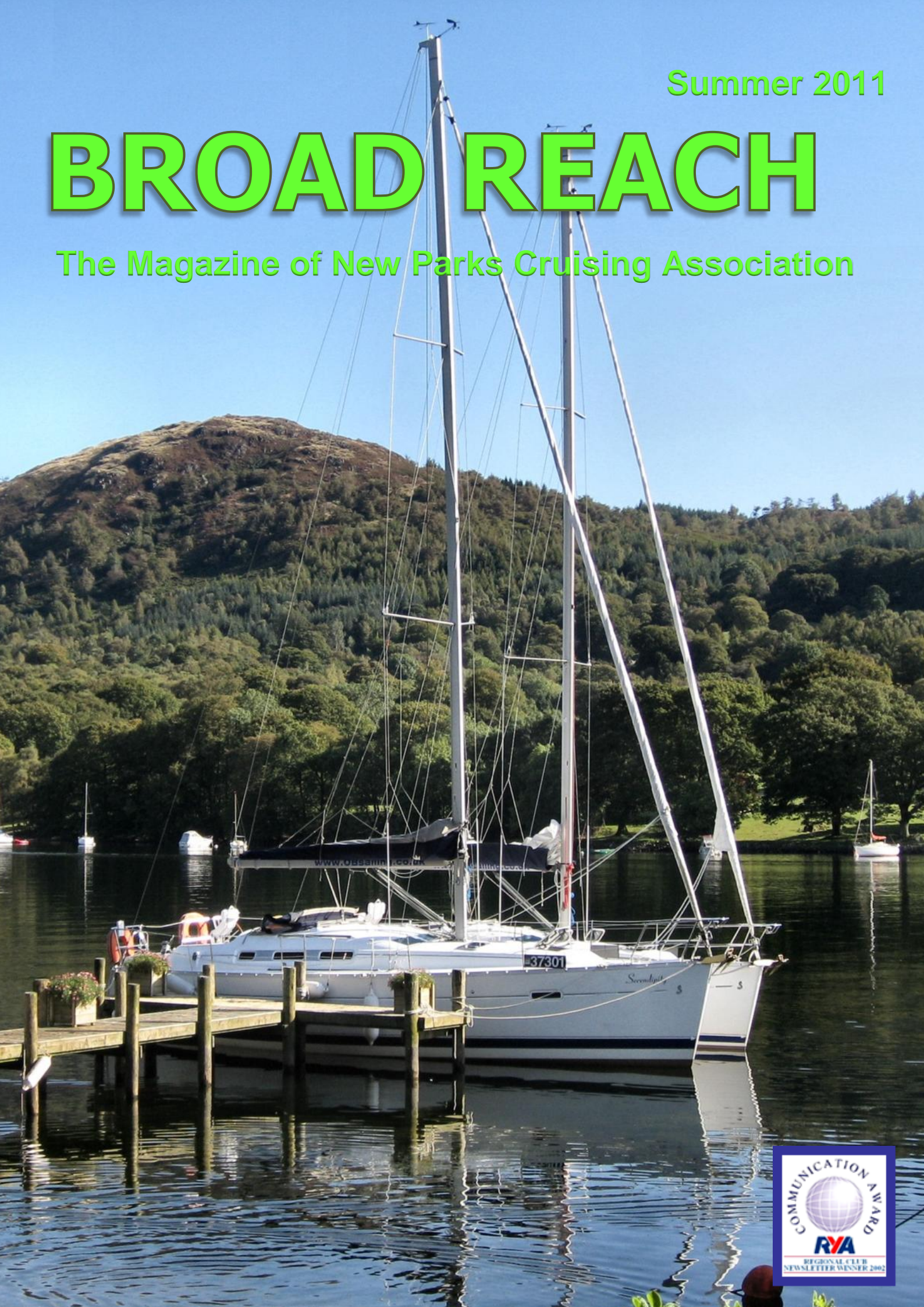


Summer 2011

BROAD REACH

The Magazine of New Parks Cruising Association



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NPCA FLAG OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2010/11

NPCA FLAG OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
Commodore	Yvonne Margerison
Vice Commodore	Eric McDowall (Sailing School Principal)
Rear Commodore	John Green
Chairman	Mike Flint
Vice Chairman	Peter Thorne (Editor, Broad Reach)
Honorary Secretary	Yvonne Margerison
Honorary Treasurer	Mike McQuade
Committee	Pauline Green (Membership Secretary) Dave Richardson Bill Hudson – Founding Member Stuart Rowland (Website responsibility)

NPCA PROGRAMME 2011

Date	Event Type	Subject
18 January (Tuesday)	Talk Helen & Richard	"Cruising in the Baltic"
15 February (Tuesday)	Talk Steven Foster	"The life and times of Admiral Lord Nelson "
6 March (Sunday)	Commodores Lunch	Lingdale Golf Club
15 March (Tuesday)	Talk James Griffin	"Canal boat from the South Coast to Scotland, by sea"
19 April	Talk Eric McDowall	"Are you suffering from Skills Fade?" (Cheese Buffet)
21 to 26 April	Practical Sailing Course	Instructor Eric McDowall
13,14,15, May	Spring Rally	Organiser Dave Richardson
31 May to 6 June	Practical Training Course	Instructor Eric McDowall
21 June	Motor Museum	Mick McQuade organiser
25 June	Round the IOW Race	Organiser Island Sailing Club
16 17 18 September	Windermere Weekend	Only if there is a demand for this
20 September	Talk	Details to be Announced
7,8,9,October	Autumn Rally	Organiser John and Polly Green
18 October	Talk	Details to be Announced
4,5,6, November	Broads Rally	Organiser Eric McDowall
15 November	Talk and AGM	Details to be Announced
2,3,4 December	Christmas Rally/ Event	Details to be Announced Organiser Mike Flint
20 December	Talk Mike Gillingham	Details to be Announced

Notes from the Editor

Welcome to another edition of *Broad Reach* as always production dates are very dependent on the number and timing of the valuable contributions sent to me. There is always a temptation to use old copy from previous editions to make up space; this I try to avoid. As in the last edition I have included one article you may recognise. A very big: “**Thank You**” to all those who went to the trouble of producing something for this edition.

I have intentionally kept the contributing author’s own style of presentation; injecting some editorial changes where appropriate.

One big ask from the editor is that, if you provide an article can I please have it in electronic format; with any pictures of printable quality. To save hours of proofing can you also please bring your contribution up to at least “O” Level English standard.

Our new website (www.sailnpca.org) will automatically display *Broad Reach* for you in Google documents on your computer.

Finally, you may have noticed a handful of new members at club nights; please welcome and talk to new members at these evenings our new members are so very important to the club.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Thorne", followed by a period.

Peter Thorne

Jottings from the Commodore

Well what is there to jot about this year? As I write we have finished our Tuesday Club nights at the Royal Oak, Kirby Muxloe, until next September, Tuesday the 20th. We have had some interesting, educating and unusual talks given by our speakers. Talks ranges from the inspiring canal boat which sailed from the South coast around Lands' End, across the Irish Sea, then up the East Coast of Ireland and on to Scotland, exploring its two major canals before returning to home base. Quite a feat for a sailing boat let alone a canal boat. To our own Helen and Richard Blackmore who sail the Baltic for six months of the year and then come home and give us a fabulous talk about their adventures, and to James Stevens retired training officer for the RYA giving us a taste of RYA life behind the scenes as well as many other inspiring speakers.

Now NPCA has bred many intrepid explorers over the years. With Mike and Cathy Sullivan sailing round the World for 7 years our latest explorers are Mike and Anne Hartshorn who are in the process of sailing round the world. They crossed the Atlantic in December 2010 and are now exploring the Caribbean; last port of call Jolly Harbour, Antigua. Although they will have moved on by the time this edition reaches you. You can follow their adventures on their blog at www.sailamail.com then look for their yacht "Nimue"

So on to the rallies.... The Spring Rally with its start at Coronation buoy led us all round the Solent, finishing with a meal at the Folly Inn and dancing on the tables. This time all our boats arrived at the Folly Inn. This was quite a change from choosing this as a Christmas venue when we have been plagued with gales for the last three years. For the Autumn Rally our venue was the Southampton Yacht club who provided us with an excellent meal on Saturday night. Yacht "Gernee" provided rum and coffee prior to everyone sailing back to their home berths.

Our Christmas Rally followed its usual course of bad weather. This time it was snow and some tricky driving that caused problems. But as we had booked our meal at the Victory pub in the Hamble most people managed to make it by car using boats as overnight accommodation.

The Broads Rally was organised by Nick Taylor and a number of helpers this year. This rally gives an opportunity for members who do not own a boat to charter and have an opportunity to sail and race in sheltered waters. With good meals organised on Friday and Saturday and pleasant company throughout the weekend.

Our Sailing Principal Eric McDowall has run several successful Practical courses this year including one in September. This culminated in two of our members Michael Day and Mick McQuade gaining the RYA Yachtmaster Coastal certificate which were awarded to them at the Commodores Lunch.

Our last event of the season was The Commodores Lunch which was again held at the lovely Lindale Golf Club and was again an excellent event, with good food, good company and attended by 76 people. Mick McQuade our treasurer once again did an excellent job of photographing those who attended, and those receiving trophies. It is well worth looking at them through the email contact he sent out to everyone.

Here's wishing all our sailors well in their cruises long or short. Have a good season.

Yvonne Margerison (Commodore)

Life member makes contribution

Life membership, whilst offering long term membership benefits also reduces club income. Some who recognised this have made ex-gratia contributions as a voluntary payment by way of thanks for the continued benefits received. Below is one such example for which the club is most grateful.

5/2/2011

Dear Joanne,

I am sending a donation to help the Association. As a Life Member I acknowledge the benefits I gain (free!); although I don't come to meetings very often, as Kirby Muxloe feels a long way off for winter night driving!

I helped the local Firemen's Charity last year, by joining in with a weeks sail in Scotland, and in the previous year flotilla sailing in Croatia with my daughter and her husband kept me in touch.

I keep busy. My best wishes to you, and I hope to see you from time to time

Yours
Maureen.

The RYA Yachtmaster Instructor's Conference, 28th-29th January 2011

The following is a report from the NPCA Principal from attendance at the 2011 YMI conference and is not a verbatim quote of any of the conference speaker's words, but more of a delegate's view of proceedings. This therefore does not represent accurately the views of the RYA.

The unannounced title of the conference was 'Navigation'.

All the RYA top brass has changed. New Chief Exec, new training managers, etc. A lively team and I think are going to be successful for our future.

Craig Burton, the new RYA Chief Instructor Sail Cruising opened the conference at the Bournemouth Marriott Highcliff Hotel. He welcomed the delegates and introduced the first speaker, who represented the conference sponsor's: "Raymarine".

In his short, 15 minute presentation, the UK Sales & Marketing executive told us how Raymarine had had a difficult time since the beginning of the recession back in 2009. Despite some reorganisation and a period of contraction at their HQ, the company had been put up for sale and was most fortunate in being bought by the American FLIR Company. FLIR have a specialisation in thermal imaging video cameras, which sold into the defence and high end security markets, with cameras having a typical sale price in the order of £2,500. The marriage enabled both companies to benefit from the other's expertise and capabilities, with Raymarine bringing a world-wide dealer and service network, and FLIR looking for a partner with specialisation in rugged displays. Raymarine hope to bring a new range of navigation equipment into their catalogues, later in 2011.

Rod Johnson spoke next. Rod is her majesties Chief Coastguard. He'd been in the service for many years. He spoke about the current reorganisation and what that meant to leisure boaters, their main "customer". A change in the way that SAR (search & rescue) centres were interconnected in communication terms, is intended to make the service as a whole, less vulnerable to major infrastructure failure. He showed us data about incident numbers at centres such as Solent, on a busy day in the middle of August and made comparison to a CG station somewhere north of a line drawn between the Mersey and the Humber, experiencing a very different sort of "busy day". In both cases the stations having the same number of Coastguards "on watch". The reorganisation is intended to enable an overloaded station to shed part of its workload to another. He spoke about the fact that during "distress working", it was often the weather broadcast that was the first thing that were dropped as "non-essential" and said that perhaps this was not necessary. He envisaged that perhaps in the future, the UK would have a VHF channel dedicated to continuous, 24-7 transmission of weather information, perhaps that would have a certain amount of automation in it, but it should enable us to get weather any time of night or day. The delegates showed they thought this was a good idea.

Rod thought that HMCG was going to get more involved in environmental protection and security of our borders, than they are at present. He spoke about the poor take up of the use of DSC in the leisure sector (in VHF radio coms). He currently felt that there were too many (as he put it) people going to sea in boats they had purchased for £30; it was, therefore, going to be necessary to continue to monitor Ch16. He said that we must try to get Ch16 “de-cluttered” though, so HMCG had a better chance of hearing that weak Mayday transmission.

Rod spoke about “Skills Fade”, the tendency for once a year sailors to have forgotten technical skills that require knowledge, even if they learned these skills once during a RYA course. He spoke about Westminster’s decision to withdraw funding for HMCG’s ETVs (Emergency Towing Vessels). He said it was ironic that the HMCG tug, which eventually pulled HMS Astute off of the Isle of Skye, had been given its notice of withdrawal only two days before it was assisting HMS Astute! He said that in the light of soon losing the ETVs that HMCG were looking at new methods of risk managing large tankers in our Coastal waters. In the case of such a vessel suffering major propulsion failure, that attaching a powerful tug quickly, had been the best plan to avoid large coastal pollution incidents that could arise from one of these going aground.

For more, see: http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-environmental/mcga-dops_cp_environmental-counter-pollution.htm

Rod spoke about TEP, clearly a sore subject to him (Time Expired Pyrotechnics). He made an amusing joke about HMCG being in the dangerous waste disposal business. He said that talks had been going on and he could see an emerging new network of disposal centres, possibly based on the sort of service you may (in the future) expect your marina operator to be involved with. Rod dealt with questions from the floor. Overall, a truly entertaining speaker!

More: <http://www.ybw.com/forums/showthread.php?t=234610>

At 1200, Professor David Last, from the Royal Institute of Navigation, commenced a really interesting talk about GPS. In less than a generation, GPS has evolved from a navigation aid to those of us that go to sea, to having millions of users who know not the first thing about navigating – and having no interest in it anyway.

He spoke about AGPS (Assisted GPS technology) where, for instance, the accurate clocks on board the GPS satellites were (these days) providing timing signals for many telephone systems in the world. The fact that the basic GPS chip currently costs no more than £1 means that these chips end up in all sorts of equipment. Modern mobile phones (I-phone; I-pad) with positioning capabilities are using a sophisticated system whereby the Satellite ephemeris data is being transmitted to

the phone from the local cell phone mast, which enables the GPS chip to better track the satellite's when (for instance) in a built up area.

David spoke about some incidents (which we as navigators need to be aware of).

On the 1st of January 2004 at 1833UT, the last of the three atomic clocks aboard satellite SVN23, starts to fail. The result at first (for receivers that had SVN23 within their horizon) was a slowly building error of position, which would have been so slow at first and hardly detectable. 15 minutes pass and positions determined using SVN23 are in error by around 500 metres, however the ephemeris is not showing any error data for SVN23. Just after 1845UT, the error due to the clock failure suddenly shot to around 10km and ephemeris data indicated "Not monitored" (incorrectly) instead of "Do not use". I suspect by now, if you had been at Sea at the time, that the readout from your GPS would have been causing some concern. What if (for instance) your Chart Plotter was in control of your autopilot at the time? Ten minutes later and SVN23 is giving positional errors of 40km due to the on board clock error. It takes until 2118UT before ground control overrides the "Not monitored" flag and declares the satellite as unusable.

Since 2007. Recent solar fare activity (that is flares from our Sun) have swamped the weak satellite transmissions and caused, what appears to receivers as, total GPS system failure. Solar "storms" are currently predicted as occurring more often and expected to reach a peak in 2013. The 2007 flare brought about network failure of Santiago mobile phone networks (which shut down for a period of about three hours) as they lost their "clock" signal that they depended on for call billing.

2010 North Italy. Unlicensed TV stations (possibly run by Mafia and transmitting programmes about partly clad ladies) spoofed GPS receivers for 50nM radius due to creating interference on GPS transmission frequencies.

2010 UK, South Wales. White Van man buys £4.99 GPS interference device so that the on-board GPS tracker is unable to report to his employer the true location of his van. Ships reporting GPS giving false position data up to 3nM off shore approaching the local port. Police stop but have no power beyond confiscation. No charges brought.

2010 UK, Midlands. Thieves Hi-Jack 44 ton truck and trailer and activate GPS interference device to prevent owners from being able to track stolen vehicle.

2010. English Channel. Stolen cars being "exported" have GPS interference devices fitted by thieves to prevent possible tracker devices being able to report their position. Ferry Captain reports Navigation equipment giving misleading data and course information on regular Dover – Calais run.

2010. Flamborough Head. Coastguard and Royal Institute of Navigation conduct trials with interference device of less power than a mobile phone, from the lighthouse. Trinity House vessel 'Galatea' monitors situation from varying distance

away. At 1.5nM, Galatea sees Navigation equipment reporting ground speeds of up to Mach 2.5 and reports position varying between northern Russia and somewhere north of Ireland in the Atlantic. Area affected is nearly 4nM from the LH and in a band about 30 degrees wide.

More: http://www.ecacnav.com/downloads/EDCN_WG15_DTI_SO_ION2005.pdf

and <http://www.rin.org.uk/>

Remember that if a ship is receiving erroneous GPS positional data, it will transmit its position using AIS with the same error.

e-Loran could be an answer. (enhanced-Loran). US (under President Bush) say e-Loran will become GPS back-up. More recently funding has been cut and programme (to install) is suspended. e-Loran capable of giving timing data and ground transmitter power level is big enough to make jamming virtually impossible. In Europe, (2011) most countries waiting to see if UK Government is going to support e-Loran installation or not.

Europe: Galileo may be the answer (Europe may claim) but still depends on (weak) signals transmitted from satellites. We may have Galileo operational by 2016. System is now determined as compatible with GPS when up and running.

2011. US make it clear GPS would be switched off if US threatened.

2011. Russian GLONASS could be operational by March.

2011. China launching satellites for GPS – op date not yet released.

2021. One hundred and forty GPS type satellites orbit the earth. Will we still be able to see the Sun?

Lesson to take on: use GPS data as an aid to navigation but use it as one of a variety of inputs.

After lunch, Jane Hall introduced the RYA e-Learning programme and the “Basic Safety & Navigation” course which is now available to RTCs (Recognised Training Centres, NPCA is a RTC) to sell. This course has taken a year to get to release, which happened at the 2011 London Boat Show. RTCs can sell the on-line course providing they meet the additional requirements of RYA, which of course include being able to give “on-line” support. This will enable those centres to be able to sell the course to a worldwide market. The European CEVNI course and test is also available from centres “on-line” and the first customer to complete was from New Zealand.

The RYA refers to this as: “blended learning” and are also working towards e-Books for I-Pad and I-phone.

Jonathan Bailey followed Jane. Jonathan is race director for Clipper Ventures plc. He spoke about the loss of Cork Clipper on 14th January 2010. Cork Clipper struck a reef named Gosong Pampanga in the Java Sea, 200 miles Northeast of Jakarta, in the night and in pitch dark. Other clipper yachts rescued all sixteen on board. The reef is more than 60nM from anywhere inhabited.

Cutting a long story short, Jonathan went through the events that led up to the grounding, the skippers qualifying requirements and the situation within this race leg. The overall account (and the report of the inquiry) has to lead you to decide that the skipper had failed in a number of ways that contributed to the incident. They were 4th in the leg. The skipper had rested previously – he was not particularly stressed or tired. He was navigating. He needed to round the reef and change from an Easterly course to a Northerly course.

He had set up a Waypoint 6 cables on the East side of the reef into the chart plotter. He was trying to get a Radar fix on the Racon he thought was with the light, on the reef.

On the Chart plotter, he did not go into the menu system to be able to read the warnings which were printed on the edge of the raster chart that would have warned him about the accuracy of the soundings and reef positions. These were accessible to him, but “cut-off” due to the Raster scan being cropped at the boundary edges of the chart. He failed to notice that the chart had the word “Discontinued” next to the light data. The Pilot book did not show that either the Racon or light was missing. The chart survey data showed that much of the Java Sea was last surveyed in 1867. The charts were up to date with latest corrections. The skipper commenced to harden up onto his new course when he arrived at his waypoint. Shortly after this, Cork Clipper ran aground on the west side of Gosong Mampango, which is approximately nine cables further east of its position as shown on the chart(s). Neither the light or Racon have functioned for some years – both are missing. The skipper assumed he had run onto its east side. He thought at first that the wind might blow him off and into deeper water but in fact the wind pushed her further onto the reef. Cork Clipper started to break up. The crew abandoned to life rafts.

For more: <http://www.gov.je/Government/Pages/StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=362>
and <http://www.rte.ie/news/2010/0114/yacht.html>

Lesson to take on: don't put total reliance on electronic navigation. Read the warnings on each chart.

October 10, 2009. Loss of the yacht 'Price Waterhouse Coopers'. Australia: race commences 10pm Friday. 92nM, 24-yacht Flinders Islet Race, organised by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia. The skipper had been at work all day and he helmed for the entire race. The yacht ran into Flinders Islet at 0300. The Islet is about 200metres long. The yacht breaks up in 5 minutes. 16 rescued, two, including

the skipper/owner do not come back. Investigation later shows skipper has set a waypoint to one side of the islet that he needs to round. Although closing it in the dark, the Islet is eyeballed. Skipper continues to follow Plotter route to his Waypoint. Fatal mistake..... The charted position of the Islet was plus or minus 50m (total chart error). At the time, local GPS monitoring stations were showing that the Hdop of received data was reaching a peak of plus or minus 50m. This means that the skipper was unaware of a possible total of plus or minus 100m of positional error. He would have had to push a few buttons for his navigation instrument to say there was such an Hdop error, but if your equipment said Hdop was 2.1 would you be concerned?

More: <http://www.news.com.au/national/two-killed-in-yacht-race-to-flinders-island/story-e6frfkvr-1225785233933#ixzz1CXudZUGl>

and <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/10/2710439.htm>

Lesson to take on: don't put total reliance on electronic navigation.

On Sunday we had feedback from the discussion groups. In summary: Shore based Instructors ought to be refreshed. Courses may need to be more modular. Commercial endorsement needs beefing up.

RYA speakers covered "Instructor Membership" and the Partners programme.

New Yacht Clubs are being set up with ventures being supported with Dean & Readyhoff marinas, their berth holders associations, their local RTCs and local Marina support businesses – with the main target of creating a social group. RYA believes this initiative will be beneficial to all. They hope they can get other marina operators to be interested in following this idea up. One of the first things the new Clubs are organising is boat handling tuition, delivered by the RTC.

Craig Burton showed the RYA statistics. Day Skipper numbers are slightly up. SRC numbers are down; other courses are neither seeing growth nor fall in numbers. The RYA has 4500 Instructors in more than 2000 RTCs and has representation in 44 countries.

Changes are coming in the ICC in March 2011. The Ocean Skipper course is being reviewed. There will be changes in the Commercial endorsement. Most learner complaints (about the scheme) are as a result of being on the wrong course.

Our new Chief Exec, Sarah Tresder closed the conference after speaking about the continuing belief that RYA is the best training organisation in the world, in respect of going on the water for leisure use. At the same time RYA defends the individual's right to go to Sea in whatever you like, whenever you like and without having to have taken any part in that training. The RYA schemes are the "Gold" standard.

Eric McDowall, Principal for NPCA, January 2010

The Adventures of Storm Force and her Crew the 'Secret Seven'

Chapter 1 – Ship Ahoy

Following the initial meeting of the seven, expectations of the spacious 38ft “First” were running high. Imagine then, one week later, the thoughts which crossed our minds, when we learned from PD, that the boat had been sold and that the seven of us were to set sail in a 33 ft. something! (That was the message my husband gave me).

The victualling was taken in hand by Eamon who caused a major hold-up in Sainsbury's by running up an extremely large queue, till receipt and bill. The contents of the numerous trolleys filled the estate car we travelled in and we began to wonder what we would do without, when we reached this 'dinghy'. (The gin, whisky and Gerald's home-faxed scrunch being assured of stowage space.)

Bank holiday traffic enabled us all to have a leisurely drive down to Port Solent where, by a strange, but confusing coincidence, the secret code J12 took on new significance. Was it Junction 12 on the motorway? - Was it the number on the pontoon? - Or was it just the map reference? In fact, it was almost certainly all three and so we found ourselves at 112 looking at 'Storm Force' - a thirty-three ft. Westerly Storm into which we fitted the contents of three full cars with ample room for tonic AND dry ginger.

Introductions were made over tea and the usual polite questions about sugar and milk asked for the first but not the last time. The seven consisted of:

Pete Dawkins (PD) Skipper

Eamon Dakin (Coastal Skipper Assessment) Gerald Wilkinson (Coastal Skipper Assessment) David Ingram (Day Skipper Assessment)

Alan Palmer (Day Skipper Assessment)

Lisa Mac Dermid (Competent Crew)

Esther Shaw (Sea Miles)

All eager to do what we had come for, we had supper. Pizza for six, cheese, tomato and oregano on toast, for Alan (He didn't like 'pizza'). Having checked the boat over, found the flares, lashed on the life raft and asked what we could put down the loo, we experimented with the engine, discovering which way the prop kicked etc. Having got to this stage it was decided that we should go to Gosport for the night, so we locked out and began to make ourselves familiar with the instruments and equipment on board. PD showed us how the depth sounder worked with a very effective demonstration of what you should do when it reads zero. Needless to say, we didn't do it again. On arrival at Camper and Nicholson's, minutes before closing time, our

skipper quickly volunteered to pay our dues whilst we played with mooring lines. When he returned, we listened to the shipping forecast before settling down to a well-earned sleep.

Chapter 2 – Mercy Buckets

Have you heard the one about 'How many men does it take to make a cup of tea'? - One to turn the gas bottle on, one to strike a match, one to turn the gas off, one to change the cylinder, one to make a din above your head in the aft cabin etc. In fact it was no joke. Five men managed to fill a kettle but one woman was all it took to light the gas. (You had to hold the knob in).

One crew member did not get tea in bed on Saturday morning which could have been why she doesn't remember much beyond mid-day - or was that because of the condition of the sea? Either way, we set off from Gosport having stocked up with charts, and sailed round to Bembridge on our way across the channel to Cherbourg. Eamon was skipper of the day when the writer was on the deck, but she can't recount much narrative beyond lunchtime, save to say that at one point, Eamon used the bucket at the chart table then passed it to the writer, and no sooner had she finished, than Alan was clambering for it! All the sea berths were full, and David had to make do with the cockpit and leeside. We were all relieved to reach Cherbourg at 2200 hrs. and being rafted to several boats on a floating pontoon was bliss, even though we couldn't get to the showers or buy croissants in the morning.

Chapter 3 – Ready, Steady, Go!

Five sevenths of the crew were now feeling rehydrated - Lisa and PD being seasoned sailors - and we were ready to head for the race. We departed at 1130 with visions of white water and excessive log speeds. At 14.35 we were told by Gerald (S.O.D. of the day) that we were 'into the Alderney Race' which accounted for the strange whirlpools and holes we were experiencing in the sea's surface. The wind died and it was necessary to have the engine on, but not before the instruction had been given to the helmsperson to 'fill those sails!' - It wasn't made clear with what.

The weather was most acceptable for the off-watch crew to take advantage of and this included sunbathing whilst - learning Spanish; reading a novel; and swatting for the Met and Signals exam. Gerald did not get much of a tan, except for the top of his head which each time it popped up from the chart table, instantly disappeared again, in response to questions such as: How deep is the water? - Which way is the tide flowing? - What time is high water at St. Peter Port tomorrow? - How long is a piece of warp?

We berthed at St. Helier at 2030 and ate! The 'on-line' chicken was followed by an eight mile hike to a 'good yacht club' somebody knew where the quiet and subdued atmosphere of the bar was transformed by the arrival of John Buckingham, his crew

and others. Tales of the preceding days were exchanged including one concerning a crew member who deposited his lunch at sea via a small hole in the safety netting between the stantions. The lengths some people go to! We cheerfully returned to 'Storm Force' feeling that even if we hadn't got them before, we had now got our sea-legs!

Chapter 4 – Ducking and Diving

We left St. Helier at 0930 with David taking his turn at breaking the record for the number of times up and down the companionway steps in one passage. Eamon had the opportunity to practice 720⁰ turns as we left the harbour whilst the rest of the crew searched frantically for the information on light signals off Victoria Pier head. It pays to be prepared!

During the course of the morning, we were involved in M.O.B. drill under sail and several of the crew attempted to retrieve Dan with varying degrees of success. At one point, we heard the helmsperson shout 'Ready about' followed by 'Lee-Ho' and so we stood by to tack not realising that when that helm said, "tack", what he really meant was "jybe", or was that 'duck' and 'dive'? Either way, even the Dan buoy was confused and the person pointing and describing the M.O.B.'s position had to start using the 24hr clock.

For the first time, the crew were well enough to eat Gerald's chocolate scrunch as we approached Guernsey. We reached St Peter Port at 1450 having had to motor for two and a half hours when the E / SE had dropped off. We were directed to a floating pontoon in the harbour whilst we waited for HW -3 in order to enter Victoria Marina. The skipper showed us his expertise in rowing and we had some time ashore. Lisa donned her vest and trainers and ran three laps of the island and the less fit ambled to a 'quiet' cafe, metres from an uphill trial bike race where the only good French beer was Carling Black Label and the refreshments stopped at custard creams. On our return to 'Storm Force', PD invited the girls to escort him in a social round of the harbour calling on Bert Clarke, Howard Craddock and John Able for aperitifs. Back on board, the men prepared supper and the boat became an 'Easterly Storm' with a delicious assortment of curries and side dishes for six and pepper and salt served with steak and kidney pie for one.

The battle for a place in Victoria Marina began during supper as hundreds of yachties throttled back waiting for the harbour control to allocate them a place. We tied up alongside John Able and then hit the town for a game of bar-billiards; Port Watch 35 points; Starboard Watch, 0. (The referee left his glasses on the boat). This was followed by a drink at the Royal Guernsey Yacht Club where a New Parks pennant was spotted.

Chapter 5: Bread and Butter

The skipper of the day began his duties early, providing that much needed commodity, a cup of tea in bed. It was with surprise and gratitude that the crew sat up and greeted Alan and then coughed and spluttered as they took their first sip.

Black tea and no sugar was presented as black tea and two sugars ('Well, I only put 2 in - Surely you can't taste that.') White tea with one sugar=white tea with no sugar etc. The only person who seemed to get what he wanted was Alan himself - White tea - fairly strong with at least 3 spoons of sugar or 6 lumps whichever was the sweetest.

We left Guernsey at 1000; Alan navigated us to Alderney. The weather deteriorated which Eamon and Lisa were grateful for as they were both onto their third noses. In fact 'deteriorate' was an understatement –as it poured with rain is closer to the truth. We picked up a buoy in Braye Harbour and went ashore for the afternoon. Shore leave consisted of three crew to the Divers, two crew to the shop and then to the Divers and two crew for a walk across the island.

Arriving back on 'Storm Force' rather wet, we changed into our cocktail frocks and dinner jackets, boarded the soaking taxi and went out to the 'First and Last' for a meal. The gastronomic delights of oyster and lobster could not tempt Alan who had saved his appetite for the largest steak Rita could cook (extremely well with no garlic or peppers). It was at this point that the endearing phrase 'I say, duck, could I have some bread and butter please?' was heard and Rita, who could sell you a double brandy and lobster when all you wanted was fish and chips, obliged in utter amazement. The evening was rounded off with whisky and the weather forecast.

Chapter 6: Fog or Hangover?

Despite the late night, we were all ready to leave at 0930. Eamon was the SOD of the day and requested that we all wore our warm clothing harnesses and life jackets as Braye itself was nowhere to be seen and neither were the other vessels we had seen anchored the previous day (they were all there of course but to the delight of PD, obscured by fog).

As the wind was very light, we set forth under motor. The auto helm recorded a speed of 7.2 knots where the manual helm would only manage 5.5 knots. The most exciting part of the voyage was changing course at 1526 to give way to a ship.

As we approached England, a message was sent to the navigator at the chart table that there was a 'thing on the starboard side.' Up he came, rearranging his glasses, returning for the binoculars, reciting collision regs and finally asking - 'What?' The reply was given smugly as 'The Isle of Wight'.

Piloting into Poole Harbour taught us a cautionary lesson about boat handling. The decision was made to take down the sails and motor to the town quay. The instructions were given including the one to start the engine before the sails came down. We had been sailing against the tide and whilst the sails were being packed away, found the boat to be drifting towards Cherbourg and getting very close to a red channel marker. Always remember: It helps to ENGAGE GEAR if you wish to make way.

The SOD of the day had a lucky escape when we arrived at the town quay at 2100 and almost missed the pubs having to wait two hours for customs clearance. He was saved when the Customs Officer boarded 'Storm Force' at 2130 and enabled us to go ashore for fish and chips and later for a jar at a pub, off the beaten track. Bill Hudson and his crew on Boudicca Warrior told us the sad story of their engine, toilet, etc. and we all drowned their sorrows with their duty frees.

Chapter 7: On the pick up

Gerald sailed us out of Poole Harbour down a very narrow channel. The working log would have taken 6 pages with all the tacks recorded and Popeye would have looked a wimp by the side of the girls - such was the frequency of working the winches. PD gave us a break though and we practised picking up a buoy 13 times under sail and with a strong tide. More ducking and diving ensued until we tied up to it and were rewarded with a well-earned coffee break.

We set off toward Beaulieu with Boudicca in sight, did a few circles changing course and headed to Poole, Cherbourg and sometimes to Beaulieu itself. Having done a few more MOB drills, the two lookouts - each with binoculars - came to the conclusion that the river entrance had been diverted. We finally spotted the transit marks and navigated up the river to berth next to Sharrow.

It was bliss to have a hot shower again and after a good meal aboard the crew headed off to Bucklers Hard and the 'Master Builder', above the noise of the country singer it was possible to speak to the crew of other yachts, one of which had been infected by BSE all week (bloody silly exercises). What is a wind chute anyway? We staggered 'home' to finish the victuals, especially the liquid ones and the skipper amazed us with tales of Spain and boat deliveries with Bill Hudson.

Chapter 8: The End

We motored off to Cowes to practise coming alongside a mooring and encountered every ferry that exists. After lunch in Osbourne Bay, we motored back to Port Solent having had a thoroughly enjoyable, extremely instructive, slightly intoxicated, week.

Peter Dawkins

Inverness to Preston Delivery Trip



"I've bought a yacht," said Bob (Hammersley). "I need a crew to help bring it down from Scotland." "Yes, please," was my reply. Any excuse exploring more of Scotland. "It's out of the water in Kirkwall." On putting the phone down, I decided to answer the thoughts 'where exactly is Kirkwall?' [The Orkneys], followed by 'how do I get there?' [It's a one-way delivery trip]. A few days later, Bob sent an e-mail stating that the yacht would be in Inverness on a certain date. Phew! Problem solved! Ryanair were doing a cheap flight there from East Midlands on that date. The definition of 'cheap flight' in this context starts at £5 and ends up costing £24! (And no, I didn't need the loo).

So, bags packed with baggage allowance in mind, I scrounged a lift to the airport and met up with the rest of the crew – Kevin Pearce and Peter Thorne. The take-off was ok, but the landing was into a strong headwind with turbulence thrown in for free. We thudded down hard (we were sat over the wheels) – I think we all nearly kissed the tarmac on disembarking.

A short taxi ride later and we met up with Bob Hammersley and got our bags onto the yacht. Her name is "Norlantic", a Moody 346. The second job of the evening was to victual the yacht. The following morning we set off on our journey through the Caledonian Canal, starting with the Muirtown Swing Bridge and flight of four locks (including a sudden rain shower), followed shortly by the Tomnahurich Swing Bridge.



A section of canal then ducks under some power lines to the Dochgarroch lock where we moored at the start of Loch Dochfour for the night.



Moving into the second Muirtown lock



Gates opening at the top of the Muirtown flight

The Caledonian Canal was built by Thomas Telford between Inverness and Fort William. The canal opened in 1822 and is approximately 52 nautical miles long, of which 19 n miles is manmade. The rest of the distance takes advantage of the Great

Glen Fault by following [NE to SW] Loch Dochfour, Loch Ness, Loch Oich and Loch Lochy. There are 29 locks with 42 lock gates, ten swing bridges and four aqueducts; the locks and swing bridges are operated by British Waterways staff.

The Great Glen Fault (GGF) is a great diagonal line running South-West to North-East through Scotland from Fort William to Inverness which is part of the Lapetus Suture. It formed about 430 million years ago when the microcontinent Avalonia [England, SE Scotland, SE Ireland plus parts of the East coast of North America], having already collided with the continent Baltica [modern Scandinavia, Low Countries & Northern Germany], now collided with the continent Laurentia [modern North America plus NW Scotland & NW Ireland], closing the lapetus Sea and eventually leading to the creation of the supercontinent Pangaea. The two main landmasses continued to be pushed together by magma convection currents for a further 20-30 million years. The closing of the lapetus Sea as the continents started approaching followed by their collision resulted in the complete subduction of the lapetus oceanic crust under the two land masses and caused the Caledonian Orogeny, a period of intense mountain building [about 490- 390 million years ago] along the fault line which includes the mountains of Ireland, Snowdonia, the English Lake District and Scotland.

Running almost parallel to the Great Glen Fault, to its South-East, are the Highland Boundary Fault (HBF) [Isle of Arran to Stonehaven] and the Southern Upland Fault (SUF) [Rhins of Galloway to Dunbar]. These effectively split Scotland into four distinct bands: the Northwest Highlands [NW of GGF], the Grampian Mountains [GGF to HBF], the Central Lowlands – also called the Midland Valley and actually a rift valley [HBF to SUF] and the Southern Uplands [SUF to English Border]. There are also similar faults around Snowdon, all running roughly SW to NE.

Pangaea started to break up about 175 million years ago when a rift caused it to break into Laurasia [North America plus Europe & Asia] and Gondwana [South America, Africa, India & Antarctica], forming the North Atlantic Ocean. Gondwana broke up about 150-140 million years ago into the continents we recognise today, thus forming the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Around 60-55 million years ago, North America plus Greenland split from Eurasia. India started colliding with Asia around 35 million years ago, starting the Himalayan Orogeny.

Day two saw us departing Dochgarroch pontoons at the NE end of Loch Dochfour, passing weirs to port [South] which allow excess water down into the River Ness. There are then a few SHM buoys which need to be kept to port as the buoyage direction throughout the canal is South-West to North-East. Loch Dochfour is quite small and we soon entered Loch Ness itself to be greeted by quite a swell – 20 n miles of fetch has a lot to answer for!



With a slightly nervous eye astern for the wake of Nessie, we watched the depth indicator go off the scale. About a third of the way down the loch, on the North shore, is Urquhart Castle, a picturesque ruin.



At the South end of Loch Ness is Fort Augustus with its swing bridge, flight of five locks and Nessie sculpture.



Erm, who should be holding the stern line?

I've found Nessie!

Day three saw us depart Fort Augustus along sections of canal joining two small natural lakes through the Kytra and Cullochly locks plus Cullochly Swing Bridge into Loch Oich.



This is the highest part of the whole canal at some 32.5 m above sea level, although the actual level may vary as this loch is part of a hydro-electric scheme. Hidden in the trees on the North bank are the ruins of Invergarry Castle.

At the South end of this loch is the Laggan Swing Bridge followed by a short section of canal and the first pair of down locks leading into Ceann Loch and Loch Lochy. At the end of Loch Lochy is Gairloch Top Lock, another swing bridge and Lower Lock leading to the longest canal section past Moy to Banavie. Here is Neptune's Staircase, a flight of eight locks followed by road and rail swing bridges. The last canal section leads to a pair of locks at Corpach and the basin just inside the sea

lock with spectacular views of Ben Nevis reflecting in the water (photo right). *Erm, who should be holding the stern line? I've found Nessie!*



Day four and our first salty water. Through the Corpach sea lock and into the top of Loch Linnhe [still part of the Great Glen Fault]; thankfully the sea was nice and calm, allowing us to get our proper sea legs gently (!). Through the Corran Narrows, and continuing down Linnhe into the Lynn of Lorn with Lismore Island to starboard, then the Firth of Lorn with the South end of the Sound of Mull in the distance to starboard and a brief glimpse of Oban to port before it was obscured behind Kerrera Island. Into the Sound of Luing with its interesting water flows and the island of Belnahua with its unusual cave – a chance for me to practice my sailing while waiting for the tides to become favourable. Later we observed the Gulf of Corryvreckan looking as innocent and harmless as we know it isn't. Into the Sound of Jura and round Craignish Point (with more tidal overfalls!) with a glance up Loch Craignish to where we had chartered a yacht from Ardfern on a previous trip; finally into Loch Crinan for the night.



Corran Narrows, with ferry



Belnahua Island, Sound of Luing



Gulf of Corryvreckan



Loch Crinan at Sunset

The Crinan Canal connects Ardrishaig on Loch Gilp (a spur off Loch Fyne) in the East to Crinan in Loch Crinan and the Sound of Jura in the West. It was designed by John Rennie and built 1793-1801 with modifications 1816 by Thomas Telford. It connects Glasgow and the Clyde with the Western Isles thus avoiding the long and dangerous route round the Mull of Kintyre. The canal is about nine miles long with 15 locks and seven swing bridges; it is entirely man-made as there are no natural lochs to take advantage of.

The bridges, the two sea locks and lock 14 (Crinan) are staffed while the others are operated by the boat's own crew – detailed instructions are given; all of the locks in the two flights are separate (i.e. two sets of gates) indicating that the canal was originally designed to be operated by the boat's crew and any operating mistakes would not drain an entire flight [compare with Neptune's Staircase on the Caledonian where eight locks use nine gates]. Some of the smaller bridges are hand-operated, showing how perfectly balanced the masses must be to so quickly and quietly move them. There are numerous places to moor along the canal and explore and/or take on water and use the facilities; shopping is primarily at Lochgilphead near the Eastern end.

Day five saw us enter the Crinan Canal at the Crinan end via locks 15 & 14 and past the Crinan Swing Bridge with the extended salt flats of the River Add below us to port. The canal has a much naturalised feel to it – hiding well its artificial nature, as distinct from the industrial image of canals of this era. A long gentle section to the swing bridge at Bellanoch then another long section to a flight of five locks and a swing bridge at Dunardry leads to the highest section of the canal. At Cairnbaan are the first four down locks and another swing bridge followed by a long section of canal and the solitary Miller's Bridge at Oakfield, overlooking Lochgilphead [literally at the head of Loch Gilp]. Finally, the approach to Ardrishaig as the canal runs parallel to the side of Loch Gilp as it descends through three more locks with another bridge. Mooring in Ardrishaig Basin for the afternoon and night left one swing bridge and the final (sea) lock.



Approaching Crinan Sea Lock



Norlantic at Dunardry (lock 13)



First section of canal after Crinan



Approaching Ardrishaig lock 2

Day six and we left the basin at Ardrishaig past the A83 swing bridge and the sea lock into Loch Gilp thence into Loch Fyne. The calm waters that had plagued us thus far now abandoned us and tested our hyoscine intake. Past Tarbert (East Loch Tarbert) to starboard into Lower Loch Fyne, into Inchmarnoch Water where Lower Loch Fyne [to the North], the Firth of Clyde [to the South-East] and Kilbrannan Sound [to South-West] all meet just North of the Isle of Arran. A long run down Kilbrannan Sound with Arran to port and Kintyre to starboard, with a glimpse of the pyramid that is Ailsa Craig in the far distance, into Campbelltown and some very tricky mooring onto a bucking pontoon.



West coast of the Isle of Arran

Day seven and we departed Campbelltown's rickety pontoon, across the bottom of Kilbrannan Sound, across the bottom of Arran, the bottom of the Firth of Clyde and into the North Channel. The weather and sea state left a lot to be desired! Through the mist, in the far distance, could be glimpsed the distinctive shape of Ailsa Craig. Across towards the Rhins of Galloway, past the mouth of Loch Ryan (leading to Stranraer; one of our few safe haven bolt-holes) into Portpatrick, where the leading line consists of painted lines on the harbour wall and on a building behind (lights by night).



Departing Campbelltown – Davaar Island (left) connected to Kintyre (right) by a sandbank



Approaching Portpatrick, Rhins of Galloway

Portpatrick was founded as a fishing village and it became an important ferry terminal between Scotland and Ireland in the 17th and 18th Centuries. It is vulnerable to strong westerlies and so lost favour with the larger vessels to the more sheltered Stranraer, despite the longer sea journey (less than nine miles by road, about 25 by sea!). Portpatrick is not designed for yachts with no pontoons, just fender boards and the harbour wall.

Days eight to ten: we stayed in Portpatrick due to the weather, running the engine occasionally to charge the batteries and run the fridge. Kevin and Peter had to leave us at this point, leaving Bob and myself. We did move the yacht on the ninth day as

another yacht started to break free as a South-Westerly storm approached causing damage Norlantic's sugar scoop. The Harbour Master got both yachts tied along a hawser laid across the harbour, so that we were surging along this rope instead of bashing against the wall. It was an anxious few hours as the storm raged – the waves funnelling into the inner part of the harbour from the South-West. By about midnight, after many hours of re-checking the ropes, the storm subsided enough for us to be able to relax a little. The morning of the tenth day was much calmer and we returned to being tied against the harbour wall; the other yacht sheepishly departed after exchanging insurance details, despite advice not to venture out yet.



View from above the yacht looking South-West towards the harbour mouth



The power of the sea - the blue sky belies the approaching storm



View of Portpatrick looking South-East (taken from near the "anchor" monument)



View of Portpatrick looking North-East (the two yachts can just be seen left of monument)

Day eleven saw us depart Portpatrick with some relief of having survived relatively intact but with thoughts of the long passage ahead and little scope for bolt holes. Then we sailed down the Rhins of Galloway, past the ruins of Dunskey Castle (4 cables South-East of Portpatrick) to the Mull of Galloway [Fl 20s 99m 28M] before starting out into the Irish Sea. We saw our intended destination, the Isle of Man, briefly, before it disappeared into cloud (presumably rain covering the island – but

with thoughts of Brigadoon); it 'reappeared' much later and we entered Peel Harbour on the West coast. The entrance is over a drying height with a sill retaining the water depth in the marina – there is also a swing bridge over the marina entrance.



The ruins of Dunskey Castle



*The disappearance of the Isle of Man
(under the cloud, centre of photo)*



*The swing bridge opening as we
approach Peel Marina*

We took day twelve off to enjoy the much improved weather and to explore Peel. It is dominated by the ruins of its Castle guarding the harbour entrance; the Castle sits on its own island (St Patrick's Isle, where St Patrick first landed), accessed by a causeway and beach. The town could almost be near Newquay with its sandy beach and seafront of hotels. Peel is the main fishing port for the island but is also a popular holiday destination. The marina is on the River Neb and has recently been developed (it used to be a large drying harbour); this work was still on-going at the time of our visit – the pontoons are in place together with fresh water and electricity, the entrance sill and swing bridge have already been mentioned while the marina office and facilities were still being finished – it is well worth a visit. Peel also has an industrial area behind the town then a wide green valley disappears towards Douglas. Peel sits on a patch of sandstone, probably explaining the source of its popular sandy beach.

We got talking to the proprietor of the chandlery who was in the process of renovating his Moody (an older, smaller model than Norlantic); later we explored the seafront then climbed Peel Hill. Walking along the summit gives views of the sea to the West and the town to the South-East and leads gently down towards the Castle. It was too late to enter the Castle by the time we arrived, but we did explore the island around it – particularly finding where they probably re-supplied the Castle from the sea.



View along the marina towards the Castle



Peel seafront



*Peel from part-way up Peel Hill
(the large beige area bottom-right
is the marina car park)*



*Approaching the Castle – the
harbour entrance is on the right
(looking almost due North)*

Next an early start to a drizzly day thirteen for the tides to depart Peel and a tour down the West coast of the Isle, passing Port Erin towards the Southern end. We decided that it would be safe to attempt Calf Sound between the main Isle and Calf of Man – a channel to be treated with respect and avoided in anything other than favourable conditions. The channel is between Kitterland Island (to NE) and Thousla Rock (to SW), the latter marked by a white beacon tower.

There were several overfalls and we were grateful for a reliable engine. Starting up the East coast and looking astern, we could occasionally make out the Chicken Rock light marking the southernmost point of the Isle – our original navigation plan had been to go well south of this as advised in the Almanac. There is more civilisation on the East coast with Port St Mary in its bay (Bay ny Carrickey) then Castletown in the next bay; Dreswick Point followed by hints that there is an airport nearby (Ronaldsway). Finally, we rounded Douglas Head with its light house, to approach the entrance to Douglas – I say “finally” but since we navigated the shortest route, we were much earlier than we’d originally planned. The entrance to Douglas is dominated by a huge breakwater with what appears to be a mini castle on an island in the main bay. Being a commercial harbour, permission must be sought before entering.

Douglas is dominated by its ferry port – two massive piers for the ferries to/from England, Ireland & Northern Ireland. Later, we were treated to one of the massive Ro-Ro ferries turning in its own length. We moored up to a metal pontoon on the inside of the outer breakwater – as you can appreciate, this is exposed to all the swell and being a substantial metal structure (to survive the conditions) it was also very noisy, each time it flexed with a wave! The outer harbour dries beyond the ferry

terminals – and towards the back wall not far from where we were! There is an inner harbour with pontoons where the water level is kept in by a flapgate.



Peel Castle from the Middle Harbour)



*Peel from part-way up Peel Hill
(the large beige area bottom-right is
the marina car park)*



*East coast of Calf of Man with Burroo –
Chicken Rock light is to the left of these)*



*Approaching Douglas – Douglas Head light
(white tower, left), Battery Pier and main
bay*

The weather improved and I spent some time exploring Douglas and must say that I was expecting more of the Manx identity to be on show. There were many mainland shop names with only a few signs using the Manx language. Beyond the harbour and ferry terminals is a large bay surrounded by hotels.



*Norlantic plus guest on the metal
pontoon*



*St Mary's Rock with Refuge Tower in the
main bay – harbour to the right)*



We departed Douglas in the evening of day fourteen as we needed to be at the SWM buoy outside the river Ribble entrance two hours before High Water Liverpool the following morning, a distance of some 60 miles. We used a mini watch system of two hours on/two hours off; the

Previous owner of Norlantic had installed the chart plotter and radar on a metal frame that could be swivelled 180° from the chart table so as to be visible through the companionway by the helmsman. The route has to take a dog-leg around the many gas fields in the area, all flashing Uniform and for many hours these signals, the platform lights, the gas flares and, clouds permitting, the stars are your main accompaniment. Eventually dawn broke and the Blackpool coast became visible with its distinctive tower. We arrived at the Ribble SWM buoy (“Gut”) before breakfast on day fifteen and were able to spend some time practising tacking. Preston Marina is some 15 miles up the river and so a further three hours would be required; the marina has storm gates and a swing bridge that are only operated in office hours, thus dictating the choice of which High Water. Although the mouth of the Ribble looks to be a vast area of water, between Lytham & St Anne’s to the North and Southport to the South, most of it is very shallow and you must carefully follow the pilotage directions. The recommended route is to approach in a NE direction, rather than following the buoyed channel due E – the former cuts through a hole in the training wall into the river’s buoyed channel. Away from the entrance flats, it becomes a matter of following the river channel between the posts past Lytham on the North bank then later the entrance to the River Douglas to the South with hints of masts in the boat yard. Eventually a group of pylons with wires across the river herald your approach to the marina. Through the storm lock (normally open), then the main lock and swing bridge into the marina. Mission Accomplished!!

Overall: 357.5 miles (54.5 of which were the non-tidal waters of the two canals).



Eyes front!



Entrance to Preston Marina

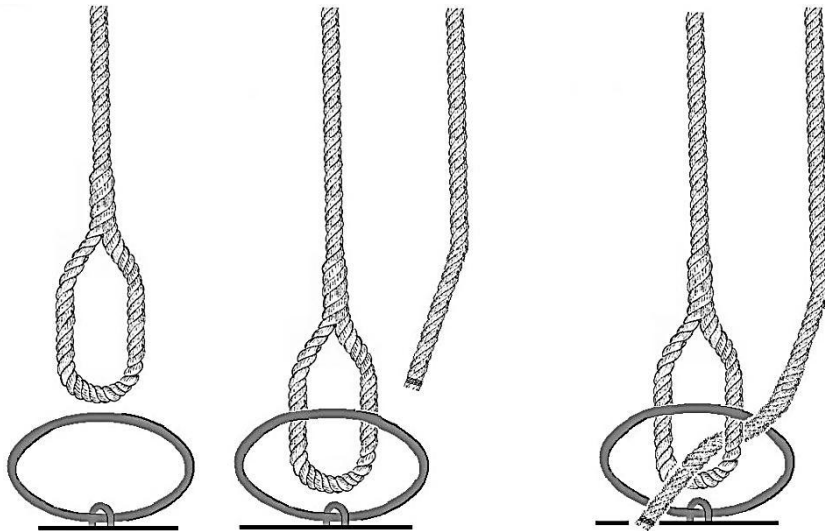
Mark A Saywell

Anchor dragging, groundings and slipped moorings

Way back in 1970 something was probably the first time a boat, or in this case 'boats', that I was responsible for - went adrift. I'd worked canal and river for some years before this occurrence, which happened at Kegworth on the River Soar. A pair of narrow boats and a party of Scouts in the hold under the cloths, and sometime in the night our moorings were slipped and the Soar tried to take us off towards the Power Station. We didn't go far, getting tangled with an overhanging tree and that is how I found us, when I arose next morning.

In the couple of years that followed I learned a great deal about being secured on the Trent. Our boss came from a Humber Keel family, his dad, 'Pop', had sailed keels and remembered fitting his first engine. He carved the propeller out of hardwood, copying one that he had seen. 'Pop' had no concern that his engine could not 'go astern' as he had managed plenty well enough when all he had was a sail and a big mud weight. In their working life, Pop and his missus, Florrie, had carried cargoes from Hull and Immingham to inland places like Goole, York, Sheffield and Nottingham. Pop told me that if they had a good weight on when they left Hull docks and if the Humber was lumpy from a westerly wind, sometimes it was not possible to walk from the stern to the foredeck until you had gone well inland, for the side decks and the cloths over the hold would be awash.

Best professional practice was to secure your mooring warp to a ring ashore. Your warp would have an 'eye splice' in the end and you pass the rope through the ring and the eye, and the shore end of your line is thus locked to the ring. OK – someone can cut the warp but the main object was that you had the knot aboard, you could adjust it, and if tide or flood took the ring under water, you could still adjust your mooring. In the worst case or risk with security, a chain was used with a padlock to the mooring ring.



You can nearly do this with a bowline. The bowline is difficult, if not impossible to untie under pressure and you could thus make the eye with this knot, if you did not have a line with an eye splice.

At Trent Bridge, Nottingham, we ran five passenger trip boats and had a fleet of leaky rowing boats that we rented out by the hour. This business helped to support our cargo carrying. The Holm sluice was built in the nineteen thirties, to end all flooding of Nottingham City and the surrounding low lying built up area. Four or five great doors span the Trent, each one capable of being 'wound up' and out the way of the river. Holm Sluice replaced an earlier weir. The Trent floods at Nottingham about four days after heavy rain in the Birmingham area. The water from Market Harborough takes about twelve hours to reach Leicester. The water from Hinckley way, takes about eight. All this gets below Loughborough and reaches the Trent at Long Eaton about fifteen to twenty hours after Leicester. The water from Birmingham can swell the Tame at Tamworth in about six to eight hours. This reaches the Trent north of Lichfield in about another six or so and by the time this flood wave has travelled right through Burton and Long Eaton, you are looking at around four to five days at Nottingham Holm Sluice.

This particular flood was bad. The river rose and broke its banks at Sawley. We knew it was going to be bad lower down. At Nottingham we had the 96 seater "Tamar Belle" on her trot mooring. The mooring consisted of two very large anchors connected by chain which was about three times the length of the boat. This was laid down the line of the river's stream. It took two of us to lift one anchor. You could carry about a yard of chain. We laid it from a barge. At two positions in its length which suited the boat, there were risers and floating buoys. Where these were shackled to the main chain at the river bed, two more chains with an anchor on each went off abeam, so that any sideways force on the mooring would be resisted; a total then of six anchors and a lot of chain. The sluice drawn increases the rate of the river without allowing it to rise. In the night, 'Tamar Belle' dragged all six anchors and all that chain and got herself stuck under the Trent Bridge, doing a bit of damage to the wheelhouse.

A few years later I had a part share in a small motor boat. It was on the style of an open stern 'fishing boat' that you could have fished with rods from. We did not fish. During the two or three years we had her on the Trent and the Witham, I took her all over the place. First from Boston to Kings Lynn a few times then to York using the Trent and the Ouse, and above there to Ripon and also explored the river to Stamford Bridge – a rare bit of navigation! In places (on the Yorkshire Derwent) I needed to get out – over the side – and push her over the scours. Anyway – I digress. Went to Hull marina and with some poor weather returned leaving Hull on the rising tide about a half hour before midnight. I arrived at the anchorage at 'Trent Falls' about 2am and laid to my anchor till next morning. There is no water fall at 'Trent falls', the Trent flows into the Humber with the Ouse – a great muddy river carrying half of Yorkshire backwards and forwards with each turn of the tide. There is a lighthouse called 'Apex' on the junction. Coasters went to Gainsborough through there (and may still do so).

In the morning I did a few jobs about the boat and waited for the ebb to cease and the flood that was going to carry me towards Nottingham, to begin. The bottom end of the Trent dries at LW Springs, although at Newark, 52 miles inland, the range is only about a foot (300mm). I did not want to go on the beginning of the flood – I knew I could end up overtaking the leading edge of the flooding tide. The flood did come and after a while I decided to pull up some of the chain and wash off the Ouse mud and stow it. This I did. A bucket with a lanyard aided the removal of the mud. I was busy with my job when a boat went by – fairly close. He was going towards the Humber – and there was no one steering! Ah! He was not going – I was. I'd pulled up too much chain and now on this rising tide my boat had set off, dragging my anchor across the bottom!

In ninety three, after I had learned to sail a dinghy and worked at Rutland and been in and out of Inland haulage work – I first went to Sea on a sailing yacht. Bill York took me for a weekend on 'Blanquilla' – a trip from Hamble to Poole and back. I liked the boat – she was big and heavy – and I understood big and heavy boats. At Poole we laid to the Town Quay, on the wall. We were alongside. Bill set up the warps how he wanted them; I think all of them going to stumps on the wall top. I put a bowline in a fairly heavy rope and locked it to the second rung from the top, on the ladder that went up to the top of the wall. I cannot remember what I secured it to on the yacht. I had not forgotten my Trent education. Before nightfall, we had six yachts outside of us abreast. Most put out shore lines. We turned in and went to sleep. Sometime after the pubs had turned out, a misguided soul slipped all the lines – all the shore lines that could be lifted up off of the bollards. Bill awoke – probably heard a noise or felt a bump that had not disturbed me. He called me out of my bed. All six boats were hanging on one rope, with the tide trying to take us off down the harbour – you guessed – the only rope they could not untie was the one I had locked to the ladder.

There are few things that trouble me greater than going aground when I do not expect it. In the many years spent on canal and river with laden craft – going aground was part of normal life – it was expected or in some cases done for a purpose. When you towed a dumb narrow boat that was 30 tons gross and you wanted to stop because your lock was not ready – but you could see a boat working through towards you – stopping 'single' and keeping that butty astern of the motor boat didn't half help when you wanted to move on, towards that lock. Your mate would put the butty on the ground following a nod of the head, and with a gentle bit of going astern on the motor, you brought both boats to a standstill – with the tow rope remaining tight and out of the water, the motor boat afloat and the butty aground.

I don't think it was my first – but it certainly was on one of my early NPCA courses – as an instructor – when trainees took me aground. They'd not done badly during the week in performing all the usual Day Skipper tasks. All the tacking and Gybing, Man overboard stuff and courses to steer and EPs. The five day trip had not long to run to completion and I decided that as they all seemed to be very competent, that I would

let them sail the boat to a destination I gave to them, while I did paperwork and filled in log books. So a while later and busy at the saloon table with pen in hand, I felt the first bump of two, which I knew meant we'd touched bottom. Although the second bump came soon after the first, I think I was already half way to the cockpit. Bramble Bank. We were stationary and I think we might have had the wind on the beam. My first concern was basic: is the tide rising or falling? Did any crew member remember when high water was – someone did, they thought it was in about three hours time. A slight sense of relief came over me, but I need to check the data. I left the crew to try to ensure that the wind was not driving us further onto the bank. I checked the tide table – it was rising, so I now was much less concerned and understood that we would float again very soon and all I had to do was to ensure we went back out the way we had come in!

That lesson had been learned many years before. If you get a canal boat stuck, it usually having more draught at the stern than it does at the bow, if it goes aground in the shallow waterway, there is little chance you are going to go forward to liberation – most often you may go back though. There was once, when I was a teenager, when I was with a crew, that for good reason – broke this, what I consider to be the basic rule about getting stuck – always try to go back – do not go forward for you will make it worse! It was the summer of 1969. I was on a narrow boat called the 'Pisces' which belonged to the (London) Hayes and Hillingdon Youth Service. Most of the crew were under twenty – our older leader was Dennis Papworth. Dennis was a good down to earth cockney who had some sort of work experience in industry – loved canal boats and was a good youth leader for his local Youth Service. I think Dennis had earlier been responsible for the local authority to acquire this ex-carrying boat. 'Pisces' was equipped with bunk beds and a cooker, loo etc. We were going to the national rally of boats – which that year was to be in Gas Street basin, Birmingham but we were entering for the 'most miles covered to get to the rally' competition and we were not going by the shortest way.

I can date this trip easily enough, because I remember that we were going around (what I knew as) the Fenny pound, in the dark of night, listening to Neil Armstrong talking to Houston on his moon walk from the Lunar module. Chugging round the Fenny (where Milton Keynes is now) and looking up at the moon and listening to the radio - wonderful. Anyway, our non-direct trip took us via Buckby and Warwick as you might expect, and then off to Worcester via Droitwich. The Worcester cut has narrow locks, like Foxton – just seven foot wide. At Diglis basin, the very last narrow lock before you get into the Severn, the engineer who built it decided to make it exactly the 'gauge' size, so that any boat that came off of the river and passed through Diglis, would not get fast in any lock between there and Birmingham. As we were travelling in the opposite direction – trying to get down to the Severn, Diglis was our last narrow lock and 'Pisces' was a little too fat. She went into the lock when it was full of water and she went down when the water went down but there she became fast. We struggled to open the bottom gates, but managed eventually and

then we tried all the tricks we knew – eventually borrowing a Turfor winch and block and tackle and lots of water from the pound above – and lots of people jumping up and down. We did not want to go back. ‘Pisces’ eventually grunched and squealed her way through into Diglis basin, else I’m sure we might still be there now.

Backing off of Bramble was not difficult five or so minutes after we had landed, but whilst there, another yacht ran into the bank on the other side. He was close hauled and well-heeled when he hit it and I thought that he might have needed more help than I did. Once we were free, my mind turned to which one of the crew was not going to get his Day Skipper certificate! Of course, not only did this crew learn from the grounding – but so did I. I had failed to appoint one person as ‘in-charge’, I was not watching what they were doing and, most of all, I did not know if the tide was rising or falling. Since then, I have had plenty of trainees take me aground – but I believe that I know when it is likely to happen, that it is not going to be dangerous to either vessel or crew and that the tide is rising!

Eric McDowall

Tayport to Scarborough

This was a one-off trip for us. The Go Sailing Association's Solent Flame II was being sailed by different crews around Great Britain (via the Caledonian Canal) and we had decided to do two consecutive legs – from Tayport (near Dundee) to Amble, and then down to Scarborough. In fact for some of the crew there was an earlier leg to do because there was no crew for the leg from Forres (near Inverness) to Tayport and they decided to do this part as well. This leg was undertaken in 2 stages. The weather was foul and the boat not at its best in close hauled mode. As a result, 2 of the 3 crew were seasick and the survivor gallantly battled on. At Tayport, the 2 sickies left SFII and we joined the boat.

First the boat; SFII is a 28ft bilge keel Moody with quite a few years on it, but in good condition due to the hard work of the GSA members. There are 4 GSA boats but SFII was ideal because of the bilge keel and the anticipated dryings out.



Here are some of the highlights of what turned out to be an interesting trip.

To Anstruther: Tayport is a nice enough harbour but had a big wall to climb down which, with SFII leaning out a little, wasn't popular with Linda and Susie, so they were glad to leave for Anstruther. Anstruther looked a nice sheltered harbour on the chart and so it turned out – even if we didn't quite get there! We really should have paid a bit more attention to the tide tables because as we approached the outer harbour entrance it looked a little shallow. Still we thought a sharp turn to port as soon as we entered would allow us to take the channel to the inner harbour. We did the sharp turn, continued for about 2 boat lengths and ground (literally) to a halt. Perfect positioning as it turned out because we were just under a plank's length off some harbour wall steps!! Any further up the channel and we would have been completely stranded for the night. And in the inner harbour I have never seen so many boats standing on mud mounds surrounded by water. They must be very restricted in getting out and in again. Talking to the harbourmaster the next day he was really not impressed at our arrival.

To Granton: Not much to say about here. A grim place!

To Eyemouth: The next day it was on to Eyemouth via the very impressive Bass Rock. Quite an interesting drying port, with trawlers down one side and yachts the other. The seagulls were having a great time picking out the prawns at low water.

To Lindisfarne: The next day we were bound for Lindisfarne. It was quite breezy with a F6 on the starboard quarter. Bearing in mind the Inverness to Tayport experience, this was a good wind direction! As we turned towards the west towards Lindisfarne, the wind was now on the beam and we roared along towards the huge stone towers that formed the first part of the leading line. This was followed by a turn to the north west on to the second part of the line, after which we decided to take the bottom to the south west of the castle. And it was very sticky mud...

The next day was very windy, a F7/8, so we decided to stay at Lindisfarne for the day. When Linda and I came back from a walk, we found we'd missed all the excitement. Apparently Susie had become stuck in the mud on her way back to the boat and a good-meaning member of the public had called the Coastguard. He'd roared up in his Land Rover, lights flashing – to find no Susie. By then, she'd freed herself off and got back to the boat. Peter hadn't known about Susie's problem and was amazed to receive a call from the coastguard asking SFII whether all was ok.

To Amble: The next day was another windy session, but again on the starboard quarter and we raced down to Amble, which is Peter's home port. Once again, time was tight but we checked with the marina and decided we would just get in at the end of the window. However, wind over tide was making the entrance a bit rough so we put on our harnesses and, using sail with full engine to keep our way up, shot into the outer harbour. Time for a crew change as Linda and Susie were replaced by John and Roy, our old work colleagues.

To Cullercoates: A fairly unexciting day, though we did get the cruising chute up. The only interest was a broken down power boat at Cullercoates that blocked the harbour wall (such as it is) and then resisted all attempts to get it on to a trailer and up to the road. Eventually, after 4 hours of grief, they decided to wait for low water and tow it over the beach to another ramp. Success!

To Sunderland via the River Tyne: Another nice day and more cruising chute! Quite breezy entering the Tyne which brought back memories of a really rough North Sea crossing some 25 years ago. The trip up the Tyne to the Millennium Bridge was interesting, and they even lifted the bridge while we were there. A quick drink ashore and we were on our way to Sunderland, where we found a nice marina and welcoming staff. The next morning we had a great breakfast ashore and visited the National Glass Centre – worth a look if you are in the area.

To Hartlepool: Yet another nice day, wind still on the starboard quarter, cruising chute up. Found the local club was having an evening yacht race round the cans so we joined in. Unfortunately the start procedure was a mystery to us and nobody was answering the radio so we lagged a bit, but had a good try anyway. As we entered the lock we succeeded in preventing a local getting across with his fish and chips – he was not amused... Once out of the lock, we found a big marina with the leftovers of the recent Tall Ships Race still tied up; an interesting museum at the side of the marina. We had a good curry!

Tees Day Trip: We wandered up the River Tees to the Transporter Bridge – quite a sight – and found general industrial dereliction most of the way.

To Staithes: The next day we saw the tall ship 'Mir', with a convoy of local yachts, as we left Hartlepool. This was the first and only time the Collision Regulations came into play on the whole trip. When we got to Staithes we found a drying harbour and were just sorting ourselves out when the lifeboat coxswain pulled alongside to suggest we move over a bit further because of the local fisherman. This we duly did and waited for the harbour to dry. It never did as we made a small error in the tide table calculations – again! At low water there was about 30cm left, and it seemed a bit odd grounding out as we rowed the dinghy. At the pub we spoke with the coastguard who said, tongue in cheek, that he thought we were going to need his help! When asked how many yachts they get at Staithes, he thought for a while and said "well, put it this way, you're the first this year". This was mid-August!! Anyway, nice place, great people and a welcoming pub.

To Whitby: A gentle sail all the way and a busy marina. We walked up to the Abbey along with many other tourists and this set us up for yet another fish supper.

To Scarborough: A good sail with the cruising chute, with the cabin boy on the helm when a F7 piped up outside the harbour. We finally worked out which entrance to use, tied up and then had a friendly visit from the Borders Agency who were, I think, bemused at our trip from Tayport and the rest of the round Britain journey of SFII.

Epilogue: The next crew had nightmare trips to Wisbech and Wells-next-the-Sea with high south west winds all the way. Because of family problems the skipper wanted to get the boat to Wells for the next crew just in case he had to leave for home during the week. A few weeks later SFII returned to Shamrock Quay at Southampton, successfully completing a great journey for all involved.

John Hackett

Hornpipe enjoys Sweden – Part 2 of our 2009 exploration of the Baltic



We left Karlskrona on 11th May and travelled up the sound between the mainland of Sweden, and the long narrow island of Öland, overnighing in ports on both sides. We visited the small village of Kristianopel, which was built as a fortress town by the King Christian of Denmark in 1599 when Denmark ruled southern Sweden. It was fought over between the

Danes and Swedes on more than one occasion. After Sweden captured the town, the walls and fortress were destroyed and it is now a very pretty village of Danish style houses overlooking the sea.

In Sandvik, on the island of Öland, we visited an eight storey wooden mill which is now a museum, with a restaurant on the ground floor. Out of season it was all very quiet, and we were left to wander round, allowing us to climb up to all the floors and marvel at the huge wooden machinery. The mill had been motorised in the 1920's, and ceased active work in the 1960's. What was also interesting was that it had originally been built and operated in mainland Sweden and was dis-assembled, brought to Sandvik across the sound and rebuilt for another 100 years of active life. One has to wonder at the economics of moving such a large structure....



We cycled around the top end of Öland which is a beautiful area. Banks of cowslips, lily of the valley and viper's bugloss (not yet flowering). We walked all around the



“Trollskog” – the forest of trolls – so called because the trees are much distorted from the constant blasting of the winds. The day started sunny but the fog rolled in from the sea into the trees. The remains of a three-master shipwrecked on



the beach in the 1920s was very atmospheric with the fog lying over the sea. The highlight of the day though was to see two sea eagles circling overhead, with one of them being mobbed by a brave little tern!

Kalmar is the largest city on the mainland coast in south east Sweden. We enjoyed a short stay there, in brilliant spring sunshine. We visited the 12th century castle and took in a concert given by the local music school in one of the castle salons. Some very good performers and a very romantic location.



Visby, on Gotland, was our next destination. We had a great sailing wind to carry us there on a broad reach. As one of the earliest centres of the Hanseatic League, some of its history was already known to us. Visby centre still exists as a completely walled town of narrow streets and historic buildings, built into the side of the hills. We learned that this was a matter of economics – there was a proposal in the 1790s to flatten the town centre and rebuild it on a grid system! Fortunately, this never took place because the money was not available. The town government then designated the wall as a monument to be conserved. The wall is surrounded by a dry moat – it was never possible to fill it as Visby is built on a hill. Keeping the wall and old town centre was a very foresighted decision for the economics of the town, because it now brings huge numbers of tourists to the island. Gotland is a beautiful island outside of Visby, but further exploration for us will have to await our next visit.

The wealth of Gotland in medieval times can be gauged by the number of gold and silver hoards which have been found – to date over 700 finds, one of the most magnificent being a hoard of over 87 **Kilograms** of silver found in a



farmstead in 1999! This hoard was from 870 AD when most of the Viking trade was with the Middle East and Southern Europe – the dated coins came from eastern and southern countries such as Turkey, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan etc. Trade with western Europe came later - English and German coins found in other hoards were dated from around 1100 AD. A lot of this is on display in the excellent museum, which also has a hall full of superb Viking picture stones.



The narrow streets of Visby also mean that they are able to keep cars out of many parts of the centre which is a great bonus. Visby also has wonderful Botanic gardens which we enjoyed walking around.

We then had a long sail back to Nyköping on the mainland to collect our friend, Mo. Again we had a good sailing wind on the beam. Nyköping is at the head of a long shallow expanse of water with reed beds and a dredged channel – very like Norfolk, but surrounded by forest. Sailing out, we saw four sea eagles thermalling overhead us – a magnificent sight!

Going north from Nyköping, we entered the Stockholm archipelago to sail into central Stockholm. We had mixed weather, but found some delightful anchorages tucked into the islands. At first we had light winds which allowed us to conduct the intricate pilotage well – when the wind got up, we had to reduce sail to keep abreast of where we were. It is fatal to lose track of position on the chart – every instruction to the helm is effectively “go to the north of that island between 2 more islands”! The critical bit is *which* islands? We had a mutiny one day when the wind went from 5 knots to about 25 knots in the space of 5 minutes, and this forced us to sort out proper discipline in the navigation! We can see why people enjoy sailing here so much – there are so many beautiful places to go. It became almost a challenge for each entry to an anchorage to be even narrower than the last one! Someone on the bow looking for rocks was essential..... fortunately there is an excellent pilot book for this area, which has been translated into English.



The Stockholm archipelago consists of the inner islands, central islands and the outer islands. The inner and central islands are very established and covered in trees and other vegetation, giving superb shelter. The outer islands are in general newer, flatter, and sparse of vegetation. This affords less shelter. We have so far not stayed in the outer islands as the weather has not been suitable when the timing was right. The land in this part of the Baltic rises about 0.5 meters every hundred years, so many of the outer islands have only been in existence for 200-300 years. As we said last year, the Baltic is continually getting smaller and shallower. The land is still springing back up after the pressure of the ice in the last ice age 10,000 years ago was removed.

As has happened in most countries, people have moved away from the land and into the cities, so there are far fewer inhabitants permanently living in the outer archipelago, as traditional occupations have disappeared. The inner islands are well inhabited, and many people commute into Stockholm to work. There is a whole network of ferries and bridges serving the larger islands. Many of the farmed islands became



recreational as land was sold and people built summer homes. To slow down this development, the government set up a body to purchase and run islands as nature reserves in the 1960's and 70s. This body still runs the islands, including some holiday development for people to visit the islands who could not afford to buy their own holiday cottages. This seems to work well, and creates jobs for people who wish to live there. We have anchored off a number of these nature reserves and walked around them. Real estate is now too valuable for them to be able to buy any new lands however.

Stockholm is itself built across 14 islands connected by ferries and bridges. We had insufficient time there to take in many of the sights, but the highlight was to meet up with two old friends of Helen from her days in Sweden 20 years ago. They visited us on Hornpipe, and then we went to stay with them for one all too short day and night.

We did manage to see two operas in the 19th century Opera House, and walk and cycle around the city centre shopping. Our major requirement was to purchase charts for Åland and Finland, without which we cannot continue on our route. Mo returned to England, and daughter Helen joined us. We then set sail through the northern archipelago towards Finland. Sadly the weather has deteriorated hugely, and the last three days have been wet and increasingly windy. Today we are gale-bound in a small village on the mainland.



When weather permits, we shall be departing Sweden for the Åland islands, which are a part of Finland but consider themselves to be a separate identity. Swedish is the language commonly used. Their status is akin to our Channel Islands. It will be sad to leave Sweden, but we shall be back here again in late July/early August, to start our journey south.

We shall not have good internet connectivity after we leave Sweden, unless we manage to get set up with a local Finnish SIM card and data contract. We do like to hear brief messages about what you are up to though!

Helen & Richard

Gräddö

14th June 2009

Hornpipe enjoys Finland – Part 3 of our 2009 exploration of the Baltic

We spent our last night in Sweden on the small island of Lido. A walk ashore took us to the krog (pub) which claimed to be shut but found us some beer. One beer led to another, which led to hunger and a three course dinner. The restaurant was open for a special booking – a retirement party for a headmistress of a local school, so we vicariously enjoyed their speeches and singing.



We had a great sail to Aland, with a beam wind and sparkling sunshine. We arrived in Mariehamn late afternoon to moor in the marina just past the sailing ship “Pommern” – one of the grain race ships of the 1900’s to 1940’s. She is now a museum, and is the last of her kind to be maintained in her unmodified condition as a sailing cargo ship. Our visit to Pommern was the highlight of Mariehamn – and we hope to visit her again someday. Pictured right is the cargo hold which would contain 46,941 bags of wheat – and two large water tanks. Water was taken on in Europe for the journey out to Australia AND the return journey, as purchasing water in Australia was too expensive! The men were only able to wash themselves or their clothes if they collected rainwater. Of all the historic ships we have seen, it is one of the most impressive in being able to gain an impression of how life was on board. The sheer size of the vessel, the complexity of the rig, to be sailed by a crew of 23-26 in all weathers was awe inspiring.



The weather improved, but stayed cold. We celebrated (?) midsummer in Mariehamn with sunshine but only 13C. We fell foul yet again of the Scandinavian propensity to not only close all their museums on, to us, obscure holidays, but also to close them the afternoon before so they can start to celebrate properly the night before! We got caught by this on the museum and art gallery.



We sailed through the Aland Islands, and the highlight was a visit to Bomarsund – the scene of a major battle of the Crimean War. The Russians had a massive fortress and town designed to house their garrison on Aland – approximately 5,000 men. The main fortress



was to be surrounded by a chain of forts, but only the three to the north had been built – due to the shallowness of the surrounding waters, and the narrow channels, it was believed that an outside attack could only come from the north. Unfortunately for them, the French and British turned up through a narrow channel to the south east (it is narrow, we sailed through it). This was accomplished because warships now had steam assistance – prior to that it would have been difficult to sail a ship of the line through there without a very favourable wind. The Allies put 12,000 men and heavy mortars ashore, destroyed 2 of the towers, and started shelling the fortress, at which point the Russian commander capitulated. The allied forces then blew up the entire fortress with the Russian gunpowder cache.

It was as a result of this that Aland became a demilitarised zone, and ultimately, a semi-autonomous state within Finland. It has its own parliament, flag and stamps. Prior to being taken over by Russia, it was ruled by Sweden, and Swedish is still the common language.

The problems of navigation in Finland are somewhat similar to those in the Stockholm archipelago, but not quite. The charts in Finland are said to be less reliable; (some say that many of them were surveyed by drunken Russians); there are far, far more uncharted rocks and shoals, and the routes through the archipelago are defined by buoyed leads. The charting within the leads seems to be very accurate. Each lead has a “maximum authorised draft” which can be as little as 1.2 metres (Hornpipe’s draft is 1.7) or up to 9m for the larger ships. There are some unauthorised leads charted with no guaranteed depth. If you go “off lead” you are basically on your own. The first few sails, we didn’t dare, but we are getting quite brave now and seeking anchorages which look possible to get into, and not too many charted rocks. Sounding in slowly, our forward looking sonar gives us confidence on depths, but we are not convinced it would show an isolated uncharted rock soon enough! We had an interesting discussion with a Finnish sailor who gave us some good places to visit, and told us that he hit a rock most years exploring – usually gently enough not to incur much damage! We are invited to visit him after he gets home from sailing, which we probably won’t have time for – but he did mark the uncharted rock in his bay on our chart.....

Compared to the excellent pilot books and guest harbour guides we have for Sweden and elsewhere in the Baltic, the Finnish harbour guide is incredibly basic – a hand drawn sketch of something one might moor to! We are never quite sure what to expect, so recommendations from other sailors are very welcome.



One place our rock-hopping friend insisted on marked “DO NOT MISS” on our chart, we had to visit. An outer island, Bjorko, with a very squeaky entry – a 1.8 metre lead where you practically have to touch the buoy on entry, and are still only 10 m off the rocks on the other side! It leads to a beautiful

bay, surrounded by steep rocks and trees. Climbing over the cliff leads you to the largest lake in the Finnish archipelago, which is about 4-5 degrees warmer than the sea. We went swimming there and it could not have been warmer in the Mediterranean. Heaven, as by then we were getting up to 35 C during the days, and it was still over 30C that evening. Heaven, that it, except for the mosquitoes!

Bjorko was one of the places where the Finns all moor to rocks with a stern anchor out. We are very coy about this and like to swing to our bow anchor; we don't have a good setup for stern anchoring. We also worry about an unexpected change of wind during the night. This particular day the wind was north westerly, but forecast to increase and go east during the evening, which we had anchored for. We were about to go to bed when the wind suddenly veered and became rapidly very squally – many of the boats started dropping off the rocks and milling about in the centre wondering what to do next! We had another glass of wine while watching the free show..... some with agile mountaineering crew anchored to steep rocks the other side – out came hammers to knock in pitons to attach to - some swing anchored, and the big motorboat which had taken the best swing anchoring position before we arrived got totally spooked and cleared off to another bay. *HORNPIPE on the right (photo above).*



All the major leads have transits – very large boards which can be seen in good visibility for several miles – and many large sea marks. However, the problem of identification “up-sun” or in poor visibility is made even more difficult as they do not have any top marks – the ice would knock them off in winter! Tall thin poles remote from their neighbours are consider to be splendid nesting sites by sea-eagles – we have now seen several nests with an eagle chick in. Sailing the boat, navigation and identification of marks does take up two people full time, but we can always tack back for a better look! We always enjoy watching the birds and other wildlife when at anchor. The delight of sailing here is the beautiful scenery in the archipelago, and the endless number of places to visit. Photographs cannot do justice to it.



Finland only became an independent nation in 1917, but still with the Russian threat on its eastern border. The territory was a part of Sweden until 1809, when it was taken by Russia. Independence only came after the Russian revolution. We hear of poverty inland and



in the rural areas, but the coastal villages and towns which we encounter appear to be extremely affluent.

Our first big town in Finland was Turku. We found a splendid jazz pub where we enjoyed a Russian jazz band and the company of some lively Finns; a brewery pub with good food and beer, and very elegant interior; an interesting art museum, but the highlight was the maritime museum. It had a contemporary of Pommern used in the grain and nitrate trade, afloat but much modified so that it was hard to imagine it in its original role. It also had the last surviving three masted wooden barque – unmodified, complete with its windmill driven pump – from the second half of the nineteenth century. It too traded around the world, though it was very much smaller than the grain ships, and run by a crew of around 10-12.



We were now having excellent weather, and enjoying immensely sailing through the archipelago and anchoring in secluded bays, fringed with reeds and backed by forests. We met up with some friends from last year for two days and swapped tales. All leads east and west go through Hanko, where we coincided with a huge regatta which made mooring interesting – we finally got to experience the reputed “double row” mooring on stern buoys – indeed Hornpipe had a boat hanging off her stern quarter! Hanko is a summer town – built by Russians for their summer vacations, it is full of elegant villas in the pinewoods, now mostly B&Bs. Many of the houses are now occupied by rich Finns who spend summer there but live in Helsinki the other 9 months.



And so to Helsinki,



which will be our easternmost point this year. It is an interesting town – very few old buildings have survived various wars, but many of the 20th century art nouveau ones are worth looking at. It is a green

city, and extremely bicycle friendly; we cycled all around, and enjoyed visiting the main museums. The two cathedrals – Russian Orthodox and the Lutheran cathedral are both very prominent and totally different. The art museum had a fascinating exhibition on the “Kalevala” which is a saga of ancient Finnish legends, interpreted through the years by many different artists. The railway station is a magnificent edifice combining art nouveau and communist solidity. Yet another massive fortress,

covering several islands, guards Helsinki harbour. However it surrendered to the Russians when they overran Finland in 1809. A new church, hewed directly from a granite mound, was built in the 1960s. This is a round space with wonderful acoustics, and we enjoyed a concert there by the Gothenburg Symphony orchestra. Helsinki is a prosperous capital, and although we hear that Finland too has problems with the recession, there is little evidence of this in the capital.



Richard & Helen, S/Y "Hornpipe", Helsinki

10 July 2009

Clean Round the Bend

It was an hour to start time. We must make Coronation Buoy by ten. "Cast off. Bow thruster on. Gear lever forward" We were off. "Engine sounds funny" the crew muttered.

With my ears everything sounds funny. I took no notice. "Steam is pouring out at the back" he said "Well it is a cold morning" I replied.

I glance astern Kemps Shipyard had disappeared in a cloud of white vapour. We tied up on a jetty in mid river. A quick check .The water inlet was OK. "If we average five knots we can just start the race." I shouted.

Off we set again.

Skippers of certain yachts have a distinctive voice. "I say old boy ... Something wrong with your engine?"

A forty foot Swan appeared out of the white mist (steam) astern and swept past us. "Could seize up ... old boy". "Thanks mate" I said touching my cap...

I turned to the crew and said: "Sorry folks we are retiring".

Back at Kemps we cleaned the water filter, checked the impeller. All seemed correct.

We watched the steam and water bubbling from the exhaust. It seemed to cycle. lots of steam, just water, lots of steam again.

"Thermostat gone" said the knowledgeable guy on the next boat. Then he gave us his views on, diesel engines, manufacturing industry, the stock market, religion, and teenage pregnancy. I was humbled by his expertise.

Next weekend I changed the thermostat but still lots of steam. The new thermostat made no difference. I looked for my knowledgeable friend; he was nowhere to be seen.

I consulted the dealer.

"Blocked engine inlet pip, he said," You will have to take off the fly wheel to clear it. "Nonsense", I replied: "I have small hands I will manage"

The flywheel was still in place when I removed the pipe but it took me three hours, three broken fingernails and three hundred swear words. The pipe was full of foam, rather like old-fashioned shaving soap. The foam filled the entire bottom engine cavity. After cleaning and five hours later I restarted the engine; still steam puffing everywhere.

I stood on the jetty in despair. Then my knowledgeable friend arrived.

"Cylinder head gasket, change it." he said" I would give you a hand but I am off to the match".

"No match for me." I moaned "The Xmas Rally is in fourteen days' time. I must get this engine going".

I rang up every engine repair shop I could think off; everybody was at the match "Eureka!" I shouted when the Hamble Point people replied.

"Yes Sir, we will send an engineer".

They sent more than that. They sent Email photos of the dismantled engine. They sent broken parts too. They sent deposits from the furred up cooling ducts, and finally they sent a very large bill.

"Now the engine works perfectly" I told my knowledgeable friend.

"Coco cola is good for you" he said" It is also good for engines. Pump it through the system at the end of the season and it cleans out the gunge".

I grinned "Sort of ... like cooking bitter".

"Thanks for the invite" he said climbing on board "I do like bitter but I prefer gin".

M. K.

Mike Flint

Mike and Anne Hartshorn's Atlantic crossing log in Nimue – December 2010

30th November 2010

Going to Barbados (Hopefully!)



Our crew, Nigel arrived last Thursday and has been helping get Nimue ready for her first Atlantic crossing. Unfortunately, we have had to delay our departure due to the bad weather in the UK, which has in turn caused stormy weather in the Canaries. Anyway, all is looking better for our departure tomorrow (1st Dec). We are intending take a southerly course down towards the Cape Verdes, where we hope to pick up the Trade winds that will take us to Barbados. We have spent the last few days, stocking up with food etc., and also taking the opportunity to have a look around Tenerife.

5th December 2010

Atlantic Crossing – heading for Cape Verdes

Having stocked up Nimue with all kinds of goodies and filled her tanks with water and fuel, we departed San Miguel marina, Tenerife on 1st December 2010 for Barbados – approx. 2650 nm away.

However, within an hour of leaving the marina we were back on the fuel pontoon. Whilst putting up the mainsail, one of the lazy-jack lines had caught in the track on the mast and jammed when the mainsail had reached half way. On our return Nigel was sent up the mast to investigate with Michael directing below and the problem was quickly rectified. So after a false start we left again and in fairly light winds the cruising chute was hoisted and Nimue started to 'eat up' the nautical miles. Our departure was delayed by a few days, as we had to wait for a storm to pass through the Canaries and wanted to be well away before another storm hit a week

later. The usual route to the Caribbean is to head south to find the North East trade winds, which usually establish themselves this time of year around 200 miles North east of the Cape Verdes. However, with high pressure over northern Europe, forcing incoming lows further south, the Trades have not yet been established this far north. These lows are also bringing adverse weather to the west, so it has been necessary to take a more direct route south to the Cape Verdes where we are hoping to find the Trade winds.

7th December 2010

Cape Verdes Stop

16 53.1N 25 00 w

Just made half hour re-fuelling stop in port of Mindelo, Cape Verdes. On our way to Barbados.

11th December 2010

Crew Calling !

After an avalanche of emails complaining of the lack of reports, it has fallen to the crew to sort things out -that's me Nigel.

Many thanks to all that have emailed us; it's been great to hear from you. Unfortunately communications are rather difficult here as the only way for us to receive emails and weather information is through the SSB [radio] which transmits data at 150 bits per min. so please keep any emails brief, or we get into trouble.

We finally left Tenerife on Wed. 1st December having waited for bad weather to pass through. The sail south following the African coast was fantastic with the wind on the beam for 3 days solid. Unfortunately our luck was to run out and the wind died. Great weather for sunbathing but not sailing. we had two choices open to us, the first being just to make the best progress we could under sail, or the second was to motor on in the hope of reaching the wind somewhere near the Cape Verde Islands.

The following 3 days were spent motoring and we finally decided to call into Port Mindelle, Cape Verdes to refuel, as we only had 2/3 days' worth left. It must have been the fastest call into port ever and no lan, it was for fuel and not booze as you suggest. We were in and gone inside one hour. The wind picked up almost immediately on leaving.

Key facts and highlights so far:

- We have done 1310 miles.
- 500 miles since leaving Cape Verde islands on the seventh, we have 1450 miles to go
- Anne caught her first fish - a Dorado
- Seen lots of dolphins
- Seen 4 killer whales

- Seen 2 white egrets which tried to land on the boat - Hedwig and his mate? (In joke for Chris, Sally, Maddy and Sally).

That's it for now folks, must dash to catch the post.

14th December 2010

Half way across the Atlantic

All is well on board yacht Nimue as we've sailed over 1600 nm. After leaving Cape Verdes the seas became very confused and winds around F6 for a while. It felt a bit like sailing back in the UK, especially when the rain showed up. Conditions started to improve on Day 11 and by Day 12 we were sailing in the Trades, downwind with the headsail pole out. Winds are still fairly light, so don't think we can manage 200 mile days, but hopefully the Trades will get stronger as we get nearer towards Barbados.

We caught a Wahoo today and the 50lb scales I bought were useless, as the fish weighed more, around 55lbs and was 1.5 metres long – photos later. Yacht Beez Neez would be very proud of the catch. The fish fought for a while before it was cut up into steaks and put into the freezer.

Tomorrow we're having a just past half- way party and at midday we should have less than 1000nm to go.

17th December 2010

Slow Boat to Barbados !

With light winds Nimue is making slow progress to Barbados and only covered 135 miles yesterday, although we still hope to arrive around the 21st / 22nd Dec. Although we are downloading GRIB weather files every other day to try and stay in the best wind, it is only blowing between 10-15 knots.

Anyway life on board is relaxed and the men have currently got their heads into good novels. I have cleaned and sterilised the galley today and am now preparing tonight's meal - Dizzy's Dahl. Today a couple of whale pods came close to Nimue, which brought some additional excitement and as usual we have seen dozens of flying fish darting around the ocean.

We start watches at 2100 hrs. and each person does a 3.5 hr. shift. As half the day is dark here, we have all become aware of the celestial sky. On first watch Orion's belt looms over the horizon with Mintaka the brightest star in the middle, of course the name of Malcolm and Denise yacht. Shooting stars can be seen on all watches, but last watch sees the rising of the planet Venus, which is really bright and lights up the night sky and the sea. Not forgetting the moon, this plays a very important role for us sailors. We are currently coming up to a full moon, which completely lights up the night sky and is very much like sailing in the daytime, with good visibility of the sea, clouds and horizon. When the moon had waned, there is no light with little or no distinction between the sea and sky.

Anyway, it's Friday night and it's film night, so we're just going to settle down with a cup of tea in the cockpit and see the last half of Michael McIntyre live.

23rd December 2010

Arrival in Barbados

Soon after writing the last blog, the wind decided to blow a little stronger for the next couple of days and we were starting to make good progress e.g. 160 nm per day when it dropped again. This left a terrible cross swell causing Nimue to 'rock and roll' and made life on board particularly difficult, especially galley duty. So, the engine on again for a further 12 hours; about 40 nm from Barbados with a 10/15 knot wind and little swell we were able to sail again and the looming of the lights of Barbados appeared.

As dawn approached, Nimue was breezing up the South coast of Barbados towards Bridgetown, where we had to check in. Once all the formalities had been undertaken, we received clearance to anchor in Carlisle Bay, a couple a miles South of the port.

Nimue and crew had safely completed the two thousand eight hundred nm journey and it was time to enjoy the sea, sun and delights of Barbados.

2nd January 2011

Memories of Nimue's First Atlantic Crossing



The most important aspect of the Atlantic trip was to get us all and Nimue safely across. However, with our extra crew, Nigel on board we were all looking forward to push Nimue a bit more than usual to enable a quick crossing e.g. circa 18 days. However, from receiving the first weather reports in Tenerife, it was unlikely that we were ever going to get any strong trade winds for our trip. Our expectations were raised after leaving Tenerife as we sailed on a fast broad reach for 2 ½ days,

but then we came to a standstill as the wind just died. After a refuelling stop in the Cape Verdes, we hit some stronger winds for a few days, but again they became inconsistent and rarely went above 15 knots. Nimue sailed well, but we just knew that with 20 knots she would sail so much better and give a more comfortable ride. The trouble with weak winds is that you still have a swell, which rocks the boat from side to side and this becomes very uncomfortable and tedious. Apart from the lack of wind, the trip was a great achievement and a fantastic experience and we still managed to complete it 20 days!

MIKE AND ANNE HARTSHORN

Donation letter to RNLI

The club raised and donated £50 for the RNLI by presenting one of our talks; "Inverness to Preston" to 40 church members at St Anne's Church on Letchworth Road in May 2011.



A 'JOLLY' AT THE FOLLY



M.M. 2011.