



YACHT
CAMINGO

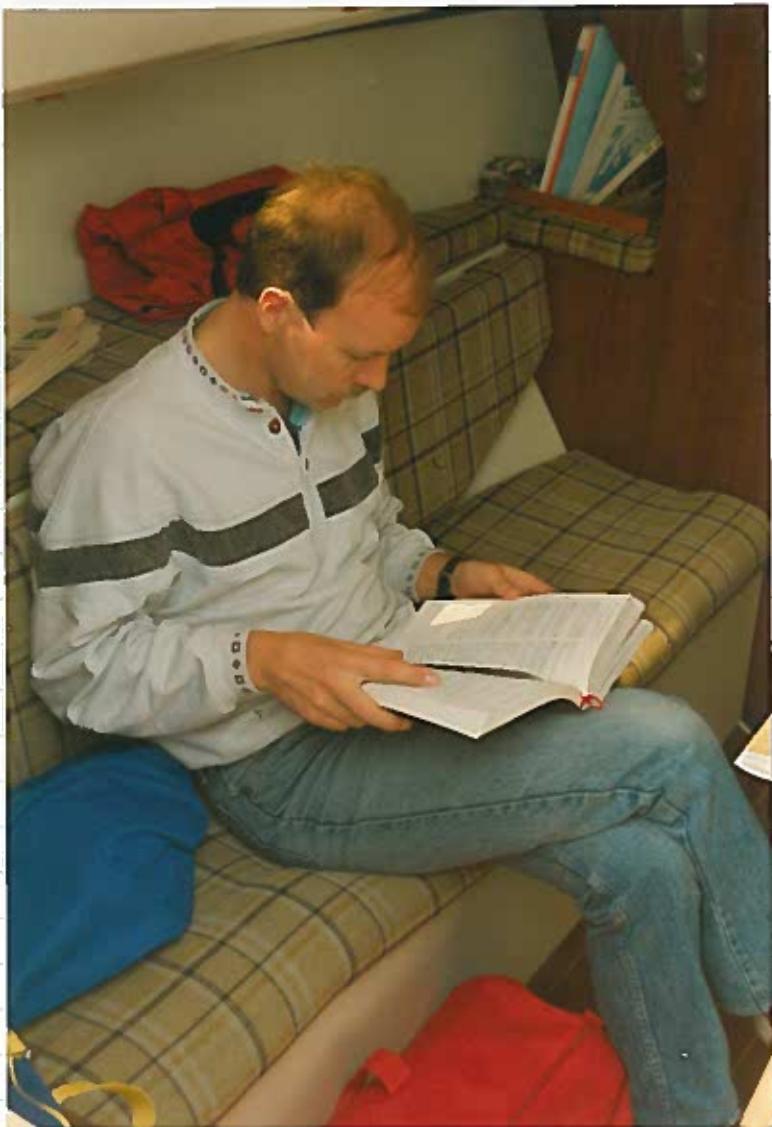
CRUISE - IN - COMPANY

With:
Fair Lady, Fir Domhnainn & Krait



Summer 1991





Prologue

The annual excursion for a week-end of debauchery at the Carlingford Oyster Pearl event has a well earned reputation for extremes of weather - gales on the nose, fog and this year no wind or what little there was, came from the North.

Friday 28th June

Time 11.00

Log 1111

The morning of Friday, 28th June 1991 was fine with a light northerly breeze as Camingo cast off its moorings in Malahide Estuary. We quickly decided there was no point in heading over to Howth for the start of the feeder race as it was most unlikely one could make it to Carlingford within the time limit in the prevailing conditions. We hoisted the main and with the engine running at comfortable revs pointed the bow at Rockabill and set about making ourselves shipshape. The calm sea facilitated stowing gear, food and personal effects.

Richie Lynch from Wild Mustard had breathed new life into Camingo's electrics during the winter including wiring up a new Navico autopilot. He had expressed interest in joining us on the trip to Carlingford and soon he was experimenting with the autopilot. Other boats must have wondered why Camingo was sailing such an erratic course with many changes of direction. Eventually we understood how to make it work for us including tacking thru 100°. A search for a suitable name ensued and henceforth it was known as "Brendan the Navigator" - Brendan for short.

Other members of the crew were regulars Sean Hynes joining us for the week end only and Russel Camier, plus of course myself, Roger Green, on my maiden cruise as skipper.

14.00

1126

passed between St Patricks and Col Islands off Skeenies. The sea was flat calm and as wind was now very light and variable we dropped the main. Our decision not to go to Howth was vindicated - "Cilla" and "Fair Lady" slowly overhauled us and passed outside St Patricks Island.



Time 17.30 Due East of Clogherhead and motor sailing at about
Log 11.42 5 knots on manx and jenny. The weather was
now warm and sunny encouraging some
crew to relax whilst monitoring local government
election results coming over the radio which Richie
had kindly fitted. Various other yachts were
also heading North both to landward and seaward.

19.00 Approached Hellyhunter Buoy and turned to port to
11.54 enter mouth of Carlingford Lough. "Just Good Friends"
(Gerry O'Neill) motored past us and "Fair Lady" was ahead
running under spinnaker. We also hoisted our kite
and had a glorious run in and up the lough on
a flat sea with a hazy sun and a light northeasterly

21.45 Dropped anchor outside Carlingford pier and tidied up
11.61 prior to going ashore. "Fair Lady" and "Freedom" were
anchored nearby and "Chinatown" "Lilla" and "Equity"
followed in shortly after. Oysters were plentiful
ashore in Carlingford Y.C. that night as were oyster
hunts.

29th June (Sat) Strolled around the picturesque village of Carlingford
in the morning and arrived late at the starting
line for Oyster Pearl race. Not that it made much
difference as the winds were up, down and all over
lough. The resident British Naval gunboat lay
right in the path on one beat and as we approached
they shouted at us to keep clear whilst several sailors
with telephoto lenses photographed us. We assured them
we would not hit them as they were bigger than us as
we passed close by their transom.

Richie left to return to Dublin by bus and Sean
went in search of a berth home on another craft.
And so we were two. However, when searching for
crew before leaving Malahide Denis Moloney had
suggested Eithne Shalloo whom I had never met.
However, after a telephone chat I offered and she accepted
a berth but could not join us until this Saturday
when she sailed up with Denis Moloney on Jig Domhnainn.
We met in the club that night and agreed she would
move over to Cammige in the morning before we set
sail. Russel and I returned to Cammige in heavy drizzle
on the club ferry in the early hours with numerous pints aboard.



The Cruise-in-Company

Sunday 30th June

Time 08.15

Log 1175

Fir Domhnann tried to manoeuvre alongside to transfer Eithne but went aground just as we realised we were also stuck at low water. Nothing for it but to sit and wait. Fair Lady was also aground but managed to motor sail off at 0825 hrs. Saturday night pub plans to go to Portpatrick proposed by Denis proved unrealistic when charts were consulted in the cold and sober light of morning. Sidney ('Krait') had dissented and decided to head for the Isle of Man as his crew heard toys were cheap there! So much for our cruise in-company.

Following a radio discussion with Fir Domhnann and Fair Lady we settled on Strangford as a first day destination and hoped we could win over Krait when they eventually came to life in their quiet berth alongside the quay in the mud.

09.30

Fir Domhnann and Fair Lady had left the lough by the time we floated free. We made a fast passage down the lough against the tide but with a fair wind. Freedom and others sailed with us but headed south as we waited at the Hellyhunter Buoy for Krait who we had persuaded, over the radio, to join us. The navy gunboat came in from the east with a bone in her teeth and at least one mounted machine gun trained on us. Again, we were recorded on film as they passed.

When Krait were in sight we set off north with a nice following breeze and a lazy swell. It was warm with sun at times. We could not raise either Fir Domhnann or Fair Lady on the radio.

13.15

1190

Abeam Annalong and half mile off. Setting 050° m for St John's Point

15.00

1201

Sailing before a good breeze in close company with Krait. Closing St John's Point. Some heavy drizzle and one or two showers. Making about 5 knots. Still unable to raise others on radio. Saw my first ever storm petrels - another tick for the list.



Time 17.00
Log 12.11

As we passed close to the well hidden entrance to Adglass with a lumpy sea running with us Denis called us on air to say they were inside and waiting for the tide (1600 hrs at Strongford pier). We sounded up and Motor sailed back into a now quite lumpy sea. Keat was not on radio watch and took some time to notice but eventually motored in with us and we rafted up with the others. We all had coffee aboard 'Camings', admired each other's boats and Ethne put her gear aboard 'Camings'.

18.30
12.11

Departed for Quoile YC - Strongford. It was a short run up - about 8 miles with a good following breeze and tide under us. As the four boats in close company neared the entrance to Strongford lough I commented to Gerry (Fair Lady) on the breaking crests ahead but we carried blissfully on. Ethne on the helm found the steepening short seas rather intimidating. I took over the helm and soon we were into steep short seas which did not all come from the same direction and with occasional breaking crests. We were running before a good breeze on a bright sunny evening. We had delayed our departure from Adglass so as to arrive at the mouth of the lough at what we calculated to be low water there and so pick up the early flood for a quick passage up the entrance. But we obviously got the timing wrong for we found we were making very slow progress against a strong ebb with a following wind. As we got into the mouth proper the overfalls got very large with breaking crests now more frequent and whilst most were running up the lough there were fairly frequent stays coming from the quarters. We eventually came abreast of the Bar Fladdy Buoy and then seemed to be making no further progress just moving forward on the faces of the waves and back as far on the troughs. The Domhnann and ourselves were close by and we had spectacular views of her undersides as we rolled heavily. Helming now required close concentration although 'Camings' behaved well and I felt fully comfortable with her. The log was

heading up to 7½ knots as we surged forward with the waves but they were too steep and short to shoot down the front. Just as well perhaps as we would have been in danger of broaching.

Eithne and Russell both dodged below to root out cameras and had just taken a shot each when we were overtaken by a particularly confused sea which threw the boat one way causing a gybe and we then gybed back as it passed under us but then a big breaking crest came over the starboard quarter in large volume and shot down through the open hatch. The quarter berth was drenched as were the top and bottom cushions on the port side berths. The cockpit was awash and we were soaked - even my hair was wet. As the cockpit drained fairly smartly, the wet cameras were quickly put away, the washboards put in and the hatch belatedly closed.

Thereafter, though we rolled fairly violently, we took no more seas and slowly, ever so slowly, we inched our way through. We could plainly see flat water just a few hundred metres ahead and eventually got there and passed Carter Rock Beacon in swirling but not rough water and admired the many common seals hauled out on the rocks.

The total distance over the ground with bad overfalls was probably no more than 1000 metres but it took us over an hour and seemed much more. The other boats each took one breaking wave over the transom but they sensibly had their washboards in and hatches closed.

Although we all had on our oilies, wellies and lifejackets none of us thought to have our harnesses ready and if someone had been washed over the side it would have been extremely hazardous for boat and swimmer to attempt to pick them up. However a swimmer would fairly quickly have been fairly quickly shot out into calmer water by the strong outflow.

Shortly after as the wind lightened we motor sailed and just short of Strangford village the



tide went slack and very soon after, maybe only 10 to 15 minutes, began to flood strongly as we passed Audley's Roads. Fair Lady was about half a mile ahead heading for Quoile when she thumped a piddly. She turned back to meet us and we decided to head for Killyleagh and then follow the recommended channel. However, it was now dark and low water. The deep channel was very narrow in places so it was quite exciting trying to navigate whilst reading the large scale chart by torch on deck, watch the outline of the shore and have one pair of eyes below glued to the depth sounder and calling out the changes. This read 5' at one point but we quickly found our way back into the channel. In blissful ignorance, we missed two mid-channel rocks marked with pecces near our destination as we manouevred between moored yachts to the club pontoon where several elderly members quickly appeared to direct us in and help us moor up about 23.30 hrs.

Russel had been cooking a beef stew as we came up the lough and no food was more welcome nor tasted better as we wolfed it down with a beer. And then to bed as the club bar was closed. Eithne went back to Tir Donnmann as her bunk was soaking wet.

What an evening!

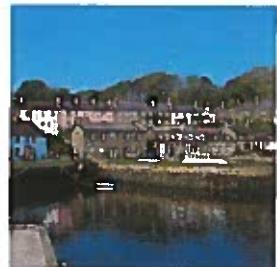
Monday 1st July
Time 09.00
Log 12.34

I rose and had a welcome shower in the Quoile Y.C. premises followed by breakfast aboard. The anchorage was in a truly delightful setting and looked its best in the warm morning sunshine. I worked hard on drying out the boat and had the cushions and wet clothes out in the sun on deck. We exchanged more reminiscences about our entry to Strangford lough and listened with interest to local lore about when and how to enter and leave the lough entrance.

12.00
12.34

Leaving the cosy, comfortable surroundings of Quoile Y.C. the company motored in warm sunshine but with thunder in the distance, back down the channel to Killyleagh, marveling at how we had safely





Useful Telephone Numbers:

Northern Ireland Tourist Board	(0232) 246609
Department of the Environment (NI)	
Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch	(0232) 230560
Countryside and Wildlife Branch	(0232) 230560
Scabo Country Park	(0247) 811491
Quoile Centre	(0396) 615520
Ards Borough Council	(0247) 812215
Down District Council	(0396) 614331
Down Country Museum	(0396) 615218
The Northern Ireland Aquarium	(02477) 28062
The National Trust	(0238) 510721
Castle Ward Caravan Park	(0396 86) 680
Strangford Lough Barn	(0396 86) 411
Mount Stewart House	(024 774) 387
Keamey	(024 77) 28479

Activity Breaks:

SAILING

Strangford Lough Charters
Ringhaddy Sound Killinchy BT23 6TU
Telephone (0238) 541186

Weekend Bareboat hire; (Leisure 17 yachts) from £50. 2 day tuition course from £110.

Skeptrick Marine Centre
Skeptrick Island Killinchy BT23 6QH
Telephone (0238) 541400

Weekend Break with tuition in dinghies and cruisers from £60.

EQUESTRIANISM

Peninsula Equestrian Centre
4 Cardy Road Greyabbey BT22 2NG
Telephone (024 774) 681

Weekend Break from £110. Six Day break from £230.

SUB AQUA

Norsemaid Sea Enterprises Ltd.
Peter Wright
152 Portaferry Road Newtownards
Telephone (0247) 812081

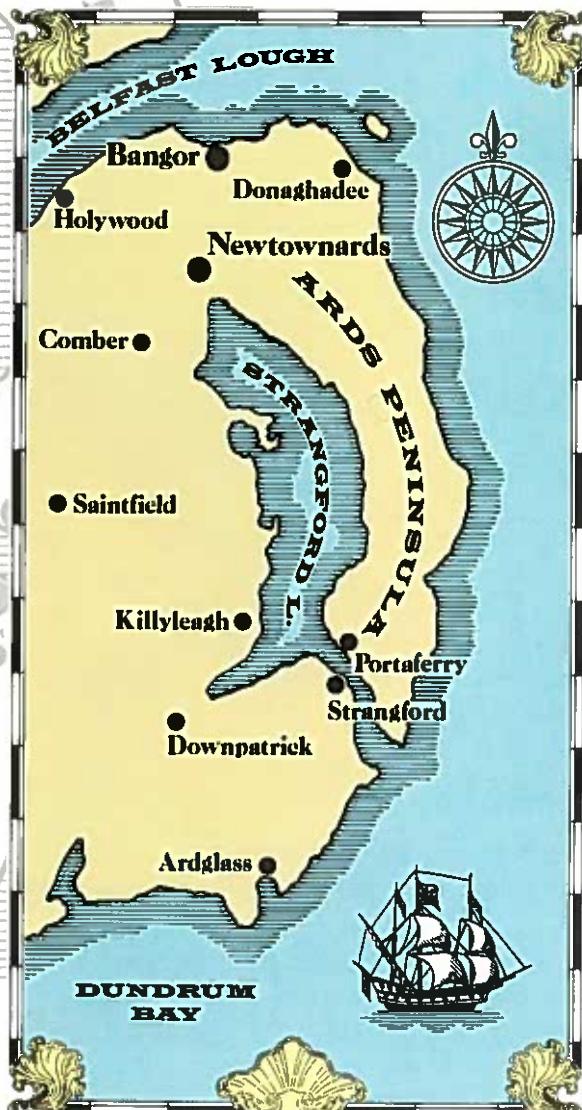
Daily sub aqua boat trips from £8 per person. Overnight accommodation on dive boat from £35 per person per day.

Compiled by the
STRANGFORD LOUGH INTERPRETIVE GROUP

which comprises

The National Trust (NI); The Department of the Environment (NI) Countryside and Wildlife Branch and the Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch; Ards Borough Council; Down District Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Strangford LOUGH



A Visitor's Guide

navigated the night before in the dark.

The yacht club at Killyleagh has lots of boats moored off a small pontoon connected to the shore by a metal gangway. We rafted our four craft on one side of the pontoon and set off up town through a street decked with Union Jacks and Red Hand flags, red white and blue kerbstones and a ceremonial street arch. We kept our voices down and made no bellows! After a snack lunch and the purchase of provisions we returned to the boats and sunbathed for a time. Gerry was not feeling too well so he stayed put and the other three yachts set off under engines up the west coast of the lough having agreed to rendezvous at Audleys Roads which would be a convenient jump-off point to exit the lough at the right state of tide in the morning.

We did some close navigation thro' narrow and shallow channels between islands and 'pladdies' of stone with the soft shapes of dummers along the shore. Close observation of charts and natural features with a keen eye on the depth sounder was absolutely essential. We passed the following yacht clubs in turn - Killyleagh Y.C., East Down Y.C., Kinghaddy Quay Cruising Club, Strangford Lough Y.C. and Down Cruising Club.

The latter have as their clubhouse the former Ballydoran lightship moored offshore in a deep narrow, fastflowing channel. It has a landing pontoon alongside and is connected to the shore by a metal bridge. Having moored alongside we found the club deserted and the bar shut so that was as good a reason as any for a brisk walk to sample 'Daft Eddies' excellent beverages so good were they that we almost missed getting away from the lightship before the fast ebbing tide left the entrance too shallow. We motored down the centre of the lough in calm weather, passing Kilbubbin Sailing Club on the East shore. Eithne cooked a curry which was preceded by a thick soup made from the left overs of hens' stew. As we approached Audleys Roads and Strangford Sailing Club it got very damp and shortly after we moored to a buoy in the Roads, near Gerry with Sidney rafted to us a thick fog enveloped us cutting visibility to a matter of metres. We ate a beautiful curry served with rice followed by coffee during which Sidney joined us. After a favourable midnight forecast



we bunked down having had a lovely day.

Tuesday 2nd July
08.00

I was up early and did wash up and tidy. It was still damp but clearing.

Time 09.15
Log 12.52

We cast off and shot down the lough with the ebbing tide but stopped half way down to kill some time. The Router wheel (a major whirlpool where the lough is only about 300 metres wide and 250 deep) was very turbulent, kicking up occasional water perhaps as much as 18". We continued our journey after 20 minutes and passed out the calm water except for about 50 metres of relatively small overfalls.

09.50
12.55

at Strangford Whistle Buoy we set a 100°m course toward the Isle of Man. As the other boats were sailing in the same direction we obviously all came out with the same answers to our calculations. The wind was about force 3, northerly with showers so we put Brendon in charge of Caningo and retired below for breakfast. We motor sailed for an hour or so but then switched off and reached in a nice breeze on a pleasant sea at an average 5.8 knots.

12.15
12.67

The rest of the fleet altered course to 090°m so we followed suit though we were not sure why and we had not so far talked on the radio. The rain cleared and a weak sun appeared but no sight of land in any direction.

13.40
12.75

Back on 100°m and 1.0 m. just appearing, though local visibility was good.

15.45
12.88

Hit first spot on in nice sunshine. We motored into the inner harbour where there were already quite a few boats and not room for everybody against the harbour wall. We rafted up outside Fair Lady in an area which we expected to dry out. We put a line from about 7' up the mast to a bollard ashore to ensure she lay in. Eithne went to look at shops and I sent bucket for diesel. The crews of Fair lady and Keat were eating aboard but Caningo and Sir Domhnall planned to eat out. Fair lady had scrubbed in Carlingford and the remaining three decided to scrub



here. In a flash we were all in swim bags and scrabbling enthusiastically before the last of the water in the river ebbed. Then to the nearby yacht club for a hot shower and when we returned the water had gone completely but Cammigo had tilted backwards at an alarming angle. Anyway, there was nothing we could do but move gingerly on board avoiding the stern.

After a nice Chinese we met up with the rest in the yacht club and when we returned to the boats at 11.30pm the tide had not yet come up enough to float the boat level so we sat around for 3/4 hour until all was fine. However, the wind came up late and there was a bit of a surge in the river which caused boats to jump about somewhat. Garry and I were up a number of times during the night checking lines and adjusting fenders. Thank goodness for Cammigo's large fenders.

Wednesday 3rd July

05.00 I was up to keep an eye on things as Cammigo once again took the ground and then went back to bed.

09.00

When I awoke again Cammigo had assumed almost the same fore and aft tilt but was leaning more against Fair Lady. We moved gingerly about keeping as far forward as possible. Though it was a dull, cool, windy morning we went for a long walk to explore the very interesting old castle and also watched seals gambolling in the clear water at the foot of the cliffs. We also had close up views of herring gulls and their chicks in their nests or nearby.

14.30

12.88

I was unwilling to spend another night - feel and so we departed as soon as we had sufficient water. The wind was N.E force 3-4 and the intention was to go around to Port St Mary but soon some skippers were proposing heading straight for Malahide to avail of the favourable wind as it was likely to go sou'westerly later in the week. After much discussion over the airwaves we steered for home on a calm sea, passing close to several shacks.

It was agreed we would travel at the speed of the slowest boat with the lead alternating and the lead boat responsible for sailing the correct course.



This allowed the crews to relax and sleep, cook, read or whatever. We met a number of ships before enjoying a lovely sunset and a continuing favourable breeze. Lots of Manx Shearwaters wheeling about.

About 0130 hrs with Fair Lady up front and the Domhnann somewhat further back, just ahead of Camingo and Keat further back and well to the east we witnessed an extraordinary phenomena. A brilliant green light flashed across the sky from left to right apparently just above mast height and ahead of the Domhnann but behind Fair Lady. However, Guy later said it was ahead of him also. The light dimmed, then flared again for a moment before dying out. It was a bright moonlit night with the moon lighting up a clear path along the flat sea to port. We discussed matters over the radio and circled around looking up the moontack on the water for another craft as this was the direction from which the light appeared. Keat called Dublin Radio and made a report. We decided it was not a distress flare as it was green and solitary and so we continued on our way. Dublin Radio later told Keat there was a lot of meteorite activity and it seems that was what we witnessed. It sure was spectacular.

With the wind lessening we motor sailed and eventually stowed sails and motored and just before dawn ^{we heard} Rockabill fog horn. Dawn broke with a heavy mist and only the Domhnann and Fair lady - right as the mist thickened the latter disappeared. As we speculated over the radio as to where we were in relation to Rockabill a nearby trawler, who had obviously been listening, called Flamingo and told us to steer SSW to pass close by Lambay on the inside. The Domhnann and Camingo had agreed the previous night to head for Howth with a view to going on down to Wicklow to extend the cruise. None of the other boats were in sight as we cleared Lambay and then we were quite suddenly engulfed in a pea-souper fog and without an exact position from which to steer. We altered course in the general direction of Malahide. Around 0900 hrs a swell developed and I suspected we were nearing shore and at 0915 the depth sounder indicated



we were rapidly running out of water. We could see no more than a few yards so we motored back along our course into deeper water and dropped anchor to await the lifting of the fog. We suspected we were south of Malahide off Portmarnock beach.

Dennis called to say he was in Howth and had almost run on the rocks on the outside of the pier and had great difficulty finding his way through the harbour to the marina.

Thursday 4th July
Time 10.30
Log 1286

The fog began to lift, so we weighed anchor and headed back to shallow water until we saw and heard breakers but no land. We motored gingerly along the 10 ft depth line northwards and clear of the breakers. As the fog lifted further we saw sand hills and shortly afterwards the County Club Hotel

Epilogue

Camino arrived off Malahide bar about 1100 hrs and at low water so we dropped the hook again and set about packing up. About 1330 hrs we got under way again and at 1340 hrs we once again were on our moorings. Fair Lady and Krait had got in before the fog thickened and the Domhnann had arrived from Howth as we came in, not having been made welcome there because they were dock-a-block for ISORA week. There was no further talk of going to Wicklow!

And so we were home safe and sound after a very enjoyable cruise which at times was quite eventful and exciting. Camino proved very comfortable for this crew living aboard and behaved very well in all conditions. We gelled well as a crew and all enjoyed the sailing and navigational challenges of sailing abroad.

Roger Greene,
Skipper.

