

‘THE BOAT’

TRURO AND DISTRICT BOATOWNERS’

ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009

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You can download your own colour copy of the newsletter from the TBOA website:-- www.tboa.org.uk

EDITORIAL

Hopefully this newsletter should appear in early Spring this year rather than early Summer.

In fact it could be argued that we’ve published two newsletters in twelve months, providing one counts everything twice, standard banking practice really and

the way to achieve targets (not that it was a target in the first place).
Talking about banking in an attempt to counter the 'Credit Crunch' we have introduced commercial advertising this year, restricted to Association members and available at competitive rates, income from them will help pay for newsletter printing and postage

Many thanks to everyone for their contributions to the newsletter, however please note elephants are a protected species and the editor cannot be held responsible for the contents of this newsletter..

As you will see we are testing the water with a boat jumble in the yard and marketing some antifouling at competitive rates.

Mark

FROM THE POOP DECK

It only seems like a year ago that I was sat here writing notes for our last communication – perhaps it was!

What a year it's been – first the tide came in then.....

And so it goes on.

Looking out through the crazed and crinkled glass of the Captain's Quarters I can see the jolly tars gaily dressed in their skimpy striped tops and pink canvas trousers with their wide bottoms (the trousers not the sailors – or is the other way round!?) hauling manfully on their rigging whilst some are keeping a firm grip on their monkeys fist, scrubbing their barnacled bottoms, doing a bit of flower arranging or just finishing off the last piece of knitting. The women are more actively employed watching television, eating chocolates and issuing orders.

And so the work at Newham yard goes on!!

It is good to see lots of new faces around, a sure sign that we feel comfortable at the TBOA, but let's not be complacent – we can't stand still, every year we need new ideas for our Winter meetings and David Purser will be pleased to hear from you.

It will be interesting to see what A & P Falmouth do with the quay at Newham when they start their operations there later this year. Perhaps more interest from commercial organisations might convince the local council that they were wrong not to install a lock system at Newham when they had the chance - whilst wildlife on the tidal mud is fine, mud is everywhere, but deep water facilities are not.

As dedicated river users, TBOA supported the installation of a lock at Newham and I can remember that our then Chairman, John Pedlar and I were in the minority at the Public Meeting, having to speak from the floor whilst our opponents were given special treatment on the platform. That's what they called local democracy.

Apart from the benefits to boat owners of deep water, think of the reflections of the Cathedral in the water on a high tide at sunset, now that can't be bad. With lock gates that would be a permanent feature and a great asset to the city.

What a wasted opportunity. Perhaps the new council will reconsider and utilise the increased value of their Euro funding to the benefit of Truro and its biggest asset – the river.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to launch into deep water knowing that if you wanted to, you could tie up alongside and have a cup of tea with your Valium before the hectic voyage to Mylor, hopping from one mud bank to the other.

Happy sailing!!

The Skipper

ASSOCIATION NOTICES

BOAT JUMBLE

FORGET BEAULIEU, THINK "COMPOUND MARINE JUMBLE BONANZA"

NEWHAM BOAT YARD TRURO 26TH APRIL

ENTRANCE FEE £3.00 TO 'HARDIESSE' CHARITY

GATES OPEN 10.00am.

BOOKING:---- PAUL 01209 211306/216769

CHRIS 01872 863702

ANTIFOULING

Brian Morris, a longstanding member, has kindly arranged the supply of some good quality eroding antifouling for sale to TBOA members only, at unbeatable prices.

There is only a limited supply and you can have any colour so long as it is red.

It is available in 2.5 litre cans price £20 a can.

Please contact Chris Rowe 01872 863702

PENNANTS/BURGEES

After a couple of years of fraying pieces of cloth and no replacements, or if you are a new member nothing at all, Keith has sourced a new supply of burgees.

A sample of the company's product certainly looks fairly hurricane proof.

They are free to all members and will help give us a corporate identity but it's up to you to collect them.

Because they are made of strong material they would be difficult to post so if you would like a new burgee please collect one from ***Keith Harris 01209 718818 or Mark Arrow 01872 865135*** or ask us for one at a meeting.

We should have supplies on our boats as well so feel free to collect one from us on the moorings. (Keith's is ' Spangler' and Mark's 'Shearwater II').

TRAMEX MOISTURE METER

Don't forget the club has purchased a Tramex Skipper moisture meter for use of the club members.

This is a professional instrument as used by most yacht surveyors and is very useful for measuring the moisture content of both GRP and wooden hulls and other structures. With experience it can be used to detect for osmosis in GRP or its possible onset in the near future.

It is available for weekly hire from the club. There will be no hire charge for members, however, due to the value and delicate nature of the instrument the committee has decided that there should be a £50 deposit (in cash) for each hire period which will be fully refundable upon its safe return in good condition.

It is complete with instructions and a useful article by Nigel Clegg on the subject of osmosis. Nigel Clegg is one of the UK's leading experts on the subject and his website www.passionforpaint.co.uk is a very useful reference.

The custodians of the instrument will be either Phil Coltman or Keith Harris.

Contact details are: -

Phil Coltman 01872 863010

Keith Harris 01209 718818

MONEY

In the present economic climate we all could be forgiven for asking the question “Why do we have all that money saved up in our balance sheet?”

I ask that myself and in justifying why perhaps I should say something that not everyone might be aware of.

We have two leases in the club; the lease for the moorings and the lease for the compound. The first costs us about £3,500 per year and the second about £17,000 per annum.

Legally the leases are made to the Trustees of the Association as legal appointed representatives, and not to the Association itself. This is the way it has to be done as a lease of the kind we have cannot be granted to an Association. (Legal beagles correct me if I’m incorrect) In practical terms this isn’t an issue just as long as we have an income from the members to pay the leases.

In practical terms however, the liability to pay the rent is that of the Trustees, and so should some income dry up the Trustees would be personally liable. Now at twenty grand a year for say three years at least, maybe up to six years at the start of the period, the Trustees could be liable for quite a chunk of money.

I know this is unlikely to happen, but I, and the committee feel that the Club should have resources to back up the responsibilities assumed by the Trustees.

The question which comes to mind is: would you like to have the potential liability of the leases on your shoulders?

Of course this is purely hypothetical, but maybe now we can see more clearly the reasons for our cash reserves.

Above all isn’t it reassuring to know that we have resources available to take us into the future where we may have some say as to how we run our own affairs, and to cushion ourselves against anything we may have to contend with?

Chris

ANNUAL DINNER 2009

Dear Boat Owners,

I have been given the pleasure of organising the Annual Dinner for 2009/10.

Having broached the committee regarding the venue, it was felt perhaps a change might revitalise the occasion. It is to this end enquiries have been made to the Falmouth Beach Hotel, who offer throughout January a 6 course meal, entertainment (band Disco and Magician at the tables) for £30.00. However things are being booked up already there is at present the possibility of the 16th or 30th Jan 2010. They also offer Bed & Breakfast @ £29.00 pp per night for the few of us who like a libation!!

If anyone has any worthwhile valid and constructive comment please get in touch with me and we can gauge the response.

Regards
David Watkins

THE COMPOUND AT NEWHAM

As we enter the second period of our 5 year lease, it's time to take stock of what we've done well and what we've done not so well.

I think that thinking negatively we still need to pay attention to the following:

Personal responsibility for keeping the yard clean and tidy. It seems that all too often the same individuals seem to end up doing most of the work. Maybe we could all make an effort individually once or twice a year to come into the yard and pick up litter, rotten wood and the usual rubbish that seems to be blown into the yard or generated within the yard. Why not bring a black sack, clean up a little, and put it out with your rubbish at home?

That reminds me to remind everyone that we should all dispose of our own rubbish. The harbour office will not be happy to find our rubbish left at their front door.

Secondly please consider your neighbours with regard to the use of electricity. If you enjoy someone else's power on a short term basis, ease your conscience by putting a quid back in the meter or giving your neighbour a small gift, or a pound or two. For those people plugged in please be aware that you cannot monopolise a socket and be prepared sometimes for someone else to unplug you temporarily. If you wish to be reconnected, leave a note on the socket.

When tying down covers, do not under any circumstances tie the cover to the props. Covers flapping and filling with water will pull the prop away from the side of the boat with obvious risks to all.

Please check the security of your props each time you visit the year, and after heavy weather.

Please do make sure the security of the yard is maintained by never leaving the combination of the lock showing. Tumble it even for a short period.

My apologies for bringing these issues up again, but they are important.

What have we done well?

- We've kept the yard full and done our best to keep costs down
- We've provided additional electricity and water outlets (Thanks to Ian Prout and his company for the electricity and to Tony Trolley for the water)
- We've erected a 'green screen' on the south side of the yard to keep dust down from the scrap yard (Keith Harris was responsible for this, thank you)
- We've made our own pontoon for the lifting operations (Pete Ellis, thank you)

The second period of our lease has now begun, as I have said, and the next three years until the next review will have seen an RPI rise on the rent of about 8.2% over our initial charge. As I said this will apply for the next three years. I don't think that's bad.

There is also some really good news hot off the press, and that is that Geoff Trebilcock has been in lengthy and painful discussion with the authorities to obtain a significant reduction in the rates we pay on the compound. I'm hoping that the costs for the next three years at least will be little or no more than current levels, and we may then get a decrease. I will have to do the sums carefully!

That, to me is a success story for the Club, I'm proud of what we've achieved and hope that the future will ensure 'ordinary' boaters in the area have some choice as to how much they are willing to pay.

If you are not a member and are reading this, why not join us and help to preserve the independence and free choice enjoyed by us. Put your name down on our waiting lists.

Boating isn't just about having a bar, a summer cruise or a winter programme it's more important than that to ordinary working people whose main concern is working out how to afford it all. I know because at the end of this fitting out season I will have had to renew rigging, engine mounts and more. Truro boat owners have taken away at least some of the pain of boat ownership for me, and I hope for you as well.

Chris

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THE STRUCTURE OF T.B.O.A. MOORINGS AT MYLOR, 2009 SEASON

Due to the long waiting list and the need for more moorings to accommodate members wishing to own larger boats, it has been decided, after consultation with Kenny Dunstan to re-structure the layout of the club moorings at Mylor.

This will also conform with the request from the Harbour Master that we renumber all our moorings and put them in numerical order.

In order to do this we will have to move some of the mooring positions.

This will not affect all the Mylor moorings and we have tried to keep the movement to a minimum.

In order to make the changes as easy as possible the club has purchased new yellow mooring buoys for all members which carry your new mooring numbers. This is a one off purchase by the club and all members will be responsible for their own buoy and tackle, as we always have been.

If for any reason a mooring buoy is lost the mooring holder will be responsible for replacing it with the same type of buoy at their own cost.

Buoys will remain the property of the Association and must be returned if a mooring is given up.

By rearranging the moorings not only have they been made easier to locate but it has also enabled us to provide two extra moorings for this season.

The smaller boats, up to 26 feet, will be nearest to Greatwood and the larger boats will be further out.

If you need any further information about this change please contact me, Steve Foot, 01872 222864 or email stevejfoot@hotmail.com.

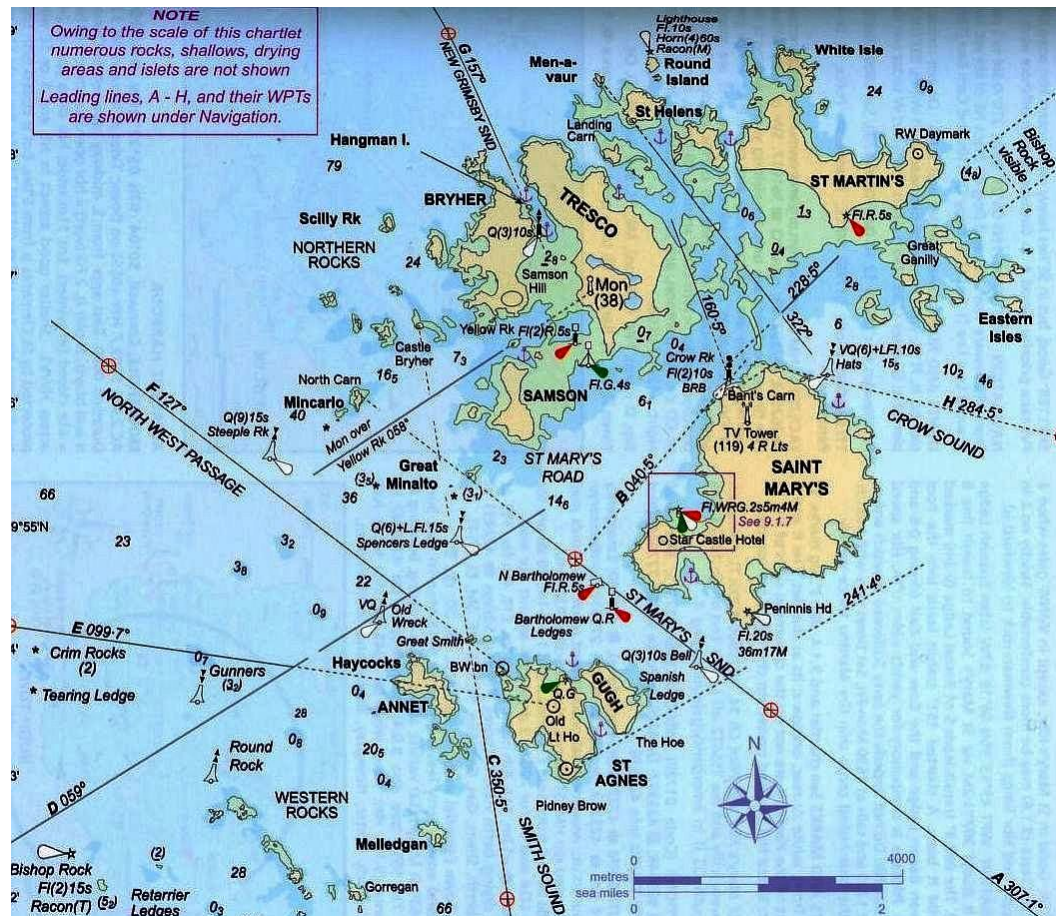
Steve

THE ISLES OF SCILLY AND SMALL YACHTS.

It was time for a sail to the Isles of Scilly again! I hadn't been there in my own boat for many years, well, since the summer of 1985 in fact when I sailed there single-handed in my trusty Virgo Voyager "Free Again".

That was quite a trip; the summer of 1985 was very unsettled much like 2008! I remember being stuck in Newlyn alongside an old fishing boat for a week waiting for the wind and seas to drop enough to make the 30 mile crossing over to St. Mary's. I spent nearly 2 weeks there chasing around from one anchorage to the next seeking the best shelter as one depression after the next brought strong winds and rain! The Virgo Voyager is a strong seaworthy little boat but one of its less well liked attributes is its ability to roll like a pig due to its tubby round bilge and 50% ballast ratio hanging on the bottom of a fin keel! And roll she did that fortnight, almost continuously it seemed, as often the boat would lay beam on to the swell despite being head to wind! That is a typical scenario in New Grimsby Harbour between Treesco and Bryher – when the wind is in the westerly quadrant with a sea running outside the swell bends round the northern end of Bryher and runs down New Grimsby Sound setting the boats into a lovely rolling motion! Not conducive to a good nights sleep! I ended up visiting Hugh Town, Porthcressa, New Grimsby and Old Grimsby Harbours that fortnight before making a final dash back directly to the peace of the Helford River at the first available opportunity.

With the realisation that there are no fully protected harbours or anchorages in the islands I swore I would never go there again unless there was an extended spell of very settled weather..... until August 2008 that is!!!



In between we had several family holidays in the Scillies getting there either on the Scillonian or by helicopter from Penzance or the little Skybus planes from Lands End. The weather was always glorious, of course, and the kids loved playing on the beaches of Tresco and St. Martins at low tide. It is such a beautiful place to be when the weather is favourable!! So as the years went by the memories of having a rough time out there on the boat faded away!

After selling the Virgo Voyager in 2006, I bought a new boat - a Hunter Horizon 26 called "Hornpiper". She has bilge keels, sailed better and had more accommodation than the old one. As she was able to take the ground the prospect of all those lovely drying anchorages in the Scilles was quite appealing. In addition my son Sam who was now 14 yrs old, and a very capable crew indeed, was urging me to go out to the islands again. Sam has been sailing with me since he was 6 yrs old and is also an accomplished dinghy sailor in his own right, having progressed through Oppies, Toppers and now Lasers. So we decided to go during the summer holidays of August 2008.

We also had to take my younger daughter Emily who was 9 yrs old then but she is normally happy on the boat as long as she has a few creature comforts and can get ashore regularly.

We set off from the Helford at six o'clock in the morning with dew all over the decks and not a breath of wind. The forecast was light and variable with fair weather and good viz. Both the children were still asleep so I started single-handed, they didn't wake up till we had rounded the Lizard. The little Yanmar diesel chugged on and we motored all the way over at about 4.5 knots on a flat sea and really hot sunshine. I was even able to cook a full meal at lunchtime! We arrived in Hugh Town at about 8 o'clock in the evening to find it absolutely packed. Since I was there before they had filled up every useable bit of space with swinging moorings, all the outer ones being for visitors. These were fully loaded with boats rafted about three or four abreast on each buoy with barely enough room to motor between them! There was no room for us!

Luckily Sam spotted an old lifeboat, now obviously privately owned, on a huge mooring near the outer edge. This looked a good bet to tie alongside as it was about 50 feet long and had topsides like a small quay. With plenty of fenders out we were safe and comfortable there for the night even though there was a very light ground swell in the harbour. We had a super passage over without any fuss or drama!

In the morning there was a mass exodus of boats that we later learned were competitors in the Penzance to Scilly and Back race. This freed up a mooring close in on the corner of the visitors mooring trots just off the old lifeboat slip, it was probably the most protected visitors mooring of the lot and we felt lucky to have got it to ourselves. We intended to stay there for a least one day to re-cooperate from the passage over and get used to the place again. That morning the Harbour Master came on his usual rounds collecting his £14/night fees and I asked him which part of the beach was best for drying out on. Ha Ha!! No drying out or beaching of boats is permitted within the harbour limits anymore; all visitors have to use the moorings. The only exception to this was the possibility of going alongside the root of the main quay and drying out there but there was an extra charge for this in addition to the £14 per night, and you would be a constant source of entertainment for all the holidaymakers passing by. There can also be a bit of a scend running along the wall at high water....no thanks! What a disappointment, I had visualised spending several days dried out on the sand along the front by the town. I was also informed that drying out was not permitted by visitors anywhere on Tresco!!..... I suppose Tresco is a

private island but what had happened since 1985, was there no freedom anymore away from the bureaucracy!!

“Green Bay on Bryher is your best bet for drying out mate” stated the Harbour Master before charging off to the next boat on his RIB.

Then the weather started to change and a strong wind picked up from the south! Later that day and over the next night it got up to Force 6 or more.....we were stuck there for a while anyway. In the end we felt we had to stay there on that mooring for 3 or 4 days until it passed over. It’s OK in a southerly in Hugh Town but when it veers round to SW and then West the boats start pointing towards the quay and the swell bends round into the harbour hitting the boats on the beam and so the rolling starts!! Most of the boats had fled by this stage and for those left the swell rolling in had prevented any rafting up on the moorings! The motion wasn’t too bad in my Hunter which is fairly flat underneath with the bilge keels acting as dampers but it brought back memories of being there on the Virgo Voyager years ago and rolling for a pastime!

We were able to get ashore easily enough in the dinghy with the outboard on and have a shower in the facilities on the quay. The beer and food in the Mermaid is excellent and quite a few hours were spent in the corner of the bar that week! There are several places in the town with Internet access, which is ideal for keeping up with the weather situation, and gives much more detail than the radio and Navtex forecasts.

Eventually the wind eased and the sun came out so it was time to head over towards Tresco. We put out of the Hugh Town at high tide minus 2 hrs and headed over towards Nut Rock, then the passage between the Hulman Beacon and Rag Ledge, then on towards New Grimsby Harbour with enough height of tide to take us over Tresco Flats without too much worry.

From a distance it was clear that Green Bay on Bryher was fairly full of boats but never the less we had to take a look. Sure enough it was quite crowded and difficult to find a nice spot close in with sufficient swinging room allowing some margin for the unknowns as to how each boat would lie when dried out. Further out towards the channel was too exposed for my liking with the wind as it was in the SW.



*Green Bay on
Bryher at low
tide.*

Looking north up the Bryher shore beyond the old Church Quay we could see a solitary mast very close inshore. Further inspection found a single yacht beached well up in an otherwise empty bay! So we went straight in and after inspecting the bottom through the clear shallow water ran the boat right up the beach until it grounded. It was now about an hour after high water and an ideal time to ground out.

It was a perfect spot, almost idyllic with the old quay giving some protection from the south. The only worry was why no one else was there?...were we allowed to be there or were we breaking some local byelaw and would we get chased off the next day with a flea between our ears! We spoke to the couple on the yacht that was already there and found that they had been there for some time without problems, even during some of the strong winds we had just had.

After the water receded we walked around the boat and dug in a fore and aft anchor plus another shoreline across the beach to keep us firmly in place when the tide returned. It is worth noting that the ground over there has a thin coating of sand making it look ideal for anchoring but it is only a few inches deep and underneath is very hard clay that a CQR just won't dig into. All the locals use either a fisherman's anchor or those four pronged spiky grapnel types that are usually home made. We had a hell of a job digging a hole deep enough to bury the 20lb CQR into with our bare hands and even some sharp pieces of wood we found. I made a mental note to always carry a small shovel on board after that!



Hornpiper dried out on Bryher.

It was a fantastic place to stay for a few days and the weather that followed was good for a while. What's more it appeared to be free and no one came to bother us at all. My wife Steph came out on the Scillonian with our little Jack Russell and took the Tresco and Bryher ferry over to meet us.

We had a super couple of days and walked all over Bryher exploring and finding the locations where the film "When The Whales Came" was made. It was only about 10

minutes in the dinghy across to Tresco quay from there so we used the new Island Stores for our provisions and also walked over to Old Grimsby and around the south of the island past Carn Near.



Looking across towards Tresco from the anchorage on Bryher.

The weather didn't last however and after a couple of days the wind and rain started up again. One evening we had a tell tale warning that the wind was picking up from the SSE again and we would be exposed in that anchorage and bumping the bottom as the boat dried or floated off – time to leave. Sam and I pulled up the anchors and we motored out into the middle of the sound and picked up the first available visitors buoy just north west of Tresco Harbour wall. It turned out to be a pretty grim night with the boat banging it's bows against the hard mooring buoy and shearing about all over the place in the wind against tide situation. By midnight the rain was hammering down on the coach roof and the wind gusting through the rigging.... Oh hell here we go again!!

Early the next morning as soon as the tide was high enough to navigate the channel we dropped the mooring and motored south in poor visibility and a strong southerly wind back through the channel and over to St. Marys. Fortunately it wasn't too crowded and we found a vacant mooring only a few buoys away from the one we had previously.

After clearing up the devastation down below left from the previous night we got in the dinghy and went ashore. At this point we decided that Steph, Emily and the dog should go back on the Scillonian that afternoon, so we dropped into the office in town and booked their tickets. Sam and I stayed on the island a few more days until the weather cleared up a bit. In the end it did of course and we left early one morning to cross back over to Newlyn.

There was quite a “left over sea” running once we cleared the islands and we did our best to motor sail in those lumpy conditions across the 30 miles or so. The Scillonian passed us about a quarter of a mile away on its way over to the islands, it was “disappearing” in the swell up to its top deck! Once nearly back we kept fairly close in along the last part of the Penwith coastline past Lamorna and Mousehole, we were both glad to get to Newlyn later that afternoon.

The facilities for visiting yachts at Newlyn are now pretty good.... a pleasant surprise after the lumpy passage over from the islands. Gone are the days of having to find an old fishing boat to tie up alongside, gone are the rusty ladders. Now there are pontoon berths available with water and power if required, and you can walk ashore from the pontoons. The berths are shared with small fishing craft on a first come first served basis but there was plenty of room and the fishermen all seemed very friendly and helpful towards us; another pleasant surprise. Ashore there is one shower at the end of the fish market that visitors can use, we did and it was a bit basic, but the recommendation is to use the facilities at the Fisherman’s Mission by the clock tower. The charges for the pontoon seemed to be in line with other places along the coast. We only stayed overnight before heading off back across Mounts Bay and around the Lizard. That day we had a good sail – “crackin’ sail Grommet” said Sam - most of the way back to Falmouth with some sunshine thrown in. We got back to the mooring at Mylor by mid-afternoon. It seemed as though we had been away for ages not just two weeks!

So it seems that I had to re-learn the lesson that I had forgotten from 1985!! The Isles of Scilly may be a beautiful place when the weather is nice but it’s no place to be on a small yacht in un-settled weather. Unless of course you are one of those “roughy-toughy sailors” who likes discomfort, sleepless nights rolling and getting damp and wet for days on end!!!!!!
I’m not!! Perhaps as I get older I’m becoming more of a fair weather sailor!!

Philip Coltman.

RECIPE CORNER

The Credit Crunch prompted me to rummage through my odd socks drawer and I came across an old wine recipe that might help those who have had to cut down on the Sherry allowance.

**The following recipes have not been tested and it is suggested that only a half-trained idiot is likely to try! A fully trained one might be over qualified.*

Corn & Currant Wine

To get the best from this wine use only the best ingredients which are as follows:

3lb Garibaldi biscuits (Huntley and Palmers only) to provide the corn and currants in one go.

2 1/2lb sugar (or black treacle if you want that Caribbean flavour)

Yeast or yeast extract (Marmite’s good!)

3 fig rolls (or Californian fig concentrate for that West Coast feeling)
Juice of a lemon or the cream from 3 Lemon Puffs

Method Take the Garibaldi biscuits in your left hand and remove the currants with your right.

For lefthanders, go to page 9.

You should find that there are approximately half a pound of currants to 3 lbs of biscuits, if not, change your biscuits – Tesco's and Sainsbury's are quite used to this request so take your receipt when returning the separated crumbs and currants. Deposit (long word for 'put') the sugar in a two gallon bucket and add a quart of warm water, not boiling or you may kill the wild bacteria and that would be cruel. Add the lemon juice or the cream from three lemon puffs to provide the correct acid balance. Custard creams are not suitable.

To start the yeast spread the fig rolls with Marmite and float on top of the 'must' (this is a technical term for the mixture as above – a 'must not' is not one of these but something else). For a quicker start you can use Syrup of Figs, but some people find this too quick, especially if in the garden.

Make the amount up to a gallon by the addition of the rest of the water which wasn't mentioned in the recipe (if you have a pen, can you put it under the Garibaldi biscuits but over the sugar).

After 2 weeks rack off the 'leas' in to a clean demijon and ferment to dryness. Fermentation can be very vigorous and you should check your airing cupboard daily. Of course, if your wine isn't in your airing cupboard you can leave this step out. After 6 weeks you should see a deposit on the bottom of the demijon, this has a technical term – 'dunked Garibaldi'.

If you do try to make this little wine for Easter, please let me know so I can be away before you taste it.

Elephant Stew

1 Medium sized elephant
20 Bags salt
500 kg peppercorns
750 bushels potatoes
125 bushels carrots
2000 sprigs parsley
1 rabbit + onions

Method Cut Elephant into bite sized chunks. This will take about six weeks.
Chop vegetables into cubes – another four weeks.
Place meat in to jumbo sized missionary pot, pump in 5000 litres of elephant gravy and simmer for 28 days.
Shovel in salt and pepper to taste.
When meat is tender add vegetables. To speed up matters use a JCB,
Simmer slowly for another week, then garnish with parsley.
Serves approximately 3000 people.
If more guests are expected add the rabbit, although this is not recommended as few people like hare in their stew!!!
Boom! Boom!

GREETINGS FROM LABERWRACH

Our last e-mail had us heading into tidal waters. Unfortunately it didn't go as planned when we arrived at the last two locks the river level was as high as the canal, flowing very fast and carrying a lot of rubbish including a lot of large trees. We decided this was not a good moment to enter the river and turned around and headed back into the canal system to wait for better conditions but it kept raining! We spent our time rescuing Paris, the man not the city and Dave they had both damaged their props travelling up the river into the canal.

After two failed attempts we did escape from the canals and had a fast trip down the river dodging trees and other debris. When we reached our first marina I couldn't think in English let alone French. Our second day on the river was equally fast when we arrived at Pauillac there wasn't enough water to enter the port so we tied up to a buoy and had a cup of tea. Whilst we were recuperating we realised the rope attached to the buoy was now under the boat. It took sometime to extricate ourselves by which time we were able to enter the marina.

At Pauillac we had our mast put up, whilst preparing the mast John had hung a Cornish flag from the aerial at the top of the mast as a warning to stop people walking into it, unfortunately when the mast was put up the flag was still there, nobody walked into it so John was winched up the mast to retrieve his flag. For allowing the marina to do the job we were given a bottle of wine, definitely my kind of marina. We then spent time turning Genesis from a canal boat to a sailing boat before finally exiting the river. Which meant leaving at 5.00am and 6.00am on consecutive days to catch the tide. I just looked upon the veg delivery as good training. Eventually we found ourselves back in the Bay of Biscay and heading for La Rochelle, it was cold wet and windy and we wore full oilskins the first time since crossing the channel in June 2005 Whilst we had been in the canals our depth sounder had become very temperamental, finally going on strike altogether as we left the canal system. This was a new depth sounder purchased in September but still under warranty our only problem was the receipt was back in Cornwall. We decided to solve the problem in La Rochelle where the chandlers confirmed it wasn't working and told us there had been a faulty batch. It got sent back to the manufacturers who replaced it under the warranty. Thus was good news but took over a week to organise we spent our time enjoying La Rochelle and riding backwards and forwards to the chandlers on free bikes, a town scheme to help people get fit.

When we did escape we decided to put a long trip in to get to the Morbihan for a holiday, the weather had other ideas and we found ourselves in strong winds from the wrong direction and a big swell not a pleasant experience we spent all day travelling 20 miles and were both exhausted. After this we decided on short day hops slowly working our way towards Brest. This system worked well for a while though at the start we had to motor into head winds but as we drew closer to Brest we managed to get some good sailing in. We were 50 miles away from Brest and had the notorious Raz du Sein to pass through when the weather turned against us. We spent one very unpleasant day attached to a buoy being bounced around by the wind and very high waves, at one point a single-handed sailor came in and tried to pick up a buoy. He lost his boot hook in the process and when he did manage to attach himself to a buoy he had the rope caught around his keel, our position didn't seem so bad after all. When the tides were right we decided to head for a sheltered marina we surfed out of the harbour into a torrent of sea and managed to move the boat into a quiet berth in the marina when I got off to tie the boat up my legs wouldn't stop shaking.

We waited for another 4 days for the winds to abate after which we had a fabulous sail through the Raz du Sein and tied up to a buoy in Camaret, next stop L'aberwrach. The weather forecast the next morning wasn't what we wanted but we couldn't stand the thought of being stuck again so we put on our oilskins and sailed to L,aberwrach. We had a superb sailing at the beginning only to be hit by very strong winds as we approached L'aberwrach apparently it had been like that for 3 days. We were very relieved to be tied up in the marina and back amongst friends.

Once we had recovered from our traumas we put Genesis on the beach and started to organise our social life.

We are now just 100 miles away from home but we are not planning to take the direct route. We should be in the UK at the beginning of September so watch this space!

I am reading Ice trap by Kitty Sewell, it is quite cold at times here! John has moved onto the charts of Northern France.

We hope you are all enjoying your summer.

Abientot John and Carol