

Spain or bust! Lady Beth finally gets to Spain

Last season I had tried unsuccessfully to get as far as the North Spanish coast. I decided to try again this year. My interest had been generated some 30 years ago by meeting Maurice Bailey (famous for surviving 117 days in a life-raft). He also founded "Yot-Grot" the Yachtsman's Second-hand Chandlery" in Lyminster. He encouraged me to cruise further afield than the usual cross-channel runs and became a good friend.

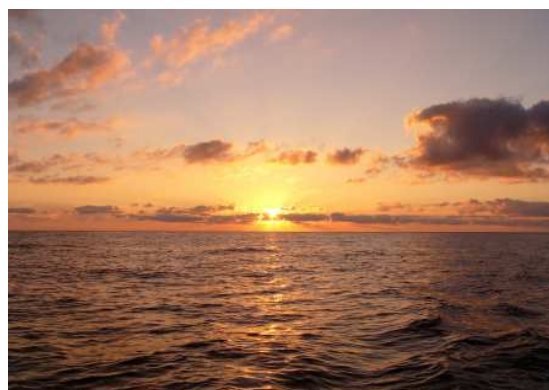
This year's cruise was unaccompanied as Roy and Terri (E23 Tudor Fox) had brought a much larger new boat which they wanted to familiarise themselves with before getting too adventurous.

The plan had been to sail down to Plymouth single handed and pick up my brother Robin before sailing south by way of the French coast to Spain; spend around a month there before returning the same way. I had allowed June to get there, July to explore the Spanish Ria coast and August for the return. Unfortunately my brother's commitments caused me to have to modify this as we went along.

Having spent much of May preparing Lady Beth, I set off as soon as the weather improved sufficiently to head down to Plymouth in the first week of June. As the weather was still unsettled, it was not until the middle of June that we left Plymouth for Helford in order to get a reasonable slant to cross the Channel to L'Aberwrach.



Departure from Helford



First night out

Having made a rather nerve-wracking arrival before dawn, in poor visibility, we stayed for 3 days whilst it blew hard from the west. Eventually the wind eased although the visibility remained poor. We motor sailed into La Chennel du Four in less than half a mile visibility but this improved as we approached Cameret. Here again we had to wait out the next blow!



Up river, L'Aberwrach



Ile Vierge Lighthouse



Visitor in Camaret



Raz lighthouse

Departure from Camaret was made into a blustery northwester and moderate visibility. However, the weather forecasters promised improving conditions for the next few days with high pressure building up due west of Biscay. The intention had been to head for one of the harbours on the south Brittany Coast but as we passed through the Raz we decided to “go for it” straight across the Biscay! It proved a good decision!



Fun and games in Camaret



Nasty rocks in Le Chennel de Four

With a wind between F3 & F5 starting from NW gradually backing to NE we had a very easy, comfortable crossing in 60 hours, some 330 miles, not bad for a 23 foot boat! For me the highlight had to be my night watch on the second night. I came on watch at midnight to find LB surrounded by a large family pod of dolphins. There was a full moon dead ahead. It was truly wonderful to see these joyous creatures cavorting and squealing with delight in our bow wave; a memory sure to remain with me long after others have faded!

On the 3rd day of the crossing, we picked up a radio transmission from a Portuguese warship about to commence live firing, wanting a 30 mile exclusion zone! We were some 10 miles inside that zone! We informed them of our presence and they kindly moved 10 miles east of us before commencing firing.



Sada outer harbour



Sada lifeboat memorial

Arrival off the Ria off La Corunna was just before dawn, in dense mist! Hey ho, we smelt our way in to the Ria and decided to avoid big ships by heading south-east for the small port of Sada, some 15 miles to the further, on another branch of the Ria. Arrival was made in warm, dazzling sunshine in this very friendly, welcoming harbour.



Headland on eastern side of Ria La Coruna



Fortified entrance to El Ferrol

After a pleasant stay in Sada we explored the Ria before heading up to the historic port of Ferrol. No wonder this was the base for the Spanish Navy, it has the most impressive natural and man-made defences! We found a tiny Club Marina by the Dockyard where we were made welcome by the caretaker.

On the following day there was a very fresh NE wind so we headed into La Coruna, the facilities being rather better than indicated in the Pilot books. The visitor's marina is still under construction with only portakabin toilets etc. Half as good as Sada but twice as expensive! After 2 days the wind eased but it was clear from all the forecasts that rounding Cape Finisterra would not be wise. It had been blowing consistently at F6 to F8 with no indication of any letup. We therefore decided to head east along the north coast and miss out on the larger Rias of the W coast.



La Coruna

We then enjoyed 3 weeks of mainly fair weather cruising gently along the coast visiting anywhere that looked interesting and was accessible. Most of the entrances are fairly shallow. The smaller Rias generally have a bar similar to our E coast. With a persistent NW swell of up to 3 metres these provided some exciting entrances!



Ria Cedeidre

Perhaps the most delightful of these was Santa Marta about 50 miles east of La Coruna. Once over the bar it was a delightful sail of about 4 miles up a winding Ria between low mountain ranges to the small, rather sleepy town. Here the Club had invested in a small Marina where we were made most welcome. We enjoyed a 3 day stay here.



Typical coastal scenery, note the high mountains, over 3000 feet and constant swell

We then continued along the coast about 30 miles each day stopping, in fascinating historic ports until we reached Gijon. This is one of the largest ports and Marinas on this coast. As usual LB was by a big margin the smallest yacht visiting. It was interesting to note the warmth of welcome from Harbour staff we received everywhere for visiting them in such a size of boat. (The average visiting yacht was around 38 feet.) As usual, most UK boat's crews chose to ignore us whereas the Dutch, French and Spanish and even German crews were very friendly.



Castrapol Village



Gijon Cathedral

At Gijon the weather really let us down by defying all the norms and blowing hard from the east day after day. We therefore took to the train and had a most enjoyable time exploring the hinterland and Pico mountains.

We eventually reached Santander; a big disappointment. Large, very commercial and not very friendly (the only place we visited like this.) We only stopped one day before heading back to Gijon. By now Robin's time was getting short. The French had declared an enormous exclusion zone for missile firing for at least a week. With the strong E/NE winds we could only make a northerly course so set out to see where we would end up. It was a rough trip for several hours!



**This was a large trawler quite close, it gives
A good idea of the Biscay swell!**



Off-shore rocks are always a hazard!

On the evening of the second day out, still sailing N in lighter winds; we picked up a severe weather warning from a Spanish station. We were 150 miles from anywhere and they were warning of W winds up to F10!!! You may imagine our horror! The nearest port that we thought we could approach in such conditions was La Rochelle, some 150 miles due east so we changed heading and began to make preparations for severe weather. Just after midnight I spotted a ship passing to the west of us. From the AIS I was able to identify her as the Pride of Bilbao. I called her up and the officer of the watch was most helpful in giving us the latest weather forecast for our area. To our immense relief the disturbance was to the south of us. He assured us that although we might get F6 westerlies for a time that should be the worst likely.

The following night, again in very poor visibility, we approached La Rochelle. Fortunately it has very powerful leading lights so we found our way into Port Minims where at 2.00 am we were made most welcome by the staff. In the morning we were allocated a berth for the disabled, next to the harbour office. After resting here a couple of days we headed out northwards towards Il d'Yeu. At first all was well but by noon the strong northerlies returned and it was a hard beat again! By dusk we were well to the east of the Island but the wind had eased. We decided to keep going N whilst we could, arriving the following morning at Piriac sur Mer.



La Coruna main fort



Basket weaver in Gijon



drying out in La Rochelle

With the forecast of strong W/NW winds for the foreseeable future and by now both rather tired and battered from 5 days of hard windward sailing, we opted to continue north via the Villaine/Rance canal system. We enjoyed a peaceful passage arriving at St Malo after a week. Here we waited for

the still fresh NW winds to ease before setting out for Plymouth. However, by noon the visibility was clearly deteriorating and rain was threatened by the evening. Not wishing to be caught out at night in the shipping lanes in such conditions, it was an easy decision to divert to Guernsey, where we arrived in time to go straight into a very crowded Victoria Marina.

After a couple of days the weather cleared and we had a quiet easy passage back to Plymouth. Here my brother left me and after enjoying the delights of the W Country I returned to Christchurch at the end of August.



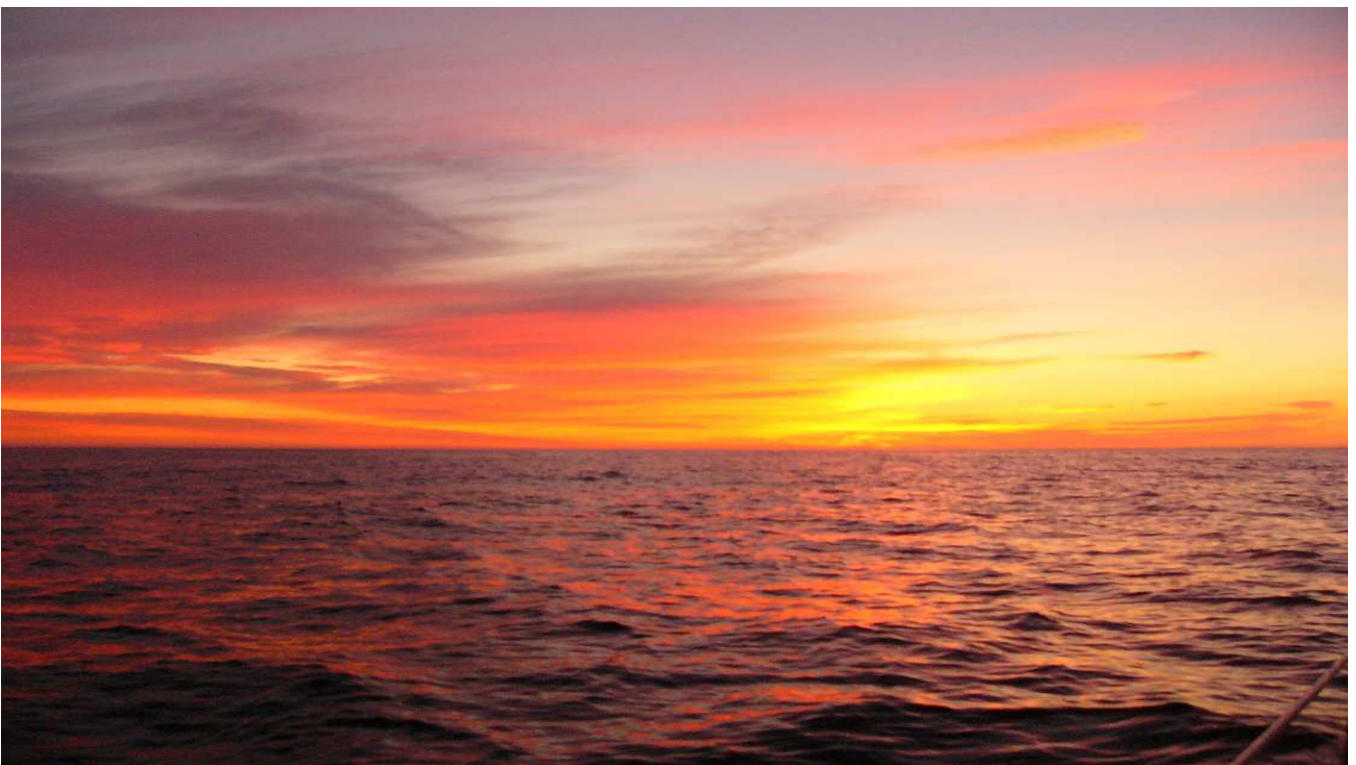
Tower of Hercules, La Coruna



Spectacular scenery nr Vivero



Gijon town centre



Lady Beth's Spanish Saga. The log of her cruise to the North coast of Spain, June/July 2006.

6th June

After a frustrating wait for strong westerly winds to ease, I was able to sail (single-handed) in the morning in a light north-westerly, departing CSC by 0915. The voyage towards Plymouth was uneventful, the weather "fair" and sea moderate, decreasing light; ideal to start out without any heroics and provide the opportunity to check everything was shipshape with boat and crew.

Night fell as we crossed a very empty Lyme Bay. Visibility was only moderate so it was some time before we raised Start Point Light. This was passed around midnight, by which time there was so little wind that the "iron topsail" was employed.

7th June

After a slightly un-nerving crossing of Bigbury Bay towards Plymouth Sound in very poor visibility, I chose to give the Mew Stone rocks a wide berth and find the light buoys at the main (Eastern) entrance channel before heading into the Sound. As we crossed the Sound itself, we passed close to an anchored warship. There was not a soul in sight and no visible security! At 0300 I reached Robin's mooring at Wilcove (near Saltash) and gratefully got some sleep at last.

Later I phoned Rob who came down and collected me from the former Admiralty jetty to go up to his home in St John.

8th to 11th June

The weather window I had benefited from was only transient. By the evening it was evident the next weather system was approaching, with increasing winds, rain and deteriorating visibility. This was to continue for the rest of the week!

11th June

With the weather again showing promise of at least another transient high, with light north-westerly winds, we decided to set out immediately for Helford in order to have a good "slant" for crossing the Channel if the winds returned to the south-west. Departure was made at 20.00 but by the time we had re-filled the fuel cans at the Mayflower Marina, it was nearly midnight as we cleared Rame Head in a slight sea and very light NW wind.

12th June

After a quiet night I came on watch just before dawn (0300). As the day lightened I was treated to the magnificent sight of the "Georg Foch" square-rigger heading up channel, about a mile or so to our south. As we closed the coast the visibility deteriorated rapidly into dense fog! With the aid of the GPS we smelt our way into the Helford River, to be greeted by warm sunshine and a strengthening westerly wind, which continued to harden throughout the day; but fortunately eased by the evening.



Departure from a peaceful Helford anchorage

13th June

A beautiful morning dawned with no wind! We immediately prepared to depart, heading for L'Aberwrach (as the forecast was for the High to last only 24 hours or so). Under engine at first, we made our departure, passing close by the dreaded Manacles rocks before heading south across the Channel. As the day wore on there was still only a very light northwesterly so it was a case of motor-sailing most of the time. Visibility was good so the shipping lanes held no nasty surprises and were negotiated before darkness fell.



First night out, a beautiful sunset but virtually no wind!

Approaching the Brittany Coast we were puzzled by a group of bright "pin point" flashing lights, not indicated on the chart or in the "List of Lights." By 0400 we were reasonably sure we had identified the Ile Verge light and Lebanter buoy. We hove too close to the buoy waiting for sufficient light to find our way in, in rather doubtful visibility. As we entered the river the weather was clearly on the change, again!



Ile Vierge lighthouse in the murk!



Entrance to L'Aberwrac'h river

At first we picked up a visitor's buoy off the slipway and got some much needed rest. However, as the wind freshened from the west this mooring became decidedly uncomfortable so, in the evening, we took the flood tide up river to pick up a sheltered berth out of the wind. Thus we had a peaceful night despite heavy rain and fresh winds.



L'Aberwrac'h, moving up river to find a more sheltered mooring

15th June

Dawn came with on real sign of improvement so we gratefully settled down to a lazy day of reading etc as the wind whined away a lust SW F5 to 7 outside. At least the rain stopped.

16th June

There being no apparent change yet we continued our leisurely stay up river. However, the evening forecast indicated better things to come so we prepared Lady Beth for a morning departure towards Cameret.

17th June

On a dull, murky morning we made our way back down the river and out to sea. Although the wind had appreciably moderated, there was still an uncomfortable, lumpy sea off shore and visibility was at best moderate, mainly poor. However, with the GPS and good charts we were reasonably confident. We at last discovered the source of the mysterious lights, a wind farm about 5 miles west of the entrance.



Lighthouses & rocks of the Chennel du Four and Raz de Sein

Entering the Chennel du Four we just about saw the famous lighthouse but little of the shoreline. However, as the day wore on the visibility gradually improved and eventually, as we entered the Rade de Brest, the sun finally made an appearance, together with a brisk westerly wind that sped us into Cameret by evening. Both marinas seemed very full but we found a vacant pontoon on the inner marina amongst some smaller local craft and gratefully tied up after a long, tiring day.

18th June

We were awoken by a somewhat irate harbour official (0730) and told we should not be where we were and must move immediately! He failed to give us more than the vaguest idea where we were supposed to go to! We made our way over towards the seemingly very full visitor's pontoon. Luckily there was a friendly English boat just leaving who helped us alongside before they departed. (In the harbour office we noted that the berth we had been in was not allocated to anyone so we were not inconveniencing any locals!)



Fun & games in Camaret



Unusual visitor in Camaret

Despite a fresh westerly wind it was very, very hot and humid, neither of us like the heat so we retired to find what shelter we could from the sun. At least there were good weather maps in the harbour office and the young lady there was most helpful by printing these out for us. We decided to be ready to depart next day, heading towards the Raz and then Audierne.

19th June

After preparing the boat, re-fuelling etc we departed with the new ebb tide after lunch. There was still a fresh wind but now NW and easing F5. It was a lumpy, bumpy departure at first but once we had started heading south this was less tiresome. Visibility was again rather poor, especially as we approached the Raz. The forecast at 1800 was very encouraging; both the English and French forecasters promised a high pressure system stationary to the west of Biscay for several days. This caused a rapid rethink and decided us to forget the delights of south Brittany and head directly towards La Coruna. We estimated this would be a 3 day passage, with luck!



Passing through the Raz de Sein

With a F3 to 5 NW wind Lady Beth romped away to the south on a gradually easing sea and improving visibility. In the evening we were plagued by a series of line squally and dodging a fleet of fishing boats, but these both soon passed.



First sunset in Bay of Biscay

20th June

By dawn the wind and sea had significantly eased, making life much more comfortable. Both crew had felt queasy overnight; in both cases I suspect more a result of nervous tension than the sea sickness". By dawn both of us felt much better and there was no recurrence of "mal de mer."

We were both surprised how empty the Bay was, not even seagulls! It turned out a beautiful day with the wind slowly increasing to a Northerly F5 by tea-time, decreasing again as the evening drew in, over a deep blue seascape accompanied by a long 2 to 3 metre high swell. In the late afternoon were picked up a VHF transmission from a Portuguese Frigate warning of an exclusion zone some 30 miles across as they were conducting live firing exercises. We were 10 miles inside the zone! After we contacted them the kindly moved 10 miles east of us before resuming their exercise!

21st June

Coming on watch at midnight, I was very much taken by the beauty of the moon, full and dead ahead. I then had one of those magical experiences only yachtsmen can enjoy. Lady Beth was running at a steady 5 to 6 knots over a long swell. All around her were these dark shapes cavorting and diving in her bow wave, dolphins, a large pod of families! It was one of those things I shall remember long after the details of the cruise are forgotten! For 2 hours I was mesmerised by their joyful playing in the moonlight.



A joyful visitor

Robin was on watch as we approached to coast, unfortunately shrouded in mist! However there are no unmarked off shore dangers and in the lightening dawn he navigated us into the Ria de Betanzos and then we sailed up to the port of Sada, arriving late morning on a beautiful sunny day.

As soon as we had found a berth in the new marina, we both got some much needed sleep before venturing into the town in the evening. The day was very hot and quite misty, without any wind!



Sada harbour entrance



looking down on Sada Harbour

22nd June

The crossing had revealed some deck leaks around the port forward stanchion bases and lights. These were removed and re-bedded. The engine was serviced. The wind had returned so it was significantly cooler. We decided to wait and see!

23rd June

First task was to finish the repairs to the leaks and test them; all seemed ok. I also checked out why the Eberspascher heater (which we wanted to use to speed up drying out) was not working. Investigation revealed water in the exhaust and a blown main fuse. Putting these to right cured the problem. During the day a Belgian boat came in alongside us, nice couple. The weather after the heat and humidity of yesterday was cool and misty until lunchtime when a breeze came in.



Plenty of fish!



Lifeboat memorial at Sada

Sada is a town in the middle of re-construction. There is obviously no “English Heritage” here. It seemed the entire old town was being simultaneously being demolished and re-built. I cannot say that the new architecture was any improvement! The northern part is built on a steep hillside but

the commercial centre is relatively flat. There is a lovely beach and all necessary facilities for yachties. The supermarket (SuperU) is on the seafront by the Marina. The Marina itself has very good facilities including a boatyard and several chandleries. Everything is very new and still in some cases under construction.

24th June

Departed Sada Marina to explore the Ria. At first there was no wind so it was an ideal opportunity to re-calibrate the Autohelm which was wandering all over the place at times! This involved going round in large circles several times, but had some beneficial effect on its course keeping.

Having re-set the Autohelm, we set out northwards to explore the Ria. By lunchtime we were lying below a sleepy village watching the world go by. By now the hot sun had disappeared behind a layer of cloud and a freshening breeze developed.



Village of Redes, north of Sada

Following a lazy lunch we enjoyed a spanking sail westwards towards to entrance of the Ria, our intention being to reach Ferrol, the “Portsmouth” of northern Spain.



Outer entrance to El Ferrol



First sight of El Ferrol

As we approached, the sun reappeared and we had a brilliant sail into the mouth of a surprisingly narrow entrance. It was a perfect location for a naval base guarded as it was by a series of batteries and fortifications at the narrowest part.



**Forts guarding El Ferrol, the
Portsmouth of N Spain**



Once inside it opened out into a large natural harbour. As well as the naval presence, we found the Portuguese Frigate we had met at sea. It was also an important trading centre for large merchant ships and a civilian as well as naval dockyard.



Entrance to El Ferrol



Our Frigate alongside the dockyard

Unfortunately a low road bridge prevented us exploring beyond the town. There were no obvious places to stop at either! We cruised around looking for somewhere sheltered from the by now freshening winds. Eventually we spotted a very small “marina” just above the naval base. It consisted of just two pontoons with finger berths. We came into a vacant one and Rob went ashore to ask if we could stop there. He found an elderly caretaker who said the berths belonged to a private club but we were welcome to stay overnight.

25th June

A very unpromising start, heavy rain and thick mist, despite a fair forecast! However, we set off to see what it was like outside. Although the rain soon stopped the wind continued to rise to a lusty NW 5/6. We decided to visit La Coruna, despite the unpromising information in the Pilot books. After rounding the main breakwater we headed in more in hope than belief! However we soon saw a notice pointing towards one of the basins to find it full of new pontoons and finger berths. We were quickly directed to a berth where we were made very welcome by a young Englishman who was working there! This basin is near the city centre. There is another inner basin used by the local yachts and fishing fleet. They created surprisingly little disturbance coming and going.

Once sorted out and lunched, we set out to explore the City. It is rather beautiful in parts with spacious parks and many historic buildings. We also discovered a good shopping centre nearby.

In the evening much of the front was illuminated, looking very attractive in the dark. It is well worth spending a day exploring the “old” city. It has some lovely buildings and parks.



Lady Beth snug alongside in Darsena de la marina, La Coruna



We decided it was still too rough outside to consider leaving so enjoyed exploring the City further. It proved a rewarding visit.



La Coruna outer harbour where visiting yachts had to anchor before the new marina was ready at Darsena



Fort guarding the inner harbour

Going to pay for our stay we were taken aback at the cost, 18 Euros! The facilities have not yet been built so there are only Portakabins at present. (Anyone who remembers Yarmouth before the new harbour offices will know how unpleasant these can be!) This was twice as expensive as Sada for much inferior facilities! Small wonder it was much less crowded.



La Coruna: dawn departure



opposite the quay



La Coruna Yacht Club

27th June

Departure was set for dawn to give us an easy start before the winds got up. The forecast was not good, the threat of heavy thundery rain with gusty winds. As we headed north the weather was quite kind, reasonably warm and a favourable wind from the west about force 3/4. By a civilised breakfast time we were back out in the Bay of Biscay. The sky to the west looked distinctly threatening and the cloud over the land obscured much of the scenery. However, we were blessed with some sunny spells but all the time the sky to the west darkened. What we could see of the coast was spectacular, great cliffs with conifer trees as far as the eye could see!



Cabo Vilano to the NE of La Coruna



La Coruna fishing fleet



The Tower of Hercules, claimed to be the oldest lighthouse in Europe



The thunder storm that hit us near Cedeira

It soon became clear that navigation was not going to be easy even with GPS (which did not seem very reliable here anyway!). We searched the coast for the entrance to Puerto de Carino but still managed to overshoot it. Our penalty was to be caught in a tremendous downpour that wiped out all visibility! However, this soon passed and we entered this enchanting landlocked harbour. By now the wind had got up so anchoring in an available space was somewhat trying to say the least; but then the sun returned for a beautiful evening.



Entrance to Ria de Cedeira



Anchorage in the Ria de Cedeira

There is no “harbour” as such. The sea wall is reserved for commercial traffic and fishing boats. There is a village to the eastern end of the Ria that is a fair row away! However it does have some basic shops. It is still well worth visiting as it is so beautiful. There were only 5 other visitors here.

28th June

This day dawned with a spectacular sunrise over the eastern mountains and promised a better day. We departed in sunshine, passing a local trading vessel at the entrance. Our destination was another small harbour, Sts Marta de Ortigueira; about 25 miles to the east.



After the storm



La Cedeira breakwater



Departure from La Cedeira

We enjoyed a delightful sail in warm sunshine and good visibility. The sheer scale of this coast is magnificent, sheer cliff 100s of feet high, mountains up to over 3000 feet. After rounding one of the most spectacular rocky outcrops, we entered the bay leading to our port. Here the swell made its presence more noticeable, running in at about 1.5 to 2 metres high but with a good long interval of about 300 metres. You only really noticed it as it crashes onto the rocks and cliffs. By noon the wind, as usual, had increased to around Force 5/6.



Finding the actual entrance was an interesting exercise itself. We knew we had arrived about 2 hours before HW. But, as it is not buoyed, it was a case of carefully watching where the seas were not breaking to find the gap. This proved easier than we had dared hope as, with an otherwise flat sea, it was fairly easy to “read” the water. We entered the river in fine style, to then gently meander some 3 miles inland. Unfortunately it had now clouded over so the views were not as spectacular as they might otherwise have been. After the first bend we found the channel very clearly buoyed, (We could not really understand why they did not continue to the entrance.)



Sta Marta de Ortigueira: rocky island to port of entrance.



Swell breaking on the bar



Entrance to Santa Marta del Ortigueira. The main channel is just to the right of Isla San Vicente. As you can see, there is no buoyage or leading marks so it is a case of good old fashioned eyeball navigation! The refraction of the swell can clearly be seen.

By mid-afternoon we reached the town on the east bank where the river widened considerably. Anyone from Christchurch will be used to the very shallow harbour and river!



Sta Marta: river and Yacht Club marina





The outer breakwater extends well out into river and is relatively new. At low water there is no more water than in Christchurch Harbour. This is one of many delightful harbours on this coast where a careful study of the tides is essential. It would also be sheer folly to try to enter in any strong northerly winds.

The Pilot book proved out of date, again! The Sailing Club has built a small marina. As we entered it, in a lusty following breeze, a young man at first tried to direct us to an almost impossible mooring in the conditions! When we said we did not mind being alongside another visitor (who had invited us alongside) he, rather reluctantly, agreed. (To be fair to him, he was a student doing a holiday job and was only trying to give us a single berth; unfortunately he knew little about the problems of trying to berth in a very restricted area, anchor astern, bow to pontoon, in a strong following wind.)

Our neighbour proved to be a delightful German couple on their way to the Med. They both spoke several languages fluently, having worked in several countries including England.



Alongside visitor's pontoon



nice final resting place!

Later we paid the student dues of 18 euros per night. This was relatively expensive but the club had paid for the building of the marina and the new club-house had very good facilities. He also, without having been asked, had downloaded and printed out a very comprehensive weather forecast! We were very close to the town centre so shops etc were quite handy, if a little on the hilly side for me. The town was also in the midst of "regeneration." All sorts of modern art sculptures were to be found, sometimes in the most unlikely places.



The yacht Club Marina. The Club is to the right & is a very modern building in stark contrast to the surrounding buildings

29th June

Market day; the market took place on the quay next to the Marina. It was in many ways similar to our own markets in that there were the usual clothes, shoe and kitchenware stalls. There were several different food stalls, meats, fish, cheeses etc. and a number of local farmers selling their produce. Chickens and other fowls were live. We spent an entertaining morning looking around. In the afternoon we explored the old town and its remarkable cemetery on the hill overlooking the harbour.



Up river



Sculpture overlooking the harbour



Town centre



Market on the quayside



**Local beach & nature reserve just inside the entrance of the Ria
Sta Marta de Ortigueira**

Having exhausted the delights here we left on a bright, sunny morning to continue eastwards. It was another day of sunshine and steady winds. We reached the bar at the entrance to be confronted by large, breaking swells! At first, although we knew where the entrance should be, it was quite difficult to find it. With some trepidation we followed the route we had taken entering, climbing up the steep swells, hoping we would not hit the bottom in the troughs! Our fears were unfounded; the depth-sounder never gave a reading of less than 3 metres.



clearing the bar & rocks at the entrance of Sta Marta de Ortiqueria

Once clear of the bar we headed out to sea in bright sunshine and a light, steady breeze. As the conditions were favourable we decided to explore the coast and make for Vivero, stopping for lunch in the Ria del Baroquero. On this passage we rounded the spectacular Isolotes El Estanquin with its lighthouse perched precariously above. This proved a good choice. Lunch was taken enjoying the sights of the Ria with its steep, wooded cliffs.



Continuing on to Vivero we passed between the mainland and the island of Coelleira, a spectacular rocky outcrop absolutely teeming with birds, the noise was indescribable! This marks the western entrance of the Ria de Vivero. Finding the entrance was not easy at first, it being overwhelmed by the great mountains and cliffs. Once we picked up the new harbour breakwater it was straightforward. Having passed the brand new fishing and commercial port, we followed the river for about half a mile to the old harbour, now being made into a proper marina. We berthed amongst about a dozen or so visiting yachts on the visitor's pontoon. However, there are no facilities otherwise yet built! For this reason we were not charged.



Vivero; new outer sea wall



Vivero; new marina entrance

After tea we had a quick around the immediate area and found a rather attractive new information bureau and exhibition centre. There was a very interesting display showing the history of the port and a display of modern sculpture.



Marina in old harbour



full size traditional inshore fishing boat



Fishing fleet in new commercial harbour



Model of traditional offshore fishing boat

1st July

We decided to stay for a full day to explore this ancient walled town. Although much has been lost to development, enough remains to give one a good idea of how it must have looked for several centuries. One fascinating sight was people still collecting water from a well, living in ancient houses abutting modern development!



Old town. It was surprising to find some people still had to draw water from a well!



Being a Catholic country it was no surprise to find several churches, a monastery and a holy shrine. Sadly most were in need of extensive repair. Like most of the towns we visited, Vivero is built into a steep hillside, adding to its character. Fortunately the major shops etc are outside the old city walls, by the river. This included a large supermarket.



Vivero old town centre

In the evening there was some kind of motor racing going on on both sides of the river but no-one could tell us what it was about! By midnight the noise died down and we were able to get some sleep.



Main gate from the port into the city



TOP: colourful waterfront

LOWER: Wall sculpture in new fishing harbour

Our next planned port of call was to be Foz but as Rob's time was limited we decided to go directly to Ribadeo, a larger port but also supposed to be historically interesting. As this was about 30 miles we set off promptly to take the tide down to the sea, some 5 miles to Pta de Faro. This was exciting sailing. With a 3 metre swell we swooped over the waves with a slight corkscrew motion. Lady Beth revelled in the conditions!



Aluminium smelting plant nr. Vivero



Offshore rocks abound here

Ribadeo has a large suspension bridge at its entrance which is also a relatively narrow, funnel shape, narrowest at the bridge; resulting in strong, turbulent currents. The harbour and town are immediately after the bridge on the wet bank. The pilot book indicated we would have to lie alongside a stone wall but as we entered we saw pontoons and finger berths. We moored to a vacant one to find out more. A charming elderly Club Bosun came out to us and told us which the visitor's pontoons were. As we were to discover, not in the most restful part!



Lighthouses & high bridge guide you into Ribadeo



As we frequently found, the Spanish government, ever mindful of the largess of the EEC have been building new commercial and fishing harbours and converting the old ones into leisure harbours. This one unfortunately is very badly affected by swell, with the visitor's berths immediately opposite the entrance; we got the full effect and had a very restless time as a result.

However, the Club was welcoming and the harbour office/Club office was efficient and well run. The town was indeed historically interesting but rather like a maiden aunt, had fallen on hard times and much looks rather sad. Andy Dennison might find a very lucrative market for his skills here!



Ribadeo old town by the harbour



New Ribadeo opposite the old town



Old fort at entrance



Customs house



street name

The town like so many is on a steeply sloping hillside so it was hard work to reach the centre, but well worth the effort if you like gardens and interesting old architecture. It had obviously been a very prosperous port at one time.

Ribadeo marina is in the old commercial port. Note the entrance open to the swell funnelling through the estuary. The original fishing harbour is in the foreground. The dark vessel on the outer wall is the Customs cutter



We continued to explore the town during the day and, having shopped, we decided to see if there was a quieter berth up river. Like Christchurch, the harbour except where the commercial channel has been dredged is very shallow and large areas dry out. There being no buoyage to help, we took a ferry ride to find out where the best channels were. We were the only passengers but it was a beautiful day and we thoroughly enjoyed being “grockles” for an afternoon. Unfortunately by the time we got back the tide was too low for us to move upriver.

4th July

After another uncomfortable night, we prepared to leave on the new flood tide and had a very enjoyable, leisurely sail up to the village of Castropol; a charming quiet place. Because of the tides we knew we would have to depart before dawn so it was an early night.



Castropol village south of Ribadeo



Castropol Church Tower at dusk



Ribadeo town centre



Ribadeo by night from Castropol



Local Club dinghy class sailing up river

5th July

Shortly before dawn we upped anchor with just sufficient light to feel our way back to the entrance with the young ebb. The tide dropped with an alarming rate but with one or two slight bumps we successfully found our way back to the bridge and open sea.



A rough greeting leaving Ria del Ribadeo

We looked at the pilot book as we proceeded east, not having decided exactly where we would stop next; the joys of cruising! Having heard a weather forecast indicating our northerly westerly winds were veering through north, making all entrances a dead lee shore, and with a 3 metre swell; we eventually settled on Gijon. This meant a log day as it was about 50 miles but it put us in an all weather port, the nearest one.





A lively passage to Gijon

Though long, the day was blessed with bright sunshine and a sparkling sea and we were not over tired when we reached Gijon in the evening. Here was our first experience of the Spanish Customs. As we rounded the end of the new commercial harbour mole, a large Customs cutter raced out towards us. After studying us for several minutes at close quarters, and with a lot of discussion by the officers on the bridge, they decided we were harmless after all and left us in peace to find, not without difficult because it is small and lost against the background; the entrance to the marina.



**Approaching Gijon from the west
Having rounded the large headland
The seas have calmed down.**



Gas storage “balloons” near Gijon



**Rounding the end of the massive new breakwater (Dique Principe de Asturias) of the commercial harbour
by El Musel**

This being a main port of entry, we thought we had better do things “by the book” so went onto the official arrivals’ pontoon. I duly reported to the harbour office, armed with all papers. A charming official sat me down and from my papers filled out the forms for me and charged me the princely sum of 2.75 euros! He seemed somewhat non-plussed that we were only 7 metres long but had come all the way by sea! We then moved over to the official visitor’s pontoons where we had a wide choice of berths. We chose what looked the quietest and, after supper, retired tired but happy.



Gijón old harbour converted into a marina. This photo is quite old, the 3 basins to the right are now filled with yachts & motor boats. Of the pontoons to the left adjacent to the outer sea wall, the nearest 2 are for visitors, the far one for local small craft, the lifeguard’s boats etc.



Visitors' pontoon



Harbour offices

6th July to 12th July

Due to the persistent very strong easterly winds, up to gale F8, we were harbour bound. Fortunately Gijon is not at all a bad place to be stuck in! It is a medium sized town with excellent road and rail links. The “old” town has some very beautiful late Victorian and Edwardian architecture to admire. It also contains many beautiful parks and Plazas. By now we were “going native”, living a leisure enjoying eating out in the street cafes (we had found one that served all home-made food, including some wicked rum-babas), taking an afternoon siesta until around 16.00 And enjoying extended evening meals with excellent local wines.



Gijon Church of San Pedro



Large bank adjacent to harbour



Below are pictures taken in and around Gijon to give some flavour of the City.



Tiled murals on shops & public buildings



Bournemouth eat your heart out!



Collier bringing coal for the power station



Interior of San Pedro Church



View point in harbour

Rob is rather less interested in exploring cities so we decided to try to get to Santander. Unfortunately it did not take long to realise that the strong easterly winds were going to make it a very uncomfortable, wet and long trip! So, we took the train instead! (WE had to get to Santander as Rob was running out of his medication. His wife, Glennis, had posted more to the Post Office in Santander.) It was a fascinating journey. The lines all follow the river valleys so it was first necessary to head inland to a railway crossroads. We were somewhat amused to find you climbed down onto the track, walked across it and then climbed into the train waiting for you to travel east... Due to the rugged, mountainous nature of the region, the train travelled quite slowly, rarely more than 30 mph, and often less. We zigzagged along this very beautiful coast for some 4 hours or so

until we reached Santander. We even saw snow on the mountain tops. Below are some of the scenes that greeted us.



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13th July

The wind had now reached such force that a local park had to be closed for safety, large branches were falling. We repaired to an Internet shop and for the princely sum of 1.1 Euros per hour (about 70 pence) to look up weather sites. We found several good ones; they all indicated moderation in the wind strength but still in the NE. Because Rob was beginning to get anxious about time, I decided to start heading for home waters ASAP and started to prepare LB for sea. We also learned that the outer sea danger area off Les Landes was closed to all shipping for missile trials for a week. This finalised our decision to head north and see where we arrived.

14th July

The wind was still strong enough to deter and early start but by late afternoon it was down to a F4 north-easterly. We decided to leave in the evening, hoping the seas would have died down a bit by then.

Departure was made at dusk; the visibility was very hazy, accompanied by an extraordinary red sunset. It was still lumpy and uncomfortable. The best course we could make was due north so it looked like another long haul directly across the Bay to Brittany. As darkness fell things began to calm down and become more pleasant, however, I decided to keep the 2 reefs in over night.

15th July

By midnight we were still only 10 miles offshore but the now F3/4 wind had eased to the east enabling us to head on a more north-north easterly course. The longer offshore seas made life more comfortable. Dawn broke to a rather nice sunny day. We could still only head a little east of north but sufficient to be able now to have a choice of S Brittany ports. We headed as close to the wind as possible in case it began to head us again; this proved a wise decision!

After lunch we saw our first yacht in the Bay, about a 40 footer heading south, how I envied him with a perfect breeze over his port quarter!

We found the GPS coverage here seemed very poor. Neither the main or portable units were happy, frequently losing the signal for over several hours. Fortunately we are both rather old fashioned and still practice "traditional" navigation including sextant work if necessary. Thus we felt reasonably confident of our position as tidal streams in the middle of Biscay are very weak.

By tea-time it was uncomfortably hot and humid with deteriorating visibility. With the wind back in the north-east, we were again heading for the western end of Brittany.

16th July

Shortly after midnight we had the fright of our lives! We were now as far away from land as it is possible in the Bay, about 150 miles in any direction. Despite the distance we received, weakly of course, a severe weather warning from a Spanish coast radio station. It warned of gale F8 to Storm F10 winds!!! The combination of a thick Spanish accent and weak signal meant we could not get the entire message. This concentrated the mind wonderfully! Studying the chart we decided to only safe "all weather" port in a westerly or south-westerly blow was La Rochelle. We tacked to head east; fortunately the wind had backed sufficiently for us to be able to make the heading.

At 02.15 I notice a ship crossing a couple of miles or so away, heading south. I immediately looked it up on the AIS receiver I had fitted only the day before we sailed. Our luck was in. It even gave the name of the ship, the Pride of Bilbao, and its MMSI. I called her up and received an instant, welcome response. The radio officer consulted his met. Officer and explained the disturbance was a small secondary depression heading due east about 50 miles north of the Spanish coast. He assured us the worst we were likely to experience was a couple of hours or so of F5/6 SW veering quickly NW winds. What a huge relief!

By dawn we were well on our way towards La Rochelle, the stronger winds not really having troubled us. They died off quickly, the direction returning to the NE but getting weaker all the time. By noon it was F3 or less and the seas had died down to the long 2 metre swell of yesterday.

We began to pick up French coast radio stations in the afternoon and, with the GPS behaving itself rather better, for a short while at least, we felt reasonably confident we would make La Rochelle on the 17th.

17th July

Shortly after midnight we began to pick up the powerful coast lights on the Island of Ile de Re. We were now motor-sailing as the wind had all but vanished. However, as we closed the outer approaches they disappeared! We continued gingerly on a course that should take us clear of the off-lying dangers somewhat puzzled. At last I picked up lights on both sides, very hazy and difficult to identify; Fog!

Despite this we felt reasonably confident of our position so slowly closed the land hoping conditions would improve. Fortunately La Rochelle has very powerful Iso-phase leading lights. These penetrated the murk sufficiently for me to be able to head directly for the dredged channel. As dawn approached, the visibility improved sufficiently for us to find the entrance to Port Minnimes, the outer marina. Gratefully, we went in and alongside the visitor's reception pontoon. A very charming French student, on the night shift, was very helpful and allowed us to stay on the inside of her pontoon until they could find us a berth in daylight.

At around 10 a.m. another harbour official in a dory escorted us to a berth they had specially cleared for us, on the disabled berths pontoon; right next to the harbour office. We gratefully slept the rest of the morning.

The crossing had been rough at the beginning and we found a lot of water had got in up forward where all our "dry" stuff was stowed, now all wet! We had to take it all up to the laundry in the office and wash out the salt.

18th July

Refreshed by yesterday's rest, I set too to try to find out how so much water had got in. Having completely emptied the fore-peak, I removed the head lining panels and soon found the problem. The hot sun had finally made the bedding under the stancheon bases so brittle it had failed. Going to windward more or less for 3 days, the bow had often been under water, which had then entered via the stancheon base plate fixings. Fortunately there is probably no better place to be to carry out repairs, this being the principal centre for sailing on the west coast of France.

By the end of a hot, uncomfortable day, the repairs had been completed and tested with a hose before re-fitting the headlining and re-stowing; I think we both deserved the meal we enjoyed that evening! There was no question of an imminent departure as the winds had steadily freshened to a lusty NE F6/7, and very gusty.

19th July

With the winds still too strong for comfort, we took the ferry up to the old city and harbour. In the morning we visited the towers, in the afternoon I took Rob to the Protestant church museum. (Glennis is a "Reader" in the Church of England). We were blessed with an excellent guide who, with our bit of French and his bit of English, learned a great deal of the history of the region. On returning to LB we checked the weather in the harbour office and provisionally planned an early departure tomorrow. We hoped to reach Il d'Yeu, some 50 mile to the NW.

20th July

We set out just before dawn into a light NE wind and smooth seas. We passed under the high bridge linking Ile de Re with the mainland, heading NW between the island and mainland. Up to noon the weather gods had been kind but now seemed quite malevolent! The wind quickly freshened and backed to the north-west; dead on the nose. Reluctantly we began to take long tacks out to sea then back again. As the seas got rougher, life became distinctly uncomfortable. We looked at the options after hearing the French Met. Office indicating the wind would ease and veer to the NE by midnight. We decided to keep going and try to reach Piriac sur Mer, some 50

miles north. At this time there were a number of other yachts also trying to head north so close attention was needed as we all tacked. We headed further off shore on starboard tack to get clear of them before nightfall.

21st July

As promised, the wind progressively eased and veered after midnight. Reefs were shaken out as we crossed the Loire estuary with its busy shipping lanes. The moon shone brightly, visibility was excellent so the midnight to 04.00 watch was really quite enjoyable after the previous one. By dawn we were on the last leg, LB had excelled herself and we hoped to make the morning tide. We started the engine to try to maintain speed but it was clearly unhappy! The reason was soon obvious; in the night one of the stern lines had become detached and fallen overboard. It was obviously around the propeller!) (Piriac is a tidal harbour; entry is only possible 3 hours either side of HW.)

Our luck held and we still just made it in time to cross the tidal sill. We were directed to a visitor's berth where we thankfully berthed. How the engine continued to run was a mystery we solved when we surprisingly easily pulled the rope off. Being a nylon one it had obviously had sufficient "slip" to allow the propeller to rotate, thank goodness. The rest of the day was taken up with drying out, again, and resting. It was a beautiful sunny day with a moderate westerly breeze, if only we had waited one more day in La Rochelle! In the evening we enjoyed perusing the nightly art and craft fair in the village square.

22nd July

Rob had had a very restless night and little sleep so we decided to have a rest day. I used the time to explore the village and local beaches. Again the harbour staff asked us to move as we were on a berth able to accommodate a much larger boat. Having paid our dues of 18 Euros, the highest anywhere, we felt a bit miffed but moved to what proved a much more comfortable berth amongst the local small boats.

By now we were both fairly tired have had such a hard trip since leaving Gijon; to windward all the way! The winds were forecast to now be NW, the direction we wanted to go! It was an easy decision to opt for a restful canal trip to St Malo. I therefore gave the engine a thorough service.

23rd July

On a damp, drizzly morning we set off across the Villaine estuary and into the river. As the tide was on the ebb, it was a slow trip up river to the lock at Arzul, which we made by noon. This was lucky as, due to water shortage, the lock openings were restricted to 4 a day. As it was we had arrived only 15 minutes before the 3rd opening. (Had we been later, we would have had to wait 4 hours!) Once through the lock we proceeded up river to find a very attractive spot to enjoy a leisurely lunch and siesta.

In the afternoon we continued up to Roche Bernard. Our good luck continued and we were allowed to berth in the old harbour, much nicer than in the marina. By now the drizzle had set in with rising winds and falling barometer.

24th July

At 03.00 we were awakened by a severe squall, heralding the first real rain for over a month. Nevertheless, we decided to continue on our way up river to Redon. By 10.00 the weather had cleared and we were able to sail most of the way. Arriving at the bridge at Cran the wait enabled us

to enjoy a leisurely lunch and siesta before passing through at 14.30. More attractive sailing took us to Redon Marina by the evening.

25th July

Being market day we enjoyed the sights and sounds of this delightful town. The new harbour master was very helpful, Steve having been moved to Vannes. In the afternoon we borrowed the controller for the mast crane (25 Euro) and lowered the mast. (Fortunately I had stowed the mast supports in anticipation of the possibility of needing them.) The rest of the day was taken up with stowing preparing for the canal and locks.

The weather forecast indicated a period of unsettled weather with strong, blustery showers; what a good decision to return by the canal!

26th July

The morning weather was as per forecast, wet and windy. We stocked up at the supermarket and visited an exhibition in the Museum about the occupation of the town; a sad, sobering visit.

By mid afternoon the rain had cleared so we set off for Rennes. By 18.30 we had reached the village of Brain sur Villaine where we tied up for the night. As dusk fell we were delighted to see an otter emerge from his tunnel and entertain us with his fishing for his supper. It was only a shame darkness fell so soon.

27th July

With Rob's time rapidly diminishing, we pressed on, despite the rain, without stopping to reach Rob's cottage near Malon, by noon. The cottage was occupied by the charming couple from whom Rob had purchased the cottage. They insisted we stay for lunch. As we departed we were hit by a severe thunderstorm. Fork lighting was quite frightening; the closest strike only about 200 metres ahead. However, it quickly passed, we were well and truly soaked, the sun came out and wind fell away. We arrived at Malon lock only to find the lightning had knocked out the electricity needed to open the lock gates! Fortunately an engineer arrived within the hour and we were able to continue at 16.00.

We reached the marina at Messac by late afternoon. The evening and night was very uncomfortable, hot and humid with spectacular thunderstorms away to the west over the Armorican Massif. Mostly it was very high sheet lightning.

28th July

After a quiet morning trying to make up for lost sleep, we continued north towards Rennes. It was very hot and humid but at least there was a bit of breeze. We stopped at the last lock before the city where we had a rather better night alongside the old barge waiting wall.

29th July

At 09.00 the lock was opened for us to continue our journey. We quickly entered Rennes but did not stop but carried on until noon when we had to wait anyway as it was the lock-keeper's lunch time. The weather was now much better, warm and sunny with a cooling NW breeze. From here it was a pleasant cruise up to the highest part of the canal to stop at Vilemorin lock. Once again we had a very pleasant, relaxing night.

30th July

A prompt start at 08.00 was necessary as today we would be descending the “ladder” of locks. There was somewhat autumnal feel to the weather with heavy dew and mist and definitely cool! However it gradually cleared to be another lovely summer’s day. We reached to top of the ladder at 09.00 only to find the student operating the lock had over-slept. She arrived somewhat flustered at 09.15. With Rob helping ashore, successfully negotiated the ladder in 2 ½ hours. Unfortunately the thunder storms were back so we arrived at Evran tired and wet.

As before, we experienced the jobs in the evening. They were so rowdy and offensive that eventually Rob set out to find the local Gendarme. He immediately responded, knowing the youngsters involved, and evicted them from the toilet/shower block; not however before they had been vandalised. I cannot say I can recommend this place to stop at.

31st July

On a beautiful morning we entered the first lock at 09.00 to continue to Dinan; a pleasant, uneventful journey to one of my favourite towns, Dinan. Noticeable was the absence of anglers this time compared with last year. However, there were numerous runners and cyclists on the towpath all very friendly. By now there was much more traffic on the canal, we actually had 3 yachts in the last lock! We arrived at Dinan by 11.30. After being greeted by the ever helpful harbour master (proper title, “Guardian of the port” and who remembered us from last year); the afternoon was somewhat spoilt by a steady drizzle. Even so we pressed on with preparing LB for re-rigging. We also had time for a shopping trip to Monoprix and a laundry session in the harbour office.

1st August

With the help of the “Guardian” we re-rigged LB and prepared her for the sea. At the same time a delightful couple in an 8 metre yacht came alongside LB. It turned out they were trying to get home on the Cote d’Azure! After waiting several days for a weather window to round Brittany they too had decided to transit by the canal. As they had not anticipated this they had no materials to support their mast. We donated LB’s two them and assisted them with preparing their boat for the canal, a new experience for them.

In the evening we treated ourselves to a really nice meal in my favourite restaurant. It was nice to find that they too remembered me from previous visits.

2nd August

On a lovely sunny, if breezy, day we set off for the barrage, intending to stop overnight just inside the Rance and continue to Plymouth the following day. After clearing the Chantalier lock, we enjoyed a delightful sail to a point about 2 miles south of the barrage where we too lunch. It was such a pleasant spot we decided to stop here overnight.

3rd August

With lowering skies and a strengthening NW wind we decided that a day or 2 in St Malo might be sensible. We passed through the barrage lock at 10.00. (Yachts please note. Because of road bridge traffic there are restrictions on the number and times of openings for masted yachts.) The weather was deteriorating all the time and an unsettled outlook we confirmed our decision to go

inside the basin at St Malo. Unfortunately it was near LW so it was several uncomfortable hours waiting until 16.00 on a buoy before we could lock in. It was very noticeable that, whilst all the sailing boats handled the entry and tying up with aplomb, the modern powerboats made a right mess of it, to the considerable annoyance and frustration of the lock staff. We also experienced some aggressive behaviour towards smaller boats (like us) by some of the larger ones who rather than tie to the walls with long lines dropped by the staff, tied up along side much smaller boats.

Because of the weather, the marina was very crowded but the friendly harbour staff soon found us a resting place. (One of the advantages of having a small boat!) Later a charming Frenchman came alongside us in an elderly Folk-boat. By chance I noticed a clevis pin on the port shroud was on the verge of falling out! (Had he tied up the other way around, I probably not have seen it.) This led to the owner thoroughly checking the rest of the rigging and discovering 2 other pins had lost their rings. (I hate those rings, much preferring to use split pins.)

4th August

We had a lousy night, completely spoilt by a selfish group on a British motorboat. Never the less, we left promptly at 05.00 to take the first lock out.

In the estuary and approaches there was still a rough sea although the wind had moderated to F45, but from the northwest, despite the forecast of F3/4 westerly. We decided to press on in the hope thing would get better. By 09.00 we cleared the entrance channel and the seas began to ease. We continued to motor-sail to the north, relying on the strong westerly set of the tide, to carry us west of the Minquies. This plan worked but the mid-day shipping forecast spoke of fog and drizzle overnight in the sea areas of Portland and Plymouth. Knowing we would be likely to be in the shipping lanes by around mid-night, we immediately decided to head for St Peter Port which we reached by 17.00. As usual the Victoria Marina was very crowded but again our size came to the rescue and the harbour staff found us a quiet berth in the NW corner.

5th August

A day of rest, with dull, overcast skies, mist and drizzle we felt quite sorry for the holidaymakers. When it cleared we spent the afternoon adjusting the rigging, re-fuelling and generally carrying out necessary maintenance tasks.

6th August

With the fog and drizzle still around and a fresh NNW F5/6 it was clear it would be foolish to set out today so I contacted our cousin who kindly came down to the harbour to pick us up and tour the Island. It turned out a very pleasant interlude.

7th August

With a much better forecast of variable F3/4 mainly W winds and moderate becoming food visibility, we set off at 06.30. Having cleared St Martin's Point by 08.30 it was then a very easy, pleasant sail/motor sail in excellent visibility towards Plymouth. As promised by the noon forecast, the wind settled into the NNE on a beautiful summer's day. Traffic was quite heavy in the lanes but nothing caused us to have to change course. By mid afternoon the high land around Start Point. The wind gradually died away as evening set in so it was the iron topsail for the rest of the trip. The evening mist made for some careful navigation to find the entrance channel to Plymouth Sound but all was well and we arrived at our starting point, Wilcove moorings at 02.00

8th August

After a late start but having slept well, I took Rob ashore to collect a car. I then unloaded his gear (He must have thought we were going to the Arctic!) and generally tidied up before going ashore myself. Thus ended this cruise, on a lovely English summer's day.

Note:

After a few days rest, I continued single-handed to enjoy the delights of the West Country before returning to Christchurch at the end of August, 4 days before my shoulder operation!