

Spring / Summer 2016

# BROAD REACH

The Magazine of New Parks Cruising Association



**Front Cover:** Spring Rally 2012

**Back Cover Outside:** “Force 0” by Monica Matterson



**Commodore’s Lunch Photo competition winner**

Taken by John Green: River Camel – at Padstow harbour

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## NPCA FLAG OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2015/16

<b>FLAG OFFICERS &amp; COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>	
Commodore	Mick McQuade
Vice Commodore	Bill Hudson (Founding Member)
Rear Commodore	Richard Malthouse
Chairman	John Green
Vice Chairman	Peter Thorne (Editor, Broad Reach)
Honorary Secretary	Yvonne Margerison
Honorary Treasurer	Mike McQuade
Committee	Eric McDowall Mike Flint (Talks Organiser) Pauline Green (Membership Secretary) Jonathan Herbert (Events & Webmaster) Hilary Holmes

**NPCA PROGRAMME WINTER/SPRING 2016**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Type</b>
19th January	Talk By Helen and Richard Blackmore (Inland across Sweden Hornpipe 2 In the Trolhatte and Gota canals )
16th February	Talk by Peter Tyldesley, Director Bradgate Park Trust (The History of Bradgate Park)
13th March	Commodores Lunch - Lingdale Golf Club
15th March	Talk by Tom Cunliffe - "Man is not lost"
19th April	Talk by Chris Tarratt (Shackleton and his open boat voyage)
7/8th May	Spring Rally (Dates and organiser to be finalised)
Saturday July 2nd	Round the Island Race*
13th September	Talk to be arranged
8th / 9th October	Autumn Rally (Dates and organiser to be finalised)
18th October	Talk to be arranged
15th November	Talk to be arranged and AGM
26th / 27th November	Christmas Rally (Dates and organiser to be finalised)
20th December	Talk to be arranged <b>Cheese buffet</b>

**\*Round the Island Race:** Would Skippers please contact the Secretary if entering under the NPCA flag so that we can take all entries into account when awarding the Club trophy.

Please always check the website for latest details. Web: <http://www.sailnpca.org/>

**Contact:** NPCA email: [mailto: secretary@sailnpca.org](mailto:secretary@sailnpca.org)

**Notes:** (A) Talks are held at the Royal Oak Kirby Muxloe (01162393166), on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the winter months (September to April), commencing 7.30 pm

(B) Note Please make all Cheques payable to "New Parks Cruising Association" **NOT** to "NPCA".

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this, my 9<sup>th</sup>, edition of *Broad Reach*. A very big: “**Thank you**” once again to all those who took the trouble of producing something for this edition.

The magazines, and indeed the club, are a sum of the parts and everyone who makes even the smallest contribution helps keep the club in existence. I have continued to include smaller articles this edition in light of comments that some were too long.

We are, yet again, most grateful for another superb and colourful contribution from Monica. Please check out her hardback and now paper back publications.

Remember Broad Reach is available on line at our website; if you don't know the address just put the club name into Google and it will find our page for you. Broad Reach looks very good on a tablet PC and smart phone.

Please see the advertisement on the inside of the rear cover for yacht charters from Firstaway; anyone who has been on one of Eric's Solent courses will have sailed with them.

All contributions are welcome, including short articles or advertisements; please contact me at my email address: [peter@thornes.f9.co.uk](mailto:peter@thornes.f9.co.uk) . I always struggle to find a high quality cover photograph, please, please take some *portrait* photos and spend a bit of time getting them in focus and correctly exposed.

Finally, you may have noticed a handful of new members at club nights; please welcome and talk with them as they are so very important to the club. Remember our club nights not only need to break-even but also make a valuable contribution to club funds.



Peter Thorne ■

## JOTTINGS FROM THE COMMODORE

“Who is he? Where has he been and what has he done?” members must have questioned when they heard that I had been elevated to Commodore. I think that I too asked the same questions because nobody could have been more amazed than me when I was asked to be Commodore of New Parks Cruising Association. It is indeed an honour and it’s a role that shall cherish and fulfil with pride – New Parks Cruising Association Commodore!!!!!!

When I was a Scout, someone gave me an old canoe which I repaired and raced from Abbey Meadow Mills to Barrow deep lock in the annual Scouts canoe race. I think that they had all gone home when I crossed the line but, hey ho, I was afloat. Later Eric Boon of Boon’s Boatyard at Mountsorrel predicted that now that I was afloat I would never be far from boats and water; he must have had a premonition!

Had Eric McDowall asked someone else to join him on that Broads rally, I might not have ‘found’ New Parks Cruising Association, but once my eyes were open, my life changed. While I am grateful to Eric and many other NPCA members we all should be thankful that Bill Hudson had a great heart and wanted to offer his students opportunities outside of the New Parks Estate. Thanks to Bill recruiting some of his mates New Parks became the third largest RYA sail training establishment in the world! At its zenith we had over 400 students per year passing through our classes and while, sadly, our school is no more, I am humbled to know that I follow in the footsteps of some truly great men.

Over the years NPCA has astounded the RYA by being a successful offshore cruising club so many miles from the sea. But without our classes we no longer have a ready source of new younger members and over recent years our membership has declined. The challenge for our association now is to rediscover and reinvent ourselves; we need to evolve to meet the challenges ahead. Within the pages of this journal are stories of fun and fellowship at sea, share your copy with your friends and family and encourage them to join us on a rally so that they too can experience the thrills and excitements that have been yours for so many years. There are still enough competent skippers able to charter boats so there is no reason why your sons, daughters and grandchildren should not be able to experience your memories.

To borrow a quote from Van Morrison, “hark, now hear the sailors cry, smell the sea, and feel the sky, let your soul & spirit fly, into the mystic”.

Mick McQuade  
NPCA Commodore



## GRENEE KEEL TRANSPLANT

Our boat Gernee was dangling above my head. She was a Southerly 100 with a cast iron grounding plate and heavy cast iron lifting keel. My job was to touch up the anti-fouling.

I bashed three times on the hull. Yvonne's face appeared over the stern: "Lower the keel" I yelled.

The hydraulic mechanism groaned and whirred. "Stop!", I shouted. "The keel has gone down too far "

"It can't", Yvonne's voice echoed from above: "I just pressed the button as normal!" I gasped! There was a two inch gap between the hull and the top of the keel; I reached into the keel box. A huge bolt came out in my hand. It was the stop pin. The bracket had rusted away. "Do you want this boat in mid-air forever?" Alan was glaring at me from the hoist. "Launch it Alan ...we are doing the round the Island race on Saturday". Alan grinned "It will go faster with a deeper keel".

I explained to Yvonne: "It will be OK to do the race darling, because the pennant ropes support the keel safely when it is half down so it will be safe when the keel is fully down even though the stop pin is missing".

Yvonne frowned: "If the stop pin has failed due to rust, the pivot pin may fail next....Think again Skipper".

Southerly had gone bust but there was still a repair section in the old factory at North Shore. I rang them. "No Sir, not safe. No Sir, Don't do the race. Yes Sir, we can fix it."

With help from Dave Picket, Gernee our pride and joy, was gently sailed to the North Shore ship yard at Itchenor in Chichester harbour.

"How much will it cost and how long to do it?" I asked.

"Don't know Sir. Not till we have done an in-depth investigation"!

They had said previously "Perhaps 4 to 5 weeks?" It seemed a long time.

A week later we got a letter, telling us that they had moved the boat from the water to the yard, dismantled the interior wood work, remove all the bolts in the bottom of the bilges and lifted the boat off the cast iron grounding plate and keel. The grounding plate and keel were now under the crane in the middle of the factory building ...if we wanted to examine them.

The letter continued the following is necessary, replace the hydraulic ram, replace the keel head plate and pennants, replace the stop pin, replace the pivot pin, fit new bushings, and finally re- drill and refurbish the cast iron keel.

I grabbed the telephone "How long will all this take?"

"Well Sir, the Keel will have to go back to the foundry in Cornwall and to save money we use a hay lorry but it is harvest time and no hay lorry's are available".

I nearly said: "Can't you use a horse and cart".

I did say: "Do your best please. We would like to sail sometime this summer".

I had a thought. I had read somewhere.... "Copper coat is more than an anti-fouling because the epoxy base reinforces the hull".

I rang North Shore again "Is copper coat anti fouling any good?"

"Excellent" the MD replied "All new Southerly boats have a copper coated bottom".

"Can you anti foul Gernee with copper coat while you are waiting for the keel?", I asked.

"Certainly Sir... We will give her five coats".

Then I informed Yvonne.

"You're mad", she said. "People tell me copper coat works in some places but is useless in Gosport and probably useless at Kempes where we are berthed".

We visited Gernee once or twice. She was immaculate in her five coats of copper coat. The yard made us very welcome with free coffee and use of their toilets. The pub next door was first class, and the coastal walks round Itchenor were good but at times muddy.

In late September we got a message "Work on Gernee is almost complete!"

"Great! Can we have our boat back please?"

"No! You have not paid the final bill".

"You have not sent a final bill".

They sent a bill. It was £££££S. I don't like to think about it... So I won't mention it.

I sent a Cheque: "Can we have our boat back now?"

"No, not till the cheque has cleared", they retorted.

An hour later "Will launch Gernee as soon as tide and weather permit".

Then the weather got foul for days and days.

At last one morning in mid-October the winds eased and we could go. It seemed like leaving old friends with big smiles and handshakes all round.

We cast off with a fair forecast, a fair tide, and good wishes.

As we approached our home jetty Yvonne said "What's the plan to moor up?"

"Same as usual, head into the tide, slow down and you grab the cleat with our special boat hook".

"But darling, you always change your mind at the last moment" she muttered.

"Not today dear. The pub will stop serving in half an hour".

I eased our boat into the current. I cut the engine with three boat lengths to go. Gernee slid majestically into her berth. Yvonne lassoed the cleat first time.

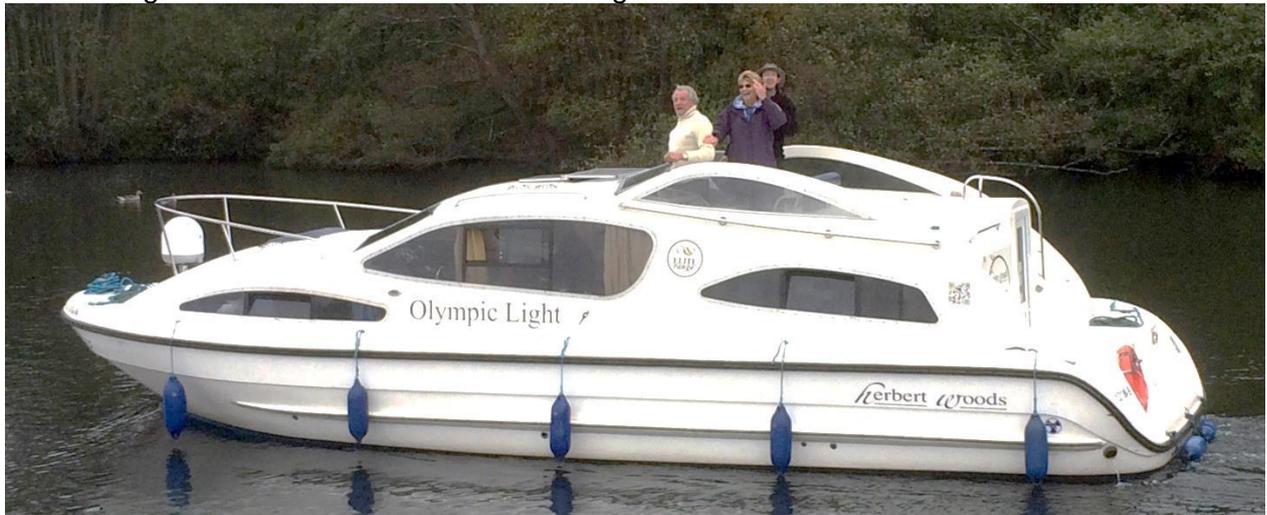
"That is the best mooring we have ever done" she shouted.

"I always do better with a clean bottom", I replied. "Shall we celebrate with a bottle of wine?"

Mike Flint 

## NORFOLK BROADS RALLY - NOVEMBER 2015

Unfortunately it was not the success we had hoped for but the nine members who hired two boats thought it was well worthwhile even though the weather was not kind to us.



In fact we were very pleased we were in two Elite standard cruisers with all mod cons. After many very successful yachting rallies we decided to try cruisers probably because many of those taking part were showing signs of age. We had hoped to encourage the faint hearts



with the comfort of home on the water. With this in mind we decided Elite was the appropriate word and those that attended were not disappointed. The boats were as warm as required, had two helming positions and picture windows in both the aft cabin and higher saloon. We also had ensuite cabins with hot showers.

This is a beautiful time of the year and the Norfolk Broads didn't disappoint. Although we had a lot of rain we did get some sunny breaks and saw autumn at its best. We visited many Broads and the highlight was a visit to Ranworth Church where we all climbed the tower and saw one of the best views in Norfolk. We also saw the Ranworth Bible found in a London book shop and is priceless. It's not really a bible but very old and beautiful.

I know certain people didn't come because we didn't hire yachts but as it happened it's a good thing we didn't. For the first time ever I spent three days on the Broads without seeing a yacht under sail or motor.

We chose cruisers as we thought it might appeal to more families. It does not compare with yachting but it's still boating and a certain amount of skill was required. Both boats had fore and aft side thrusters which we enjoyed using particularly in windy conditions. It was also more pleasant helming inside during the worst of the weather. The galley area was also great and the bar seemed always well stocked. For the very keen; there was a working TV in every cabin. If you choose your crew carefully the skipper does not have to go outside at all to park.

Five of the nine people who came this year are keen to have their own boat next year. The Elite boats were not as expensive as we thought as we received a refund for the fuel not used. My crew of four paid £200 and that hired the boat and covered our on board food and drinks and the main meal we had on the Saturday evening at the Wroxham Hotel. Our largest boat had the smallest crew member as he was only 5.

**Boat: Olympic Light**

Crew: Bill Hudson, Elizabeth Hall, Cliff Hitchin, Jonathan Herbert

**Boat: Royale Light**

Crew: Richard Malthouse, Chris Malthouse, Blake Malthouse (age 4 1/2), Chris Geere, David Geere

*Bill Hudson* ■

## RIP VAN WINKLE AND SON (attend the 2014 NPCA Spring Rally)

**We found much more than we bargained for in two days!**

**Not 25, but more than 40 personal years and echoes of 500 years of family history!**

Our son Martin recently bought a Moody 31 and decided to look out his Yachtmaster certificate gained about 20 years ago at New Parks, but without success. Bill Hudson and his team worked hard tracing it's issue, but the RYA insisted his stated claim was impossible. I took a hand and explained their knowledge of the early years of the RYA and Yachtmaster Certificate was defective, when Martin played the ace of trumps and found his certificate countersigned by Bill Anderson and John Durie. Immediately the RYA conceded and requested a photograph and issued a new Certificate. Martin can now claim to be a Yachtmaster Coastal, ancient and modern!



I was delighted to learn the NPCA had refused to die, and was holding a Spring Rally. After years I had spent at Whitby motor-boating and fishing, and narrowboat holidays on canals, Martin and I determined to make an appearance at the Spring Rally after 25 years of dormancy. I had been the first New Parks student to obtain Yachtmaster Coastal forty years ago, guided by Captain Sutherland, and two years later, added the Yachtmaster Ocean under the Department of Trade Regime. It was the start of fifteen wonderful years with Bill Hudson instructing at New Parks until we left Leicester. Like Rip van Winkle, the mythical Dutchman who slept for twenty-five years we set out to return to the fold.

I thought of a rally of many years ago, held at Yarmouth that was planned to end a race that started at Gillkicker Point. Our boat, **Pusat Tasek** (Malay for 'Pau Amma's hiding place in the ocean') was berthed at Gosport and so the course was inevitable for us. Most others

were Hamble based, and as they emerged from the Hamble Scramble, found the wind was straight in their teeth and gusting a full gale 8. They wisely abandoned the race and motor-sailed to Yarmouth to benefit from their meal ticket. We sailed the whole way without seeing a New Parks boat. By the time we had reached the entrance the rest of the fleet was nestled onto uncrowded pile moorings. Outside we attempted to start the engine, but there was no response whatever. We dropped our CQR anchor and it held. Trying to source the problem in that confined space and that motion meant exchanging Glasgow kisses with the Volvo Penta, so I put out a plea for a member to come and pull us in. Hugh Butler, bless him, was the Angel who came to our aid with *Min*. I regret that I have never fully thanked him appropriately for his self-mortification that day. Hugh, I thank you now! Ever so much!

These thoughts were foremost in my mind as we approached Yarmouth in Martin's *Drifter*, recalling events of forty years ago, until I spied *Emily Rudkin*, fast to a mooring outside. I hailed her repeatedly as we passed but there was no response. That encounter triggered long ago memories of 70 years back!

The Emily Rudkin is a 32 feet Curlew, built and maintained by Purbrook Rossiter of Christchurch and kept in excellent condition. Extra-ordinarily it was the last boat I had helmed, just about four years ago. 'Emily Rudkin' carried the owner Clifford Curry, his wife Marion and crew Bruce Jarvis to visit us at our French home in Portbail. I had taken the tiller when we all went for a trip around the bay outside. Both men were Ministers of the New Church, and I had first met Bruce at Sunderland. I recognised the name of "Emily Rudkin", and told the owner that the Rudkin family lived and worked in the Belgrave area building narrow boats for the Erewash coal trade. The street names in the Belgrave district area



reflect that. There is a portrait of Emily in the yacht's saloon.

The Rudkin family lived and worked in the Belgrave area of Leicester making quality narrow boats for the coal trade by river and canal from the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire coal pits to Leicester retailers. Heanor Street is an example of a street leading to canal side wharf where coal from the Heanor colliery was unloaded. Wharf Street also remains testifying the traffic. At the end of the nineteenth century the railway was taking the canal traffic, and a son of Emily Rudkin diversified into cycle manufacture. He set up a cycle shop in Aylestone, and

his name was Harry Curry. Harry was a very enterprising man, as were his sons. We all know the family name today, but not perhaps for much longer now his brainchild is subsumed into a much bigger empire of chain-stores. This much I had learned from my canal interests that began in 1961 before New Parks sailing existed, and one of my patients living in Pope Street who had known Harry and his cycle shop very well.

Harry Curry retired to Bournemouth, and as a boy of 12 I was presented to him by my grandfather, and met Harry's son Clifford and daughter Freda slightly older than me who attended Talbot Heath School. I think I recall correctly. It was Clifford who had the boat built and named to honour his grandmother Emily Rudkin. Clifford died, and his son, also Clifford, is the present owner. Harry was a keen member of the New Church that met as a society in an upstairs room near The Lansdown in Bournemouth. My grandfather was the resident preacher, resuming activities begun in Poplar at the end of the nineteenth century. As a retired builder, he with Harry was a useful member of the group that built and established a splendid New Church at Tuckton, in Bournemouth. It was a startling jerk into nostalgia triggered by the unexpected sight of Emily Rudkin!

The harbour inside was very different from my last visit when only pile moorings existed. Also I was conveyed by car with Bill to the restaurant because of my age of 28, Eric Morecambe notation. That is, the numbers are correct but their order is less certain. Our meal was fine, the venue very friendly, and many folk remembered me and recalled events aboard Pusat. I was surprised no-one reminded me of the stove. We will leave it at that.



On our way to Yarmouth we had enjoyed some fun trying to decipher and find the buoys from the clues provided in the sailing instructions given by Jonathan Herbert. Without Mr. Herbert his organisation and instructions we would not have been there. It was a cue for fate to play another joker from the pack of coincidences. Returning to *Drifter's* berth, along the West Solent, we spied a black square-rigger westbound. As we passed we saw the name, *Earl of Pembroke*. Without his family, we Lampards would not have left the Continent; we would probably not be in England at all. The name of the first Earl of Pembroke (of the second creation) was William Herbert, an ally of King Henry VIII in his squabble with the Roman Catholics! "Black Will", to quote his nickname. It was well deserved; he had started as a young man by killing a constable in Bristol, the Port of Registry of the square rigger, and the same port of registry of our second *Pusat Tasek* in 1974 that we listed on Lloyds Register of Yachts.

I shall not dwell on the antics of Black Will. If you want to know more about him, try dipping into John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, a collection of notes about famous folk, written when Aubrey was half-drunk and long before the laws of libel and slander. Retribution in those days though was swift, and violent. The writings were not collected and published until he was safely dead and safely buried. I enjoyed a wonderful weekend.

We still have a table in France made for me, to fit into our original canal boat *Pusat Tasek* in the workshops of George Herbert in Leicester.

**God Bless the Herberts and all who sail with them, not forgetting Bill Hudson and his merry band!**

**Floreat NPCA  
(Long may the New Parks Cruising Association Flourish!)**

*Ron Lampard* 

## **HEARD AT THE NPCA MEETING**

- (1) It was an excellent audience, bright, intelligent interested, and slightly drunk
- (2) I know you admire Tom Cunliffe but it does not mean you can sail like him
- (3) He must be a Yachtmaster. He has packed thermal long johns to sail in June
- (4) How do you qualify to be a Yacht Mistress?
- (5) I don't need so much a competent crew but a competent cook
- (6) The technique of "Sailing in Company" is...
  1. Get round the course fast
  2. Shout "Starboard", "No water", "right of way boat" on all occasions
  3. Buy the organiser a drink and say "Excellent Course"
  4. And...Hopefully you will win a bottle of wine even if you are last!
- (7) It is not sailing, it is the exotic life style in foreign ports they like.
- (8) No need to take a night dress love!
- (9) It was a perfect holiday. We got through more gin than milk
- (10) Welcome to New Pensioners Cruising Association?

*Mike Flint* 

## SEA FEVER GOES TO CORFU 3RD - 10TH MAY 2015

### The Crew On board:

Tony Ball, Richard Goodman, Mick McQuade, Alan Walters and Dave Warner

Sea Fever is berthed in Levkas Marina, a short taxi ride from Prevasa airport; easily reach in less than one day. The atmosphere of the Greek Islands is famously friendly and laid back, and the locals pride themselves on their 'no problem' attitude to tourists.

Our week sailing was under the (now expected) blue skies and calm seas. There was very little wind and all of it was constantly on the nose, beating in a Force 1 is like watching grass grow, you never see it moving! This week turned out to be a donkey exercise but nevertheless a time for great fellowship, banter and wit. We ate ashore every evening taking turn to pick a restaurant and never had a bad meal or paid over the top. Eating and drinking choices are wide and rarely disappointing.

I could take time to describe the excitement when the sails fluttered on their own but instead I thought that you might like a quick insight to some of the attractive features that abound in the region.

Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
4 May 2015	Levkas	Prevasa	10 miles	Northerly	2
<b>Prevasa</b>		38° 57'. 48N 20° 45'. 39E			
<p>A modern capital city, Prevasa is the administrative, commercial and tourist center of the prefecture, built on the entrance of the Gulf of Amvrakikos. Beautiful, traditional buildings adorn the port and the historical centre while the pedestrian walkways and cobblestone streets lined with popular taverns and cafès remind us of the islands.</p> <p>Preveza is built on the location of ancient Vereniki which was founded by Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, in 290 B.C. to honour his mother-in-law, Vereniki. The city was established towards the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, after Nikopolis was deserted. Many conquerors passed through the city until it was finally incorporated with Greece in 1912. Its port offers connections to the islands of the Ionian sea.</p> <p>Things to see include: The three castles: Agios Andreas (18thC.), Agios Georgios (1807), and Pantokratoras (1807). The view from the last one at dusk is spellbinding; The Museum of the Aktion Naval Battle; The scenic seaside promenade flanked by imposing buildings such as the Court of Justice, the Town Hall, the National Bank, and the Old Marketplace; The Amvrakikos wetlands habitat, at the estuary of the rivers Louros and Arachthos is considered one of the major European wetlands habitats and is protected by the Ramsar Convention.</p>					
					
Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
5 May 2015	Prevasa	Limin Gaios	31 miles	Northerly	1
<b>Limin Gaios on Paxos</b>		39° 11'.80N, 20° 11'.32E			

Gaios is the largest of the three main settlements on the island of Paxos, and the only one that can be called a town, albeit a very small one. Gaios, the 'capital' of the island, shows its Venetian and British heritage in the colourful buildings that line the long harbour-front. Life in Gaios focuses on the harbour where in high season, awe-



inspiring yachts jostle for space with working boats of all kinds. An intriguing variety of eating establishments, chic boutiques and old-fashioned stores make Gaios a fascinating place to visit, with an atmosphere all of its own.

In the harbour life centres around the main square, bordered on one side by the waterfront where boats of all kinds jostle for mooring space. With the daily arrivals and departures there is always something going on, always an excuse to take a seat at one of the open-air

cafes and indulge in that most popular of pastimes - 'people watching'.

The chandlers-cum-hardware-store-cum-ironmonger was a step back in time and while it seemed like chaos they did have the bits we wanted. We were amused by the shop across the street, guess what they sold?

Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
6 May 2015	Limin Gaios	Gouvia	32 miles	Northerly	1
<b>Gouvia</b>		39° 39'.53N, 19° 51'.35E			

Sadly Corfu town does not have a marina or harbour accessible to leisure yachts, the nearest marina is found on the east coast at Gouvia some 8 km from Corfu town. The marina is well served by busses and taxis so visiting Corfu town is relatively simple.



Gouvia, a small former fishing village has been developed throughout the last four decades into a modern holiday resort. The village of the resort has about 600 inhabitants and was built on the site of an ancient Venetian harbour. Today, Gouvia is the main marina of Corfu and welcomes many yachts from all over Europe. The local people are nice, friendly and eager to show to the foreign visitors the way of

the Greek hospitality.

Because of the location of the marina, settled in the middle of Corfu, it is ideally placed to explore the lush hills, olive groves and citrus plantations that surrounding Gouvia. For those sailors who like to venture off the boat there are excellent facilities to hire a car, bike or horse to explore the island. The marina is midway between the ancient villages of Gouvia and Kontokali and, I am told, both of these villages have a good selection of bars and restaurants serving Greek, Chinese, Thai, Italian and

Mexican dishes and a very lively atmosphere at night.

Instead of dashing off to catch the bus to Corfu town or walking to the village centre, the shade of the marina bar and the fragrant odour of the Ouzo seemed a better way to spend the couple of hours before evening dinner

Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
7 May 2015	Gouvia	Plataria	22 Miles	Northerly	1
<b>Plataria</b>		39° 27'.10.18N, 20° 16'.29.40E			

The small port village of Plataria is situated in the northwest coastline of the Greek mainland. Opposite Plataria lies the south tip of Corfu island, the tip of Asprokavos, separated by a narrow channel of 9 nautical miles. Plataria has a new harbour with ample berths for sailing yachts of all sizes. It is a traditional Greek fishing village and with a good selection of locally produced foods.



Moor on the town quay stern-to or on the outer wall. Either place needs plenty of anchor chain out (3 boat lengths) as the muddy bottom is known to drag. There numerous tavernas with tasty Greek food including *Olgas* where there are good showers as well as traditional classics on the menu. You can fill with water if

you ask Olga nicely.

It is a popular place for the Greeks to holiday as there is a nice long beach, which is great for a morning/evening walks and swims.

Avoid mooring here on weekends as it is a turnaround base for 3 flotillas.

Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
8 May 2015	Plataria	Lakka	11 miles	Southerly	2
<b>Lakka</b>		39° 14'.65N, 20° 07'.75E.			

Lakka lies at the head of a deep narrow bay on the north coast of Paxos. Tree-covered headlands almost enclose the bay, forming a natural harbour that attracts a variety of yachts. The tiny village has narrow streets that all seem to end at the sea. Plants and trees spill over the walls of private local gardens. With numerous small shops, bars and tavernas with a pleasing variety of food on offer, Lakka, with its friendly locals, has a special character all of its own.



Always a fishing harbour, Lakka is now immensely popular with sailors and attracts every kind of craft from flotilla boats and weekend yachtsmen to awe-inspiring super-yachts. There are also beautiful beaches around nearby. Usually beaches around Paxos tend to be pebbly, but in Lakka the pebbles give way to golden sand as soon as you step into the water. Around Lakka bay the beaches have natural shade. A walk over the headland where the 'Farros' (lighthouse) stands, or a short

trip by dinghy, brings you to some terrific beaches where the sea has sculpted the rocks into amazing shapes.

Date	From	To	Distance	Wind	Force
9 May 2015	Lakka	Levkas	40 miles	Southerly	1
<b>Levkas</b>		38° 49'.8N, 20° 42'.8E			



Lefkada is all about the ladies: It's notable for being the birthplace of Greek goddess Aphrodite and the suicide site of Sappho, the famed lesbian poet who is said to have flung herself from the cliffs of Cape Lefkada because of the love for Phaon. The German archeologist Wilhelm Dorphfeld suggested that Lefkada in fact was Homer's Ithaca and that the palace of Odysseus was located west of Nidri on the south coast of the island.

**Lefkada**, also known as Lefkas or Levkas, is one in the group of the Eptanisa or "seven-islands" in the Ionian Sea in Western Greece. The other Eptanisa are Zakynthos, Kefalonia, Kerkyra, Paxi, Kythera and Ithaki. Lefkada is the fourth largest Greek island, after Zakynthos, Kefalonia and Corfu. Its capital city is also called Lefkada. The island is separated from mainland only by a narrow canal, Drepanos, 50 meters wide. There is a long boardwalk and a floating bridge connecting Lefkada with land, which makes it the only Greek island, except Evia, accessible by car. It is surrounded by nine satellite islands, including

Meganisi, Kastos, Kalamos, Madouri and Skorprios, the island of Aristotle Onassis family. Lefkada island has an area of about 300 square kilometers and coastline of 117 kilometers and a population of about 22.000 inhabitants..

Lefkada is named by the white rocks (Greek leukos=white) in the Lefkata cape, southern part of the island. Levkas played an important role in many wars through history, like Persians Wars or Peloponnesian War.

A huge earthquakes destroyed the major part of Lefkada first time in 1948 and after that in 1953, so a very few examples of the traditional architecture are still standing on the island. However, the Island's architecture was influenced by numerous western civilizations, especially the Venetian, but also lots of traditional houses can be found across Lefkas. Especially interesting are the wooden houses covered with coloured metal sheets. Byzantine architecture can be seen through many churches on the island.

Lefkas Marina is situated on the eastern side of the island, literally embraced by Lefkas town and right beside the main harbour. It is virtually a separate town within a town. Thus, visitors arriving at the marina have the opportunity to visit the historic centre of the island and its museums, to wander through the charming paved alleyways, do their shopping or enjoy a coffee in the town's central shopping area and to come into direct contact with the customs and traditions of the community of Lefkas.

The area around the marina is bright and lively both day and night. Numerous bars and restaurants offer good value for the visitor and street theatre adds vibrancy to this experience. A destination worthy of any travellers 'must visit' list.

**Total Mileage      146 miles**

For the historians among the Club membership, the Ionian is steeped in history going back to the birth of time. There are numerous websites on the internet that describe the rise and fall of the various empires including the Venetians, Corinthians, Romans and the hundreds of others that have had their day. All of these successive empires have conspired to leave an indelible footprint on the landscape that artists, poets and philosophers have salivated over for centuries. You too can soak up this atmosphere and with the help of your camera or phone, bring a little back home to reminisce over on cold dark winter nights.

Mick McQuade

March 2016



## WELL, HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ACROSS THE SEA TO IRELAND?

### Part 1

Having made an initial outline plan to go to the west coast of France in 2015 circumstances made a trip to southern Ireland become a more attractive destination. I set off solo from Chichester aboard Sandpiper, a Westerly Ocean 33, in the latter part of May, to Gosport for an overnight rendezvous with fellow New Parker Vince Magrath aboard his yacht Janet Patricia. Joined by Heywood Underhill and Paul Price, an evening of reminiscing ensued, lubricated by everyone's personal tipple. Vince departed westward on the first of the tide early afternoon the following day and I was joined on board by Pat Wright, fresh from Leicester shortly afterwards. Our destination the following day being Weymouth, we left Gosport in the late afternoon and moored to one of the buoys off Yarmouth for an early



Sunset at Yarmouth



Old Newparkers going west

departure next morning. Moderate winds brought our arrival to Weymouth at 13.00 hours after a seven hour passage. In the afternoon John Mitchell arrived via train to complete the crew complement. Following an exotic gastronomic **Wetherspoon's** supper early bunk time ensued for yet another prompt start in the morning and the beginning of voyage proper.

The following days bought a constant battle with the weather, a pattern that I found followed throughout the 2015 sailing season. The wind was directly from the west so it would be a beat all the way to Dartmouth. Having rounded the Bill, although in a westward tidal flow, a tack towards the land seemed to sweep us towards a lee shore. This confirming that there must be a counter current close in to the tip of Portland Bill. I have visited most of the towns on the perimeter of Lyme Bay by road and foot but it gave little pleasure to have a maritime view of all of them throughout the day as we tacked round Lyme Bay. The weather brightened in the afternoon but we did not arrive in Dartmouth until eight thirty, seventy four miles after our departure and having covered fifty per cent more distance than the direct route.

Strong winds were forecast for the following day but we decided to give it try to get to Fowey. However a mile west of Dartmouth a couple of green ones down the deck and a heavily overcast sky needed little more encouragement for the my companions to agree to return to port. We decided to have a run up to Dittisham past the Naval College,

when we arrived there it started to rain heavily so we returned to the Dartmouth walk ashore pontoon. It will take little imagination to understand what followed as the front passed through, the wind strength dropped and the sun came out. Too late to start again we spent a lazy afternoon around the town.

We reached Fowey the next day. The log recording 'bright and sunny, excellent sailing, six knots, clear weather' and suddenly '10/10ths cloud cover, overcast and cold'. We reached Falmouth the following day in a west North West wind gusting thirty five knots occasionally. The adverse weather and the time factor was now starting to play against us. I had originally planned to sail from the Solent to Falmouth in one passage, a short rest, onwards to Ireland and then a few days cruising before flying home. I had felt it was asking a lot for companions to jump on the yacht cold in the Solent and expect them to sail for thirty odd hours overnight on the first leg of trip.. We now had seven days to get to Cork but unsuitable weather kept us in Falmouth for two days. We had planned to jump off from the Scillys but no one was venturing there, many yachts weather bound in the Yacht haven. One of the crew was keen to break the trip and depart from Newlyn for a shorter overall distance but the delays forced us to do the trip to Kinsale in one passage. Concerned that the sea state would prevent us from cooking sensible meals on route the skipper was forced reluctantly to acquire 'pot noodles'. Six months later, during a locker cleansing session the noodles re-emerged to make their last journey to land fill, the skipper having decided not to post them on to the noodle enthusiast. We set off at 08.00 hours, Wednesday, and by 14.00 hours were off Lands End and the Longships. I had passed this way several years earlier and was again reminded of the inhospitable rocky shore and the menacing rock called 'Armoured Knight', one would certainly not want to bump into him at any part of the day. The swell was crashing on Longships after the prolonged westerly blow and we were glad to cross the nearby traffic flow system and get stuck into the crossing proper. This proved to be fairly uneventful with few ships or fishing boats seen, our first indication of land being gas platforms some thirty miles offshore. We arrived in Kinsale at 19.45, elapsed passage time thirty eight hours, distance one hundred and ninety two miles, average speed five knots due to extended periods of light airs.

Kinsale is a great spot to make landfall in Ireland with an excellent yacht club lively and interesting town, reportedly the gastronomic capital of Ireland. Outside the yacht club hangs the 'Famine Bell'. It was used to summon the starving when food became available during the potato famine of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are many fortifications along the coast in this area built centuries ago to defend against foreign invaders who might later make it a jumping off point to cross to mainland Britain. 2015 was the centenary of the sinking of the Lusitania off Old Kinsale Head and the local tourist industry was making efforts to commemorate the event. The sinking contributed to the United States of America joining the allies during the First World War. We came across some British yachtsmen who had dived on the wreck some fifteen years before. This is no longer allowed as the hull is collapsing down.

On Saturday we sailed round to Crosshaven, just inside Cork Sound, and home of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, reported as the oldest yacht club in the world and host to the biennial Cork Week sailing races and only a short distance from Cork city itself. Apart from the yacht club I found little to recommend Crosshaven unlike the comments offered in the pilot book. There is an interesting redundant fortification overlooking the entrance worth visiting but the quality of the local water hostelrys are varied. Having spent Sunday round Crosshaven we departed to the airport the following morning having left Sandpiper secured in a small local boatyard/marina. Our various airport destinations were Tenerife, Birmingham and Gatwick. On the way to the airport the taxi driver said there was little sun in southern Ireland in the summer and the chief concern of the residents when it came out was how many hours it would actually remain visible, all delivered in a broad Irish brogue which made an amusing conclusion to this part of the trip.

## Part 2

About a week later Roma and myself returned to Crosshaven by car, the idea being to use the car to tour if the sailing weather proved inappropriate, which it did do. We spent about twelve days travelling westwards along the coast by car sightseeing and walking. On our return to Crosshaven we were joined by old sailing friends Alan Hardwicke and Mark Thompson. Roma departed for Dublin, north Wales and family visits. On Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> June we set off to return to Kinsale as I thought my companions would enjoy a visit to the town before the more rural atmosphere further to the west.

The coast of southern Ireland is composed of a series of headlands facing the prevailing predominant south westerly winds. The sea state off these headlands can be quite short and steep and it was quite a discomfoting first short trip, we all agreed that we felt a little unsettled. We spent an afternoon and evening in Kinsale and the following morning set off



Valencia Island with Skelligs beyond

south westward to Castletownsend. This is a very pretty small village built on a steep hill descending to the nearby river. We anchored overnight but before going ashore I spotted another Westerly yacht anchored nearby. I looked in the owner's association handbook and ascertained the owner's name. As he rowed by to go ashore he was quite taken aback when I said 'good evening Mr Brown', 'How on earth did you know my name' he enquired



Sandpiper off Baltimore

and my fun was spoilt by having to tell him. Charmingly there is a large tree growing in the middle of the main street which is an excellent substitute for a sleeping policeman as motorists have to cautiously navigate around it. The local inn provided the best meal and hospitality I experienced in Ireland.

The following day we made the short twelve mile trip to Baltimore.

As we passed through the entrance into a large landlocked expanse of water there was a considerable amount of lifeboat and helicopter activity nearby. We anchored off the village and went ashore for provisions and a drink. We came across a news cameraman/reporter in the lobby of the hotel where we were using the Wi-Fi. He informed us that three people had drowned the day before. A young woman had been washed off the rocks by a rogue wave and boyfriend and father had dived in to the rescue leaving a very

young girl to run back several miles to the village to raise the alarm as she had no mobile

phone. The rescue services were still looking for the last body, those lost in the water being members of the family who run Primark. Baltimore is famous, apart from giving the name to the city in the USA, for a raid in the sixteenth century by Barbary pirates who carried off some hundred inhabitants who were enslaved in North Africa. Considering the damp climate of southern Ireland did they get such a bad deal? However further considering the possibility of becoming a eunuch or member of the harem of the Emir makes the alternative of huddling round a peat fire look quite attractive. As there was little chance of mooring alongside in



Unusual ship off Baltimore

Baltimore we journeyed a mile to the nearby Sherkin Island where we were advised of a walk ashore pontoon, the island and its hostleries being worth a visit.

We were now beginning to consider the return trip and again the unsettled and erratic weather governed our plans. Strong winds were forecast for the next day, followed by a short lull, then further prolonged poor weather. We spent the next day walking on the island, designated a nature reserve, while strong winds blew through. We were warned that we might have to vacate the pontoon

should conditions become too extreme as it might become unsafe. We required extra mooring ropes but fortunately did not have to move. While we were there a very smart Gran Soleil yacht came alongside and the jaunty skipper inquired our plans. We replied that we were trying for England tomorrow. He said that he had just come from Baltimore where so and so was and did we recognise his name as an author of a book on heavy weather sailing, the said chap going off to England tomorrow as well. I gamely replied that we would keep an eye out for him and follow closely in case we could pick up any tips! Gran Soleil man duly departed and we noted Royal Yacht Squadron emblazoned on his stern.

We departed the following morning, winds from the south west, force six and by the afternoon were in bright sunlight. Our departure decision proved to be a correct one as I recently read an account of a fellow Westerly owner who planned his departure from Cork to England a day after us and remained weather bound for ten days. The trip was uneventful until



06.00hrs the next morning. Although I had done the graveyard watch during the night I was awake to hear the engine stop dead with a clunk. We had been motor sailing during the night due to sea state and wind direction. I quickly left my bunk and gingerly removed the companion way cover to expose the engine fully expecting to see a pool of oil and a connecting rod poking out the side of the cylinder block. However, these not being visible, plenty of cooling water in the header tank and no excessive heat there were some grounds for optimism. I then examined the oil level which was satisfactory and cautiously checked that the front crankshaft pulley was free to rotate as we then knew the engine had not seized up. A prod on the starter button and the little two

Pontoon jetty at Sherkin Island

cylinder gamely started to idle. However when put in forward gear the engine laboured and stopped, similarly in reverse gear. We were now fairly sure that we had fouled the propeller.

We were some sixty miles from the Scilly's, so it was heads down and get there. As we approached a few miles off I radioed Falmouth Coastguard to report our arrival and they suggested contacting Hugh Town harbour master on St Mary's.



Unusual rock on St Mary's

Although it was Sunday lunchtime he answered the phone immediately and on reporting our situation to him he said he would arrange a tow into the harbour when we were close by. He rapidly declined my suggestion of sailing on to a buoy. We were duly put on one of the few buoys available on arrival. Although there are a considerable number in the harbour almost all were occupied by weather bound

yachts. If we had missed a buoy trying to pick it up under sail it would have been almost impossible to avoid some sort of collision.

On reporting to the harbourmasters office we discussed our predicament with him. He walked us to the harbour wall and pointed down indicating that it dried out at this position at low water and we would be welcome to lie there and examine the propeller. Unfortunately low water occurred at 01.30am and we could not lie against the wall during the working day as the island trip boats left from there. At 18.00hrs the harbour masters launch moved us alongside the wall and we prepared craft knives and hacksaws in preparation for removing anything from the propeller. I dared not go to sleep before the appointed removal time as I am sure I would have slept through any alarm call after the previous disturbed night. At 00.30hrs we manoeuvred the dinghy under the hull and torchlight revealed a large bundle of multi-coloured heavy duty polypropylene net surrounding the propeller. As the onslaught of knife and saw proving ineffective we resorted to the traditional serrated bread knife which made short work of clearing the debris. We motored back to the mooring before working boat trade commenced in the morning. As I write this article I look above my desk where I have a mounted 'Close's Fishermen's Chart of the English Channel', dated 1957. When I place the co-ordinates on the chart where the stoppage occurred I see a large area marked 'rough ground', rocks drawn on the bottom, there being a small clear patch in the middle. Was it possible that a trawler had drawn her net through this patch and, straying a little, ripped her trawl net on the rocks with us being the recipient of her misfortune? We were impressed by the help and hospitality of the harbour staff on St. Marys.

Strong winds blew again through the day and so we spent time walking on St Mary's. However we did note the odd adventurous sailor both leaving and entering the harbour, all of which had either vertical or horizontal red white and blue stripes. Probably French and Dutch sailors are more adventurous, brave or foolhardy than the home grown variety! We departed the following morning in twenty five knots of westerly breeze to Newlyn. On radioing the harbour office they informed us they were full but would find us some space. We were duly parked between two fishing boats which, in turn, were moored to finger berths on the floating pontoon. There appeared to be very few berths for visiting yachts and they were already filled. Facilities on shore did not quite match the ambience of a typical Solent marina but the catch of the day at the local seafood café excelled.

A very bumpy inshore trip round the tip of the Lizard confirmed my reservations of visiting Newlyn but was compensated for by a pleasant evening in the Helford River and thence on to Fowey. The following day Alan wished to be dropped off at Plymouth in order to return

home by train. As we approached Plymouth there was intense lifeboat, helicopter and fishing boat activity with the radio constantly working.



Apparently a scallop dredger, with two crew aboard, had disappeared. She had probably overturned when her dredge became trapped as wreckage was discovered floating on the surface. After dropping Alan off we spent the night in Newton Ferrers.

The following day we made for Dartmouth, the weather improving for a sunny trip along Slapton Sands. As we approached Dartmouth there was a large race of traditional boats around the marks off the entrance. It turned out to be the annual Classic Boat Rally and races before a cross channel event. We moored up in the marina in Kingswear and went ashore to the Royal Dartmouth Yacht Club for a drink where classic boat sailors were gathering for post-race drinks and spent an amusing interlude: 'people watching'. On the waterside terrace the blazer clad skipper of his yard prepared pride and joy sipped Pym's alongside his designer clad lady discussing the aggressive use of his lengthy bowsprit at the weather mark. Inside the club house, sheltering from the rays of the afternoon sun sit a trio of bearded, Breton hated, pipe smoking salts grasping pint tankards in knarred and anti-fouled stained hands discussing the poor quality of baggy wrinkle available, if one could actually find any in 'them fancy shops they now call chandleries'.

We crossed Lyme Bay the next day with a fair wind but limited visibility. The AIS indicated a vessel, towing, approaching us on a reciprocal course mid-way across the Bay. A small tug emerged out of the mist followed with what initially appeared to be a large tower of jumbled scaffolding but clarified in to a drilling rig mounted on a barge. Portland Bill emerged out of the mist at about a mile and a half range, fortunately the radar giving us assurance of the position of it. We steered north of the tip and caught the inshore current which pulled us close in to round the Bill on the east going flood tide. We averaged six knots on the nine and a half hour passage to Weymouth.

The following morning Mark left for the train station and I departed on my own for the Solent. I followed a very erratic course down the channel to the harbour entrance intermittently stabbing the course alteration buttons on the auto-helm as I stowed warps and fenders only to discover that I had not pressed the 'auto' button and was in fact steering on 'stand-by'. Any bystander must have wondered if I had been drinking heavily on the previous night. Having emerged from the harbour entrance I was met with the customary range safety boat. As Lulworth Range was active I had to steer well offshore which made the succeeding run into the Needles dead down wind. As I did not relish the idea of rigging a pole while sailing alone in the ever present foggy conditions I had to be content with tacking down wind. Old Harry Rocks appeared fleetingly through the mist and eventually the Needles Fairway Buoy. It was a thoroughly miserable afternoon, grey, cold and gusting. Two yachts emerged from the gloom from the south as Sandpiper sailed homewards down the Needles Channel, and then a lifeboat came outbound. At this moment I picked up a riding turn on the sheet winch which took a little sorting out and I hoped my erratic course did not encourage the attentions of the lifeboat. Thankfully they did not come over to look at me.

The strong flood tide now swept me passed Yarmouth at about nine knots over the ground and I had to make a decision whether to stop for the night at Cowes or to carry on home to Chichester Harbour. As it would have meant another early start in the morning I decided to press on. It was a grey rough July day with barely a yacht out on the Solent in the misty gusting conditions. On passed Egypt Point still doing nine knots and down through the Forts

with not a vessel in sight as I crossed Chichester Bar. Still rushing on with the flood tide I entered Northney Marina on Hayling Island at 20.30hrs, seventy four miles and twelve and a half hours after leaving Weymouth.

So what were my conclusions on sailing to Ireland? If one enjoys robust sailing off rocky peninsulas, often on a lee shore, interspaced with a moderate offshore cruise across the Celtic Sea then it is there for you. However I did enjoy that predictable trip along the south Cornish and Devon coast, a cruising area which I favour.

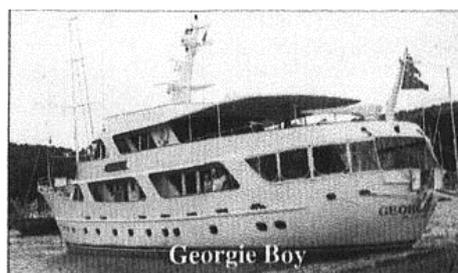
John Allsop 

## A TOUCH OF THE SUN?!

Feb. 1998 Monica Matterson

It is not every day that you receive a phone call from a multi-prosperous ex-colleague inviting you to spend a few weeks cruising the Caribbean on his yacht - and "Don't worry, I'll send you some air tickets"! Not a lot of persuasion was necessary and the few domestic and family obligations were soon organised.

At 5.30 am on a foggy, frosty morning on Friday January 30th we left for Heady° for our flight to Miami arriving at 5.10 p.m. local time, 10.10 p.m. GMT. We were met by our Cuban host George, for an hours drive to the Marina at Fort Lauderdale and on to his "Yacht". This was a rather imposing 115 ft. Benetti Motor Cruiser *Georgie Boy* for which was lying beside one of his other boats similar but smaller at 105 ft. By that time bed was the only tiling on our minds but we coped with a reception party and Buffet supper.



At 9.00 p.m. we left the dock heading for Freeport in the Grand Bahamas where George lives. On board were Sam, myself, George, his sister, mother, brother-in-law, two slobbering dogs and five paid crew. Our stateroom was a blue confection of king sized bed and settee, a marble bathroom and wall-to-wall mirrored wardrobes. It was also right over the propeller, very noisy, with freezing, force five air conditioning and smelt of diesel fuel. So, although we did not sleep too well we took no notice of the course or weather conditions until arriving at Port Luca)\* Marina at 8.00 a.m. next morning in warm sunshine.

It transpired that the family was moving to Freeport, so it took all Saturday off-loading boxes, items of furniture, family, and the dogs. We changed bedrooms onto the upper deck, smaller, less noisy, and just as cold with a greater tendency to wallow.

### Sunday 1st February

10.30 a.m. we leave the Marina, having been joined by Don, an Ernest Hemingway look-alike, and all his fishing tackle. We shall be at least four days at sea to Tortola Island before being joined by the wives of George and Don- sensible ladies!

1.00 p.m. Course 124 degrees, wild south east 18 to 20 knots, cruising at 11 knots waves 1.5 to 2.0 metres with white horses. Not a lot to do, the electronics are in charge, just an occasional glance at one of the two Radar screens is enough, We are on the outside passage passing Gorda Cay and the south west point of the Abacos.

### Monday 2nd February

7.30 a.m. Breakfast "in the hand" in the wheelhouse brought up by the very grey - looking Basque Chef, Jakobi. The wind has increased the waves larger with breaking tops, the boat is digging into the troughs, I and you can't see anything for spray. The captain, Walter, decides to alter course to 178 degrees to take the inside passage and seek protection from the i. lands, but there is 10 miles to go before then. With caution, I take a look on the aft deck. A large exercise machine has collided with the cycle machine which is entangled with two collapsed sunbeds. The other 10 chairs and three polished tables are waltzing about at random. In the elegant saloon, the 30" T.V. doors are flapping, and a \$5,000 inlaid card-table had just descended a flight of stairs. Three silk flower arrangements and a tree rolled around on the Persian carpet! From the galley came frequent sounds of crashing crockery interspersed with foreign oaths. It is dark by the time Walter finds the lee of Crooked Island and drops the hook at Landrail Point for a welcome night of respite.



### Tuesday 3rd February

At 11a.m. the weather forecast still not good. Anchor up to find better shelter. We are radioed and guided in through coral heads to Portland Harbour by a concerned Islander in a small dory. By 2.30 p.m. George and the crew are not happy with the anchor; we are being blown towards the coral. Because of the heightened chop it is now difficult to see the coral and it takes almost three hours and near darkness before we are secure.

### Wednesday 4th February

Having now realised that furniture etc. moves in rough weather, the crew tied everything possible down and taped up drawers and cupboards. 8 a.m. anchor up and thread a reciprocal course out through the coral into mountainous seas with nowhere to go but onward. Pass Castle Island.



### Thursday 5th February

Sea much calmer with moderate swell, course 123 degrees, speed 10 knots. Distance run approx. 610 nm. Don, fishing on the stern, hooks a 5 ft. Marlin which escapes with all his-line; the washing machine is back in service after flying across the galley, Erin, the first mate, is washing the salt off the Mahogany, and I am trying to find a seat in the sun to watch the flying fish.

### Friday 6th February

The barometer is rising; the motion of the boat is more comfortable in the E.S.E. 12 knot breeze. Speed 10 knots and only 109 nm to Tortola. At 5 p.m., we pass Puerto Rico 30 miles to starboard and by 7 p.m. see the islands of St. Thomas and Little Tobago. Another hour and we are coming through the "The Narrows", only half a mile wide between the steep cliffs of Great and Little Thatch and St. Johns Island.

The harbour at Road Town Tortola is rather crowded with imposing Schooners, *Legacy*, *The Other Woman* and several more. By 10.30 p.m. we are at anchor off the first land for six days and over 1000 nm. Tortola is the Spanish name for Turtle Dove, and is the largest of the British Virgin Islands but only 21.5 square miles. The highest point is Mount Sage at 1780ft.

On Sunday, six of us took a taxi round the hairpin bends and tortuous, narrow potholed roads up to the prescribed viewpoints, catching tantalising glimpses of the turquoise sea lapping white sand beaches, and passing many of the natives walking to their nearest village

church dressed in their "Sunday best". In spite of the heat the girls wore thick white lace tights and the men had on their black Trilby hats and a dark suit. Vegetation was lush and colourful. The properties ranged from very opulent to tumbledown huts with the chickens and goats wandering about and the family cow tethered to the nearest tree.

Apart from the short walk down a quaint street with dilapidated and garish shops followed by lunch at the Yacht Club on the day before, that is all we saw of Tortola. By 1.30 p.m. the anchors were up to motor four miles across to the 1.7 square miles of Peter Island to anchor in Deadman's Bay. The 16 ft. rib dory zapped us onto this idyllic beach with silver sand, palm trees and dazzling crystal clear water - wonderful - true to the brochures, just what we've been waiting for - and seven more islands to go!!



Monica Matterson

*A general map of the Caribbean cruising area:*

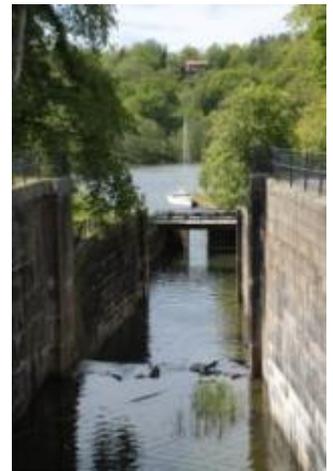


## INLAND ACROSS SWEDEN ON HORNPIPE 2

It had long been on our Baltic “to-do” list to cross Sweden from west to east through the two canals and the great lakes which connect the two coasts. The Trollhatte canal goes from Gothenburg on the west coast to Lake Vanern, which is the largest lake in western Europe. The Gota canal connects the east side of Lake Vanern to the east coast at Mem, via Lake Vattern and other smaller lakes. The direct route across Sweden is 270nm.



We managed to sail the first part of the trip into the Trollhätte canal, up the Göta Älv (river) which is quite wide. It is 44.5nm long, with a total rise of 44 meters. There are two locks of 6m rise, then a huge lock system at Trollhattan with 4 locks of 8m rise, 3 in one flight. There is a class of cargo vessels called Vänermax which are built to the maximum dimensions to fit into the locks - about 89m long. All commercial vessels take priority at bridges and locks.



Trollhättan is the site of three generations of lock systems which bypass the falls, which have a total drop of 32.5meters. An attempt was made in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century to build a system; three locks were built but the project was suspended. The first complete system, opened in 1800, had 8 locks in two flights with a size of 36.6m long by 6.35m wide carrying ships with cargo up to 140 tons. The second system (1844) consists of 11 locks in 3 flights with a size of 35.6m by 7.28m carrying ships with cargo up to 300 tons. The system in use today dates from 1916 and consists of a flight of three locks, a pool then a fourth lock. In the 1970s the capacity of the locks was increased so that ships today can carry a cargo of up to 4000 tons. The length of the locks is now 90m and the width 13.7m. We moored up before lunch at the base of the second generation system in a beautiful area with grass and trees.

The whole area is very rural, and we enjoyed walking around the three systems, then taking a lovely walk around a circular track through the woods to the massive Olidan hydro power station, built to utilize the power from the falls. The first section was completed in 1910 housing 4 Francis type turbines, with an additional 4 added in 1914 and a further 5 turbines in 1921.



We proceeded up through the locks with no dramas. It was very helpful having a friend on board to give us three pairs of hands! We were able to choose the smooth side and get adjacent to a ladder to hold ourselves in with a central spring, swapping two springs on the ladder as the water raised us up. The other side of the locks is much more open and hard to move lines up widely separated bollards. The total amount of water for one lock cycle is stupendous, in excess of 30,000 cu.m. Since we locked through alone, it was impressive to have it all used just for us, but Sweden is not short of water!

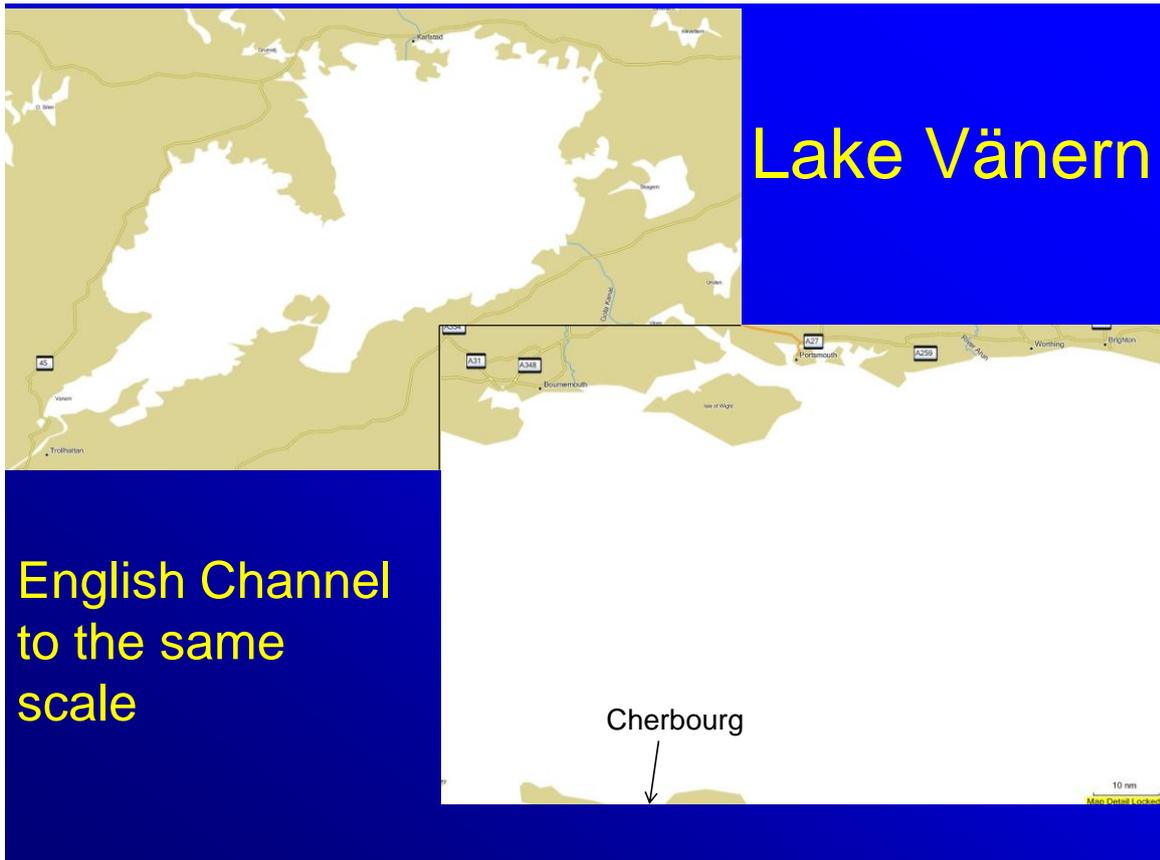
We stopped in the little marina just after lock four in order to do the other circular walk around the falls and sluices and through the woods. A massive and impressive engineering project again, dating from the building of the power station. We were not there for one of the times when they open all the sluices to allow the river to flow down its own natural gorge, which would be a fantastic sight.

One more lock takes you to Vänersborg on the edge of Lake Vänern which is the third largest in Europe, and the largest in western Europe. Rough dimensions are 60 miles by 40 miles (*roughly equivalent to English Channel between Weymouth to Portsmouth across to France*). We spent over two weeks sailing to interesting towns and small friendly boat clubs around the lake: there is so much good sailing, places to visit and islands to anchor amongst that many local boats never leave the lake, just as many boats never cruise further than the Solent to Weymouth and across to France and the Channel Islands!



## 2 Canals – Trollhätte & Göta





In Lake Vanern we had a lovely mooring outside Läckö Slott, a castle which was originally built as a bishop's palace in 1298 on a peninsula which was easy to defend.

Midsummer is THE big celebration for Scandinavians, and Sjötorp is a small but lively holiday place which is both on the lake and also one end of the Göta canal, and was thus a popular place to spend midsummer. We watched the raising of the midsummer pole and the traditional dancing and games afterwards. We took a walk through the forest around the bay in which the village is located. During our walk we found an old substantial stone jetty, with old railway lines descending into the water. It transpired that this bay was used for shipping out timber, and the rails were used for rolling the logs down into rafts to be towed away.

We spent several days moored in the centre of the city of Karlstad where there were several interesting museums, and good cycle routes around the local delta. The local museum had an exceptionally well designed walk through history of this region from the Stone Age to the modern era. We learned that Sweden produced most of the iron goods for Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries having both huge quantities of iron ore and trees to make charcoal to process it. The market for Swedish iron collapsed when Britain started producing iron goods more cheaply based on their supplies of coal, rather than having to make charcoal. This led to a lot of poverty and mass emigration from Sweden. Timber and paper subsequently became the main industry.

We left Karlstad to sail gently with the wind into the archipelago in the northern part Lake Vanern. We found a great anchorage, deserted apart from the wildlife. Regular readers will know that we always set a riding sail to stabilize our movements at anchor: when we came to take this out of the cockpit locker we discovered we had left our bicycles at Karlstad! A 5:00 am start saw us retrace our steps and retrieve them, much to the amusement of the guest harbour staff.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June we were back to Sjörtorp and into the Göta canal itself. Its nickname is the “divorce ditch”, but we found the locks very easy to manage, following the techniques they recommend. Mostly the height difference is only about 2.5 metres per lock.

We were pleasantly surprised just how much we did enjoy going through the canal. We sailed a couple of times under jib alone with a following wind, (having at that time not read the T&C which state that sailing is not permitted!). Mostly we motored gently at a speed of 3 knots or so. It is so beautiful through different types of terrain that we went as slowly as reasonable to be able to look around. Hornpipe 2 is so easy to handle that we did not find it at all stressful to transit all the locks and bridges. Richard was specialized in doing all the close quarters handling on our Freedom “Hornpipe”. On Hornpipe 2 we both handle her, and both in turn helmed or crewed her through locks – no divorce ditch for us!

When locking up there is no way to get off the boat in the lock to fix lines, so it is necessary to drop one person off on a little stone jetty on the approach to the lock. This person carries the bow line as the other drives the boat into the lock. The helm throws the stern line up to the crew who drops the bowline in the end over a ring, while the helm makes the line off tight on board. The crew then puts the bow line through a ring and passes it back down to



the helm who puts it around the cockpit winch and thus controls both lines. After the lock is full, the crew releases the lines and either gets back on board or takes the bow line forward to the next lock in a flight. Locking down was even easier, although the lock-keepers preferred one person to stay ashore and take the line forward in a flight of locks.

All the locks are manned by students, who have wireless controllers to operate the sluices and gates. They try and get traffic through very efficiently, and in a flight they will establish if boats width allows them to cross so they can do a double locking (boats locking down and up in the same cycle). The lock-keepers also operate all the minor bridges on the canal by remote control – they are all monitored by cameras. The speed limit is 5 kn and most boats proceed at that speed, but we found the scenery so beautiful that we tended to go at 3kn. That meant they often opened the bridges a little early when they saw us coming, until they got used to our slow speed!

Major road bridges, and all the rail bridges, are operated at a more senior level – the railways control their own lifting bridges with openings much less frequent – at the bridge carrying the main railway line between Stockholm and Gothenburg they advise they may not open the bridge again that day unless one arrives before 1500.



The Göta Canal system is built to the same dimensions as the 1844 lock system in Trollhattan, so the maximum boat size is just under 30m. There is also an air draft maximum of 22m. There are some very old passenger boats operating in the canal, and one always hopes not to meet them in a narrow section!

You pay a fixed sum according to boat length to transit the canal, but this includes up to 5 nights at each of the guest moorings. These are mostly just alongside pontoon on wider sections, but with toilet, showers, laundry and pump out facilities ashore. Some of them are in towns, others in lovely rural positions and we often stayed more than one night somewhere.



We sometimes retraced our passage along part of the canal on our bikes on the towpath, or cycled ahead to reconnoitre our next choice of mooring. Perspective from the bikes was very different; much of the route was in the shade of trees which was very welcome in early July when we had very hot days.

Going west to east, one rapidly reaches Lake Viken which is the highest point of the canal at 91.8 metres above sea level. We were disappointed that there was insufficient wind to sail, now we had the opportunity! Within the lake were stretches which had been “canalized” through shallows, also a section of canal which crossed a peninsula. It was all incredibly beautiful. The walls of these sections had large bollards on, where they would have originally warped through sailing ships when the wind didn’t oblige. The final canalized section took us into the edge of the village of Forsvik, which claims to be Sweden’s first industrial area, long before the canal was built, as a result of obtaining power by damming the river.



The power was used for a pulping mill, and a flour mill. Its history dates back to the middle ages. There was an iron foundry with a water powered hammer, a shipyard, a smithy and lots of workers' accommodation. The old industrial area is now a heritage site, and we enjoyed the museum and walking around the old buildings, much of which are preserved as they were. The Forsvik lock and bridge, both built in 1813, is the oldest lock and the oldest iron bridge on the Göta canal, with the highest fall of 3.5 meters. The lock is original and has very rough and uneven walls, so we studied these carefully to work out where we wanted to position Hornpipe for descending. When we left we made sure we were first in to the lock in the morning – in fact we were the only ones in that lock cycle! This led us across a small lake to the town of Karlsborg, on the edge of Lake Vättern.



There had been a market place at Karlsborg as early as 1225, but in 1819 the King decided to build a massive fortification here. This was after Sweden had lost Finland and the Åland Islands to Russia, and the Swedes feared a Russian incursion into mainland Sweden. The fortress was designed to house a large contingent of soldiers (6,000-8,000), and provide a safe retreat for the Royal Family in the event of an invasion. If this happened, the parliament was also to be relocated here. Sweden's gold reserves were to be moved here. There is still an active military presence, and a number of areas are off-limits to visitors. The fortress is located on a peninsula and the main barracks is a brick construction, 678 metres long, clad in massive limestone blocks on the external façade, allegedly the longest building in Europe. The whole site is surrounded by massive ramparts. During the prolonged construction (which was finished circa 1909), a whole civilian town grew up within the ramparts with dwellings, a hospital and workshops. By the 1820s a network of tree-lined streets had developed. It now has the feel of a lovely small town with wide boulevards.



We exited Karlsborg into Lake Vättern where we were again able to get some good sailing. We spent 10 days sailing around the lake, whereas the majority of boats cross straight across to the eastern section of the canal.



One of the highlights in the lake is to visit another castle, Vadstena. The town was very important in the Middle Ages having grown up around the Birgittine Abbey, which housed both monks and nuns, and was consecrated in 1384. The monks and nuns were strictly separated but could

converse through a barred wall in their exercise areas, and exchange notes and books through a rotating box! The Abbey became a major place of pilgrimage. The castle was built in 1554 by Gustav Vasa as a fortification. Around 100 smallholdings and their buildings were cleared for the strategic site of the castle. It is perhaps the most startling castle to arrive at by boat in that the guest harbour is in its moat! Like many castles, it was converted into a residence for his son Magnus, and to a Renaissance palace by his son Johan III, with the addition of a second storey.

After ten days in Lake Vättern, our next destination was Motola on its eastern bank, to re-enter the Göta canal. There were several delights in Motala to entertain us, and we used our bikes extensively.

Motala was built up in conjunction with the building of the Göta Canal. Linking the west and east Swedish coasts via the lakes had been suggested as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. One of the reasons was to avoid paying Sound Dues to Denmark, who controlled entry to the Baltic. Detailed proposals were drawn up in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the first Trollhätte canal linking Gothenburg to Lake Vänern was opened in 1800. Baltzar von Platen, a retired naval officer, submitted a proposal to King Karl III in 1810. His proposal was approved and a Royal Charter given to the Göta Canal Company. The Company was given the resources to commence building – mostly Swedish soldiers, but also some Russian prisoners, and the ground and forests required. Most of the canal was dug by hand – many sections through hard rock. Altogether some 58,000 men were employed, the average yearly workforce being about 3,000, taking a total of approximately 7 million man days. Von Platen was aware of the canal programme in Britain, and he employed Thomas Telford as a consultant. Telford arrived in July 1812 and was there till early October.

The route runs from Sjötorp on the east side of Lake Vänern to Mem on the Baltic sea. Of the total route of 190 km, 103 km is through lakes and 87 km is dug canal. There are a total of 58 locks, arranged where possible in flights to reduce the cost of manning them. We don't know the original number of bridges, but now there are 45. Telford took twenty days to survey the terrain, resolve problems with levels and topographic details, travelling on horseback. Taking out the time we spent sailing in Lake Vättern, we were in the canal for 24 nights!



Sadly von Platen died in 1829 before it was complete, although the western section between Lakes Vänern and Vättern was opened in 1822. His grave is just east of Motala, in a site he chose himself, alongside the canal - his lifetime's achievement. At his request, other members of his family are buried there, as is the chief engineer of the canal. The king also died before the canal was completed – the eastern arm between Lake Vättern and the Baltic Sea was opened in September 1832 by King Karl XIV Johan.

Von Platen was also instrumental in designing the layout of Motala as it expanded, in a fan shape facing the bay leading to the canal entry. In addition, he was responsible for founding Motala Verkstad on the island between the canal and the fast flowing river Motala Strom. This company became a huge industrial works successfully building ships, and later locomotives. It specialized latterly in building huge crankshafts for marine engines. Another fascinating industrial museum, but sadly Motala Verkstad has not been able to survive against the competition from Asia and is now just a museum. We also visited the exhibition about the building of the canal, but it was rather short of explanation – lots of original plans, maps and surveys and some equipment but little detail.

After Motala, the weather in the second half of July became very cold and rather unpleasant. Blankets and heating in late July are not normal: Swedes told us it was the worst summer since 1972, or maybe 1962! For many people, including land-based tourists, the highlights of the canal are the two flights of locks – 5 at Borensult and 7 at Berg. However, descending a flight of 7 locks in pouring rain and a chill wind was not at all a highlight for us. But it did mean that there was not the normal huge audience! This took us into Lake Roxen; in other circumstances we would have sailed across but beating into cold wet weather didn't appeal (are we getting old?), so we took the soft option and motored across, steering from inside with the autopilot!



We reached Söderköping, 3 miles before the end of the canal, at the end of July. The weather suddenly improved dramatically and summer finally arrived. Söderköping is a historic town, possibly once the capital of Sweden, certainly the site of coronations and parliamentary sessions, and an early important Baltic trading port. It was protected by the castle at Stegeborg in the narrow part of the Slätbaket inlet on which it is situated. The oldest part of the town centre has been preserved with its tiny wooden houses, and a lot of archaeological work has been carried out. An interesting display shows 14 different layers of street through the ages. The town lost importance in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and is now quite small but with a lovely holiday atmosphere. The canal harbour has a wide tree lined promenade with many shops and restaurants, and ice-cream shop of the year. We spent a couple of nights here, then finally left the canal at Mem to spend the fine weather sailing in the Swedish east coast archipelago.

### **Some Facts and Figures**

We left Gothenburg on 9<sup>th</sup> June and left the canal at Mem on 1<sup>st</sup> August. The canal fees cost us £562 which included our moorings on 27 nights (i.e. less than £21 per night for all facilities inc electric and laundry). We spent an additional 25 nights in the large lakes. Direct route 210nm, but we sailed 470nm – a very leisurely 52 nights and days!

Largest lake in Europe: Lake Ladoga, Russia 17,700 km<sup>2</sup>

Largest lake in Western Europe: Lake Vanern 5,655 km<sup>2</sup>

Lake Vattern is the sixth largest lake in Europe at 1,893 km<sup>2</sup>

This is larger than the combined area of the IJsselmeer (1,100 km<sup>2</sup>) and the Markemeer (700 km<sup>2</sup>) in Holland.

Helen & Richard Blackmore 

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## TIME FOR A CHANGE

Polly and I have sailed together for many years. We have owned four boats all based on the south coast varying in size from 29 to 36ft. Over the period the two of us have sailed to the Channel Islands and beyond several times as well as trips along the south coast both East and West. We have been on and organised NPCA rallies, had a mooring on lease at Ocean Village Marina and even got married on Warrior in Portsmouth harbour.....So why , last year, did we decide to sell both the boat and mooring, jointly purchase a 21 ft. Beneteau on Rutland Water and buy a motor home?



It was for several reasons really. First and foremost was a distinct lack of enthusiasm. Long cross channel trips no longer had the same appeal. Neither of us have ever liked long trips. Frankly we both found any sailing longer than 3 or 4 hours pretty boring. The only plus side being the achievement felt when we arrived after what we called a long trip. The other reality of these trips is that most times unless the weather was ideal we resorted to the engine or motor sailing.

Secondly, and also important, was considering the cost of owning and maintaining a boat, were we getting value for money?

I calculated that for what it cost us to keep the boat per week we could charter for less both home and abroad. It was a very nice feeling to have a boat we could go to at any time but considering costs involved tempered with an inward feeling of guilt when it wasn't used that 'nice feeling' came at a rather excessive price.

Thirdly and not quite so important was the fact that we were so familiar with the Solent Area. We had kept the boat at Torquay for a year in an attempt to raise our enthusiasm but concluded that as a sailing centre the Solent is hard to beat. It has also seemed much windier in recent years. We have driven down several times and although we have sailed it has been too wet , windy or cold to be having what would be described as an enjoyable sail. Marinas down there also seem to be getting more crowded. In season it is becoming unwise to turn up at a marina without booking first.

Fourthly and more personally the fact that Polly has fairly recently had to have two complete new knee replacements obviously knocks her confidence. From my view point rapidly approaching three score years and ten means time is running out for all we want to do.

We are both keen travellers, have so far been to 46 countries and are eager to see more.

We are both aware that if we wished we could still purchase a smaller boat down south, keep it on a cheaper mooring and just use it when we wanted without the feeling of guilt when it wasn't being used but certainly at present we have no inkling to do this.

So like many sailors we have purchased a motor home. Ok it costs as much as a boat but no mooring costs, we moor it at the house, no tides or wind to bother about, no long drive to the south coast, no mal-de-mer and not the same guilt feeling when it is not being used. Also the horizons are much wider. We drove down through France to Spain last year and are hopefully driving to the Algarve this year.



Sailing is and will remain a wonderful pastime. We are and will remain members of New Parks, will continue to go on rallies when we can, hope to be taking part in racing on Rutland Water this year and will be chartering in the Med. and possibly the Caribbean in the future.

Did we make the right decision...who knows.....but we both agree neither of us have had any regrets about selling the boat , we feel a relief at not having the responsibility but for the future....again who knows.

John Green 

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



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NPCA keep members informed of rallies and other events by email and text message. If you do not wish to receive these messages, please tick the appropriate box.

I do not wish to be contacted by email  I do not wish to be contacted by text message

RYA Sailing Qualifications: None  Competent Crew  Day Skipper   
Yacht Master Coastal  Yacht Master Offshore  Yacht Master Ocean

Sailing Experience .....

.....

I wish to apply for membership of New Parks Cruising Association. I enclose the annual membership fee of £10.00 which is renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> October annually. Please make your cheque payable to **New Parks Cruising Association** and then post to: **P A Green, NPCA Membership Secretary, 5 Orton Close, Rearsby, Leicester LE7 4XZ** or set up a Standing Order using the details below.

Signature ..... Date .....

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To .....Bank plc      Sorting Code  -  -

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Upon receipt and upon 1<sup>st</sup> October annually thereafter, until further notice, please pay, from my account number , the sum of ten pounds (£10.00) to Lloyds TSB Bank plc, High Street Leicester Branch, 30-94-97 for credit of New Parks Cruising Association Account Number 03299191 quoting my name..... as reference with each payment.

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