

Newsletter of the North West Venturers Yacht Club  
Gallows Point, Beaumaris, Anglesey, LL58 8YL

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## What's on....

November 2018

**3rd November 11:00am**  
**AGM followed by**  
**MEMBERS FORUM**  
**BARBECUE at 6pm**

**17th November**  
**CLUB BUFFET**  
**and DISCO**  
*Victoria Hotel,*  
*Menai Bridge*  
**Book now!**



December 2018

**15th December**  
**Christmas Party (informal)**  
bring plate of food and a game!

January 2019

**17th January**  
**"Surveying Shipwrecks around Wales"**  
talk by Dr. Mike Roberts

February 2019

**Coastal Watch Talk**

## Commodore's Corner Paul Morton



**What a fantastic Summer, you don't hear that very often, but unfortunately the later weekends have been dogged by strong winds and bad weather. My Sailing this year has been very restricted by a major project at home and in London**

The Club business never stops it may slow in the summer but never stops and this time of year all the Officers are preparing for the AGM and beyond.

My plea in July was for people to come forward and to have a role in the running of the club by joining the management committee. So far we have most of the positions filled but of course they have to be voted in and anybody can challenge for any post at the AGM even mine! But unfortunately nobody has come forward to be the Rear Commodore. Help is available, the team is always ready to split the work but it is important to have someone in place so please think about it and come forward.

This Venturer has been sent to all the members in this paper form to prompt a reaction. We asked last year at the

members forum how people feel about an electronic version on the web site and the general feeling was Electronic.

But we have strong feed back saying you would like a paper copy back, as few read it on the website! So please make your feelings felt at the members forum again. We do really need your opinion about all the issues with regard to the club and how it is run.

I am looking forward to seeing you at all the AGM on the 3rd of November and please stay over for the members forum and the Bonfire is in the evening.

**Paul Morton**  
Commodore

# Irish Sea Plight

Rob Leigh

Although an unlikely sequel to "Irish Sea Pilot" Marjorie and I wish to share our joys, tribulations and retrospectively funny moments of our new experience in NWVYC and the world of sailing.

It all started just a few months ago. We wanted to extend our adventures beyond the pleasant but comparatively sedate inland waterways scene and have a go on lumpy water. After attending Day Skipper Theory, VHF radio and introductory sailing courses it was time to purchase our first yacht. We spotted "Meganza" for sale where it already lived as part of the NWVYC fleet, so on purchasing we had the complete package of a boat, a base and a sailing club rich with expertise willing to guide us. Although prudence dictated our first real ventures would only be with the accompaniment of experienced sailors, our initial launch and journey of a few yards from the ABC Marine's ramp to the nearest buoy opposite Gallows Point under motor and in a calm sea, was deemed by us to be well within our repertoire of experience. Or was it?

Mooring pick up buoys do have a nasty habit of apparently not keeping still when you're trying to grab them, so we might be excused for somehow managing to get a floating line caught around our sail drive. We like to try self help before crying "help" so we laboured on declining initial offers of assistance and managed to pull the line clear using our mooring warps. Then the engine overheated and cut out.

Meganza was left precariously hanging on to its mooring warps which were in turn hanging on to some thin line, in a main channel. ABC Marine came to the rescue and were very helpful and also assuring. They explained that they're constantly pulling new starts out of the mire so not to worry, next week it will be somebody else's turn to occupy the clown spot!

Continuing in our quest to journey beyond Gallows Point without further incident, our Commodore Paul came on board to assist. Firstly he fixed the engine armed with a length of hose and a powerful set of lungs, clearing an air-lock in the sea water cooling system. With the engine now running smoothly, Paul and Jen in "Mood Indigo" guided us past Puffin Island where we opened up the sails for our first time. Acquiring a new burst of confidence we repeated the experience by ourselves the following day.

For our first scheduled club outing Joy and Lee in "Why Knot" took us under their wing and as it transpired, their towrope as well. We took our 14 year old grandson Nathan along and the three of us enjoyed the outward journey to Moelfre, including the challenge of experiencing some stronger winds. To return from Moelfre we had just started to lift our anchor when with the worst possible timing our engine cut out again. Our boat drifted during failed

attempts to restart the engine, snagging the part raised anchor on something submerged but not stopping it from moving, which meant we were drifting towards the rocks. We ended up dragging an anchor knotted up on whatever it was, being towed along by "Why Knot", not doing very many knots but thanks to Lee and Joy we were pulled out of danger. A patrolling RNLI crew saw us and came to assist, advising to ditch the anchor and chain and called the Beaumaris crew to take over the tow when closer to home. On meeting up with the Beaumaris crew one of them lifted his helmet and said, "Remember me?" Not many days before it was the same person in ABC attire sorting out our aborted mooring attempt! They towed us at 8 knots SOG and judging the way our boat bounced, speed over water was approaching that.

To sidetrack from the story for a moment, this experience caused a dark philistine moment for which if I confess and declare repentance there might be a reprieve from being



made to walk the plank. I wanted an engine, a big engine, in fact make that two. Instead of working with the forces of nature let's use brute force to make a vessel go where you want it to go. The thought of having to remortgage to pay for the fuel was not the main reason to recant, it was simply a refocus on the dream of one day becoming an accomplished sailor enjoying the beautiful blue sea, watching dolphins and the world go by. Having said that, when an engine is really needed and it won't go then having a second one would be nice!

On arrival at our home mooring the RNLI crew made sure our boat was secure then implored us to vacate due to a forthcoming storm that night. Where to? We didn't as yet have access to the club lounge to squat for the night so we decided to go home. The short journey on the tender with the three of us, luggage and by then choppy water was challenging and appeared to be overseen by a Coastguard patrol car which drove off after we safely landed. Nathan's verdict on the whole day's experience? Awesome! He said it was like something out of a James Bond movie and boasted about it to his friends. I'm confident that with more control of events and less "excitement" in our future ventures he would continue to enjoy sailing with us.

Before our next excursion there was some rebuilding to do namely the anchor with rode, the engine, and our morale. There were several kind offers from members who had a spare anchor but we made do for the time being with a substantial Danforth and rode which we had as a backup. From Paul's advice we purchased a new sea water filter and mounted it in a different position where it was easily viewable. Now we could check and monitor water flow

and correct problems before they started, so that was the engine made good. For the morale fix the "Why Knot" crew came to our rescue once again with some on board mentoring prior to our next venture. We were now all ready for the next scheduled club outing and our ambitious target of a rescue to trip ratio of better than 1 out of 2.

The next day we followed the flotilla through the Swellies, past Caernarfon Bar and on to Porth Dinllaen. Forgive me for not remembering all who called us on the radio, we were surrounded by sailors keeping a watchful eye on us making sure we avoided all the hazards. After a barbeque on the beach we set off the following morning making good headway with just our jib sails. (I understand our jib is not large enough to qualify as a Genoa, anyway it's the one at the front). Was it all going too smoothly this time? Well, just one hitch but not a technical one. My sea legs had adapted well from the start but on this occasion despite the return journey being the smoothest part my sea stomach played up. I must remember in future to aim for the leeward side but spare that detail, the important point here is we were still smiling and filming to record our best experience to date. To put icing on the cake a dolphin showed its head to tease us briefly before disappearing.

That's the story so far, for us a very short first season and for all the best reasons very memorable. Experienced sailors would shout at us if we assumed that calamities made us unique. It's the experience, support and encouragement we've had from NWVYC members even before we became members ourselves that convinced us we have begun our sailing adventures by joining a great institution.

## David to the Rescue!

4th June 2018.

written by Pam White

David White was very proactive last night at Llandwyn. A motor cruiser had perched itself on top of the rocks in Mermaids cove, Stern in the air for about 8Hrs. David took our spare Bruce anchor, fenders, ropes galore and managed to get the afloat again by 1130pm. He kept them calm and reassured after delivering coffee and sandwiches from the good ship Spindrift3. The Cruiser managed to limp its way back to Victoria dock with some prop damage. Thankfully we didn't have to call for Lifeboat assistance although they had been informed. David will probably be cross because I have told the tale **but I feel he has been a true Venturer and I am proud of him.**





# Conwy Weekend Sail

14th - 16th September 2018 Joy Downes

The weekend sail had been set for Conwy but as the weekend drew closer, most crews decided that the forecast they had seen didn't bode well so decided to stay at home.

Why Knot's crew decided to go to Conwy anyway and, after seeing a post on the Sailing and Cruising Wales Facebook page advertising that Bart's Bash was taking place on the Saturday, they contacted Steve Gorst from the North Wales Cruising Club (NWCC) who gladly accepted their entry to participate in the race.

Bart's Bash is a global sailing race taking place at 100s of venues, with 1000s of sailors in 100s of different classes of boat around the world. The event was founded in 2014 and verified by Guinness World Records as 'The Largest Sailing Race in the World'.

It is open to all sailing clubs, yacht clubs, schools, universities, scout groups, sea cadets, windsurfing clubs, individuals and any venue globally that can host a race and is inspired to take part. Each individual event is organised by a venue who are the organising authority for all activities at their site.

Bart's Bash gives the sailing community a united opportunity to remember Andrew 'Bart' Simpson, a double Olympic medallist who tragically lost his life whilst training for the America's Cup in 2013.

The Andrew Simpson Foundation (ASF) uses this event alongside being a memorial, for an annual fundraising and participation campaign to allow them to achieve their charitable aims each year. The ASF are dedicated to increasing participation and improving lives through sailing.

A handicap was provided (Bavaria 350) for us by NWCC (being unable to quickly find a handicap for a Pretorian 35) and we sailed across to Conwy on Friday in sunshine and calm seas and were allocated a berth in the marina.

Following supper on board, we walked into Conwy to meet up for the race briefing and instruction for the following day. Everyone at NWCC was very hospitable with many members arriving for the briefing.

23 yachts were entered, and we all paid our £5 entry fee and purchased raffle tickets to win a hamper full of alcoholic goodies (gin, whisky, brandy, rum etc which had



been donated by members). After some light-hearted banter, we walked back to Conwy marina on peaceful and calm night for a good night sleep.

All yachts that were entered were given a start time based upon their handicap with there being an hours' difference between the first and last starters. HW Conwy was 1530 hrs – our start time was set at 1439 Hrs and the start gate was between C3 and C6 in the channel. The course was then to sail to the fairway buoy and pass it to port then over to the outfall marker off the Great Orme, back across towards the channel entering it at C2, leaving the mark to port and then sail following the channel to the finish line which was a transit on the Deganwy shoreline.

Bruce and Vix Kennedy, who have a motorboat and we have met before in Abermenai with their family was the committee boat and also the official photographer for the event. He did a splendid job of providing a one-minute warning of impending starts and then, once all yachts had set off, zoomed around taking photos of the yachts sailing.

The wind was, as forecast, a F4/5 with some gusts but the sea state was only slight. We elected for full sail as this is what Why Knot likes and found ourselves amongst boats, both large and small, from gaff riggers to all out racers with Kevlar sails and crew hanging over the rails to balance the boat.

Lee helmed initially and got us off through the start gate where we tacked over towards the fairway buoy when we could actually see it! Roles were swapped when short tacking was required utilising Lee's strength to our

advantage. There were yachts going everywhere with cries of “Water” – all friendly fun.

There were a few retirements through mal de mer, a broken gooseneck and broken main halyard but all boats made it safely back into the marina or river onto their berth.

The NWCC hosted an evening dinner for £10 a head with all proceeds going to Bart’s Bash. Unfortunately, this was oversubscribed so we ate on Why Knot again and then headed into Conwy for the results and evening’s entertainment and raffle draw.

Steve Gorst had run all the results through his racing software and we had come a credible 5th on his calculations.

Sunday saw a good motor sail back from Conwy with hardly enough wind to sail with and we were tied up and off from Why Knot by 1600 Hrs.

On the Monday, following the times being submitted to Bart’s Bash, we were delighted to be informed that we had won on handicap – Bart’s Bash had all our dimensions and it transpired that Why Knot weighted nearly 1T more than our original handicap yacht – a Bavaria 350.

A big thank you goes out to Steve Gorst from NWCC for his organisation of this event and the warm welcome we received at their club.

We have signed up as a club so that we can consider running some form of Bart’s Bash next September – it was designed to be a short race of 100 minutes over all points of sail and to encourage sailing by both able and non-able bodied participants. There are very few restrictions on what type of sailing vessel can enter and it is for a very good cause. Let’s hope we can host our own event in the future to rival that of NWCC.



## 50 Club Winners Update

Since our last Venturer was published, we have held three draws – July, August, September and our End of Season party draw.

There are still some numbers available for purchase with a chance to win in 14 draws – if your number came out first every time, you would be massively in profit to the tune of £850! As Dale Winton used to say “you’ve got to be in it to win it” and it is a complete lottery (pardon the pun) but apart from the fun of being in it, it does raise funds for our club. So if you fancy a second number to increase your chances or a flutter for the first time, please choose from the available numbers on the website and make your payment of £50 (or £52 via Paypal) before the next draw.

### July 2018

1st	No 45	Mark & William on True Brit
2nd	No 11	Joy & Lee on Why Knot
3rd	No 29	Pam and David on Spindrift III

### August 2018

1st	No 33	Graham & Noreen on Sizzler
2nd	No 09	Joy & Lee on Why Knot
3rd	No 39	John & Jan on Soay

### September 2018

1st	No 17	Jerry & Denise on Ocean Mood
2nd	No 44	Lee on Why Knot
3rd	No 36	Richard and Charlie on Pearl

### End of Season Mega Draw

1st	No 40	No winner as number unsold!
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Many thanks to all who participate in our Lottery club and good luck in your remaining draws.

# **GORDON RUTTER.      Died 8th October 2018**

## **COMMODORE 1982 - 1984**

**Steering the Club's culture for many years before and after his time as Commodore.**

Seamint, built of steel and concrete in Old Colwyn, epitomised the venturing spirit which Gordon and Marjorie instilled in Club members. They built the boat in the back garden and craned it out over the house. Gordon, a plumber, fitted her out with the tools of his trade and Seamint was instantly recognisable as her ketch rigged water pipes navigated Anglesey's coastal waters. Shortly afterwards, Gordon became vice-commodore and then commodore. This decade was arguably the Club's fastest period of growth, in both numbers and reputation. Each year Seamint took the Summer Cruise to Scotland, with (some-where north of) Ardnamurchen as the destination. Nobody felt properly dressed at the end of the season if their yacht did not sport a sprig of heather. Seamint carried the biggest!



As the years went by, the Club cruised to other destinations but Gordon and Marjorie always headed North until, in 1988, they achieved the Club's ultimate cruising trophy and reached St Kilda, in company with Geoff & Vera Schofield in Solitaire.

Between sailing successes, Gordon managed a major Clubhouse development and extended the Club's membership rules to allow motorboats – but with strict conditions!

Always the cruising man, Gordon introduced a (sort of) race – the Seamint Trophy. Whilst most races begin with a scuffle on the Line, this race allowed a staggered start encouraging participants to calculate the best start time for the tides and prevailing weather conditions. The race started at Puffin Island and finished at Port St. Mary, at times testing seamanship to its limits.

Gordon and Marjorie – it was difficult to think of them as separate people – gave a whole new meaning to "leading from behind". Even on weekend cruises they always collected late-starters from the moorings and shepherded the slowest boats into the anchorage. Club members could feel safe with the Rutters and several tons of concrete and steel taking care of them. They also needed their fair share of Pollyfilla, smiting Gigha and being the winner of the Rock Trophy (and recipient of its very first Poem).

Gordon was one of only a very few Honorary members, awarded the distinction for his role in building the Club into the force it became in the 1990s.

After swallowing the anchor, he transferred his interests to land cruising in a motorhome until recently, appearing in the Club car park for social events, summer and winter.

**His influence shaped the club through the decades and his memory will be around for many years to come.**

## **Nigel Morton**

**Sadly, Nigel passed away on 1st October at the age of 85. He was Georgina Clough's father and a member of the NWVYC for over 25 years, having joined in 1991. Nigel was also the Club Auditor for a time.**

**Nigel and Georgina owned "Georgie Girl" a Leisure 17 which they sailed in the Strait. From 1967 when they moved from Halifax. Nigel and his late wife Nancy were near neighbours and friends of John and Jenny Partington in Wilmslow. They had children of similar ages and would often go on holiday together when their children were young.**



# One afternoon at Abermenai...

David White

One Friday in August we went to Aber Menai. We had sailed from the Britannia Bridge tacking into a fresh southerly breeze and in fact put a reef in the main just off Y Felinheli followed by eight rolls in the genoa as the ebb gathered strength. Just short of Belan we put the engine on, lowered the sails and anchored off the last tree in the dune ahead of 'Haika' and 'Cavelletta' in about 4 metres of water.

As I tidied up Pam put the kettle on muttering something like 'Gentlemen don't go to windward!' Then we heard shouting from the shore 'We need help there are dolphins on the beach!' We looked towards Newborough and there were two dolphins beached on the sand northwest of the gravel spit. 'Cavalletta's' dinghy with Bill and Barb came alongside and said bring towels and a buckets as 'Haika's' crew, Morris and Julie, reached the first dolphin with their towels and bucket.

We didn't waste time fitting the outboard to our dinghy but did as requested and duly arrived ashore to help out. The smaller dolphin was by now back in the water but the larger one, possibly its mother was further up the beach on the edge of the black muddy stretch just off the gravel spit.

Four of us with two towels between us under the dolphin managed to drag/lift the creature towards the water. It was squeaking but not moving very much until we managed to get it into the water when with one flick of its tail we got splattered with black mud! We kept going and soon it was back in the water. It swam off towards the smaller dolphin which by then had turned back towards the shore.

To prevent them beaching themselves again Morris and Bill used their dinghies to get between them and the shore encouraging them to move towards deeper water and the



entrance to the Straits. This they succeeded in doing and the sight of the two dolphins surfacing to breath and swimming away from danger was very rewarding.

We returned to 'Spindrift' rather muddy with one bath towel very much the worse for wear but glad we were able to help 'Haika' and 'Cavallette' return these beautiful creatures to safety.

An adult dolphin is big and heavy and it took four of us to move it and I was glad it only flipped its tail once while we returned it to the water. The adult was probably ten to fifteen yards up the beach when found by I think Haika's dog ashore for a walk so it had been out of the water for some time.

It was a warm sunny afternoon and both dolphins might have been sunburnt by the time they were returned to the water.

So whilst we didn't swim with them I doubt if we will ever again get quite so close up and personal with one of these beautiful marine mammals. If we have one regret it is that we have no photographs of these exploits but with all the mud and water that was splashing about perhaps its just as well as it wasn't a good environment for camera equipment!



# Summer Cruise continued...

## Des Founds

Very pleased with successful tests of the water pump so I reckoned we deserved a drink or two of Captain Morgan's. Opposite us a chap and his crew were having a lot of leaking rudder seal, so much so the water was up to the berths," It was 6 months since I was last here" commented the skipper. When asked where they were sleeping they said "on the floor above the marina office". We offered the lady who was with the two gents a berth on board our yacht which she accepted. We also gave the gents our cockpit cushions to sleep on which they were grateful for.

We all went ashore for a fish and chip supper that evening followed by a visit to the local pub to discuss our shipboard problems. Late home we all slept well (I believe) so Lin and I waited for our guest to arise and leave before getting ready to leave for Bangor. Said our farewells and set off for Bangor 2 hours before HW, we had a lovely day with wind on our beam and the motor on half revs all the way and arrived Bangor at teatime (left 12-30).

Plenty of berths available to choose from, so picked one easy to reverse into so no rain to blow into the cockpit over night. Had our SAFE ARRIVAL drink then took Gem for a walk along the promenade, made ourselves a meal of the warmed up chips from last night with a tin of Spam (boy, I spoil this crew of mine). Settled down with a book and a whiskey for the night. Woke the following morning to a dull overcast day but no expected rain, had breakfast then walked along the coast road to the Royal Belfast YC where a hive of activity was taking place all trying to get ready for their annual launch.

Equipment not up to ABC standard but the craic was a lot better listening to all the laughter going on, wandered back and went into town after dropping off Gem at the boat. Did the usual things, shop for postcards, gifts, and of course the coffee and cake. In the car park outside the marina a food festival was in full swing, being near lunch time we had a look around. Tried some BBQ meats from different countries, WOW, now had to dash across the road to the pub to quench the burning throat and mouth with a lovely ice cold cider. Back to the marina for a shower a late walk for Gem then turn in (Mouth still tingling).

Decided to move on today as the weather forecast looked in our favour, topped up with fuel out of the drums I carried with me, paid the marina bill and set off in a sunny but cold afternoon breeze for Glenarm. Left 2 hours before HW to pick up tide to next stop, crossed Belfast Lough in a

nice breeze but waves and wind picked up after the lough headland going north. With all sails set and the motor on half revs we were quickly covering the ground up to Glenarm. We experienced big seas off the headlands though we tucked right in to the coastline to try missing the races that occur off these places, still were making 7 knots so no complaints from me (can't say dog and crew thought the same!) Seas a lot bigger than I expected but now surfing at 9.1 so on a mission to reach double figures. Soon brought back to reality when crew complained that this was supposed to be a holiday not a race!!

Arrived at marina to the delight of dog and crew, me I wanted more! Called the harbour master when we arrived at 6-30 pm to get the gate code. No code just a fob to swipe, great so tied up then tried the fob before taking Gem for a wander, it's not working so Lin takes Gem whilst I prepare some dinner for us and wait for her call outside the gate. Liver and mash eaten we settle down for the night, in the morning we'll sort out a new fob when the harbour master arrives.

We awoke to a cold damp day with mist rolling in from the sea and no sign of it lifting so decided to stop another day, besides the washing machine and dryer are free here so take the opportunity to do the laundry.

By lunchtime the sun is breaking through so we walked up to the castle where a fete was taking place, £15 to get in no chance! So walked up the glen to the waterfall at the top with Gem and had a picnic. A couple of yachts left early this morning on their way to Scotland, I would have liked to have joined them really but we don't have Radar and didn't fancy going out in that fog. Still, washing done and aired and hull washed down of dried on salt from yesterday so evening meal in the cockpit and settle down with book and a drink.

The following morning paid our dues and set off for Ballycastle 3 hours before HW to get slack at FAIR HEAD. Encountered a race on the inside passage across Red Bay but no problems and reached Fair Head bang on slack, a back eddy occurs on the inside of this headland (which you can go close to) and carries you all the way up to the marina mouth giving us a passage time of 4 hours. Tied up to the visitors berth then after walking the dog settled in for the night as the rain started. In the morning its lashing down, Gem still wants her walk so out with the brollies and saunter up the river trail to the centre of town. Most of the





**Glenarm**



**Ballycastle**



**Fair Head**



**Carrack a rede**

shops seem to be closed ma'be it's because it's a Wednesday, not a lot to see so walk back to the Marine Bay Hotel where they allow dogs in, so coffee and cake plus biscuit for Gem are in order. In the afternoon rain stopped so walked along watching big rollers crashing onto the beach, came back along the golf course just as the rain decided to start, seeing as the crew had put up with some rather lumpy weather I thought I'd treat her to a dinner of fish and chips at the most expensive chippy in the British isles, MORTON'S on the slipway. Got to say it was very nice and was appreciated. Rain stopped so a last walk up to the river bridge to watch the small trout fry jumping out of the water catching the midgies. Back on board for a nightcap and put the heater on to warm up.

The following morning awoke to strong winds but the sun is shining so both of us showered and caught the bus to the CARRICK-A-REDE rope bridge walked along the headland to the bridge and was surprised to see how popular it was, (couldn't help but make it sway whilst a group of young ladies were in the middle). Walked back to the cafe by the car park and had a coffee each with cake. Caught the bus back to Ballycastle and took the opportunity to soak up this long overdue sun. An evening walk on the beach and early night.

A promising morning was spoiled by the arrival of more rain, so, caught the bus to Colleraine with the dog. Interesting city but not a lot to see when it's bucketing down even with a big brolly over you. Museum was interesting with lots of stuff to see, but only so much, so back to the bus depot which is also the train station and back to Ballycastle. Arrived just as the rain was stopping mid afternoon. After an evening meal went to the local pub and watched the International rugby with more yacht crews, good crowd so had a nice night having banter over the rugby. Woke early-ish next morning and went for an Ulster fry at the cafe by the marina. We decided to get under way this day so I paid our dues whilst Lin took Gem for a walk. Lin said HW was 10-40 am perfect to catch the ebb up the North Channel and slack at Fair Head. How it all went wrong! don't know because after Fair Head we seemed to go travelling in the wrong direction! Yes it was LW not HW so change of plans quickly put into place and we're on a ferryglide ride across to the Mull of Kintyre and next stop (like it or not) was Campbeltown.

The almanac says a race extends out from the tip of the Mull for 1 to 2 miles being carried with the tide we were surprised to get into a race 3 miles off the tip, still no problem other than the dog disappearing down below thinking another battering is about to take place! A quick passage between the Mull and Sanda brought us to the mouth of Campbeltown lough and sheltered water (we know this as the dog has appeared in the cockpit). Motored down the channel to the marina.

Berthed on the long finger near the town dock which was quite noisy with a salmon suction vessel of about 5



thousand tonnes operating it's pumps ready to collect it's cargoes around the loughs. Had our safe arrival drink then took Gem for a walk along the grassy front to the ferry terminus. I'm feeling generous so tell Lin we're going out for a meal tonight. Had a lovely meal of Haggis and chicken pie with lots of trimmings plus a duff (pudding) a few drinks and back to the yacht. Back on board Lin said " thanks for a lovely meal ,did you get me a birthday present as well ?" knowing full well that I'd completely forgotten I had to own up but kept my mouth shut about the error between HW and LW this morning. Try keeping the crew happy my old man used to say when he let me catch a fish when out sailing in the Dee estuary. Anyway the sun's shining and the thermals are being packed away so it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. We've never been to Campbeltown before so a day or two exploring could be just the ticket. Off to sleep with an Irish whiskey of

Bushmills finest. Being Sunday we didn't expect a lot to be going on in town so we took the opportunity to wash down the boat, empty the dingy of Irish rainwater and generally air the yacht out seeing as the summer has finally arrived. Sun really hot so all bedding out to air as well, looks like a hippy boat in, people on these other big yachts must be thinking. At least I'm out sailing my boat not collecting green mould sitting in a marina I thought. After dinner we walked into town to sample a bar that was supposed to have 300 different types of whiskey, the barmaid would'nt allow Gem in so we headed for the door a lady called us back in asking why we were leaving so soon "not allowed in with the dog " we said "I own the hotel so please be free to sit in the lounge and feel welcome". We were bought a round of whiskey by an American couple who listened in on the conversation and made a fuss of Gem to the growling of both her and the barmaid. A German couple whose father had bombed the place were also sitting alongside and so we had a great evening but seeing as I'm a pensioner and skinflint we ducked out after our round because at £25 a shot these people had bigger pockets than me but also good taste for whiskey . Back on board I'm glad they didn't come back to sample the 15 year old Black Bush (whiskey that is).

Awoke to a glorious day sunny with a great sailing breeze, prepped yacht and got under way after breakfast, breeze was blowing down the loch so motored out the mouth of Campbeltown lough and set sails up the Killbrannan lough towards Lough Ranza , switched off the donkey and had a great sail till we reached the top of Arran nearing the turning to go into Lough Ranza , weather report is giving a storm blowing through this night and in the morning. Ok , carry on up Lough Fyne onto East Lough Tarbet. We were making great progress so not a worry just a different destination. I telephoned Dave Astbury to ask if he was out sailing from his berth in Ardrossan, "yes , on our way to Tarbet and in company with Bernie and Shirley" (both past members and Bernie a past commodore). "Great meet you there", arrived in the marina to be greeted to another ex pair of members, - Seven and Leslie Frazer off SWEDMAN



**Campbeltown**



**Ardrossan**



**East Lough Tarbet**



**Tarbet**

who picked up our lines when we docked. We all decided on a BBQ on Bernie's boat. It's huge so plenty of room in the cockpit for all. Whilst cooking the BBQ a rather cheeky seagull swooped down and took a chicken leg off the BBQ pan whilst it was being cooked. Bernie wasn't happy with this thieving bird (neither was I considering it was my chicken leg it nicked) so he was determined to teach this greedy bird a lesson. He got out this insanely hot chilli wrapped it in some ham and tossed it in the water by the yacht needless to say our greedy friend was first in line to get a free meal. I've never seen a seagull do the hippy hippy shake before and don't think it's ever drunk so much marina water in such a hurry before either.

We had an uneventful night after that and settled in to put the world to rights. The following morning woke to the oddest sound I've heard for a long while in a marina - went into the cockpit to see an old scots Puffer going past. Great! Last time I saw one was in Holy Lough called THE VITAL SPARK which was used in a series about PARRA HANDY a puffer skipper played by Rab Nesbit. The guys restoring her gave me the COOKS tour for a bag of freshly caught mackerel.

Following morning was a lovely warm day with no wind to talk about so a walk into town with Gem then up a steep path to a derelict old castle. Two routes to pick from red or blue, we go blue. Didn't realize it was going to be so steep but what a view from the top of the hill overlooking the whole of Lough Fyne and the surrounding areas of the town of Tarbet. When we arrived back at the castle 3 hours later a traditional Scots wedding was taking place or at least they were dressed like it but no guests, only coloured flags in a circle with bride and groom with a person who was conducting the service, again in traditional costume. Took some photos then went down the hillside to a bar where we toasted the happy pair and quenched our thirst after the long walk. Picked some provisions up from the local Co-op and went back to prepare dinner. Bernie and Shirley called after dinner, Dave and family were feeling poorly so had an early night but we had a few drinks and some nibbles plus a few Black Bushes which went down well. Being an ex commodore Bernie had lots to tell about our club, with lots of stories about how yachts were all so much smaller in the past and most of them bilge keelers. We both had enough to drink so a cheerio for the night and don't fall in on the way back !!

Got up the following morning without a fat head, surprising really when you see the empty's in the galle. Went into town with Gem, paid the marina bill and got ready to cast off. Left at lunchtime with a flat sea and a nice breeze, ma'be this heat wave the kids have been raving about is finally getting up to this part of the world. Great sail down the lough and wind is definitely picking up a tad as we get to the bottom of the lough and start the turn up towards Tignabruich and the Kyles of Bute. Wind blowing down the sides of the lough off the mountains so roll up the genoa and under main alone still scooting along very nice and

sun still shining. Dropped the main at the Kyles of Bute entrance started the motor and made our way into the anchorage of Wreck Bay. Still quite a lot of wind blowing down off the mountains and this anchorage is untenable for an overnight stop. Ok, we'll carry on through the kyles onto Rothsay at the top of Bute with the wind dropping all the time which we arrived at 6-30 pm under engine alone. Waited for the ferry to depart and asked for the bridge lift to enter the inner marina. Got tied up whilst Lin took Gem ashore cleared away decks and stowed sails then ashore for a meal. We had a fab meal at the Esplanade Hotel opposite the marina of fish pie and veg on the side, couldn't fit in a pudding as the pie was so big and full of large fish pieces. Back to our bunks full and can recommend the fish pie to anybody.

Had a lovely lie in this morning. Made breakfast whilst Lin walked Gem along the North shore. Lovely day so we're getting under way as soon as the ferry leaves and they lift the bridge. Set a course for the passage between Little Cumbrae and Great Cumbrae down this side of the Clyde. Tide was with us so didn't take long to get to the passage - went through and made our way towards Millport anchorage. There are new laid mooring bouys close in to the pier so looks a good spot for us. Cutting the corner towards them we ran up what can only be described as a rock ramp, we definitely ran up the ramp just as Lin was bending in the locker to get hold of the boathook. Only going slow luckily, it brought us to a sudden stop and Lin inside the open lock. After getting Lin out of the locker we looked at each other in disbelief, "what the hell was that?" we reversed away and stopped. Lin noticed a little whithy sticking out of the water, picked up all the cabin sole boards and thankfully found no water ingress, went and picked up a mooring bouy then checked all the keel bolts for play, phew, we need a double safe arrival after this experience and more attention going into places even if we have been there lots of times before. Waited an hour or so then rechecked the bilges again, then took Gem ashore. I didn't want to stay too long ashore so a quick walk then back on board for another inspection. Turned in early before another quick check on the bilges. So thankful it could have been a lot different had this rock been steep sided.

Woke after a fretful night to have another look for water in the bilge all dry so now I'm happy there's no damage to the boat and this sunshine is glorious. Seagulls are paying me back for the chilli meal we gave one of theirs, deck scrubbing is the order of the day, but ok in this weather. Went ashore for an ice cream then had a snooze in the cockpit till mid afternoon. Dropped the mooring and set off down the Clyde towards Ardrossan Marina under just engine to cover the 2 hours it takes to get there. Had to wait for the ferry from Broddick to get into the outer harbour before port authority allowed us to get to the Marina which is beyond the port area. Tied up to the visitors berth (a long walk from amenities) but a quiet sheltered spot. Bern and Shiril called and invited us to drinks in the clubhouse after



getting settled in. We joined them after a while Bernie said the pub down the road is cheaper and more atmosphere there, so off we went to try the local nightlife which I must admit was a little rough and saw one or two people being turfed out saying the wrong thing about a football club (Rangers) seems to be the team supported here. Keep your mouth quiet about football and it's a great cheap pub, but isn't that the way of things when you go to somewhere strange ?

The following day Lin wanted to do some washing in the launderette so I took Gem for a long walk down the derelict frontage which I recon is going to be developed in the future into a housing estate. Marina flats were really cheap here compared with every Marina development I've seen but didn't know that half of them were held by a family association for local families. Bern has got us some tickets for a berth-holders BBQ this evening opposite the Marina entrance in their storage yard so after picking up the washing and having a shower we met up for what turned out to be a hog roast with free beer to boot. Really enjoyed the company and the free night and good company. We decided to stay another day and catch the ferry over to Broddick on Arran tomorrow so with plans set we went to bed happy bunnies. The following day I filled the boat up with fuel and water ready for an early start in the morning but later we caught the ferry over to Arran where we had a really nice day wandering the coastline with Gem. Ferry was packed going back at 5-20 like the whole island was being deserted before a plague.

Early the following morning 5-30 to be precise took Gem for a walk before setting off, all was ready for the trip down the Clyde to Portpatrick, motored out into a slight chop but wind almost heading us in the direction we wanted to go. Wind almost westerly coming up the Clyde so raised sails and started a long tack into the coast towards Girvan, then along tack towards Ailsa Craig and beyond wind getting stronger or is it just that we're out in the middle of the channel - another tack will get us towards Stranraer lough decide to run engine as tide is a lot stronger here and I want to make Portpatrick before the tide changes in St George's channel. Off Stranraer the waves are huge, so much so I wanted to duck into the Lough to get out of this horrible weather, we've had the washboards in for most of the trip but now I'm so glad we did as water is slapping the dodgers as well as trying to swamp us from the stern. Lin says we should continue down the coast as it's only another few hours to our destination. Really don't want to put her and Gem through any more of this weather so in two minds what to do, ok, if it's still bad when we turn around Carswell Point we're going back down Stranraer Lough. Lin must have a guardian angel because as soon we were round the point a bit of a change was noticeable, wind was of course on a different angle and that made a lot of changes to the sea state. Still big waves but now only going in the one direction. One of the last times I got into Portpatrick it was rough and this entrance isn't very wide so all sorts of scenarios are going through my head, try to get in with big

waves running or miss the tide and push the strong current on to Peel? As it turned out the headland outside Portpatrick broke most of the fury from the big waves and we ran in under full engine power and reversed to nearly a stop once inside the harbour walls. Our friendly harbour master took our lines which was all very easy with permanent shore lines attached to the harbour wall and a bow and stern line going ashore. Time was 3-30 and boy did I need that safe arrival drink after hand steering for 9 hours. In safe - that's what matters. I'm so chuffed with this yacht makes you feel safe to be aboard when weather gets really bad but a little annoyed to have put Lin through another rough passage and more grey hairs on Megs face. Another trip and we're in our second home - the IOM. After Gem had her walk we went to the George for a drink with wobbly legs and what looked like a drunken dog.

Slept like a log last night and got up to a nice sunny day had breakfast then took Gem for a walk on the cliffs, were surprised to see flat calm seas and hardly no wind to talk about. Should we get under way or stop another day? Let's get going, I persuaded the crew to see the delights of lazing in the cockpit all the way to the IOM, forecast gave a NE 4-5 backing 3-4. Ok off we set. Harbour master said leave 2 hours before LW keep close into the coast to get the back eddy and arrive at Grammag Head at slack, thus then getting the tide lift down to the IOM. Wind was all over the place close into the coast but we made the tip of the mull. In 2 hours under engine and main. Tried the cruising chute for a while but wind not right for this leg so stowed it and raised all sail and had motor at half speed. That 5 they promised came soon after Grammag Head and we soon started surfing down increasingly bigger waves with tide and seas on our stern quarter. The sun is out so crew not too worried so let's see what I can get out of her with her new copper coated bottom, 8-9 knots seems to be about it so I'm like a pig in whotsits steering down breaking waves with complete awe at how well we're going. Not a hard job when you have both elements behind you and before long Peel arrived on the port bow with a welcoming calm we went straight into the Marina right up to the top onto a berth near the amenity block. Well deserved safe arrival drink and still on a buzz after the rush from Portpatrick. Cleared up the mess down below made dinner then went to the best pub in Peel The White House. Yes definitely on a rush cos we're at the IOM for the TT races.

### **Wed 23rd may -----Sat 9th June -----TT Races**

Another sunny day on the island of paradise in the IOM but all good things come to an end sometime, so we are making preparations to leave for our home port of Menai Bridg. Up at 5-30 ready for a bridge swing at 6-30, Let lines go at 6-25 and motor slowly down to the bridge just perfectly timed as we get there as the lights turn green on the traffic signals. Out into the bay and raise mainsail give engine some stick as soon as she's warmed up and set a course for the Calf Sound 2 hours down the west coast of the island, push a bit of tide through the sound then raise all sail off Spanish Head. Get some breakfast down us as

we see 3 basking sharks feeding a mile off the head. Great, not seen a school of them before, but the water looks full of plankton around here so it looks like we had breakfast with them.

Not a great deal of wind and the sea is virtually flat, I had ideas to sunbathe in the cockpit all the way across but it's that cold in the cockpit we've got all our sailing gear on even though the sun is out. Gem must know we're on our way home as she has stopped in the cockpit most of the way across, arrive under motor and sails outside the clubhouse at 5-20- picked up a mooring and took Lin and Gem ashore with a stack of gear to load into the van which was parked at the clubhouse. I motored down to Menai Bridge on my own as Lin drove the van to meet us at St Davids slipway where we come ashore normally. A food festival was in full swing on the old pier but we wanted to get home so didn't succumb to the temptations of hot Welsh Lamb. Set off home with some great memories and trying to forget the worst ones.

### **DES, LIN and GEM.**



**Dinner at Team Funds camp**



**Millport Rock**



**Broddick**



**Rothsay**



**On way home**



**Portpatrick**



# Rhum and return

## Single-handed in “Soay”, Sadler 32

### 4th-20th July 2018

### John Lomas

#### Route

Victoria Dock, Caernarfon-Peel-Glenarm-Port Ellen-Craig-house-Ardfern-Tobermoray-Coll-Rhum-Lochaline-Ardfern-Gigha-Bangor, NI- Ardglass-Cemaes Bay-Victoria Dock.

The intended route involved a circumnavigation of Skye including anchoring Soay at the island of Soay. However, plans and the weather change.

#### This comprised of:-

- 16 days of “sailing” at an average of 40 miles each day.
- 1 rest day
- 637 nm.
- Underway 120.45 hrs.
- Engine used for 100hrs
- 170 litres of fuel used
- Sailing for 20.45 hrs approx. (roughly 20%)
- Longest day, Caernarfon to Peel. 14.5 hrs, 80 nm.

#### Best bits

- Entering Peel Marina on my own at 0200!
- Harbourmaster at Glenarm staying on way after his finishing time to sell me fuel.
- Being passed in the North Channel by a large cargo ship called “Hong Hing”. Name made me laugh.
- Meeting up with Nightsong at Port Ellen and Sizzler and Elise in Sound of Jura
- Craighouse. The view of the “Paps” and drinking Jura whisky in sight of the distillery.
- Coll, the anchorage and the Hotel, but perhaps not on the day England were kicked out of the World Cup!
- Getting north of Point of Ardnamurchan at long last in Soay. J an and I tried to do this and failed in 2009!
- Rhum. The mountains and cliffs. Loch Scresort and Kinloch Castle. What a place and what a history!



Soay in Glenarm



Soay at Craighouse



### Could have been better bits

- Arriving in Peel on "Tynwald Day". Almost everywhere shut. Devil of a job to find a breakfast.
- Fortunately the pubs were all open and busy. Radio antenna breaking in the Sound of Jura going north (not to mention the cost of an emergency one!)
- Weather between Lochaline and Ardfern. Heavy rain. Wind up to 20 knots on the nose. Very poor visibility. Trapped finger in windlass leaving Lochaline. Hurt. Still bruised nearly 3 months later. Arrived at Ardfern wet through. France won the World Cup the same day. Not a good day. The day did however provide the best "Glad it's Not Me" moment of the trip. As we were coming through the Sound of Luing at 11 knots (6 knots of tide) we met a trimaran coming the other way. Despite an impressive bow wave they were making no progress at all as far as I could tell!
- Dense fog between Bangor and Ardglass. Dense as in 50 metres or less most of the time. 4.5 hours of motoring 'blind'. Praise be to chartplotters, radar and AIS.
- Autphelm failing off Ardglass. Happily, I had a spare onboard.

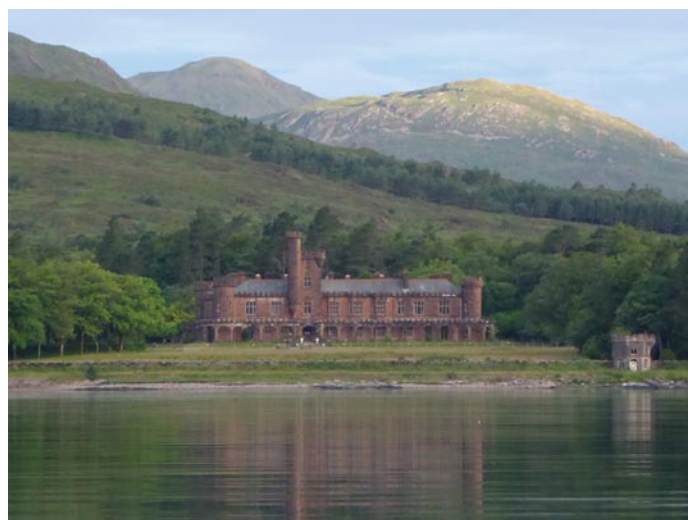
### Further thoughts

- Single handed, I found that increasingly I was talking to the autohelm (he's called Otto by the way), and giving the fenders names.
- I had a constant struggle to stay awake some days. The weather was warm, the sea flat, the engine on, Otto working away quietly, Zzzzzzzzz.
- Not to mention the thought of falling overboard and watching Soay disappear into the distance. Needless to say I wore my lifejacket all of the time on deck.

**And finally, Venturers doing what they do best on Gigha!!**



**Ardnamurchan**



**Kinloch Castle, Rhum**



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