

Yacht *Flamingo*

CRUISE LOG

SUMMER 1998

Scotland



The Skipper and Author

Crew

Malahide to Ardglass

Roger Greene
John Duggan
Mary Jo O'Sullivan
Ann Fitzgerald

Ardglass to Largs

Roger Greene
John Duggan

Largs to Malahide

Roger Greene
Micheál Lynch
Russell Camier
Colm Mulvey

Accompanying yacht

Krait

Crew;
Sidney McInerney
Joe Dalton
Eddie Caffrey

Day One – Saturday 30 May

Malahide to Ardglass

Having warned all to be on board ready to depart at 06.30 hrs. we cast off at 06.50 hrs. and made a hasty departure to clear the bar before the last of the ebb.

It was bright but misty as we motored towards Rockabill then motor sailed on the NNE wind. Around 11.00 hrs. the wind has freshened to force 4 and had come around sufficient for us to dispense with the engine and sail with one reef in the mainsail and a full jib. As the wind freshened we further reduced sail and made a number of short tacks out to sea to maintain course.

Flamingo tramped along in bright sunshine and a lumpy sea with a number of other yachts, apart from *Krait*, on the same course. They were Irish Cruising Club members rendezvousing in Carlingford for a week-end rally.

Ann Fitzgerald, who lives with Mary Jo, had recently returned from an exciting career break in the course of which she climbed to a base camp in the Himalayas, rafted down gorges in Australia and bungee jumped in New Zealand. However, the sea state off Clogherhead proved too much and she went very quiet before feeding the fish for a period. John and Mary Jo lost their appetites but no worse.

Around 15.00 hrs. we made a long port tack out to sea from the Carlingford whistle buoy but shortly after coming about again the wind was on the nose and dropping steadily and by 17.00 hrs. all sail had been furled and we motored the remainder of the way across Dundrum Bay to Ardglass, arriving on the Phennick Cove marina berth at 20.10 hrs.

In true *Flamingo* fashion the mainbrace was split and Geraldine Dalton's pre-cooked food was put on the stove as we awaited the arrival of *Krait*. We welcomed the crew of that worthy craft with a stiff tot and served curry with rice and red wine to the combined crews aboard *Flamingo*. The craic was good and it was 01.00 hrs. ere we turned in.

Distance covered this day	63 miles	Miles covered to date	63
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	11.5 hours	Engine hours to date	11.5



Dining in Carlingford

Left to right: John Duggan, the Author, Roger Greene, Eddie Caffrey, Ann Fitzgerald, Sidney McInerney and Mary Jo O'Sullivan

Day Two – Sunday 31 May

Ardglass ⚓ ⚓ ⚓

The wind was piping from the NE this morning and as that was the direction of our intended and we were all feeling rather tired there was unanimous approval for resting up a day. We all trooped up to the marina building for a 'community' Ulster fry. I say 'community' because the Phennick Cove marina in Ardglass is a local community enterprise and staffed on a voluntary basis. Traditional Ulster fries are served on Saturday and Sunday mornings and what a base they are for a hearty days sailing. The plate comes piled with bacon, egg, sausage, black and white pudding, soda farl and potato cake, all washed down with tea or coffee and brown bread and marmalade.

Sidney and I made use of the day to do some minor repairs, fit a new main halyard on *Flamingo* and rig flag halyards so that the Commodore's ship might not be found wanting in terms of etiquette.

The ladies walked around the coast to Killough and back for exercise. This quaint little County Down backwater with a great seafaring history is well worth a visit.

We all gathered back on board *Flamingo* in the late afternoon sunshine and enjoyed a selection of cheeses and pates from France washed down with Bucks Fizz courtesy of John Duggan and Aer Lingus.

Claire had cooked and deep frozen a pork casserole dish and this was served up that evening accompanied by boiled rice and a nice red wine, following which we all retired to the Mooring pub in the village. John sang and played guitar whilst some other patrons also sang and performed on banjo and mouth organ. Before a great open turf fire the craic continued into the wee hours – no 'time' was called by the publican.

Distance covered this day	Nil miles	Miles covered to date	63
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	Nil hours	Engine hours to date	11.5

Mary Jo goes aloft





Above: Roger, Ann, Eddie, Mary Jo, Sidney and John

Bucks Fizz and French Cheeses & Pates in Phennick Cove Marina

Below: Roger, Ann, Eddie, Mary Jo, Sidney and John



Day Three – Monday 1 June

Ardglass to Bangor

After seeing Mary Jo and Ann off to catch a 08.30 hrs. bus to Downpatrick and thence to Newry to pick up a pre-arranged lift, John and I spent a leisurely morning which was bright and windy.

As we planned a fairly short trip to-day to Bangor we delayed our departure 'till noon to take advantage of a favourable tide. With the wind just 20° east of north we initially motor sailed for an short while in a force 4. We enjoyed a pleasant sail in good sea conditions, sunshine and warm weather. We used the engine to help us clear Ballyquintan Point and having sailed close around the South Rock lightship to take photographs we bore off on a pleasant reach with a force 3. Having closely rounded each navigation mark along the route, the spinnaker was hoisted shortly after the Skulmartin and we sailed in close company with *Krait* to Donaghadee sound where we lost the wind around 18.45 hrs. We motored around towards Bangor whilst *Krait* persisted somewhat longer with sail until headed.

Approaching Bangor, a fender was dropped overboard as we tidied ship. This presented an opportunity to practice MOB skills or the lack of them. With just the two of us on board and no sail set we did not find it easy or quick to get back to recover safely, even in good conditions of sea and wind. Sidney came up to us as we made the pick-up and was somewhat upset, thinking he had missed finding a good fender!

We tied up in nearby berths in Bangor's fine large marina in calm conditions at 19.55 hrs.

Eddie Caffrey cooked an Italian chicken dish with rice on board *Flamingo* and it went down exceedingly well with three bottles of wine. To our bunks at 01.30 hrs.

Distance covered this day	36 miles	Miles covered to date	99
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	2 hours	Engine hours to date	13.5

Day Four - Tuesday 2 June

Bangor ⚓ ⚓ ⚓

A cold dull damp morning with easterly breezes. Decided to stay put and see the sights in Bangor – we did not get very excited! I resisted a ride on the train or the swans at the Picky Pool. To make matters worse it rained steadily from lunch-hour onwards. We didn't even find a decent pub.

At least the *Irish Times* was available. I read that Eithne Shalloo's father has passed away.

John (with a little help from Marks & Spencer) produced a tasty chicken dish with new potatoes and mixed vegetables followed by ice cream.

As we were all eating aboard *Flamingo* as usual we played an extended game of *Shut-the-box* to decide who should do the wash up. The cook gets an automatic exemption, which was just as well for John as I recall the dice rolled badly for him.

Distance covered this day	36 miles	Miles covered to date	99
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	2 hours	Engine hours to date	13.5

Day Five – Wednesday 3 June

Bangor to Campbeltown

With a long passage ahead of us we made an early start, clearing the harbour at 07.25 hrs. Even just outside the sea was lumpy and became more unpleasant as we progressed out into Belfast Lough. There was heavy sea traffic in and out of Belfast including a HSS and a Seacat so we were some what on edge as we were tossed about. The log stopped working not once but twice necessitating it's withdrawal for cleaning off some pieces of silicone that had become entangled in the impeller. As I was attending to this with John on the helm a big rogue sea came right over the bow and the canopy, some water even finding it's way below and soaking the chart table.

Even though the wind was almost on the nose we hoisted sail with some difficulty as the boat jumped about but the motion became much more comfortable even if our rate of progress to the shelter on the other side of the Lough was reduced somewhat.

Having initially travelled in close company with *Krait* and enjoyed some good views of their undersides we drew ahead somewhat but then noticed that they were having difficulty in hoisting full sail and they were not responding on the radio. However, they called us to say they had lost the main halyard and were unable to retrieve it in the conditions of sea and wind. They had the hatch battened so did not hear us calling on the radio. They eventually decided to return to Bangor to fix the problem and by then it was too late to follow to Campbeltown but as the weather had improved they went to Portpatrick instead.

Meantime we were beating under full main and slightly furled jib in ever improving weather and making rapid progress with a favourable tide under us. At 10.15 we had to go about and tack out to sea to clear the Maidens. When we tacked back on to a northerly course the wind was almost on the nose and dropping so the jenny was furled and we continued on main and engine. The sea was also calming although we were still taking the odd splash over the bow. By noon the log was telling us we had done 20 miles through the water but our progress over the ground was considerably better and by 14.00 hrs. we were approaching Sanda Island on a flat calm sea and a very slight breeze. Low water was at 13.41, again giving us a favourable tide and so we decided we would explore a little by going west of Sanda and though the sound between the Mull of Kintyre and the island. There were marvellous passages of gannets passing East West and vice versa whilst large numbers of cormorants were flying back and forth between the mainland and the island. Next day we were to learn that the gannets were coming and going from the enormous gannetry on Ailsa Craig to the East of us. The sea remained flat as we enjoyed the views and took photos. I reckon there are relatively few days in the year when one could have been as comfortable as we were in the Sound. At 15.00 hrs., as we were exiting the Sound, four military jets flew low overhead giving us quite a start.

Brendan (the autohelm) was put to work and we enjoyed our sarnies in bright sunshine but a sharp breeze as we journeyed close to the Aranman Barrels and past

Blindmans Rock towards Davaar Island at the entrance to Campbeltown Lough. After a lovely sail up the loch we made fast on the town pontoon at 16.37 hrs.

About 17.30 Eddie Caffrey from *Krait* called on his mobile phone to say they were approaching Portpatrick. However, we lost contact before we make any rendezvous arrangements and I did not have his number to call him back.

The local mixed cruiser fleet of six boats had a gentle race in the loch's shifty light breezes whilst the pontoons became quite full of visitors.

I spoke to Claire on the phone to bring her up to date on our progress. She said Paddy O'Neill had been in touch to say he was joining the *Pachua* on a voyage from Dublin to Portsmouth after the Tall Ships visit to Dublin in late August and would I be interested. I said I would think about it and could she get more information in the meantime.

John and I ate in the White Hart Hotel bar – I had a gorgeous fish pie topped with cheese and herbs. I consumed two pints of 70/- ale as we watched World Cup football and then to bed. We tried, without success, to raise the *Krait* crew on the radio nor did they get us by radio or mobile phone.

Distance covered this day	44 miles	Miles covered to date	143
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	9 hours	Engine hours to date	22.5

Day Five – Thursday 4 June

Campbeltown to Troon

We had no news of *Krait* on either the radio or the VHF on this warm sunny morning. We figured they would head for Campbeltown or Troon depending on the wind direction. Our plan was to head initially for Pladda on the southern tip of Aran which should get us closer to them on whichever route they would travel.

Departing the pontoons at 11.00 hrs, we motored down the loch and cleared Davaar Island 30 minutes later. As the breeze was light and almost on the nose we motored with mainsail on a calm sea and soon decided to steer 125° for Ailsa Craig. We called on channels 72, 67 and 16 and got a broken response on the latter but could not tell if it was *Krait*. There was no reply on the mobile phone. Visibility was good and there were a number of yachts about but none that might have been *Krait*.

The wind died away completely as course was maintained towards Ailsa Craig. The sun blazed down from a clear blue sky and the sea became completely flat – perhaps more so than I have ever experienced before. Brendan, the autohelm, was charged with maintaining course and on looking back we could see our wake snaking along the surface for several hundred metres. It appears Brendan was making regular and consistent very small corrections. The main had been stowed at this stage.

We had a close up view of the impressive gannetry on the west side of the Craig with some fishermen in a boat attending pots right under the cliffs before motoring around close to the north shore passing an old stone tower with a metal trumpet protruding from the roof. It may have been a beacon in days of yore. It was connected to the small jetty on the north- east side by a little narrow gauge railway running along the shore at the foot of the cliffs. There was another of these towers on the east side and also a modern lighthouse.

As we nudged in towards the very short semi-ruined jetty the depth went from 60+metres in the space of 75 metres to 2 metres. We had to raise the keel to tie the bow to the ladder on the jetty where *Flamingo* lay safely and comfortably in the absolute calm. There was a notice proclaiming the rock a nature reserve and prohibiting landing. Nonetheless, we climbed ashore in turn to be photographed against the backdrop of the rock. The place felt intimidating and I felt we were intruding on nature. As I backed the boat off John very nearly fell in to the marvellously clear but weedy water. Ailsa Craig sticks massively up out of the ocean and is awesome when viewed from any prospect but especially close up. It looked lonely and somewhat forbidding and I was conscious of the hardships endured in former times in trying to establish and maintain navigation warnings on this great danger to navigation in the middle of one of the busiest shipping areas in these islands. Imagine my surprise then as we pulled away and I was scanning the area around the jetty with binoculars I spotted a young lad lying in the sun in the grass sucking a straw. He was less than 100 metres from where we had landed and must have been put ashore by the lobster boat.

After an hour in the vicinity of Ailsa Craig we set a course 40° for Troon at 15.00 hrs and readily maintained 6 knots on the glassy sea passing Turnberry golf course and

hotel and Culzean Castle. We almost ran down an enormous seal basking on the surface – he just gazed lazily and yawned as we passed.

I dried out the bilges – water that had come in whilst clearing the log impeller and the sea that had come aboard crossing Belfast Lough.

By 17.36 hrs we were off the Heads of Ayr and shortly after received an aborted call on the mobile. A few minutes later Telecom Eireann called to check the line. Then, a little later Joe Dalton rang from a call box in Campbeltown and said *Krait* hoped to go to Tarbert the next day. After considering our options and the weather we rang back and said we would do likewise.

At 18.55 hrs. we made fast in Troon marina which was not particularly pretty on the water or shore side. We ate reasonable food in the Anchorage pub and stayed for a quiz which was professionally run and quite clever but very difficult. Later we walked the main street and were not impressed though the way home along the waterfront was pretty enough in places. In

Distance covered this day	44.5 miles	Miles covered to date	187.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	8 hours	Engine hours to date	30.5

Day Six – Friday 5 June

Troon to Tarbert (Loch Fyne)

Departed Troon at 09.17 hrs. in a haze (weather not us) and little or no wind and motored until 11.00 hrs. steering 317° to clear the southern tip of Bute. The sea was calm and there were quite a few yachts about on passage. We tried the jenny for a period while on a broad reach but it just hung there.

Around noon when just about one mile off Garroch Head on the southern tip of the Isle of Bute we noticed a black hulled vessel with orange superstructure – rather like a tugboat- coming out from under Arran in a broad arc. It altered course in our direction and came up on us from behind. I realised we had not been keeping a listening watch on channel 16 and just as I came up from below having switched on I saw an officer lean out from the bridge waving a radio handset. He requested we switch to channel 6 where we heard a conversation between a submarine and our neighbouring vessel re the yacht *Flying Fish* and another nearby yacht. When that exchange had terminated we called the our neighbour who was flying a blue ensign. He was most polite and apologised for ‘creeping up’ on us. He stated that there was a submarine operating in deep water on the north east side of Arran and southwards and would we please keep clear. Our route did not take us into the exercise area but we could see the twin periscopes about 3 – 4 miles away close in by the measured mile on Arran. There were many other yachts crossing in all directions, many closer than *Flamingo*.

The weather clouded in about 14.00 hrs and the wind also filled in. We hoisted the spinny in the snuffer bag but got a twist at the top. However, the wind rose rapidly and we switched to full jenny, turned the motor off and enjoyed a very pleasant three and a half hour run up Loch Fyne. Tarbert looked it’s usual pretty self as we entered at 15.00 hrs.

Krait arrived about 18.30 and I had pork chops with celery and onions cooking in apple juice with boiled potatoes almost ready. After a few ‘G & Ts’ and a glass of wine we went up town and visited a few hostelrys before settling in one with a country and western singer. We joined in, with John contributing a few numbers. I had a couple of pints of 80/- beer and rather too many whiskies with Eddie. I should have had more sense as I did not feel at all well later – I had to walk them off ! !

Distance covered this day	31 miles	Miles covered to date	218.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	5.1 hours	Engine hours to date	35.6

Day Seven – Saturday 6 June

Tarbert to Rothesay   

Did'nt feel the best this a.m.!

I was up early as were the rest. It was a dull morning as we all walked to West Loch Tarbert. Nothing much to see at head of loch but I was able to show the party an oystercatcher's nest. We visited the Heritage Centre on the way back. I looked for diesel but found none was available on week-ends despite it being quite a busy little fishing harbour.

Just as we left about noon in a fresh breeze the weather closed in. We motored into the wind about half way across the loch and then bore off and hoisted main and three quarter jenny. The rain poured down but the spray hood offered great shelter and kept the cabin dry. The rain gradually lightened as we entered the Kyle but the day remained overcast. This was rather a pity as the trip through the Kyles is most scenic and the colours, especially the rhodadendrums, were still wonderful. What a difference sunshine would have made.

We met about six Sigmas going the other way including IRL 1 and IRL 2 both with tricolours stitched onto their mainsails. We surmised they were from a sailing school. We ran up the West Kyle at some speed in a fresh wind then motor sailed across the top and down the East Kyle meeting many yachts along the route.

Rothesay was busy and we obtained one of the last good berths when we arrived at 17.15 hrs. our evening meal consisted of Mr. Hyslop's Tarbert meat pies baked in the oven and accompanied by broccoli and boiled potatoes and of course a nice red wine.

Russell phoned to confirm that he would be flying into Prestwick next day with Colm and we arranged to rendezvous in Largs marina

All were very tired, what with the previous night's carousing and the long sail in the fresh sae air. We retired to a pub just 100 metres from the boat for one drink and when we emerged at 22.30 the rain was absolutely bucketing down.

Distance covered this day	25 miles	Miles covered to date	243.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	2.8 hours	Engine hours to date	38.4



Feeding the gulls coming down the East Kyle of Bute

Day Eight– Sunday 7 June

Rothesay to Largs

There was very heavy rain followed by fog this morning. The *Krait* crowd went off to have a Scottish breakfast ashore and then inspect the remarkable restored Victorian toilets on the pier.

Just before 10.00 I was keying in Claire's number on the mobile phone when a call came through from her. Friday had been torrentially wet in Malahide and the Saturday golf and barbecue at Donabate had been cancelled.

Flamingo departed at 10.50, ahead of *Krait*, and after clearing the Toward Bank set course under engine for Largs in a very light south-easterly breeze.

As we approached the northern tip of Great Cumbrae the weather brightened with the mist clearing and a weak sun breaking through. A submarine, travelling on the surface, crossed our bows just a few hundred metres ahead – in fact we had to slow to allow it to clear us and in any case an escorting Defence Police launch took up station between us and the sub. to ensure we did not get too close. Three crew were on the conning tower and it was pushing a massive wave from the submerged bow. The hull surface looked as if it was tiled with many tiles missing but this was probably some sort of defence arrangement to give deceptive sonar echoes.

As we came into our berth in Largs Yacht Haven the new crew of Russell Camier, Micheál Lynch and Colm Mulvey were literally arriving on the pontoon having been told at the marina office that we had just called in on the radio. John, who was leaving for home, had already packed and left immediately to seek to catch an earlier flight from Glasgow.

Flamingo was fuelled up and the water tank filled. We spent the rest of the day lolling around, viewing the yachts in this 700 berth marina and visiting the chandlers whilst some walked into Largs. There was a Kelt similar to mine but with some running rigging refinements for racing.

The two crews ate a mediocre meal in the marina restaurant and all retired after one drink.

Distance covered this day	8 miles	Miles covered to date	251.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	1.7 hours	Engine hours to date	40.1



Above clockwise: Mícheál Lynch, Russell Camier, Sidney McInerney, Joe Dalton, Colm Mulvey, Roger Greene and Eddie Caffrey

Dining in Largs Yacht Haven Restaurant

Below Clockwise: Roger, Mícheál, Russell, Sidney and Colm



Day Nine— Monday 8 June

Largs to Tarbert

We were up for an early shower followed by a Scottish fry in the *Boat Dock*, the marina café. Lines were cast off about 10.10 hrs. and we came out into the Largs Channel to a favourable breeze though the air was chilly the sky overcast. We sailed straight across to Great Cumbræ, up to and around Tomont End and then north-east towards Rothesay. *Krait* were delayed for some reason though they appeared ready as we left and later attempts to raise them on the radio were unsuccessful – battery saving again !

Heavy rain set in but two porpoises lifted our interest by swimming right up behind us. A submarine was spotted on the surface over near Toward Point.

As we approached Rothesay *Krait* caught up and we docked together to allow the crew to inspect the Victorian Lavatories. There was still a drizzle and light wind as we departed for the East Kyle about 12.30.

Flamingo and *Krait* ran up the Kyle in light airs and rain. On approaching the Narrows we took the shorter but trickier passage to the west of the Burnt Isles whilst *Krait* popped through the East Passage. Because of the light airs and strong tide under us we kept the engine ticking over in case of difficulty but in the event neither boat experienced any problems. We continued to motor sail on calm water across the top using Brendan, the autohelm. However, as we rounded the point of Rubha Dubh opposite Tighnabruaich the autohelm went into distress and worked furiously sending the boat every whichway. I disconnected it and looked for the problem as we sailed on and when having found nothing apparently wrong I reconnected a short time later it worked fine. The person watching the large scale chart noticed that a local magnetic anomaly which was obviously the root of the aberration.

The wind freshened as we rounded down the West Kyle to Ardlamont Point using engine, mainsail and Brendan. We ran before a fresh wind in a lumpy sea towards Tarbert. The rain was heavy and driving and were we appreciative of our new sprayhood, plus good wet weather clothing and an autohelm. We had just one on deck at a time whilst *Krait*, keeping station with us, had all crew up and the hatch closed. The crew became wet and cold and Eddie, in particular, was feeling quite miserable.

The butchers were closed when we arrived in Tarbert so no meat pies and we ate in the Victoria but not before our spirits were lifted by some much appreciated hot toddies prepared by Micheál.

Distance covered this day	30 miles	Miles covered to date	281.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	3.4 hours	Engine hours to date	43.5

Day Ten— Tuesday 9 June

Tarbert ⚓ ⚓ ⚓

It rained heavily all through Monday night and throughout Tuesday and that night we had rain or heavy mist. The others took a local bus to the entrance of the Crinan Canal and then went on into Loughgilpead. I stayed back to do a bit of sketching and painting between showers and when the sun shone through I took myself off for a walk through lovely scrub beechwood to the White Shore. The trees were dripping and the ground underfoot was either gravel or stone pathway or boardwalk over the more boggy patches. The sunlight filtering down through the light green leaves was magic ! However, heavy rain came again within thirty minutes and I was soaked to the skin as I had no wet gear with me. After a hot shower and a change I was fine again.

I had Mr. Hyslop's baking in the oven when the others returned and we settled in to a most pleasant meal washed down with a good red wine. As the rain continued to descend like stairrods we stayed on *Flaming* to play *Shut the box* and to read. Finally, having downed hot whiskies to assist Eddie in fighting his cold we retired early.



A wet night in Tarbert

Left to right: Roger, Eddie, Russell, Colm, Sidney and Micheál

Distance covered this day	Nil miles	Miles covered to date	281.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	Nil hours	Engine hours to date	43.5

Day Eleven– Wednesday 10 June

Tarbert to Campbeltown

As we had been warned that the footbridge on to the pontoons was being lifted and replaced today we were up early and away by 09.15 hrs. The weather was still depressingly misty as we motor sailed along the shore of Loch Fyne towards Skipness Point. On heading into Inchmarnock Water the weather brightened. Some small dolphins or porpoises were spotted but otherwise no sign of life. We crossed over to Loch Ranza on Arran bringing clear weather with us though it appeared to be raining where we had come from. We sailed cautiously up to the head of the Loch and then back out again through the moorings just off the town of neat houses. We caught a small mooring buoy and rope but fortunately it slipped off again quite easily. We motor-sailed down the west coast of Arran in intermittent and almost went aground on a jutting spit before heading across Kilbrannan Sound to Carradale. Although *Krait* had taken a more direct route from Skipness to Carradale they were still behind us when we crept into the tiny harbour near Carradale known as Port Crannach. Here there were a few trawlers, a handful of houses and an enormous ugly scrapyard. It was raining again and within minutes the wind went from WSW to north and began to pipe so we made a hasty exit. Soon it blowing a good force 5 and we ran down the Sound under jenny only towards Davaar Island with *Krait* nearby. It was gusting well over 30 knots as we entered Campbeltown Loch. We were doing 6 knots in heavy rain on just half a jenny and watching our navigation in the passage between the mainland and Davaar Island when, apparently out of nowhere, a large sleek British warship came up abeam of us at speed. They had made no warning sound and we has not been keeping a proper watch to our rear because of the rain. They gave us some fright. It was still raining as we rafted up on the busy pontoon at Campbeltown at 16.20 hrs.

Distance covered this day	34 miles	Miles covered to date	315.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	5.1 hours	Engine hours to date	48.6

Day Twelve— Thursday 11 June

Campbeltown to Ardglass

The plan was to leave at 05.00 hrs. to get best of tide for a potentially long passage for we hoped to go all the way to Ardglass.

Despite a fitful sleep I still overslept and it was 05.20 hrs as we hurriedly cast off in company with *Krait*. For a change the weather was fresh and bright, the wind light and the sea state calm. By 06.35 we were abeam the Mull of Kintyre, under full sail but on an almost dead run in a sloppy sea. Michael was sharing the first watch with me and became quite ill.

Russell and Colm took over at 09.00 hrs. the wind increased to 15-20 knots and shifted somewhat so it was coming over the starboard quarter. Fast progress was made downwind with the boat surfing up to 8 knots and a strong tide under.

By noon Mew Island Lighthouse was abeam and as the tide turned the sea calmed and the wind became light and somewhat variable with some very heavy thundershowers. The iron horse was summoned to work about 14.00 when a few miles north of the Skulmartin Buoy. By now a strong adverse tide was cutting slowing our S.O.G. drastically and the heavy showers drove the watch crew below, relying on Brendan to steer the ship. With our superior engining ability we left *Krait* astern and made improved progress as the sea became flatter. Apart from the overspill off Strangford Lough the latter part of the journey was smooth and we tied up in Phennick Cove Marina at Ardglass at 18.10 hrs. and *Krait* followed about an hour later with a wet and tired crew.

We could not raise Belfast Coastguard to report our safe arrival but Liverpool picked us up and said they would relay our message.

A long day !

Distance covered this day	73 miles	Miles covered to date	388.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	6.2 hours	Engine hours to date	54.8



Krait and Flamingo in Phennick Cove Marina, Ardglass

Day Thirteen— Friday 12 June

Ardglass to Carlingford

We awoke to a warm sunny morning and were up and about in shorts and tee shirts – what a change. *Krait* was heading direct for Malahide but we were just going round the Mourne to Carlingford. We were away first about 08.50 hrs anxious to catch the flowing tide up the Lough. As we motored out of Ardglass we saw a British gunboat lying out to sea with a few ribs fussing around. Almost immediately they came towards us at high speed. It was obvious that they were interested in us and as they came close I throttled back and called to them asking if they wished to come aboard. I got no reply and as one rib came alongside my port side I again asked if they wished to board but again I was ignored. They grabbed our gunwale and three clambered on deck. They all wore black survival suits but showed no insignia or identification and carried guns. The man on the foredeck almost went head first down through the fore hatch as he tried to peer inside whilst another went down the companionway. They were not inclined to be chatty to put it mildly. The man in charge asked if I were the skipper and produced some forms which he proceeded to fill. He asked questions about my date of birth, home port, etc. and then thawed out a bit as he made some crude efforts at being witty. The crew were each given short identification forms to complete. The guy down below did chat to Russell saying he hated the sea but on joining the British army found himself posted to duty on the gunboat normally stationed in Carlingford Lough. Before they departed I was asked to sign a form agreeing they had been courteous and had caused no damage. Unfortunately, it was only when they had gone that I found that their rib had left very nasty black rubber scuff marks on our hull. Meanwhile the other rib had been standing some 50 metres off keeping a wary eye. Between both craft there were about 18 soldiers involved and they were definitely intent on presenting an intimidating image.

We had a pleasant coasting along the Down shore in bright sunshine but a bitterly sharp wind and came up the Lough at the top of the spring tide. As we approached the marina we were called on the radio and asked to stand off for a short while as a pontoon was being moved. We spotted Padraig Monerly alone on his yacht towing a pontoon, all of 25 metres long, down the Lough and swinging around and in through the narrow twisting entrance of the marina. He did have a couple of workmen on the pontoon to fend and push until it was located at right angles to the ladder down from the concrete ship on the seaward side. They then set to with sledges and welding plant to get it secured in place just as the rush of visitors began to arrive for the Oyster Pearl week-end.

The marina was almost full with resident boats whilst an impressive new construction was in progress at the top of the ramp –it will eventually be a service block including a restaurant and bar. By that night the place was jammed tight with yachts.

We trooped off to 'PJs' for a pint and a sandwich and then went to see the maritime trade exhibition set up in a marquee on the Green. Micheál and I managed to get four samples of John Teeling's locally distilled whiskey plus some smoked salmon whilst I

met a local artist who said I should look out for her on a BBC 2 programme 'Awash with Colour' to be screened in the Autumn.

The rain started with a heavy drizzle and grew steadily heavier as the evening wore on. Margaret O'Riordan drove us to the sailing club where there was plenty of traditional Carlingford hospitality with as many oysters as one could eat and a generous supply of free Guinness. Margaret drove us back to the boat about 2 am by which time the rain was bucketing down.

Distance covered this day	28 miles	Miles covered to date	416.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	4.5 hours	Engine hours to date	59.3

Day Fourteen-- Saturday 13 June

Carlingford ⚓ ⚓ ⚓

It rained incessantly and torrentially through the night. The wind blew the cabin doors open and the rain came in necessitating getting up to re-secure them. We awoke to the sound of gushing water and on looking out saw brown flood waters coming off the mountain, down through the marina car park, flooding the toilet block area to a depth of several feet and spouting out through the rock armouring into the marina. It was just muddy water everywhere. Pumps and earth moving equipment were brought into use and raised boardwalks constructed and all the while the rain poured down.

There was a distinct lack of enthusiasm for going out to race in such wet conditions and very poor visibility. In the event racing did get under way but the extremely fluky winds turned the first race, at least, into something of a shambles.

The *Flamingo* crew, as is now customary, went to McGee's Bistro to partake of the proprietor's banter and good food before working our way to the sailing club via PJ's. Claire and Eithne, who had driven up to join us that afternoon, set off to drive home again but the rest of us drank on for a while longer.

Distance covered this day	Nil miles	Miles covered to date	416.5
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	Nil hours	Engine hours to date	59.3

Day Fifteen– Sunday 14 June

Carlingford to Malahide

Up at 07.30 and made efforts to arouse *Schullduggery* crew as they were moored outside us and we were hemmed in fore and aft. They moved off just ahead of us in some dis-array and promptly ran aground in the marina as it was approaching low water. We lifted our keel and endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to tow them off. However, some nasty owner appeared from below and shouted a tirade of abuse at *Schullduggery* about damaging his boat. We were anxious to catch the tide and as we could do little more we thought it best to leave them to sort out their problems. They apparently lifted their keel as they appeared out of the marina as we were motor sailing down the Lough at a fast lick on the last of the ebb.

After clearing the mouth we proceeded in bright sunshine, under full sail, to sail 180° in a north-easterly force 3 on a somewhat lumpy sea. The wind freshened as the day wore on and we rolled along at a good pace. There was quite heavy traffic homewards with some absolutely flying under spinnaker. 40 miles later we were safe in our home berth at 15.00 hours.

Looking back, the company was most agreeable, the scenery great but the sailing was somewhat marred and indeed curtailed by inordinate amounts of rain and at other times total lack of wind. No complaints about the latter though as we enjoyed brilliant sunshine and glassy seas making motoring very pleasant and relaxing.

Distance covered this day	40 miles	Total mileage	456
Engine and/or motor sailing hours	1.3 hours	Total engine hours	60