

1981

LODESTAR

CRUISE TO THE BAY OF BISCAY

CREWED BY: JOHN RATHE
 ALAN ROE
 ANNE ROE
 HAL (AUTOMATIC PILOT)

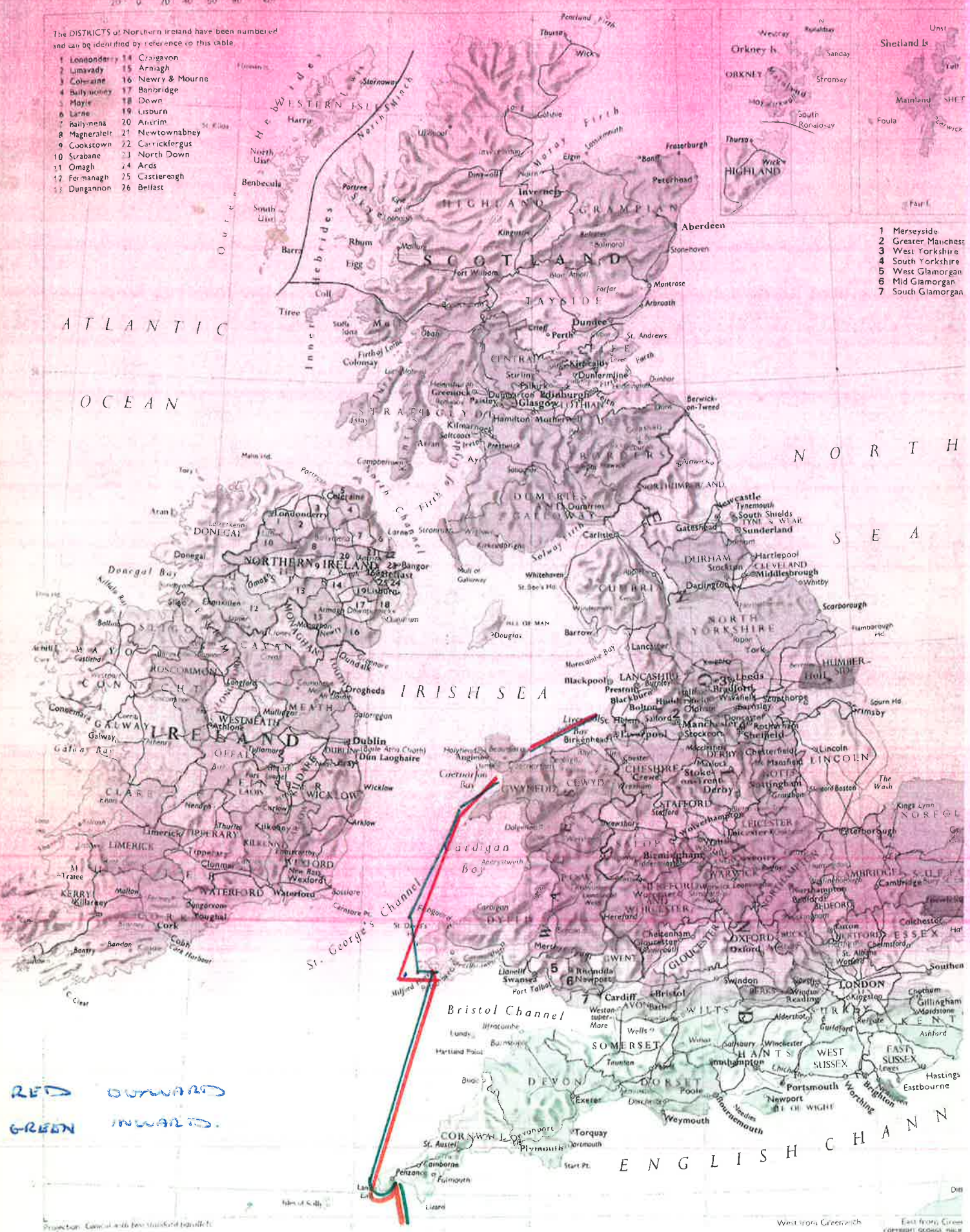
CHEF: ANNE ROE
CHIEF FISHERMAN: ALAN ROE
NAVIGATION: MR PURECHANCE



The DISTRICTS of Northern Ireland have been numbered and can be identified by reference to this table.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 Londonderry | 14 Craigavon |
| 2 Lurgan | 15 Arniagh |
| 3 Coleraine | 16 Newry & Mourne |
| 4 Ballymoney | 17 Banbridge |
| 5 Moy | 18 Down |
| 6 Larne | 19 Lisburn |
| 7 Ballymena | 20 Antrim |
| 8 Magherafelt | 21 Newtownabney |
| 9 Cookstown | 22 Carrickfergus |
| 10 Strabane | 23 North Down |
| 11 Omagh | 24 Ards |
| 12 Fermanagh | 25 Castlereagh |
| 13 Dungannon | 26 Belfast |

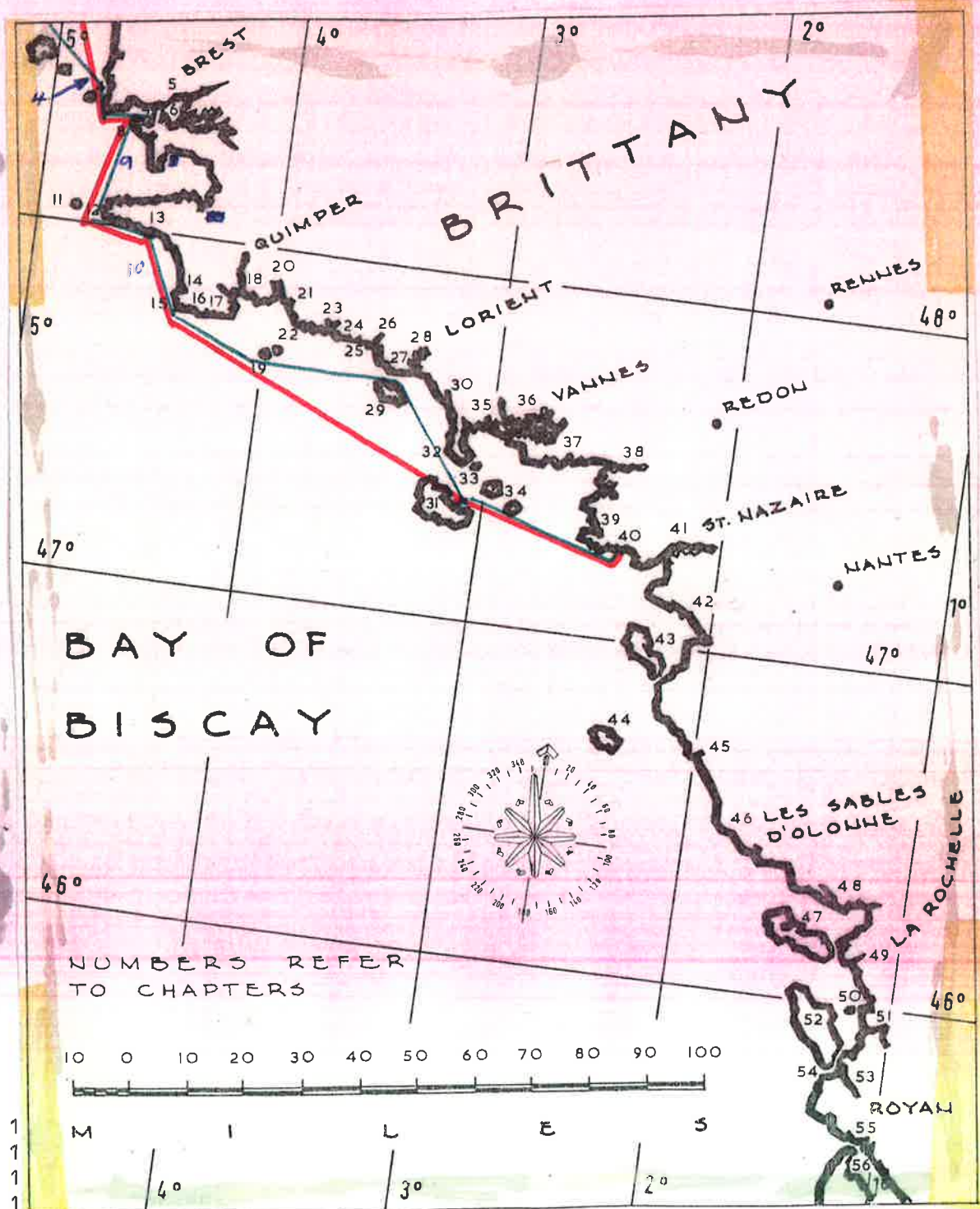
- 1 Merseyside
- 2 Greater Manchester
- 3 West Yorkshire
- 4 South Yorkshire
- 5 West Glamorgan
- 6 Mid Glamorgan
- 7 South Glamorgan



RED OUTWARD
GREEN INWARDS.

Projection: Cassini with best standard parallels

West from Greenwich East from Greenwich
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- 15 PTE DE PENARC'H
- 19 ILES DE GLENAN
- 20 QUIMPER
- 29 ILE DE CROIX
- 31 BELLE ILE
- 40 PORNICHET
- 41 ST NAZAIRE

4 CHENAL LE FOUR
7 CAMARET
8 CHENAL DE TOULINGUER
9 IROISE
10 BAIE D'AUDIERNE
11 ILE DE SEIN
12 RAZ DE SEIN
13 STE EVETTE
15 PTE DE PENARC'H
19 ILES DE GLENAN
20 QUIMPER
29 ILE DE CROIX
31 BELLE ILE
40 PORNICHET
41 ST NAZAIRE

"Well" we're off! After nearly two years planning and a lot of work we were finally on our way.

We had arrived down in two cars, both packed with equipment; "it will never all go on board" someone was heard to say. Somehow after five dinghy trips, (we had taken out four loads the previous night), and a lot of help from friends on the beach, we managed to load up just on high water.

With the boat now three to four inches lower in the water we got under way at 18.55 hours.

The weather forecast was west south west, three to four visibility good to moderate rain later; don't believe a word of it we said it's the night of the Isle of Man Race, it was bound to be north west four or five.

Well as you know it wasn't, we motored for the first few hours, picking up the wind at 22.00 hours, then it was from the south south west three to four, we were now making very good progress Log reading a steady 6 knots.

We were making for the Straits and needed to be at the Swellies by 05.20 11th, but at 03.00 hours it blew up, to five to six from the south west and it started to look like it might be a repeat of the Puffin Island Race when it had taken seven and a half hours to beat up to Beaumaris from the Orme.

We decided not to mess about so we dropped the Genoa, reefed the Main and started the engine.

We picked up a mooring at Beaumaris at 06.45 but because of the weather we were now too late for the Swellies

Distance 50.3 miles

Engine hours 7 hours 25 minutes

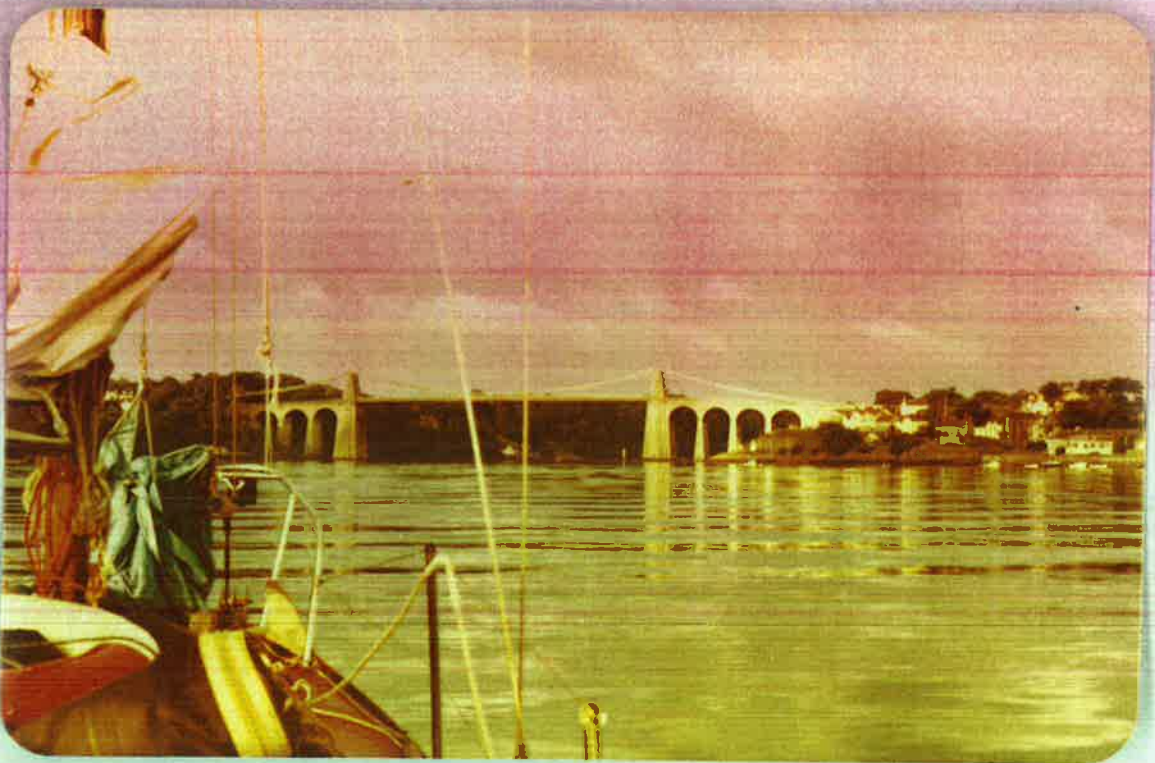
Total time 12 hours 25 minutes

After getting some sleep and buying two gallons of petrol we moved up to the Gezelle at 18.00 hours. We had decided not to continue until the following morning.

We arose at 05.00 12th July to find the sun shining down the Straits making it one of those memorable mornings.



"RISE AND SHINE"



"MENAI"

We set off at 06.05 for Menai Bridge and passed through the Swellies this time with a chart. (I went through last year without one). After clearing the Caernarvon Bar we laid a course of 229⁰ mag for Bardsey Island.

We were able to sail down to Bardsey, however, once abeam of the Island we had to start the engine due to wind force zero.

Hal now took over the helm; he's the fourth member of the crew, and we set course for the Smalls Light; the forecast was variable three rain later visibility moderate.

All went well until just past midnight; the forecast now was giving westerly three to four fog patches, good, we thought at least we will be able to sail, "well we didn't", it did blow up but from the south by west three/four right on the nose.

We sighted the Smalls at 02.35 13th July but lost it in fog at approximately 06.00.

At 08.00 we turned off the engine and started tacking with the goal of finding the Smalls and with the help of a Brooke's and Gatehouse RDF set and the good eyes of Alan it was sighted at 10.30 hours off our port side.

We rounded the light at 11.00 hours and with the wind now backed to the north west force three sailed east towards Dale Roads with the fog now lifted we entered Milford Haven Channel and we sighted the first yacht since Anglesey, and who should it be but PANTHERA homeward bound from the Channel Islands. After a brief exchange over the RT they soon passed out of sight and we went in and picked up a mooring at 16.00 hours.

Distance 148.3 miles

Engine hours 23 hours 15 minutes

Time taken 33 hours 55 minutes

Total 198.6 miles

After refuelling with six gallons of petrol and taking on nine gallons of water, we went to the local Pub, followed by a meal at the Posthouse then on to the local Sailing Club, followed by a good night's sleep; "mind you the beer helps".

The following morning we bought some food at the one and only shop and returned to the boat for the 13.55 forecast, which gave westerly three to four or five rain expected visibility poor fog.

We slipped lines at 14.40 hours and motored out under a bright hot sun with calm seas, visibility moderate.

We continued under engine until 17.50 hours, then we picked up a light breeze which we were able to sail by. However, at 19.25 we had to restart the engine as it had backed on to the nose. At 21.45 we eventually picked up the westerleys forecast about force three by 23.00 the wind had increased to force five and we were experiencing the first of the large Atlantic seas. We also had a dance with some fishing boats, whichever way we went they seemed determined not to let us pass.

We were really flying now, between 00.10 and 04.10 we covered 27.6 miles or at 6.9 knots and this was with the main reefed. By 06.10 we were somewhere off Lands End but could not obtain any visible fix due to mist.

Again using the RDF we found we were a few miles further west than expected, as we reached the corner the mist lifted and just abeam of the longships we meet "Billy" (that's what Alan called him); he swam up to us, had a look and then swam off, in fact it was the only shark we were to see on the whole journey.

We had to motor sail from Longships as the wind had dropped down to a two and the tide was now foul.

We took our time on reaching Penzance as I had calculated that the Lock Gate would be open until 17.30 hours, in fact the Gate closed at 16.30 hours - twenty minutes before we arrived, so we would have to spend the night outside on anchor and as you can imagine, I was not popular that night.

Distance 130.0 miles

Engine hours 8 hours 20minutes

Time taken 26 hours 10 minutes

Travelled so far 328.6 miles

While waiting the following day for the Gates to open the Ferry for the Scilly Isles departed. We had anchored on the north side close to some other yachts, mostly French.

The Ferry had to go astern to clear the south pier and came very close to the yachts ahead of us before going ahead.

A large whirlpool from the ship's propellers moved through the water dragging a French yacht with it then commenced to spin it round and round and round twenty or so times; "well we could not help laughing, that is until the French yacht suddenly stopped and the whirlpool came over to us, and we felt rather foolish just standing there with the boat spinning round, so we went down below and hid".

The rest of the day was flitted away and the evening spent in a good pub named The Admiral Benbow.



"PENZANCE HARBOUR"

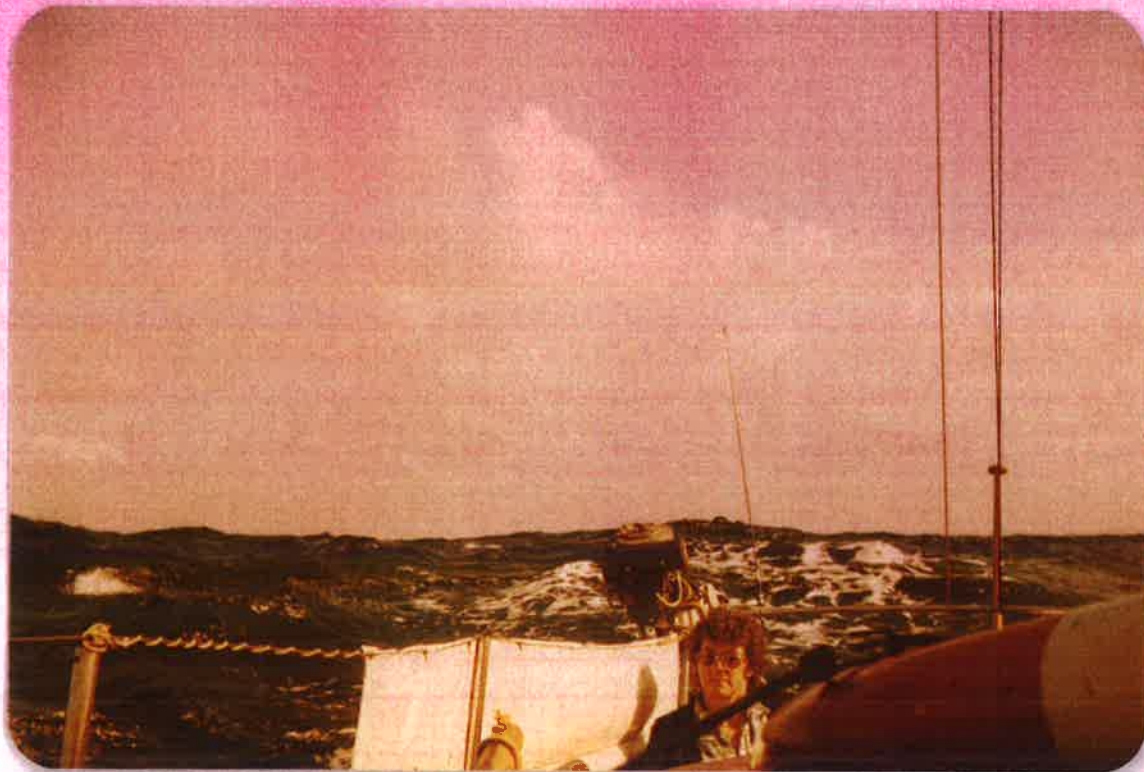
At 16.04 on the 17th we said goodbye to Penzance and after just going through the dock gates the engine stopped (blocked petrol filter), a quick panic followed as we got the Genoa up and sailed clear of the Harbour entrance.

The forecast at 13.55 had given north west four or five possibly six so we set our course for the Chenal Du Four.

We had started out with a full main and Genoa but by 18.00 hours we had it reefed right down and by 20.55 hours we were sailing on working jib alone and the Log was reading $6/6\frac{1}{2}$ knots steady.

"ON JIB IN THE CHANNEL"





THE SEAS IN THE CHANNEL

The size of the seas caused me some concern as it was a following sea and I was worried about taking a big one over the stern. The boat however was behaving well and at times was surfing down the rollers; we had a full moon right throughout the night which made the visibility and sailing excellent. A magic moment was recorded by me just after the sun broke over the horizon at 04.10, a few miles ahead was a line of merchant vessels and one passenger ship; they all looked to be on fire with the sun reflecting off their hulls then being extinguished as we or they disappeared in a trough. 05.00 all one could see is a solid line of ships steering out of the Channel and into the Atlantic. Judging their movements carefully some I beat up to windward and rounded their sterns, others crossing their bows and one or two ships changing course to round my stern.

At 07.00 we ran the engine to charge the batteries just after we had switched it off we started to take in water over the stern. The odd large wave would sneak up on us and slop in that was usually followed by cursing and the sound of the bilge pump.

By 09.30 however the wind had dropped down to a four and the seas were now moderating so we replaced the gib with the Genoa and set the main. We sighted the coast of France at 10.15 and picked up the Le Four Lighthouse right on the nose.

At this point we sighted many yachts and all the time we sailed down and back up the coast there was always ten or more yachts in sight.

However, to continue, we passed the Four Light and sailed down as far as Anse de Portzmorue before the tide turned; we then started the engine to push the tide (the tide here runs at neaps 2.8 knots and springs $5\frac{1}{4}$ knots).

We passed Le Conquet at 15.00 hours and cleared the Four Channel by 16.30. Once clear we were able to sail under a lovely warm sun up the Avant Goulet and into Camaret at 18.00 8th July.

It should be noted here that at Camaret there is a Marina there, those floating things that we don't have in the Irish Sea.

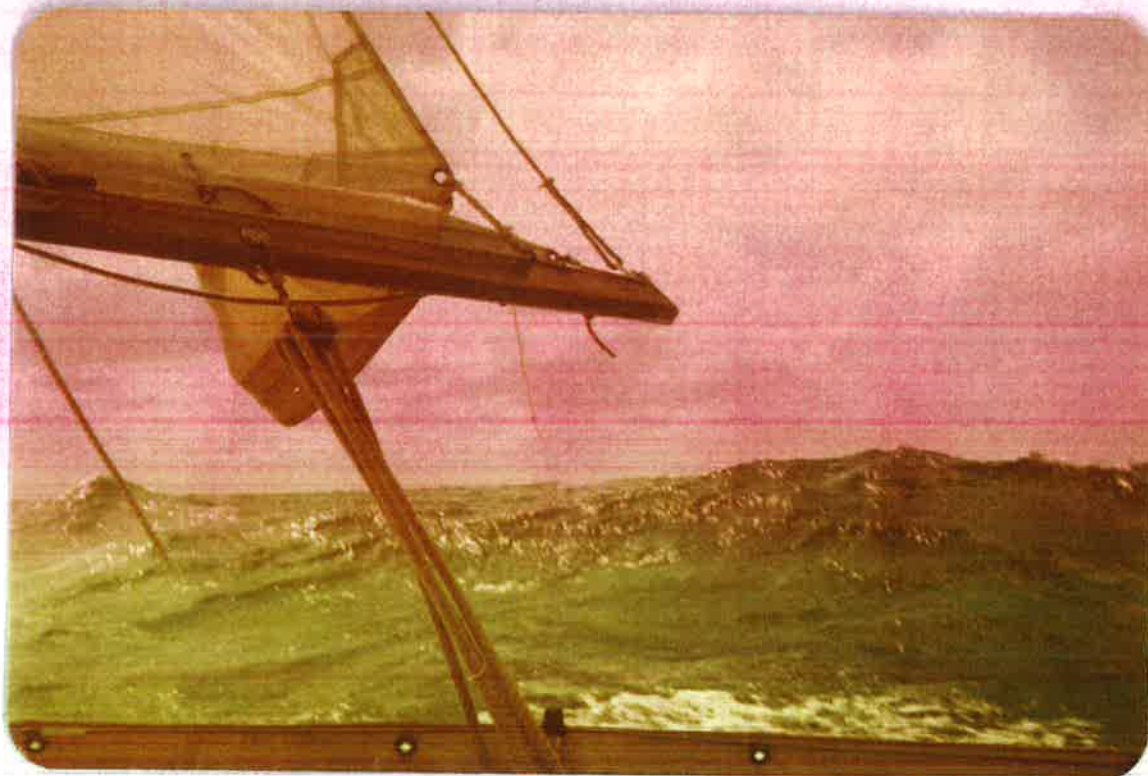
The boats here tie up alongside and not stern on, which was handy as I don't have a reverse on my engine. Alan, acting as breakman, brought us to a halt - he is now getting his shirt sleeves lengthened.

Distance 134.3 miles

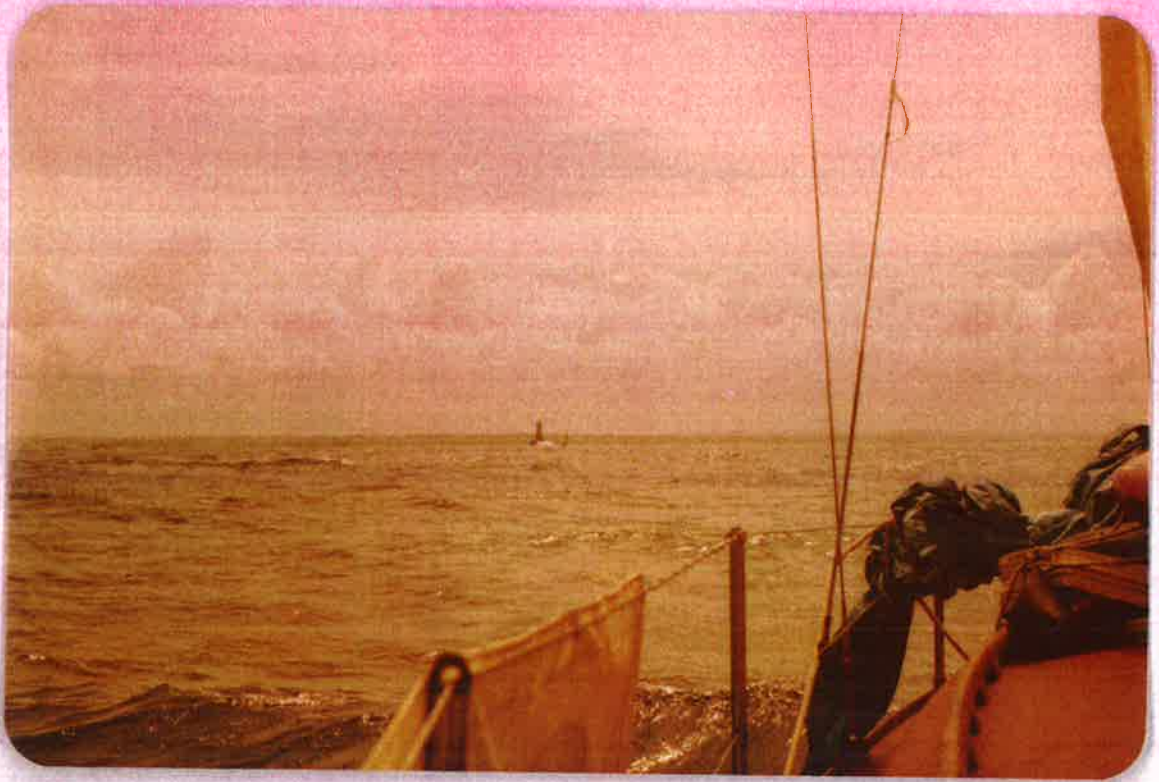
Engine hours 4 hours 10 minutes

Total time 25 hours 56 minutes

Distance covered so far 463.1



NEARING FRANCE



LE FOUR LIGHT



CAMARET

After securing the boat and a general tidy up, Alan and Anne went to find the Customs as they had not shown up; eventually returning to inform me that they had closed for the day.

So off exploring we went; the first thing you notice is that all the people are foreigners, however, just along the quay were three green tin boxes which were used as toilets - we did not use them as anything. Just beyond them is a Fortress which overlooks the Harbour and the Avant Goulet which leads up to the Port of Brest. This Fortress was built in 1689 and 5 years later repelled with, I might add, heavy losses a combined attack by the Dutch and English and later in 1791 won a victory against five English Frigates, so we didn't win them all!

Just adjacent to the Fort were further public toilets, with showers and 'phone. By French standards, as I was to find out, these were excellent as well as interesting as they were mixed.

Further along the quay now on the inner harbour, we passed some slipways on which were two fishing boats being repaired; these boats were of modern design, ocean going and were built entirely of wood. Next to that, above the high water line, were dozens of abandoned barges and some fishing boats. This we found out was a graveyard and these boats were left here just to rot away.

The town of Camaret was nothing startling, just shops, Banks, etc., plus of course many Cafe's. It was certainly civilized to be able to get a drink at any time of the day and not get thrown out at 11 at night.

FOREGROUND - THE ABANDONED FISHING BOATS

BACKGROUND - THE FORTRESS AT CAMARET JUST BEHIND THE CHURCH





- TOP LEFT - THE CHENAL DU TOULINGET
 TOP RIGHT - THE FORTRESS
 BOTTOM - CAMARET HARBOUR, THE MARINA IS ON
 THE EXTREME RIGHT

19th July - Sunday

The man from the customs arrived at 09.30 when we were still in bed. However, he waited while we dressed; after checking the boat papers, as it is not registered, and our Passports, he gave us a clean bill of health.

The rest of the day flew by; we just spent it walking about and of course visiting the Cafes, I being the last one back aboard very drunk but happy.

20th July - Monday

We had planned to sail today for Belle Ile, some 110 miles south east. However, the first call we needed to make after breakfast and showers, was to a Bank, but this proved very difficult as they were closed all day, so after some shopping which, of course, included wine on the list, we returned to get the B.B.C. shipping forecast, which gave Biscay west north west 4/5 mist visibility poor, so at 14.30 BST we slipped our lines.

Motoring westward for the Pte Du Toulinguet, we checked over the charts for our course, as running out from the headland for some seven miles are a group of rocks, some of which do not show and numerous shoals.

However, three channels are possible in the right conditions; the Chenal du Toulinguet, Chenal du Petit or the most westward Chenal du Corbeau.

After careful study of the charts, and me being chicken, I thought it might be best if we went all the way around, but on sighting the Chenal du Toulinguet we changed course and headed right down the middle.

The Channel is only $\frac{1}{4}$ mile long by $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wide; the mainland stands some 80 metres high and the three large rocks to the westward side stand some 59, 66 and 45 metres high - a lovely sight and easy passage but I should imagine very difficult in bad weather. So onward south we now sailed, on a course of 208° mag heading for the next nasty bit the Raz de Sein.

With the wind from the north west, force 4, we sailed on down and across the Iroise for the Raz.

The Raz de Sein is the area of sea between the Pointe du Raz on the mainland and the Ile de Sein. The tide through here in the channel which narrows down to $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, runs at neaps 5 knots springs at $6\frac{1}{2}$ knots so it is largely a matter of timing and having reasonable weather conditions.

The sea state at the time was very good but just before the La Plate Tower and the La Vielle Lighthouse, which guards the mainland, the sea was exceptionally rough and this was at high slack water, it is definitely a place not to attempt in bad weather or at the wrong time.

We passed the La Plate Tower at 18.50 and so cleared the Raz; we were now in an area of sea called the Baie d'Audierne and had changed course to 115° mag. As I had stated we had left Camaret with the intention of sailing direct to Belle Ile, but as that was another 75 miles away, we decided to pull into Audierne which has an anchorage at Ste Evette. So, rather than sail overnight, we dropped anchor at 20.45.

Distance 30.7 miles

Engine hours - 2 hours 50 minutes

Total time - 6 hours 15 minutes

Distance covered 493.8

Once on anchor we got our skates on "so to speak", as I needed refreshment: Beer! Booze! Alcohol! etc. We landed by dinghy by the lifeboat slip and set off to walk around the bay to Audierne, the book says it is only $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles - well after walking for what seemed like an eternity, we turned back for a Cafe we had passed in Ste Evette, in fact the only Cafe.

21st July

We awoke that morning to a gorgeous sunny day and lazed about the boat doing nothing. We did plan to sail at 18.00 hours but the fog and mist closed down later in the evening so we were pleased we had not bothered.

The afternoon was spent looking around Audierne, which is a fishing centre; the actual harbour dries out and only boats with legs or twin keels lie here. We also had a look around a shellfish factory. When fishing boats return they deposit their catch of shellfish, crabs, lobsters, etc., into this factory where the catch is then held and fed until they are large enough to sell. I don't like this food anyway and after seeing them there, it's definitely put me off for life.

22nd July

Well today had to be an early start as I intended to make Belle Ile, over 70 miles away, before dark, so rising at 05.00 we picked up our anchor at 05.40 and got under way. The forecast for today was westerly force 3 fog patches, so we needed to make at least 5 knots.

On leaving Ste Evette our course across the Baie D'Audierne was 164° mag, using all sail and engine we pressed down to the Pointe de Penmarc'H, arriving at 09.05. Once abeam of the Eckmuhl Lighthouse which guards this headland, we turned off the engine, changed course on to 132° and raised the spinakker.

Hal now took over the helm once again and we all sat back to enjoy the sail. Alan tried his hand at fishing once again and as per normal caught nothing. He kept on blaming our speed "well we were doing $5/5\frac{1}{2}$ knots".

We passed to the westward of the Iles de Glenan at 11.00 hours and changed to 123° mag at 11.40 hours, when abeam of the La Jument Light which guards these islands from the south. After trimming the sails to allow for the change in course, Hal packed up on us and we were really to miss him later on in our journey.

6 hours out from Ste Evette we had covered 33.3 miles, so far so good, however, later in the afternoon the wind shifted around to the north west and increased to force 5 occasionally 6. Still carrying the spinakker we sighted to the east, in the distance, the Isle de Croix

and at 15.35 sighted Belle Ile. We were now maintaining $6\frac{1}{2}$ knots but felt we were doing 10 times that, we all agreed this was the way to sail, all down wind.

At 17.40 saw us abeam of the Pointe des Poulains, which is the northern most tip of Belle Ile and by 18.10 we rounded the Pointe de Taillefer, at which point, after 9 hours, we dropped the spinakker.



BELLE ILE THE POINTE DES POULAINS

We motored into Le Palais only to come right out again as the ferry to the mainland was on its way out. This, however, gave us a chance to blow up the dinghy as mooring in the outer harbour requires you to use your anchor in the middle of the harbour then haul your stern into north jetty and this among two solid lines of yachts with no reverse. On dropping anchor Alan pointed out to me to watch some as he said "some fool in a rubber dinghy" getting right in my way. However, this fool offered to take my stern lines and make fast, which was gratefully accepted. This fool turned out to be Douglas Shepherd, who occasionally writes for, among others, Yachting Monthly.

A meal ashore that night with, of course, a few drinks and a peaceful night's sleep.

Distance 74.9 miles

Engine hours 4 hours 0 minutes

Total time 13 hours 10 minutes

Distance covered 568.7 miles

Belle Ile is the largest island off the south coast of Brittany, being some 10 miles long and 5 miles wide, the island has a long and interesting history taken by the English in 1572. After the English had withdrawn, the island was fortified, the main fortifications including the Citadel which makes such an impressive background to Le Palais Harbour, were built by Vauban at the end of the 17th Century. However, that did not deter the English. It was blockaded in 1761 and surrendered to the English after a long seige. It was then held by the English for two years but they exchanged it for Minorca.

We spent a good proportion of the day looking over the Citadel and the view from the battlements is quite breathtaking. Le Palais is an Isle of Man type place, except here they welcome yachtsmen and want you to visit them. Contrary to K Adlard Coles and A N Blacks North Biscay Pilot, which describes the inner harbour and wet dock as dirty and unattractive, this has been cleaned out and was packed with all sizes of yachts. However, unless you are planning a long stay it is best to stay in the outer. Anyway I think it's cheaper; it cost us 10 France a night.



BELLE ILE

In the afternoon we did some minor repairs to the rudder, the cheeks of the stock had worked loose and some clown in a huge plastic yacht fouled my anchor. We did not even get a pardon as we dragged across the harbour. That night was spent in one of the many Cafes with Douglas Shepherd, who sails a glass folkboat named KALINKA out of Percuil. He is retired and sails all down this coast as far as Spain for 7/8 months a year. He's done this for the past seven years and he lives on just £200 to £300 for the time he is away. A very lucky man. He also informed us how to obtain our duty free at Camaret, which I will go into later.

24th July

First thing this morning we took on 7 gallons of water and after breakfast helped Shep with his lines as he departed bound for La Rochelle, some 120 miles to the south. We slipped our lines at 10.30 bound for Pornichet, which is just to the north of Saint Nazaire, the forecast was north west force 4 to 5 possibly 6. Steering 114^o mag we were running before with main and boomed out genoa, making a good 6 knots, so we did not need the spinaker. Passing the Goule Vas Light we changed course to 093^o to clear the Plateau du Four, which is a group of rocks west of Le Croisic. The sea was very lumpy here and the boat started rolling heavily from side to side, so we took off the genoa which reduced the rolling. 16.45 hours saw us enter through a narrow channel into the large bay of La Baule/Pornichet with some seven miles of beaches between these two places.

We entered the man made marina and a large notice directed visitors' boats up to 8 metres to bay 1. As each boat has its own bay entering bow on Alan had to jump off and grab hold of the bows so as to stop us crashing into the pontoon.

Distance 35.9 miles

Engine hours 0 hours 45 minutes

Total time 6 hours 50 minutes

Distance covered 604.6 miles



BOUND FOR PORNICHE (BELLE ILE IN THE BACKGROUND)



PORNICHET

Well we had made it??

Well before and during our trip it crossed my mind that we would not make even France, let alone our planned destination.

We had so far sailed for a total of 73 hours 26 minutes and motored for 51 hours 45 minutes, a total of 125 hours 11 minutes.

Petrol used $16\frac{1}{2}$ gallons.



PART OF THE PORNICHET MARINA



I'M SURE I LEFT THE BOAT HERE SOMEWHERE??

25th July

First thing this morning as with most mornings that we were in port, we took in a supply of French bread and, of course, some bottles of wine. After we had completed our shopping in the local openair market, we went by bus to La Baule to do further shopping for presents.

I did mine in 10 minutes while Anne with Alan in hand, spent most of the afternoon shopping. Therefore I found a Cafe right by the beach where I sat drinking coffee and beer.

This cafe overlooked the beach and it soon came to my attention that the girls on the beach were very absentminded or very poor as most only had on half a bikini.

Well I forced myself to sit there for most of the afternoon watching the girls wobble er sorry!! I mean walk by.

To finish off a good day we eat out, followed by plenty of beer, as tomorrow we start our journey home. Except for work, I think we all wanted to continue southward!

26th July

09.00 hours saw us pushing off literally from our pontoon, Alan jumping on to the bows in the last second (I must get a reverse), anyway we motored out of Pornichet and into the rain. The wind this morning still from the north west force two to three, our course for the Gouevas Buoy was 273⁰ mag so we motored for some of the 15 miles and to save petrol we tacked for some of the time. Visibility was very poor as the rain was producing mist. However, at 12.30 when abeam of the Gouevas, it stopped raining and the wind also died. We then had to motor until 14.20 then it blew up again from the north west, where else!!

Working on a series of some long and some short tacks we sailed into Le Palais at 20.25.

We tied up alongside a French yacht, well it was nearly a ship, it must have been 55 feet l.o.a. about a 10 foot beam, all timber built, Bermuda rigged, the mast never ending, disappearing into the clouds. "How fast" we asked them "does this go"? Answer, "with the wind, about 12 knots, against the wind 7 to 8 knots".

After seeing if they would do a swap, which for some reason they declined, I made a tour of the quayside cafes, which anyway made me very happy by the time I went to bed.

Distance 46 miles

Engine House 3 hours 30 minutes

Total time 11 hours 15 minutes

Distance covered 650.6 miles

27th July

The start of another day and what a day, very very hot, girls out in their bikinis sunbathing on various boats, and this at 08.00 hours. Well I was dragged away by Alan as I had to get fuel while Anne and Alan went for food. After refuelling with 6 gallons, we got under way at 10.50.



LEAVING BELLE ILE

Our destination today is Port Tudy on the Ile de Croix, some 30 miles away to the north north west. Steering 336° mag we had to motor as there was not a breath. However, at 13.30 the wind came from the north west which freshened up to a force three, so by late afternoon we were enjoying a good sail.

We entered Port Tudy at 16.50. Now mooring in the outer harbour here yachts moor fore and aft to large mooring buoys in two trots long warps are needed as the buoys are a long way apart. Each yacht then uses breast lines to its neighbours, you also ensure you have your fenders ready.

Anyway the place was packed with just a small gap, "have a go for that" Alan said so I motored up to it but turned away as it looked far too small. Then a French man appeared on deck of one of the boats next to this gap and indicated to us to come into this space, I bet he still regrets it - he was about to experience our braking system. Well, motoring up as slowly as I could without the engine stopping, Anne on one side and Alan on the other to fend off, we nudged our way in, Alan grabbing hold of this French boat's aft stanchions then letting go as it was too hard to hold, then

grabbing hold of his next stanchion, which by then had taken all the way of the boat.

Now, you might ask, what has the French man been doing, well he was going along his side deck on his knees, choking to death, saying stop! stop! stop! Well what had happened was this: this French man was wearing an anorak type coat which had a hood with toggles; he was leaning over his boat, fending off, when Alan grabbed hold of his aft stanchion and with it his toggles, when Alan let go he unbeknown to him, still had hold of his toggles and dragged him along the deck until the next stanchion, the toggles chocking him. Well after that he never did speak much to us.

Port Tudy is the only safe harbour in Ile De Groix. It has an outer harbour which we were moored in, and like most small French harbours two inner, one of which has been converted to a marina. They really know how to lay on facilities these French. A new lock gate across the pierheads of the inner harbour, six or so pontoons, instant yacht marina magic!!!

That evening was spent on a leisurely walk to the main square, which lies about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the harbour, a quick look around then back for refreshment at a quayside cafe.

Distance 28.3 miles

Engine hours 3 hours 0 minutes

Total time 6 hours 0 minutes

Distance covered 678.9 miles

27th July

This morning started just like any other, very sunny, slight sea mist and hot. Anne and Alan disappeared off to the shops and Bank while I prepared for today's journey, which would be to Ste Evette. While busying myself with a few jobs it was interesting to watch the French yachts, some as large as 28 footers, sculling themselves out of the harbour, it's not as if they don't have inboards, they just wont use fuel if it can be helped.

Well we got away under engine at 10.00 hours after the normal problem of pulling ourselves astern and turning the boat round in the right direction (one day I am going to get a reverse fitted); anyway off we went. Forecast variable force 3 actual force zero. Once clear of the northern point of the island we layed our course 275⁰ mag for the Les Laouennou Buoy, some 21 miles away.

14.00 hours saw us pass the Les Laouennou Buoy which lies to the south west of the Iles de Glenan, they themselves lie some 12 miles south of Benodet, this archipelago is an intricate mixture of islands, rocks and shoals, and is the home of the Centre Nautique Des Glenans, which I am told is the largest Sailing School in Europe. It is a place to visit but alas we did not have time.

At 14.20 a gentle breeze came in from the west force 2 so we stopped the engine to check over the dynamo.

All day the ammeter had shown only a trickle charge so we stripped the dynamo but could find no fault.

We re-started the engine at 15.00 hours to continue our journey but ammeter still only showed a trickle charge.

Later in the afternoon the regular dose of mist and fog came down however, as normal it did not stay for long.

Then more problems: 19.10 engine stopped. We checked over all the possible causes, but could find no fault.

We managed, not without some difficulty, to re-start it at 19.50. However, it was not well, in fact it was very sick. We could only get a maximum speed of three knots, so we made very slow progress over the last 15 miles.

We picked up the leading lights into Ste Evette at 12.00 hours and dropped anchor at 00.30.

Distance 60.1 miles

Engine hours 12 hours 50 minutes

Total time 14 hours 10 minutes

Distance covered 739.0 miles.

Well, last night was the first night I had not been ashore for a pint and I could have done with one. However, here we were, up at 05.45, as we have to look at the engine and have to be away in a few hours.

Checked fuel lines, filters, carburetter, everything we could think of but still found no problem, so after breakfast we sailed out of Ste Evette at 07.45.

The morning was bright and sunny and looked if it was going to be a real scorcher. Once clear of the harbour we set our course 296° mag across the Iroise bound for the Raz de Sein.

Slack low water at the Raz was 09.30, good timing is most important and at 09.30 we were abeam of the La Plate Tower which is the southern Point of the Raz.

The seas across the Iroise had been very calm and with the wind from the north east force three had been no problem, but now as we entered the Raz the seas were very lumpy and confused. Our course now was 360° mag but the best we could make was 340° mag. I put the engine on mid-way through the Raz as the seas were taking the way off the boat. 09.45 saw us through the Raz and back into flat calm seas, so sailing again we tacked our way up the coast.



SAILING THE IROISE

Anne all this time was glued to the radio and had been since 06.00 this morning as, if you had forgotten, it was the Royal Wedding. 12.00 saw the fog and mist come down yet again, so we changed course to 060° mag to close the Pte du Toulinguet.

We sighted the La Parquette Tower, which is some five miles west of Toulinguet, so leaving this to starboard we entered the Avant Goulet and sailed up to Camaret, coming alongside at 15.35 hours.

Distance 29.6 miles

Engine hours 0 hours 45 minutes

Total time 8 hours 20 minutes

Distance covered 768.6 miles

On arrival in Camaret all the British yachts were dressed overall and the marina was a mass of colour, this all in aid of the wedding so Anne got her flag out that she had brought with us. Its the biggest red ensign I had seen, and had come from a large merchant vessel. Only the mast could take the weight so we hoisted it up



CAMARET

We spent the night in our local cafe and a most joyous night was had by all. If you ever go to Camaret the cafe to head for is the most noisy one overlooking the inner harbour, you can not miss it as you will hear the music before you get there

30th July

Well today would be our last full day in France and if we had a choice we would not be leaving. Anyway a lot to do. We took on water via the hosepipe on the pontoon, six gallons of fuel and re-stocked with various foodstuffs.

The weather was excellent, very hot and wow the girls don't wear much around here, it was difficult to concentrate on the odd jobs I was doing. We also took on duty free. You should do this when first arriving in France or if you prefer on the way out. The procedure is as follows:

After clearing with Customs take your Customs Receipt to Michel Les Caves Camaretoises 13 Et Quai Kleber 29129 Camaret-Sur-Met. From them you obtain an Order Form, take that to the Custom House, which is just next door, and the Customs will write in how much you are allowed per person. Return the Form to Michel Les Caves, who will then arrange to deliver to your boat. You pay cash on delivery. Do not buy your Whisky from shops as you will find it about the same price as in the U.K. Duty free price is about £2.50 per bottle. As it was our last day we had a slap up meal ashore, five courses for about £4.00 a head.

31st July

10.25 well this is it, the engine is running and we are about to slip our lines, the weather forecast for Biscay was south or east three to four possibly six in north fog banks, could be better but if the wind is either in the south or even east it will do us. However, right now there is not a breath, fog yes, but no wind.

10.30 saw us slip our lines and in no time we were motoring westward down the Avant Goulet bound for the Chenal du Four.

One hour later we were just to the east of Pte St Mathieu when an explosion occurred from the engine, followed by smoke rising from the cockpit sole. After the initial shock I whipped off the engine hatch only to be greeted by more smoke then another "bang" - "engine backfiring through the exhaust".

Well decision time, in a few minutes we would be into the Four Channel and would go through at four or five knots with or without engine, or we could return to Cameret. I was for going back; Alan argued that as the engine was still running very little could be wrong and the tide in the Four Channel would take us through and also we have to get home, so we rounded Pte St Mathieu. 12.30 saw us abeam of the St Pierre Buoy, we changed course to 320^o mag to take us out of the Four Channel and into the Chenal de la Helle. We continued under engine, which was still running fair up to the B. Luronne Bell. So with all the hazards now passed

we got our southerly wind, and we set our sails.

The shipping forecast was still good except for fog banks. Biscay was giving variable three to five backing south west four to five Plymouth east five or six backing south westerly three to four fog banks.

Well to this day I'm still awaiting for those winds. 15.30 saw us restarting the engine as we were becalmed. We had by now discovered the fault on the engine that had been bugging us for days. On very close inspection of the spark plug, very small dots of oil had been whisking the gap, this problem we put down to the petrol we had bought in Le Palais.

17.50 hours 25 miles out of Camaret wind direction north force two, forecast variable three to four rain; well we had that an hour ago, fog banks, well we were in that. Visibility less than half a mile. "I'll get the foghorn" I said - I checked everywhere but could not locate it. I realised later that it must have been stolen at the beginning of the year when the boat was broken into.

Taking no chances, I inflated the dinghy and when Anne wasn't looking so as not to make her concerned, I loaded up in the dinghy some flares and other equipment.

19.30 Visibility slightly better now, one to two miles, and we have wind from the north west so we have been able to give the engine a rest.

20.45 very changeable weather, wind shifted back to the north and fog closing down yet again. Alan heard it first then saw it, a small coaster bearing towards us from the west. He was close but not yet bow on so we turned to port. They had been keeping watch as he had also come round a few points to port, the Officer on watch gave us a wave as we passed down his starboard side no more than 200 feet away.

Turning back on course we crossed his stern and in minutes we were alone again.

I don't think any of us thought things could get any worse, however, they did.

Visibility stayed about two to three miles but the wind increased to about a four from the north and the seas now started to pick up. Large rollers bow on, hitting us and taking all the way of the boat. Then the rain started, or I should say fine wet mist type rain. Rain that penetrates everything.

We all remained on watch that night, one on the helm, one checking to starboard and one to port, many lights of vessels were sighted but none came near enough to have us worried. Another hour went by then nothing, not a light in sight, so we could at last relax for a while and watch the phosphorus. Great sheets of light as far as

the eye could see, we had it on the deck left from the odd wave that would sweep along the deck then running off our oilskins, a marvellous sight.

The engine in the meantime still kept losing power every couple of hours, due to the petrol, so everytime this happened we would shut it down and change the plug. At about 00.30 I sighted a vessel on our starboard bow, after a few minutes two white and port lights were visible. He should not be here as I calculated that we had crossed the southgoing traffic lane and were somewhere in the separation zone, and in fact should be seeing lights down off our port side. Anyway we watched him for some minutes and on looking at his two masthead lights he should pass across my bows. Alan was on the helm and held our course of 355⁰ mag. However, this ship was not going to cross our bows it seemed, well to me it did, that it was going sideways, or should I say that we could see his two masthead and port light; his mastheads nowhere near in line, but he was coming right at us. So, not being able to work out precisely his course, we held ours. I switched on my deck lights which lighted up all the boat. We could now hear his engines, still no change of course from him. I flashed the torch at him still no response, things did not look too rosy. Flashing my torch again the light reflected on his bows, we were now looking up at his masthead lights, which seemed to be somewhere in the sky and his port light started to cut out as if we were under his bows.

At this point the engine backfired and lost all power, Alan bent down to adjust the throttle control so the engine did not stop, at the same time he put the helm over and we turned to port, the next thing I saw was this ship's stern light.

Now Alan disagrees with some of the facts as I see them.

Now Alan says that after sighting the ship we changed course a few points west of north and kept adjusting to the west as the ship approached; that may account for the converging courses, and instead of crossing his bow and going down his starboard side he recons we went down his port side. None of us saw his port or starboard light as we were being thrown all over the place. Anne who had been standing in the hatchway saw people through the ports of this ship.

Anyway, whatever happened, it was too close.

I should have taken some action sooner but it's easy if you're not tired, wet, battered, etc., etc. Three things I should have done were (1) have to very early to check his course, (2) when he looked to be a danger to us, fired a white flare, and (3) when

he was very close, fired a red parachute flare at his bridge deck, as it was very obvious no watch was being kept.

Our problems were far from over, we started losing our lights, dynamo again so we thought. About an hour later no electric power, pitch black all around and us still to cross the eastgoing shipping lane and no navigation lights.

We saw quite a few more ships that night and as we were frightened of any light we saw, we bore away in any direction to keep clear. We steered east, west and even south to keep clear of vessels; only one vessel coming near, it seemed to follow us about, that is until I set off a white flare.

A most uncomfortable night, we did not even have a torch anymore, that had been washed over the side by one of the many seas sweeping along the deck.

05.30 brought some relief "well not much", the wind had picked up to force five or six but had backed to north east, so we reefed the main and set the genoa, at least the engine could have a rest. Myself and Alan taking turns to get an hour's sleep, although we kept our waterproofs and safety harness on. At one point when Alan was on the helm we took a wave over the side with such force that Alan was thrown across the cockpit and ended up on his back. How Anne had managed all night I don't know, she was a hero, passing out hot - well warm, drinks whenever possible.

15.00 hours, the seas had now dropped down to just a swell and the wind had gone down to a two or less; also the mist had closed down yet again, so now back under engine still heading 355° mag, we should have sighted land but I had no idea where we were as we had changed direction that often during the night.

It was possible that we could be to the east of the Lizard or even sail up between Land's End and the Scilly's and miss England altogether. I tried the RDF but could only pick up Round Island Beacon on the Scillys, not a squeak from the Lizard, so was it possible that we had gone too far west and were passing the Scillys to the west and the RDF bearing was 180° out?. Well it had me wondering.

16.00 well some land in sight but it was not until 17.30 that we picked out the Coastguard Station on Land's End and the Tater-du Light a few miles to the west, so we felt rather pleased with ourselves that after a very bad night, nearly getting run down, being lost, we found ourselves with Penzance right on the nose.

I checked the closing time of the dock gates at Penzance with the Almanac and pushed the boat as fast as we could, 19.05 it closes, 19.15 we arrived. Dash!! or words to that effect.

Distance 126.2 miles

Engine hours 21 hours 40 minutes

Total time 32 hours 50 minutes

Distance covered 894.8 miles

We moored on the one and only mooring just clear of the fairway and sat down, wasn't it nice to stop. We rowed ashore and spent the night in the Admiral Benbow. We returned to the boat to find only 4 foot of water and LODESTAR just touching, the tides were springs and we were just on low water so we went to bed.

2nd August

07.00 hours no rest for the wicked. The men on the capstan which operates the lock gate were waiting for us to come in, so we put the engine on and motored into the Harbour. Anne cooked us a most beautiful breakfast, after which we sat around reading. A lovely morning with the sun beating down, but who says this is a holiday? Work has to be done. The dinghy had to be cleaned as a packet of red sea dye that I had loaded into the dinghy had burst. Everything was covered in it, the deck, sails, me, it got everywhere, a real mess.

While making a better job of securing the main on the boom we got talking to a local man who was an Insurance Salesman. We asked him if there was any scrap yards about as we still have to check our charging system and it may be the regulator box. He informed us that it was some distance away but told us which bus to catch. Anyway we had other things to do. We took on water and four gallons of petrol and we would have to find out if we could get any calor gas, as we were down to half a bottle.

Now to return to our charging problem; it took just five minutes to fix. Again checked the dynamo, regulator, nothing wrong with them, then Alan twigged it. The drive belt between the dynamo and the engine was slack, the belt in fact was just about worn out, but I carried a spare. If only we had known sooner. Later in the afternoon we were re-visited by the Insurance man who had driven down specially in his car to give us a lift to the scrap yard. Well there are still nice people about.

Just ahead alongside the quay was one of those Moody things and we had got talking to them in the earlier part of the day, and in fact gave me a lift in his car to get calor gas, which you could only get at a garage a few miles out of town.

We spent most of the evening on this boat which had so many cabins you needed a map to find your way around. The cockpit would hold about ten people, or so it seemed. He had sailed down from Anglesey a few weeks earlier and left his boat here. He was now on his way to Biscay with his wife, two children and a £900.00 radar set fitted just to do this cruise.

3rd August

The Customs at last arrived today to clear us; two men from the Customs had in fact come down yesterday, but as they were busy and we did not plan to leave until the 4th so we had to wait until today. It took him less than two minutes; we thought it might take hours the way they had spoken to us yesterday.

We did very little today except lie about in the sun, have lunch at the Admiral Benbow - cost 50p, for that you got a Cottage Pie and then you help yourself to various dressings - excellent value.

The afternoon was very hot and the fog and mist came down very thick, visibility less than one mile, so I was glad we had not put out.

4th August

Plymouth variable one to three fog extensive Lundy, Irish Sea south west three to four. Well, except for the fog not a bad forecast but we have to go regardless. 07.25 hours we slipped out of Penzance Harbour with the wind from the south west no more than a one. We motored up to Landsend and had to push the tide round the corner, we did not get abeam of Longships until 12.15, the tide being so strong. Both myself and Alan shouted for "Billy" the shark but alas we did not see him. Alan had been trying his hand again to catch us some fish but as per normal, he did not even get a bite.

The 13.55 forecast gave us variable mainly south west three extensive fog. Well we had no fog as yet nor, however, did we have any wind.

We were steering 022° mag on course for Dale, we would have liked to go all the way up the Irish Sea but if we have to motor across the Bristol Channel we will need more fuel. 18.00 hours saw us $44\frac{1}{2}$ miles out and the first sign of fog, visibility was less than five miles.

19.15 hours we got a fix from a yellow special mark at $50^{\circ}.29' N$
 $5^{\circ}.35 W$ and checked on visibility, which now was less than two
 miles.

The night was very calm and misty and was the coldest night we had
 had and the Longjohns had to be worn again.

The following morning at 08.20 we turned off the engine and tried
 the genoa but we made only one mile in half an hour, so it had to
 go back on. We were now having very little trouble with the motor
 as we now had good English petrol.

Alan got me out of my bed at 10.30, "John I need you on deck it
 has gone foggy", on looking out it was a real pea-souper. We then
 picked up the fog horn on St Annes Head and 15 minutes later sighted
 the St Govan Light Ship, which put us six miles to the east of
 Milford Haven.

We changed course at 11.00 hours to 360° and shortly after sighted
 Limney Head. We then got the first bit of wind we had had which was
 from the west force two, this wind also cleared the fog, so we sailed
 the last few miles into Dale arriving at 14.15 hours.

Distance 125.7 miles

Engine hours 28 hours 45 minutes

Total time 30 hours 55 minutes

Distance covered 1020.5 miles

We went ashore immediately upon arrival and took on 8 gallons of fuel
 plus water, then had a beautiful hot shower at the Dale Sailing Club
 and a meal ashore at the Posthouse. That night, after leaving the
 Sailing Club, we had to row a long way back to the boat because yours
 truly had not checked the petrol in the outboard. I got called for
 everything.

6th August

Well off again we go, 08.55 hours, we slipped the mooring with the
 wind from the north force two, it might be yet another motor job,
 the forecast had given variable less than four. We all thought the
 variable would be nice from the south but it knew we were going north.
 We motor sailed as far as Skokholm Island then putting two reefs in
 the main and setting the genoa we beat our way up between the islands
 of Grassholm and Skomar towards the Bishops. The wind a dead north
 north east force four to five.

The seas were not that bad between the islands, but once clear of the
 Bishops, things got a bit out of hand.

The best we could point west of north would take us to the south of Dunmore East Ireland and the other tack hardly any distance to the north.

All the time we were getting battered, the boat going up huge waves hanging in mid air then crashing down in the trough. The wind picked up at about 12.00 hours to a six and at 13.00 hours the genoa ripped out along a seam.

We had had enough, I hoisted the working jib, dropped the main and went about, we would have been daft to continue in these sea conditions running before them yes, beating no.

We rounded Skokholm Island at 17.00 hours, entered the Haven at 18.00 hours and picked up what now seemed like our moorings as we had been here so often.

Distance 47.2 miles

Engine hours 2 hours 25 minutes

Total time 10 hours 0 minutes

Distance Covered 1067.7 miles

7th August

Here we go yet again, in fact if we did not leave today we would have had to bus it home. The wind was still from the same direction but seemed to be less than it was so we slipped at 10.45 and set the main and jib but left the engine on as time was not with us. Once we cleared the overfalls by Skokholm Island we tried to steer our required course of 032° mag, which we could near enough make, so we continued up between Grassholm and Skomar and we were abeam of the Bishops by 13.30.

Once out in the open however, we found the best we could steer was 050° mag, but it was nearer the course than yesterday and the seas were nowhere near as big. The forecast had given us northerly force three going south west three or four visibility good. So things looked brighter.

So we plodded on with the wind north easterly two, we motor sailed tacking a course of $360^{\circ}/50^{\circ}$ all the time the seas dying down and by 21.00 hours some 42 miles out the sea was calm and the wind had gone. We now made our course of 032° mag making 4 knots.

We sighted Bardsey Island light at 02.10 hours and were looking forward for the forecast south westerlys. We were still waiting for the south westerleys when we were abeam of Bardsey at 05.00.

Just to make us feel at home when daylight came so did the fog.

We were abeam of Port Dinlleyn at 08.30 hours and made the Caernarvon Bar at 12.00 hours, right on time to catch the first of the flood.

The sun had by this time broken through and cleared the mist. We motored up the Straits and picked up a mooring at Port Dinorwic at 13.40. We had a few hours to kill before the Swellies so as per

normal Alan went to bed, Anne did some reading and I wrote some of this rubbish.

We passed through the Swellies at 15.30 hours and dropped anchor off Gallo~~wa~~s Point at 16.35 hours.

Distance 124.0 miles

Engine hours 26 hours 30 minutes

Total time 28 hours 30 minutes

Distance covered 1191.7 miles

We took on yet another three gallons of fuel and spent the night drinking away, getting kicked out at 11.00 (rubbish these pub~~s~~ - not like France), and returned to the boat to sleep, knowing that we were back in home waters, that we had got to our planned destination and back in one piece with no major hold ups, well for one I was very pleased.

9th August

The last day and an early rise, we picked up our anchor at 05.15 hours and set off up towards Puffin. Alan went back to bed as he was feeling a bit rough but I had to get him out again because at the entrance by Puffin the seas were backed up. The tide was running out very fast but with the wind from the north west a good four or five the seas were climbing all over each other making it exceptionally rough.

So we had to reef the main and set the jib. We tacked our way out clearing Puffin at 06.50.

We now made a very quick passage to the Bar flying along at $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $6\frac{1}{2}$ knots in very large seas once again, some coming in over the side. We made the Bar at 12.00 hours and changed course for the Channel.

BACK IN THE IRISH SEA





WATCH YOUR STERN?

The sea was determined to have it's last say and poor Alan was to get it yet again. I had gone forward on the deck to have one so as to speak over the side and was hanging on the starboard shrouds when there was a tremendous crash of cascading water. A big green one had come right over the stern and Alan was soaked. Well I laughed. We dropped anchor off the A~~W~~ at 14.05 and made our way in at 17.15 only to run aground, someone had moved the A~~W~~ while we had been away. We at last picked up our mooring at 17.50 not sure if we were happy to be back??

Distance 50.6 miles

Engine hours 2 hours 35 minutes

Total time 12 hours 35 minutes

Total journey 1242.3 miles

Trip back:	sailed	52 hours 35 minutes
	motored	102 hours 0 minutes
	total	154 hours 35 minutes
	petrol	22 gallons

Total for outward and return:

sailed	126 hours 01 minutes
motored	153 hours 45 minutes
petrol used	38½ gallons