

Isha Cruise West Cork 28th July – 12th August 2000

Written by Denise Doyle

Crew on delivery trip: Denise Doyle, Simon Dupuy, Frank Davis, and Dane Farrell.

Crew cruising West Cork: Denise Doyle, Simon Dupuy and Sean Doyle.

28th July 2000 Malahide to Cork

Simon and I arrived and stored the food and our gear. I felt excited to be embarking on my first delivery trip to Cork. As our crew arrived, we showed them where everything was and where to store their gear. The watch system was explained and agreed as three hours on four hours off. All four of us would be on watch for the first hour then Simon and Dane would be on for two hours. Dane would not take a watch on his own as he had volunteered for the trip even though he had never slept on a boat or sailed any further than Howth. Frank had many trips to Cork under his belt, as did Simon. I also, had many cruises under my belt including Wales, Scotland and West Cork but I had never sailed from Dublin to Cork and was looking forward to the trip.

17:55 We started the engine and waved goodbye to Sean and Adam. It was a beautiful evening with very little wind. As we motored out of the estuary, I was ready to enjoy my 4 hours off watch, as I had just left behind a house full of guests. The peace and quiet of the boat – except for the engine – was bliss.

18:40 Sails up, motor sailing, speed 5 knots. Frank and I hit the bunks, leaving Simon and Dane on deck. Simon gave Dane some instruction on helming and apart from one accidental gybe while crossing Dublin bay, he did great. The wind died, so we motored on to keep up our 4.5 knots required to catch the tidal gate around Carnsore Point the following morning.

22:05 Simon off watch, Frank on the helm, Dane and I having coffee and rolls as we pass Greystones. Dane hits the bunk, and Frank and I have a beautiful watch with clear skies, good visibility, but no wind. If only we could shut the engine off.

22:45 We have rounded Wicklow Head. The log reads 25.3 miles, but comparing with the GPS, we feel it is under reading by about 10 to 20%. Frank goes off watch and I had

a very peaceful hour on my own. We passed two sailing boats heading north. Dane woke up early and made us coffee and cake. We had a good watch together as I was able to teach him navigational work at night using the lights of the Arklow banks.

02:00 Simon is back on deck and its time for me to hit my bunk as we pass Arklow. Dane only has two hours on at night so after his hour Dane goes to sleep leaving Simon on watch alone still motor sailing to get round Carnsore point on time.

04:00 Frank has come on watch and the wind has freshened enough for him to kill the engine. Oh what bliss reaching down the Irish Sea at 6.5 Knots! Unfortunately it didn't last long.

06:00 Back on watch just passing the East Cardinal Mark on the Blackwater Banks. Simon stays up to see the sunrise. We pass some fisherman collecting lobster pots. Frank is up now and informs Simon that if he gets sun in his eyes he'll never get to sleep. Somehow I don't think so. We tried to keep the engine off for Simon to sleep in peace. It only lasted for half an hour and the engine was back on again.

07:50 Log 59.3 miles, the wind has come up, so the engine is off again. Dane has decided to stay up.



08:25 Log 64.79 miles. We decided to have breakfast as we watched the ferries go in and out of Rosslare Harbour. The weather is good so were going inside Tuskar Rock. Even though the weather is good it is still a bit lumpy so put the engine on to give us more drive and stability. Since Simon, Dane and I are all on deck we decide to let Frank sleep on. It's a beautiful morning; sun shining and we're rounding Carnsore Point in perfect conditions and the full lift of the tide is under us.

12:45 Log 81.24 miles, Frank is up for breakfast as the rest of us have lunch. As we pass the Conningbeg Light Ship Frank notices dolphins jumping south of the Saltee Islands. Dane dives for his camera. But it won't work and by the time it does, they were gone. We still seem to be getting a lift with tide but there's no wind and quite a large swell.

14:15 East of Hook Head, Log 85.8 miles, we topped up the diesel.

16:35 The wind has freshened, but it is on the nose so were beating and it's starting to rain. Thank god I'm off watch for four hours.

18:00 Simon and Dane are on watch and have decided to bear off a bit and head in towards Dungarvan. But, we are still making very little headway. At this rate we won't be into Kinsale until 11am tomorrow morning. And at the rate we are using diesel we might not have enough to motor all the way. Simon and I decide we should go into Dungarvan for the night. We can get diesel and hopefully tomorrow the sea will have calmed, and maybe the wind might not be on the nose.

19:00 Dane makes us a snack as Frank reads the sailing directions. We know we're chancing our arm four hours after high water but with our experience of Malahide we decide to have a go. Six porpoises follow us into Dungarvan harbour but abandon us just as we pick up the newly buoyed channel. With Simon on the helm, Frank reading the sailing directions, Dane calling the depth and me picking out the buoys, the sun was setting right in our eyes. We tip toed our way in with just 0.1 metres under the keel at times. The depth rose back up to five meters and we all started to relax.... The depth went from five meters to zero in seconds as we were just passing between a port and starboard mark. Simon quickly reversed us off the sand. As we recovered from the shock, it was decided we must have been too close to the starboard side and that we would try again in the middle. Once again thud and once again Simon got us off. We then decided to pick up one of the moorings in the deep pool of water beside us and use the dingy to get ashore.

21:00 Engine off, log 120 miles, Frank is on his mobile sourcing diesel. Simon is having a beer to calm his nerves and Dane and I cook dinner (Spaghetti Bolognese & garlic bread) and we have a nice bottle of wine. After dinner Simon and Frank pump up the dingy and row ashore with the diesel cans. Dane and I wash up the dishes. Both Dane and I will have to leave the boat in the morning, as we have to be back in Dublin. Simon and Frank will have to bring the boat the rest of the way to Kinsale on their own. They must leave by eight in the morning to get the tide. When they return with the diesel we have packed our gear ready to go first thing tomorrow.

The tide is so low now that the dingy is going aground. All of us getting in to go for a pint meant we had to wade in the last bit. Dungarvan was very lively, with tables outside the restaurants and pubs on the quayside. The sailing directions say that you must be willing to take ground at low water springs, but as we passed the visitor's pontoon there must have been only about six inches of water around the boats on the pontoon. We are now very happy with the position of our boat. The Yacht club was very nice and the people were friendly. They gave us a chart of the buoys in the channel with their lats & longs so we could enter them into the GPS.

29th July 2000

07:00 Bip, Bip, Bip, Darn is it that time already! We drag ourselves out of bed and Frank paddles us ashore while Simon tops up the engine oil. We had woken to fog so we're quite happy to have the chart we got in the yacht club last night. Sean is collecting Dane and I at about ten a.m. We have plenty of time so we both just sit on the bench at the top of the slip and watch Simon and Frank sail off into the distance. Later we head up the town to a hotel for breakfast.

08:00 Franks is back on board so they cast off and pick their way out of the harbour. As the fog lifts there is still very little wind. Heavier wind is forecast for later. At least the seas are calm again and the boat is making headway. With just the two on board they took two hours each on watch.

14:55. They had an uneventful sail until the wind filled. But it's either a feast or a famine. Instead of the F3-4 as forecasted it became a F6-7!! The lads reefed the main and screamed along towards Kinsale with rain, and more rain.

16:00 Engine on, the jib is dropped so they could make a better heading for Kinsale harbour.

18:30 Dropped the mainsail and noticed the bottom batten was coming out of its pocket so it was put back in. Moored up on the visitor's pontoon outside a trot of French and English boats. Engine off, log 47.9 miles. After tidying the boat Frank and Simon hit the town for a well-deserved drink or two.

30th July 2000

After a long sleep Frank left the boat to visit his sister who lives in Cork on his way home to Dublin. Simon went for a walk around Kinsale and the surrounding area.

31st July 2000

Simon Slept most of the day, had a shower and then did some shopping.

1st August 2000

Simon was awoken to the sound of knocking on the coachroof. One of the French boats wanted to move. After a tricky manoeuvre with Frenchmen who had no English, Simon with a borrowed Englishman's wife as crew and both wind and tide working against him,

managed to berth his boat and go back to bed. Later in the day another French boat wanted to leave and kept asking Simon where his wife was to help move the boat!

2nd August 2000

Simon went into Cork today to get a replacement aerial for the VHF as we seem to have lost ours somewhere on the trip down. Teak oil and cleaners were also required. The following days would be spent relaxing, going for long walks and cleaning the boat in between rain showers and strong winds.

4th August 2000

Sean and I arrived in Kinsale and unloaded our gear while Simon had a shower. The weather was to improve tomorrow, so we hoped to leave Kinsale and head for Glandore. While Simon and Sean got diesel, I went shopping for food. We went for a meal and a couple of drinks. The weather forecast that night informed us that the front was slower than they first predicted. So it's another day in Kinsale.

5th August 2000

We had a lovely day in Kinsale, Sean and Simon watched the rugby in the Greyhound bar over a couple of pints while I strolled around the shops. We had dinner in The Spaniard restaurant that was really divine, well worth the walk. After dinner we walked back to Kinsale Yacht Club for a drink and then back to the boat. It was a lovely night so I decided to take a walk around the marina. To my surprise I found a sea otter walking in front of me on the pontoon before he slithered back into the water.



6th August 2000

09:50 Engine on. Sean, Simon and I are in high spirits; this is what we had worked so hard on the boat for over the past few years. We were finally going to cruise West Cork!

10:00 Left the berth and motored out of the harbour. We put up the main, but the force 3-4 southwesterly forecasted never showed. We motored on in very light winds.

11:45 Just off Old Head of Kinsale, Log 5.5 miles.

14:10 Log 18.8 miles, two miles off Galley Head and having a relaxing lunch. All of us have had some shuteye; this motor sailing in light winds can make you very tired.

15:45 Passing Adam and Eve islands on the way into Glandore, sails down.

16:00 We pick up one of the visitor moorings. Log 27.3 miles, engine off. While we sat and had a beer in glorious sunshine, an old man in a rowing boat asked us did we know how had designed our boat? We informed him that we only know of the builder, B. Martin. The man was delighted to inform us that he owned Isha's sister ship and that they were a modified James Francis Jones Design. How small a world we live in.



7th August 2000

13:30 After a long sleep we started the engine and dropped the mooring Simon has decided to stay in bed so we motor out of Glandore heading for Baltimore.

14:10 Fog as thick as soup has come down, we have charted our GPS position just off High Island and were now steering a course to two miles south of The Stags. All hands on deck as lookouts, oh how I hate fog.

15:25 The fog has lifted and we're dead on course, the south cardinal mark off The Stags is in sight. Log 8.1 miles. The new GPS passes its first test.

15:50 Sean has decided we've done enough motor sailing we're going to sail even if it is a beat in light winds into Baltimore Bay.

16:45 Approaching Baltimore Bay and our friend mister fog is back. We begin to inch in towards the Sherkin Light and once again the GPS backs up our chart work.

17:45 We Pick up Sherkin Light straight on the nose, the fog lifts as we pass through the narrow gap between Sherkin and Baltimore. We decide to anchor off Sherkin Island because there's a regatta on in Baltimore and the pontoon in packed with racing boats.

18:30 Dropped anchor, Log 16.3 miles. We phoned the only pub on the island to see did they serve food, which they did up until 20:00 hours. The lads pumped up the dingy and we paddled ashore for our first taste of island life. After many pints and good crack with the skiff rowers from Castetownsend, we paddled back to the boat and sat on deck. It was a beautifully moonlit night and we savoured the peace and tranquillity. I was reluctant go to bed but it was getting very late.



8th August 2000

After the best sleep yet we had breakfast. The weather forecast is for a southerly gale, so we were going to move over to Baltimore for more shelter. Most of the boats have moved on to the Schull regatta so there's room on the pontoon. After motoring across we filled our water tank. Then Simon and Sean went about finding our diesel leak, while I shopped for food. Simon spent most of the day in the bilge and the leak was eventually found in the tank. The tank was emptied to below the leak and then the clean up started. We all went up and had showers to try and remove the smell of diesel. Later on, Vincent O'Shea and Frank arrived on a Sail Ireland Charter boat. We met them after dinner for a few drinks.

9th August 2000

The gale was still blowing so we decided to stay put and clean the boat after all the work on the engine and bilge yesterday. That evening after dinner we walked up to the Widow's Thumb on the Baltimore cliffs. The view up there was out of this world.

10th August 2000

08:55 Engine on, and by 09:00 we were slipping out from between the French and English boats. We waved goodbye and wished the English boat a good trip to Bantry.

09:15 Motoring out towards the north entrance of Baltimore harbour we hit one of the Lousy Rocks which are south of the south cardinal mark!! After lifting the floorboard and checking for leaks we picked our way through the Sound with a keen eye on the depth sounder.

10:50 Having emerged from the sound we put up the sails. Simon's nerves were shot after hitting Lousy Rock and decided he needed to lie down. Sean and I set sail for the Fastnet Rock.



14:20 With the Fastnet Rock in the foreground, open tuna fish sandwiches were on the menu for lunch. We sailed around it and started to head for Cape Clear. I was hoping to catch up with Siobhan Crowley from whom we had bought Isha. She works part time on Cape Clear as the district nurse.



15:15 The wind died and we could see fog beginning to close in, so we motored in as we wanted to get in to the harbour before the fog .The sailing directions tell you to line up the grotto with the end of the pier and this gives you a clear passage in the narrow entrance, however the grotto can not be seen since they extended the pier. Cape Clear's harbour is very small and much of it is quite shallow. We motored round in circles

avoiding children swimming across the harbour and the ferry. We eventually found a spot and were preparing to take the ground at low water when a fishing boat informed us we were in his spot and he had a catch to land. We gingerly moved onto the end of the pier wall not wishing to run aground further up the harbour. The water was crystal clear and we could see starfish and crabs.

17:00 Engine off and I'm not moving until tomorrow, Log 18.3 miles. I walked up to the shop to enquire if Siobhan was on the island and was told she had left that morning, just my luck. We had burgers and chips and retired to the pub for the night. After the pub we drank the bottle of champagne Dane had given us as we celebrated getting this far west. Tomorrow we start our trip back towards Crosshaven.

11th August 2000

11:00 After a nice sleep, we reluctantly prepared to leave Cape Clear.

12:30 Engine on, loosed the mooring ropes, and headed out into the fog, which was hugging the island. We turned north towards Gaspone Sound between Sherkin and Cape Clear.

14:50 Log 9.1 miles, approaching Toe Head and Simon is asleep again! The F3-4 southerly forecast, is nowhere to be found.



15:50 Passing High Island on the approach to Glandore Harbour, Log 12.9 miles.

16:30 Engine off, Log 15.8 miles, picked up visitor mooring. That evening we headed up to the Glandore Inn to pay our mooring fees and have dinner and a shower. Simon had been looking forward to the seafood platter, which was huge. Both Sean and I had Scampi. The seafood is just divine. As the sunset sets on the harbour we moved inside and joined in the singsong, which went on until the early hours of the morning. We said goodbye to our new friends and headed back to the punt to row back to the boat. Thank goodness we had left the anchor light on, as a dark green boat is very hard to find on a moonlight night with a local seal for company.

12th August 2000

Today we have decided to head straight for Crosshaven and not stop over in Kinsale. But, since our car is in Kinsale the lads are going to drop me in the marina and carry on to Crosshaven. I will drive the car around to Crosshaven and meet them there in the evening.



09:40 The engine is on and we slip the mooring. We all felt very tired after our singsong and a very rocky night on the mooring. As we motor out of Glandore passing Adam and Eve once more, it was apparent that the F3-4 that the forecasters kept telling us about was never going to arrive.

11:50 Log 8.8 miles. No wind!! Passing across Clonacilly Bay. Simon has refilled the diesel and we are about to have lunch.

12:30 The bottom batten in the mainsail has been removed as it is falling out of the ripped pocket.

14:45 Passing Old Head Of Kinsale. Log 21 miles.

15:30 Dropped me off in Kinsale marina to drive to Crosshaven.

18:00 Passed Darth Rock Bay, log 35 miles approaching Cork harbour. Sean and Simon are back in familiar territory after their few previous visits to Cork Week Regatta.

19.25 Log 41 miles moored up in Crosshaven in a fast tidal flow, engine off. We were leaving the boat in Crosshaven in the morning and heading back to Dublin via Kilkenny to pick up Adam. Simon and Sean went to pay our marina fees while I tidied and packed away our gear. It was cheaper to pay for a week then the four days we'd be away before we returned with Adam to bring the boat back to Dublin, just Sean, Adam and I but that's another story.

13th August 2000

We got up after an enjoyable evening and dinner in Crosshaven. We loaded our gear in to the car and reluctantly we headed for Dublin. However, Simon is looking forward to his own bed and TV, which he left behind seventeen days ago.