to the previous few days. *Lady Maud*, the French gaffer, followed closely behind. The temptation to sail was too strong, so we were late at the narrows, and ended up punching our way out against a 4 kt tide under full sail and engine going flat out.



Strangford to Ardglass



Lady Maud



2nd August: Ardglass to Carlingford Lough



Ardglass

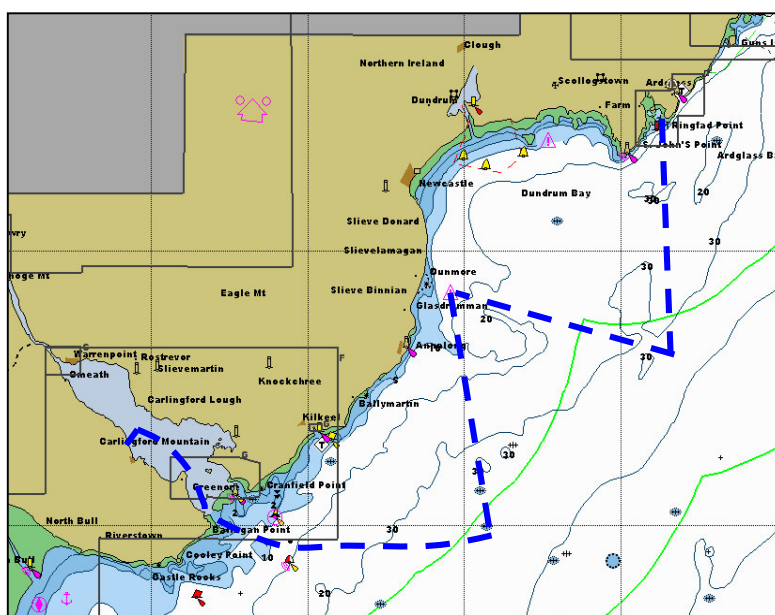
We were away at 0715 in order to make best use of the tide, as it was likely to be a beat. We motored clear of Ardglass and settled down to a long slog in a lumpy sea. Quickly, we had one reef in both genoa and main. Dairne was not feeling too comfortable, so I tacked inshore to seek flatter water. The risk was that the Mountains of Mourne would accelerate the wind, and indeed it seemed that to some extent they did.

We were down to 2 reefs in the main for a while.

Worse, there appeared to be an inshore eddy giving us adverse tide when we were expecting favourable tide. The water was a bit flatter, but not much. The tack angles on the plotter were dreadful!



Ardglass at low tide



Ardglass to Carlingford Lough



Cormorant laughing at our tactics

After being directed to a berth in the marina by VHF, we were delighted and surprised to find *Vivage* with Carla and Gerrard on the next berth. They had successfully completed their scrub and antifouling operation at Bangor, and were now back up to speed. Over the next two evenings we got together for drinks, and were delighted to be given a CD made by the jazz band Gerrard runs. He plays banjo, while Carla wrestles with a double bass!

As we approached the layline for Carlingford, the wind shifted. We tacked immediately, but had overstood, so eased sheets a little. Then the wind faded altogether and we had to motor the last few miles, arriving just after high water. There was a little adverse tide, but we had made it just in time before the ebb spate got going.

Yes it was one of those days when the tactical decisions did not go right!



Mountains of Mourne

3rd August: Carlingford Lough.



Carlingford Mountain

We opted to have a lay day in Carlingford. In part this was just to have a rest after a hectic few days, and partly because I was concerned about a leak from the engine, which I feared might be gearbox fluid. The marina manager, who is quite a character, managed to find a marine engineer (it was a Bank Holiday!) who looked at it and concluded that it was in fact diesel weeping from the tank and running down a hose into the drip tray. This was good for the peace of mind, especially as the weather was settling down at last and looked very much as though we

would need to be motoring quite a bit.

We walked into Carlingford Village, which is quite picturesque, with bits of ancient castle scattered among the buildings.



Carlingford Marina

During the late afternoon, the engine oil was changed – we had remembered to bring an extra oil filter with us!



Carlingford Village

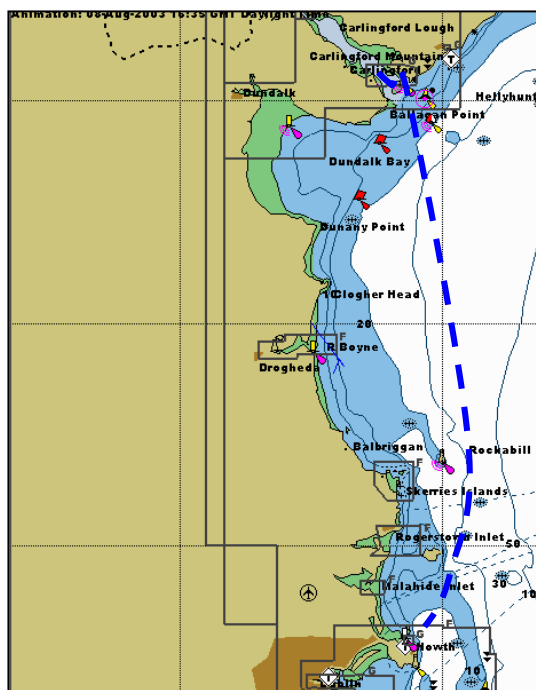
4th August: Carlingford to Howth

Light easterlies were forecast. It is a long way to Howth, so we left early to get the best of the ebb out of Carlingford and to give maximum time to use the south going tide outside.

Perversely, *Ariadne* decided she would leave the marina stern first. Long keel boats have a will of their own. But with my larger rudder, steering was at least possible, if not easy!



Sluicing tide at Carlingford



Carlingford To Howth

The tide swept us down Carlingford at gathering speed. Eventually we were doing more than 8kts over the ground as we passed the lighthouse. Even on a still day, the water outside the entrance was broken, sending sheets of spray skywards from the bows as we motored out.

It was not till 1130 that we could shut down the engine with enough wind to sail. Up went the cursing chute, and we had one of the nicest days sailing that we can remember. There was a lot of haze, so we did not see much of the coast, which was a



pity. But the milestones were two islands, Rockabill and Lambay Island. We carried the 'chute until about 1700 when we turned in behind Ireland's Eye and into Howth. We had also caught 6 mackerel on the way.



Rockabill

In these light winds, the autopilot on the Monitor is the best way to steer as you can maintain a course despite a fitful breeze. Mostly the breeze was about 9kts at 60°, occasionally puffing up to 12 kts. Our speed was above 5kts much of the time, occasionally touching 6 kts. The sun shone, the sea was smooth.



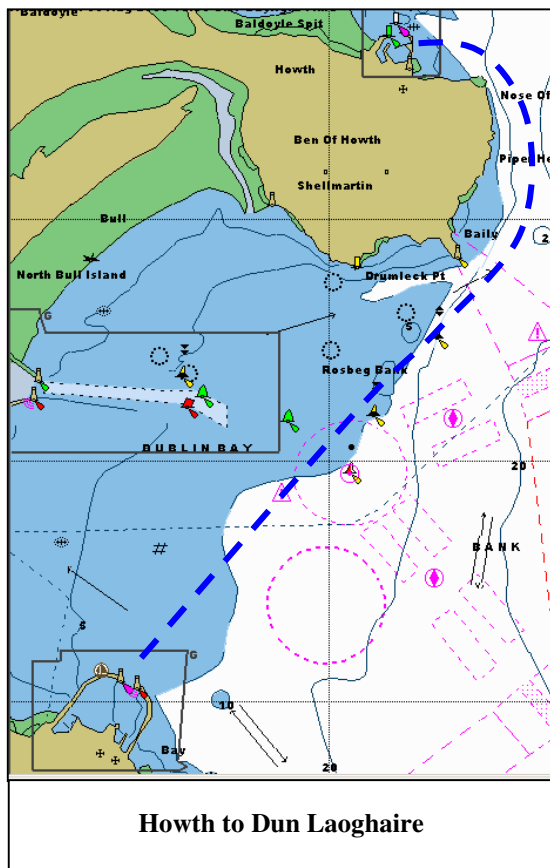
Lambay Island



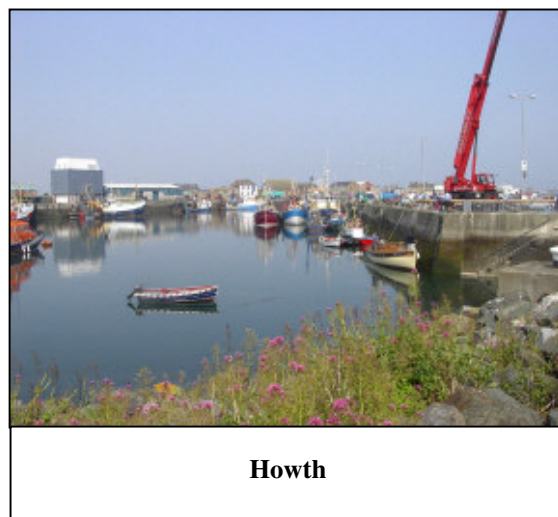


Inevitably, it was baked mackerel for supper, and four were marinated for future use. Carla and Gerrard, who were already in Howth, sunbathing, declined to participate in the mackerel!

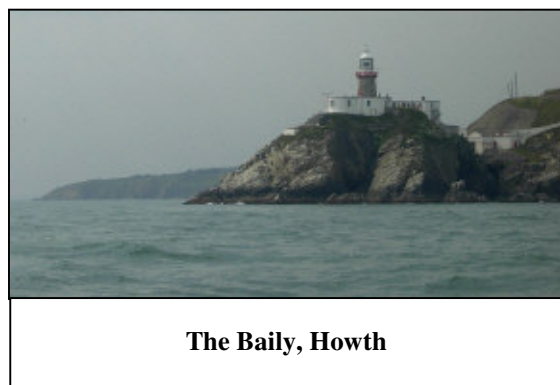
5th August: Howth to Dun Laoghaire



Howth had been given a big build up by an Irish acquaintance who used to travel on the London train. It certainly looked attractive as we approached. Frankly it was a disappointment, being a little bit run down, although the fish dock was colourful. Possibly this was because the fishing boats were in port, probably because they had run out fishing quota!



I walked up to the shops, and managed to find internet access at the library for the first time for many days. I had over 700 junk messages, and 400 to go through! Most were also junk.



We decided to cross Dublin Bay to Dun Laoghaire with the intention of going from there into Dublin for a day ashore. It was a gentle drift, but even with our experience of commercial shipping in Southampton, the approach of the HSS fast cat caused a bit of alarm because her route into Dun Laoghaire was not obvious. There seems to be a kind of circulatory system in use.

Once into the new marina, we found a first class facility, very large, and very modern.

During the evening, thunder clouds built up, and we heard the odd rumble of thunder. We later learned that in Northern Ireland, storms had cut electricity from 20,000 houses. We were lucky.



6th August, Dublin

With the prospect of poor visibility and little wind, this was a good day for a run ashore. The railway station is just outside the marina, and heavily subsidised. It is a very easy way to see Dublin. Once in the City, we boarded a hop on hop off tour bus and 'did the circuit'. Eventually we got off at Trinity College where we saw the famous Book of Kells and managed to get a couple of books on Irish history. The Book of Kells is a mediaeval illuminated manuscript. Incredibly beautiful, and well displayed.



Trinity College, Dublin

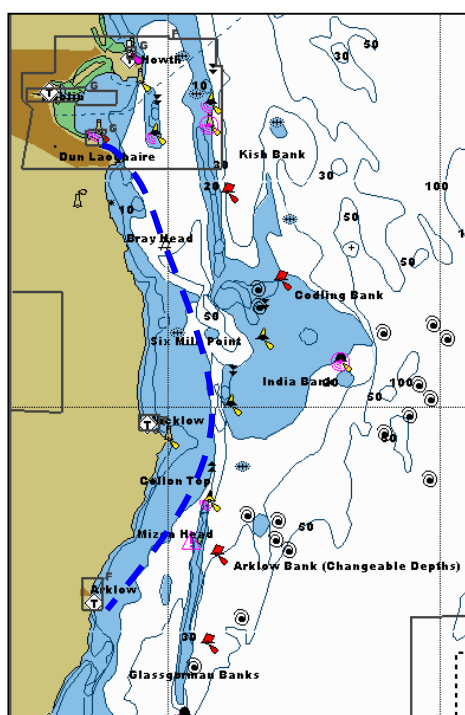
Dairne had not seen Dublin before and was impressed by the Georgian architecture, and by Trinity College. The latter is an entire University Campus in the city centre.

Dublin seemed to be full of Spanish tourists – we were next to Spanish groups on the bus and in the pub where we had lunch.

Back at the marina, Dairne had had enough, but I spent a pleasant hour at the Royal Irish Yacht Club, an imposing building. As everywhere,

the visitor was welcomed, and I managed to get some useful advice regarding the offshore banks that litter the coast between Dublin and Carnsore Point.

7th August: Dun Laoghaire to Arklow



Dun Laoghaire to Arklow

This would be a long trip in limited visibility, inside some complex offshore banks. In particular, the Arklow Bank has a reputation for experiencing cross tides. So we left early, at 0640, to try and carry the tide to Arklow.



Dun Laoghaire

We noticed a Rustler 36 that we had not seen before moored in the outer harbour. *Dalua* is an older Rustler, and had clearly been developed for cruising, with a Monitor windvane to which storage 'platforms' had been attached across the stern. She also sported a 'steadying sail' on



a portable mast mounted on the pushpit, probably used mainly to keep the vessel windrode when at anchor. Interesting!



The trip south led close inshore past the ‘stockbroker belt’ of expensive houses along the beach and through the narrow Dalkey Sound where the tide gave us a strong push. There was insufficient wind to sail, so it was motoring in flat water. The course was shaped further offshore so the coast was lost in mist until we passed



Dalkey Sound

Wicklow Head at about 1100. Then we could bear away, take advantage of the light breeze and sail the last 5 miles to Arklow.

Off the entrance a large cable layer was anchored, very close in. We later learned that she was about to lay a new cable out to the Arklow Bank where an offshore wind farm is under development – though there are severe problems with fixing the piling rig because of the shifting sands!

By 1210, we were alongside the pontoon in the river, preferring this to the cramped marina.



Arklow

Arklow is a working port, and the town, while having good basic facilities, is nothing spectacular. In short, Arklow is a useful passage stop, but has nothing more to make it a special place to visit.

8th August: Arklow

The visibility was 200 metres. We stayed put.

But even in such miserable conditions, there are sights to be seen, such as the fog droplets highlighting the cobwebs that some intrepid spider had created on our Monitor!



Arklow



Cobwebs!

It was my birthday. Dairne had managed to hide a bottle of Talisker, so we just had a very relaxed and enjoyable day, including an excellent pub lunch.

I talked to the skipper of a launch providing survey and crew boat services to the Arklow Bank offshore windfarm project. Apparently they had had real trouble. They needed to

dredge the top off the bank to get the piling rig in place. To do this they had engaged a back hoe platform that was supposed to spud into the bank. But the currents were so strong that the sand was being washed away from the legs and the rig was 'walking' down the bank. To add insult to injury, the first piles they drove unexpectedly hit rock. The survey company that had done the original work was recalled. Sounded like litigation to me!

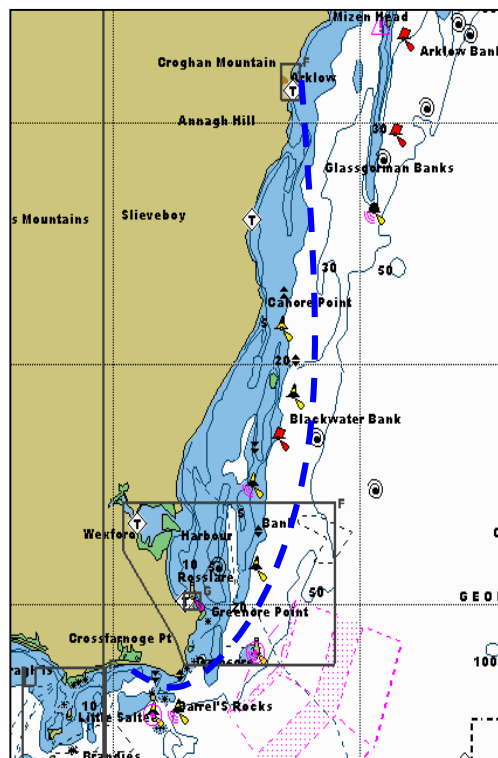
9th August: Arklow to Kilmore Quay

The visibility was better, but not much better. We decided to chance it, partly because the promised weather pattern suggested a good opportunity to cross to the Scillies the following day.



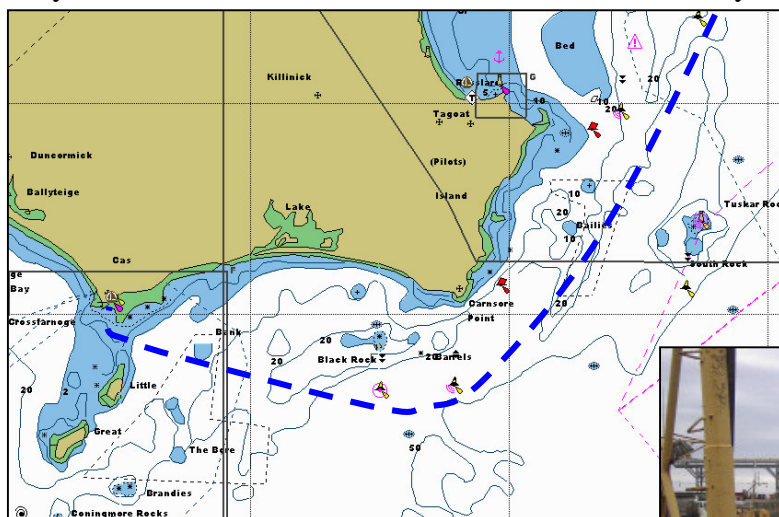
Fog at sea

When we left the harbour the visibility was nearly a mile, but it soon shut down again, and at times was about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, but usually was in the range $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 mile. I passage-planned to pass well south of the Arklow Bank, outside the Blackwater Bank (rather than take the Rusk channel) as it would be easier in poor visibility. We would then cut inshore, well inside Tuskar Rock (giving the option of opting out to Rosslare), over St Patricks Bridge and turning into Kilmore Quay.



Arklow to Kilmore Quay 0

We had to motor all the way, but the plan worked out well, the tide turning against us only after we had rounded Carnsore Point. The visibility lifted a little as we rounded

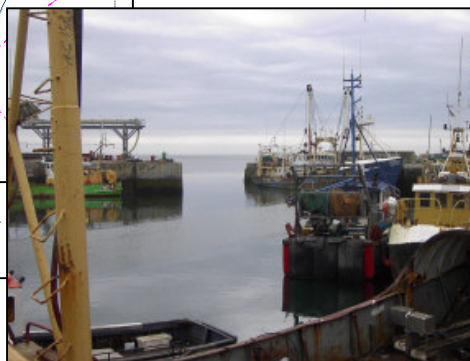


Round Carnsore, inside Tuskar Rock to Kilmore Quay

clear leading marks, and entered the tiny Kilmore Quay harbour, weaving among moored fishing boats into the marina.

Carnsore, where there is now a major wind farm, and we could see the Saltees and identify St Patricks Bridge buoys long before we got there.

We rounded onto the



Kilmore Quay entrance



Kilmore Quay

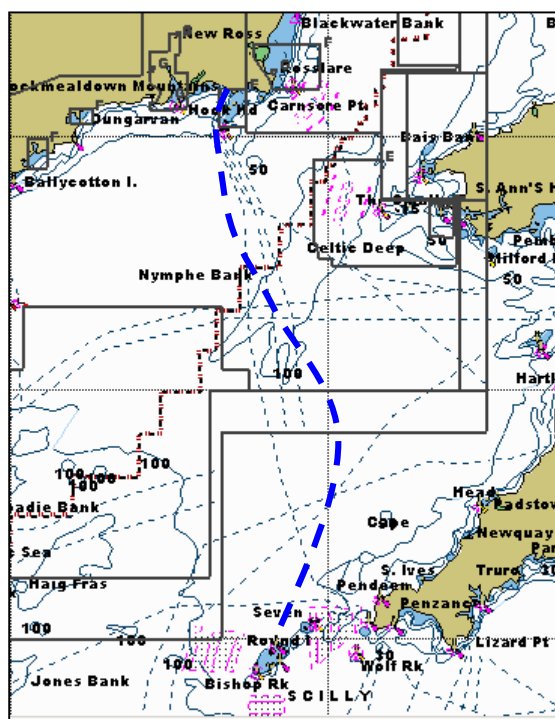
Kilmore Quay is very much a holiday village (as well as being an active fishing port). This was to be our last night in Ireland, so we resolved to find a good fish restaurant, and we succeeded! We had, on the whole, been disappointed by the quality of restaurants as we had gone round Ireland, but Plaiçe Quay was absolutely excellent, and not too expensive either.



Plaiçe Quay restaurant

10th - 11th August: Kilmore Quay to New Grimsby, Scillies

We followed our usual pattern for a 130 mile trip, leaving mid morning at 0930. There was a little breeze, and we reached gently down to the Coningbeg light vessel, getting a good view of the Saltee Islands on the way. As forecast the wind was northerly, but it faded to a point where we motored.



Kilmore Quay to Scillies



Saltee Islands

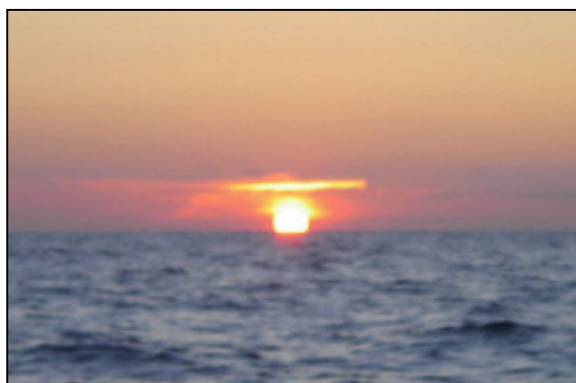
Had the breeze been only 25 degrees different in direction, we could have carried the cursing chute, but it was a dead, dead run. So we motored all day until 2345 when the breeze freshened from the north.



Coningbeg LV - departure point

But the day was not without incident. At 1825 we were entertained for about half an hour by the biggest pod of dolphins we had ever seen – about 20 we think.





Sunset

Then at 2130, a Dunlin landed in the cockpit. We were now 50 miles south of Ireland. The bird was exhausted. Twice it tried to fly off, but returned to cower in the cockpit. At about 0300, we brought it down below to try and warm it up, but sadly it died. It had just run out of fuel.

By 0435 the wind had increased to 23 kts true. We had just left the main up, while we were motoring, and as the wind had increased, we were running under main only. I decided a reef was

needed. With single line reefing this should not be a problem, even on a dead run. But in the darkness, I managed to get one of the biggest riding turns ever on the winch. The only thing to do was start the engine; come head to wind; drop the main and then sort things out. This was where the boom gallows really paid off as everything was steady in what was now quite a rough sea. We reset the genoa and put the boat on windvane steering while I sorted out the tangle. This involved partially dismantling the winch! After that we ran on under genoa alone making better than 5 kts through the water, though we had quite a lot of foul tide hat slowed us to 4.8kts over the ground.



Large waves running up astern



Cromwells Castle, New Grimsby

As daylight arrived I was able to clear away all the ropes, including the foreguy, gybe the genoa and settle down into a fast run to the Scillies. We saw a few Fastnet boats bashing their way outbound, with crews strung along the deck edge. Rather them than me!

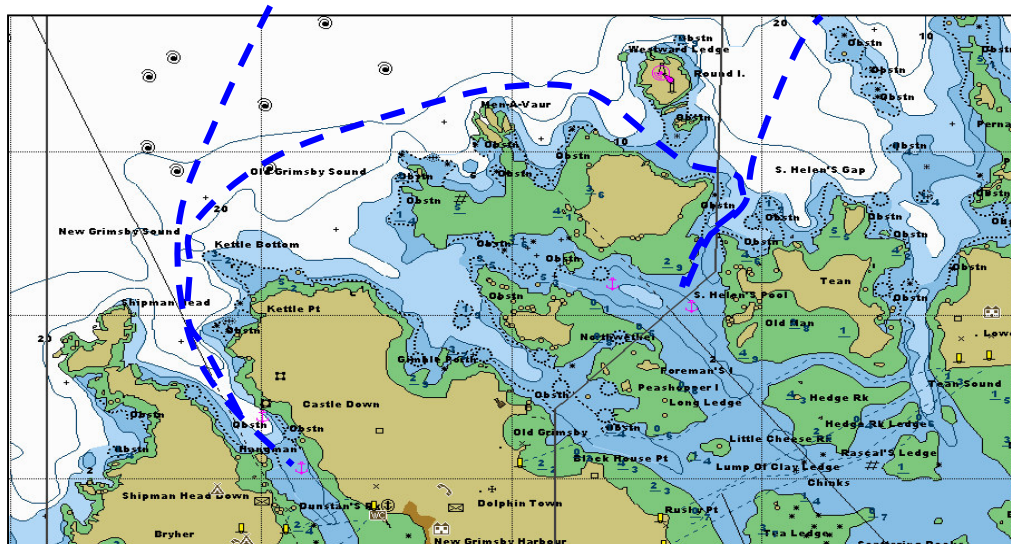
By 1240 we were comfortably on a buoy in New Grimsby, although we did have a bit of trouble in getting a line on to the buoy.

That afternoon we slept, but enjoyed a glorious and peaceful evening in the sunshine in the cockpit. The Scillies were being kind to us.



12th August: New Grimsby to St Helens

After a lazy, sunny morning, we briefly went ashore for some stores and a brief beer in the pub garden. To my amazement, I discovered that there was an internet access at the café next to the pub. After lunch, I went back ashore and tidied up my email. I also got weather files onto a floppy disk, which was useful.



New Grimsby to St Helens Pool

At 1600 we dropped away from the buoy and had a gentle sail round to St Helens Pool, passing through the narrow channel between St Helens and Round Island before making our way into the pool. There we had a peaceful evening and night.



St Helens Pool

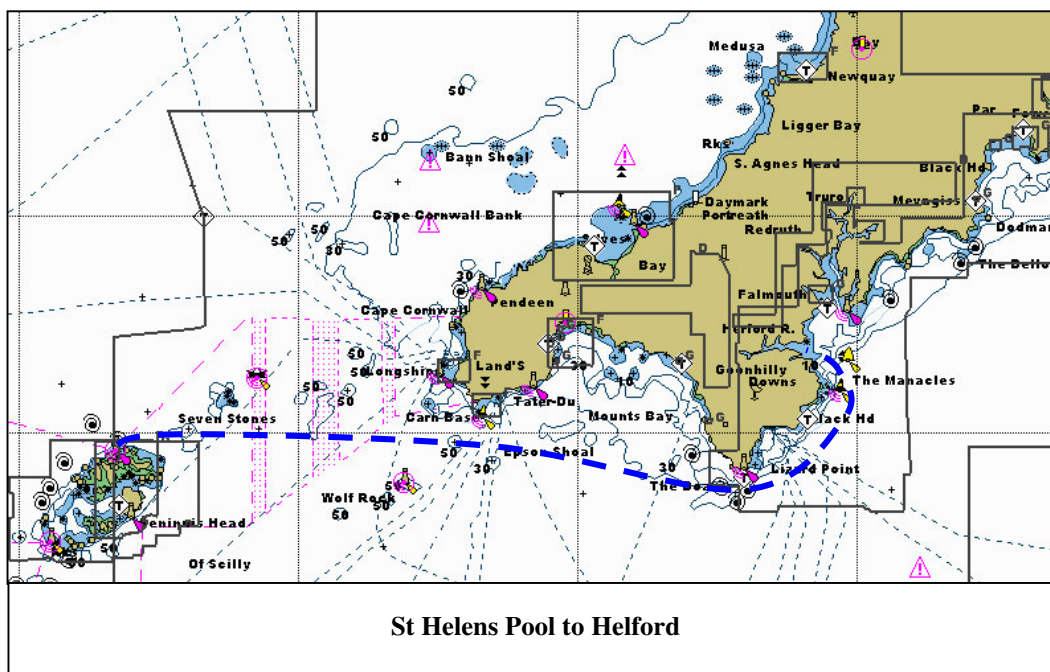


A quiet evening in St Helens Pool

But the forecast for the next few days was for the winds to turn easterly and freshen. Reluctantly we decided that we had to take advantage of the last of the northerlies to get to the mainland the following day.



13th August: St Helens Pool to Helford



We set off with high hopes of a reach in a gentle north westerly wind with a fairly flat sea. It was not to be. Instead we had breeze that was too light to sail, except at times when it blew F3 from the south for a while, or north east, or north. So it was a bit frustrating.



Wolf Rock

We eased past the Wolf Rock (and its attendant lightship!) before the tide turned against us. Then, of course, progress was slow across Mounts Bay. We were again entertained by a pod of about 16 dolphins leaping clear of the water, but they were just too far away to photograph.

By 1700, the tide was turning in our favour, and with the flat water we were able to round the Lizard close to (about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile) before plugging up the coast, past the Manacles to anchor in the Helford above the moorings at 2000.

We were delighted to see *Lutine*, the great classic yawl, on an adjacent mooring looking much loved and immaculate. She really is a beautifully proportioned boat.



Lutine



14th – 18th August: Pottering about Falmouth

We anchored off the town at Falmouth to avoid getting trapped on the marina as the Fal Week yachts came back. After a shopping trip, we used Chris Owen's mooring for a few hours, then went up to have a look at his new factory, but with a dropping tide, we could not stay on his pontoon. Then we saw *Vivage* – yet again – and so went into Falmouth Marina (at Penryn) on an adjacent berth. A long and enjoyable party ensued!



Rustler Factory

The next morning, we visited the Rustler factory. It is a really impressive facility with huge potential. 2 Rustler 42s, 2 Rustler 36s and a Starlight35 were all in build without fully utilising the space.

We had to leave by 1130 as the tide was starting to drop, and made our way over to St Mawes, which promised to be very sheltered in the brisk easterly that was beginning to develop. We stayed there on anchor



St Mawes

for 2 days, spending a very pleasant evening and day with our family friend, Hilda Russell. It was a very pleasant change to spend a day ashore, relaxing in an armchair!

Then back to Helford where we found a buoy, had our annual steak at the Shipwrights Arms (at twice the price of a couple of years ago!) then a restful day.



Dairne and Hilda



19th August: Helford to Fowey



Dodman -an unusual view

The weather pattern suggested that we take advantage of settled weather to move east, so we decided to abandon our original plan to stay in Helford another day. By 0705 we were under way, motoring for about an hour till we picked up a gentle westerly wind. The engine went off, and, goosewinged, we slowly made out way along the course towards the Yealm. But the wind was fickle, so we decided that a pleasant sail to Fowey was preferable to slogging away under engine Newton Ferrers.



Fowey Daymark



Fowey

Long before we reached Dodman the wind had shifted more into the north west, and we had a really pleasant reach into Fowey, arriving at 1230. It was Fowey regatta week, so the place was heaving with boats. We managed to find an empty visitors buoy, but were soon joined by *Segura II*, another Rustler 36. The result was a very pleasant evening with John and Pam.

Fowey was so busy we did not even attempt to go ashore.



20th August: Fowey to Salcombe



Cursing Chute poled out

The tides were dictating early starts, so we were away at 0730, with little breeze evident. But by 0900 we were able to stop motoring and deploy the cursing chute for an hour and a half, but the wind had come so far aft the chute would not stand, and the engine went on again. By 1100 we were nearly 4 miles SSW of Rame Head.

At noon we tried the cursing chute again, and managed to get it to stand by setting the tack slightly to windward on the spinnaker pole. This arrangement lasted till 1430 when we handed the chute, gybed and reached

into Salcombe, anchoring at 1525.

On the way in we spoke to Roddy Innes on *Jessamy*. He was enjoying a leisurely cruise back from Falmouth having just returned from the Azores.

21st August: Salcombe to Dartmouth – then on to Studland!



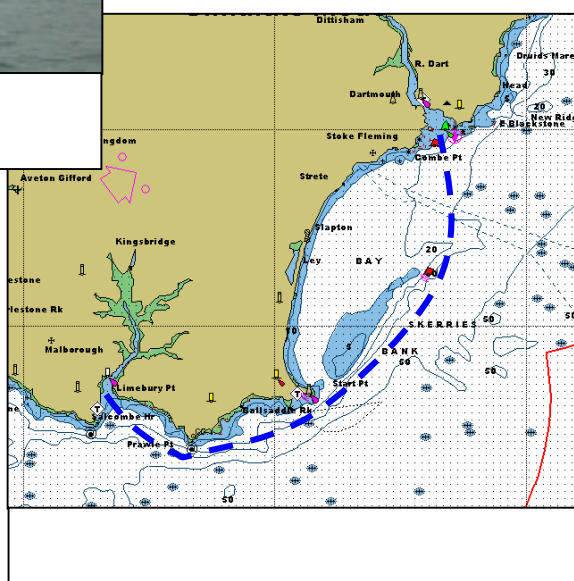
Bolt Head (left) and Prawle Point

Salcombe was busy with holiday makers, motor boats, and bustle. We were just not used to it! In any case we prefer the Dart. But we could afford to leave later at 0940.

After clearing Prawle Point, the genoa was poled out for a run to

Start Point. The breeze gradually freshened and, after gybing at the Skerries buoy, we had a sparkling reach into the Dart where we anchored at 1245.

Then we heard the forecast. It implied that in a couple of days, the wind would go easterly. So we had to give up our plan of a stay in Dartmouth. A quick run ashore replenished our



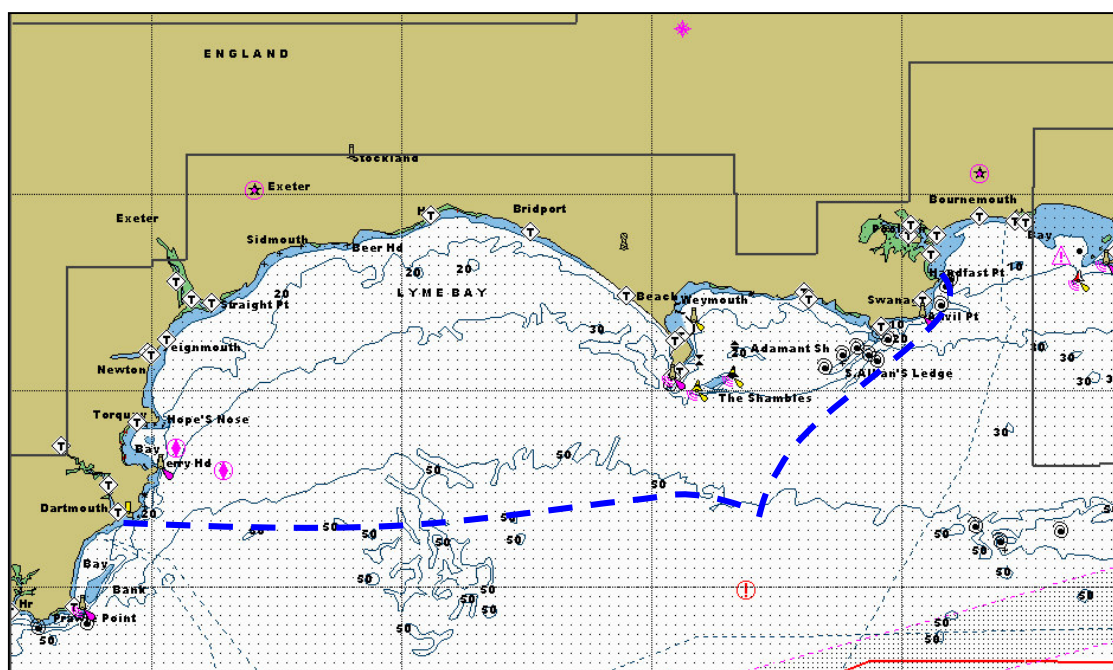


stores, and we were on our way again at 1600.

The breeze was forecast to be between F4 and F5, and so it proved. A waypoint was set about 7 miles south of Portland, and we could just keep the genoa standing on this course. The boat was tramping along, making more than 6kts much of the time, with a favourable tide. As usual, Dairne took the evening watch. There was quite a lot of shipping about, and we used the radar to check distance and bearing of several that came quite close. Just after dark, Dairne asked for assistance with the radar. A large passenger ship was coming at us round Portland, and the nav lights were lost among all the other illuminations. Eventually the ship altered course to clear us. Comforting that she had seen us! I tried to call them on Ch16 VHF to check how good our radar image had been, but there was no reply. Obviously using GMDSS and not monitoring 16. Very dangerous tendency.



Start Point



Dart to Studland

During the late evening the wind had freshened to the top end of F5, so the genoa was rolled, and we carried on under single reefed main only, the boat rolling quite a lot in the quartering sea that gradually built up during the adverse tide as we approached Portland. By midnight we were about 9 miles south of Portland, and I took over. The tide turned in our favour, but the wind remained brisk, touching F6 at times. By watching the tack angle on the multi instrument, and the waypoint bearing to Anvil Point, I was able to watch the gybing point get closer. We had expected to carry on the same course till about 0300. But the wind veered a little, and the tide was



surprisingly strong, so at 0120 we gybed and headed toward Anvil Point. At least that was the theory. In fact we were heading in toward St Albans at first. But by tweaking the monitor, I got a better heading and the tide did the rest.



Old Harry, Studland Bay

Shortly after taking over, a ship was sighted well to the south (among several other lights on the horizon). In no time at all it was rattling towards us, and eventually passed less than ½ mile ahead. It was, of course, a Seacat going in to Weymouth. A little alarming!

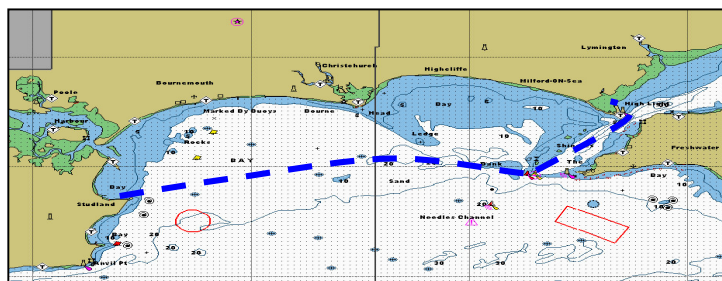
With the strong tide, Anvil Point was reached surprisingly quickly, and we motored in to Studland at

0500, with just the first glimmer of daylight to assist. The trip had been 70.7 miles at an average speed of 5.4kts through the water. Dartmouth to Studland in 13 hours is a good passage.

22nd August: Studland to Keyhaven

The plan was to spend a couple of days in Poole while the easterlies went away. But they did not materialise – yet. But they were threatened for a couple of days time. After talking to our friends John and Mary Miller with their new boat, *Northern Light*, we realised that the best plan was to get round to Chichester before the easterlies set in.

So after sleeping much of the morning, we set off under genoa only again and had a storming sail in F5/6 up the Needles Channel back to Keyhaven, well positioned to meet up with the Millers the next day.



Studland to Keyhaven - the final leg



Needles

There is something satisfying about seeing the familiar sights again. The approach to the Needles is impressive Freshwater with the cliffs shining in the sun; then a clear view of the Needles. Finally, with the tide sluicing us up the Needles Channel, we could see Hurst Castle, the entrance to the Solent, which is really just a great big playpen.



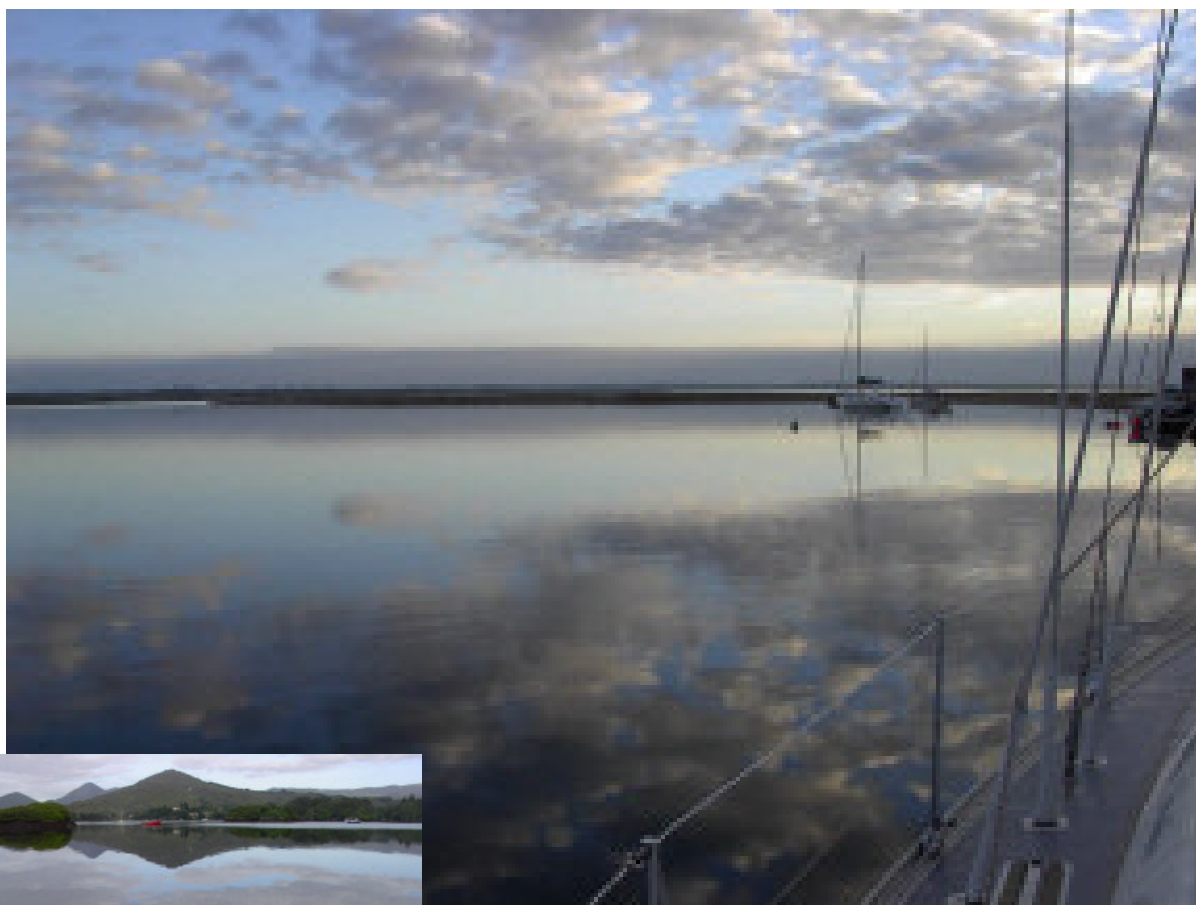
Hurst - gateway to the playpen

It was approaching a Bank holiday weekend. We could see that Yarmouth was already heaving with boats, and no doubt Lymington would be busy. So we were pleasantly surprised to creep into Keyhaven to find that we were the only visitor. 2 of the buoys were free and there were no boats in the anchorage or Colquhoun's cut.

It was blowing hard all afternoon, but the sun shone. Keyhaven gave us a warm welcome home.

23rd August: Keyhaven

Keyhaven had one more surprise. The next morning dawn was still, with sun speckled clouds. Somehow it was reminiscent of Glengariff.....





We had a pleasant weekend of Solent sailing in company with *Northern Light*. We also met up with *Polynya*, with Chris and Francoise Elliot on board. Chris bought *Polynya* as a bare hull and has made an impressive job of finishing her off.

Then we went home to Marchwood.

Finally, another quote from Pete Goss' book:

“Obstacles are what you see when you take your mind off the goal” – Peter Blake



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Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Graham\My Documents\Ariadne Ireland 2003\Log 2003 Ireland Txt & PPT
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Graham Rabbitts\Application Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: 23rd May: Marchwood to Cowes
Subject:
Author: Graham Rabbitts
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 01/10/2003 21:11
Change Number: 4
Last Saved On: 01/11/2005 20:38
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Total Editing Time: 23 Minutes
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