



Autumn 2018

# BROAD REACH

The Magazine of New Parks Cruising Association

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**Front Cover:**

Steve Gurney's 38ft gaff ketch "Touchwood" on the Blackwater Estuary

**Back Cover Outside:**

*Farewell to "SEACHRIS"* - - - *"Missed"* by Monica Matterson dedicated to Bill Hudson



**NPCA Commodore Bill Hudson is presented with a framed copy of Monica's picture by Tom Cunliffe**

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## NPCA FLAG OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2017/18

FLAG OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
Commodore	Bill Hudson (Founding Member)
Vice Commodore	Vacant
Rear Commodore	Mike McQuade
Chairman	Peter Thorne (Editor, Broad Reach)
Vice Chairman	Eric McDowall
Honorary Secretary	Yvonne Margerison
Honorary Treasurer	Mike McQuade
Committee	Chris Geere Mike Flint (Talks Organiser) Pauline Green (Membership Secretary)

The committee would like to specially thank **Jonathan Herbert**, our webmaster, for his invaluable ongoing work on the design and upkeep and hosting of the club website.

## NPCA PROGRAMME 2018

Date	Event
Tuesday 16 Jan	Talk By Stuart Rowland " Sailing in Croatia"
Tuesday 20 Feb	Talk by Lesley Dexter " The little life boat "
Tuesday 20 March	Talk by Tom Cunliffe "Confessions of a Yachtmaster Examiner" Members £7.50 Guests £12.50 each
Sunday 25 March	<b>Commodores Lunch</b> at Lingdale Golf Club - Two course £12.95 three courses £15.95
Tuesday 17 April	Talk by Graham Walters 'Atlantic Rescue'
April 27/28/29	<b>SPRING RALLY</b> Organising Team Chris Geere/Richard Malthouse
Tuesday 18 Sept	Talk by Julia Fuller MCA "Dover Coast Guard"
October 5/6/7	<b>AUTUMN RALLY</b> Organiser Hilary Holmes
Tuesday 16 Oct	Talk by Eric McDowall (subject to be announced)
November 2/3/4	<b>BROADS RALLY</b> Organiser Bill Hudson
Tuesday 20 Nov	Talk By Dr Lampard "What the Yacht Master Certificate meant for me"
November 23/24/25	<b>CHRISTMAS RALLY</b> Organisers Mike and Yvonne
Tuesday 18 Dec	Talk by Mike Gillingham "The Titanic"

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

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

**Contact:** NPCA email: <mailto:secretary@sailnpca.org>

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

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

## NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this, my 10<sup>th</sup>, edition of *Broad Reach*. A very big: “**Thank you**” once again to all those who took the trouble of producing something for this edition.

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

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

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

All contributions are welcome, including short articles or advertisements; please contact me at my email address: [peter@thornes.f9.co.uk](mailto:peter@thornes.f9.co.uk) . I always struggle to find a high quality cover photograph, please, please take some *portrait* photos and spend a bit of time getting them in focus and correctly exposed. If you have given me a contribution and I have not included it here, please accept that, as editor, I must achieve a balanced range of content; I may publish it at a later date.

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



Peter Thorne 

## JOTTINGS FROM THE COMMODORE

I have re-read the commodore reports since 1991 to the present time they are all well-known names who have contributed to our success. We even had the first lady commodore; Yvonne Margerison, who also has been our excellent secretary for many years, this along

### **Commodores over the last 28 years:**

**Bill Hudson 2017 / 2018**

**Mick McQuade 2015 / 2016**

**Richard Malthouse 2013 / 2014 / 2015**

**Eric McDowall 2011 / 2012 / 2013**

**Yvonne Margerison 2010 / 2011**

**John Green 2008 / 2009**

**Mike Flint 2004 / 2005**

**Bill Hudson 2002 / 2003**

**Willoughby Garton 2001 / 2002**

**Ina Humphries 1995 / 1996**

**Hugh Butler 1993 / 1994**

**Bill Hudson 1991 / 1992 / 1993**

with her partner, Mike Flint. They have both been the back bone of the committee for 30 years. Mike regrettably has to stand down due to ill health.

The year 1991 was not the beginning but near the pinnacle of our success and since the 90s our slow decline in student numbers in classes. What didn't decline was the number of students who had completed their 2 - 4 year course and they now wanted to put their qualifications to the test. This was the time for volunteers to form NPCA who filled this void. This was shown when we held a dinner for our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Loughborough University and had 5 speakers. All top men in the sailing world; even our one night forums were sell-outs and with the help of Bob Bond we had visits from all our Olympic medallists plus Robin Knox-Johnson and Sir Chay Blyth.

The main problem now is we have no classes and only one active Yacht Master Instructor, however we still have some active sailors and a strong experienced committee providing monthly meetings during the winter when we've had some very interesting visitors; including my old mate Tom Cunliffe. In the summer months (April to October) there are 4 rallies with owner's and charter boats with qualified skippers.

Many people have helped since the 1960s some have died and some are sailing around the world and Baltic Sea. I have sold my lovely yacht **SEACHRIS**, a **DuFour** 31 but still hope to tread water with some of you.

We must thank our treasurer who is also standing down and Peter Thorne for our well-produced Broad Breach magazine.



The first student to be awarded his Yacht Master Offshore certificate was Bill Walker in 1974. Afterwards he published a training book and dedicated it to New Parks. The final examination then was an oral test with a qualified examiner. In 1975 three more passed: John Barnes, Jeff Dunston and Dr Ron Lampard. In 1970 we saw the flood gates open and 28 received certificates including me; several became instructors and at our peak we had 25 coastal and YM Offshore practical instructors; this with 400 – 500 students in a full range of nautical course.

From this you will see our club has a long, well founded and prestigious history we now need newer members to step forward and take up the mantle; the club is and has always been what the members make it.

Fair winds and full sails,

Bill Hudson

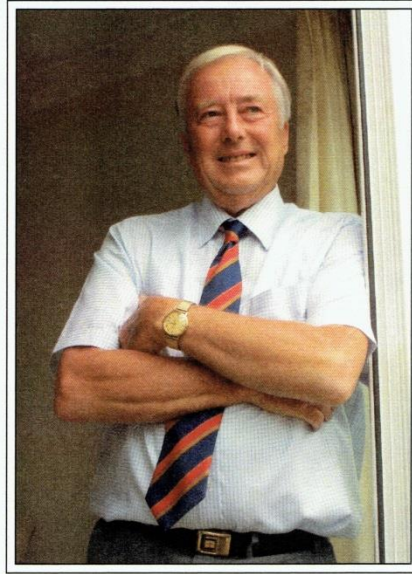
Founder Member NPCA

Bill Hudson  
NPCA Commodore



## REMEMBERING DERRICK YOUNG

**Clarendon Park  
Congregational Church**



*To Celebrate  
the life of*

**Derrick Charles Young**

12th October 1937 - 6th July 2018

*'Lived his life for helping others'*

Tuesday 31st July 2018 at 1:00pm

## MEMORIES OF A PAST VOYAGE WITH IAN HUMPHRYS

A little drift out of the Blackwater Estuary, going off to the Orwell and a date with the “Butt & Oyster”. We had better sailing later, as we actually had a bit of a breeze. This is a photo from the tender, of my 38ft gaff ketch “Touchwood”. The de-commissioned nuclear power station at Bradwell can be seen in the distance. This trip was also taken back in the mid 80`s with Ian Humphrys aboard his yacht “Hexanora” when I was taking my day skipper practical, and subsequent trips with him along the East coast rivers.



I will never forget that trip though, and the night spent in the “Green Man” at Bradwell. Ian was on top form, after his birthday meal at the coffin table, out came the squeeze box and the songs. Some people were horrified at some of the near to the knuckle lyrics, while other people were trying to write down the words!! Perhaps these are not suitable for print? He still managed to drink more than a number of the crew that night, on top of the bottle of Gin & French he downed before we went to the pub!! That man could surely drink; although I did my best to keep up with him. Needless to say we had a few sore heads in the morning, prior to a trip back to Levington, Suffolk Yacht Harbour. A final farewell drink in the lightship that night, was very much a repeat of the night before + a couple of extra hours, as the bar man stated. “While your skipper keeps singing, I will stay serving”.

I fell in love with the East Coast Rivers following this week and not just the social side!! I have had “Touchwood” for 10 years now, and unfortunately we can’t take Ian with us. The times and trips with Ian will always remain with me though. He was a larger than life character and enjoyed his sailing in this beautiful part of the country, mud and sand banks as well. I raise my glass to the man every trip I take!!

Regards,

Steve Gurney 

## ROUND THE ISLE OF WIGHT 2016 BY DAVE PICKETT

Once again I was invited to take part in the Round the Island race by Yvonne and Mike Flint their 32ft Southerly 100 (Gurnee), along with Mike's son Tony and Cath & Ian Brett from Hollowell SC.

We missed the event in 2015 after the boat suffered a catastrophic failure of the lifting keel mechanism prior to the race so with the keel refurbished by Northshore Yachts and a posh Coppercoat bottom we expected a good result.

We managed to finish 446th overall from over 1500 entries. 85th in class and 13th in our group with a corrected time of 10 hrs 01 min and what a fantastic sail with crazy winds peaking well over 30 knots and careering over the waves with 10.8 Knots maximum shown on the instruments. The seas ranged from normal swells expected from Force 7-8 on the reaching leg past St Cat's after a spell of huge breaking waves off the needles which really focussed everyone's attention.

Skipper Mike had produced a detailed passage plan with tidal speed and direction for each hour and an expected time at various points around the course. So we set out from our overnight mooring at Island Harbour marina to the start off the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes. The weather was fine and sunny with a lively breeze.

We were the last Start in the sequence but with about 150 boats starting together and a strong tide pushing us over the line it all got a bit tense, however we made a good start with Mike at the helm and beat into wind along the Solent towards the Needles with 2 reefs in the main and about half the Genoa furled.

It was quite hard going with the boat well-heeled and the crew working hard on the winches as we constantly tacked or freed off to avoid other boats.

We passed Yarmouth when Mike declared he was ready for a break and put me on the helm and as we continued toward the Needles a squall came through with rain and very strong gusts, so spirits became a bit dampened at this point with thoughts of another 10 hours of this and lots of boats returning having retired, however it didn't last long and we had to make a decision whether we could clear the Needles in these conditions before the tide turned. Mike declared that we were well up on time according to his passage plan so we pressed on.

We made it into the Needles channel and were met by a wall of breaking seas, but at this point the tide is so strong that there's no possibility of turning back so we pushed on trying to keep the boat going forward but at the same time not allowing it go beam on which would have meant certain disaster. (It's a long time since I've been so scared) but after some time we came through and finally bore away on to the next stage.

The leg around the back of the island toward St Catherine's point was a broad reach and although it's normal to keep well inshore on this section to avoid a foul tide the skipper felt that being close to a lee shore in these conditions may be dangerous so we took a direct line.

After a while I was feeling somewhat shattered so Ian took the helm and with his usual enthusiasm worked at the wheel to keep the boat at maximum speed. The sailing was magnificent with the boat surfing on a big swell at times doing over 10 knots. Another 3 hours or so and we were past St Cat's and gradually bore away deep downwind toward Bembridge. On the previous day we'd set up the cruising chute but after some consideration it was decided that it was best left in the bag.

All this time Yvonne had kept us supplied with tea and coffee and snacks and at strategic times Hot Sausage rolls and Pizza appeared, we also managed to consume a whole box of Cath's special cookies before 3pm.

As we hardened up towards the Forts, wind and seas had moderated somewhat so we let out maximum genoa and the boat was steaming along.

We pressed on up the eastern Solent which seemed endless as the tide was against us but remembering to miss the shallows between Bembridge ledge and Ryde we made the mistake of staying a bit too far right and were ambushed by a stream of large ships outbound from Southampton at high speed, this prevented us tacking onto the island side and left us fighting the tide in the main channel which probably cost a few places.

It was during this episode that our lookout Tony saw a yacht lose its rig as it tried to cross ahead of a large container ship with a bow wave the size of house, we all held our breath as it passed but luckily they didn't make contact.

Finally crossing the line at 9:30pm having started at 10: 10am we all agreed that it had been fabulous days sailing.

We made our way back up the Medina to Island Harbour by which time Yvonne had once again excelled by producing a piping hot meal by the time we were tied up.

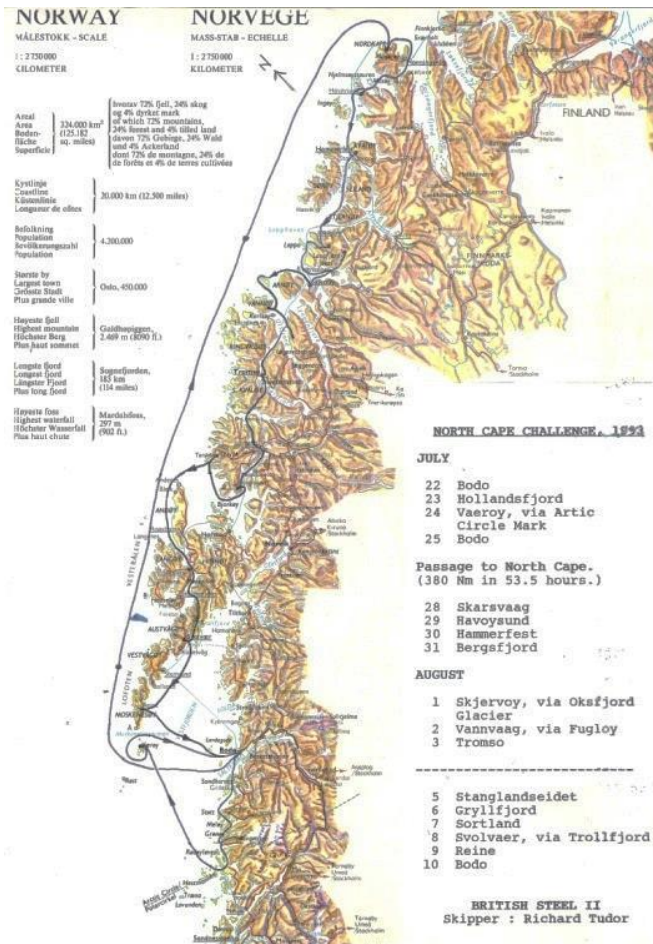
In conclusion, many thanks to Mike and Yvonne for trusting us with their boat and indeed to Cath, Ian and Tony for making it a brilliant sailing and social weekend.

Dave Pickett 

## “WHAT IDIOT WROTE THIS IN YOUR LOGBOOK?”

Pete Dawkins asked this of me as he was checking my logbook during my practical Coastal Skipper test. Under the section for “passages” I had an entry “Miles 380, hours 54, night hours 0.” He continued “it’s supposed to be the details of one passage, not the whole b...y trip”. But it **was** one passage I explained. North of Norway up to North Cape in midsummer,

one long passage – sun never dipped below the horizon!



This passage was part of a trip I made in 1993 on British Steel II. The first British Steel Challenge Round the World Race took place in 1992/1993. It was a revolutionary idea by Chay Blyth to have 10 identical 67 foot boats built, and crew them with 13 people who may never have stepped on a sailing boat before, plus an experienced skipper. There was a training programme for the crews over the two years prior to the race. It cost a lot of money to participate but really caught the public and press imagination, and people of all backgrounds and all ages raised the money to take part, £14,850 to do all the legs. That was a fortune at that time.

It was always planned that some of the yachts would be used to run an “adventure sailing” business between the races. Summer 1993 had British Steel II cruising over to Norway and up to North Cape. I had previously driven to North

Cape and really wanted to sign up for the 2 week leg covering this section, however the price was ridiculous. About six weeks before this leg started, I received an offer to do a 12 day section of it at a vastly reduced price. I rapidly organised to do so. We had the skipper (Richard) from the Challenge Race and one of his watch leaders (Marcus) as First Mate. Marcus’ wife Vicky came along as chief cook and ‘hostess’, although we all participated in meal prep. However the holidays had not attracted a lot of attention, and we only had 5 of us as ‘paying crew’. This rapidly reduced to 4 when one guy fell ill and had to leave.

We joined the boat at Bodo, and had a few days local cruising to the Svartisen glacier, crossing the Arctic Circle (southbound!)



enroute, and back north via the Lofoten islands. We then undertook the passage to North Cape.

The watch system was the same as they had used on the Challenge Race (where each boat devised their own watch system). Two watches. Starting at 8.00am three watches of four hours to 8.00pm, then four watches of three hours back to 8.00am. The system of 7 watches per 24 hours meant that each watch rotated which hours they did. One day your watches would be 14 hours, the next day 10 hours. This worked very well as meal times



were fixed so you were not doing food prep, washing up etc for the same meals each day.

We were hard on the wind sailing NNE up the coast. Wind was maximum up to 28-30 knots which we handled with only one reef, overall we averaged over 7 knots for the passage. The boat was a joy to helm, as the yachts were designed to go the “wrong way around the world”, i.e. westabout, into the prevailing wind. I was on “skipper’s” watch,

and he liked to spend a lot of time (dozing) at the chart table (no difficult navigation), so the crew did all the helming. The wind angle was favourable, only requiring a few short tacks. I recall being fairly close to the coast, the scenery getting less mountainous the further north we travelled. Other recollections: coming on watch at 2.00am, sticking my head out to see how many clothes to wear, and realising the most important need was sunglasses; asleep in my (very comfortable) Pipe cot, dreaming that the other watch leader came in to wake me and I punched him away. But one soon got into the watch routine and I would now choose the same system for a long passage with sufficient crew.

Richard and I cruising alone do a system of minimum 2 hours in bed for the off-watch, sleep till you are woken. Helm continues after that for as long as they are happy which could be up to 4 hours. Then there is a half hour handover for sharing food or a drink. Two hours is all you need on a cold and wet night, although we once reduced to one hour watches going round Cape Wrath at 3.00am in hail and snow!



Back on the Challenge boat Richard and Marcus entertained us with many tales from the race, including their dymasting in the Southern Ocean. They managed a jury rig to get them to the next port, where the rig was replaced to allow them to continue to race.

Marcus told us, 3 months later, how his body was only just recovering from all the ‘salt sores’ they ended up with. I think possibly modern clothing has reduced that unpleasant element of ocean racing. We heard how most people, however cold and wet they were, tried to keep one item of clothing clean and dry in case conditions got even worse than they were!

Once we had reached North Cape, we cruised to the headland at midnight – sun low on the horizon. Thereafter we day sailed southwards. I don’t remember if the boat had GPS, but all navigation was done by dead reckoning and pilotage. Navigation through the islands was quite tricky, and identification of marks essential. We had Norwegian charts – they had replaced the Admiralty Charts earlier in the trip after a near do with bridge heights! We had only one day with poor visibility, rain and mist, and that caused us to revert to engine to control our speed. The challenge of the navigation was good fun – no chart plotters in those days.



All the paying crew got lifted to the top of the mast underway – a real thrill, although I remember not wanting to come down! The mast height was 26 metres. I was one of two to get to go “wave walking” – the other two didn’t fit into available wet suit top. I was in a harness suspended from the top of the mast on the spinnaker halyard, and swung out once we had enough speed to heel well over whilst hard on the wind. This allowed me to “run”



across the waves. Great fun, while we had enough speed, then we got into a wind shadow; the boat stopped heeling, and I was swung in trying to keep my head away from the hull and fend off with my hands and feet. They rapidly winched me up and recovered me. I don't suppose the MCA would approve that for charter boats now!

Day sailing south we ended up in little fishing boat harbours, often rafted up against a local fishing boat. At that time, yachts were few and far between in northern Norway and we always attracted a lot of attention amongst the locals, who were very friendly. We never anchored – never found anywhere shallow enough!



Left: One large mast in a harbour of small fishing boats.

It was a very memorable trip. My section ended in Tromso, where Richard allowed me to do the mooring in something akin to a recognisable marina – floating pontoons at any rate. Normally he did all the close quarters handling. It was a fine boat to sail, and to live on, but after all the tales, I never fancied participating in a race on one. I can't remember the

total mileage, but I do always remember the figures for that special passage that upset Pete Dawkins! The map of our trip was sent to me by one of the other crew who stayed on for the extra 6 days back to Bodo.

Helen Lewis Blackmore 

## NPCA SPRING RALLY 2018 - RESULTS

You may like to know (and pass on to your crew members who are interested) the results of the 'timed passage' from Norris to Spit bank Fort on Saturday 28 April 2018.

Yacht	Reported Elapsed Time (mins)	Handicap Ratio*	'Corrected' Time (mins)
Zara	2hrs 02mins (122)	0.965	117.73
Gurnee	2hrs 19mins (139)	0.851	118.29
Viola	2hrs 04mins (124)	0.998	123.75
BrightStar	1hr 58mins (118)	1.071	126.38

On behalf of the Rally event organisers, may I express my thanks to all who took part in such good spirit and made a most enjoyable day on the water.

On behalf of everyone who took part, may I express a particular thanks to David Richardson who undertook the tasks of assembling all the crew lists and meal orders and who contrived the excellent course we enjoyed. Dave, when you read this, please know that we missed you greatly on the day and look forward to you organising another rally.

To everyone who took part, may I extend our very best wishes and always fair winds for your future sailing.

Chris Geere NPCA Committee 

## HM COASTGUARD ADOPTS RYA SAFETRX AS NEW SAFETY ID SCHEME

4 July 2018

The RYA SafeTrx now supersedes the HM Coastguard CG66 scheme

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) have today [4 July 2018] joined forces to reveal RYA SafeTrx as HM Coastguard's new official voluntary safety identification scheme.

RYA SafeTrx: designed to improve safety at sea

The world-leading RYA SafeTrx app is designed to improve safety at sea and potentially cut vital minutes off the time taken to pinpoint a casualty's location. It monitors your boat journeys and alerts designated emergency contacts should you fail to arrive on time.

Using iPhone and Android smartphone technology, this free tracking and alerting system is easily accessible and ideal for everyone who enjoys being on the water – from kite surfers and kayakers to dinghy sailors and powerboat users.

Notify the Coastguard at the touch of a button.

The free RYA SafeTrx mobile app and website, now supersedes the HM Coastguard CG66 scheme. It combines a more technologically cutting-edge version of the CG66 database function with additional lifesaving technologies so that you can make a 999 call to the Coastguard at the touch of a button.

The app can be used free of charge in UK territorial waters and is used by many other search and rescue organisations across the globe.

The app is freely available to any UK resident. Similar systems seem to be available for most European countries like Norway and Spain.

The RYA SafeTrx app is available to any UK resident who wants to be safer afloat and already has over 13,000 users. It provides all recreational boat users with an accessible and simple-to-use way of automatically informing HM Coastguard of their voyage plans, vessel and crew information, incident data, dynamic location and even a direct 999 connection in the event of distress.

Our club night on 18 September 2018 talk was given by Julia Fuller who is a Senior Coastal Operation Officer for HM Coastguard, based at Dover; she mentioned this RYA SafeTrx scheme in some detail.

Peter Thorne 

**OPINIONS – A POEM BY MONICA MATTERSON**

***Opinions***

*I disagree with patience strong,*

*I think she's wrong.*

*'You are nearer to God in a garden?*

*I beg her pardon,*

*But has she ever been to sea?*

*'The song of the birds for mirth?*

*From my sleepy berth,*

*I hear much sadness in the cry*

*Of wheeling seagulls blowing by*

*From salt reed marshes to reach the sea.*

*'The kiss of the sun for pardon?*

*Forget the garden!*

*Feel the kiss of spray on a blustery day*

*And be nearer to God than she (or, - at sea.)*

**M. Matterson** ■

**CHRIS GEERE'S BIRTHDAY TREAT!**



Chris Geere 

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

### Part 1

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



Sunset at Yarmouth



Old Newparkers going west

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Part 2

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

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



Valencia Island with Skelligs beyond



Sandpiper off Baltimore

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

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

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

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

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

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



Unusual ship off Baltimore

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

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

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

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



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

Pontoon jetty at Sherkin Island



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

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



Unusual rock on St Mary's

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

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

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

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

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

home by train. As we approached Plymouth there was intense lifeboat, helicopter and fishing boat activity with the radio constantly working. Apparently a scallop dredger, with two crew aboard, had disappeared. She



Lizard Point

had probably overturned when her dredge became trapped as wreckage was discovered floating on the surface. After dropping off Alan, we spent the night in Newton Ferrers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

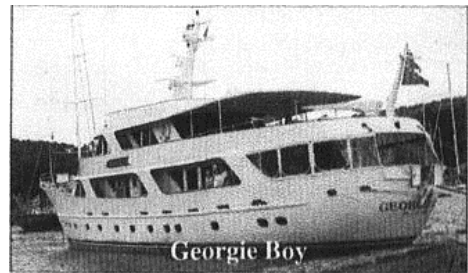
John Allsop 

## A TOUCH OF THE SUN?!

Feb. 1998 Monica Matterson

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

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



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

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

### Sunday 1st February

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

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

### Monday 2nd February

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



### Tuesday 3rd February

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

### Wednesday 4th February

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



### Thursday 5th February

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

### Friday 6th February

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

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

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

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

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

Monica Matterson



*A general map of the Caribbean cruising area:*

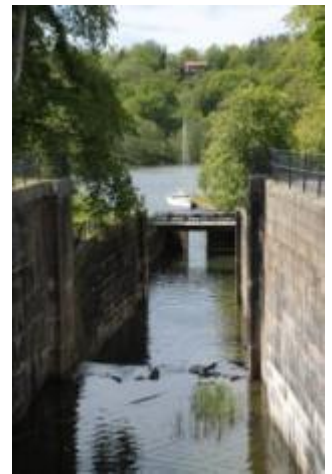


## INLAND ACROSS SWEDEN ON HORNSPIPE 2

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



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



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

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



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

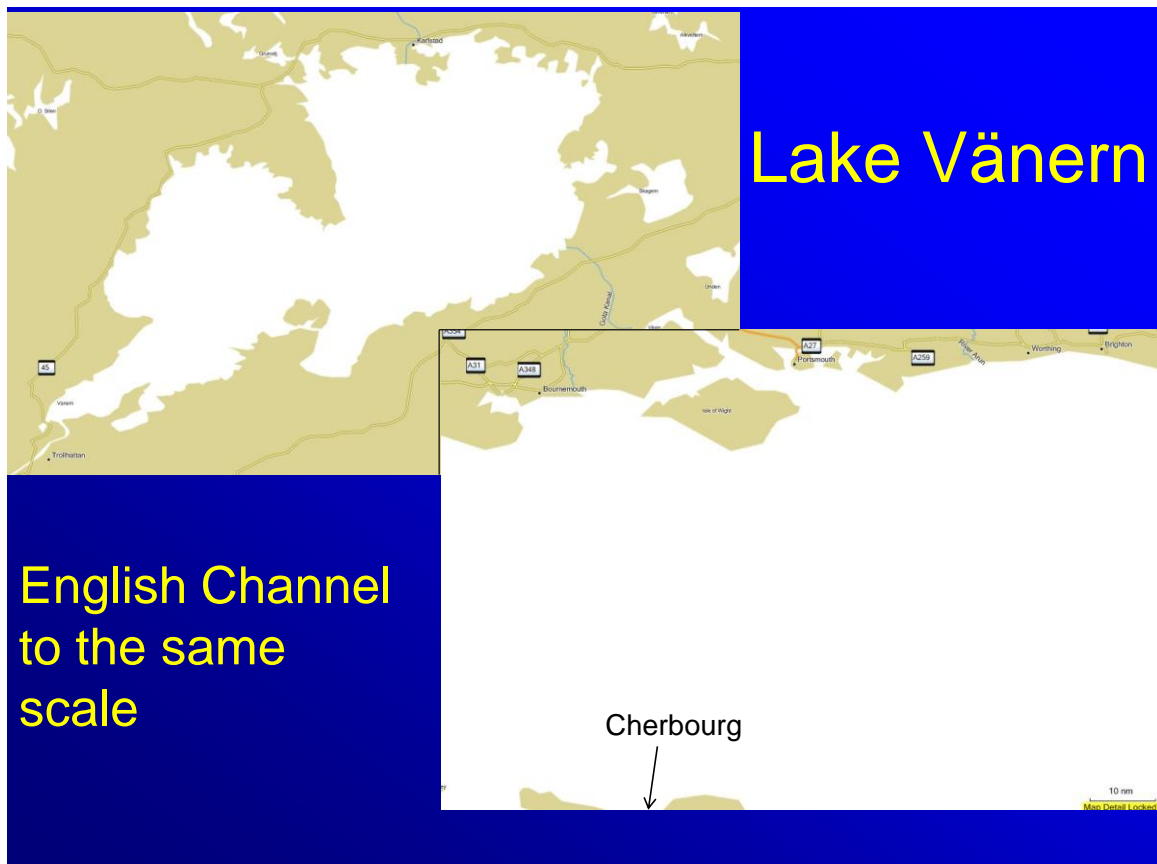
We stopped in the little marina just after lock four in order to do the other circular walk around the falls and sluices and through the woods. A massive and impressive engineering project again, dating from the building of the power station. We were not there for one of the times when they open all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

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



## 2 Canals – Trollhätte & Göta





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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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



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



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



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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

After Motala, the weather in the second half of July became very cold and rather unpleasant. Blankets and heating in late July are not normal: Swedes told us it was the worst summer since 1972, or maybe 1962! For many people, including land-based tourists, the highlights of the canal are the two flights of locks – 5 at Borensult and 7 at Berg. However, descending a flight of 7 locks in pouring rain and a chill wind was not at all a highlight for us. But it did mean that there was



not the normal huge audience! This took us into Lake Roxen; in other circumstances we would have sailed across but beating into cold wet weather didn't appeal (are we getting old?), so we took the soft option and motored across, steering from inside with the autopilot!

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

### **Some Facts and Figures**


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

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

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

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

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

Helen & Richard Blackmore 

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## RICHARD'S BALTIC LOG - PART 1

**Editor's Note:** *The full track of this passage undertaken by Richard and his crew can be found at <http://www.sailnpca.org/bsb2016.html> on the club website.*



Photograph: BrightStar at Kastrup Marina, Copenhagen.

Days 1 - 4, Gosport to Dunkirk

We left Gosport on Saturday 4 June as planned. There wasn't much wind for our passage to Eastbourne (Sovereign) marina though and it was quite misty and rather cold.

We crossed the Channel to Boulogne on Sunday. At first conditions were benign but later in the day we encountered lumpy seas and winds gusting to 25 knots. Nothing too difficult really - BrightStar was taking it all in her stride. I'm really impressed with the boat - although the electronic navigation systems are going to take time to fully understand. However, we had a problem with the "kicker" (or vang) which holds the boom up and controls the sail. It broke inside for reasons that are not yet known. The upshot of this is that we haven't been able to use the mainsail and won't be able to do so until we get a replacement in Scheveningen on Thursday or Friday. Until then we are restricted to just the jib (foresail) and/or the engine. But we managed to make good progress anyway.

After Boulogne we reached Dunkerque yesterday - where we are at present (we had a rest day today). We saw Royal Navy WWII battleships at anchor as we entered - then a RN WWII motor torpedo boat and indeed other WWII naval craft. And above us there was an aerial dogfight - I think model Stukas and Spitfires. Soldiers in combat uniform were walking along our pontoon. Warner Bros are filming a movie "Dunkirk". For a rather more sobering reality check we visited the excellent WWII museum in Dunkerque; most moving.

Tomorrow (Wednesday) we depart for Breskens, and then after that Scheveningen.

I'm delighted to say that Mark is going to stay with us for leg 2 to Copenhagen. Ralph departs at Scheveningen to be replaced by Chris, also for leg 2.

Days 5 - 15, Dunkirk to Kiel

We have just made it to the end of the Kiel Canal. Today has been quite delightful - the Canal is a most impressive feat of engineering - and of course sharing it with enormous cargo vessels adds to the excitement. It is bordered by woodland punctuated by clusters of pretty houses. The birdsong is terrific and it has finally felt warm enough to be midsummer.

Tomorrow we will exit the canal and head for Denmark - probably first to Geyser - and then to Copenhagen to allow Chris & Mark to depart. For now we are tied up (for free!) outside a shipyard - with the added bonus of a Wi-Fi connection.

Since the last update from Dunkerque we visited Breskens. But getting out of Dunkerque was somewhat problematical. We had spent some time on board SV Medusa - a 1942 Port Guard Vessel. All quite fascinating and (Captain) Alan Watson made us most welcome. Unfortunately, we had left it all a little too late and we were stuck on a falling tide. But a few cups of tea and an hour later we were off - through the film set. It was an easy passage; we stayed overnight on the visitor pontoon - we arrived too late and left too early to pay for a berth.

We left Breskens at 0445 and headed north to Scheveningen. Crossing the Maas required much care. There are huge volumes of shipping coming and going to Rotterdam and our little boat was in close proximity to huge ships. However we were monitored by Maas Control (think air traffic control) and we followed their guidance. The entrance to Scheveningen marina is through a commercial harbour and then a narrow "pipe". The skill of commercial mariners in getting their vessels into tight spaces is remarkable. Even with bow & stern thrusters I fail to park as neatly as they do.

I spent a wonderful few days with family at Voorburg whilst Chris, Colin & Mark stayed onboard the boat at Scheveningen.

We picked up and fitted the replacement kicker in Scheveningen so we could start to use the mainsail again. From Scheveningen we stopped at Den Helder - passing the Frisian islands - and then Vlieland Oost. We followed a traditional Dutch sailing barge into the harbour. Again I marvelled at the skilful manoeuvring of these craft. there were about 30 or so in the harbour - many seemed to be crowd by schoolchildren. We liked Vlieland Oost and had our first meal ashore there.

The next stop was Lauwersoog. We didn't like this place at all. We went into the outside marina (the inner one through the lock is we are told much nicer). There were no facilities - the toilets/showers were inoperative, electricity wasn't available, the shoreside facilities were bleak and uninviting - and I suffered the indignity of being attacked by seagulls (my first time but doubtless not theirs given the accuracy of their "bomb aiming"). needless to say everyone thought this was very funny - including my wife who I was talking to on the phone at the time. The approach to Lauwersoog is fraught with difficulty - not least due to the ever-changing sandbanks. Thankfully we have forward looking echo sounder - a brilliant piece of kit.

After Lauwersoog we stopped at Cuxhaven. We liked Cuxhaven. We had intended to stop at Norderney first but were making good time and this enabled us to have a rest day in Cuxhaven. We met a charming Belgian couple - Henry and Gaby - on their 47' ocean girdling ketch Falcon. They'd sailed more than 120,000 miles in her - around the world several times. We had them aboard for drinks and vice versa and were astounded by the adventures they'd had. Henry had retired at 60 to go sailing. Now 82 he thought that they might stop sailing next year.

And so we are almost at Kiel. Chris and Mark return to the UK on Tuesday (21 June) from Copenhagen; my son and grandson fly out to join us on Thursday (23 June). I'm hoping that we can get up to Gilleleje to see my cousin next weekend.

So far so very good - although I'd have preferred to avoid the breakages at the outset. But all now fixed.



Days 16 - 28, Kiel to Copenhagen and beyond

I'm writing this just before I fly back to Kastrup Marina, Copenhagen where BrightStar has been moored to meet up with Ralph, Jon and Hilary for the start of Leg 4. I returned home for a week - and month's worth of mail to deal with.

Picking up from Kiel - we exited the Kiel Canal at 0820 on Sunday 19 June. (Our transit time had been 9h 15 m and the log recorded 76.8 nm). It was all remarkably straightforward. There's very little rise or fall in the canal itself - and there are floating pontoons to make fast to. We had to use the large commercial vessel lock again - the small craft lock was out of operation - and as a result there was no charge. There were just two other pleasure craft in the canal - a British flagged sailboat and a German motor cruiser. Plus one other commercial vessel. Maybe Sundays are always quiet.

When we left the canal we expected to be surrounded by hordes of yachts taking part in the Kiel Week Regatta - billed as being the world's largest. In fact it too was also remarkably quiet - we saw very few boats. Perhaps the crews were sleeping in after the revelries the previous night.

We reached the small yacht harbour at Gedser, Denmark at 19:00 hrs, a run of 77nm. Sailing to Gedser had at times been fast - SOG of 11 knots - but entering was slow as there was very little depth in the approach channel - at times the echo sounder was reading minus 0.2 metres (this is the depth beneath the keel) so we were probably dredging our way in.

On Monday 20 June we headed for Copenhagen - Kastrup Marina. We were joined at sea by a rather weary racing pigeon which rested on the folded sprayhood - and repaid our generous gifts of food and water by promptly "recycling" it on the nice new blue canvas before being encouraged to jump ship when we were close to shore. Mark had taken a particular shine to the creature; we think he had always wanted a Danish bird. As we approached the capital the Oresund Bridge (Copenhagen - Malmo) presented itself to starboard. A beautiful structure.

We had been told that there is little or no tide in the Baltic. That may be so - but there are certainly strong currents - we experienced a fortunately favourable stream of 3 knots in the Sound as we approached Kastrup. Entering Kastrup Marina the echo sounder was showing minus 0.3 metres so we were again dredging our way in. Although I'd checked with the Marina manager and had given him BrightStar's dimensions it was clear that the Hanse was somewhat oversized for the marina. With our beam of 4.38 metres we couldn't fit in any of the "box" moorings; and local yachties were surprised that our draught of 2.25 metres had been deemed acceptable. But we were in - and the marina itself has proven to be convenient for both the airport (20 minute walk) and the centre of Copenhagen (25 minutes on the excellent Metro system).

Chris and Mark left to return to the UK on Tuesday 21 June, leaving Colin and me to become land based visitors. We liked Copenhagen.

Thursday 23 June - Referendum Day in the UK. I'd already voted by post but my thoughts turned to a sailing friend - John Green - whose funeral was taking place that same day. I couldn't get back to Leicester to attend as my son & grandson were travelling out to Denmark. John had been also been a Commodore of the New Parks Cruising Association (the club in Leicester where I had been a sailing student) and had worked tirelessly to further the club's interests. I'd last seen him on the club's rally in Yarmouth in May - where he seemed his usual cheerful, amusing (and well) self. A great loss. On a

happier note I went to meet my son and 4 year old grandson at Copenhagen airport. Foolishly I thought I'd walk to the terminal - the exercise would be welcome plus I'd save the bus fare. Big mistake - the heavens opened and there was a tremendous thunderstorm. I was drenched to the skin when I met their much delayed flight at 23:30.

Friday 24 June - Brexit result. It wasn't what I had hoped for; a few locals (Danes) seemed pleased by the outcome - saying that the UK decision would perhaps "wake up" Brussels. I did wonder if there would be some sort of backlash - but the Danes are clearly too polite for that. Still, I did hide the Red Ensign when we were off the boat. With Colin, my son and grandson as crew we sailed north to Gilleleje. Although just 39 nm it took 6h 30m - there wasn't much wind. On our port side we passed the magnificent sight of Helsingor (Hamlet's "Elsinore") and the Kronberg castle. On the opposite side the Swedish port of Helsingborg. That evening my cousin, her daughter and her boyfriend plus my sister joined us for pizza on board.

Saturday 25 June. Gilleleje is a charming location, and the harbour is larger than we expected. We took my cousin, her other daughter and her boyfriend together with my sister for a short sail in the afternoon prior to dinner on board. The run downwind to Helsingborg was deceptively easy but the return into a stiff headwind showed our visitors that sailing conditions vary. Everyone took turns at helming - except my grandson. That would come later.

On Sunday 26 June we left Gilleleje for the Swedish port of Helsingborg. The short run of 15.5nm took 3 hours. Helsingborg Yacht Club Marina was, like many we visited, unmanned with berthing dues and tickets being handled by machines. All very efficient. Generally we were finding that berthing costs were less than half those on the south coast of England. Helsingborg had an attractive waterfront with a children's play area that my grandson really didn't want to leave. We returned to Kastrup on Monday 27 June - and I accompanied my son & grandson to the airport for their return flight in the afternoon. The boat had suddenly become much quieter.

Colin & I reverted to land based becoming tourists. We took the bus to Malmo to enjoy the bridge experience. Unfortunately I nodded off just as we were crossing - and Colin had problems with his camera at the same time. All age related disorders I suspect. My cousin 60th birthday was on Thursday 30 June and she kindly invited us to her home for the party. We took the (again excellent) train service north to the bucolic setting of Toftevej 77. Another hugely enjoyable day before we left Copenhagen on Friday 1 July to return to the UK. A local (Kastrup) motor yacht owner who wants to get into sailing - very kindly offered to watch over BrightStar - and even sent the photo (Page 35) of the yacht at Kastrup marina.

To be continued...

Richard Malthouse 

## ERIC'S LOG 2015

### Preface

I have always been grateful for the existence of New Parks Cruising Association and Tom Hailstone, for without both of these I should never have become a Yachtmaster Instructor. It is true that I had a massive background in 'boating' before ever learning to sail, and I was able to take the experiences of that former life into my yachting. Bill Hudson and NPCA gave me the RYA Sail Cruising Scheme and Tom gave me the opportunity to learn how to be a skipper 'in the background', with lots of fun and a host of valuable experiences. I guess I was one of the very few who climbed that ladder to 'Yachtmaster Instructor' and never have been a yacht owner. It is regrettable that NPCA no longer have any 'learners' to train on board.

Below, in (part 1 of) my 2015 Log, I recount some of the many days I have spent at Sea in 2015 as an Instructor, as a professional skipper and as a volunteer.

April 2015. 'Clear Blue' a Westerly Ocean Ranger from 'Alba Sailing': a RYA course.

19.04.2015 From Dunstaffnage Marina. Crew: Coastal Course: *Marchien Szczepanski*; Competent Crews: *Miranda Phillips*; *Eleanor Phillips*; *June Owen*; *Ruth Watts*.

We departed Dunstaffnage after the minimum of Safety briefing and set off to the South. Went past Oban (Sound of Kerrera) with Marchien trying to do the pilotage, but he was struggling as I had not given him any preparation time, it was all new, and so he was doing it 'on the hoof'. Anchored at Puilladobrain.

20.04.2015 Unexpected wind popped up at breakfast and we sailed off the anchor and headed west. The wind carried us with good speed until around lunch time when it became variable. Proceeded south along the Mull shore to Iona where we anchored and the crew went ashore for a couple of hours sightseeing. Pulled up the hook and went to Bunessen (Mull) anchored overnight there: Very quiet.



21.04.2015 Weighed anchor at *Eleanor rows the dinghy from Iona* around 0900 and proceeded to Staffa.

Calm, so motored. Bit of swell off of Staffa so crew decided not to use the dinghy and land. Motored to the Treshnish Isles and anchored off of Lunga. My crew went ashore and had more than an hour alone with the Puffins before a trip boat arrived. They all made it to the cairn at the top of the hill. After weighing, we had wind and a north going tide and could sail, however it was 'right on the nose' for Arinagour, so we motor sailed. There was just one other yacht laying at the mooring buoys there! By now Miranda was the only one not to have rowed the dinghy, so we continued to tow this. Although the wind was westerly, there was a small amount of swell in Loch Earthana, but I always sleep well on a buoy.

From Arinagour, Loch Earthana, Coll. 22.04.2015 There was still a light and steady breeze from the west and we sailed off of the buoy towards Tobermory. Did lots of 'points of sail' exercises with the ladies in the crew. Once into the top-end of the Sound of Mull, did MOB under sail with the Coastal student, Marchien. Arrived Tobermory in good time and had showers, meal and then went to the 'Mishnish' – which had a shortage of real ale – shame. Just two yachts on the pontoons and paid just £15 for the night.

23.04.2015 Slipped around 1030 after a full cooked breakfast. At the start – a light Sea mist and calm. After an hour the westerly wind came back and we did lots more sailing exercises. Around



*June receives her course certificate*

lunch time we set up the pole on the fore sail and dropped the main. The light wind carried us while we made and ate lunch. The speed was not bad. As we approached Duart Castle there was thick fog and we headed, still sailing, south west to the anchorage at the south end of Kerrera. In poor visibility I used the chart plotter to get us in the anchorage. The holding was poor in 6 to 8m of water, but we held, probably on the weight of the chain, while we had our evening meal. Commenced the 'night sail' with the fog lifted - but dark. New lit buoys in Kerrera Sound not on the chart but pretty easy to

guess where they had been positioned. It was cold – I ran the cabin diesel heater so the cabin remained a warmer refuge. Met a fishing boat in 'Ferry Narrows' blinding us with five great spot lights and making it very difficult to identify the navigation channel. Made Dunstaffnage Marina a little after midnight and had difficulty locating a vacant pontoon berth belonging to Alba in the dark. Half of the pontoon lights appeared to be unlit, which made it tricky to establish where the main walkway was. End of course.

24.04.2015 Crew disembarked.

April 2015. 'Clear Blue' a Westerly Ocean Ranger from 'Alba Sailing': a RYA course.

26.04.2015 At Dunstaffnage Marina. Crew: Day Skip Course: *Andrew Casey*  
Comp Crews: *Morag Casey; David Richardson; Phil Naybour.*

Blowing West F8, the pontoons are not quiet at Dunstaffnage and the moored yacht is surging on the swells. Not a day for setting off – I concentrate on Inventory and Safety brief. Morag is suffering from Mal de Mare and she heads for the bar ashore. She stays up there for a couple of hours. We eat our evening meal and the wind dies down a bit. Morag comes back aboard.

27.04.2015 Departed Dunstaffnage Bay into a wind that built rapidly into Southerly F7 with heavy seas down to Lady Rock heading 240°(M) and trying to keep off of the Lismore shore without having to tack away, which we did. My sail plan is not ideal, close hauled with just the head-sail! Got into the Sound of Mull, which I knew would be more sheltered. At the south-east end we had a bit of fog and then mist and this turned to snow! Yes – sailing in cold snow. It lasted a while and then clear skies; the wind would come and then go to nothing. Difficult to teach sailing with such changeable winds. Got around into Loch Sunart and had a hail storm on the way up to Salen Jetty. Horrible day – cold, wet and felt that I had not taught a great deal- though probably a lot of learning had taken place. On the pontoon at Salen £15 for the night.



*Lismore Lh seen from The Sound of Mull - Ben Cruachan with snow*

28.04.2015 Difficult day with very changeable winds going from near nothing to force seven and then back to near nothing in such a short space of time. It was very tricky getting the right amount of canvass. Started with two reefs in the main. After a while changed to motoring with a huley of a wind on the nose in the narrow loch. Past Loch na Drumbuie and started sailing close hauled, still with two reefs in the main and half a head sail. After a tack, we bore away to sail down the half-mile wide fairway and were headed lovely for the cardinal at the far end. Then a cloud hit us with another F7 and we had too much headsail! Tried to furl a lump of this away and it would not! Trying to spill wind to keep her upright, it was clear to me that the leeway we were making would put us ashore soon! We turn round and it feels safer running downwind. I am now at risk of gybe with too much sail and in a narrow fairway. Phil goes forward to try to free off the furling drum jam-up. I am concerned for him as I cannot stop the flailing sheets. I decide the fix is to get into sufficient sea-room that I can motor, face the wind and get the main down – then sort out the jammed furling drum. This we do.



*Left to Right - Andrew, Morag, (aft) Phil and helm David*

The wind then drops and we put the main back up and sail into Tobermory Bay.

Andrew then does some close quarter sailing around mooring buoys and moored yachts. A really huge motor yacht at anchor in the bay has 'RYS' on the stern but is flying a large red duster. I take a pontoon berth for the night and the harbour master is charging me £25! "But last week I paid £15!" – he says "it's now gone up to 'summer rate'" and I tell him "but we were sailing in snow yesterday!"



*Anchored in Loch Aline, evening and looking north*

29.04.2015 Andrew took us off of the pontoon and we did buoy mooring exercises – motor and sail. Steady sail down the Sound of Mull became 'no-wind at all' eventually. Had done some of the sailing exercises and Andrew did a GPS task, David and Morag are both struggling with 'points of sail'. Loch Aline: forecast had said 'fair' and that is what we got! Anchored in 8 metres with 40m of chain out. Quiet night.

30.04.2015 Still, like a mirror in the morning. Lovely views during the day, especially of Lismore lighthouse with a snow topped 'Ben Cruachan' in the background. Finished off all the course tasks. Like the last course, finished with a meal at the anchorage at the south end of Kerrera. Difficult to establish good holding there but it is OK for a short stop if there is little wind. Late evening: a night-sail to Dunstaffnage via Oban Bay, on 'Clear Blue's home pontoon just after midnight.

01.05.2015 At Dunstaffnage. Course completed. All disembarked. I drove to Inverkip Marina.

May 2015. 'Chimere' a Beneteau Oceanis 44 from 'Britsail': a RYA course.

01.05.2015 At Inverkip Marina. Crew: Day Skipper Course: *Colin Moncrieff; Dennis Salter; Rob Wilford; Karl Inchley; Paul Holland.*

Britsail had 'stitched me up' adding Paul into my Leicestershire learners when I thought I had an exclusive course for them. That won't happen again! I tried not to show my annoyance.

02.05 and 03.05 The weather was poor and whilst we did sail Chimere in about force five to six on Saturday the second, we spent Sunday morning in the Britsail classroom doing 'course to steer', 'Pilotage plans' and 'height of tide' etc., while it blew its socks off. In the afternoon we sailed to Lochranza and took a mooring buoy.



**Anchor in Asgog Bay – good shelter about where the “A” in “Asgog” is, and about on the 5m contour.**

04.05.2015 Good down-wind sail to East Loch Tarbert. We did lots of exercises: poled out, ran with a preventer, GPS, bit of Pilotage, hove-to, MOB, lunch at anchor in Asgog Bay. We ate ashore at 'The Anchorage' which was as good as usual.

05.05.2015 Put the Storm Jib on the forestay before we left Tarbert and it stayed on there all day. It was a hell of a fight close-hauled to get into the West Kyle in the South-East eight that we had. During one stint while Paul was at the helm, the echo played

up and showed zero when we were in about forty metres of water. The result from our helmsman was panic and he gybed her right round whilst not concentrating on where we were pointing. We also had issues with a 'vessel engaged in fishing' which appeared to be able to get onto a collision course with us – regardless of which direction I tried to sail her. Eventually we got safely into the West Kyle and shelter. It was not too bad in the Kyles, with a down-wind sail to Tighnabruaich and then a strong wind on a close reach after we had negotiated the much trickier passage that is on the west side of the Burnt Islands. Took a pontoon at Rothesay for overnight and Fish and Chips were purchased and brought back to the yacht.

06.05.2015 Nice morning and managed to do MOB under sail before berthing at Kip. Course completed. Disembarked and went home for a few days.

01.05 to 06.05 I have worked for Britsail since they started. The operation appears to be going downhill, which is a shame. The number of issues with the yacht is a headache and it all points to a lack of maintenance and poor care by the other instructors who work for this school. During this week I had sail bag zipper hanging off by threads; ensign staff socket tube broken off (needs welding); grill will not stay alight (impossible to remove the burner to clean it on the Plastimo cooker); electric anchor winch will pay-out but not haul-in; outer cover broken off of the Steaming light; one cupboard door lock broken and cannot open the cupboard; fridge lid securing is broken and a piece of rope is provided to tie the open lid to a grab rail;

Paul turned out to 'know everything' but actually very little. He was going to be trouble and I ended up awarding him a DS certificate although I do not think he was up to the standard. I think he knew I

was not impressed. So I broke one of my rules and let this one slip through. I did not get the support I expected from Britsail, which was a shame, or there would have been a different outcome.

May 2015. 'Chimere' a Beneteau Oceanis 44 from 'Britsail': a RYA course.

10.05.2015 At Inverkip Marina. Crew: Day Skipper Course: *Zoe Smith; Stephen Laughlan; Stuart Rae; Colette Bremridge; (except Zoe, all members at Strathclyde Loch Sailing Club).*

11.05.2015 After a comprehensive Safety brief that lasted most of the morning, we sailed downwind to Rhu and took a mooring buoy off of The Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club for our evening meal. It did get dark, though mostly due to the cloud which continued to come with the South-Westerly force eight and we started a 'night-sail' about 2030. I was aiming to return to Chimere's mooring at Inverkip. We motor-sailed all the way back into this strong head wind which was uncomfortable. It was pretty sheltered until we cleared the entrance to Gare Loch at Helensburgh, then brisk to Cloch Point, where we got the full force of it.

12.05.2015 Sailing 'Chimere' with a Storm Jib and three reefs in the main is tricky for a Day Skipper to get to grips with. For a start it is possible for the instruments to prove (when close hauled) that the leeway could be as much as 20°. This means (of course) that you are not going to the place you are pointing at and this is confusing for some learners. Apart from Zoe, the rest of the crew are dinghy sailors from a lake near Motherwell and would not usually be out in these conditions! However, they are all very keen. Zoe leaps about the yacht like she has been doing it for years. Knowing if the small main is sheeted in tight enough is down to feel and your experience.

13.05.2015 We didn't appear to go far, but in fact went more than half-way to Lochranza before turning back to the more sheltered Port Ballantyne and took a pontoon berth.

14.05.2015 Still blowing well, went south-about Bute and made Tarbert. Collete did not respond



**Left to right, Zoe, Stephen, Stuart and Colette**

well to being tested. Stuart did not want to socialise with his fellow club members and Zoe was very good. Stephen was fine.

15.05.2015 Tarbert to Rothesay. Collete has got used to me and responded much better. She is a good sailor – at least as good as Stephen. She showed me she could tack or gybe on request and did know where the wind was coming from. We worked out that her biggest issue from day one had been sole previous experience with tiller and failed to cope initially with a wheel – kept going the wrong way! They all enjoyed the short tacking in the Kyles.

16.05.2015 They were all deserved of the Day Skipper ticket. Stuart confided that he was interested in learning single-handed techniques – he certainly does not need other people! Zoe (*Land-Rover Girl*) is very definitely a country girl of considerable practical talent and great fun.

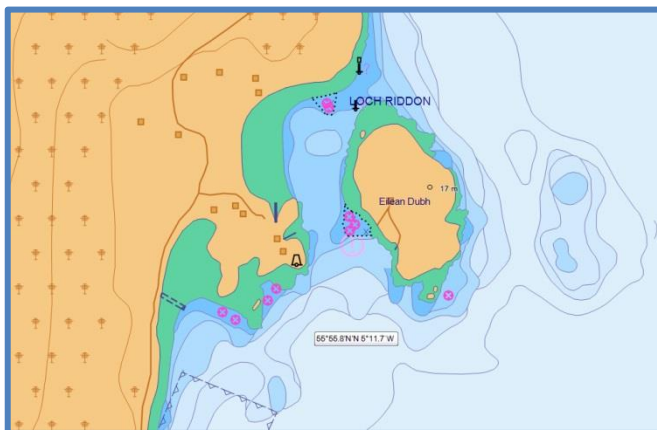
May 2015. 'Chimere' a Beneteau Oceanis 44 from 'Britsail': a RYA course.

17.05.2015 From Inverkip Marina. Crew: Day Skipper Course: *Mathew Hartley; Dave Woods; Michael Green; Neil Eatough.* Competent Crew course: *Kimberley Hartley.*

18.05.2015 Anchored in Inchmarnock Water in a wee Bay and due to the blustery conditions and shortage of sea room to leeward, I did set up an anchor watch. Holding was good.

19.05.2015 To Tarbert and ate ashore at a cheap pub. Didn't enjoy that much. This crew do everything on the cheap – crisps with everything – in sandwiches, for breakfast – get me out of here!

20.05.2015 Mathew is OK but annoyed me as he did not follow my instructions and did ding the



**Caladh Harbour just west of 'Eilean Dubh' (Black Isle), room for just one yacht!**

stem post on 'Chimere' when putting the anchor over the bow roller using the wrong method at Caladh Harbour. On many yachts, so much care is needed to ensure your anchor cannot swing into your own stem. Clumsy! How much do I tell him off? He won't have to pay but Britsail will have to put the paintwork right eventually.

21.05.2015 Dave helmed in Rothesay inner harbour (very tight for forty-footer) and managed a 'three-point-turn' in there very well. I had regained my composure! The

sailing onto a buoy exercises had gone well enough for Matt, Dave and Mick. Kimberley still needs to row the dinghy. The Indian restaurant at Rothesay did not look very appealing to me from the outside, but the crew went in through the door and I followed. The Samosa starter had a skin on it like crackling – not very good – but the Fish Curry was lovely. No licence – we went to the 'Black Bull' after for ale.

22.05.2015 After I did a demo, Kimberly was brilliant in the dinghy. Mick took us out of Rothesay Inner and we sailed downwind to Kip on just the head-sail. Another course finished! Three DS and a Comp Crew – certificates issued. Week-end clients expected to be late arriving.

Learned something new about Chimere (that I ought to have known before!), in that sailing her in force seven and up, she sails better with the storm jib than she does with the equivalent area of the furling headsail, despite the storm jib having a tack "strap" which is over a metre in length. I reckon that she would sit even more upright if I could work out a good way to lower the tack without compromising the visibility ahead, under its foot. There is also a risk that the sheeting angle might suffer as lowering the tack would lower the clew by the same amount and it might be designed around the most forward position on the head-sail car.

May 2015. 'Chimere' a Beneteau Oceanis 44 from 'Britsail': a week-end Cruise.

22.05.2015 At Inverkip Marina. Crew: *Cass Flack-Dalziel; Dave Flack-Dalziel; Elaine Burns; Shaun Burns*. The crew all arrived together and very late.

23.05.2015 0810 Belfast Coastguard MSI; Inshore f/c 0600 UT Saturday to 0600 UT Sunday; Mull of Galloway to the Mull of Kintyre including the Firth of Clyde and the North Channel: Variable 3 or less, South or South-West 4 or 5 veering North-West later; Smooth; Occasional rain; Good.

After a minimum of Safety we set off south on a South-south-west wind and with full sail – tacked to the south end of Bute. Bore away to go around the west side of it and after half an hour the wind died and we motored for a bit. Sailed again in the West Kyle and right up abeam of Caladh Harbour. Motored to Colintraive (where a table had been booked at the Inn) but all six mooring buoys were taken. Motored in heavy rain to Rothesay and we ate at the Hotel.

24.05.2015 Down-wind sail to Kip on South Westerly force five. Lots of good feedback from the crew: "did all we hoped for and more" (been right round Bute). They went home.


25.05.2015 Disembarked and went home by train.

Eric Mc Dowall 



## AIR AMBULANCE - LETTER OF THANKS

Following the CLUB NIGHT talk Members donated £70.30 on the evening into the "rattle can" and the club made a donation by cheque of £50 TOTALLING £120.30!



Coalville, Leicestershire  
23 November 2017.

Dear Peter,

I just wanted to say a personal thank-you to you and the Association members for your hospitality and kindness at the presentation the other evening.

You said that the personal donations on the evening would probably exceed the cheque donation and you were quite right - £70.30 on the evening was wonderful.

Please pass on my thanks to everyone for their generosity and thank you once again for a very enjoyable evening.

Kind Regards,  
Peter Gunderman

Receipt hereafter:



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theairambulance.org.uk  
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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Application Form



### NEW PARKS CRUISING ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to the **RYA**

#### **Annual Membership Application and Renewal Form 2017/18**

Name:	Home Phone:
Address:	Mobile Phone:
	Work Phone (Optional):
Post Code:	Email:

#### About Your Data

NPCA keep members informed about rallies, other events and club news by email and text message. If you wish to receive these messages, please sign the form to give your consent. In order to administer your membership we will hold the data on this form securely; a copy can be obtained from the club Secretary. You may unsubscribe from email and text message by replying with the word "STOP".

#### RYA Sailing Qualifications:

None  Competent Crew  Day Skipper  Yacht Master Coastal   
 Yacht Master Offshore  Yacht Master Ocean

I wish to apply for membership of New Parks Cruising Association and agree to be bound by its rules. The annual membership fee of £10.00 is renewable on 1<sup>st</sup> October annually. Please pay by internet banking or set up a Standing Order using the details below or by cheque payable to **NEW PARKS CRUISING ASSOCIATION** (Not - N.P.C.A.) posted to: **P A Green, NPCA Membership Secretary, 5 Orton Close, Rearsby, Leicester LE7 4XZ.**

Signed:	Date:
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#### Payment Options:

1. Set up on Telephone / Internet Banking using these details or
2. Instruct your bank using the Standing Order form below.

#### STANDING ORDER FORM

To The Manager: .....Bank plc

Address:.....

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

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

Contact for data enquiries to: The NPCA Secretary email: [secretary@sailnpca.org](mailto:secretary@sailnpca.org) other information go to [www.sailnpca.org](http://www.sailnpca.org)





M.M. 17.

FAREWELL TO "SEACHRIS" --- "MIST"!