

Carraig Log Book Voyage 2

Cnoc na Carraig
55° 52' N
5° 14' W



Carraig's 2016 track in brown

Carraig's Log

Voyage 2 Year 2016

A little history. Carraig is your standard Moody 33, bought from Fred Ellis as Eric the Scop and stored at Suffolk Yacht Harbour on the River Orwell during winter 2014/15. In good "nick", that winter we installed a calorifier for hot water, but essentially she is sailed as rigged when Fred had her. The 2015 sailing season started in June when family and friends brought Carraig from the river Orwell round the English East coast to Ramsgate, and from Boulogne, down the French side of the Channel visiting Normandy, Brittany and the Channel Islands before recrossing to Plymouth, rounding Lands End, up through the St. George's Channel to Ireland and in September 2015 to Kames, Kyles of Bute and finally layup at James Watt Dock, Greenock. Quite a mammoth shakedown voyage for year 1. In spring 2016 we fitted an electric windlass and

some 60m of chain to replace the rope rode which, while perfectly suitable for the East Coast of England, didn't do the business for deep loch anchoring and fierce French currents.

Decision time

It was at Christmas 2015 that the family made the decision to go South again to Brittany. As part owner, and navigator (our son Alasdair being the other partner) I had made some errors of judgement on the French coast, to wit: entering ports too late to secure marina codes and restaurant bookings; leaving insufficient time to explore; and generally rushing the cruise to too tight a schedule - guilty as charged. So 2016 was to be a more relaxed affair, making time to visit previously overnighed ports. And, to visit Brittany's Rose Coast which was missed in it's entirety in 2015.

Planning and recording

Voyage 2 began in June and finished early October. Timetabled to allow crew changes and flights to and from home, and time out to do other things, including, a week's Airbnb in St. Malo with friends, home leave and the extended crew running the Kyles 10 miles. My wife, Pamela, undertook Diary Management, with customary enthusiasm, and succeeded brilliantly, designating Carraig's ports for rail and plane connections. Constantly updated, the calendar reflected "chunks" of time around strategic ports allowing forward holiday planning and researching the necessary ferries, trains and flights to and from Glasgow, Leeds and London.



Carraig storing at James Watt Dock Spring 2016



The hot exhaust manifold's failing hose



Red sky at night and settled weather



Lunch at Tresco

The basic route

The cruise shaped out to be a rough figure of eight with the Isles of Scillies/Lands End being the waist and Roscoff to St. Malo the base line. Carraig hasn't broken new ground; with the Internet, pilot books, Ipad charting and tide table software* much of yesteryear's angsts are sorted. We thanked our lucky stars for the weather's co-operation. The wind blew Northerlies from the Clyde, Ireland, Scillies and to France. With Southerly veering West in September for the return from the Channel Island towards Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and home, yet, it delivered glorious sunshine for much of the cruise. With one eye always on the weather, longer passages were motor sailed, shortening passage time when, in all honesty, we could have been only under canvas, but prudently boosting the average passage speed well towards 5+ knots.

What ever could go wrong?

There was only a singular "bloody hell" moment, much to my and the crew's amazement things generally happened when expected. A cruise is never more memorable when things go ever so slightly off kilter. Fried, leaking exhaust engine hose, due to a hot blocking exhaust gas elbow, necessitating routine bilge pumping on passage from Dun Laoghaire to Tresco was a trial, but fixed all the same. And a repeatedly blocking blackwater tank, also a bumper 'til a "Greek" work-around solution was achieved. And, then the engine stopped.

Farewell to the Clyde

I left Kames on the Kyles of Bute on Wednesday 1 June with a hop to Campbeltown, where Donald, my brother joined. This was to be fast passage stuff, as Donald, a keen yachtsman is in great demand and was about to join a yacht in Singapore (he was later to scoot out to and round Rockall - but that's another story) It was great to have his experience and enthusiasm onboard. Bangor, Ardglass and Howth were done in rapid succession. Donald left in Howth, the airport taxi stinging him for 30€, whilst the Glasgow airfare was only 19.99€.

The Good and Bad Dun Laoghaire Marina

Dun Laoghaire offers outstanding 24 hour service when compared to Howth Marina which when we had settled into our berth, refused extended berthing, despite early positive assurances, Carraig was thrown out, and we went to the more accommodating and welcoming Dun Laoghaire. Now, Dun Laoghaire is a joy, despite losing its fast ferry service, it has a buzz about it with great facilities, restaurants and many yacht clubs. Being on the Dart rail line means an easy and quick run into central Dublin, not to mention the 10€ direct bus link to the

Airport. Dublin to Leeds flights were also 10€ and Pamela flew out to holiday on Carraig and we much enjoyed Dun Laoghaire and Dublin.

The Isles of Scillies

We (my friend Angus Marshall and I) left Dun Laoghaire at 1020 hrs. on Thursday 16 June for the 205 Miles, 41 hour crossing to Tresco. The Forecast was for mainly Northerlies becoming 4-5, the outlook was for fresh to strong Northerlies moderating later, so we were prepared, if necessary, to call in at Arklow or Kilmore Quay. With tide and wind with us we made great progress principally under autopilot and by 1700 hrs. South Arklow South Cardinal Buoy was abeam and it was agreed to head out towards Tuskar Lt. traffic scheme (Tuskar necessitated a jinks in the course to comply with Traffic Zone Regulation) and by midnight exited the scheme and settled down on short two hour watches as it would be properly light by 0448 hrs.

Throughout the morning and afternoon watches there were occasional crossing traffic, fleets of beam trawlers, pods of dolphins and a couple of sunfish at the surface. The forecast had been accurate - sea being Northerly moderate with a moderate swell, combining at times to drive Carraig on at over 11 knots under reefed main and the engine on tickover.

The Isles of Scilly being low lying and in the haze were sighted at 1812 hrs. at a range of less than 12 mls. With the distinctive guano covered Round Island well to the north by 1900 hrs. New Grimsby Sound is well hidden until on transit, there's a confused sea at its entrance and a cross tide to contend with, but once inside the Sound any swell rapidly diminishes. We were secured to a visitor's buoy by 1942 hrs. having done 209 Mls in 33.3 hrs., an average speed of 6.29 Kts.

Neither Angus or I had been to the Scillies before and once our wives (Beth and Pamela) joined Carraig we went exploring. We left Carraig at her mooring (to get a week's discounted mooring fees) and either dingy-ed it or took scheduled water taxis. Our lasting impressions are of a fabulous collection of Islands each one as distinct from the other, Tresco has the pubs and world famous gardens, whilst Bryher has a pop up restaurant serving big local crabs. Fit women rowed racing gigs for our edification followed by an excellent beach party at the local boat club, and St. Mary's has the transport hub, shops and tourists. Needless to say the weather stayed fine.

Thursday 23 June saw us let go and cross the Tresco flats on a rising tide - the shallows and sands link the islands and the reefs sighted in the clear blue water - before rounding up into Porth Cressa to disembark Pamela and Beth for their ferry to Roscoff.

Towards Roscoff

At 1224 hrs. 23 June Carraig, with Angus and I onboard, set course SEXE for Roscoff some 119 mls and 24 hours away. Again Angus and I shared the short night watches. Although well clear of Traffic Separation Zones, there were considerable concentrations of traffic, particularly on Friday 24 June, north of Ouessant in the early morning prior to sunrise at 0516 hrs. From Carraig's deck the distance to the horizon could be anything from 3 to 10 miles. Ships both inbound and exiting the Channel Approaches went smartly from hull down to very close extremely quickly. We were never quite sure of any vessels' situational awareness although we could hear them reporting into Vessel Traffic Services. Motorsailing we gave them quite a bit more sea room. 0924 hrs. North of the Isle de Batz we corrected our course for Roscoff and gave the island a 2 mile offset. 1000 hrs. it looked like we were to be delayed by the Irish Oscar Wilde ferry, but she went to anchor and we slipped by and at 1030 hrs. were all fast alongside. 122 Miles 2054 hrs. at an average speed of 5.84 knots and a maximum of 8.44 Knots.

Roscoff, Cote de Granit Rose towards St Malo

The installation of the electric windlass with new chain, was in anticipation of cost reduction and less reliance on Marinas. However, with the exception of an occasional overnighter and lunch stop anchorage, this cruise turned out to be Marina based with costings of 18-30€ a night on visitor berth rates. I like (love?) French Marinas: their high standard of service; met by staff in a dory and docking assistance; high standards of facilities and morning delivery of fresh bread, coupled with sensibly priced great quality supermarket wine; just add to a great holiday experience. And contrasts sharply with the experience, for example, of that received at Howth.

Roscoff

Pamela and Beth rejoined at Roscoff's excellent new-ish 24 hour entry Marina, with access to the town no more than a stroll away. In spite of it being a busy ferry terminal, Roscoff's heart is an architectural gem, and boasts a confusing history on Mary Queen of Scots, which can be discussed and Googled at length at some great eateries. Where better for a crew change as Alasdair and Amy joined and Angus and Beth left.

Coasting eastward

We coasted to and stopped off at Trebeurden, Plouman'ach then upriver on Le Jaudy to Treguier. On Wednesday 29 June, we were given a big fright by a very moody dolphin. Under sail, making 5 knots in the narrow channel and shaping a course at Le Banc du Taureau reef to clear the starb'd hand buoy we all heard and felt

a distinct "bang". Bewildered and believing that we had had made really hard uncharted contact, we immediately pulled Carraig into deeper water, then no sooner than that was done, we had another similar contact. To our evident relief this 4 metre dolphin surfaced and "chuffed" hard alongside, it was to give us several more good "dunts" before losing interest. Later, locals told us that he was very selective as to whom he greeted with tail slaps and head butts and although alarming did no damage. On Thursday 30 June leaving the berth at Treguier at 0900 hrs. we were set up for an exhilarating sail in a W'ly 4-5 passing south of the famous Les Heaux de Brehat Lt. Ho.. Through the exceedingly narrow channel at Pont de la Gaine on a 3 knot tide at 8.7 Knots and whistling through the shallows close by rocks and reefs via the inside Passe de La Gaine, and down through the Chenal de la Moisie towards Lezardrieux.

To many a West Coast of Scotland sailor these inshore passages would look impossible on paper. Particularly, tracks that go over extensive charted drying reefs. However, once the Charts and Pilot books are consulted, such as the acclaimed Shell Channel Pilot, and tides and their ranges are calculated, then, taking these passages becomes the norm and has their allure - dowsing the Atlantic swell, and managing the day's run between accessible ports. However the way markers and navigational marks on the rocks and reefs are not necessarily fixed at their edges and the mark's vertical height gives an inkling as to the sea's massive rise and fall around this beautiful coast.

The guide book says: "The Cote de Granit Rose runs from Plestin-les-Greves to Louannec in the Cotes d'Armor and is one of the most outstanding coastlines in Europe. This particular beautiful thirty kilometre stretch of rocky coast, an incredible pink colour edged with turquoise sea and fine sandy beaches." It's all true, they need to add huge 14+ metres of rise and fall, fast tidal streams, marked reefs, and important clearing transits. Tide and port entry times are essential planning. With this in mind, ports were never more than 6 hours away and entry was alternate 24 hour free flow to "lock-in" or cill access, allowing reasonable west to east progress. The aim was to be in port no-later than 1600 hrs. or thereabouts.

Pontrieux

We tried to explore up rivers as much as possible. Upriver Pontrieux from Lezardrieux made an excellent stop off, with a fine riverside marina, historic riverside wash places and more importantly French regional rail connections, where quite literally one waves down the single tracked train to board - and a change of crew to Sue. The last bit of the river can be a tad shallow

(Carraig draws 1.7m), so keeping mid-stream is a must, although the bottom appears to be fine mud. We did check the engine's raw water intake frequently and always removed quite a bit of debris.

French locks, harbours and canals

We found that locks, harbour and canal systems are free to enter and exit, our 1.7m draft prohibits going too far inland, I have a CEVNI certificate but in reality, certification wasn't an issue, but knowing and obeying docking signals are a must. Shore lines in most locks are looped around vertical ropes or wires cleverly rigged to the dock wall or made fast ashore by expert shore crew, we never faced "Crian standards" making transits quite straightforward. In major locking systems expect to raft up or share with sizeable commercial traffic. Oh, and queuing is seen differently by all nationalities, after the commercial stuff is in, entry can be as flamboyant or tentative according to the amount of scuffing seen on hulls. In busy locks, an acceptable practice is to raft up right across and let the insiders deal with ropes, fenders and dockwall - and at weekends, the locks can be very full. Check on-line for operational times or pick up brochures ahead at each Marina, the Ports are really well set-up, documented and co-operate with each other, frequently owned or managed by Regional Chambers of Commerce and proud of their EU funding. But really it's all good holiday fun.

Ship's documentation

I like to think that Carraig complies with mandatory French standards, and carries originals of her current Registration Certificate, my RYA documentation, International STCW and Insurance certificates. Every one needs suitable travel insurance as some Channel Island are outside the European Health Insurance Scheme. St Peter's Port, Guernsey needs Passport details on their Customs Manifest, but apart from that, we were never asked for our papers. EU port entry is very simple, for ease, I had a typed up sheet with Carraig's and my home details, which was usually accepted at Marinas with a typical Gallic shrug. Seldom if ever in Marinas is "plastic" refused and is essential for fuel where self service pumps don't handle cash. For convenience I have a Post Office branded MasterCard Travel Money Euro card which can be loaded over the Internet - it was never refused. Oh, and as an aside, do bring a good length of fresh water hose and snap on connector.

Lezardrieux to Paimpol

The French are keen on their festivals of sail - a bit like a watery Tour De France. A tour overtook us at Lezardrieux leaving in a big cavalcade of flag bedecked mean



Typical drying cill - Trebeurden



Alasdhair stops the train



Pontrieux river with its famous wash-houses



Boat maintenance was always ongoing

machines, but having fun as the crews partied with family on board. Monday 4 July. At 1600 hrs. the VHF DSC alarm went off while we were at anchor. The Paimpol lifeboat returned towing the casualty and 2 lifeboats were still in attendance at 1800 hrs. The system is that the Service will rescue people for free, but tows and other assistance may be chargeable at 600€ per hour per lifeboat.

Monday 4 July. 1124 hrs. Lezardrieux: Let go from mid-channel pontoon and proceed down the river Le Trieux towards Rade De Brehat channel. 1240 hrs. Hoist sails and proceed to tack and work towards Canal Du Denou. 1600 hrs. Anchored under sail awaiting tide for Paimpol channel, which dries for some distance out, well clear of the extensive oyster beds. 1820 hrs. saw us through the locks and alongside. The town's famous for its "Dundees" and their hard living crew who sailed to fish Icelandic seas, the Museum explains the history. The Quayside buildings still reflect the owners and crews social standing, some folk clearly made fortunes.

Coasting to St Malo

Leaving Paimpol on Wednesday 6 July we overnighed at St Quay Portrieux. Setting off the next day at 0736 hrs. for a cracking sail to St Malo. Thursday at 1100 hrs. saw Carraig off Cap Frehel battling a fierce tide as the wind dropped and sun beat down relentlessly. Time to anchor. We coasted into Baie de la Fresnaye, for a planned stop, and anchored out of the tide for lunch. 1618 hrs. anchor aweigh and now having the tide with us it was a great schoosh through the well buoyed multiple reefs at Le Grand Jardin to the Ecluse Du Naye (locks) at St Malo and at 2030 hrs. we were all secure at Vauban Marina and ashore for a Gin and T at the local bar under St Malo's protective walls. We were joined by Graham, Sue's husband, and our friend Jenny. Where we day tripped and stayed at a well appointed Airbnb in St Malo, before flying home on Tuesday 12 July.

St Malo and surrounds revisited

Pamela and I returning to Carraig on Thursday 21 July, to cruise St Malo and the La Rance river estuary, a flooded river valley where the "tide" is controlled by a giant hydro electric river barrage. The pace of life slowed considerably and things were great. I can recommend it, particularly Plouer sur Rance (Lilian gives Moodys berthing discounts) and of course the medieval city of Dinan, the stylish Dinard. St Malo, at least the original Island Citadel, was rebuilt after General Patton's drastic demolition job. What you see is basically a rebuilt 18th Century walled city with updated 20th Century vision, planning and plumbing, somehow it all works, and is a favourite of ours.

The last of France

Our last French port was Granville with a long shallow bay, where the swell lets itself be known. The "trick" is to dodge into the older fishing harbour to de-rig and make ready for docking, then scoot round to the marina, where there is a free for all when the cill is well covered. The French are skilled seamen, but at Granville, entry and exit are deemed a contact sport and it's best to be a spectator, and occasionally just wince. Nevertheless Granville is a great port to visit - and within striking distance of Jersey and the Channel Islands it can be busy at weekends - a nice touch, is Friday's free drinks and bolots at the Marina's Reception get together. We met a couple of yacht crews, who in a short time became our very good friends. Many of the supermarkets in France deliver directly to yachts - it's worth remembering when stocking up on heavy loads of red biddie and bottled water- the wine allowances are huge with resulting increase in draft and stability changes.

The Channel Islands

Jersey, Guernsey and Sark

Friday 5 August saw us to Jersey's St Helier to pick up Alasdhair and Amy. Alasdhair had a hankering to visit Alderney, so on Sunday we set off North to overnight at Guernsey's St Peter's Port. The tide times weren't quite right for the Alderney Race, so on Monday 8 August, we chose instead to go to Sark and Herm. I have anchored twice at Sark, and on both occasions being tide rode to beam on swell, rolled fitfully. Dixcart Bay lacks the heavy duty visitor's mooring so La Grieve de la Ville is preferred, alas under the lighthouse which in fog grunts twice every 30 secs. Watch out for steeply shelving beaches and swell, which dumped the unwary whilst disembarking. Sark is in decline, (there are much local grumbings aimed at the Brecqhou based Barclay Brothers) with many tourist shops closed, but a good walk takes you to a favourite - the excellent Stocks Hotel and a fine lunch and swimming pool. Alasdhair and Amy are not only both fine cooks but also compulsive seekers of great restaurants - we usually dine exceptionally well when they board.

Herm

Tuesday 9 August. Herm is a delight and this year we anchored just clear of the busy Rosiere Steps landing. With a fast tide running through the anchorage, the dinghy outboard has to do its job well, but the trip ashore is worth the effort. The Island can be walked in a morning, short-cuts are discouraged if there's the bull in the fields (there's a notice to that effect - the bull crosses the field in 60 seconds and as long as you're fit enough to do it in 59 all will be well). Fabulous shell beaches, pub lunches and boat trips to and from Guernsey are on offer.

Alderney

Wednesday 10 August we set off from Guernsey's St Peter's Port for Braye on Alderney. Timing is all, with the tide running up Little Russel at 4 knots and building and wind turning Northerly and gusting 5, it has the makings of an uncomfortable day although we were shaping a course to avoid the Alderney Race. At 1230 hrs. we saw moderate falls ahead and altered to shape a course more to the East, whilst by now trundling along in the lee of Alderney at some 10+ knots. A smidgen too early, we had some moderate falls for 5 minutes, necessitating battening down Carraig and crew jacketed and harnessed in the cockpit. By 1324 hrs. we were to a buoy and secure. Braye and the surrounding Island is delightful, (ideal for cycles or just a walk) but there is this military building clutter left from WWII, when the Germans fortified the island, and it's spooky feeling remains to this day. What put the crew flat on their backs on deck, and a definite "wow factor", courtesy of Alderney's dark skies, was the Perseid meteors on the night of August 11-12 - simply a stunning celestial display.

Guernsey and crossing the Channel

Monday 22 August. We had sailed around the Channel Islands and finally been weather bound in St Peter's Port. Alasdair and Amy had gone back to work, Pamela had flown to Exeter/Plymouth to await Carraig's arrival. Sue had joined from London specifically to help Carraig over the Channel and was now kicking her heels as her leave time ticked away. But at last the unseasonal Gale was going through and we were ready for a 90 mile dash to Plymouth.

My preference is to go North about of Guernsey with the tide, so we were off the berth at 0800 hrs. and clear of the NE corner of Guernsey by 1000 hrs. By 1200 hrs. the Channel Lt Buoy of Shipping Forecast fame had been sighted and we were well on the way to clear Casquets Traffic zone. We sailed some of the way, but mostly motorsailed to keep above 5.5 kts. 2200 hrs. Salcombe was abeam and it was now just 4 hours run down the coast to Plymouth where we berthed at 2400 hrs. having done a day's run at 5.62 Knots

Plymouth, Falmouth, the Lizard and around Lands End to Padstow

Plymouth's distillery was a worthwhile visit when Pamela rejoined and prior to Sue's departure to London. Pamela doesn't do the long jags, indeed, she had come to this lark after 30 years of border line non-participation and it is important, as they say, "not to frighten the horses". Normally I'm not short of volunteer crew for the longer crossings and Pamela would rejoin in port. Anyway, the weather was great

and Falmouth and the river Fal beckoned. To be on a mid river pontoon at Maggotty Bottom after a good pub lunch eased Pamela worries, and she declared "there is simply nothing as good as mucking about in boats on a river" - or words to that effect, before leaving with her at the helm for an overnight stop at Helford River.

Saturday 27 August. Off the buoy at Helford at 0612 hrs. for Newlyn/Penzance, with the wind to veer SW 4-5. By 0842 hrs. the Lizard's abeam to starboard and Carraig shaping up for a fast reach under a single reef. Pamela's tucked in under the sprayhood as the low Channel swell eases a tad and by 1130 hrs. we were set up for Penzance Harbour entry and alongside and all fast at 1148 hrs. A day's run of 32 mls at 5.98 knots. Now Penzance Harbour is not pretty, a description of declining industrial is being kind, but in mitigation there is a rather good dockside cafe and the town and surrounds are not bad too, with a rebuilt historic Lido and Mount St Michael in the bay. Anyway, although not a great fan of Newlyn, it's the only all tide staging post for Lands End and beyond, so on Sunday we hopped 1.6 miles down the coast and rafted up in a "pen" portside to.

Bank Holiday Monday in Newlyn is the Harbour Fish and Fishermen Festival, what's more Newlyn has spruced itself up, what a difference a year makes. It's worth a day's delay to be there. Some of the dockside fish displays are stunning and Carraig joins in the fun and is dressed o'all with as much bunting as we can muster - still no shore side showers though.

Newlyn to Padstow

Tuesday 30 August. Off berth at Newlyn at 0530 hrs., with sunrise at 0631 hrs. there's just enough and increasingly better light to spot pot buoys. Carraig still hasn't a prop-shaft rope cutter, so entanglement is best avoided. Wind S-SW 3-4 becoming variable, the engine is on and we're doing 5 knots. The knack on this trip is to make all the tide gates on time and be in Padstow harbour well before the flap gate rises as the river Camel dries out to a trickle. Simple. Otherwise the next stop is Milford Haven another 13 hours further on. Cornwall's north coast is rugged and beautiful, but constantly exposed to Atlantic pounding.

0810 hrs. and we are rounding Lands End, the engine's off and we're broad reaching under full main and headsail, the current is bubbling up over the rough bottom, and every tide gate has been met. 1622 hrs. Doom Bar's crossed and we're set up for the Harbour. 1742 hrs. all fast alongside with a couple of hours to spare. A day's run of 60 Miles at 5.40 Kts. Now I like Padstow, (PadStein to the locals) it's twee and touristy, and a magnet for kids and their crab buckets, but Pamela's not really a fan, moored out in the perfect small harbour it's a bit like a goldfish bowl. Our

neighbours and friends follow Pamela's Facebook entries, so the next day it's a real pleasure to have Leeds neighbours Roy, Laura and the girls aboard for a visit. Lobster pot, crab buckets and ship's boat are deployed to full effect and great fun in the harbour.

Milford Haven

Thursday 1 September. It's a big ask this one, it's 14.2 hrs. to Milford Haven, with no stops or shelter. The weather's good and the winds to back SW 3-4 increasing 5 occasionally 6 later. There will be a low swell on the beam till we're out of the bay and course set.

I can do this on my own, but Pamela's up for it too so it's a goer. 0612 hrs. Off the pontoon and out of the harbour. 0724 hrs. clear of Doom Bar and Padstow Bay and a course set for Milford Haven, there's a long moderate swell running. 1300 hrs. I need to bring the sea time down to avoid getting to Dale in the dark, so start the engine at tick over, just as the wind goes SW 5 and gusting occasionally 6. Leave engine on and put in a reef. Carraig steadies up and works well under autopilot. 1700 hrs. Wind has steadied on SW 6 and I've got in a second reef - but we're not that far from the Estuary and its shelter. 1714 hrs. Off Turbot Bank, the sea is confused and building, using the engine to help punch her through, shipping a bit of water on the bow well deck, when the engine splutters and stops, with over 55 litres in the tank, all should be well, but it refuses to restart. Alter course to the North West to give Pembroke's Peninsula lee coast a better offing. I can see that Pamela's gone white, this is not good, (perhaps dreadful is a better description as all thoughts of a pleasant Maggotty Bottom day are momentarily expunged). The seas are becoming better now that we are in the estuary. Decision made: we will anchor in Dale Bay and sort things out. 1820 hrs. Anchored in Dale Bay, engine primed and bled, it fires first time and runs for a good hour. 1930 hrs. move to Dale Bay mid-bay pontoon portside alongside. Day's run is 72 Mls for 1227 hours at an average speed of 5.77 Knots. The good news is that I have spare fuel filters aboard. Knackered and sleep well. Pamela's not happy about moving without a reliable engine.

Friday 2 September 1442 hrs. Off pontoon towards Milford haven Dock with 55 litres of fuel in the tank. Port Control advise I'm to follow the Briggs mooring handler MV Cameron into the lock, but I've passed her way back lifting a buoy, she'll be taking her time out in the estuary. 1536 hrs. loitering at dock channel entrance buoy waiting on Cameron. Check engine again, if it fails I have the hook rigged ready for instant action. 1612 hrs. all fast in the Lock 1700 hrs. clear of Lock and finally berthed port side to in Marina. Engine sounds normal. Run of 5.6 Mls.



The St Malo Team



Amy and Alasdair chill on the foredeck



The Fishermens Mission stall Newlyn



Padstow - our neighbours girls having fun



Arklow- weather for Friday and Saturday

Milford Haven and a run up the Irish Sea

Thursday 22 September. Yesterday, Sue came up from London to do the Irish Sea crossing, and I have driven down from Leeds to ready Carraig. 1140 hrs. off the berth to bunker at the fuel pontoon - I dose the tank liberally with system 16, a diesel bug destroyer, and fill to put 100 litres in the tank. By 1230 hrs. we're through the locks and go for a sail up river, before spinning round and heading to Dale Bay anchorage. The routine is: turn in, then up and eat a late meal, kit-up like Michelin men - the full kaboodle, warm gear, life jacket, harness and all safety gear ready - and go.

However, tonight's and tomorrow's weather needs careful consideration, It's to be SW 3-4 increasing 5-6 then backing South later and increasing again. What's concerning is not only the 1200Z GMT and 1800Z GMT immediate forecast but also the 24 outlook with predictions of Southerly Gales. We note both UK and Irish Forecast agree - there are to be Gales in the St. George's Channel and Irish Sea for Friday afternoon and through all day Saturday - our Arklow ETA is 1200 hrs. Friday at 5 Knots. The alternative 12 Hour Kilmore Quay route would start with a deadheader then a close hauled sail and Carraig and her crew don't do deadheaders or close-hauled anything at all well, at least not for fun. If it blew up we would come off the wind anyway, making Arklow the main port and Greystones our second viable stop - Arklow it is then, the tides are right and we're to arrive in daylight. 2018 hrs. anchor aweigh set sail for Arklow. 2100 hrs. St. Anne's Head and a very very confused sea, wind W'ly 5. I've drawn the course through an eleven metre channel in St. Anne's shoal - with the benefit of hindsight, I've stupidly cut the corner far too tightly and in these shallows coupled with the tides it's causing the seas and swell to really build - this is all my fault, further out we would have none of this and now, in the dark, we're having to hang on in there and in Carraig's big cockpit, it's extremely uncomfortable. 2137 hrs. Skokholm Island abeam to Port. Still running a high sea, but it's much less irregular and improving - in Broad Sound going with the tide and avoiding the charted overfalls. 2320 hrs. South Bishop's Lt. abeam to Starboard, set course for Arklow. Wind W'ly becoming SW gusting 6, broad reaching with reefed main and jib reefed to clear the Stb'd spreader. Wind steadies on SW and jib is fully unfurled - Carraig's going well. 0300 hrs. Loom of Tuskar Lt. to port. Sue has not been well for some time, but is now improving. [later we're to study Practical Boat Owner's (PBO) latest take on mal de mer and effective cures]. 0812 hrs. South Arklow South Cardinal buoy 4 points to starboard.

Tide is against us and the wind is moderating to 3-4. The Irish Coastguard announce a gale warning for that afternoon, and with only a couple of hours to go we start the engine and set it for full speed. 1012 hrs. alongside the river pontoon starboard side to with extra warps out. We go to our bunks and crash out. Day's run is 80 MLs at 13.9 hours giving an average speed of 6.34 Knots. At 1500 hrs. awoken by the noise in the riverside trees as the wind picks up, the Gale is on its way.

Arklow

There had been a bit of a discussion with the Arklow's genuinely helpful Harbour Master about the merits of being alongside the river pontoon or snug in his minuscule Marina. With an Easterly, a big send gets funnelled up the river and the river pontoon fair bounces. More worrying, is touching the bottom at the breakwater entrance. The rises and falls here are small, Arklow being close to an amphidromic point and, at times with less than 2 meters under her keel at the entrance Carraig could touch in a swell.

There's a new shopping complex opened adjacent to the river pontoon, (Aldi and cinema etc.) with a good local museum (sponsored by Arklow Shipping - they have offices next door - and are Ireland's biggest shipping company, one of Europe's biggest dry bulk carriers). 2016 marks a hundred years of Irish Independence and Childers famous gun running yacht Asgard was at times based here from 1969 to 1974 as a sail training boat and Chichester's lovely Robert Clark designed Gipsy Moth was built on the north bank. Much of the surrounding downstream wharf awaits regenerating.

Arklow to Dun Laoghaire

Sunday 25 September the Gale has blown itself out. 1012 hrs. Off berth and turned in river by the pontoon. 1050 hrs. Reefed main up and running out off the shallows. At Mizzen Head on the starboard run, "bye the lee", Sue on the helm, wears Carraig to starboard in a very fresh breeze and I, manning the sheets, make a right royal mess of it all as we come head to wind, "missing stays" Carraig hangs and bounces for ages, before a backed jib drives her through the eye on what is to be her only tack of the day. I'm lightly scolded for my incompetence (perhaps this scolding includes a wee bit extra for Friday's St. Anne's Head debacle, the likely cause of Sue's mal de mer?). Whilst the wind is Westerly and there's little fetch, there's a few squalls off the land - it's really the swell in the shallows that are causing the problems, the water's depth is 15 metres and is churned up and khaki coloured with sediment. 1406 hrs. well past Wicklow Head, over the land to the west, the Cumulus Nimbus are quickly building to fabulous heights and advancing in

regimented rows. We heave to, put another reef in, furl the foresail and sort ourselves out. This lot looks threatening and I have no ski goggles aboard for face protection. Not a minute too soon we are ready as the first line squall hits, flattening the water, the air hisses with rain and hail, accompanied by a loud crack of thunder. We ease the main and let the autopilot take charge as we hunker down under the sprayhood, soft hail tries to cover the deck and cockpit. The engine is at tick-over, to prevent Carraig wandering too far off course, but never the less the off course alarm is buzzing. Then it's over, and the scuppers are gurgling with hail, detritus and water. We resume course, quietly pleased with Carraig and our performance. 1515 hrs. Moulditch Bank Port Hand Buoy abeam. Hit by another big line squall, we're prepared as before and take this one in our stride. 1640 hrs. Dalkey Island abeam to starboard, fair whistling through the Sound. Quite a shore crowd out and about. Now is it the fishing, the scenery, us whistling by, or barenaked bathers in the 40 foot hole that is attracting them? (Dalkey Island's Martello tower home to James Joyce is now one of many museums to his name. He famously describes the seas around the 40 foot hole as the "snotgreen sea - or scrotumtightening sea"). 1700 hrs. inside Dun Laoghaire outer harbour, docking prep done and heading for our berth. Day's run 35.8 Mls at 0530 hrs. at an average speed of 5.51 Kts, and maximum of 8.74 Kts. Panda eyed and faces bright red with windburn, we wander ashore to Weatherspoons pub "the 40 Foot Hole" for a pint and pasta. A good day's work done, a really good cracking sail, and all is forgiven.

Dun Laoghaire to Ardglass

Tuesday 27 September. Sue has run out of time and is back in London, and everyone's now crying off with little holiday leave and mountains of work. Last year we were in the Kyles of Bute by this time, but then, we had just skimmed through some of the French ports as opposed to our more leisurely cruise this year. It really is coming to the end of the Season. Carraig has only greenhouse electric tubes for heating and they are no longer sufficient to ward off the evening's damp air. The Autumn equinoctial is upon us, and good sailing days are becoming unpredictable, the days are shortening and it's all signalling that this voyage 2 is about over. I've e-mailed James Watt Dock and the guys are prepped to lift Carraig out. My current marine insurance sets limits on my solo daylight sailing, and I'm now pushing the boundaries.

Tuesday 27 September 0650 hrs. Off Dun Laoghaire pontoon at astronomical sunrise and out into Dublin Bay. Main up with two reefs, wind W'ly 4-5 - the forecast is for W to SW 5-6 occasionally gusting 7 then to

moderate becoming variable 3-4, it's far easier to shake the reefs out, when rigged from the cockpit and this voyage I've taken to rigging boom preventers too - we're going well, broad reaching with the strong tide for the next couple of hours. 0840 hrs. Ben of Howth abeam making good speed, auto pilot on, all is good. 1000 hrs. Lambay island abeam with wind W'ly now 6 and occasionally gusting 7, reaching under main alone. 1200 hrs. Passed Rockabilly Lt. an hour ago. Wind now gusting over 34 Kts and steadily climbing through the force 8 scale (this was definitely neither forecast nor announce on VHF - although a small craft warning is in operation). Engine on to help the autopilot. The engine stops abruptly with 70 litres in the tank. I fly a tiny, minuscule corner of jib, more for balance than to heave to - I consider putting a third and final reef in the main, but that means going on deck rather than working in the cockpit and decide the next option, if necessary, is to drop the main altogether and work with jib alone, I have plenty of sea room and at least Carraig's well behaved, shipping spray and sea from windward onto the for'd deck, but her cockpit is dry, and she rising well to meet the fetch, far from being laboured - balanced this way the autopilot is still in charge, (always a good sign) and importantly she's heading approximately in the right direction. An Irish Naval vessel crosses my stern in sheets of spray, perhaps heading for Drogheda firing range, or just curious, there can't be many yachts out today. Now I've eaten a whole pack of wine gums for inspiration. I ponder: If I can't start the engine I'll have to play a blinder at Ardglass or in an emergency sail on - Bangor Bay is a possibility or, at worst, sail downwind to the Isle of Man - at this rate of knots well over 10 hours away. Phennick Point or Ardglass' entrance is not the place to anchor offshore today. This leaves the possibility of sailing under jib into Ardglass' fishing harbour, dropping the hook with a tripping line and or securing to fishing boats - we'll see. 1400 hrs. Over time the wind has been dropping and is steadying up on W'ly 5-6, I shake a reef out and fly more jib - now on course and purposely underway. 1629 hrs. Having looked out the spare fuel filters and sorted a nappy filled bucket (to catch diesel splashes and old filters), I feel confident enough to open and secure the engine hatch. I have a crack at simply purging the fuel line, and yes, the engine restarts at first crank - it then continues to run sweetly. Oh Joy, start to eat my last pack of midget gems, then guiltily remember that the family constantly chide me for this sweetie binging - so have a beer and greedily eat almost all of a pack of ginger tab-nabs (biscuits) from the new PBO recommended deck box - what the heck, live a little. 1800 hrs. St. John's Point light abeam, (Brendan Brehan was dismissed the Irish Lighthouse Service here for

opening many paint tins with blows from a heavy hammer. - perhaps in his honour, it's still wasp coloured black and yellow, and in need of a lick of paint). The weather's certainly taking a turn for the better and now is S'ly 3-4, with the remains of a lumpy sea. 1842 hrs. at Ardglass Harbour prep for docking starboard side to. On a pontoon, an old chap, hands in pockets, has silently watched me come in and do my lines single handedly. He then eventually approaches and confides that as the Manager, he much admires my great single handed docking technique and welcomes me to Northern Ireland with the facilities code. Yes, welcome indeed, I'm a bit curt, knackered, I go below pursed lipped for a deckhead inspection and drift off whilst considering the engine's fuel problems. 1859 hrs. sunset. Days run 63 Mls over 1128 hrs. at an average of 5.49 Kts, maximum 8.84 Knots

Ardglass to Bangor

Friday 30 September. 0900 off berth, bit "bumpy" at entrance. However, today was to be one of those glorious sails. The wind set W-SW more or less steady on 5s, but to decrease through the day. 1030 hrs. Entrance to Strangford Lough abeam, well off the coast to avoid any overfalls, then I begin to haul Carraig more onto the wind, shaping a course inside South Rock Lt. House and its reef. Built in 1727 South Rock structure is claimed to be the oldest wave washed tower in the world - still standing. 1134 hrs. Hooray, Scotland sighted. 1356 hrs. Donaghadee Sound. A large yacht has overhauled us, furled its sails and looks to be gingerly feeling its way north through the Sound. Carraig, by contrast, under full sail has a bone between her teeth and is having a great day - as the tide flushes her through. 1510 hrs. At the bunker berth, Bangor. Take on more diesel and dose with system 16 - now have 150 Litres on board. Day's run 34.8 miles at an average speed of 5.55 Knots, not bad for an old Gal necklaced with weed, dressed in stretched canvas and a duffer at the helm.

Bangor to the Clyde, James Watt Dock and the Season's end

Saturday 1 October. 0930 hrs. off the berth at Bangor. I had elected to dodge the tide on a coastal eddy, which I can't find and have to fight the tide for a couple of hours out from Bangor, before it turns in my favour, I then motorsail a tidal "arc" across to Campbeltown, which takes me East of Patterson rock and Sanda. However, between 1500 - 1600 hrs. in the North Channel, I'm accosted in separate actions by 2 "Guard Ships" [ship's initials SH and Nb]. These trawlers - for that was their day signal - both steamed on a relative steady bearings, making me the give way vessel. I was perplexed as I altered course they altered to maintain the same aspect, I slow



The Guardship Nb -for the record its a trawler



Busy locks at St Malo



Milford Haven's new lock pontoon



We're overtaken in Rade de Brehat



La Rance above Plouer

down. Only in the Barents and Baltic Seas have I been previously "targeted" by the old Soviet Navy in this way**. Now, a couple of cables out each would then turn broadsides displaying unlit banners with "Guardship". Contact made by VHF on CH 16 and 13 by SH I'm asked "what ship where bound" - "The Clyde" says I. It then goes through some prepared scripted mumbo jumbo about cabling. Apparently they're guarding an exposed subsea cable, and were there to warn me off in case I'm delusional enough to go plough it up from 100 meters. It's all a tad surreal, potentially dangerous and not at all funny. Then it dawns on me, there's probably nothing in their contract stipulating the use of initiative or the removal of trawling day shapes and I resume course and speed.

Campbeltown

Now across the North Channel and into the Clyde any remaining swell and wind switches off and I gun the engine to make a reasonable ETA for Campbeltown and a great meal at the Royal Hotel.

Kames, Kyles of Bute

The next day, following the overnight stop at Campbeltown, saw Carraig pass Carry Buoy (Carraig) in the Kyles of Bute at 1206 hrs. Sunday 2 October and at 1248 hrs. she's back on her home mooring, the pick-up pennant now foul and fat with mussels and marine fauna. And we're both Home.

Greenock

Monday 3 October saw Pamela rejoin and we moved Carraig to her winter berth at James Watt Dock, Greenock, it's cold, but dry and the sun's shining. We have our last sail of the season, making a fast passage mainly under reefed main and jib. We make fast for the last time this season at 1800 hrs. By Thursday 6 October the deck's stripped and she was out of the water and on her cradle for the winter. Voyage 2 is over.

We had set out on this year's voyage with the aim of revisiting the Brittany coast and it's many harbours, and to do them in a more timely fashion. Everyone's agreed that it has been that special summer to remember, with just too many high spots to single just one out.

Many, many thanks to all the Crew, without whom life would be so much duller: Pamela, Alasdair & Amy, Donald, Angus & Beth, Graham and Sue, and Jenny.

And also to all who followed Pamela on Facebook.

Hamish Beaton

Yacht Carraig

October 2016

sailcarraig@gmail.com

* I use an Ipad for both planning and navigation with the following software: MaxSea - Time Zero and Imray's Tide Planner. A secondary software is Memory Map.

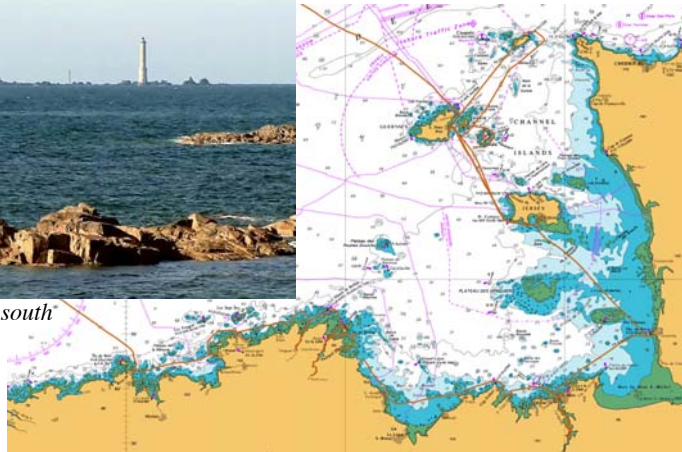
I run these programmes with a bluetoothed GPS. I must say MaxSea is an excellent planning tool, recommended by PBO, but at times has problems "seeing" the GPS puck. I've noticed this often happens when the crew are texting or playing with phones and may also be caused when the phones "chirps" when looking to triangulate. However, it can quickly be made to reconnect. Otherwise, I still carry charts, pilot books, almanacs Garmin and Lowrance instrumentation, etc. - which I happily consult from time to time.

** In the days of the USSR, when approaching the Berents Sea ports of Murmansk and Arkangelsk and the Latvian's Baltic port of Rega it was routine to be signalled from and closely inspected by guardships. Similar (and worse) routines have occurred in the Peoples Republic of China.

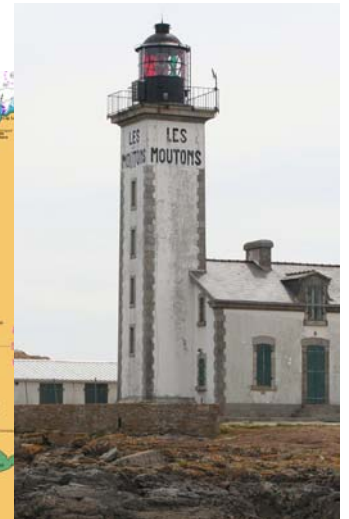
Useful interactive mapping software on www.sailcoolroute.eu/map.html



Les Heaux-de-Brehat Lt. Ho. - from the south



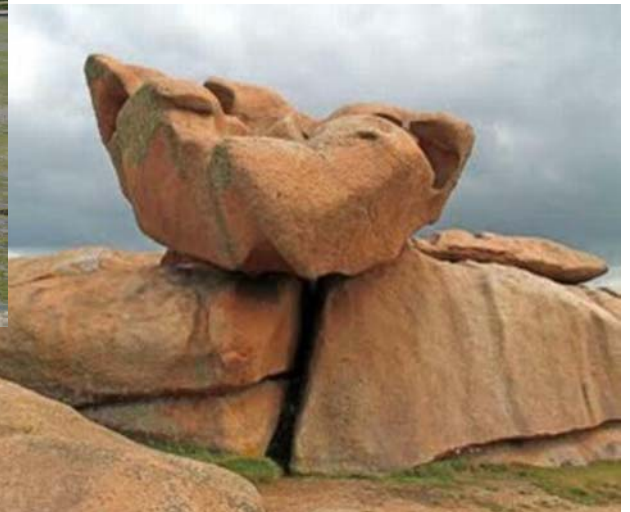
Carraig's route in brown



A neat touch - named Lt. Ho.



Paimpol channel - typically dried out far into the bay



Pink granite carved by the elements on Le Cote de Granit Rose

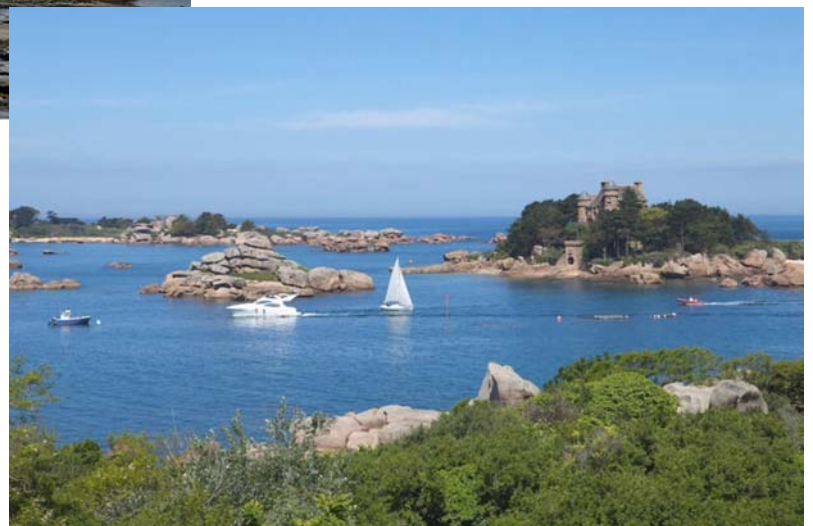


St Malo's busy beach

The Crew claimed that there are few truly "Square" Lighthouses on this coast. However, the Skipper disagrees ... bets are on wagers in Gin & "Ts". Both sides cheat - The Skipper has the List of Lights, the crew feign myopia.



Roscoff's leading light another square lighthouse.



Ploumanac'h - one of the many pretty ports - the bay dries completely. The harbour has 2.1m behind the cill at chart datum