

BEAR ESSENTIALS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF CARDIFF BAY YACHT CLUB 51.26.9 N 03.10.4 W

Established in 1935



Edition No. 44

December 2004

Cost priceless

www.cbyc.co.uk

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Eternal vigilance is the price of safety and safety is a state of mind, not a list of equipment and remember to always wear a lifejacket when on or near water.

New Years Eve Party At C.B.Y.C.

*Welcome in the New Year and Dance the Night Away
with the Six Piece Band.*

"INSIGHT"

Sixties Music Onwards - 8 pm until next year, Plus "D.J." Sound and Lighting.

BUFFET

Tickets are only £10.00 each. From behind the bar.

First come first served, they're bound to go quickly at this price. Dress smart casual.

SURGERIES: The Commodore holds a surgery on the last Thursday evening of each month at 20.30 for members who have a query on any aspect of Club business or policy.

Editor: Tony Davies 16 St. Winifred's Close, Dinas Powis, Vale of Glamorgan, CF64 4TT - 029 2051 5376, Mobile 07816 337904 E-Mail: tony@designbyrelish.co.uk Proof reader - Bryan "Reels" Morgan. Distribution - June Ackerman and Ruth Coles. Any views expressed are those of the editor, contributor or correspondent and not necessarily those of the Cardiff Bay Yacht Club. Information contained in this newsletter is not to be used for navigation or reference purposes, always use current Admiralty publications. The publication of any article or advertisement does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the Cardiff Bay Yacht Club management. Copy may be amended or deleted for any reason by the Editor. Club contacts: - Fees - Ruth Coles - (029 2066 6627). Membership - Jane Hall - (029 514 915). Moorings, pontoons, yard, haul-out - Barrie Metcalf - 07966 930823 - during the weekend working period. i.e. 09.00 - 13.00 Sat. & Sun use 07773 462769. Cruisers - Andy Higson (01446 713908). Dinghies - Jeremy Taylor - (029 2040 0457). Angling - Bryan Morgan - (029 2021 7910). Motorboats - Gareth Davies (07970 208390). Catering - Bar - (029 2022 6575). Sailing School - Nick Sawyer (029 2051 4966). Flag Officers: Vice President - Jean Anette (029 2062 0160). Junior Vice President - Roy Evans (029 2070 4696). Commodore - John Jefferies (029 2061 0864). Vice Commodore - Roger Dunstan (029 2089 1451). Rear Commodore - Kevin Rolfe (029 2025 9442). Hon. Secretary Helen Phillips (029 2021 5759). Hon. Treasurer - Tony Thomas (029 2075 0224). Hon. Sailing Secretary - Nick Sawyer (029 2051 4966). Management Committee: Tony Davies (029 2051 5376). Steve Cooper (01443 820 574). Paul Simes (01443 205130). Jeremy Taylor (029 2040 0457). Peter Pope (01443 208360). Jonathan Crofts-Davies (029 2070 7427). Gareth Davies [co-opted] (029 2086 9167). To external recipients of Bear Essentials, please would you kindly display it where others may read it, on a notice board if possible, thank you Tony Davies Editor.

For sale and wanted ads will be published for three months and then deleted unless I hear that the item remains unsold, Editor.

There is nothing; absolutely nothing; half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter . . . that's the charm of it... Kenneth Grahame, "The Wind In The Willows"

**Any fool can carry on but a wise man knows how to shorten sail in time.
Joseph Conrad.**

HOW WE SAVED THE BARGE

BY ARTHUR HELLIAR and CUTHBERT CLARKE 1908:

Performed by Bransby Williams

I'm a Captain, that's what I am, sir, a nautical man by trade,
Though I ain't tricked out in a uniform with buttons of gold and braid.
I ain't the Captain it's true, of one of these floating grand hotels,
It's true as I ain't the skipper of one of these Clacton or Yarmouth Belles.
I'm the Captain of this 'ere barge, sir, wot's known as the "Slimy Sal,"
And a faster boat there ain't on the length or breadth of the whole canal.
Though I'll own so far as the breadths concerned that ain't much praise o' course,
And the number of knots an hour she makes has summat to do with an 'orse.
Have I ever had any adventures? the same as one meets at sea?
I should rather just think I 'ave, sir, not one but a dozen, maybe.
If it wasn't as 'ow my throat's so dry as to almost stop my breath,
I'd tell yer the way as the missis and me was snatched from the jaws of death.
Her courage it was too as saved us, 'er courage what pulled us through,
Or I wouldn't be standing here thirsty-well, thank'ee, don't mind if I do.
One morning some two or three weeks ago, our cargo had all been stowed,
We'd 80 odd tons of coal aboard which o' course was a fairish load,
We'd got a new 'orse that day, sir, too good for the job a lot,
He'd once been a Derby winner, though 'is name I've clean forgot.
He was standing harnessed on to the barge, the missis and I was aboard,
When all of a sudden we feels a jerk and he starts of his own accord.
Something or other had startled him, what it was I never could think,
Though I fancy he'd 'eard some gent like you wot 'ad offered to stand me a drink.
I flew like a flash to the rudder, and I pushes it 'ard alee,
And the missis 'ad 'oisted a flag of distress to the chimbley, I could see.
We 'adn't a fog'orn or whistle aboard but the missis she yells like two,
But the louder she screamed "Clear the course" the faster the old 'orse flew.
He thought he was back in the days gone by, a-winning some famous race,
Twas a race with death for the missis and me, at that awful 'eadlong pace.
'Ouses and trees went flying by—a mighty splash and a shock,
And we'd passed bang through, without paying too, the closed up gates of a lock.
Just then when we'd whizzed through a tunnel she yells from the lower deck,
And says "If that 'orse ain't pulled up pretty quick, I can see as we're in for a wreck.
We only got thirty or forty miles till we gets to the end of the course,
It's a case of which 'olds out the longest the bloomin' canal or the 'orse.
But before I tells 'ow we was saved, sir, there's one thing I'd like yer to know,
My missis was once in a circus as a h'artist I mean, years ago.
She used to perform on the tightrope and wonderful tricks too she done,
But of course, that's all finished and over, her weight being seventeen stun.
Then she stood on the deck where I stood sir,
and I sees a gleam come in her eye,
She says "It's a chance in a thousand, but it's one as I'm willing to try.
The 'eadlong career of the 'orse must be stopped, it's our last and only hope.
There's only one way to get at 'im, I must walk to his back on the rope.
She gives one farewell 'ug sir, takes an oar for a pole in her hands.
Then smiling, as though in a circus, on the tow rope in a second she stands.
I closed both my eyes after that sir, for the sight would have made me unnerved.
For a 'orrible death twould 'ave meant for 'er if the barge for a moment had swerved.
But I opens 'em wide in a moment, for I 'ears a loud kind of a crack.
And I sees that theer 'orse collapse in a 'eap, for the missis 'ad broken 'is back.
As soon as the crisis was over, on the deck in a swoon sir I dropped.
But the barge it went on for a mile and a 'arf on it's lonesome afore it was stopped.
Why didn't we cut thro' the rope sir, and 'ave let the orse loose instead?
Just fancy you thinking o' that now, why, it never came into my 'ead!!

Supplied by William J. Turton Esq.

PORTS: An inlet of the sea between the land with good anchorage where a vessel may ride secure from the storms. [a definition from 1730] and a true description today. But we have come to regard a port especially in the Bristol channel to mean a town where there is a sea lock and a floating harbour where a ship can tie up alongside to convey goods.

But this description belongs to the 19th century, when there was a rapid expansion in the trade of goods to and from our shores, when the docks at Milford, Swansea, Barry, Penarth, Cardiff and Newport were built. The docks at Bristol and Gloucester belong to an earlier century.

Prior to the boom in docks in South Wales primarily for the export of coal, the busiest harbour was at Pleasant Harbour now the site of Aberthaw power station, built in the 1950's. This harbour consisted of a pool fed by the River Thaw and a harbour wall reached only at high water. Towards the end of its life the harbour was dominated by a large mechanized lime kiln, which is still there today.

Elsewhere along the South Wales coast, harbours consisted of drying creeks or river beds with wharves mainly at the towns mentioned. But trade was carried out at many other locations now not so obvious. There were many shore side lime kilns, and up rivers, like the Wye, riverside quarries that discharged directly into Trows. Along the Severn banks between the bridges can be seen cuts in the bank, where Trows nosed in at high water for loading. In our area, vessels simply landed on the beach. These locations can be detected by looking at the old road systems where they terminated in the sea. Penarth front, Lavernock point, Swanbridge and at least three locations along Sully bay.

Back in Roman times the Ely pill was used, as was the Taff and Usk, providing sheltered waters, But with the discovery of the Roman custom house at Cold Knapp, the Romans must have used the pebbly beach to land their galleys. Recently there have been found the remains of old ships dating back to the 14th century namely at Gold Cliff, Newport, and Chepstow, suggesting they may have been abandoned at the site they operated from.

The heyday of the South Wales ports was reached before 1940. They are now in decline and within the next 20 years it is conceivable that only one will be in use and maybe in 50 years, all taken over for pleasure activities. JOHN WOOD 09 2004.

Thought is the wind, knowledge the sail, and mankind the vessel.

Dear Bryan, Many thanks for your letter, which has been passed on to the operational staff.

Can I also pass on our thanks to the competition organisers, and Trevor Parker in particular? By learning from previous events, they planned the event at a time of neap tides, and also provided us with a list of the bulk of competitors in advance. The timing of the event allowed for locking without restrictions and the prior communication allowed for preparations our end.

We look forward to working with you when you start planning for next year's event, so as to ensure it is even more successful.

Yours sincerely Stuart Jones Barrage Team Leader Cardiff Harbour Authority

R. Freemantle Esq. Cardiff Harbour Authority
Queen Alexandra Dock,
Cargo Road,
Cardiff. CF10 4LT

Re: Cardiff Bay Yacht Club Annual Open (Boat) Cod Fishing Festival 7th Nov 2004

Dear Rob,

I write on behalf of the C.B.Y.C. Angling Section Committee who feel that it's only right and proper we should let you know that, although we had 110 boats attending the above Comp, we consider that the service from the barrage was exemplary.

All the duty staff were "brilliant" and are to be commended on their helpful attitude and expertise in getting all those vessels out, and back in, with a minimum of fuss. I don't believe there were any real problems, not that we heard of anyway.

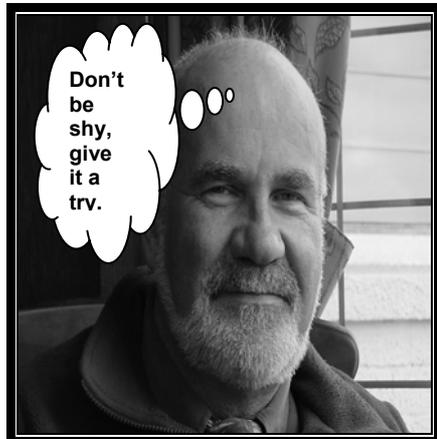
Although our Vice Chairman, Trevor Parker has been in touch to thank them, we think we should make our thanks "Official". We would therefore be grateful if you would kindly "do the honours" and pass this message on to all concerned.
Thanks and kind regards,

Bryan. Bryan Morgan. [Sec/Treas. Angling Section].

WHO'S WHO AT CARDIFF BAY YACHT CLUB: Starting from this issue of Bear Essentials I am featuring a article profiling some of the members at C.B.Y.C. and to encourage participation I thought I'd start with myself...

I am Tony Davies and I am 57 years old, and am retired. I have been a keen sailor for most of my life, starting with the Scouts in Whitchurch, where we built a Yachting World Rambler and sailed it out of Barry, this was in the late 50s.

I went to sea as an electrical engineering officer, first with the ESSO Petroleum Company then with Geest & Co out of Barry and finally with The Cable and Wireless Co., sailing on a cable laying and repair ship "Mercury" which incidentally, was laid up in Avonmouth docks for many years before being scrapped.



When I came ashore I joined the Barry Yacht Club and sailed a "Ruffian 23" in partnership with a neighbour, this mostly consisted of racing in the Barry Y. C. points series, away meetings, regattas, channel races and suchlike. In 1975 I became a member of the Cardiff Yacht Club, still sailing the Ruffian 23 which incidentally was called "Scruff" At this time my main activity was mostly racing interspersed with cruising the upper reaches of the Bristol Channel. In 1988 I became a member of The Penarth Motorboat and Sailing Club (now CBYC) and bought my present craft which is an Oyster Hustler SJ 35, built in 1985 for one of the commodores of the Royal Yacht Squadron who's name I can't recall. She sailed under the I.O.R. handicap system and indeed, or so I am told, came second in the world "three quarter ton cup" in 1986 or thereabouts. I also own "Floosie" which is a "Seafarer 465" a 15 foot trailer sailer which I sail in the bay and also trail. I am a Council member, and also editor of Bear Essentials which I enjoy producing. I do hope that one or two other people will be inspired to contribute to "who's who" especially flag officers and council members, my e-mail is as usual... tony@designbyrelish.co.uk

PONTOONS 2004: Well, if you haven't been down to checkout your boat lately you won't have noticed the new pontoon layout – you may have difficulty in finding your boat even but trust me it is there! A new government idea is to try to improve the health of the nation e.g. by walking more; well the CBYC CoM have listened carefully and acted in an appropriate way. i.e. most of us have to walk a lot further to 'find' our boats – not too bad a thing eh? Well done the CoM.

The new scheme is coming along at a pace now after a rather slow start. Many people have helped the hardworking staff to move boats, pontoons, cleats etc also to build and refurbish pontoons, build bridges, pull ropes, drive boats etc. To all these folk we must pass on a hearty thank you from everyone at CBYC. The main walkway has a slight list to port; this is quite deliberate as it aids drainage so the wood will last longer – well done Barrie.

So by Christmas we should have completed phase one and have approximately 50 extra berths, then we have to attend to our car park problems – more next month. Anon C.L.

STAND OF THE TIDE: Period at high and low water when there is no appreciable change of level.

GO BY THE BOARD: Said of a piece of equipment that breaks away from the deck and goes overboard, particularly of a mast.

DATELINE JUNE 2005 TRAFALGAR 200 CELEBRATIONS: Today it is exactly 200 years since Lord Nelson's famous naval victory over the French and Spanish in the Battle of Trafalgar. To kick-start the anniversary celebrations, yesterday an actor dressed as Nelson posed for pictures on the River Thames at Greenwich. But before he was allowed on board an RNLI Lifeboat, safety officials made him wear a lifejacket over his 19th century admiral's uniform.

So how would Nelson have fared if he had been subject to modern health and safety regulations? We can only imagine...

"Order the signal to be sent, Hardy." "Aye, aye sir." "Hold on, that's not what I dictated to the signal officer. What's the meaning of this?" "Sorry sir?" "England expects every person to do his duty, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious persuasion or disability. What gobbledegook is this?" "Admiralty policy, I'm afraid, sir. We're an equal opportunities employer now. We had the devil's own job getting 'England' past the censors, lest it be considered racist." "Gadzooks, Hardy. Hand me my pipe and tobacco." "Sorry sir. All naval vessels have been designated smoke-free working environments."

"In that case, break open the rum ration. Let us splice the main brace to steel the men before battle." "The rum ration has been abolished, Admiral. It's part of the Government's policy on binge drinking." "Good heavens, Hardy. I suppose we'd better get on with it. Full speed ahead." "I think you'll find that there's a 4 knot speed limit in this stretch of water."

"Damn it man! We are on the eve of the greatest sea battle in history. We must advance with all dispatch. Report from the crow's nest, please." "That won't be possible, sir." "What?" "Health and Safety have closed the crow's nest, sir. No harness. And they said that rope ladder doesn't meet regulations. They won't let anyone up there until a proper scaffolding can be erected."

"Then get me the ship's carpenter without delay, Hardy." "He's busy knocking up a wheelchair access to the fo'c'sle Admiral." "Wheelchair access? I've never heard anything so absurd." "Health and Safety again, sir. We have to provide a barrier-free environment for the differently abled."

"Differently abled? I've only one arm and one eye and I refuse even to hear mention of the word. I didn't rise to the rank of admiral by playing the disability card." "Actually, sir, you did. The Royal Navy is under-represented in the areas of visual impairment and limb deficiency." "Whatever next? Give me full sail. The salt spray beckons."

"A couple of problems there too, sir. Health and Safety won't let the crew up the rigging without crash helmets. And they don't want anyone breathing in too much salt - haven't you seen the adverts?" "I've never heard such infamy. Break out the cannon and tell the men to stand by to engage the enemy." "The men are a bit worried about shooting at anyone, Admiral."

"What? This is mutiny." "It's not that, sir. It's just that they're afraid of being charged with murder if they actually kill anyone. There's a couple of legal aid lawyers on board, watching everyone like hawks." "Then how are we to sink the Frenchies and the Spanish?"

"Actually, sir, we're not." "We're not?"

"No, sir. The Frenchies and the Spanish are our European partners now. According to the Common Fisheries Policy, we shouldn't even be in this stretch of water. We could get hit with a claim for compensation." "But you must hate a Frenchman as you hate the devil." "I wouldn't let the ship's diversity coordinator hear you saying that sir. You'll be up on a disciplinary charge."

"You must consider every man an enemy who speaks ill of your King." "Not any more, sir. We must be inclusive in this multicultural age. Now put on your Kevlar vest; it's the rules."

"Don't tell me - Health and Safety. Whatever happened to rum, and the lash?" "As I explained, sir, rum is off the menu. And now there's a ban on corporal punishment." "I believe it's to be encouraged, sir." "In that case... kiss me, Hardy."

Christmas Menu at C.B.Y.C.

*Merry Christmas
to you all from
Sue and the
galley slaves.*

Sue will add extra nights if there are enough bookings.

3 Course Christmas Dinner

plus Mulled Wine and Coffee

£14.95

For Bookings contact Sue Jones Direct on 07779 315609, or pick up an Menu & booking form in the club.

*Thank you for
your patronage
and may we
wish you all the
best for 2005.*

Please Remember the Club Restaurant Winter Opening Times

Thursday Evenings, Saturday Lunchtimes, Sunday Lunchtimes.

Why not enjoy a meal at Your Club!

CAPTAIN CAPTAIN: I don't like sailing; shut up and keep bailing.

AFRAID: I came across this many years ago in a book about the sea that I have forgotten. I have not seen it anywhere else, although you may have done. It was attributed to the Hebridean fishermen:

"A man who is not afraid of the sea will soon be drowned, for he will go to sea on day when shouldn't. We be all afraid of the sea and we be drowned only now and again." I've no idea whether its authentic, it doesn't sound very Scots dialect, although it embodies that acceptance of fate that marks communities that earn their living from the sea. Gren Fox.

QUARTERDECK BAR: We are looking into redecorating the quarterdeck bar. If you have any ideas, preferences or suggestions, please send them to me via email (kprolfe@hotmail.com) phone (029 2025 9442) Kev Rolfe Rear Commodore.

FOR SALE: 23ft Catamaran (Hirondelle) 5 berth, Furling fore sail, Roller main, 10 hp mariner engine, Good condition, £5,000 o.n.o. For Quick Sale Tel John 02920 229646

WANTED: Solar panel, suitable for charging 80 ah lead acid battery please call Mobile 07816 337904.

2005 – 2006 YEAR BOOK: If you have any ideas for it's improvement, an amendment from this years edition or a photograph suitable for the front cover please contact. Tony Davies.

ARROWSMITHS TIDE TABLES A limited number of Arrowsmiths tide tables are available on a first come first served basis, £4.00 each. Please contact: Tony Davies 16 St. Winifred's Close, Dinas Powis, Vale of Glamorgan, CF64 4TT - 029 2051 5376, Mobile 07816 337904 E-Mail: tony@designbyrelish.co.uk

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR: *May I take this opportunity to wish each and everyone of the members of C.B.Y.C. a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year and also say a warm thank you to the many members who have supplied copy or been involved with the production and distribution of Bear Essentials especially Bryan (Reels) Morgan, June Ackerman and Ruth Coles in the office, once again thank you all very much, Tony Davies, Editor Bear Essentials.*

DINNER: We had to dine with us today Mr. Christopher Hughes, American charge' at Stockholm, Col. Webb, Mr. William B Astor, and Dr Francis. While we were at dinner there was a ring at the doorbell. The boy Daniel went out and found nobody there; but there was a basket at the door, which he brought into the dining room, and it was found to contain a lovely infant, about a week old, stowed away in soft cotton. It had on a clean muslin frock, lace cap. its underclothes new and perfectly clean, a locket which contained a lock of dark hair; the whole covered nicely with a piece of new flannel, and a label pinned on the breast on which was written, in a female hand, Alfred G. Douglas.

It was one of the sweetest babies I ever saw. It lay in a placid dozing state, and occasionally opened its little sparkling eyes, and seemed satisfied. Poor little innocent - abandoned by its natural protector, and thrown at its entrance into life upon the sympathy of a selfish world, to be exposed, if it should live, to the sneers and taunts of uncharitable illegitimacy! How often in his future life may the bitter wish swell in his heart and rise to his lips, that those eyes which now opened so mildly upon me while I was gazing upon his innocent face had been forever closed.

My feelings were strongly interested, and I felt inclined at first to take in and cherish the little stranger; but this was strongly opposed by the company who urged, very properly, that in that case I would have 20 more such outlets to my benevolence. I reflected, moreover, that if the little urchin should turn out bad, he would prove a troublesome inmate; and if intelligent and good, by the time he became an object of my affection the rightful owners might come and take him away. So John Stotes was summoned, and sent off with the little wanderer to the almshouse.

The group in the kitchen which surrounded the basket, before John took it away, would have furnished a capital subject for a painter. There was the elegant diplomat, the inquisitive doctor, the bluff editor, and the calculating millionaire my wife and daughters, standing like the daughters of Pharaoh over the infant Moses in the bulrushes - all interested, but differently affected, the maids shoving forward to get a last peep; little Emily, the black cook, ever and anon showing her white teeth; James and Dannie in the background, wondering that so great a fuss should be made about so small a matter; and John, wrapped up in his characteristically neat overcoat, waiting with all the dignified composure which marks his demeanour, to receive his interesting charge and convey it to its destination.

This affair ended, we returned to the dinner table, the game and oysters cold. but our hearts warm; other topics soon engrossed us. and it was near midnight when we broke up. Philip Hone, (1780-1851) A businessman and mayor of New York... a snippet from his diary... December 8,1838.

Bear Essentials: is the newsletter of the Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, it is produced monthly and is entirely dependent on articles contributed by members. Thanks go to the members who supply regular copy, it would be impossible to produce without your contributions. My ultimate goal is to obtain monthly copy from every section of the Club. The deadline is strictly the end of each month, if you have an article, anecdote, item for sale or wanted etc. please e-mail it to the editor... Tony Davies: tony@designbyrelish.co.uk

ALL-A-TAUT: Said of a ship when she is fully rigged and everything is in place.

WELSH WONDERLAND – A SUMMER CRUISE: June 2004 will probably not be remembered for its fine weather. Quite the contrary, it was a rotten month, one of the worst Junes on record. But there was a week, just a week, when it all turned out brilliantly and, by chance, that is the week when Teân of Cardiff set out from the Barrage at 03.30 on the tide, heading West.

There was little wind to begin with but with a Spring tide under our keel, we made good progress. By breakfast time we were sailing, close-hauled into a decent westerly breeze and making 5 or so knots through the water. The sun shone. The biggest threat to an early arrival in Milford Haven was posed by sunburn and the desire to stop for a swim in one of the Gower's beautiful bays, clearly visible from miles off. The Haven was reached by 2030, and a spot alongside the pontoon at Dale provided an idyllic setting for the first nights rest.

Next morning dawned bright and clear and we left Dale at the appointed time according to the rules for getting through Jack Sound at slack water – a civilised 08.30. In fact we sailed so well on that leg that we had time to kill, exploring South Haven at Skomer and watching the nesting Puffins close-in to the grassy slopes of the island. Jack Sound was traversed without incident. We recorded 5 knots of tide briefly at one point – and this was slack water ! Whilst the crew marvelled at the spectacular scenery in this area, the skipper had to keep his eyes firmly on the road to ensure a safe passage. This is challenging but not difficult if the pilot book's advice is accurately applied.

Next we were crossing St Brides Bay in blazing sunshine with genoa pulling nicely and real Cornish pasties for lunch made by our real Cornish crewman – bliss! The entry to Ramsey Sound needs to be just right. By the time we reached it the tide was running with us but not too strongly. We chose the western route, coming close to the Bitches and easily avoiding the dangers. We were flushed out the other side by the gathering strength of the tide and sent on our way around St David's Head towards Strumble Head in no time at all. Again, the spectacular scenery of that part of Wales on such a perfect day would take a lot of beating. The resident Peregrines wheeled and soared above the cliffs giving us an impressive display of their flying prowess. The wind stayed fair and gave us a good run into Fishguard Harbour. We chose to anchor off Old Fishguard but not before landing alongside the old quay for water and supplies and a chat with the friendly natives. What a pretty little port Old Fishguard is. We spent another idyllic evening in the bay and after a swim, settled down to the usual menu of fine foods and wines accompanied by Norah Jones. There was only one other yacht anywhere near and a couple of fishermen bringing in the catch as the sun went down over a glassy sea – theirs was certainly an appealing job in those conditions!

An early start the next day saw us racing across Cardigan Bay for Pwllheli some 60 miles distant. The hills of West Wales stood out a brilliant green in the morning sunshine. Visibility was so good that features stood out for miles and it seemed to take an age to leave the land behind despite our 6 knots plus through the water. Sea-birds were becoming more numerous now with large flocks of Manx Shearwaters at regular intervals and occasionally Storm Petrels skipping through the waves. The Gannets, out on a day-trip from Grassholm, were as agile as ever, bringing up sparkling fish with apparent ease. The wind soon dropped and came astern giving us the opportunity for a spinnaker run for many miles as we closed on the North Wales coast. Teân's colourful spinnaker completed the perfect scene with a sun-kissed sea and dramatic Lleyn peninsula ahead. Another perfect day ended in the quiet and perfectly sheltered Hafn Pwllheli where we bade goodbye to one of our crew for whom work was looming. Next day the two remaining sailors set out with great hopes as a strong North-Westerly gave 6 to 7 knots through the water for the first hour under full sail. Soon however, the familiar pattern of sunshine and falling wind came upon us and we were resigned to motoring back to Fishguard after another long day at sea. This day was a bit different. Half way across the bay, we were surrounded by a spectacular display of Bottle-nosed Dolphins. A family group including mother and baby pairs came leaping and diving around the boat, giving the chance for video clips and stills to die for! My screen-saver now is a constant reminder of that wonderful day. This continued for over half an hour before they tired of this play and went on their way. In many years of sailing the Cornish and Welsh coasts I have rarely been eye-to-eye with so many of these beautiful creatures. It was a true privilege.

The following day saw an easy passage from Fishguard and into Ramsey Sound, this time by the inshore route close to the Lifeboat house with a strong tide running. On exit from the sound a sea-fog came down very suddenly. I was glad this had not happened ten minutes earlier when we were sluicing past the Bitches at 10 knots over the ground! St Brides Bay was eerily quiet in the fog. All our navigational skills had to be employed to give confidence in our track making for Jack Sound. The GPS was a comfort but no substitute for good seamanship in those conditions. A ghostly outline of another yacht crossed our bows making for open water. We judged it better to close the land and had already decided at which point to abort and go around to the west of Skomer when the fog disappeared as quickly as it had come. Behind us was a massive fog-bank and the unfortunate yacht heading north-west was guaranteed to stay in it! The sun now shone with a vengeance, seemingly to make up for the two hours lost in the fog. Jack Sound looked unappealing with the threat of more fog hanging around, the entrance so Skomer was rounded and a fair wind soon sprung up to carry us swiftly past Milford Haven on route East. St Gowans ranges were in action that day so we were escorted out to sea and given a detour that lost our tidal advantage before we reached Caldey island. A night at anchor off Tenby was in store and the angry sky heralded a change in the weather. This was day five of a fantastic week surely it couldn't last?

Next day dawned grey and windy. NW 6 was forecast and NW 6 was what we got for an exiting surf-ride for the 60 miles to Watchet. The wind and waves clearly didn't put off the seal fishing off the Foreland or the mother and baby Harbour Porpoises off Porlock. This was tiring but satisfying stuff and it put the luncheon chef to his first real test of the trip. It's funny how often Teân ends up in Watchet, but it seems such a convenient place to fetch up if you don't really want to go home just yet!

Next day we romped home with a fair wind and tied up at the club by early afternoon. The weather was still sunny and it was sad to leave the boat after such a fine trip.

During the following few days, the weather deteriorated to a point where we all doubted true Summer would ever come. I believe there were six weeks of pretty foul weather following that fantastic week in June. We were so lucky to see Wales at its very best, to have the privilege of seeing her wildlife close at hand and to enjoy her scenery in such perfect conditions. I think we are a lucky ship. I hope so. This really can be a Welsh Wonderland! Richard White – Teân of Cardiff.

That she drinks water, and her keel plows air. George Chapman.

RANDOM JOTTINGS FROM A SUMMER SPENT CRUISING THE ATLANTIC COAST OF FRANCE: The Boat is a Rustler 36 [a sailing yacht to the uninitiated!], which draws 1.6m; has a "long" keel by modern standards so is extremely cantankerous going astern; displaces 8 tonne so we have to pick whom we moor alongside when it's blowing. Balanced -- and some! -- by sailing smoothly, quickly and easily to windward when required. We try [hard!] not to "require" her to go to windward very often.....!

The Area We Sail. On retirement 5 years ago I took "Arian" to the Atlantic coast of France and now keep her at Foleux, 14 miles up the Vilaine River, during the winter. In the Summer we are gypsies -- we moor where we are and move on to fresh pastures when it suits. And "it suits" when the winds are fair and the sun shines, which it does most of the time around this area. Our cruising grounds have been bounded by Brest in the north, and Gijon, on the North Coast of France in the South. Crews have been variously very experienced; family; non-sailing friends; and just me! The Jottings, then....

- We had that summer gale in France as well here at home. I can *strongly* recommend Port Crouesty [just outside the entrance to the Morbihan], as a very safe bolt-hole in such strong on-shore conditions. The visitors berths -- 130 of them -- are deep inside the marina complex, inside the several harbour walls that have been built as each stage of the marina has been commissioned. We were heeling around 10* to 15* in the strong winds, but conditions were settled on the visitors pontoons.
- The entrance to Crouesty is shallow at low water, and has rocky ledges each side of the buoyed entrance channel. On the port side these ledges are *very* close to the last two port-hand markers: those on the starboard hand are *to seaward* of the starboard channel markers, towards the headland. Even at high tide the port side ledges are dangerous. The combined effect of these ledges is to make the last half-mile into the port rough/disturbed in onshore breezes. As there is no space within the port to round up and take off sail, it is essential to plan the de-rigging in good time.
- Concameau is *not secure* in strong on-shore winds. This year, in that summer gale, the pontoons broke-up, boats had to be left to their fate and the crews evacuated into emergency accommodation within the town. This is a repeat of a similar situation in a similar on-shore gale around 10 years ago.
- This whole area is noticeably more crowded now compared to just five years ago. That congestion is *not* around the middle of July [Bastille Day] as is frequently suggested. Our experience is that the whole of August is *far* more difficult, as the combined British, French, Dutch and German fleets all compete for space. We reserve space at La Trinite for 6 weeks each year, booking from one year to the next, to ensure that we have a base from which to operate if necessary [this is the real benefit of not having a "home" marina as the double cost would then be prohibitive]. But this year even with this prior arrangement, we were moved several times and ended up rafted three deep for some time. This had not happened in earlier years when we were allocated a free pontoon for the whole of the booked period -- and then had the significant additional benefit of being able to return in the middle of the night and still find it free.
- The French customs are ever more active, and now resorting to teams of male/female officers in casual dress apparently "wandering" around the marinas. They appear to be particularly interested in whether the boater has a house in France as well as the boat. You need to demonstrate that your home is the UK, not just assert it is..... I found the address on the boat insurance schedule, plus the printed out copies of email exchanges with marinas/boatyards [showing my UK email address] a lifesaver here when one team became "pressing".
- Our collective experiences of French railways, local bus systems and taxis have been universally favourable. The taxis have been well driven and sensibly priced. The railways are remarkably favourably priced, run to time [or not at all because of strikes.....] and do "connect" when the timetable says they should. And they are clean and comfortable! Then, local buses seem to run just about everywhere -- although at times they are "infrequent" to put it mildly -- and explore corners of the locality you probably didn't know existed. The timetables of both buses and trains need to be read with great care as they are covering wide variations in service offered for weekdays, holiday and weekends. But they are, in our experience, kept up to date and as the seasons change so are the timetables on display.
- The Admiralty on-line system for providing chart up-dates works smoothly and is well worth using along this coast, particularly the North Coast of Spain where there seems to be an explosion of change to harbour and navigation data. The system has been significantly improved each year, and is due for another leap forward in March 2005. It is now really easy to use and effective in it's facility.
- Prices of much sailing kit in France is more expensive than at home. Particularly antifouling. And, strangely, "Plastimo", which is French...
- BUT, per contra, their hourly charges for labour/services are *much* lower than at home. And, despite the rather sniffy attitude we have to their long lunch breaks, they get things done quickly and therefore cheaply. Taking out my mast in the UK, 5 years ago was costing around £250 and the same to put it back in at launch. I have just paid the euro equivalent of £40 to take it out, AND the boatyard demolished a fence especially to allow it to be stored alongside "Arian" in her normal winter berth...
- At Port Louis [entrance to Lorient] we had the harbourmaster talking to us at the entrance to his marina, clarifying where we were to go, and then leaping onto his bike and peddling like mad to be able to take our lines as we berthed. To add to this promising beginning, we then found the adjacent village absolutely delightful. AND the berthing fees were low, even by French standards.
- La Rochelle already has the largest marina, by far, along this coast. But, they are this coming year, expanding even that to give an extra 1700 berths, bringing the total to around 4800! If visiting, consider going into the old harbour [through those famous double towers -- an experience in itself!]. It can be a bit noisy as you are right in the centre of a large vibrant town. But that location is itself the big advantage as the main marina is a very long way from the centre, is cold and dispassionate.
- In August this year there were the first signs that some of the harbours on the off-lying islands were reaching saturation point. Ile de Groix and Belle Ile were overfull before the end of the day, with boats arriving after 16.00hrs having at best, unattractive berths. In fresh conditions I would not have wanted to be where some of those boats were being put. And some of the French skippers are "flamboyant" in their approach, so can cause more caring owners heart failure with their antics to "get a place". The need for plenty of large fenders is now unavoidable.... *Continued on next page*

Far more boats sink at the dock than they do on the high seas. In an owner's absence, a minor problem can easily become a full-blown disaster.

From previous page.

- Mooring fees are sometimes twice the “normal” level in July and August. And in the peak season there is consistent effort made to actually collect the fees, whereas in the rest of the year frequently no one is employed at all in this task. We find the French publication “Livre au Bord” *much* better than any of the British almanacs, for this area. It is an annual publication, very widely available at chandlers, harbour offices and other sea-side businesses, and is in both French and English. It costs around £10. Apart from its use as an almanac, it also gives a wealth of local data that is valuable in the wider marine arena.
- At Le Bono, near Auray in the Morbihan we actually lifted the mooring completely at the peak of the Spring tide! As it was very fresh at the time, we had an entertaining time bringing order and calm to the ensuing chaos.! This buoy was one of the official visitors berths and we thought it significant that the harbourmaster was patrolling in his launch and was quickly involved.
- Boat diesel is expensive in France as the tax discount given to car diesel is not present. It can come as quite a shock if one simply “fills up”, particularly in a power boat. *On the North Coast of Spain it can be very difficult to obtain diesel. The Pilot books cover this aspect because it is such a problem.*

The initial reason we started to stay in France for the whole year was the unattractive passage home up the North Cornwall coast, at the end of the season and therefore always with the risk [and frequently the event] of foul weather. That is still a key aspect. But after the experiences of the last 5 seasons we have come to feel welcome as boaters, not the target of corporate avarice and public disdain. And that is now assuming an entirely new source of pleasure – on top of the [usually] better weather etc. etc. Jeff Owen.

PS. Bought a Mirror in August – from within the Club -- and am now relearning the pleasures [?] of getting wet *before* starting to sail, heeling in a puff of breeze and that booms are very hard when they clout you round the ears. But balanced -- as everything is with sailing -- by the immense pleasure of introducing a six year old grandson and three year old grand-daughter, to those indefinable days of “fun” being in a boat. See you “Down The Bay”.



ANGLING SECTION: Well, at last, we've actually succeeded in having an Open Cod Comp that hasn't had to be cancelled due to bad weather. The day went very well indeed, with no real “Hassle”. The car parking was ‘a bit of a headache’, to say the least, but we managed in the end. We've sent a letter to the harbour authority thanking them for their help in getting everybody out – and in again – with a minimum of fuss. A copy of the letter is on the notice board with their reply.

The final details of the Comp. were as follows: - Alan Jeffries of Cwmbran Angling won the first prize of £600 + 50% of the pool monies, with a Cod of 15lb 4ozs Second was Paul Backhouse, £300 + 30% pool, Boat Sandpiper, with a Cod of 14lb 7ozs. Third was Ray Smith, £200 + 20% Pool, Boat Watcher, [D Hobbs], with a Cod of 13lb 15ozs. There were 31 prizes in total and there were 33 Cod, over 6lbs, weighed in.

The Comp was very well attended with 110 boats and 426 Anglers, a record attendance for us. Considering the number fishing the number of landed Cod over 6lbs was considered low. Where have they all gone? The presentation of the prizes in the evening went very well and we gave a donation of £500 to the NOAH's ARK Children's Hospital Appeal.

The last Comp. On 21st November was fairly well attended - we'd like to have seen more – and it was won by James Singleton, [Sea Princess], with a Conger, 34lb 11ozs / 56.98%. Second was John Gittins, with a Cod 12lb 7ozs. 3rd & 4th were TWO VISITORS, Steve Atkinson and John Harris, each with Cod; 9lb 9ozs & 6lb 4ozs.

THE NEXT COMP. Will be A Bumper Christmas Comp. on Sunday 5th Dec. There will be £120 in cash prizes for the first three heaviest cod and also the pool will be divided between the first three winners, 50%, 30%, & 20%. Also there will be poultry prizes for the first ten and every member that fishes will receive a chicken.

A new list of Fish Minimum Weights is now on the Notice Board and the eligible fish now total 14. Also available is a printed guide for use on board, to make it easier to see if a fish is worth keeping for the weigh-in.

The New Comps list etc. has now been posted on the Notice Board.

Also on the Notice Board is the “Chart” showing the limits of the Fishing Area for all future Comps.

The Angling Section committee would like to take this opportunity to wish all Angling Section Members and also all other C.B.Y.C. Members a Very Happy Christmas and New Year.



Of wind (in or near Britain) A veering wind, fair weather, a backing wind, foul weather. If the wind is north-east, three days without rain at least.