

The Medina Mariners Association

THE MAGAZINE
FOR ALL RECREATIONAL USERS OF
THE RIVER MEDINA



SPRING 2000



Richardsons

BOATBUILDERS

Time to get moving! Spring is just around the corner . . . all boat owners have finished their winter tasks, made the alterations they planned whilst sailing last season, done all the little repairs that they had noticed were required, painted, varnished . . . uhm, er – well, OK in an ideal world. Luckily, your friendly local (and ever expanding) **chandlery** is just a few yards up or down stream.

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*Island Harbour Marina Ltd.
Mill Lane – Binfield – Newport – Isle of Wight*

TATTY FLAGS

We fly our flag up on the shroud
When bright and new, we are not proud
The burgee must be weathered
Left up there when the yacht is tethered
To show that we are not green
A battered, battle flag, must be seen.

But pause and think, is it just for show
Or is it so's my friends will know
That I belong to the MMA
And watchful friends both night and day
Will look out for my pride and joy
And ward off thieves and pirate boy.

When winter comes haul out the boat
The flag still flies though not afloat
Laid up, the mast comes down
But flag still flies when on the ground
Each winter when we down the spar
Please, Please put the burgee in your car.

When next spring comes, hoist up your flag
And don't forget when sailing, it could cause drag
Too much windage on the mast
The yacht wont sail very fast
When solent rigged it's probably all right
But shouldn't it be taken down at night?

From the *Crows Nest*.

this was brief. Dick Loaring commented upon the presentation of accounts by the Accountant which would be more easily interpreted by the Members if certain changes were introduced to show activities making a profit included in INCOME and those losing money in EXPENSES. Money spent on property, such as the £2,666 on the Oarhouse should be reflected in an increased value on the Capital Account (Balance Sheet) offsetting Depreciation on other Assets. The money spent was not a loss. He also welcomed, as instigator, the addition of a crewed section for the Round the Island Race for those who no longer felt up to a single handed slog around.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The Chairman declared all Offices vacant and the President, Murray Dixon, took the Chair.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Murray Dixon was Landlord at the Folly Inn at the time that the M.M.A. was founded and had been President since 1982 succeeding Captain Henry Wrigley but at last felt it time to pass the Office on to another. The Committee recommended the election of Madge Jewell to the office, a choice that had his fullest support. Madge was a founder member and had served on the Committee for 25 years out of 26 and he could think of no-one who more richly deserved this recognition of service.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT: Madge Jewell was unanimously elected President with no other candidates. She thanked the meeting for their support and made it quite clear that she had no intention of being put on the shelf to be taken down and dusted once a year but would attend Committee and play an active part.

PRESENTATION: On behalf of the Association, Madge presented Murray many years service as President. Murray thanked the meeting and wished the MMA continued success in the future.

CHAIRMAN: Charles Spelling was re-elected as Chairperson

TREASURE: David West was re-elected as Hon.Treasurer.

SECRETARY: Dick Loaring was re-elected as Hon.Secretary.

AUDITORS: D.G.Sims was re-appointed as Accountant/Auditor

COMMITTEE: The existing Committee Members were re-elected with the addition of Mr Roger Easley. There remained vacancies. (Committee list to be published in Magazine)

CLOSE: The Chairperson, Charles Spelling, declared the meeting closed at 2130.

OPEN FORUM

There followed the usual open discussion items discussed including . .

- Winter evening meetings. Possible venue at Quay Arts Centre. Need for good Speakers to attract members.
- New Rally Officer, Andy Pavey, to offer a number of new venues.

**MINUTES OF THE 26TH. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
MEDINA MARINERS ASSOCIATION**
held at the Riverside Centre, Newport on Thursday April 22nd. 1999 at 2000

APOLOGIES: Were tendered on behalf of Mr & Mrs Grant-Davis, David Burdett, John Drewery and Johnny Walker.

MINUTES: of the 1998 AGM were confirmed as circulated.

MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising raised.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Charles Spelling gave a comprehensive resume of the years activities. Rallies had been adversely affected by the coincidence of bad weather but, in general, events across the board had been well supported in both Racing & Rallying. The Annual Dinner at the College Restaurant was successful in terms of catering but with no facility for guests to mingle before or after the meal. A change to Gurnard Pines was planned. Thursday evening Social events at the Riverside Centre had not been so well supported and would be curtailed. The Auction went well and the £1-00 entrance fee helped to maintain a reasonable profit to Charity. Charles would be accompanying Peter White, Medina Watchdog, to attend the planning meetings at Westridge to object on behalf of the MMA against proposed development on the East Bank of the River Southwards for Industrial development.

TREASURER'S REPORT: David West had circulated his report with the Accounts. The main factors were as follows. **INCOME.** Down £3,487 due to reductions on Investment Income (low rates) Membership down 47, Dinghy Park Rentals down £190, Harbour Rental down £420. **EXPENDITURE.** £2,666 spent on the Oar House, £850 transferred for Disabled Sailing (an increase of £450) Subs. to external bodies up £391.

ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS: David West answered a number of questions from the floor after which the accounts were adopted on a proposition by Rodney Ireland, seconded by Jim Jewell.

SUBSCRIPTIONS OR YEAR 2000: The Committee were again recommending no increase in the subscription of ten pounds which had remained at this level for a number of years. However, investment income deposit rates were at a record low and the new increased Whitbread rental was starting to bite making it difficult to maintain a balance between income and expenditure. For that reason the Committee sought approval to raise year 2000 subs. by a maximum of 10 per cent. if necessary Proposed : Peter White, Seconded: Jim Jewell. Carried.

HONORARIUMS: These had remained unchanged for many years at £300 per annum for Treasurer and Secretary who sought no increase in view of Association finances. It was pointed out that this sum barely covered unclaimed expenses. Carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Chairman had covered most MMA activities in his report so

The Medina
Mariners Association
SPRING 2000



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MADGE JEWELL

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Front cover: Ryde (see page 15)

*Back cover: The giant floating crane
used during the redevelopment of
Cowes quayside.*

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FROM THE EDITOR

Paul Wood

As the new season beckons I begin to get the pleasant anticipation of some good sailing ahead.

Of course I conveniently forget some of the more exciting and bothersome experiences that occurred last year, like the tiller snapping in two off Calshot spit, or in fog mistaking a house on the shore for the Lymington car ferry. And there was the time on the Medina, sailing past the gas works when the belaying pin rail bolts sheared and the whole lot went up the mast while the main and jib came crashing down. Various groundings are definitely forgotten. Strangely these always seemed to occur near the gas works as well.

Then there was the pleasant sail back from Newtown River which quickly became very unpleasant as the wind strength suddenly increased and we began to experience rough wind over tide conditions nearing Cowes, *Dawdler* seemed quite happy smashing about but we certainly weren't. The sinking at Newport harbour was a tad inconvenient as well.

A coming together with the chain ferry proved to be as interesting for us as it was for the passengers peering down. Could this be one of the reasons that Christine has bought a Mirror and is going solo? . . . no, surely not.

However this open day-boat sailing is not all doom and disaster, we had a very good year on the water, although from time to time I find myself reading advertisements for small reliable marine diesel engines.

In this issue we have another *Rambles with Roller* about Quarr, a fascinating place. Also some African memories from Chrissie Saunders and an interesting cruise around the coast of Ireland by Jim Mottram.

If you see Peter, Christine (if she can drag herself away from her Mirror) or myself sailing about come and say hello.

Have a good Summer on the water and perhaps (as usual I live in hope) you might send an article or letter or anything into the magazine.

The 27th. Annual General Meeting of the MEDINA MARINERS ASSOCIATION

will be held at the Riverside Centre, The Quay, Newport. I. W.
at 7.30pm for 8.00pm on Thursday April 13th. 2000

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the Minutes of the 1999 Annual General Meeting as circulated in the Magazine.
3. Matters arising from those Minutes.
4. To agree Subscriptions for the year 2001
5. Honorariums : Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary for 2000
6. Chairman's Report
7. To agree the 1999 Accounts. Hon. Treasurer's Report.
8. Hon. Secretary's Report.
9. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
President of the Association
Chairman
Hon. Treasurer
Hon. Secretary
Auditor
10. Committee for the year 2000
11. To close the Meeting

There will follow the usual Open Forum for general discussion to assist the new Committee in their work during the coming year.

See pages 22–25 for Dinghy Racing and Social Events etc.

NEWPORT HARBOUR USERS ASSOCIATION

The welcome changes that took place in Newport Harbour some years ago, now, with the addition of pontoons and shower facilities, seemed to herald a new beginning to a settled and expanding future. Sadly in the last few years the facelift to the Quayside area has not been reflected in the harbour itself. The lack of dredging and maintenance, the poor state of harbour walls and the total lack of investment has meant that the harbour is now in a lamentable state. Whilst investment has been found for buildings, the harbour has had its income cut drastically, the loss of Vectis Shipping revenue and boat lay up space has been a major blow.

It was a slow but deep realization that action has to be taken to prevent the loss of the harbour as we know it and that future generations would be robbed of a major local facility, bequested to them as long ago as the 13th century.

Many people that my husband and I spoke to had similar opinions. So we decided to form a Newport Harbour Users Association to bring together the diverse interests that are involved in that description.

Our first meeting on the 29th November 1999 at the Bargeman's Rest was well attended and enthusiastic. We voted unanimously that the aim of the Association be:-

'To promote and support the interests of both commercial and pleasure boat owners in the future development of the harbour and to ensure that, so far as is practical its redevelopment should be connected to maritime use'.

We have no committee, decisions are to be made at meetings and representatives taking forward issues may change according to knowledge and relevancy. I hope this will ensure inclusiveness and stop one interest predominating. We were encouraged by Councillor Smarts contribution and it cheers me to think that we may have the same aim as many of the councillors.

We will go forward to open two-way communication with the Council and we hope to make a contribution to the well being of Newport Harbour.

Our next meeting will be held on the **13th March at 8pm** in the upstairs function room of **The Bargeman's Rest, Little London, Newport Quay**.

The meeting is open, so if you have an interest please come along.

Chris Tindell (Mrs)

AT THE HELM

Charles Spelling

Once again reading last Friday's County Press it has been announced that the hotel on the river bank at Newport has been granted planning permission for the first phase for the hotel and restaurant complex. No doubt an interesting project. A hotel facing the river when the tide is out with the industrial estate opposite.

As I wrote in my previous article there seems to be very little consultation as to the views of the residents of Newport as what they would like. You will have your chance if you attend the next meeting of the **Newport Harbour Association** on the **13th March, 8pm** at the **Bargeman's Rest, Little London, Newport Quay**. It promises to be a lively meeting with Councillors attending with council employees who no doubt will fill us in as to the details of the overall master plan.

Today, the 2nd February, I had reason to visit the Boatyard at Binfield.

It was a day when the sun was shining with a touch of warmth in it. It was as if the yachting world was beginning to wake up to a new season. A good number of boat owners were starting to do those jobs that have been waiting since last season. It must be Spring just around the corner.

I went down to my boat at its mooring on the river. The engine started the first time, but where was the water coming through. Having blown through the pipes to check for any blockages and taking off the cover to the water pump, I found that the impeller section had once again parted from the central boss. The impeller was only replaced last July and had only been in use for approx. 10 hours. Has anybody had this happen to them? Back to Jabsco once again.

Looking forward to seeing you at the annual auction at the **Riverside Centre** on the **16th March**. In aid of Sailing for the Handicapped.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Dick Loaring

I really enjoyed the Earl's Court Boat Show . . . did you go this year?

Perhaps not. The Southampton event is a quick Red Jet away and offers more craft afloat on real salt water so it is understandable if you pass on the London trip as an unnecessary and relatively expensive day out.

So why do I go every year? As well as some welcome escapism at a cold and gloomy time of year, there is an added bonus for me at Earl's Court. It provides an element of nostalgia. As you may have noticed, the older I get the more heavily I'm into that!

As an apprentice, over fifty years ago, the big Earl's Court attraction was the annual Motor Show. Toast on the Red Funnel Paddle Steamer and a coach stop at the Sally Lunn at Hindhead for tea and a buttered bun. Sounds a bit like a Hovis advert doesn't it. The front of the original Earl's Court building has seen little change and we still huddle on its steps in the rain awaiting the return coach.

Inside we had a view, from behind silk corded barriers, of the Rolls Royces and Bentleys, over a dozen British manufacturers would be showing their latest models and there were real Sports Cars for enthusiasts like us to dream over. Happy just to look. How easily pleased we were in

those days. Our expectations were low to match our wages!

In these later years and with the advent of the Boat Shows, it has been the efficiency and good humour of Mark Rayment with his Solent Cruises 'Ferry & Coach' package that has done so much to make the London Show an annual event for many local Anglers and Sailors alike. A good humoured crowd with many familiar faces return clutching their 'Boat Show Specials'. The rougher the Solent crossing home the more they seem to enjoy it!

At the Show nowadays, electronics rule. However much we pay lip service to the infallible leadline or sextant, how tempting are the goodies on show! How persuasive the arguments for getting out the Barclaycard and letting electronic brains take the strain. 'The more you have, the more lazy you get' I try and convince myself. 'It's the old difference between what you want and what you need.' 'Bigger boys have bigger toys!'

Still, as a sometime single-hander it is good to have a display of useful information without leaving the helm. In this way, like most of you, I suppose I have got spoiled. A modern depth alarm tells me it's time to tack. A proximity waypoint in the GPS reminds me if I'm about to hit Black

FITTING OUT SUPPER AT THE FOLLY

Members may have noticed that there was no Christmas Rally at the Folly last year. This was in response to an extremely poor turnout for the 1998 rally. A large amount of food was left untouched but still had to be paid for at the end of the evening. It was a great disappointment to Peter White, who had arranged it, and to Andy and Cheryl, who had provided an excellent buffet at a very reasonable price.

As a committee we have decided that we should not give up the ghost just yet, so we'll have another go.

We will holding a
Fitting out Supper at the Folly Inn on
THURSDAY, MARCH 23rd, at 1930 hrs

We have arranged for a crew-pot meal, and there will be a vegetarian option as well. The cost of the evening will be £5. per person, payable on booking.

Please fill in and return the booking form below before

MONDAY, MARCH 15th

We look forward to seeing a good number on the evening

Name -----
Address -----

Telephone no. -----
Total no. of tickets @ £5.00 each -----
No. of vegetarian meals -----

Please make cheques payable to Medina Mariners Association and send to
Karen Saith, 9 Terrace Road, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1EE.

NOTICES

DINGHY RACING AT THE FOLLY

The Wednesday series of dinghy races will start on

10th MAY, FIRST RACE 1830 HRS.

Any type of dinghy welcome.

Last season there was a very poor turnout, it would be nice to see a lot of sails round 'Windy Corner' this year, if the response is poor then we might have to consider dropping the series.

THE FIRST WINTER SOCIAL EVENING

With the end of the Wednesday evening dinghy races at the Folly the prospect of long winter evenings loomed. Then the rest of the Medina Mariners laid up their boats and it was apparent that something was needed to prevent us all from becoming isolated. A new venue for winter socials with a new format, and held on a different night, was arranged at the **Bargeman's Rest on Newport Quay**.

The Sail loft provided the right sort of seafaring ambience for 40 or so members to enjoy a chat over a drink or two at the bar, or watch some sailing videos; the more energetic amongst us even had a game on the pub's skittle alley. Everyone said it was fun, they enjoyed the change and would like another evening.

SO THE NEXT NIGHT IS
MARCH 17th AT 1930 (7-30 PM)

AND THE OTHER PROPOSED DATE:
APRIL 14th 2000

WATCH THE COUNTY PRESS UNDER YACHTS AND BOATS FOR
FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS.

MMA AUCTION

**Thursday 16th March at the
Riverside Centre**

LOOK OUT FOR FURTHER DETAILS IN THE COUNTY PRESS

Rock or something else nasty, normal waypoints help me to find my way home in poor visibility.

On the rare occasions when it is behind me, the wind instrument warns of an impending gybe if I wander off course and start running by the lee. When, as is more likely, it is on the nose, I can keep close winded without watching the luff of the jib or getting a crick in my neck studying a masthead windex.

'Who are you trying to convince' I hear you say, 'what is all this leading up to? You went to the Show, what did they flog you?' I'll come clean. It's a Chart Plotter, it was a bargain, I had to

have it. It has bells and whistles that you wouldn't believe. I will probably be still staring at it trying to work out which button to press when I ram you so be warned!

In theory it will save the quick dash below to mark up the Lat Long and check the position on the chart. I'll just have to do it now and then when I put the kettle on. Sounded good to me at the time.

I wonder if it can find the gap between Goose Rock and the *Varvassi* wreck? If not, let's hope its waterproof.

Have a great Summer and see you at the A.G.M.

COPY DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER ISSUE MAY 2000

Please keep sending the articles in to:

**THE EDITOR
c/o THE MMA, FOLLY HARBOUR OFFICE,
FOLLY ROAD, WHIPPINGHAM, ISLE OF WIGHT,
PO32 6NB**

Venues and dates of MMA activities may change or have to be withdrawn at short notice so don't forget to keep your eyes on the County Press 'Yachts and Boats' column for up-to-date amendments and information on MMA events.

RALLY OFFICER*Andy Pavey***RALLY NEWS FOR 2000**

After consultation with MMA members, I propose the following
Dates and Venues:-

- 1) **Saturday 27 May Port Solent**
- 2) **Friday 16 June Weymouth and/or Poole**
- 3) **Friday 7 July Cherbourg/St. Vaast**
- 4) **Saturday 2 September Emsworth/Itchenor**
- 5) **Saturday 23 September Lymington race/rally**

This summer, the Cherbourg race will sort of coincide with the rally, but departure is earlier than the race ie from
Yarmouth at 0500 on Friday 7 July.
This means leaving The Folly Thursday evening!

I have left August free of rallies since many have holidays then, but if you have any ideas for an impromptu overnight stay or weekend away, let me know. Use the notice boards!

I will post details of each rally on the notice boards giving more details nearer the date of departure.

At the time of our ventures there was still a fair amount of shipping for the sailor to watch out for. Among the hazards were the rusty, derelict wrecks of long abandoned hulls. The main channel was sometimes polluted with a rainbow coloured layer of stinking oil - which together with the sight of an occasional snake in the water was another reason not to get a dunking! Of course the river is tidal so big tankers and cement ships were often at anchor or slow moving in the upper reaches.

Many crew of the tugs and service vessels that regularly trundled up and down the river began to recognise this couple in a sailing dinghy (we were obviously something of a novelty) and would thoughtfully slow down to minimise their wash, giving us a cheery wave and greeting us with cries of "Hey Aebo (white man)!" Other river craft consisted of locally built water buses and fly-boats providing transport between the villages located throughout the vast delta area. Villagers were often seen plying the waterways in their own dug-out canoes. Mostly they were propelled with a paddle at the end of a strong arm but occasionally a canoe would sport a tattered sail. The local description for a sailing boat is a "rag top".

The commissioning of our "rag top" was further enhanced by three or four boat boys at the Club who, under instruction from the master, had become proficient at tying knots correctly, rigging and de-rigging, spreading out the sails under the palm trees and carefully folding them. Normally work-shy, they really enjoyed this task and would rush down the slipway to meet us on our return and, employing their same method of launching, would bodily carry the dinghy ashore - sometimes with me still in it - so "madame would not get her feet wet"!

competitive events. There is a strong class of G.P.14's in existence. Some are originals built in plywood, others (like ours) the lighter, faster, G.R.P. version.

Sadly, the Boat Club at Port Harcourt was no comparison to Lagos YC. Once it was a thriving centre for boating and social activities. A retired British Naval Commander, long-term resident since first arriving as a young ADC, told wonderful stories of how it all used to be in colonial days. Then everything was kept in tip-top condition and traditions faithfully observed. In modern times, like the surrounding environs, it had become characteristically run-down. Motor boats, such as Shetlands and Fletchers, came into popular use for fishing trips or pleasure outings down river.

When we first started going out we would often attract a little band of fascinated spectators who, with the hoisting of the sail would murmur knowingly "Ah! dis ting is the engine. We found we could spend a good couple of hours off the Club. With a fair wind it was possible to tack down river to the junction with Primrose Creek, which led into the New Calabar River, then reach back on the incoming tide; although the fickle air might necessitate goosewinging the sails. Due to the nature of the river bank with its thick growth of trees, giving way to winding creeks, there were often moments when we'd find ourselves in a dead lull one minute then a sudden gust would send us zooming toward the tangled muddy roots of mangroves - when the skipper called "lee-oh" the move was executed like billy-oh! But becalmed in one of the hot, airless pockets I actually began wishing for wind and some more exhilarating action!

Back in the bad old days of Nigerian history, the coastal locations were involved in the Slave Trade. Later Port Harcourt's importance grew as a bunkering port for coal powered ships. Coal was mined and brought down river from Inugu to the port which is 15 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. The docks are just up river from the Boat Club; before the current ongoing political and economic crises they used to be a busy centre for the exportation of palm-oil, ground nuts, and cocoa. Then the country was practically self-sufficient in agricultural products. In addition to coal there is a wealth of minerals but when oil was discovered everything changed.



Zelco leaving Studland Bay, Summer 1999

ROUND IRELAND CRUISE 1999

Jim Mottram

Having retired in the Spring I had decided that I was going to spend the Summer of 1999 sailing right around Ireland.

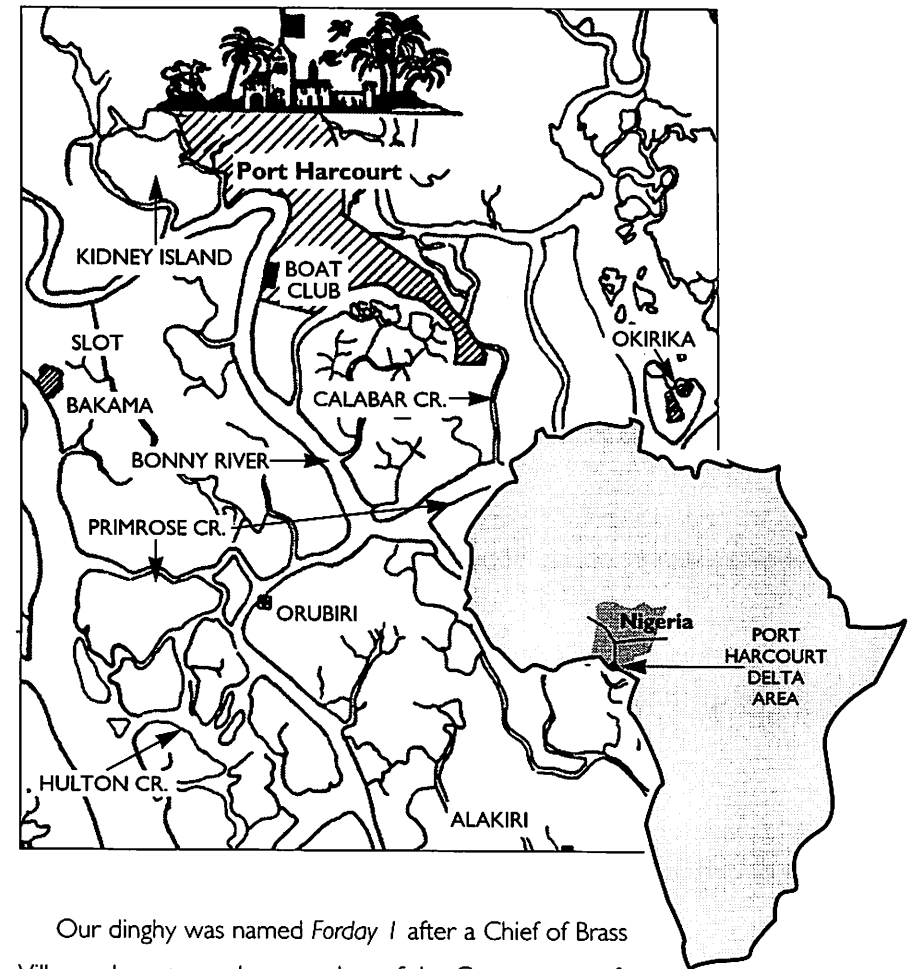
After recovering from a huge celebration party, I left Christchurch in my Elizabethan 23 *Reservation* at the end of May.

The weather was not very kind and it was the middle of June before I arrived in Kinsale after a 32 hour passage from the Isles of Scilly. The going seemed to be slow after being spoilt by the near idyllic weather of 1995 when I sailed to Dingle and back to Dunmore East stopping at most of the harbours, usually in perfect conditions. The South West coast is, without doubt one of the best cruising areas this side of the channel, but with a long way to go I tried to visit places I hadn't been before. I had to leave Kitchen Cove suddenly with deteriorating weather but later in Bantry Bay it became sunny and I was able to anchor in lonely Adrigole harbour and Lawrence Cove, instead of the more popular Glengarriff.

It was with regret that I ignored the fine anchorages of the Kenmare River and spent the night in the landlocked Darrynane Harbour. A brisk breeze took me northwards but I couldn't resist a night in Knightstown, Valentia before going on to Dingle.

Although Fungi, the dolphin ignored me, Dingle was still welcoming, bustling and colourful with a large choice of genuine Irish music in the pubs. I was not too upset to be held there in the windy but sunny weather.

The wind backed to the south with the usual penalty of heavy rain. It was a pity the visibility was so poor through the Blasketts and the incredible coastline of pinnacle – like granite cliffs.



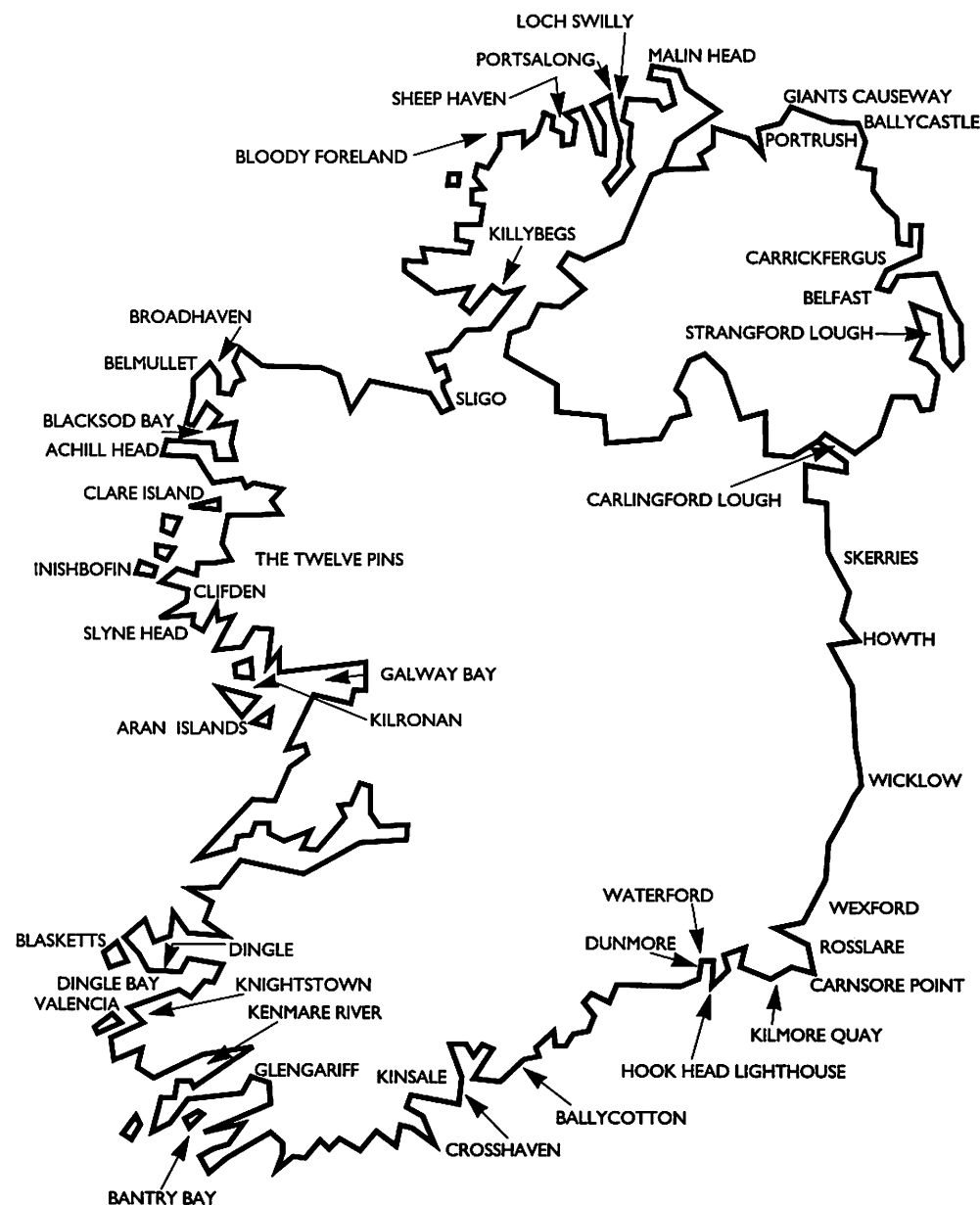
Our dinghy was named *Forday I* after a Chief of Brass Village who was made a member of the Government - for one day - when he met the Queen. The former owner was a relative of this chief and a member of the Nigerian Navy. When posted to Lagos, and unable to take the dinghy with him, he left it in our care as he knew there would be plenty of crewing opportunities at the Lagos Yacht Club. We were told Lagos Harbour is the place for real sailing in Nigeria. The winds are excellent for racing and the yacht club is an attractive well-run establishment which organises regular

Adventures of a FAIR WEATHER CHRISSIE SAUNDERS *Sailor*

Although the murky waters of the Bonny River in Nigeria are not very inviting, going to that region changed my view of sailing. While some people's salt-water blood surges at the first hint of a blow, their excitement mounting with the rising wind, mine wavers and dies. Being assured "it will be a really good sail" does little to alleviate my aversions to the cold, wet elements which seem to conspire to bring about a somersaulting stomach.

Leaving our home on the Island for 18 months meant losing beautiful countryside and the freedom of walking over spacious downland. At least in the delta areas of Nigeria there are plenty of stretches of wide, open river. The conditions are warm and calm - not quite "blue water" as depicted in the glossy charter ad.'s but o.k. for a confirmed fair weather sailor. So, with limited free-roaming recreation and lack of other activities, our weekend sailing became welcome escapism from the every day dirt, dilapidation, and noise of life in this part of West Africa.

The craft for this diversion was a G.P.14. We found it easy to handle and manoeuvre; kind, forgiving, ideal for a novice crew. Although there are toe straps fitted on a GP, an enjoyable sail is possible without the need to sit right out and with an experienced helmsman there is no danger of capsizing, so there was no fear of getting cold and wet or having to do anything outrageous! Being short was also a bonus as I could stay safely in the well of the hull while the boom easily went over my head when we tacked. It was a simple matter to slide from the central sitting position to either side as necessary.



Running hard with the wind astern soon finished off the Autohelm, so I was glad I still had the windvane and the ancient Tillerpilot which struggled gamely on for the whole trip.

In the evening I passed between the Aran Islands into the harbour Kilronan. Perhaps I had watched too many documentaries as I found it a bleak desolate place away from the village. The Islanders have always led a grim existence mixing sand and seaweed to make soil to maintain their livestock. Today they mainly rely on the tourists and the world famous sweaters.

I crossed Galway Bay two days later and sheltered in a rather lonely spot while a strong S.W. blew, then set off in drizzly, murky conditions round a rocky coastline. I didn't relish the prospect, especially without the G.P.S. but the weather cleared, the wind died and the sun came out. Approaching Slyne Head I became anxious as there seemed to be miles of broken water but this turned out to be huge patches of harmless foam.

In hot, sunny weather Clifden was a delight, anchoring in a huge inlet. I was the only visiting yacht of the three there. A long drying harbour led to the bustling market town nestling under the Twelve Pins mountains. A part of my windvane steering had sheered so I was pleased to be able to repair it in the calm conditions.

During a stay at the island of Inisbofin next day the weather deteriorated, blowing and raining hard from the south. I got out through the sound in poor visibility and once clear flew along under the main alone. The beautiful Killary mountains, Inisturk and the massive Clare Island were all passed without a sighting.

One consolation was that by early afternoon the foot of the giant Achill Head appeared out of the murk. Thankfully the visibility cleared as we roared into Blacksod Bay with vicious gusts coming down from the heights. It was with relief that I anchored inshore of some fishing boats in the lee of Blacksod lighthouse. A local fisherman said he had recorded F7 in the morning and it had increased a lot by the time I came round.

I had developed a bad cold and was not enjoying the Belmullet Peninsular. Ironically once north of Eagle Island the wind went north east and beating round into the huge expanse of Broadhaven I managed to find shelter. Fresh stores were getting low with the area sparsely populated, villages were many miles away.

The fifty mile coastline stretching to Sligo has many inlets and harbours but none appeared tenable in the strong north to north-east winds. When the winds eased off I set off in sparkling sunshine, set the windvane to go to windward and went below in the dry. Fortunately the wind backed and by midnight I entered the large fishing port of Killybegs. Spent five days there, anchored in a bay sheltered

building and cultivation. At what is now 'Newnham farm' a dam was constructed to force the little stream to flow on a level to supply their foundation with water, at Wootton they built a bridge over to their fulling mill, the base of which can still be seen near the 'Sloop Inn' which originally had been the Millers House.



Life went on quietly at Quarr until Henry VIII dissolved the Monasteries and drove the monks out. The great buildings which for four hundred years had been the centre of religious life of the district stood empty.

Then came the threat of a French invasion, so along with other empty religious houses the Abbey was looted of its cut stone to provide material for forts along the south coast. Quarr then became a quarry, supplying stone for generations of local people, indeed the little cottage whose neat garden had attracted us, was, in the eighteenth century, built on to the end of one of the monastic buildings (now being used as a barn) using cut stone, and windows from the ruins.

Our informant said, that was not the end of the story, In 1901 the 'Benedictine' monks of Solesmes in France were driven from their homeland by the anti religious government of their country, they sought refuge in the Isle of Wight, leasing 'Appuldurcombe House', in 1908 they moved to Quarr Abbey House (Built from the old Abbey stones) but this proved to be too small, so Dom Paul Bellot one of their number designed and organised the building of the new Quarr Abbey in rose pink Belgian bricks. This magnificent structure stands a few hundred yards further along the 'Coastal path' which we had to follow to get to our destination at

Fishbourne It had been a very pleasant walk from Ryde, and on the way we had discovered a bit more of the history of this fascinating Island.



S.T. Roller

RAMBLES WITH ROLLER

QUARR

Over a cup of tea in the thatched restaurant in Appley, Ryde, we planned our next move, the vote went in favour of following the 'Coastal path' through to Fishbourne, where we had arranged to meet friends in the 'Royal Victoria Yacht Club'.

Although the first part of the walk was along a main road, we were at least in sight of the sea, but once passed the roundabout by the pier, we moved inland among houses. At one point we came up to the main road from Ryde to Cowes, but then the golf course gave us a more rural outlook. Once passed the course the path became a rough stony track, a sign post pointed to 'The Ruins' this looked interesting. A few hundred yards further on we saw the ruins on both sides of the path, on the left, what was left of massive walls, while on the right the remains of what appeared to be the ruins of a very large group of buildings.

To find out more, we approached a man working in the very neat garden of a stone cottage attached to the end of one of these old buildings. He told us, that what we could see was all that was left of the original 'Quarr Abbey' founded by 'Baldwin de Redvers' the Lord of the Isle of Wight in 1132. Like others of the followers of William the Conqueror, he wished to found an Abbey where he and his family could be buried and prayed for, and to ensure that his memory could be venerated for many years to come.

To carry out his plans, he approached the 'Cistercian' Abbey in Savigny in Normandy, and a group of twelve monks led by one Gervase (later to become the first Abbott at Quarr) came to the Island and set to work clearing the land for

from the gales by the bulk of the huge ocean-going trawlers. I could only get ashore above half tide but the music in the Sail-On pub kept me from getting too despondent. The owner was a brilliant fiddle player and with an accompaniment of other players and singers both local and visiting, we were always sure of a memorable evening of real Irish music.

The hop to the island of Arranmore ended in calm conditions. Exploring the island in the pouring rain I found it uninteresting, although scattered it is well populated but without any real centre. I tucked into the shore near the quay to await a W. gale. This duly arrived and it was fairly comfortable until it veered N.W. 8 gusting 9, expecting the anchor to drag I had an anxious night.

The gale died suddenly and I had a splendid sail around the low-lying Bloody Foreland into Sheephaven. It blew again but Downings, an isolated holiday village was quiet pleasant.

The weather was definitely improving and I had good sailing over sparkling seas to spend an enjoyable evening at Port Salon in loch Swinney.

I had expected rounding Malin Head to be one of the major hurdles but with a bit of motoring, a good N. breeze and working the strong tides I arrived in Loch Foyle before nightfall.

Across the border the tall crowded buildings of Portrush contrasted sharply to the small villages I had visited. It was now the end of July and the boat went alongside for the first time since Dingle, a month before. A prolonged period of light S.E. winds followed and with strong tides I made fair progress though motoring more than I liked.

The Giants Causeway is just a pile of rocks from seaward but the cliffs and scenery of the Antrim coast is quite spectacular. After visiting the new marina at Ballycastle I arrived at Carrickfergus in Belfast Lough. I took the bus into Belfast, passing housing estates with kerbstones and lampposts painted red, white, blue and with the initials U.V.F., U.D.F. Union flags were flying from windows and poles. The Laggan bridges, the magnificent Waterfront Hall and the grandeur of the massive facades of the City Hall were interesting, but apart from these, I found the City much like any other and didn't stay long. In foggy conditions I motored south and into the fierce swirling waters at the entrance to Strangford Lough.

Some strong E. winds were forecast so, before they arrived I mainly motored the thirty miles over to the Isle of Man. Apart from an uncomfortable night at anchor in Peel I enjoyed the lovely sheltered bay at Port Erin.

On the tail of a N.E. gale I flew back to Ireland the next day to fine sunny weather as I drifted past the Mountains of Moine and into Carlingford Lough. I enjoyed my stay in the friendly marina, its breakwaters formed by a ramshackle

collection of sunken barges and blocks. The ancient village with the castle overlooking the drying harbour, the town walls and old buildings were a visual delight.

After a rolly night at the Skerries I passed Lambray Island and Irelands Eye Howth. From here frequent D.A.R.T. trains get to Dublin in 15 mins. Despite the traffic a truly beautiful city. The Custom House and the Law Courts on the banks of the Liffey, spanned by the elegant Halfpenny Bridge, Christchurch Cathedral and Trinity College were all of interest. After a meal in a typical pub and naturally a visit to the Guinness Hop Store I finished my tour in the bustle of O'Connell Street.

I left Howth and sailed south to Wicklow – Ballykissangel country. On then to the difficult shallow harbour of Wexford. The buoyage had become very poor since my visit in 1990 but I was glad I made the effort as I was remembered by many of the locals. An E. gale was forecast so, bucking and bouncing I struggled out of the harbour just in time. Once past Rosslare I flew round Carnsore Point into the safety of Kilmore Quay before the full fury of the storm broke.

It was still blowing hard when I left, but once round Hook Lighthouse I had a good sail up river to Waterford. I spent a couple of days there before the wind went S.W. and I could go back downriver to Dunmore East.

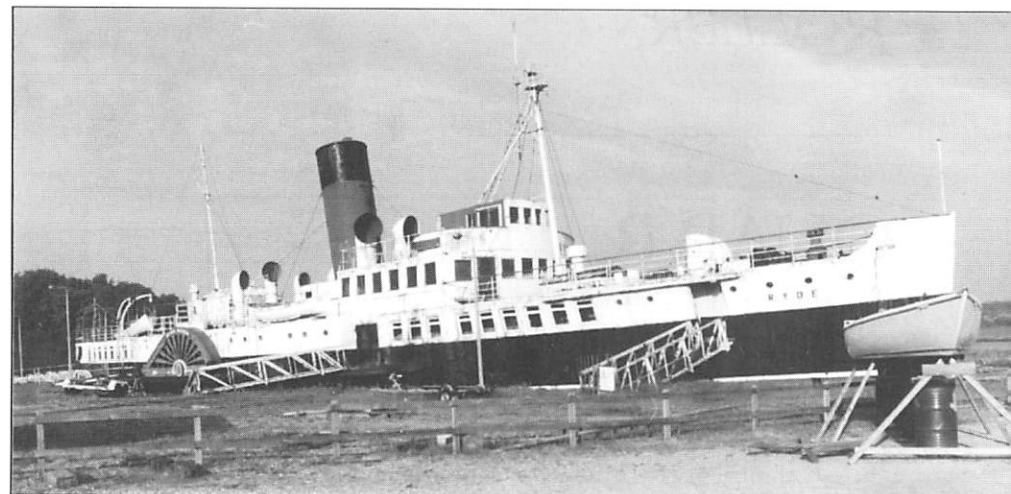
Unwisely I left with a S.W. wind and quite a steep sea, motorsailing it was still slow going. Unusually most of the antifouling had been eroded and long streamers of weed covered the bottom which didn't help so it was dark before I entered Ballycotton, when of course the strong headwind dropped. My last weekend in Crosshaven was made enjoyable by the hospitality of the Royal Cork Yacht Club.

Next day with mixed emotions I sailed past the Bulman and up river to Kinsale. It was now the 29th August and I had left on the 17th June when Kinsale was just stirring from its slumbers. Now it was a much livelier, colourful town although the season was coming to an end.

Reluctantly I left the next morning as there was a favourable breeze for the Scillies.

I was sad to leave, I had visited 45 Irish ports or anchorages, enjoyed the Guinness, many evenings of Irish music in the pubs. Not always good but always with the cheerful company of the Irish. Memories of the varied but beautiful coastline and the friendliness and generosity of the people remain with me and I hope it is not too long before I return.

RYDE in 1996



and now (also see cover)

