



YACHT  
**CAMINGO**

BOYNE CRUISE



MAY 1993

## 'Not so plain sailing'

The problem with my skipper is that he is over forty and is thus inclined to reminisce from time to time. This can be a problem when he recalls his dinghy sailing days and attempts to relive them in a 27ft cruiser as was the case when we headed north for the Boyne.

On a bright Saturday morning in May we left the sanctuary of Malahide behind. The forecast was favorable. On my first cruise, and not knowing what to expect, I opted to keep my head low and my mouth shut. As we headed north along the coast, the crew relaxed. Russell spoke of previous cruises and especially of Eithne's penchant for 'basking' on the foredeck taking in the sun and distracting other crews in her flowery bikini. Mary-Jo, having just completed her duty aboard the L.E. Eithne was 'briefing' us on how real sailors do it on real ships.

Slowly, we nudged our way north past Portrane, Skerries ... Having kept quiet for so long I finally posed a question to Roger. 'Why are we going to Drogheda?' His reply, 'For old times sake, it's where I spent my formative sailing years.' The question opened the flood gates and out gushed a series of memories ...

As the columns marking the mouth of the Boyne approached Roger grew visibly more excited. The reasons soon became apparent. At the river's mouth there was a boiling, angry sea. We took in the sail's and switched on the engines. Expertly, we came through the first challenge of the day.

Quickly we moved up the river. Roger on the helm pointing to the site of the boat club where he spent his youth on 'Enterprises' learning the vagaries of boat and river. ~~The boat club was~~ Next we came upon the fish plant and the factory. We were briefed on the ability of the Boyne to take large vessels and how Drogheda is a fast growing port. In addition to all of this we learnt a little about the local wild life.

As the town's huge arched bridge approached we spotted the 'marina'. (~~He tied at~~) What a marina, the stench! Ahead

of us in the marina was the entire Clogher Head fishing fleet. Between hunger and small we were desperate to get ashore. But at low water all that lay between us and terra firma was <sup>the</sup> ten feet of fresh air above us!

Russell to the rescue. 'Our hero' scaled the heights and dragged us up one by one but not without incident. Our 'real sailor' dropped her handbag into green, gusy mud below. What's a handbag stuck in mud to a crew used to picking up a Malahide mooring! We retrieved the handbag and headed for 'little Peking'. There we attempted to get rid of the bag but on two occasions the staff rescued it and returned it. We then told them it's history and it was bye-bye bag after that.

Appetites satisfied, thirsts now had to be quenched. We went to one of Roger's old haunts on the river. We had to prolong our stay there awaiting the rising tide to bring Camingo closer to us. I don't know if it did but it seemed alot closer after our little spell in the pub.

Bed beckoned but prior to retirement we agree the morning watch. Roger being the local expert and I the early riser opted to take Camingo down the river (~~at six~~) in the morning. At 6 a.m we rose and cast off. Big ships and little dinghies ply this river so we had no concerns regarding lack of water.

Revisiting the fish plant we heard a crunching but it passed. The instruments indicated sufficient water. We eased our way towards the mouth of the river where the confluence of river and sea foamed furiously. As we approached the open the wind stiffened. The morning was dull. As we entered the white water we were being buffeted about. The crunching sound resumed. Mary-Jo, now by my side, said 'This is worse than any Atlantic gale in March'. My response was, 'I haven't made my will!' We jumped as Roger roared at Russell to 'get up now'!

They quickly brought the boat about and headed back up the river. It was vital that we didn't get stuck on the bank in a falling tide and with a rising wind. Up the river we soon got stuck and we were heeled over at 45°. We settled down to catch up on last sleep.

Suddenly over the stern King Neptune in a blue woolly had appeared. Our vessel had been spotted by the local

salvage expert. He was as surprised (or disappointed) to see me as I was to see him. He came on board and accepted the tea and biscuits offered. Our reward was endless stories of adventures in far away places and the activities of the local racing fraternity. This (man) former merchant navyman was now involved in the bloodstock industry!

Eventually he left taking Mary-Jo with him. She had to return to her policing duties off the south coast. Little did she know at the time that the vessel that rescued her from Camingo had earlier been 'borrowed' by King Neptune. The last we saw of her was her heading cross country towards the main road.

On the radio we listened to the ships outside awaiting entry to the river. They were not prepared to tackle the treacherous torrent at the river's mouth.

In the calm of the river we now had enough water and went in search of a mooring. ~~Only one was to be~~ There was only one just beyond the old club house. We headed for the defunct fish plant, now home of old washing machines and appliances. Again we had to climb to Terra Firma. We headed off into the countryside seeking out a local. We soon found one who pointed us in the direction of the owner. He was out but soon recognising the woman at the door we got a temporary home for Camingo. Roger recalled having bought a carpet from this family's business. This won us the mooring.

So what of the crew and skipper. Well he found a refuge for us also; Hadley's Kill was to be our last stop. No, not a planet or some disipated comet but the home of old friends of Roger's. Fortunately, he remembered his old friends better than the river. Next time we read the tide tables!

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