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Editors' Musings

By all accounts 2018 was a great year for sailing with more than its share of fair weather! Sadly, for me, time constraints meant that VIVACIOUS was late back in the water in early May, so I had no chance to make her ready for the Nationals out of her home port, Newton Ferrers! I did, however, manage to motor out for the first race, and attempted to take some photographs of the start and first couple of legs. Sadly, a camera failure bathed the photographs in a pink haze, making them unusable! One day I hope to participate with a full and worked up crew – chance would be a fine thing, but I retire later this year, so will have more time!

The highlight of my season was a trip to Normandy with the RNVR Yacht Club in early July. With a friend crewing for me, we set off from the Yealm in light airs, heading for St Vaast. Our passage time was 28 hours, and the vast majority of it was under engine. Our route took us north of the Casquets Traffic Separation Scheme, and despite the volume of traffic and a couple of uncomfortably close encounters, visibility was good, and the crossing was uneventful. It did, however,

remind me of the value of AIS (I have a Class B tx/rx system), not so much for collision avoidance, but more for situational awareness! In the early hours, towards the end of the passage, the wind, though light at 8-10 knots, became more consistent from the northwest, and we actually sailed for a couple of hours before it died away again! Having fought a foul tide off Cap de la Hogue, we anchored off St Vaast to await the marina opening, and got our heads down for a couple of hours!

After 3 days of R&R in St Vaast, the RNVR Yacht Club fleet sailed in company to Cherbourg. This time we had plenty of wind from the northeast at 15-20 knots. A good 'Ballad Wind'! With full main and the No 2 Genoa, VIVACIOUS romped along at speeds in excess of 7 knots, keeping well up with the bigger boats. It didn't last though; the wind died away after three hours, and we motored for the final hour, before fuelling and then berthing in the marina at Port Chantereyne.

Sadly, for us, this marked the end of our participation in the Rally. After an overnight stay in Port Chantereyne we had to head for home; work beckoned! The rest of the fleet took passage to Carteret (coinciding with Bastille Day!), and then on to their final call in Granville. For our passage home, I again took a route east and north of the Casquets; the weather remained kind, with very light winds which allowed use of the trusty No 2 Genoa from time to time. The passage was uneventful, except for an episode just east of the Casquets westbound lane, involving two tankers close together, which, for no apparent reason, just stopped in the water about half a mile apart and about 2 miles northeast of VIVACIOUS. A large container ship manoeuvred around the tankers and, while refusing to answer us on VHF, seemed determined to run us down! A radical turn away from the containership to the north did the trick and she

eventually passed about 4 cables astern of us. Given her wash, a little too close for comfort!

With more favourable tides, the passage home only took 21 hours, and we slipped into the Yealm in the grey pre-dawn light, which seemed to make unfamiliar all of those familiar features that you rely on in the full light of day! Nevertheless, we found our mooring and berthed without incident. The end of a most enjoyable Channel crossing with lots of wildlife seen, and a brief taste of Normandy hospitality. For the Rest of the season I had to be content with a series of day sails, but it was great just to get out on the water on a regular basis. Sadly, my co-editor did not manage to get afloat once last season. She usually manages at least one 'boat picnic' with friends, but she was too busy with the Buckfast Abbey Millennium.

Apart from the results of last year's Nationals and a report of the 2018 competition (well done the young bloods of SHARA!!), this issue of your Newsletter has an eclectic mix of articles, including the voyages of KHADINE and SIXPENCE. I hope that you will enjoy them, but remember there is always the 2019 Newsletter to fill, so please put pen to paper and let me have your masterpiece by the end of October. Remember, you all have a story to tell!!

Three Men in a Boat

2010



The Three Men

Weather Forecast.

WSW4-5 Sunny spells.

Left the moorings at 11:30 am and motored out into the Sound amongst the Eddystone Pursuit race. We raised ostensibly a number 3 genoa, Alan to soft for a number 1 genoa but it was obviously wasn't, too big for either a number 2 or 3 so we took it down and went back on the wall and picked up the other genuine number 3 in the back of my car and set off again at 12:30pm. The wind had increased a bit and we started out towards the Eddystone then tacked and went for Fowey making just over five knots. Nearing Fowey the wind increased slightly and we were making 6+ knots off Udder Rock. Alan helmed out of Plymouth and Pete took us to and into Fowey. We lowered the sails on arrival and motored to Mixtow Creek and rafted up-there. We arrived there about 5:30 pm. Pete cooked a chilli and rice dinner with crumble and custard for afters (actually previously prepared by one of the girls and just had to heat up). Mooring fees £16 /night at Mixtow and £14/night elsewhere in the port. 30 Nmiles / 5 hours.

18/7/10

Weather Forecast.

SW 4-5 slight or moderate.

Rain or drizzle at first.

We decided to stay as the forecast for tomorrow was better. We had a full cooked breakfast. Went to the toilet etc. up the slipway and in the middle of the boat park and I went off further up

Mixtow Creek

the lane to the caravan site and met a couple who were friendly and chatted a lot. We three men walked to the Ferry Inn at Bodinnick and had a couple of beers. We came back and had lunch on the boat of cheese and lettuce sandwiches. We had a wine with it and rested the remainder of the day. The weather became sunny and good. Perhaps we should have gone. We lost the washboard lock tang. We couldn't find it anywhere in spite of a deep search in the saloon.



19/7/10

Weather Forecast.

S3-4 going 5 for a time in the West.

Slight or moderate.

Occasional rain in the West. Fog patches in the west later.

We came off the jetty whilst the inside boat turned around and went off at 6.00am. We got up properly about eight o'clock-ish and carried out our ablutions. We left the mooring and went to Albert Quay to purchase a new bottle of gas, topped up with water and a few victuals. We finally left 11:15 am, Alan skip-du-jour. We put up number 3 genoa but decided it was too small and changed to number 2 instead and made much better speed. The weather was warm and sunny periods, the wind S. with a bit of east-ish in it. We arrived at Helford having just beaten a Bavaria 35 to August Rock from Dodman Point in spite of having to put a tack in at Guinaes Rock. We arrived at the Helford mooring 17.00 hours. It began to rain in the evening.

Mooring fees £14/night.

27 Nmiles / 5 ³/₄ hours.

20/7/10

Weather Forecast.

SW - W 3-4 occasionally 5 in the Scillies.

Occasional rain later and fog patches.

Left the Helford at 7:37 am with the wind SW and set off for Newlyn. We motorsailed out into a misty and showery weather. We got virtually to the Manacles Buoy and decided to return as the weather was very poor, showery and very misty and not particularly comfortable so we returned to Falmouth arriving at 10:30 pm and the rain became more continuous. We went and had a shower and dined ashore in the evening. Pete put up his bimini (or tarpaulin to you and me).

14 Nmiles / 3 hours.

21/7/10

Weather Forecast.

W-SW 3-4 > 5 at

times.

Slight to moderate.

Showers.

Good.

Newlyn harbour

A bright sunny morning and we left Falmouth 7:30 am Pete skip-du-jour. We motorsailed to the Lizard and raised number 2 genoa and



sailed up to Mousehole by mistake. We should have taken a bearing instead of trusting our eyes. You can't get the navigators these days. We lowered our sails and motored to Newlyn. We entered harbour and moored at the head of the floating pontoon. The side we were on the maximum length was 9 metres and 1.5 m depth. We also purchased Thai fishcakes from Stephenson's the fish shop on the front. We both had visited the local pubs to find the best, Fishermen Arms the decor was fair but the beer poor, the others pubs looked awful. So we retired to the boat and Pete cooked/stir-fried the Thai fish cakes with vegetables. We had to test the wine to make sure it was up to scratch. We restocked the larder.

Mooring fee £12.00 on the shorter side.(max 10 metres).The other side the maximum was 17 metres.

N56 Nmiles / 7 1/4 hours.

22/7/10

Weather Forecast.

W to SW 3-4 going N 5-6 later in the West.

Slight to moderate.

Showers later.

24hr. Outlook.

W to NW backing SW 3-4.

Occasional rain.

The Irishman's weather (Grib).

NW 3 - 4 until 2100 hrs.

Then N – NW

It rained a lot during the night and early morning gradually clearing up. Pete erected his bimini. We didn't bother with dinner and as Alan and Pete were going to play tennis. I walked to the edge of Penzance with them and watched a radio controlled sailing barge on the boating pond performing. Not bad. I then meandered back on my own passed the memorial to fishermen lost at sea at Newlyn near the Tolvern Inn.



Newlyn Fisherman

23/7/10

Weather Forecast.

NW 4-5 backing southerly or southwesterly 3-4.

Slight showers.

24hr Outlook.

S.-SW backing SE veering W. or NW 3-4 occasionally five at first.

Slight occasional rain or drizzle

The weather was sunny with a good breeze NW so we made good speed and were able to go straight to the Scillies. We met merchant ship at 13.30 hrs in the separation zone. We put on the engine to ensure we missed him or rather he missed us. The wind was dropping so we motored the rest of the way. As we approached the Scillies the wind backed slowly to the SW. We entered St. Mary's sound, saw a seal there, and around to St. Mary's and Hughtown. We moored up 16.30 hrs. Pete and I went ashore in the dinghy for some more victuals and a beer. Pete cooked a curry a trifle late at 9.30pm.

39 Nmiles / 8 hours.



24/7/10

Weather Forecast.

S - SW going NW
later 3-4

occasionally 5 in the
far West at first.

Smooth or slight
becoming moderate
later in the far West.

Occasional rain or
drizzle or fog
patches.

24hr Outlook.

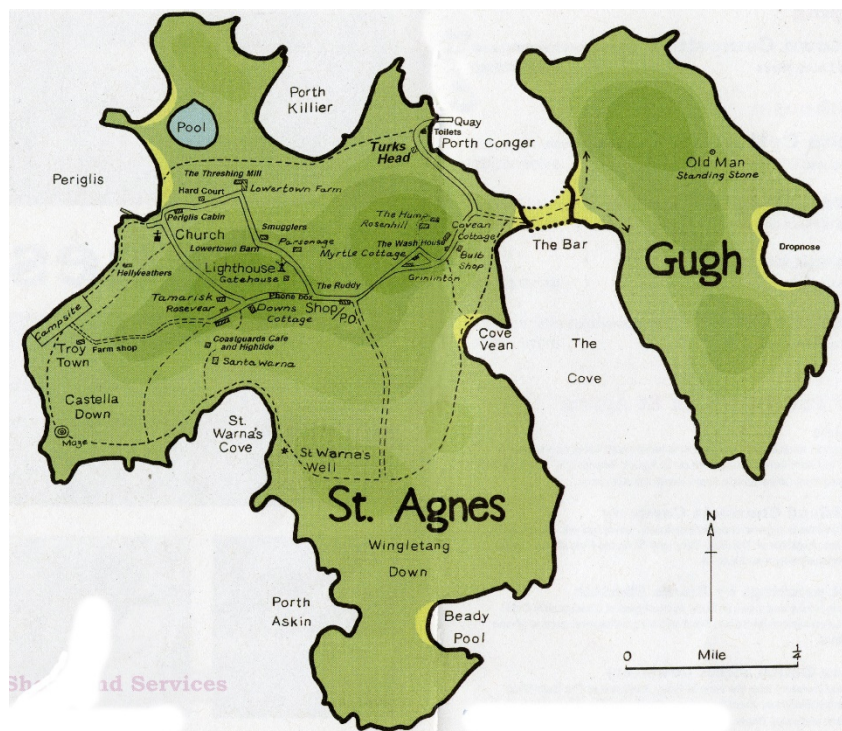
W- NW 3-4.

Smooth or slight fog
patches in W.

Buzza Tower

Harbour master called £17.00/night. Wind southerly. We had a poor night and the boat seemed to be rolling and yawing all night. I woke at 7.30 and made tea/ coffee and we had breakfast. I tried to replace the flexible gas pipe. It took longer than I expected partly due to the awkwardness of where the fittings were but I eventually succeeded. Alan and Pete went ashore to take the laundry and buy some more food.

They collected me and we went to the Atlantic Inn for lunch. They went off to play tennis and collected the laundry and brought it back to the boat. The weather was warm but fairly misty and foggy. It kept coming and going. The boat seemed to be bobbing up and down and rolling although the sea seemed very calm Peculia r! presumably the underlying Atlantic swell.



25/7/10

Weather Forecast.

W to NW 3 or 4.

Smooth or slight.

Drizzle with fog patches at first.

24 hr Outlook.

W to NW 3 or 4.

Smooth or slight.

Drizzle and fog patches later.

Left St. Mary's 11:30 am to St. Agnes Cove arriving at 12.30pm. We were going to fill up with water at St. Mary's but it was too shallow. It was bright and sunny to start with but clouded over about 11-12. We anchored in the Cove at St. Agnes. We went ashore and went to the Post office/shop for more victuals and postcards as we were told they shut at two o'clock. We only just made it. The shop is up the slipway and turn left and go passed the Bulbshop and Covean Cottage Cafe. The shop seemed to be fairly well-stocked. The weather improved and the sun stayed out. We went back and carried on up the road instead of going down the slipway to the Turks Head and had lunch and a pint, of course. We had a Ploughman's and two Farmers lunches. After that we then continued on long the road and round the coast to the dyke at Browarth Point which enclosed a pond and the island football/cricket pitch. We went round Periglis Bay and its slipway. There were quite a few small boats moored in the bay. We turned up the main road, passed the lighthouse and back passed the shop and ended up at the pub for an evening/afternoon drink. Eventually we got back to the boat for a meal cooked by Pete.

4 Nmiles /1 hour.

26/7/10

Weather Forecast.

NW to Wor S 3-4.

Smooth to slight.

Fog patches in far W.

24 hr Outlook.

W or SW 3 - 4 occasionally 5.

Smooth or slight.

Occasional drizzle and fog patches.

The weather was poor with low flying cloud, mist or fog. It was warm out of wind. We went ashore and walked a little way round Gugh. By the bar there was a large homemade sundial just to the left of the path. We followed the path round the edge of the island until we got to the highest

point. Visibility was very poor. We bore right and followed a path passed Obadiah Barrow. It was not particularly inspiring and the weather didn't help. We crossed the sand bar and went to the Post office/shop. We called at Covean Cottage for a local ice cream (recommended) and thence to the shop where we got more victuals and cards required for Peter. We came back and called in Covean Cottage for a cream tea (also highly commended) thence back to the boat.



.Guess which one is Obadiah?

27/7/10

Weather Forecast.

SW to W. or NW 3-4 occasionally 5 in W.

Smooth or slight.

Occasional rain or drizzle Fog patches at first in W.

24hr Outlook.

W or NW 4-5 dropping 3 later.

Slight but moderate W. of Cornwall.

Showers in the W for a time.



The Gugh Clock

We breakfasted and up anchored to go to St. Marys at 10:30 am. We approached the water taps But it was too shallow so we moored on buoy and went ashore. Alan and Pete inquired regards hire of a tennis court but one was not free until gone four o'clock. We walked around to Portcressa and up to the Buzza Tower and back. Pete went shopping but we

met again in the Atlantic Inn for a pint. Alan

and I returned to get the boat and brought it onto the Harbour wall for water. Pete joined us after shopping and we motored back to the Cove at St. Agnes and we got back about five o'clock. We had our evening meal in the Turks Head and were entertained by a mens choir from St. Mary's singing the old sea shanties and Folk.
7 Nmiles / 2hours.

28/7/10

Weather Forecast.

W - NW 3-4 occasionally 5 at first.

Mainly slight to moderate in N.

24hr Outlook.

NW 3-4

Slight occasionally moderate in N.

Mainly fair moderate to good.

Pete and Alan stirred at about six oclock, they were worried about the tide, and weighed anchor at 6:40 am set sail. We left St.Agnes and they then raised the sails. The wind was 4 in W. The weather was overcast with a hint of rain. We raised the spinnaker which pushed us just above 6 knots touching 7 occasionally then speed dropped to below four knots with the wind so we put the engine on about 8:30 am. We saw a solitary dolphin near Wolf rock. As we got close to land the weather improved and the sun gradually came out and the wind picked up so we raised the sails again about 13.00 hours and sailed to Newlyn. We arrived at 14.30 hours. The tide was at its lowest and we touched bottom trying to get round the top of the pontoon. As we couldn't get on the pontoon that we wanted to we went round the other side and moored on one of the longer ones and moved back when the tide got higher. We had got as close to the end of the pontoons as we could but it was still too shallow. We had a pasty lunch. Alan and Pete went off to play tennis in Penzance. We had evening meal in the Tolvern Inn. It had been recommended to us and was by far the best pub in Newlyn. Food and beer good. Staff good as well.
37 Nmiles / 7 hours.

29/7/10

Weather Forecast.

NW-W 3-4 .

Smooth or slight.

Mainly fair.

Moderate or good occasionally poor.

24hr Outlook.

NW - SW 3-4 occasionally 5 in W.

Smooth or slight.

Fair then rain or drizzle with fog patches.

Moderate good becoming poor or very poor.

We left Newlyn at 8.00 am. The weather was bright and sunny and the wind force 1. We motored to the Lizard and raised a spinnaker just off the Lizard. The wind had picked up so off the Manacles we changed plans and decided to go on to Fowey as we were making reasonable time, the weather was warm and sunny and tomorrows forecast was poor. We lowered the spinnaker off St. Antony's Head as the wind had

gone a little more northerly and the spinnaker was a little too shy so we raised the genoa. As we approached Fowey a clay boat and a cruise liner were also arriving but they were settled in by the time we got there. We arrived at Fowey at 7.00 pm. We went to Albert Quay for some bread and milk after which we went down to Mixtow Creek. We eventually moored on the pontoon after some shuffling about as we had to raft up with the other boats in the order of their lengths. We went and had a shower then walked to the Ferrv Inn for our evening meal. The cruise ship we had seen "The World" was in port. It was just like a block of flats. 48 miles / 11 hours.



Nothing like my 'World'

30/7/10

Weather Forecast.

Variable SW 3 to 4-5 later.

Smooth or slight.

Fair then occasional rain and drizzle. Fog patches later.

Moderate or good occasionally very poor.

24hr Outlook.

W 3-4 to 4-5.

Slight.

Occasionally moderate at first.

There was early morning drizzle so we had breakfast at the Shore cafe just by the bridge ashore. It opens about 8 ish, it said on their board. There was a good selection of different breakfasts. We all had a full breakfast, it was very good and plenty of it. We decided to go and left Mixtow at 11.00 am and motored out. "The World" block of flats was having their windows cleaned. I counted at least 13 window cleaners outside on just one side of the ship. We raised sails and sailed home. The weather was good and the wind was reasonable making mostly about 5 knots so we arrived at Yacht Haven about 4:30 pm and filled up diesel and off loaded all our chattels into Pete's car which Di and James had come in to meet us there and they went round to meet us at the Oreston slipway. It saved loading up the dinghy and making a couple of trips to off-load every thing as the tide was too low for us to go alongside the wall at Oreston. We then went to our mooring.

24 miles / 5.30 hours.

Cruise Summary.

Trip total was 270 miles, 56 hours sailing. 43 litres diesel.

National Ballad Championships 2018

hosted by

Yealm Yacht Club

Friday 25'h May saw the fleet assemble in the River Yealm in anticipation of a good weekend's sailing to determine the 2018 Ballad Champion. Nine boats entered: Balladier(Richard Mason), Bandit (Tim Adams), Windwhistle (Martin.lones) under YYC flags. Duchess(Janie Smallridge), Summertime (Chris Tyrrell) from Plym YC. Mavanier (Peter Noakes) and Shara (Kimberly Noakes) Saltash YC. Poppin (Tim Burne) RNSA and the well-travelled Shebeen (Ken Morgan) from Poole.

The forecast was good and a pleasant evening was spent inside and out of the clubhouse swapping news of Ballad deeds and consuming calories from a 'sailors supper' ready for the fray to come" There was an interruption for the Briefing with an introduction from the Commodore, Andrew Beveridge, for our race officer, Stuart Jones, who was ably assisted by Jon Pegg, organiser and chief (only) mark layer. The geography of the Yealm's adjacent waters of Wembury bay and south of Plymouth breakwater, populated by shipping buoys does not allow for a multitude of course options as say, Fowey (birthplace of Ballad Nationals and provider of several trophies). But to the Race Officer's relief the wind was set to stay in the Eastern quadrant and he was confident of providing a fair and varied test.

Saturday dawned with a goodly NE breeze (Your reporter's ship is a bit of a gadget free zone, so the wetted finger said 4, gusting 5?) Course for Race 1: Yealm entrance dead downwind start to a laid mark a mile away SW so that the Mewstone didn't get in the way of the next leg. Most opted for a port pole with a few starting otherwise at the pin end which provided an entertaining gybing confliction at

the buoy. A few raised voices but in good Ballad fashion all emerged unscathed with Shara setting the pace and, like most, keeping her kite up on the beam reach to Mark 2. But plain sail proved about as fast. Broad reach Mark 2 to 3 followed by a gybe where there were still several close quarter battles joined by a bit of Plymouth coaster-sized shipping that was considerately steered to leeward. Mark 4 was off Penlee Point providing a single leg port beat of 4 miles back to Mark 1 and a shorter beat to finish at our start area. The Noakes sisters in charge of Shara were never really challenged and Windwhistle hung on to second by a boat length from Mavanier the 'other' Noakes boat - one more tack would have changed that as a NE wind in Wembury bay, provides a variety of strength and direction to test anyone's skill and patience. Customary Ballad lunch break was held at the overnight mooring pontoon in the river, with pasties delivered, whilst the Race Officer worked on his afternoon plans:- "similar winds still, but let's give the crews something to do" Short legs for 5 laps - 3 triangles, 2 sausages. The dizzy and exhausted staff hardly noticed the cooling rain shower that arrived just after the finish. Shara's crew earned their victory and Peter Noakes made sure of a second after a little nudge up the backside from Windwhistle at the start of the last lap spurred him on. All credit to Balladier's family crew for completing a busy day's sailing.

The evening's entertainment of the local Mocktails band at the YYC started early but no crews could muster any action until BBQ fed and watered (or cidereed or something). The band's percussion got some help from distant thunder and the dance floor started to move. A good time was had by all but the happy campers of Shebeen from the far off land of Poole needed better cooperation from the weather as the threatened storm did arrive later to disturb their attempts at sleep.

Sunday dawned with a reasonable sailing breeze, down a touch -3 to 4- and round to SE. So the morning's longer course was set around

the same marks as Race 1-, but clockwise, with a beat out from the Wembury Bay start . Shara first round again for a port pole long run to Draystone buoy off Cornwall. Everybody else followed except the senior Noakes ship – Mavanier - was delayed after a little contretemps with Bandit necessitating a penalty turn. She followed the fleet around the mark and then set off on the other gybe towards the breakwater; better breeze and caught up the leading boats at the Draystone. A short reach to Knap buoy, then a harden up for the beat back past the Mewstone to round Mark 5 to the finish. Lunch, well earned by the Shara crew as Kimberly Noakes' third win had made them indisputable 2018 National Champion.

They were followed by some close fought duals which continued into the afternoon after the lunch respite back at the pontoon. The Race Officer was kind to the tiring fleet. With a lessening SE breeze he chose the maximum size Triangle/Sausage course he could fit into Wembury Bay but finished us at the end of the first run. Mavanier recorded a consolation win that cemented their second place overall.

Hence to the evening's prize-giving dinner upstairs at the YYC. Although nearly full capacity the club fed us very well. Suitable thanks were made to the staff and to the Club for hosting us, and to Stuart Jones and Jon Pegg for making good use of the conditions for our racing. The silverware was presented and souvenirs given to great applause, with one final trophy to decide – Monday's Pursuit Race.

Once again the weather was benign, but with no significant breeze. A direct course from Yealm Mouth to Plymouth Mountbatten breakwater was going to take long enough against the ebbing tide. Windwhistle crept past the opposition by the Mewstone but the better course inside the Sound chosen by Poppin gave our esteemed chairman a fully deserved win. Finally a select few assembled in the back garden of the Boringdon Arms at Turnchapel to toast Tim and

Janie for all their good planning that gave us a really enjoyable Championship weekend.

Poppin Celebrates Pursuit Race Win:



... and again:



...and the rest of the team join in:



Race Results

Name	Sail No	1	2	3	4	Total Pts With 1 discard	Place
Balladier	3390	9	8	9	5	22	8 th
Windwhistle	5994	2	3	4	3	8	3 rd
Poppin	3992	8	6	8	9	22	9 th
Duchess	3322	6	4	2	4	10	4 th
Summertime	496	5	Ret	5	6	16	6 th
Bandit	3727	4	5	7	7	14	5 th
Shara of York	3331	1	1	1	2	3	1 st
Sheheen	782	7	7	6	8	20	7 th
Mavanier	5398	3	2	3	1	6	2 nd

Trophy Winners

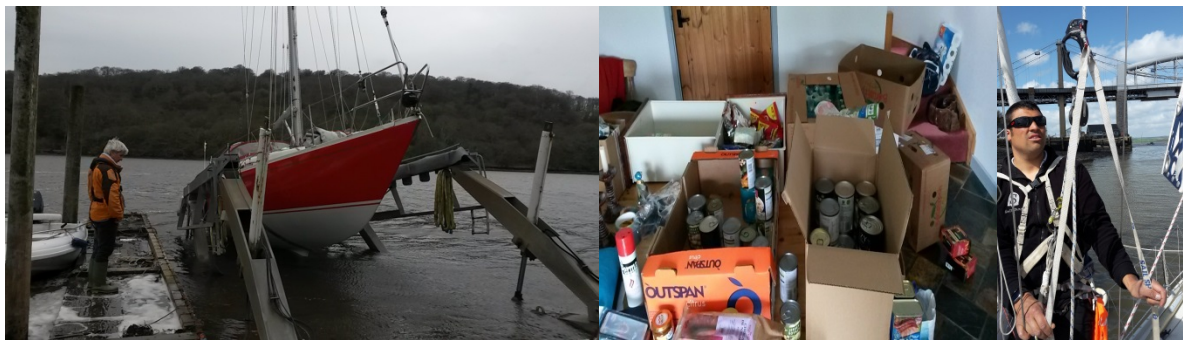
Julian Foye Trophy	Concours d'elegance	BANDIT	Tim Adams
Voyager Trophy	Furthest Travelled	SHABEEN	Ken Morgan
Variety Trophy	Best Endeavour	POPPIN	Richard Greenacre
Rocky's Spoon	Last Place	POPPIN	Tim Burne
The Old Ferry Inn Trophy	Pursuit Race	POPPIN	Tim Burne
City of Plymouth Trophy	Best Plymouth Yacht	DUCHESS	Janie Smallridge
Not in the top three			
Pam Sherridan Trophy	Best Fowey Yacht	Not Awarded	
Not in top three			
The Toms Trophy	3 rd Overall	WINDWHISTLE	Martin Jones
The Upperdeck Trophy	2 nd Overall	MEVANIER	Peter Noakes
The Jean Ellis Memorial	1 st Overall	SHARA OF YORK	Kim Noakes

Martin Jones, Windwhistle

SIXPENCE's Jester Challenge 2018

2018 has been an eventful year for the Jacksons and for Sixpence. Katie and I both stopped work in March, and with several diversions along the way (one just to check out where America is). We threw ourselves into the preparations to get Sixpence ready for this year's Jester Challenge to Newport, Rhode Island. With characteristic optimism Katie had booked flights, accommodation and hire car for around the time of my anticipated arrival in mid to late June.

But back to the preparations – as the nineteenth-century Prussian military commander Helmuth van Moltke said: “no plan survives first contact with the enemy”. Or as Alan Harris said to me: “the boat that's totally prepared is the one that doesn't set off”, when I confided that I still had a lot to do in the final week before setting off. But I think it's fair to say that the various breakages and failures that accumulated to a point where I felt I couldn't safely continue, were not ones that I could have anticipated though I was prepared for a range of possible scenarios.



Preparations didn't really start in earnest until March – the usual winter malaise stunting enthusiasm to get going with the work. One thing that cropped up quite soon was the need for a new frame and support for the batteries (these are located under the cockpit sole behind the engine on Sixpence). When I came to remove and check over the battery fixings and steel frame that supports them, the steel crumbled to dust. I then spent 3 or 4 very uncomfortable days scrunched into the cockpit lockers fitting a new frame in aluminium. I decided too to make a container in the port hand locker for a spare (albeit old) battery, which I could keep charged from a 60W PV panel and keep as an auxiliary for charging the phone, tablet, Iridium GO! Etc. It was also connected to an electric bilge pump which I would only run if the hull was breached and needed to focus on stopping the leak. I also fitted a second manual bilge pump for operation down below. Quite a lot of my preparations were around these 'what if' scenarios.

I also boosted our charging capacity (though sadly didn't change the batteries more of that later). I added a further 60W PV panel mounted on the sprayhood, and changed the charging controller. The standard Beta alternator I had changed from 40 to 70amps to boost the charging rate - if I needed to run the engine for charging.

After 9 years and much hard use I was persuaded by Alan to ditch the old mainsail and furling genoa for ocean grade Dacron sails incorporating Vectra. I carried a spare main, the old furling genoa No2 and No3, a hank on No2 which can be set on the inner forestay called a “slutter “ rig, I'm told. Along with storm sails (tri and jib); a high cut working jib, spinnaker and asymmetric cruising chute. We

were then left with the challenge of trying to fit food and water for the trip plus clothes, bedding etc. etc. Everything to be kept dry was packed into dry bags and I carried a spare set of wet weather gear.

Back to the safety kit and electronics: We invested in an EPIRB and PLBs (for both us), a Vesper AIS transponder in addition to the old NASA receiver, and an Iridium GO! plus a Wifi hotspot with external antenna. The transponder was also a requirement of our insurers for the trip – the implications of this are discussed later. It is a very good piece of kit and I wouldn't be without one now. The Iridium GO! worked very well with its external antenna for voicecalls and picking up weather from Predictwind. We found texting and email to be hopeless using Iridium's own service, so blogs to our Yellow Brick tracker for instance had to be written up by Katie. The tracker was a very generous gift from my old company Kendall Kingscott, and it did what it said on the tin.

One of the consequences of preparing for a trip like this is that everyone wants to stop and have a chat with the fool setting off across the North Atlantic the wrong way - nowhere more so than on the final few days when Sixpence was alongside the Saltash SC pontoon. As a result I was more than a little frazzled and worn out when the day came and we were throwing the final things down below.

May 7th – THE START

What a glorious day for the start of the 2018 Jester Challenge, though tinged with sadness as one of our number had a nasty fall badly injuring his face so Doug and his Westerly 33 Jakeeda 2 were not to take part. Slowly pottering down river I remembered my ST2000 which was brand new and therefore not calibrated. Mike on Gancia Girl was somewhat perplexed by Sixpence doing slow circles at the mouth of the Lynher to set the ST's internal compass. Just a little further down I stopped alongside the catamaran Miriam Too to pick up the No2 I had lent to skipper Colin last autumn when his genoa blew out. He very generously gave me a bottle of wine in return and lent me his lucky Sixpence – fancy having one of those on board!

A Jester start is not like 12 Ballads jockeying for position on the start line. Apart from the Challenge being a challenge and not a race, no one is minded to have a bump before we've even get going.

I was very touched by the turnout, with fellow Balladeers around me, and the club launch Herbie Davy, and a former and successful participant in the 2010 Jester Challenge to Rhode Island Tony Head and his Twister Triple Venture.





Sixpence made a good start in the light airs and pulled clear rapidly from the heavier boats, but taking time out to put in a tack towards Penlee Point to wave to land based well-wishers. The breeze was from the West and I decided to head inshore to pick up some sea-breeze and to make for the anchorage off Looe. Arriving at 1915 I dropped the anchor and spent the evening stowing all the loose gear and provisions, though my main aim was to get a good night's sleep. (Incidentally stops are allowed in the Jester whether to anchor for a rest or to stop for repairs).



May 8th

At 0530 I hoisted the main and weighed anchor and got underway in a light North-westerly backing to the West. Something was up with the self-steering gear and I swung the servo rudder assembly out of the water only for it to snap off. Whilst I had made a spare it was of softwood (a bit of shelving from Trago no less!) and I couldn't rely on it working for 3000+ miles of North Atlantic weather. So I phoned Katie needing to source some 18mm marine ply to make a new servo rudder, and headed for Fowey. The shipbuilders in Polruan – C Toms and sons came up trumps and I headed home with a quarter sheet of ply.

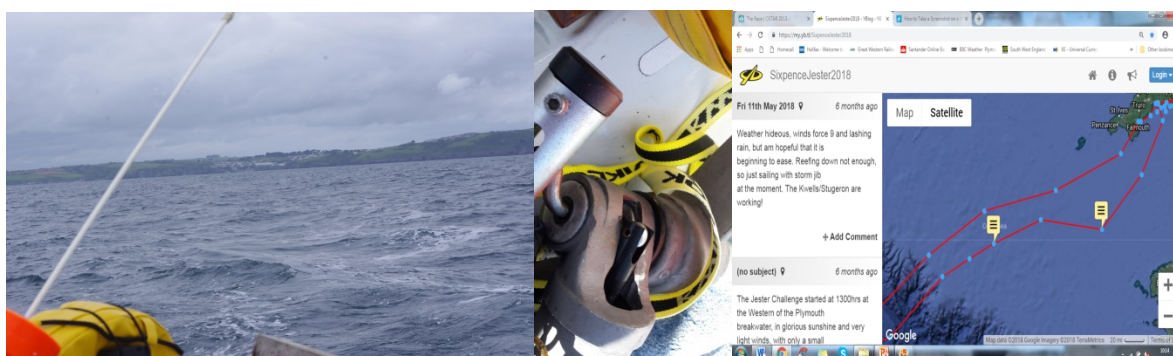


With my son Martin's help I fashioned two more rudders and gave them a coat of epoxy resin. And I'm pleased to report that the one I fitted has survived more than 4,500 miles.

Back in Fowey; I fitted the new servo rudder and let the epoxy cure fully overnight and had a second good night's sleep.

I was going to need it.

May 9th and 10th



In no particular hurry I set off from Fowey a little before 10am to pick up the Westgoing stream. It was an altogether cloudier day and the wind F5 rising F6 from the SouthWest and then backing NorthWest. It was an uncomfortable night with heavy rain and by midnight we were 20 miles South of the Lizard.

The day started a little quieter but at 0900 I noticed that the linkage on the self-steering gear was working loose and fortunately tightened it up before it went into the sea. Our heading that day was Southwest or West as the wind backed from West to South and piped up again in the evening reaching a 7 gusting 8 and occasional 9 overnight.

May 11th

The sea was very rough and confused and I found that with 3 reefs and the hank on working jib we were travelling too quickly and as a result were falling off the waves with teeth jarring crashes. The

main came down, and then the working jib and the storm jib were hoisted in its place and we jogged along at 3 knots until the wind dropped to a 5 around 0930 and I increased sail. Later that day the self-steering linkage need tightening once again. The previous night and the nagging frustration with the s/s left me very tired and in need of sleep and I hove-to to get some rest. From time to time the AIS alarm would go off to warn me off passing shipping.

May 12th

Again that morning the self-steering failed and with the wind picking up and 30 knot squalls passing through I couldn't risk lifting the assembly off the transom, and hand steered until 1700. I decided at that point to do what I had put off doing and brought the s/s in- board. The problem was with a grub screw that had worked loose; this I changed for a spare and all seemed well. I'm noticing by now that the solar panels are not providing the charge I was expecting and am having to run the engine daily to charge the batteries.

May 13th

Squalls continued into the early hours. "Cold night" I recorded in the log. Later that day a pod of pilot whales comes along side to swim with Sixpence. I was very pleased to have their playful company. But less pleased later when I found the battery monitor was playing up (or so I felt at the time), with the battery charge state rushing up and down in an inexplicable way.



May 14th

My daily battle with the self-steering gear continued into the 14th with this same screw working loose. A major frustration was that the assembly (once again) had to be lifted in-board which at about 17kgs makes the arm's length exercise both exhausting and perilous. I decided this time to put a spot of Araldite on the threads in the hope that that would secure it and then reset the gear. At about 12noon we were joined by "frigate birds" (I recorded in the log) and two herring gulls. Clearly I'm no ornithologist, because if they were frigate birds they were an ocean and 1000s' of miles off track! Consulting my book of seabirds – I thought they were probably common terns with particularly fine forked tails. Much later I found out they were long tailed skuas, presumably migrating South.

May 15th

Very little wind in the mid part of the night, so hove to and slept for about 4 hours. A solitary pilot whale passed by. Wind veered Northerly and picked up to a 5 to 6.

May 16th

The wind stayed fresh and continued to veer to the E, later dropping to a 2. I hoisted the cruising chute for the first time on this trip until the wind died altogether. 800 nm covered.

May 17th

At sunrise I noted "rare sight of sun" but not for long as the visibility dropped and fog closed in. High pressure is frustrating progress with the variable and falling breeze dying out altogether.

May 18th

Again managed to grab several hours of unbroken sleep; just as well really as I am 61 you know! Very little wind but the sun came out and I lit the candle on the delicious birthday cake Katie had baked me.



Later checked the main water tank and found half of it had siphoned out through the galley tap. Fortunately I hadn't included the tank in my calculation of drinking water.

May 19th

Strong breeze from the SW gusting 6 and once again we are hard on the wind. A warm front (noticeably warmer now) passed through with more poor visibility. My concerns about the batteries are building and the battery monitor continues its erratic behaviour. I'm continuing to have to run the engine to supplement the poor performance of the solar panels. 1000 nm covered.

May 20th

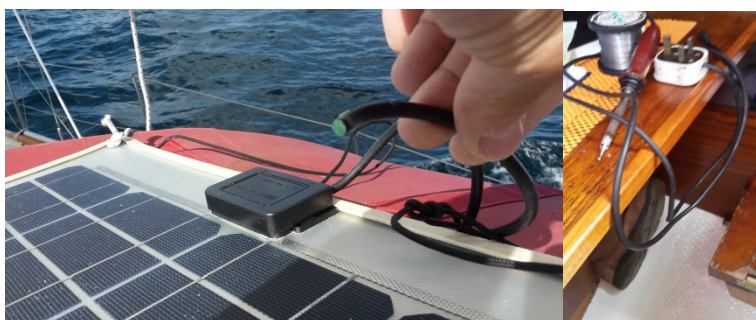
My frustration is building with the batteries and charging. I decided to swap over the spare battery for the No2 house battery. This proved to be another exhausting and dispiriting task. Whoever thought that putting the batteries under the cockpit sole was a good idea should be.....! But of course we have put up with this arrangement for over 10 years.



It was at this point that I decided to head for the Azores to get expert advice on my electrics and replace the batteries.

May 21st

Today brought a new challenge but also a possible explanation for my charging and battery problems. The positive cable from the new solar pane had corroded and come away from the terminal block. Removing the lid of the block showed a clean break with the soldered joint but unbelievably absolutely no waterproof protection to this joint and the cable entry into the block. Ho bloody hum! Well as luck would have it my very dear friend Paul Taylor had kindly lent me his electric soldering iron (not that he knew I was taking it to America with me, nor did I for that matter). Fortunately I also had some solder wire and so was able to make a new soldered joint and get some charge again from the panel.



Within 24 hours I had changed my mind about the Azores and continued to plug westward thinking I would still have the option to drop down or back if the situation deteriorated again.

May 22nd

Wind picked up through the day veering from SSW to WSW and rising to F7, and I reduced sail to 3 reefs in the main and the hank on working jib. No shipping or wild life seen that day. Conditions

continued to get warmer despite the strong winds. Again I noted how confused and lumpy the seas are.



May 23rd

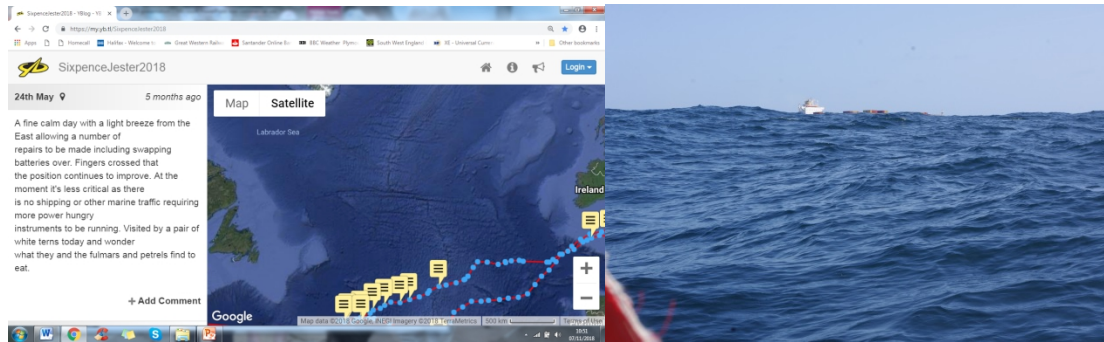
Winds continued strong and veered NW so I tacked to continue a westerly course. The luff tension in the heavily reefed main and the strong wind seemed to produce a vibration that set the luff slides singing away which made rest very difficult. Had a storm petrel and Cory shearwaters for company today – the shearwaters in particular were welcome companions behaving much as fulmars do circling the boat to check you out. At midday I noticed that the steering lines to the tiller were badly worn through and adjusted these to take the wear away from the blocks. By the evening wind had dropped to a F4 and then a F3 and I experienced a very fine sunset. 1400 nm covered.

May 24th

Light winds continued in the morning and the wind continued to veer through North to the South and then backed SSE. This seems to be a day of repairs. My solder repair had failed on the PV terminal which I redid. A number of leaks had developed over the preceding days particularly around the windows, the mast boot and at various points along the toe rail. I repaired and proofed the sprayhood. Checking the supply of diesel I have about 55 litres left having used about 15 litres for charging so far.

In the evening was passed by the Barcelona Express at 18 knots heading ESE.

We had now covered 1500nm and were at N 43 36 and W31 01 leaving the Azores behind to the South and East.



May 25th

Continuing to make good progress to the West with our position hovering just above 43 degrees North; my intention was to get down to 40 N by 50 W leaving 17 degrees of westing still to go. Adjusting the self-steering gear (again) barely gets a mention in the log I'm so used to it. The wind is now from the SSW and between 5 and 6 and I've noted again the need to reduce sail to slow Sixpence down to prevent slamming in the confused seas. More problems noted with the battery monitor and the very rapid running down of the house battery. The arrival of dolphins in the evening cheered me up.

May 26th

1700 miles now covered. I'm feeling like we are more than half way there. And it is distinctly warmer and about 23 degrees down below. I seemed to have a day of visitors with dolphins and shearwaters close by and in the evening one attempted to land on the top of the mast (not a shearwater but a long-tailed skua I've now had confirmed)! A fine evening is recorded in the log.



May 27th

1800 miles covered and we have passed 36 degrees West. With misplaced optimism I noted a revised ETA at Newport of the 13 June assuming a 112 miles a day. Wind continues 5 to 6 from the SW. I've noticed a very high concentration of Portuguese man o' war bobbing along like bright pink and blue bath toys (but not suitable for baths!). Ah yes – my dear old friend on the transom has again come apart and I swapped over the Teflon fork and grub screw on the push rod.

May 28th

Wind lessened overnight to a F4. At about 0815 I spotted some unusual spray which I was then delighted to see was a large whale up ahead. Delight turned very rapidly to consternation as I realised it was directly in our path with no intention of shifting out of the way. Tripping the self-steering lines, I steered around this behemoth with only two boat lengths between us. Hitting it, I imagine, would have brought my progress West to a very sudden and permanent stop.



Courtesy of Martin Jackson – photo of sperm whale taken in New Zealand!

May 29th

Fuming again about the grub screw on the self-steering working loose and jamming the gear. Around midday I spotted a strange looking orange 'centipede' about 18 inches long – a creature of the Gulf Stream? Forecast is for winds gusting 39 knots so had the trysail and storm jib ready to deploy overnight. I noted in the log "Well done Sixpence we've passed 40 Degrees West" and have now dropped down to 41N.

May 30th

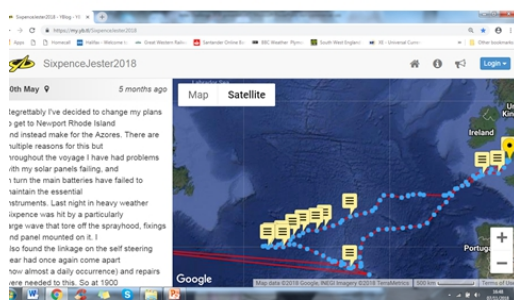
Winds rose overnight from SSE with gusts as predicted reaching 40 knots and big breaking seas. Sixpence felt steady and comfortable with storm sails set continuing to head west. At 0309 UTC we

suffered a knockdown with Sixpence momentarily laid over on her side and I stared through the cabin window at the ocean below. Once righted, I opened the hatch to find the sprayhood and PV panel in the cockpit and the self-steering jammed. Sheeting the storm jib hard in I tied the tiller down to windward and threw the sprayhood and frame below and tried to get some rest. This was interrupted by water spraying in around the companion way hatch and was to be a feature of life for the next 5 days.

The wind dropped to a F5 by midday and I adjusted and reset the self-steering gear, resigned to this being a daily occurrence. I was conscious now that my principal means of charging (other than the engine) was beyond repair and I was only running the minimum of instruments and no transponder, radio or tricolour.

I talked at length with Katie that evening and decided that continuing on to Newport was not tenable with the combined issues of depleted batteries and a wayward self-steering gear. It was time to draw stumps, turn back and head for the Azores. So I set a course for Flores the westernmost of the Azores islands which bore 116 degrees and 523 miles distance. The log read 2102 nm and we had passed longitude 42W – roughly two thirds of the way to Newport.

May 30th - 41N 42W and 2102nm



May 31st

Winds continued to blow hard from the SW and we jogged along ahead of the big quartering seas with just the storm jib set. Later I eased out some of the furling genoa to gain more speed but holding on to the storm jib and this “slutter” rig continued to be used for much of the journey to Flores. Spoke to Katie at our usual appointed time around 1800UTC and decided that we would still go to Newport but I would catch a flight to Boston from Faial via Sao Miguel.

June 1st

Moonlit night but with the wind backing to SSE and dying, and so progress slowed and was further frustrated by the back-winding effect of the large waves pushing a block of air at right angles to the prevailing wind. Winds rose during the day to a F8 and we continued under storm jib alone. Later the wind dropped a little and I again let some of the genoa out and found that the extra lift meant Sixpence would point higher but without the main



June 2nd

A container ship passed 4 miles to the North. Noted in the log that conditions down below were wet including wet weather gear but at least it's warm. I haven't mentioned the self-steering gear for 2 days! Well this time the threaded bar to adjust the linkage rod length snapped off. I had a spare rod and bar and fitted this and decided to try PTFE (plumbing/gas tape) to bind the threads in the hope that the wretched thing would stop unwinding. Happily I can report that you will hear no more about the self-steering gear as it has worked without any problem or adjustment for more than 2000 miles, and we are on good terms again.



June 3rd

Today I thought I had better start preparing for a landfall at the Azores. What about Charts!? Well - Reeds covers the Azores and there is an excellent pilot by Anne Hammick which I had on board so harbour entry should be ok. And although steep to, the islands are fringed by lava flows that create reefs and rocky outcrops. The general advice is to keep well offshore and head in only once you've established the leading lines/bearings in to port. Fortunately I also had a full set of Admiralty Charts on my HP Note book that covered the islands at all scales and when linked to a little Bluetooth GPS made a respectable plotter.

June 4th

Anticipating a landfall during the night at current speed with a F6 from SSW I took down the main and reduced our speed from 6 to 4 knots. At 0900 the tanker Eleni passed 1 mile to the South heading West. I switched on the AIS transponder and called up Eleni to get an AIS check which the on-watch officer confirmed. Another ship passed to the North and later I was joined by 8 or 10 dolphins. This ocean's getting crowded!



June 5th

Winds reached 35 to 40 knots and I had set the tri and storm jib to maintain a steady pace. In the morning the wind eased and decreased to a F3 and then a 2 and veered West. Visibility was poor in the morning and Flores was only a few miles away but finally at 1211 I recorded our first sighting of land. And how dramatic that was: with the great basalt cliffs and outcrops shrouded in low cloud and lush green vegetation which ran up to the high peaks. Only dinosaurs were missing from the primordial landscape. As we made our way round the South of the island to approach Porto dos Lajes, this primeval scene is reinforced by the great lava flow known as a 'Faja' whose profile was that of a crocodile's head and snout.



Determined to continue under sail in the light airs I finally rounded the breakwater at 1445 and was beckoned by friendly Azorean fisherman on the quay and directed to a berth in the small marina. I handed our lines to Edwin and Martin off a German and Dutch boat. In the berth next to Sixpence was Lena, a dutch registered Contessa 32 owned by Eddie who very hospitability plied me with wine and the conversation ranged from the delights of the Galician Rias to Bill Bryson's observations on all things quirky and English. I needed a shave and a shower!



If I thought I would plunge into an unstoppable sleep that night I was wrong. At about 1030 I awoke to the most extraordinary cacophony. Peering up out of the companion way hatch the marina lights caught the underside of birds flying at speed to and from the cliffs above the marina emitting a weird harsh cry. The following morning I learned these were Cory shearwaters and this was very much characteristic of their behaviour around their colonies at night.

June 6th

The following day fellow Jester Len and his Hurley 26 'Emu' arrived. He had heard that I had decided to turn around and head for Flores, and so made his way to Flores from Terceira to see if he could assist in anyway. I was delighted to see Len and it is a measure of the camaraderie amongst Jester Challengers that he altered his plans to sail 200 miles to check we were ok. Len had decided early on to make for the Azores and not Newport RI. We enjoyed many long chats, beers, meals and his 'Emu' baked fruit cake which was delicious.

It's probably right to draw this article to an end by concluding that I had spent 28 days at sea (taking a day off for Fowey) and covered 2692 nautical miles of which 2102 had been heading West. I think it's fair to say I've seen quite a bit of the North Atlantic and have worked out there is a more comfortable way to do this. It's called the Atlantic circuit following the trade routes.

The Jester Challenge has been a 10 year project for me and Katie and whilst it's sad not to have completed this 2018 event. I think my diarising of the issues that I faced made the decision to turn back the correct and seamanlike one. Will I have another go? No. But if I did – yes Sixpence would still be my choice for taking part.

POSTSCRIPT

I did get to Newport RI from the Azores – by plane, bus and car. And with Katie, Martin and Arthur I met up with the first of the two Jester skippers to make it to Newport. Tim and 'Medusa' arrived on the 17th of June after 41 days at sea and his wife Tina arrived the same day by air. 13 days later John Apps in Raven completed his second Jester Challenge crossing to Newport in his Rival 34 'Raven'. The Newport Yacht Club and its Commodore, officers and members were incredibly hospitable most notably Norm Bailey who is a great friend to the Jester Challenge and other transatlantic events.

Self and Tim on the pontoon next to 'Medusa', and Tim receives the medal for first to arrive at Newport from Steve Weaver the club Commodore.



Sixpence has been fundraising for the Alzheimer's Society through <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/chris-jackson68>. Our hope is to reach 2/3rds of my original target of the 2902 nm Rhumb line distance(in £s) from Plymouth to Newport RI.

RAGDOLL in Scotland

Janie asked me to write a few words about Ragdoll, her history and sailing in my area which is the Firth of Clyde.....with a few photos.

Ragdoll was built in 1973 and is Hull 135. Her hull is green.

1. She was first owned by Andrew A* from 1973 to April 1976 and was based in Fort William. She was raced successfully there. I have a long letter from Andy to Robert M* her 3rd owner (below) about her mast settings, rating and such stuff which I have transcribed below.

It would be interesting to hear comments from other Ballad sailors on how relevant this is in 2018 or whether it's very old hat stuff which everybody with Ballads knows about now.

Regarding your queries.....

The mast was deliberately set far forward but should have had $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick hard rubber between it and the deckhead. It is important in hard weather, or particularly in a lumpy sea, to have the mast firmly held in the fore and aft position and the best way to achieve this, is to have the mast hard forward and packed tight with hard rubber on the aft side. Then put stout rope round the mast with the two ends around the sheet winches to allow you to slide in a bit of rubber (when the mast is winched aft to compress the rubber on the aft sides) which when the ropes are released gives a firm grip and a set thickness of $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{8}$ inches. The reason for this position was twofold , a) it improved the pointing ability but not significantly affecting the weather helm and more importantly b) it minimised the J measurement for the rating.

Unless John S changed things Ragdoll differs from other Ballads with J small and JC = J = spinnaker pole length with spinnaker widths to suit. This means on Ragdoll LPG = 1.6 J which carries a small penalty on rating whereas normally LPG = 1.5 JC but JC is normally spinnaker pole length and this severely penalises the rating. This is why the Rating is 21.3. As you implied there was a more obscure reason for the mast setting !

Regarding sailing points you will find at wind speeds across the deck of 20kts + she goes better with the No.2 sheeted to the outer tack, not only does she point higher

she foots much faster. Below that wind strength, ie bottom of range for No.2 but more than the No.1 can stand, sheet on the inner tack.

May I suggest you consider a new spinnaker (unless she has one) as the orange one was re-cut 5 times with Banks making it wrong initially and never really getting it right. I felt that in any breeze at all she was overpowered and a bit inclined to broach because the head was too full and the leaches closed in. I used to have a light spinnaker (1½oz) and a very light genoa which were most valuable, although John S didn't want them and they have been sold. For spinnakers (radial head) and light weather or special sails I don't think there is anything to touch John McWilliam, Crosshaven, Co. Cork. Should you decide to enquire let him know they are for Ragdoll and remind him she belonged to me at one time. Johnny Mac. Is a bit of an individualist and likes to know who he is making sails for so indicate your racing intentions.

2. In April 1976 Andy A* sold her to John S* who planned to continue racing her but had a serious accident (nothing to do with sailing) and had to sell her 6 months later.

3. Robert M* bought Ragdoll in October '76. He was based at the other end of the Caledonian Canal from Fort William possibly in Inverness and kept her until about 1986. I don't know much about her time there. I suspect she was brought to the Firth of Clyde by Robert.

4. She was then bought by Jim M* in about 1986 who was based in the Firth of Clyde at Cove on Loch Long where Ragdoll's racing career continued. Jim re-named her La Perla III.

I was told by the owner of the other Ballad which winters in the same yard as me, that he used to race against La Perla in various other boats and she always seemed to win so he decided to get his own Ballad. He duly did and Thorfin is dark blue and Hull 131 so four boats older than Ragdoll. The two Ballads are usually parked adjacent to each other in the wintering yard at Rosneath which I refer to later. Thorfin's owner describes Ballads as "the last of the pretty boats that were made". How true.

Ragdoll's original engine was replaced with a reconditioned Penta 3000 series MD7B (17.5hp) with a new matching prop in 1998. She still has the same engine which, touch wood, still seems to run well.

5. After 18 years she changed hands and David O* bought her on 2nd May 2004 but she stayed just a short distance away at Rosneath in Gare Loch and was raced in the same area.



La Perla III in 2007 – the earliest photo I have of her.

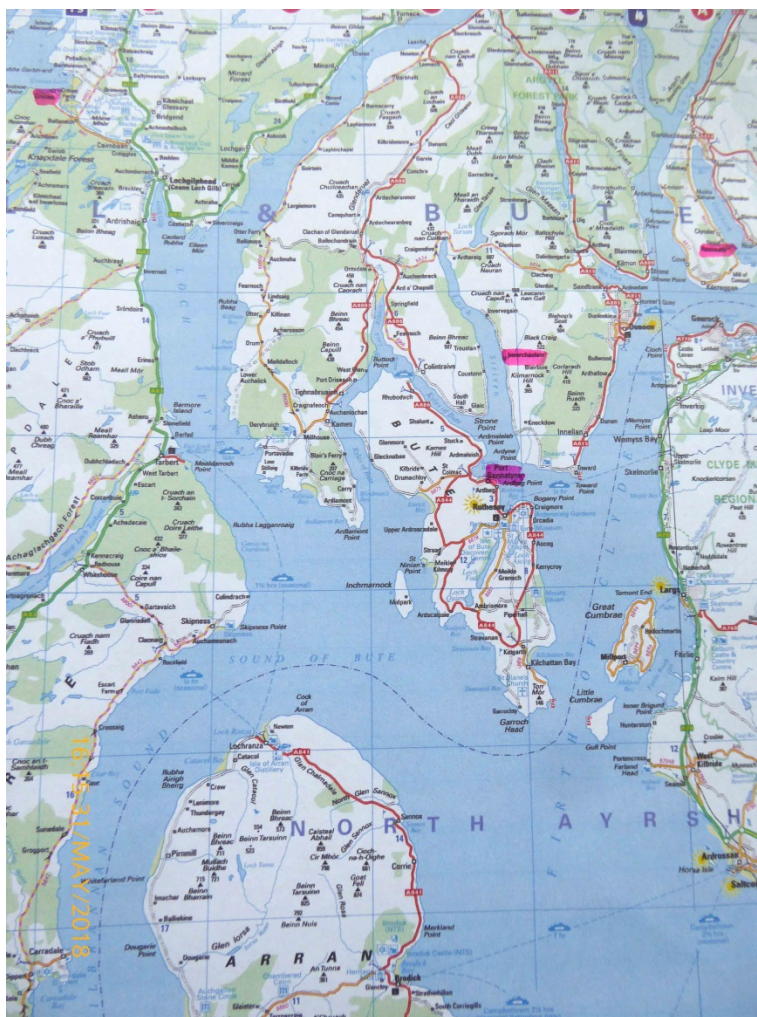
6. Donald E* then bought her on 5th November 2009 and changed her name to Justando based on the initials of his family's names. Sadly ill health forced Donald to give up sailing.

7. I bought Justando on 12th September 20015 and re-named her back to her original name of Ragdoll. She is wintered onshore at DRB Marine at Rosneath which is just south of the Faslane nuclear submarine base and moored in Loch Striven at Inverchaolain during the summer. She came to me with 13 different sails reflecting her long racing career. Her interior is still the original 6 berth (2 pilot berths) with few changes. She had a full survey in May last year and passed well with only minor defects noted, which would be expected of a 45 year old boat. Over the years she has been wonderfully well looked after with much TLC. Ragdoll and I are now two mature citizens who are partners.

I have sailed on and off since I was about 10 but some 60+ years later I now own my first boat, Ragdoll. I was asked by my insurance company how much experience I have. It's a difficult question. How do you calculate experience. Yes, over a long

period of time I have intermittently sailed many times all over the world in dinghies and yachts. Does this equate to “experienced”? What I do know is that having my own boat and learning to sail her single handed is a steep learning curve especially now that I am less young and I don’t have the strength, balance and grip I once had. I have also been very fortunate in having Ragdoll as my first boat. She handles so well and accommodates all my mistakes but at the same time shows her thoroughbred qualities.

I am also fortunate to sail in the Firth of Clyde area. It is a wonderful area despite the Scottish weather and at least out on the water one is free of the dreaded midges. I moor Ragdoll on Loch Striven with my daughters much larger Sigma 400. Loch Striven is aligned north south with steep sides and it is deep. It is due north of Port Bannatyne on the Island of Bute.



Map of the Firth of Clyde. Highlight marks = top left Crinan Canal exit. Upper centre Inverchaolain, Centre Port Bannatyne. Top right Rosneath

Loch Striven was used in WW2 to practice with Barnes Wallis bouncing bombs. There are supposed to be many on the bottom of the Loch which a survey ship was trying to locate last year. The Navy still use the loch for submarine operations.

The Loch is well protected but has some very unpredictable winds. Its alignment means the westerly winds come over the steep sides of the loch and often cause big downdraughts and up draughts. It is common to see big twisters of water sucked up with the up draughts. The loch is still a lovely place to be with amazing wildlife and a peaceful setting.



Ragdoll on “glass” on her mooring in Loch Striven



Loch Striven looking north, with Ragdoll on the left. The head of the loch is 9 miles further up.



Looking south from Ragdoll's mooring with Port Bannatyne on the Isle of Bute 20 minutes away in the mid distance, with its lovely small marina and 3 good pubs. In the background are the mountains of the Isle of Arran.

Sailing in the Firth of Clyde is probably slightly different to the Devon south coast. It is deep water sailing. Tides are not a major problem except at a few key spots. The area is mostly well protected from big ocean swell. The area is very beautiful and there so many places to explore along the various lochs. Hotels and pubs, of which there are many, have gone out of their way to make sailors welcome and provide

free moorings and use of facilities. There are numerous large and small marinas. From the Firth of Clyde it is easy to access to the west coast of Scotland and all that it has to offer, via the Crinan canal. I could ramble on for ages but the best source of information is the Clyde Cruising Club's Sailing Directions and Anchorages - Firth of Clyde including Solway Firth and North Channel 2nd Edition 2016, Edited by Edward Mason.

* (I have changed people's names – confidentiality, data protection etc etc !!)

John McDonald

Parish Notices

Would you like a second hand screw?

Going free to a good home, collection from Newton Ferrers, Devon: An old folding prop for a 1 inch shaft (original Volvo engine) and a boom which was the original boom from Campion of Yealm. Please contact Mark Studd on markstudd@btinternet.com

Ballad Windows Plea

Michael Sneary's VARIETY, has a common Ballad problem, corrosion of her window frames, and Michael believes that they may be beyond repair. If anyone can advise on repair or replacement, please let me know on t.t.h.v.clark@btinternet.com I will pass any advice received direct to Michael and include it in next year's newsletter.

Subscriptions

Have you paid your Ballad association subscription for 2019? If not, please pass your £6.00 to Janie Smallridge as soon as you are able. Thank you