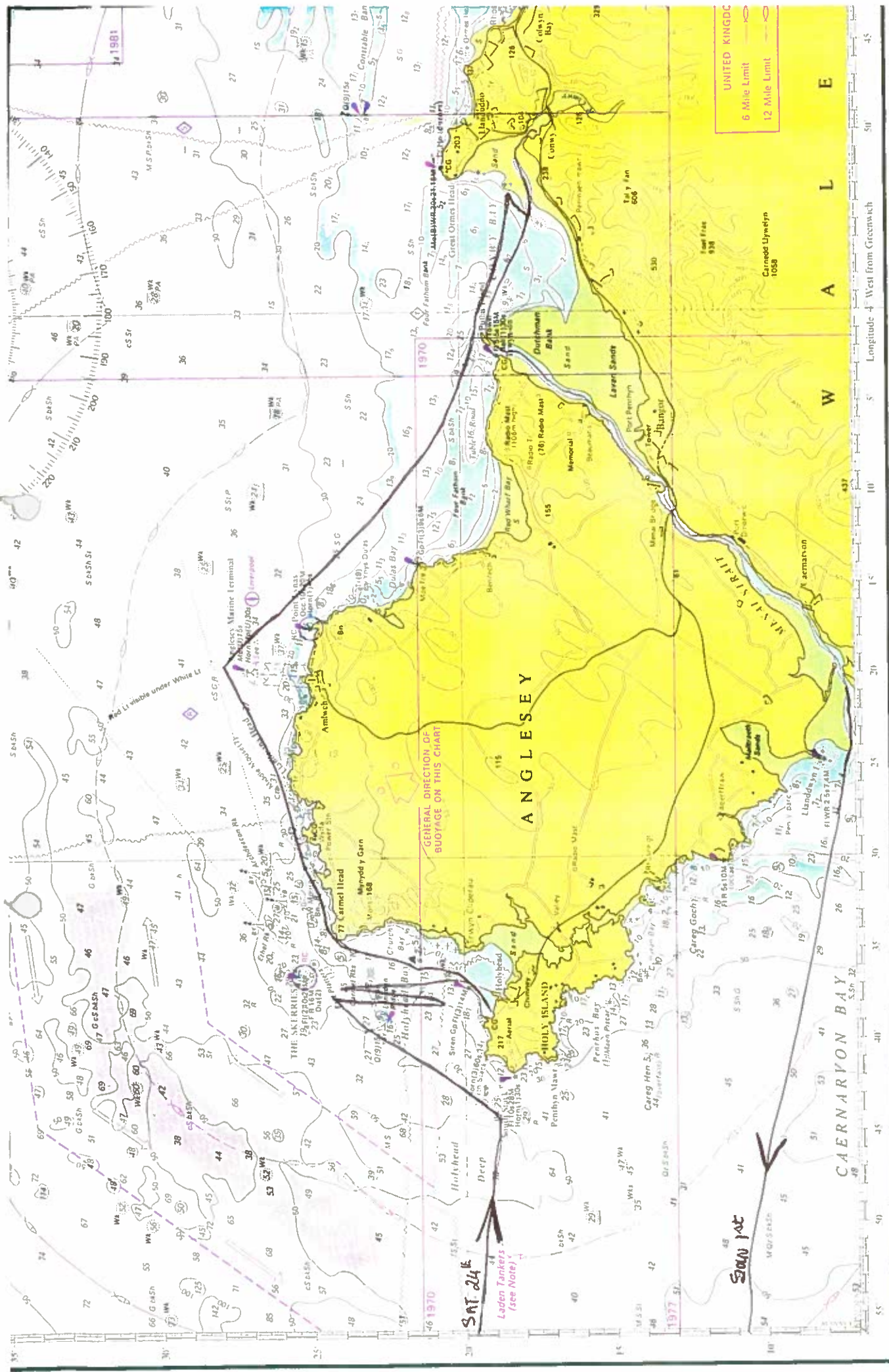


YACHT
CAMINGO

NORTH WEST WALES
CRUISE

JULY 24th - AUGUST 1st
1993



CAMINGO'S COURSE



Saturday, 24th July, 1993

North Wales was the chosen venue for Camingo's 1993 cruise with departure scheduled for shortly before the top of the tide on the afternoon of Saturday, 24th July.

With five persons travelling, space was going to be at a premium so during the week before departure all unnecessary gear was offloaded and essentials carefully stowed in lockers.

As "Fair Lady" was also departing for a Shipman cruise in company to Pwllheli via Wicklow, Mike Williams kindly offered a launch service and endured several soakings in the heavy showers.

Russel Camier, Margaret O'Riordan, Mary Jo Sullivan and myself accompanied by Claire took a leisurely lunch in Gibneys awaiting the arrival of Eithne Shalloo from an emergency dental visit. She had been troubled in the weeks before departure with a gum infection which would not respond to treatment and she had the offending tooth extracted on the Wednesday before departure but a protruding piece of bone necessitated the last minute emergency treatment.

The balance of impedimenta which had not been put on board earlier was loaded and stowed. The borrowed Avon dinghy was deflated and lashed down on the foredeck.

Having gone thro safety routines in relation to flares, plugs, harness and lines etc., we dropped our mooring at 15.15 hrs. in bright sunshine carrying mainsail and No.2 foresail on a broad reach in a force 3/4 West South West breeze and steering 095° magnetic. About five miles out we called Dublin Radio to give them a TR but they could not read our broken signal and advised us to check our aerial connections. Having sanded the joint at the foot of the mast we tried once again and came in loud and clear this time. The weather was bright and sunny but with squalls threatening. None actually hit us as we made good speed. Later we observed a spectacular lightening storm under heavy black clouds about four miles to the North.

Mary Jo did the first spell on the helm followed by Margaret, then Eithne. Having altered course to 105° magnetic, we had a pleasant uneventful crossing with the B & I and Stena Sealink ferries regularly



passing in either direction and providing reassurance that we were on the right track.

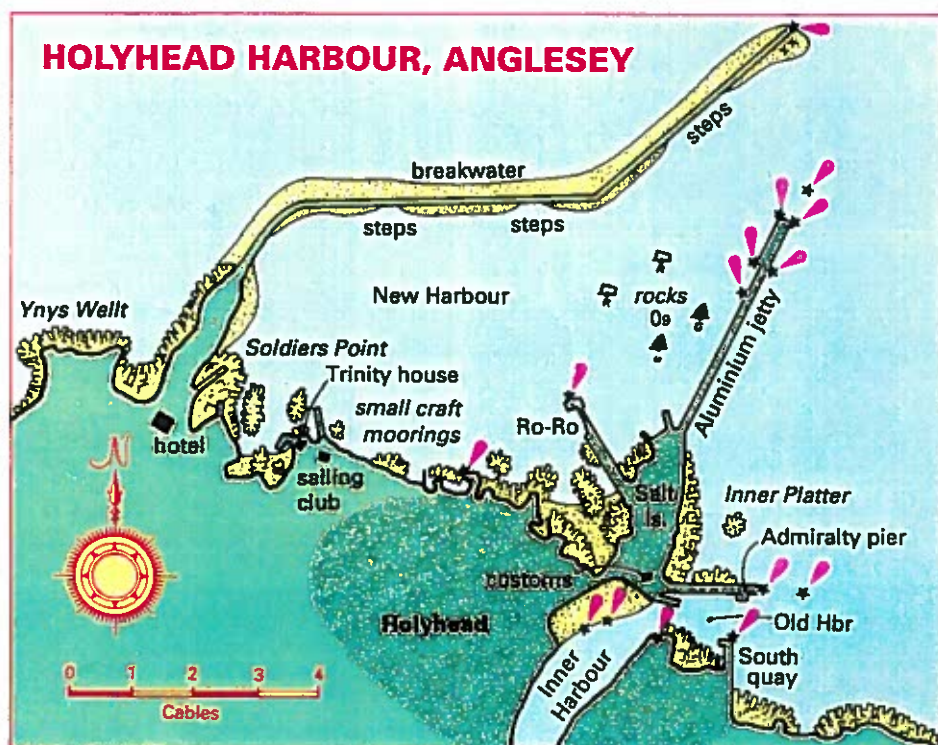
I cooked rice and served up Mary Jo's delicious precooked Hotpot. Unfortunately Mary Jo was feeling rather queezy in the lazy following seas. They obviously had no effect on the Stena Sea Cat which made a spectacular sight as it passed us at high speed.

The ship's log was reading seriously short for at dusk we picked up the South Stack lighthouse and Holy Mountain. Russel helmed as we passed through heavy traffic in the traffic separation lanes and closed on the South Stack. At 23.30 hrs. we were only a mile or so off but as the forecasted force 5/6 had not arrived and we were making slow headway against the tide which was setting us South, I endeavoured to start the engine only to find the battery almost flat and unable to fire the engine even using the de-compression lever. We had to switch off radio and navigation lights and I felt very uneasy crossing the northbound traffic lane unlit. Fortunately this lane had now gone quiet but the outer southbound lane was still very busy.

Sunday, 25th July, 1993

With a freshening wind from the North West an entry to the port of Holyhead under sail in the dark with no power available was ruled out as I had not sailed there before. With the benefit of hindsight it would have been quite feasible, although tricky, and further complicated by frequent ferry movements. The Pilot says "entry to Holyhead in the dark is a confusing business of masses of lights and a scatter of unlit hazards such as heavy mooring buoys".

Having decided to stand off until dawn, we stowed the main and headed North East under No. 2 alone towards the Skerries light passing outside the Langdon Ridge light. The wind went into the North West and quickly freshened toward force 6 with the seas building. We subsequently sailed back to the harbour inside the Langdon Ridge light and again back up to the Skerries. Had we studied the comments in the Pilot about Holyhead Bay we would not have been so sanguine. In retrospect we would probably have fared better had we stayed outside the ridge and avoided the "mass of rips, swirls and races" between the Ridge and the Carmel Rocks but this appeared at the time to bring us into the proximity of passing ships and we had no navigation lights or radio



Mary Jo was below feeling unwell and had to endure repeatedly being tossed out of her bunk. She had chosen a lower one without lee cloths. As we ran back towards the harbour the seas had got quite big causing Camingo to roll heavily. However, it was by now first light and Russel helmed us in on a fast run with big irregular seas just outside the harbour mouth. Once inside it was fairly calm but still blowing hard as we tacked up the harbour towards the yacht moorings. I took the helm and we sailed through the trots but could not see a single vacant buoy. There were numerous vacant big ship mooring buoys but these were too large and solid to approach under sail in an attempt to land a crew person to make fast a painter. We contemplated attempting to tie onto some large yacht but if we picked an occupied boat we would hardly have been welcome. Finally I spotted a small trawler yacht moored to a ship buoy so I nudged up to its stern and Russel hopped aboard with a line which he duly made fast. We put a second line aboard also which was wise, as during the course of the next five hours the main line was severely chaffed in our fairleads.

Exhausted, we all crashed out and when I came on deck about 10.30 later on Sunday morning I was surprised to find two girls sitting on the trawler's bulwark with fishing rods. Having exchanged pleasantries, they called Holyhead Yacht Club on their radio and requested the club launch to take me ashore. The club boatman said there were battery charging facilities in the bosun's store in the club so I took the battery ashore and had it put on charge.

I enquired from two strollers as to where I might find a shop selling milk and papers. They had a car nearby and offered to drive me in to the town. We had a late breakfast when I returned on board and we then all went ashore to sample the delights of a Sunday afternoon in Holyhead after showering in the yacht club. The local festival was finishing with lots of activities and side shows on the waterfront green. We needed gaz and ingredients for our evening meal. Strangely, we found a number of hardware stores open but food shops closed - something to do with Sunday trading laws. We settled for fish 'n chips and got the last ferry back on board at 6 p.m., having collected the re-charged battery for which there was no charge. Having read for a while, we had a light supper and retired early.

Monday, 26th July, 1993

The Westerlies had moderated so we cast off at 07.15 hrs. to catch the tide round the North West corner of Anglesey. The Pilot (A Cruising Guide to Anglesea and the Menai Strait by Dr. Robert Kemp) suggested that, allowing



for the five and a half miles to be covered, Holyhead moorings are dropped at half ebb to arrive at Carmel Head at the first of the flood. It appears the flood begins to run at Carmel about one and half hours before low water at Holyhead.

We bowled across Holyhead Bay with the engine boosting the reefed main and No. 4 jib. We could see nasty broken water seaward to port from the Langdon Ridge up towards the Skerries which in daylight we now saw to be dangerous looking craggy rocks rising steeply out of the sea.

We kept right close up against the rocks at Carmel Head and had a relatively smooth passage. However, only 100 metres out the seas were quite confused over the Carmel Rocks and the Platters further out. Immediately past Carmel Head the seas became lumpy but we were making rapid progress despite the seas - obviously the tide under us was very strong. We passed inside West Mouse steering 060° for Middle Mouse leaving lots of beacons marking hazards to port. Having passed inside Middle Mouse with Wylfa nuclear power station to starboard we had to alter course out to sea to pass outside the Anglesey Marine Terminal Buoy. We were using Chart No. 1826 updated only to 1984 and it carried a warning prohibiting unauthorised navigation within 610 metres of the Buoy to which are attached floating hose 320 metres long. There were several ships in the area and as we could see no trace of the Buoy we assumed one of these ships were moored to it but they moved off. It seems the terminal is no longer functioning and the buoy is gone but ships heave-to here now to pick up pilots to take them into the Mersey.

In the days of sail when Liverpool's prosperity was increasing rapidly, Trinity House was buying up all private lighthouses. In 1841 the Skerries was the last privately owned light to be acquired. A series of signal stations along the North Wales coast enabled messages to be passed to and from Liverpool in a matter of minutes. Ships hove-to between the Skerries and Port Lynas to await orders to advise of their impending arrival in the Mersey.

From Point Lynas we altered course for Puffin Island at the north eastern entrance to the Menai Straits. We were flying along goose winged sometimes in big seas which decreased as we closed with land but the wind remained fresh westerly force 4 to 5.

The windspeed increased somewhat and as we had made a very fast passage we would be too early to enter Conway with sufficient water. We dropped the main in the lee of Puffin Island and set off under No. 4 on a dead run. The



GREAT
ORMES
HEAD
ALSO
SANDBAR
IN
CONWAY
BAY



ENTRY TO
CONWAY
RIVER



CONWAY
MARINA

Pilotage Information



When entering Conwy from seaward, the Fairway buoy RW is in position $53^{\circ} 17.96'N$ $003^{\circ} 55.49'W$. From the Fairway buoy, steer $114^{\circ}T$ for a distance of 0.88nm. This will bring you to No. 2 buoy, which is the start of the channel. Then follow the diagram above.

Points to Note

1. The channel changes frequently.
2. The Scabs: The Scabs form a bar between No. 6 and No. 8 buoys. When entering the channel, pass No. 6 buoy by approximately 20m, then dogleg to Port to about $030^{\circ}T$. When approximately 10m from No. 8 buoy, turn to Starboard and follow the channel normally.
3. Perch Light: When rounding the Perch Light, leave a berth of approximately 30m.
4. Buoys and Lights: All buoys are at present unlit, with the exception of the Perch Light FL WR 5s. It is intended to fit radar reflectors to all buoys and light some of them when they are handed over to the local authority in April 1993.
5. When passing channel buoys, remain within 10-20m.
6. Entering the Marina: When entering the marina, on the Conwy side of the estuary, the entrance is marked with two piles fitted with tide gauges and the appropriate top marks.
7. Until you are used to the channel, it is recommended that vessels observe a 2 hours before and after high water limit. A good indication is, if the concrete footing on the base of the Perch Light or Sandbanks outside the river entrance are covered, vessels drawing up to 2m should be all right. Minimum depth of water at low water neaps is 1.8m throughout passage.

This information is provided as a guide only and, due to the changing nature of the channel, Camper & Nicholson's Marinas Ltd. do not hold themselves responsible.

entrance to Conway is tricky via a twisting channel running more or less parallel to the shore. The Pilot gave a compass bearing of 115° magnetic from the N.E. corner of Puffin to pick up the Conway Fairway Buoy which might prove difficult to locate and indeed we failed to pick up the buoy in the lumpy seas and shot past it and almost fetched up on the offlying sand bars.

As we were still early for water in the Conway channel, we rounded up and beat back and forth slowly on the No. 4 alone in a fresh force 5 on the nose. Just as we got to the Fairway Buoy another boat approached from Puffin. We called them on Channel 16 and asked them to switch to Channel 37 but they did not have 37 and we had to revert to 16. They confirmed they knew the channel and agreed to guide us in. The twisting channel is sparsely marked with singleton buoys up to $\frac{3}{4}$ miles apart, three to port and three to starboard so it was most comforting to have a local pilot to take us in. There is an extremely strong stream in the Conway Narrows which almost swept us past the marina entrance. We tied up at 15.05 hrs.

Conway Marina, operated by Camper and Nicholson, is interesting. A road tunnel under the river was completed recently. It was constructed from large pre-cast concrete sections which were cast in an enormous hole excavated on the western bank. The hole was periodically flooded and the prepared sections floated out to be sunk in a trench excavated in the river bed. When the tunnel was completed, the construction site was bought for a marina development. Floating pontoons were installed in the great hole and shoreside facilities and a marina village are currently under construction. Meanwhile the marine office, sanitary facilities, Dickies Chandlery, a yacht brokerage and a restaurant are housed in portacabins.

After showering, we walked the mile or so along the Conway river past hundreds of yachts on swinging moorings and offshore pontoons to the old town of Conway with the residential area of Deganwy on the opposite shore. The historic town of Conway is small, quaint and picturesque and dominated by the enormous castle with three distinctive adjoining bridges. We supped in a nice pub before eating well in Alfredo's Italian Restaurant and returning on board. It blew stink that night so it was nice to be snuggled in behind very high banks.

Tuesday, 27th July, 1993

We toured the market, tourist centre and castle before adjoining to the sunny courtyard of an old pub. Eithne revelled in the wide variety of potato crisps available. It was still blowing hard when we took an early



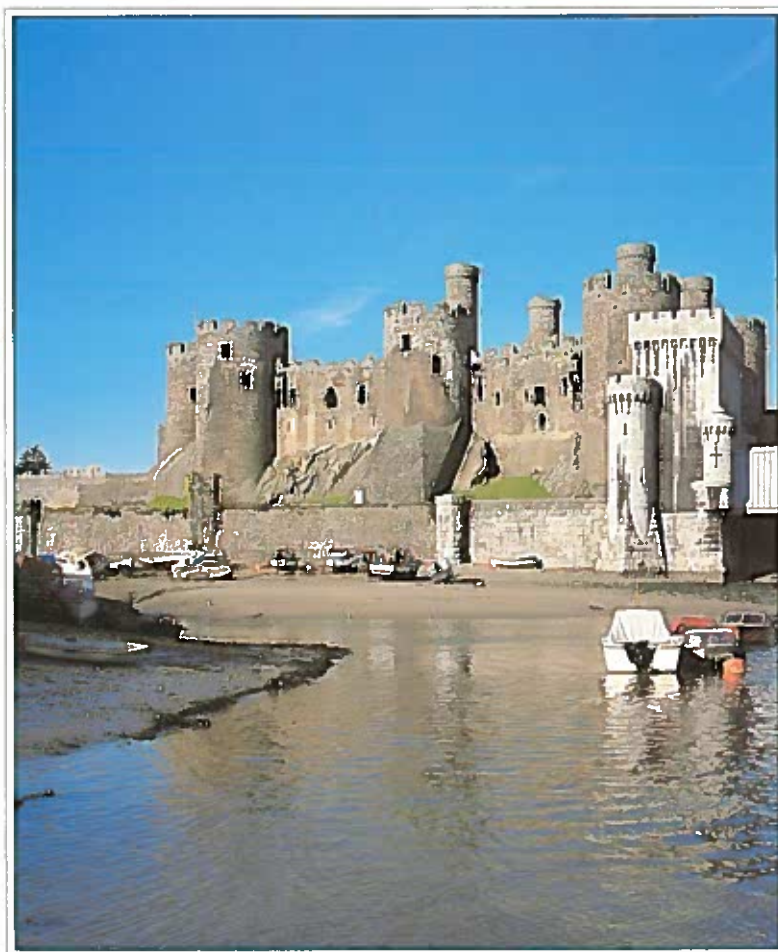
PUB LUNCH IN CONWAY



CONWAY
CASTLE

Conzey

1993 YEARBOOK



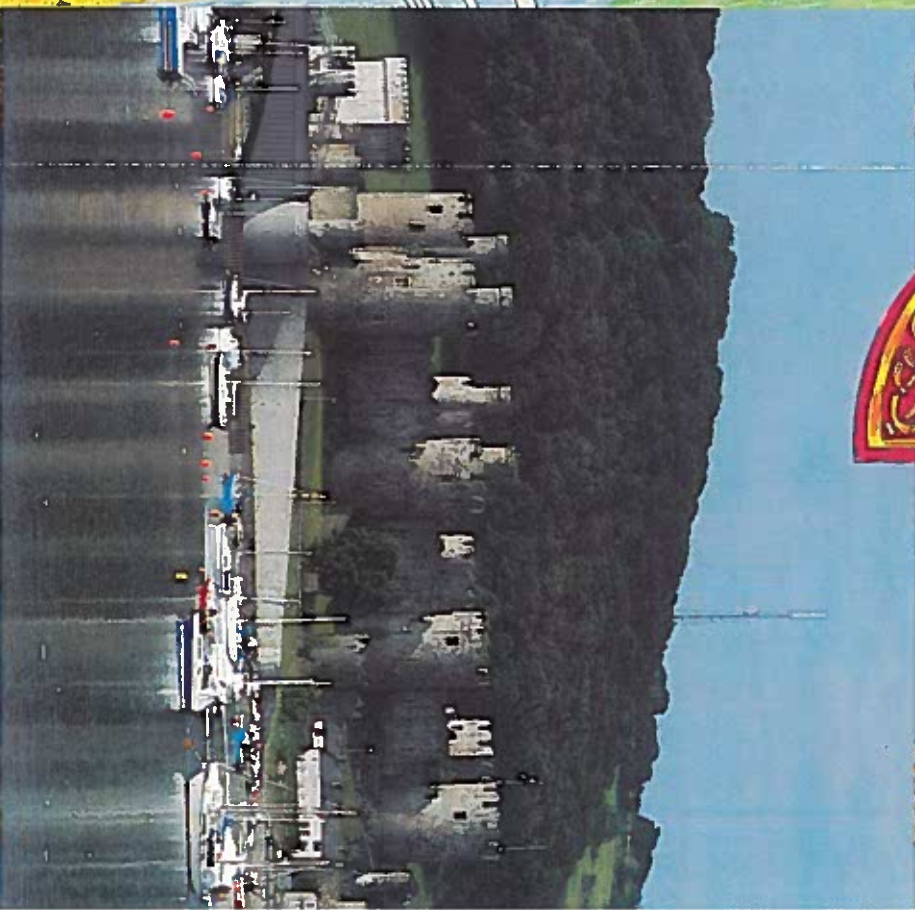
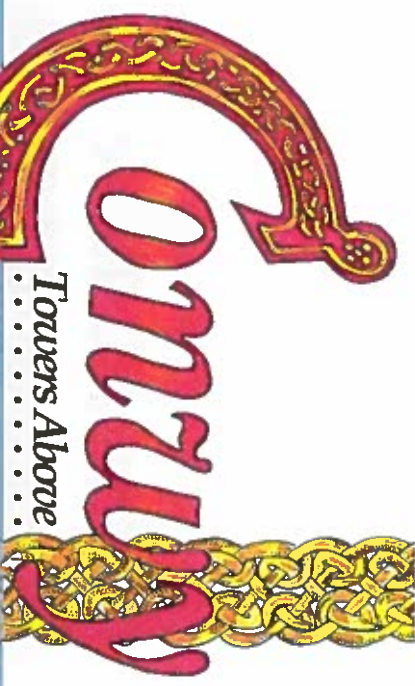
CAMPER & NICHOLSONS MARINAS

A Crest Nicholson Company

CONWY

Town Centre

OPEN ALL YEAR
Further information and a
Bed Booking service
is available at the Tourist
Information Centre, Conwy Visitor
Centre, Conwy, Gwynedd
Tel: 0982 922268

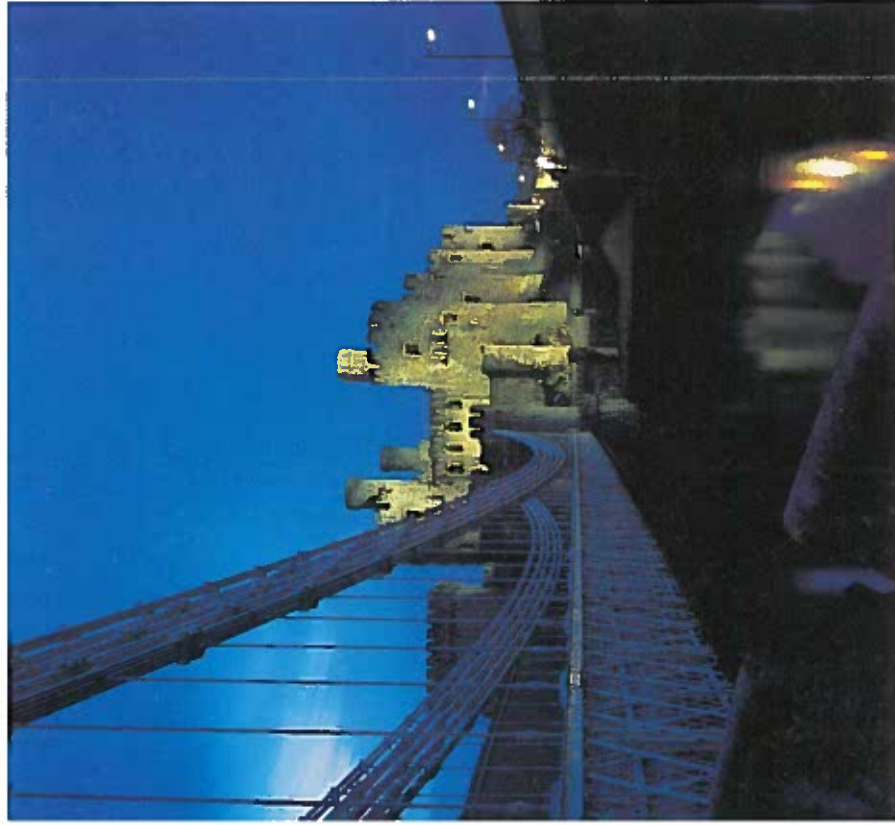


Historic Fortress
Town of
North Wales

One of the most complete walled

Conwy Castle

World Heritage Listed Site



Cadw
WELSH
HISTORIC
MONUMENTS



One of the most picturesque of Welsh castles, and a masterpiece of medieval architecture. Built by Edward I, Conwy was both fortress and garrison town.

Built between 1283 and 1287, the castle's shape is dictated by the very rock on which it stands. It has barbicans at either end, and eight massive towers.

The Conwy Castle Information Centre includes not only a tourist information centre, but a shop selling a wide range of quality gifts and publications together with an exhibition on Edward I and his castles in Wales.

Inside the castle, the ground floor of the Chapel Tower contains a colourful and informative exhibition about Castle Chapels and includes a life-size tableau. The top floor of the same tower houses a scale model of Conwy Castle and town as it may have appeared around 1312. Regular guided tours of the castle are available.
OPEN ALL YEAR, DAILY.
A "Welcome Host" Attraction.

CROESO I GONWY



Croeso i Gonwy hanesyddol, un o'r trefi caerog harddaf a mwyaf cyflawn yn Ewrop. Mae Conwy yn cynnig cyfoeth o lety, atyniadau, gweithgareddau a digwyddiadau, i gyd o fewn pellter cerdded hwylus i'w gilydd

WELCOME TO CONWY



Welcome to historic Conwy one of the finest and most complete walled towns in Europe. Conwy offers you a wealth of accommodation, attractions, activities and events all within easy walking distance of one another.

BIENVENU A CONWY



Soyez le bienvenu à Conwy, une des villes fortifiées les plus belles et complètes en Europe. Conwy vous offre toute une gamme de logements, d'attractions, d'activités et d'événements, chacun facilement accessible l'un de l'autre à pied.

WILLKOMMEN IN CONWY



Willkommen in Conwy, einer der schönsten und besthaltenen ummauerten Städte Europas. Conwy bietet eine Vielfalt an Übernachtungsmöglichkeiten, Attraktionen, Aktivitäten und Veranstaltungen, alle von einander aus zu Fuß leicht erreichbar.

towns in Europe

Aberconwy House

Dating from the 14th century, this medieval merchant's house has been refurbished with meticulous care by the National Trust. Each room now reflects different periods of the house's 600 year history.

Situated right in the centre of the town, this charming property is a must for all visitors to Conwy.

OPEN: 1st April to 31st October. Daily except Tuesday 11.00am - 5.30pm. Last entry at 5.00pm.

ADMISSION: Adult £1.80; Child 90p. Family (2 adults and 2 children) £4.50; Group (pre-booked) £1.60

Telephone: 0492 592246

A "Welcome Host" Attraction.

THE NATIONAL TRUST





TOWN QUAY AND CONWAY RIVER

OLD AND NEW BRIDGES AT CONWAY





LLANDUDNO



afternoon bus to Llandudno. The crew climbed Great Orme Head whilst I looked around this large victorian resort town. I felt positively young among the crowds of Darby and Joans shuffling along the promenade or queuing at the pier for bracing 20 minute trips around the bay on the "Maid of Llandudno".

We all met up again at the minicipal swimming pool where we enjoyed a lovely swim. Russel and I returned by bus but the others grew impatient at the bus stop and went off in search of a taxi. It was Eithne's turn in the galley and she served delicious chicken, without almonds in deference to my palate, washed down with a pleasant wine.

There was a single public phone in the Marina office into which Mary Jo fed a small fortune before persuading her sailor boy (friend) in Cork to ring her back, thus enabling the conversation to be extended for another half hour. I chatted to the duty security man whilst waiting to phone Claire. He was a member of the local inshore lifeboat crew and regaled me with an account of the rescues of people locally from houses and local authority flats who were marooned by freak flooding, though very many feet above high tide level. He imparted lots of useful information about navigating the local waters and warned us about the potential dangers associated with the 25' rise and fall of the tide. When Mary Jo did eventually hang up, he offere me free use of the office phone - it was his last night of employment in the Marina. REturning to Camingo the wind was absolutely singing in the rigging. The windage on the mast and foil was causing the boat to list and the fenders were under strong pressure. I was glad of the relative shelter of the marina.

Wednesday, 28th July, 1993

Mary Jo should have left to catch the ferry home from Holyhead but decided to stay another day and got the last booking on the Seacat. The crew again went to Llandudno to shop. I did some housekeeping on Camingo and then walked out past the golf club to the beach which commanded fine views of the approach channel which runs more or less parallel to the shore. The tide was full out so the Channel hazards were clearly visible. The wind was dropping and the sea state calming - at least the large white horses were dying down. I decided we should depart for Beaumaris in the Menai Straits on the afternoon tide.

Before departing at 15.50 hrs. we were exchanging pleasantries with a couple on a nearby yacht. On enquiring about the likelihood of being able to



LEAVING CONWAY

CONWAY BAY (NOTE GREEN CHANNEL BUOY)



NORTHERN ENTRANCE TO MENAI STRAIT

Note:
Ten Feet Bank and Dinmore
both have a charted depth of
2.6m, though a very confused
sea can develop in wind over
tide or in a strong NW blow.

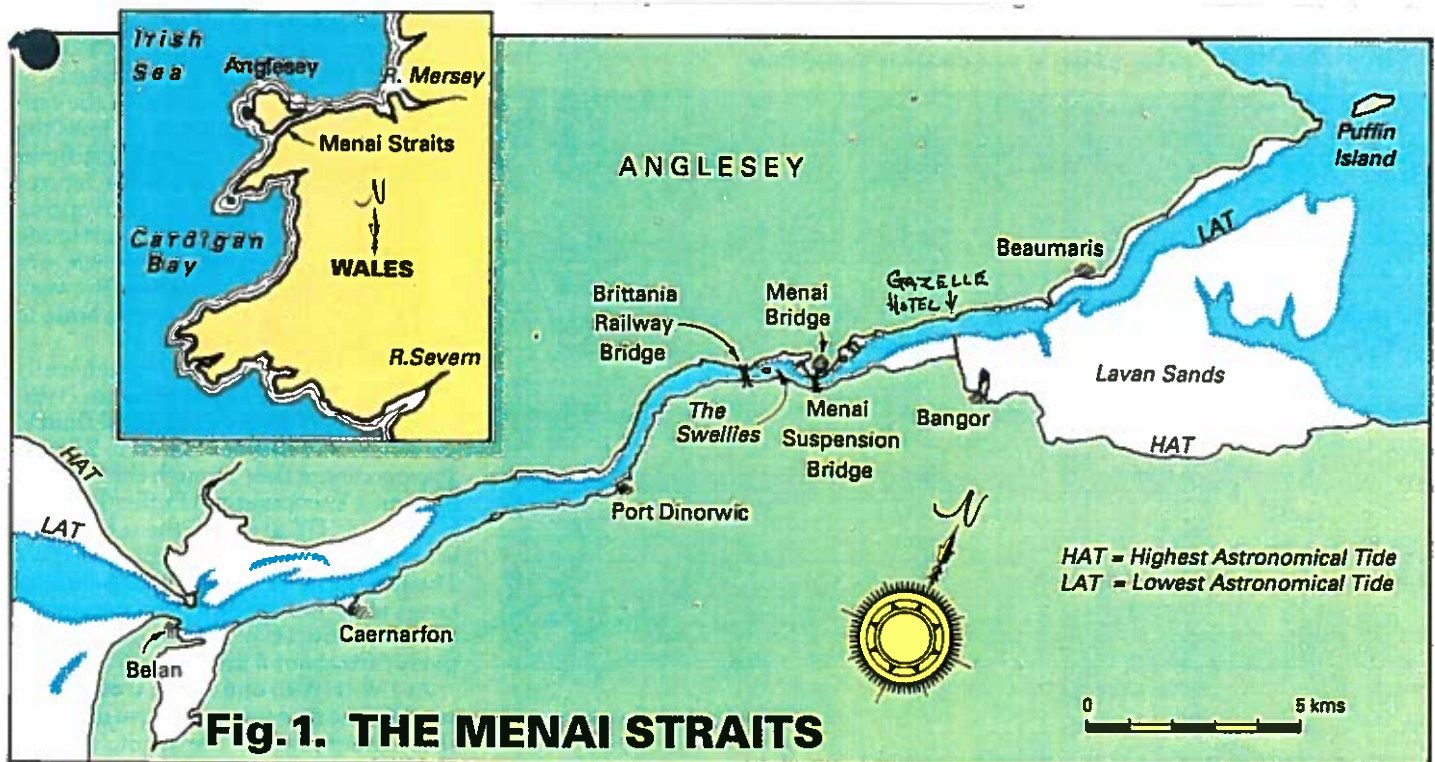


Fig.1. THE MENAI STRAITS

find a vacant mooring at Beaumaris, they offered us their swinging mooring at the Gazelle Hotel, directly opposite Bangor pier.

We motored out against the mid flood and had an uneventful exit with plenty of water under us. We had a pleasant beat up to Puffin Island which we left close on the starboard side with Dutchmans Bank skirted to port. As Camingo entered the Straits, the falling wind was on the nose so sail was stowed in favour of the iron topsail. It was a pleasant evening trip south-westwards through a well buoyed channel. The very extensive Lavan Sands were well covered to port as a number of craft were sailing well outside the marked channel. Indeed many local clubs and classes were racing on courses taking them close to shore on either side. Boats were moored all along the Beaumaris shore in great numbers. WE passed on by Gallows Point to the Gazelle Hotel opposite Bangor pier. There we found the promised "Lady Glo" mooring in a prime spot just off the hotel slip.

Margaret, being 'Cook of the Day', produced a delicious vegetarian chille con carne served with pasta and washed down with a very drinkable red wine.

We pumped up the rubber duck with some difficulty (because of a damaged footpump, not because of too much wine) and all five of us piled in for the short pull to the Gazelle where we stayed till closing time.

Thursday, 29th July, 1993

We rowed back into the Gazelle Hotel. We could just as easily have rowed across to Bangor pier, but there was the problem of where to leave the dingy. We climbed up from the hotel to the road and caught a bus to Bangor via the suspension bridge. Russel and I visited Dickie's of Bangor chandlery while the girls went for a swim (men were barred that day!). Mary Jo caught a train to Holyhead for the ferry and the rest of us returned by bus and getting a view of The Swellies as we again crossed the bridge.

Having consulted the Pilot and tide tables we cast off at 17.00 hrs. and arrived a half hour early off the village of Menai Bridge under the awesome shadow of the great bridge itself with the notorious Swellies visible beyond the massive piers.

We perceived another yacht had gone straight through so with some considerable trepidation and with charts and Pilot on deck, we lined Camingo up and commenced the passage through the Swellies under engine.



NORTH EAST
TOWARDS
PUFFIN ISLAND
FROM
GAZELLE HOTEL



GAZELLE
HOTEL



SOUTH WEST
TOWARDS
MENAI BRIDGE

FROM ROADWAY
ON MENAI
SUSPENSION
BRIDGE
TOWARDS
BANGOR
ON RIGHT
AT PIER

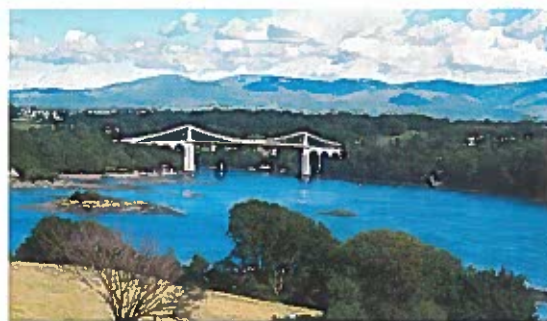


TELFORD'S
MENAI
SUSPENSION
BRIDGE





MENAI SUSPENSION BRIDGE



Telford's Suspension Bridge - one of two road bridges linking the Isle of Anglesey with the mainland

The Swellies

The tide runs very swiftly here, running NE on the flood and SW on the ebb at up to 6 knots, except for a short period of slack at HW and LW — at LW there may be only 1m in the channel.

The exact timing of slack water is important, and as the tide tables tend to be inaccurate, the best guide is to watch local craft swinging on their moorings.

Before passing under the power lines which span the strait (22m clearance) preceding Britannia Bridge, the course must be laid to lead midway under the south span of Britannia Bridge, giving an adequate berth to Britannia Rock lying midstream. A course is then steered onto a beacon 2 cables distant on the south shore until the fixed green lights at the base of the bridge's south tower are in line, when a course may be laid directly onto the S cardinal buoy marking Swelly Rock. Maintaining this course until Princes Point Beacon (Fl WR 2s 5m) lies abeam to starboard when steering approx 080T will lead between the south cardinal and Princes Point, and well clear of the Platters to starboard. From where a course may be laid to pass through the middle of Menai Suspension Bridge with 30m clearance. One of Telford's masterpieces, started in 1819 and completed some 7yrs later, having been widened and reinforced in 1938-41 to cope with the vast amount of traffic which now uses it.

BRITANNIA RAIL BRIDGE



De Kemp in his Cruising Guide remarks of The Swellies that "Pilotage between the bridges has a fascination of its own both in theory and practice". Encouraged by the yacht ahead and another now following closely astern we held boldly on under the centre span to the South bank leaving the Platters close to port and through the narrow passage between the Savelly Rock beacon and the shore, then altering course sharply to sail on a transit on past Cribben Rock and a shore beacon before again altering course to leave Brittania Rock under the equally massive Brittania Rail bridge close to starboard. As we were early starting we had a slight tide against us but what an anti-climax - it was a doddle. We saw none of the fearsome rips and eddies and rock hazards that completely rule out a passage at any time other than very close to slack water, preferably high water. We enjoyed a clear wide run with the tide on a pleasant evening down past the remarkably stately home of Plas Newydd, seat of the Marquess of Anglesey where a large number of guests were being entertained on the lawn. Port Dinorvic was our destination and here we were presented with a choice. There was a large open dock with floating pontoons but it virtually dried at low water, though we were told a fin keeler could comfortably settle into the deep mud. We opted instead for the other dock and presented ourselves outside the lock gates and called the dockmaster on the VHF. He opened the gates allowing us into a narrow but long (150') lock. Closing the gates behind us and opening those in front, we found ourselves easing into a crowded long narrow harbour in a deep ravine with a quaint lifting bridge half way along. The lock walls were of dressed limestone. We were instructed to raft up outside a large motor cruiser near the entrance which proved an interesting spot to observe the comings and goings. The shoresides were well kept with an interesting old building serving as a bar, with a poor restaurant and rather dirty showers. However, a swish new clubhouse was due to open the following week.

Russel on galley duty produced a nice Malaysian Chicken Curry with rice after which we adjourned to the bar till closing time.

Friday, 30th July, 1993

We just lazed about in the beautiful sunshine well sheltered from the strong winds outside. We took a bus to nearby Caernarvon in the afternoon.

Caernarvon, like Conway, is an ancient riverbank town dominated by an enormous castle commanding the town quays. The castle was started in 1283 by Edward I and completed in 1322 by his son. Like Port Dinorvic the town thrived in the last century on the export of slate from the numerous quarries in the hinterland.



LOCK GATES

PORT DINORWIC

ROLL-UP BRIDGE





"GEORGINA"
GUARDIAN
LADY
OF
PORT
DINORWIC





Evening light behind Caernarfon
Castle



Returning on board I cooked a hearty brown beef stew. The plan for the morrow was to sail the 25 miles or so out of the Menai and round to Pwllheli. However, in the pub a local sailing school skipper advised us against such a bash and beat particularly as the later forecast was for a Sou'westerly force 5/6 gusting 7. This would have made the exit at Abermenai very problematical.

Saturday, 31st July, 1993

The wind got up during the night as forecast so we stayed put. The day was dull, cold and windy. I took a bus back to the Menai suspension bridge and walked across to view the Swellies. Whilst the gale was powerful on the exposed bridge the Swellies were relatively docile as it was near low water. Forecast for the morrow was more promising and as we were running out of time we decided to depart next morning.

Sunday, 1st August, 1993

We were up early and at the front end of the queue waiting for sufficient depth of water to lock out. We headed down the channel under engine against both wind and tide. Conditions were less than pleasant and we made slow progress. Just before reaching Caernarvon we met a conical buoy with vertical black and white stripes. This highly significant navigation mark is the Head of Navigation buoy where the cones and cans marking either side of the channel through the straits change sides.

Drumbeat, Marie Clare and another Howth yacht gradually drew ahead of us. A large dirty yacht, 'Pooka' from the Howth Boat club passed quickly out of sight belching black smoke as the man and boy crew pushed the engine hard. On the two mile leg to the Narrows the third Howth boat came close by and hailed us to the effect that they had turned back as they thought the exit too rough and warned us to do likewise as we were much smaller. We heard two local boats chat on the radio and decide not to attempt to leave. We called Drumbeat and Marie Clare ahead and they confirmed they were going through. They agreed to give us progress reports.

The South West entry to the Menai Strait between Abermenai and Belan Points is certainly narrow - four hundred yards at High Water and only three hundred yards at Low Water. It has, however, a depth of 50' at L.W.S. and is free of rocky hazards. In appearance is it not unlike the Short Deep at Malahide.

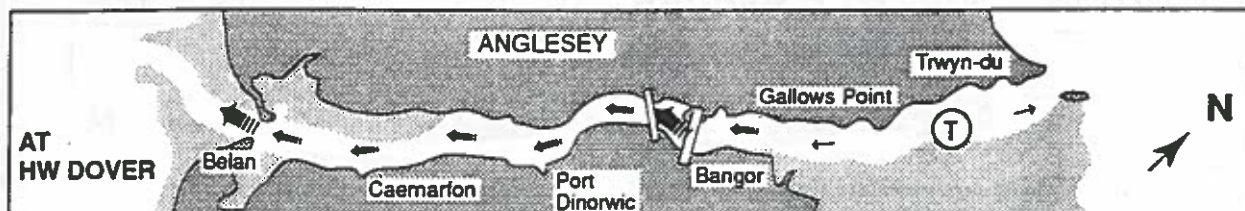


A LIVELY RETURN CROSSING

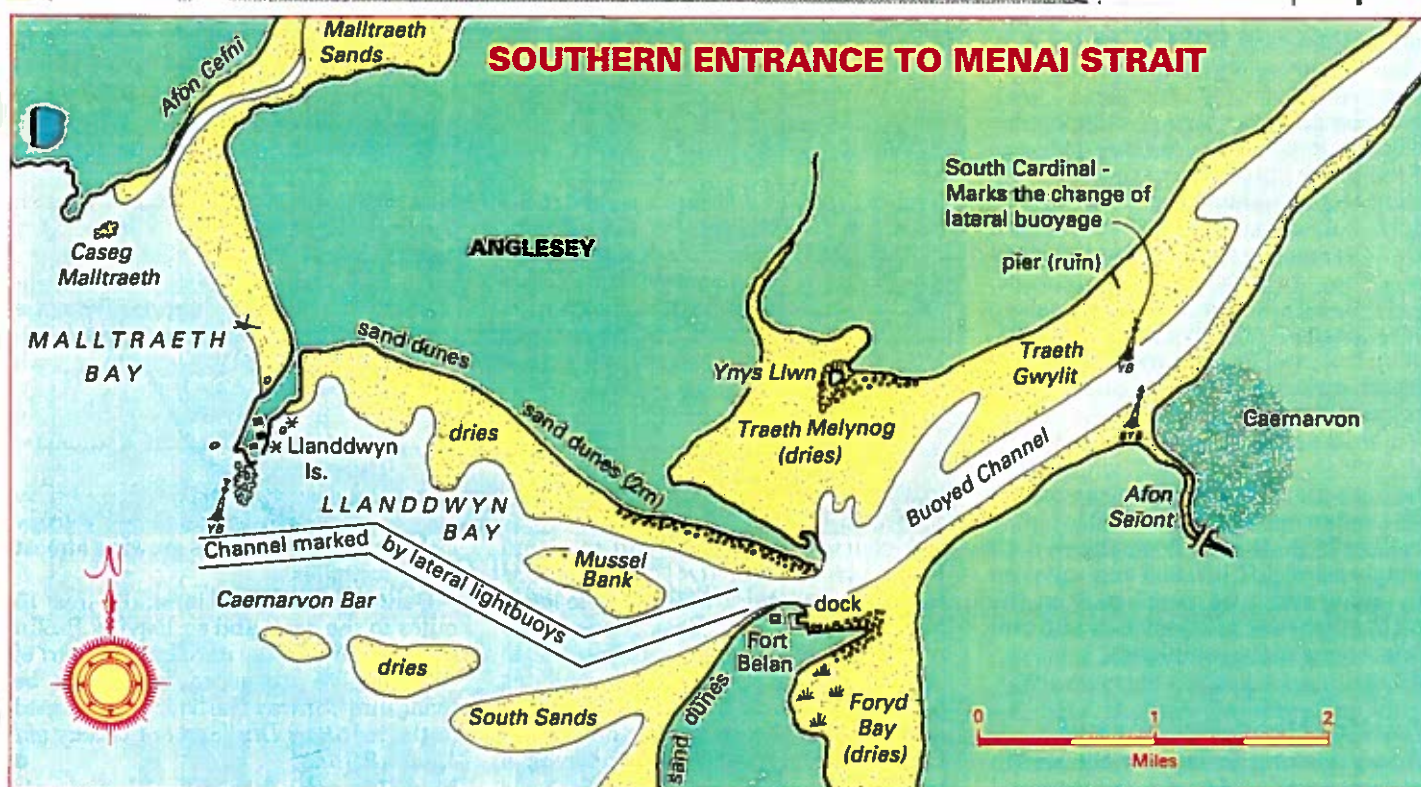
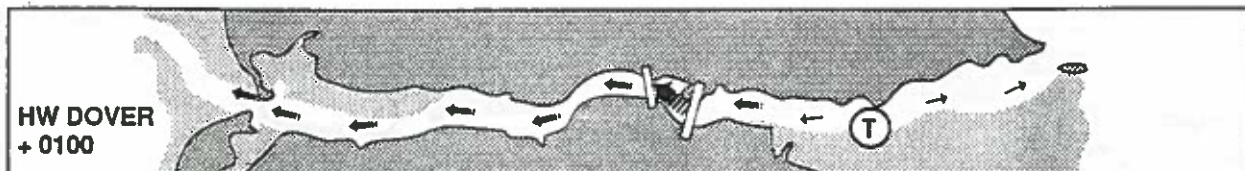


MENAI STRAITS TIDES AT A GLANCE

(T) : turning → : < 2k → : 2-4k ||| : 4k +



LOCAL HW TIMES: Menai: Dover – 0005. Beaumaris: Dover – 0010



+ 0500

LOCAL LW TIMES: Belan: Dover + 0520.

CAERNARFON BAR

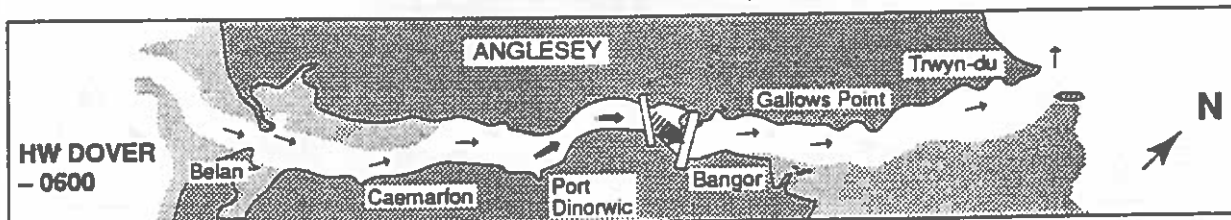
CAERNARFON BAR is without question highly dangerous in certain conditions. Buoys are located to suit changing channel; positions obtainable from Caernarfon Port Radio. Beware cross track tides near high water. Bar impassable during or after fresh or strong onshore weather. Keep strictly in channel.

OUTWARD BOUND: Do not leave Belan Narrows after half tide, better as soon as possible after the ebb commences, which gives maximum depth and duration of fair tide if bound S & W.

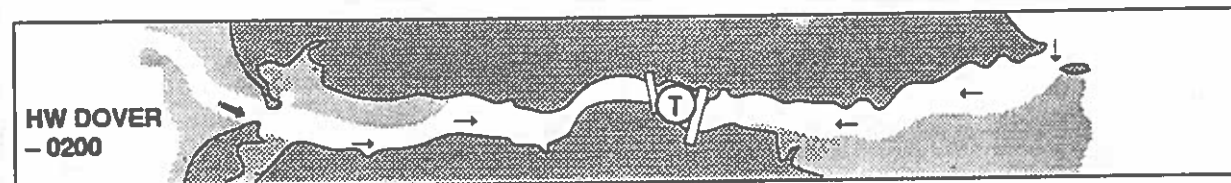
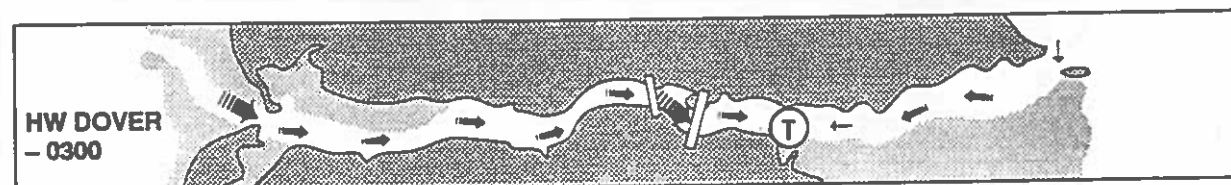
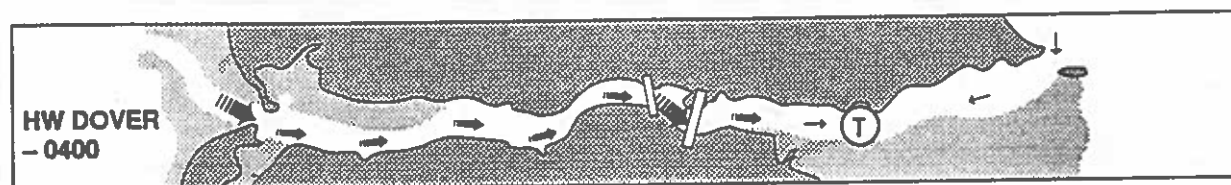
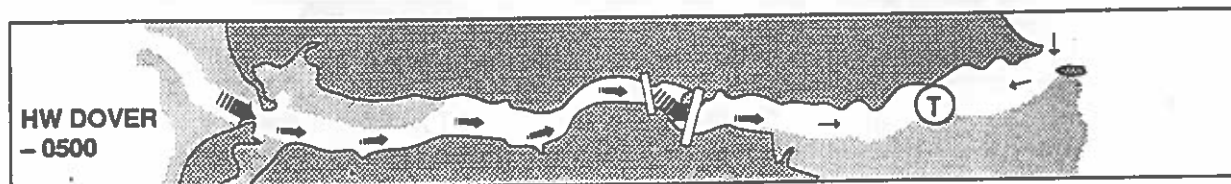
INWARD BOUND: Locating the bar buoys may be difficult; head for Llanddwyn I. until they are located. Only cross after half tide (HW Dover – 0400), which inevitably limits onward passage to max of 3 hours.

MENAI STRAITS TIDES AT A GLANCE

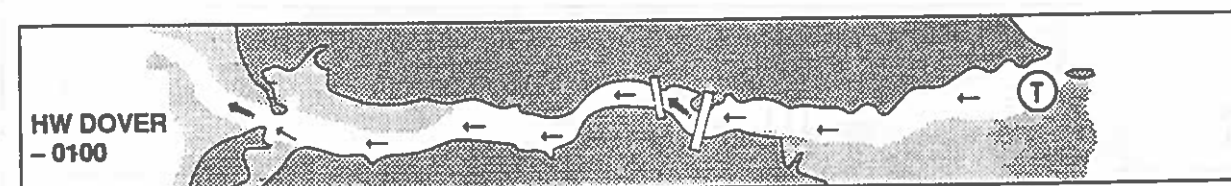
Ⓣ : turning → : < 2k → : 2-4k |||→ : 4k +



LOCAL LW: Caernarfon: HW Dover -0555. Port Dinorwic: -0620. Menai: -0540. Beaumaris: -0605.



SLACK WATER IN THE SWELLIES: HW Dover -0200 to -0230.



LOCAL HW: Belan: HW Dover -0115. Caernarfon: -0105. Port Dinorwic: -0050.

THE SWELLIES

WESTBOUND: Leave or pass Beaumaris in time to arrive at the Swellies by HW Dover -0230 to -0200. If in doubt about passage speed, leave early; the adverse tide will check your progress. For a first time passage this is useful, as the yachts speed over the ground is reduced. Late arrival will mean a faster passage, but with perhaps less control.

EASTBOUND: Leave or pass Port Dinorwic in time to arrive at Menai Bridge by HW Dover -0230 to -0200. Progress towards the Swellies should be closely monitored, as you are travelling with the last of the flood. Early arrival will mean a fast, perhaps dangerous passage, being late may make it impossible.

We decided to press on towards the point of no return at the entrance to the Narrows and be guided by reports from ahead. Just before entering the Narrows, Marie Clare called us on a broken transmission to say it was very rough but they beat thro' under foresail and main and engine and advised us to do likewise if we decided to follow. Drumbeat also radioed that it had been very heavy from the exit from the Narrows to the third buoy but getting easier outside. They suggested I attempt the passage only if I had full confidence in my crew.

We pressed on, got the No. 4 up and had the main with one reef ready to hoist. The wind was on the nose now and the channel too narrow in which to tack. We had the washboards in and the hatch shut. We were all clipped on as Camingo made painfully slow progress thro big short standing waves. The bow was burying and the waves seemed to pass under us rather than we driving into them. We crept out even though the tide had now turned in our favour. The No. 4 was not drawing and I barely had steerage against the strong wind. Our 10 litre plastic water bottles were jumping about in the cockpit. It was an enxious 10 to 15 minutes and seemed to last almost forever.

Suddenly we were into relatively calm water. The main was hoisted and with engine going we rapidly beat out, steering thro waves and picking up buoys easily over the three mile bar. Singleton buoys mark a twisting channel which shifts regularly in the rough seas common here. This requires regular re-positioning of the channel markers so charts give only an approximation of the way out or in.

Marie Clare put into Pilot Cove for shelter as the BBC was forecasting force 5/6 winds. We got the RTE 12.53 forecast which was favourable with the Sou'westerly backing South which should give us a fast reach home. The weather was fresh and sunny now but the seas were still from South West but tending to be more confused than regular causing the boat to bounce around somewhat. We met no traffic as were were south of the ferry route. Drumbeat who were almost out of sight confirmed a course of 290° magnetic for us from their Decca. As the wind gradually backed we clipped along under a cracked No. 4 and single reefed main with the starboard rail well dipped.

By 18.45 hours we were experiencing fairly large seas and taking the occasional green one over the coach roof. It was misting when we spotted a large ketch taking a hammering as it beat south into heavy seas. I called him up for a position fix and eventually raised a continental who gave us a position 53.13N and 05.28W. I worked out that we had covered 43 miles in 7½ hours - a very satisfactory rate in the conditions. I estimated we were



HOMEWARD Bound



25 miles from Howth with an E.T.A. of 23.00 hours.

Having picked up the Kish we altered course to the North and headed for Howth in showery conditions. I attempted to make link calls to home but received no reply. As 22.30 we were tied up in Howth marina.

Having unloaded much of our gear off the boat, we got taxis home having failed to raise any drivers to come and collect us. To say that Claire was surprised to find me in bed when she got home would be an understatement!!

Next morning I moved the boat back to Malahide and put it on the scrubbing posts to get it back in shape for racing once more.

Though not a long cruise in terms of miles logged, the ten days spent on board were very enjoyable. We all got along well which was no mean achievement for a mixed crew of five (down to four midway) in such a small craft. We ate ashore only once or twice and dined and supped well aboard the rest of the holiday. The weather, whilst mostly dry and bright, was extraordinarily windy with the result that we sailed in heavy conditions much of the time and on occasions, at the beginning and end, extremely rough seas.

Camingo and her crew came through with flying colours.



AT REST