

Ships Log

Malahide - Isle of Man – Wales – Malahide

Date 3rd of August to the 11th of August 2001

Crew: Denise Doyle, Sean Doyle, Dane Farrell and Adam Doyle (age 7)

Total Log 216 nautical miles

2nd August 2001

We provisioned the boat in driving rain on Thursday night. We were sleeping on board as an early start was planned in the morning. Dane, our other crew member, was at an interview all day and would be arriving late. I tried to stow our belongings as best I could, as there was someone coming down to view the boat that evening. The rain was so bad Sean rigged up a makeshift boom tent out of the sail cover, which helped to keep out some of the rain. I hope it doesn't stay like this for the whole trip! While Sean got the diesel I prepared supper. During all this our potential buyer arrived and we showed him around the boat. Adam explained the loo and the lifting floorboards and the water in the bilge while I tried to point out some of the boat's better features. He seemed interested and said he would contact us when we got back. Would this be our last cruise on Isha? Dane arrived later and after I put Adam to sleep we had a bottle of wine and settled down for the night.

3rd August 2001

08.30 The sun is shining. Hopefully we will get away without being drenched. Dane had not sailed since last years delivery trip to Cork, so Sean ran though all the lines and they strapped on the dingy while I cleared up after breakfast.

09.30 The engine is on and the weather is looking good. Adam is now helping Sean and Dane with the lines, as I get ready to reverse out of our berth.

09.45 Heading out the estuary under engine power in glorious sunshine; such a change from yesterday. Dane and Adam take in the fenders while Sean hanks on the jib. There are still some rain clouds hugging the land and hopefully that's where they will stay, as we head out to sea. The wind is approx force 2-3 northeasterly so we will not be turning off the engine yet.

10.30 I've just put through a TR to Dublin Radio and Danes putting up the mainsail. We decided we would let him do it, as he feels he is a bit out of practice at this stage. Barometer 1015 mb Course 80° magnetic. Isle of Man here we come.

11.00 We're passing Lambay and Adam thinks it looks a bit like the island in Jurassic park so he's been looking for dinosaurs, he also wants lunch!! At 11 o'clock this sea air is something else. I hope I've enough food on board if he keeps eating like this we will run out. His lunch order was boat soup (cream of mushroom and herb) and banana sandwiches.

12.00 I've made everyone an early lunch. Dane and Adam have gone to their bunks and Sean and I are on watch. Position just north east of Lambay Island. A fix on Rockabill, Donabate tower and the sugarloaf has being taken, log 7.3 nautical miles the barometer is steady on 1015 mb. There's a ship approaching us but we have taken bearings on it and they're changing- they will pass well behind us.

12.55 Still motor sailing, course still 60°, the barometer is steady, log 14.5 nautical miles. The rain clouds still seem to be hugging the land lets hope they stay that way if the wind would just pick up enough to sail we could shut off this engine and I would be very happy.

14.15 Sean is now off watch and Adam and Dane are on. Adam is at the bow taking this being on watch very seriously; only I don't need to know every fish and bird that's on the nose. O' well at least he's learning about watches on a boat. The barometer has dropped slightly to 1013 mb, log 22.1 nautical miles, and course 60° magnetic. Dane is on the helm and he's keeping it well on course.

14.45 'Land ahoy!' shouts Adam from the bow, that's not land that's a cloud I told him, but he insists its land so I take out the binoculars and sure enough its land. The Isle of Man on the nose and we still can see the Coolie mountains in Carlingford. Adam is thrilled he can see Ireland and the Isle of Man at the same time.

15.40 Seans up on deck and its my turn to go for a rest. The wind has shifted a bit more easterly so we're goose winging our way to the Isle of Man. Dane has poled out the jib and its working well we can turn off that engine at last. Before I hit my bunk I've made pot noodle for Adam, Dane and Myself and soup for Sean. Log 29.7 nautical miles, barometer 1012 mb a slight fall, course 60° magnetic. Dane is on the helm practicing down wind sailing under Sean's watchful eye and Adam is happily looking for fish. Peace at last, I timed this well; I'm off to sleep!

18.00 Everyone is up and breaded chicken and garlic mayonnaise served in a bap is the order of the day. With everyone fed, Adam and Sean have a lie down, while Dane and I change direction slightly to 50° magnetic to get the way point in the GPS just out side the harbour of Port St. Mary. Dane had let the tide push him a little off course while he was concentrating on the sails. The barometer is back up to 1015 mb, log 41 nautical miles.

19.30 Sean and Adam are back on deck. Danes goes down below to play with Adams Game Boy while Adam steers towards the new Jurassic Island (Isle Of Man) and he's not making a bad job of it at all. The wind has dropped so the dreaded engine is

back on. We cannot hold the jib on this new course so we've dropped it. Log 48.1 nautical miles. Barometer is steady at 1015 mb. Our position is 53° 55' 98" North by 004° 59' 58" West.

19.45 Adams still on the helm and enjoying every minute of it. We can see the light on the lighthouse on Chickens Rock.

20.35 Position 54° 00' 16' North by 004° 51' 09' West, log 54.5M just approaching Calf of Man & Chickens Rock. Port St. Mary is just to the west of them.

21.30 Approaching the harbour we can see some yacht masts. They all seem to be facing the same way, bow in towards the town, so we have put out fenders on the port side. I'm on the helm so the lads can jump off with the ropes if it does not go according to plan. I've learned over the years that long keeled boats have a mind of their own when it comes to maneuvering in close quarters. As I round the end of the pier wall I must keep in to port and leave the perches to starboard. The harbour dries to starboard of the perches. In the dusk light they are not that easy to see, as they are not lit. We pass some large vessels and carry on up to the yachts. We approach another wooden yacht and ask may we come along side but they inform us their leaving at 5am the next day so we carry on to the next boat and they welcome us along side. They won't be leaving for Fleetwood till 9am the next day, much more like it. The two men aboard the boat are from Liverpool and had been to Malahide early in the summer.

21.50 Engine off, log 61.3 nautical miles. Shorelines and springs on. We have adjusted them to the other boats since they were there at low water and their lines were ok. The tidal difference is over 24 feet so you have to do it right or you will end up suspended from the harbour wall at low water. We have decided to go for a pint and eat dinner later. Adam is so excited that he has crossed the Irish Sea to another country he can't wait to climb the harbour wall and see what the Isle of Man is like. We all climb the wall & make our way to the yacht club, which is very friendly. Adam has met two boys around his own age who are on a converted trawler called Endeavour. The kids are happy playing table tennis and pool. After a pint or two, we make our way back to Isha, have dinner, a bottle of wine and relax on this beautiful clear but warm night. Later we retire to bed for a well deserved sleep.

4th August 2001

I awake to a loud knock on the couch roof. Our neighbours were heading off and we were required to move our lines. However when I got up on deck I realised we must be at low tide and we would not have enough rope on the stern line to feed it round the bow of our neighbour and back up the wall to let them slip out so we decided to walk Isha back to the gap left by the wooden boat who had indeed left at 5am. I slowly climbed the wall, which seemed to go on forever. After completing this maneuvering we waved off our friends and I gingerly climbed down the ladder and started to cook the fry for breakfast.



Adam on the helm



Dave the ferry man



Port St. Mary



Douglas

It had been decided we would head into Douglas and go for a swim as I had been told there was a very good swimming pool there. Before breakfast a boat from the Royal St. George arrived and wished to tie up beside us which was ok, however we had to remind them to put on shore lines and springs as well as more fenders I don't think the tie up on trots very often as they seemed to think one fender was sufficient between the boats. Adam has climbed the wall and is watching the fisherman practice for a fishing competition later that day. The water is so clear here you can see the fish swimming around and nibbling the bait off the lines. He now wants a fishing line; we will have to see about that.

After breakfast we head up to Port St. Mary to catch the bus to Douglas. The bus man informs us that the return ticket is also valid on the steam train so were going to return later on the steam train which goes down a treat with Adam as he loves trains. After a bumpy ride on the bus we arrive at the sea front, which has the most extraordinary castle in the middle of the bay, which you can sail around. Maybe next time we will come up here and try out their new marina (no 24 feet wall to climb). After a short walk along the sea front we're informed that the swimming pool is no longer on the sea front but is up this hill in the new National Sports Arena. We hop in a taxi and head up to the swimming pool. It was great, slides whirlpools and two ordinary pools. One for lengths and the other one for kids to play in with floats. We had a great time and Adam managed to lose his tooth into the bargain so the Isle of Man tooth fairy will have to come tonight.

Refreshed after our swim we head back by bus to the railway station which is right beside the new marina they have built in the inner harbour. The lads sit in the sunshine at the railway station having a coffee while I visit the large Tesco to get Steaks. We're going to christen the BBQ I bought last year since it's a beautiful day. The steam train was great and Adam loved the fact we had a compartment to ourselves. The train station was at the far end of Port St. Mary so we strolled through the village soaking up the sunshine and the fab views of the harbour.

Later on, after a lovely BBQ on the boat, we washed up the dishes and Dane rowed over to pick Adam up off his friend's boat, Endeavour. It's easier than climbing up and down the wall at low tide. We headed up to the yacht club for a pint or two. Some of the club's members were showing us the plans for a new marina but I don't know how long that will take to build. Port St. Mary would be very high on my list of harbours to visit if I didn't have to climb that wall.

Returning to the boat that evening we could see the fish jumping in the harbour. Adam, Dane and Sean skimmed stones on the way back to the boat. I thought we'd never get Adam out of the yacht club he was having so much fun. I have to say it's the best-equipped yacht club I've visited for families cruising with children. They have a separate room for the children to play in with a video and loads of tapes, board games, a pool table & a table tennis table. We will definitely be back.



Goodbye Port St. Mary



Adam Relaxes

We said goodnight and were about to retire to bed when the crew from the Royal St. George returned to their boat. We informed them we would be leaving early in the morning and if they agreed we would move them up to the next space on the wall if they were still asleep. They agreed and we headed off to bed. At least we will be able to manoeuvre the boats quickly ourselves in the morning.

5th August 2001

7.30 We're all up except for Adam and have had coffee before we climb the harbour wall. It's low tide and a day off neaps so I'd hate to be here on spring tides. Dane and Sean moved the lines on the boat out side of us so we could move them up in front of us. The skipper was awake but seemed quite happy for us to fix his lines for him as he waved to us from down below, how trusting. After tying their boat up we started on our own lines and I finished up storing gear down below.

8.35 Engine on, Dane & Sean topped up the diesel tank we used about half a tank on the way over from Malahide and it's approx. the same distance to Conwy. It's a glorious morning with a light SE wind the barometer is reading 1023 mb and we are the only boat moving out of the harbour this morning.

9.00 Isha left the Isle of Man and we all waved to the men fishing on the pier wall. The sails are put up by Sean & Dane but the wind is too light to push the boat along fast enough to turn off the engine, so we motor sail towards Conwy in Wales. Adam has just woken up to find the tooth fairy has left an Isle of Man £1 he's thrilled. He doesn't seem himself and is complaining of feeling hot so I check him and find he does indeed have a temperature. He is given some Calpol and goes back to sleep with just a fleece blanket over him. ~~The rest of us tuck into breakfast~~

10.55 Log 11.1 nautical miles, Course 156°, wind SE force 2 Barometer 1020 mb. Adam has woken up and is up on deck he wants dippy eggs and soldiers so he must be feeling better.

11.30 The wind has shifted so we're now on more of a beat than a reach Course 156° magnetic, Barometer 1020 mb. Adam has decided he wants to go back to sleep; he's definitely not well, I'll keep an eye on him.

13.00 The engine is turned off as the wind has freshened Log 22.5 nautical miles Dane is fixing an old fishing line for Adam since we could not get a small fishing rod for him in Port St. Mary. Adam is back up on deck but he doesn't look the best and is complaining of pains in his tummy. He decides to go to the toilet so I go down to help him and as I'm just about to come back up on deck he gets sick. Luckily we keep bailing buckets in the forward hatch so I was able to avoid too much of a mess. After changing all of Adam's clothes and mine Adam is back up on deck feeling much better. He has cookies and tea courtesy of Dane while I clean up down below. I think he had a tummy bug as the sea is very flat. He does not normally feel sick even in bad weather.



Look at that Sky



I can see the bottom

14.05 Log 28.3 nautical Miles, Position 053°40' North by 004°20' West, Barometer Steady none of us are tired so were still all up on deck enjoying a beautiful sail.

15.20 Just finished a late lunch. The engine is back on again as the wind and speed have dropped Adam and Dane are fishing off the stern with the line Dane rigged Log 34.3 Nautical Miles

16.30-log 38.9 nautical miles barometer steady position 053° 31' North by 004° 11' West. The weather is great at the moment, but we can see bad weather coming by looking at the sky around us. We should be well in port by the time it hits. We may be staying in Conwy longer than we had first planned.

17.30 The Engine is off again and we're approx 12 miles off Conwy. Dane and Adam are still fishing but I don't think they will catch anything as we are moving too fast the wind is now around F3-4 SW oh to have a wind speed that worked, another item to go on the new boat list of requirements. Adam wants to phone his cousins who live near Chester and tell them he has sailed all the way over to their country so once we got in close enough to have a signal on the phone we phoned my sister and he chats to them for a while. He wants them to come and visit but they are driving down the south of England tomorrow to get a ferry to France on their holidays, so that won't be possible.

18.30 Dinner is now served; Adam is feeling great so he eats a good meal as well. We don't want to reach the landfall mark leading into Conwy too early, as it's low tide now. There is very little water in the channel 0.5mt at the lowest point so we're taking our time approaching the landfall mark.

20.10 Having picked up the landfall mark we still feel we're a little early so we motor around for a bit before deciding to go for it, we're on a rising tide! Entering the channel to Conwy we head straight for the beach before turning sharply to port to avoid a sand bar. The tide is now gushing in the river the engines showing a speed of two knots and the GPS is showing a speed over the ground of 5 knots. Dane is on the bow with Adam hanging on in case we hit bottom. At this speed they would go flying forward. The channel is like a zigzag with sand bars on either side and a cross tide so Sean has to increase power to the engine to stay in the channel as we approach the shallowest part the depth sounders reads 0.2M under us. Thankfully we are used to going into Malahide or I think we would have turned back at this stage as you have to steer towards another sand bar and this time turn sharply to port. The tide is filling quickly now and the depth is rising by the minute. As we enter the wider part of the river after leaving the Morfa Perch to starboard we pass the Beacon's Jetty. We now keep to starboard as the channel splits with moorings in the middle. The marina is just past the jetty but its controlled by a drop gate sill with access approx 3 hours either side of high water. There is a pontoon out side for yachts to wait at. However when we arrived it was full. We radioed the marina and they informed us that the sill would be dropping in about 20-30mins so could we motor around until then. To amuse Adam we let him drive the boat around the moored boats up

and down the river until the lights went green to signal the sill had dropped. Adam was about to head into the marina until we informed him we had to be allocated a berth. The marina office called us and told us which berth to go to. I already had a layout for the marina so as the lads tied on the fenders I steered the boat in. I had to get Sean to turn on the lights on the instruments as it had got very dark all of a sudden and I was having difficulty seeing where we were going. After we berthed up 'in the dark' I was informed if I took off my sunglasses I might be able to see! It was only beginning to get dark; that's the trouble with prescription sunglasses, you forget you have them on.

21.30 Tied up in the marina cut the engine. Log 60.5 nautical miles. We did the lines and headed up to the pub where once again they had a section for children to play in with Lego bricks and some toys. Not a bad pint of Guinness either and a choice of ordinary or Extra Cold, we're very impressed. While the lads get the drinks I check into the marina office and get the numbers for the showers, loos and gate.

We had a look at the weather forecast for tomorrow and it looks very miserable. We are hoping to have a look round Conwy and there seems to be quite a lot on as there is a river festival taking place at the moment. Tomorrow night there will be live music in the bar. After a few drinks we retire back to the boat and put Adam to bed. It starts to rain so Dane and Sean set up our make shift boom tent and open a bottle of wine. We discuss the plans for tomorrow. There was no milk left so Sean was going to go to the shop first thing and we would then all have showers before I cooked a fry for breakfast. That agreed, we sat back under the boom tent chatting about the day's events and later on, went off to bed for much needed sleep.

6th August 2001

Sean got the milk first thing as promised and after coffee we all headed off to the showers. I was checking out the laundry and one of the men resident on the marina was only too happy to let me know which machine to use and which dryer was no good. So armed with this info I purchased my tokens and went in search of somewhere to freeze our freezer packs. The pub come restaurant weren't any help but the lady in the chandlery told me I could put them in the bottom of the Ice cream Fridge. (Another thing for the list of things for the new boat a fridge). I meet up with the others after their showers and we went down to the boat for Breakfast. Then Dane rowed Adam over to the side of the marina and they were able to walk down a bit to a small beach. Later on as they were returning it started to rain, heavy downpours, which lasted for ages. Adam was soaked to the skin. The waterproofs he had were just not good enough. I sorted out what had to be washed and I went up to the laundry to put on the wash and give the ice packs in to the chandlery. While I was there I asked if they had any children's waterproofs as I had no luck in Ireland getting Adam proper oilies. To my surprise she had a selection of children's ones. So off I went to get Adam and Sean. Adam tried on the leggings and jacket and loved the idea he now looked the same as his dad. We purchased them and let him wear his new outfit as it was still raining. Sean got a pair of wellies and we all left happy. All decked out in our waterproofs we headed into Conwy for the day. High on the



Fishing at Last





Gally Slave



Llandudno

list of priorities was a fishing rod for Adam. As we strolled around Conwy the rain got heavier and heavier. At least we could walk around and not have to worry about Adam getting wet. We found a great shop selling bate, fishing rods, books and tackle. Once again we reappeared with a happy child- and a lighter wallet. It was now time for lunch/ dinner so we made our way up the town to the pub we had passed earlier and went in. Dane and Sean got a drink and sorted out Adams fishing rod while I popped over the road and did the food shopping when I returned we ordered the food. The meal was lovely and very reasonable. Outside it was still raining, would it ever stop. We headed back to the marina and when we got there, I went to the laundry to switch our clothes into a dryer. Adam, Dane and Sean all went back to the boat where they set about showing Adam how to cast a line. We were afraid he would hurt himself with the hook so we removed it until he perfected the art of casting.

The rain was now accompanied with wind so while Adam practised casting off the stern of the boat, the storm jib was taken out to create a windbreak and to extend the makeshift boom tent. Once in place it was very cosy. We chatted with some of the others on the marina, fed the resident swans and then Adam decided he wanted the hook on the line. Someone had told him the best time to fish was in the rain. We checked out his casting, he really had got the hang of it, so Dane bated the hook with brown bread and the two of them started to fish. Adam's arm got tired so he got Dane to hold the rod as he gave instructions. Once again you could see the fish nibble the bate off the line. All of a sudden we heard a shout, we've got one. Sean and I jumped up on deck and there was Adam and Dane reeling in this large fish. I was sure the line would break. Sean got the pinkeen net out but found it difficult to get the fish into such a small net. Then we had to figure out what kind of fish it was. After much discussion it was decided it was a mullet and should be thrown back in but first we had to get the hook out of his mouth. This fishing was a lot easier when Adam had no hook on the line. I've told him unless he catches mackerel they get thrown back in.

That evening, our way up to the pub, I get the weather forecast from the marina office. It confirms we won't be going anywhere tomorrow, but the following day looks promising. The band has started already and Adam finds a seat up at the front where he can observe the playing of all instruments. Over a few drinks we decide that since we can't go sailing tomorrow we would play the tourist and visit the Llechwedd Slate Caverns in Blaenau Ffestiniog. This involves getting a bus into Llandudno and a train down to Blaenau Ffestiniog. It was time for bed and we have to prise Adam away from the music and back to the boat. The rain has stopped but the wind is still there, maybe tomorrow will be better. Were all quite tired after all the walking around Conwy so we go straight to bed.

7th August 2001

No luck with the weather still more rain. After breakfast Dane and Sean collect the diesel while I work out when we could leave the following day. The sill at the entrance to the Marina drops 3 hours before high water Conwy. If we want to go down the Menai and though the Swellies we have to be at the Swellies at 2 hours before high

water Dover to pass though the Swellies at slack water. It is impossible to make the Swellies on the one tide so we have decided we will go as far as Beaumaris and stay there the night before leaving the following day to go though the Swellies and on to Victoria Dock in Caernarfon.

It's decided that we should leave mid morning against the tide as soon as there is sufficient water for the sill to drop. The tidal flow in the river exceeds 5 Knots at times. So leaving against the tide will slow us down and we can use power to avoid being set across the banks. After the lads got the diesel they tried to get gas but there was none to be had we were told they had been waiting for a delivery for weeks so they didn't think anyone on the north coast of Wales had any. Not good news so we are now on the lookout for gas. We're ok for the moment, but we might need one before we head home, as I'm already on the second cylinder.

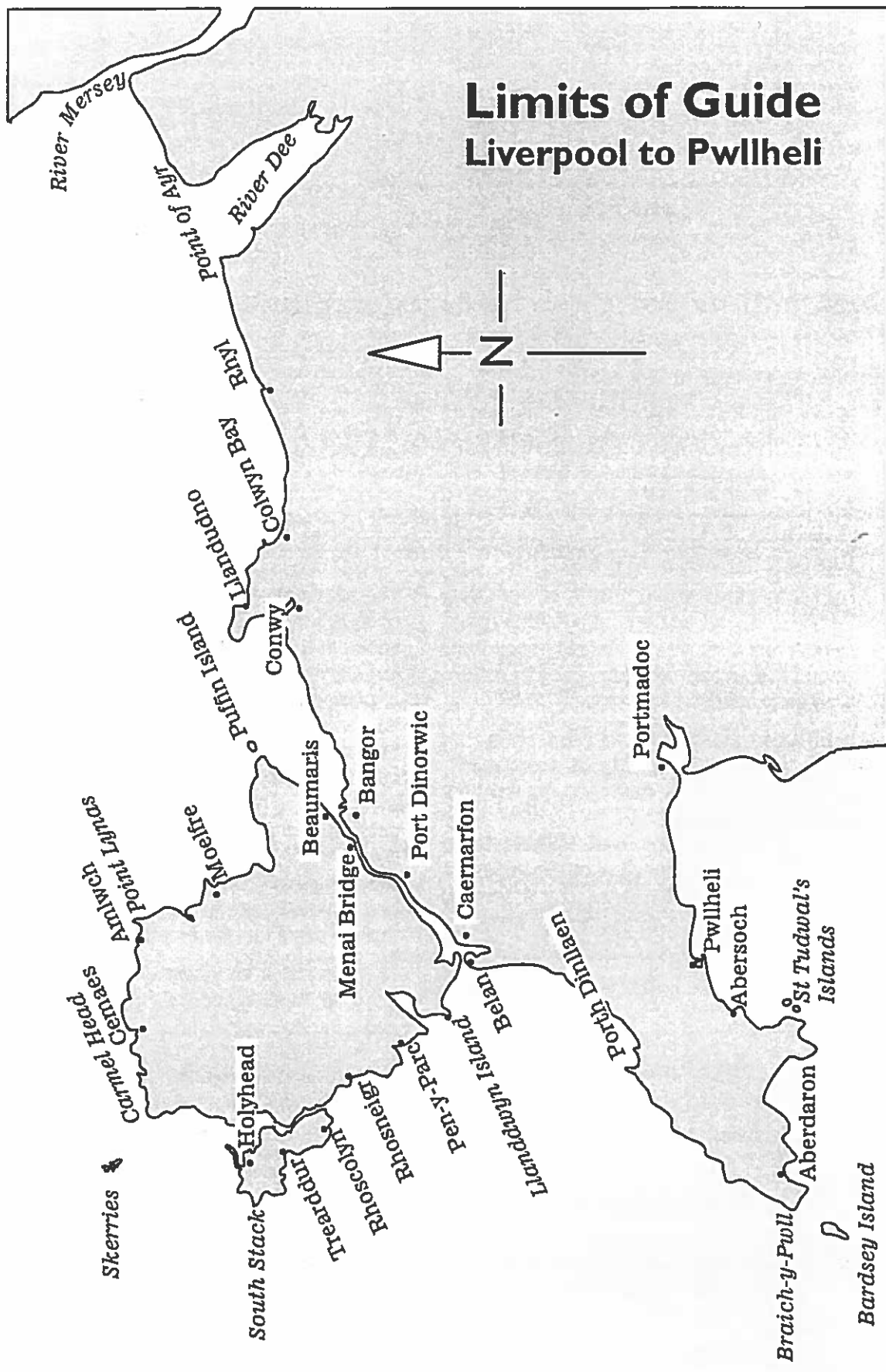
Work all done we walk up the road in the rain to get the bus into Llandudno and then get the train to Blaenau Ffestiniog to the slate mine. However when we got to the station in Llandudno we found out we had just missed the train and the next one would not be until 4pm. This was too late for the mines as they closed at 5pm and the train would take an hour to get there. Our plan for the day now gone it was decided we'd go down the sea front and walk out the pier, which had amusements and gift shops on it. As we walked along we noticed there were a lot of very big seagulls around and there were signs up 'Do Not Feed The Seagulls', then all of a sudden one swooped down on a lady eating her sandwich on a bench and it robbed her sandwich out of her hand, you don't have to feed them - they help themselves. We had lunch in a nice hotel along the sea front and then spent the remainder of the day along the pier. On the way home we did some food shopping in Marks and Spencer's and then got the bus back to Conwy.

We will be leaving in the morning so we settle up with the marina office and since we are annual berth holders in Malahide we get 50% discount in any Crest Nicholson Marina so at least we got storm bound in a cheap marina. I picked up the weather fax while I was up there and it looks like going down to F3-4 over night so we should be ok in the morning. After dinner on the boat we decided to stay on board and let Adam have an early night so sat around with a bottle of wine and cheese chatting until it was time to go to sleep.

8th August 2001

Were all up early as we are eager to leave and get out to sea again. After breakfast I collect our ice packs from the chandlery and Dane and Sean deflate the dingy & stow gear ready to leave.

11.25 The engine is on and we're waiting for the sill to drop. Adam is on lookout and according to my calculations it should be dropping around now. The barometer is reading 1008 mb and the wind is northwesterly approx force 3-4 as we expected so we will have to motor to Puffin island when we get out of the river as the wind will be on the nose.



Limits of Guide

Liverpool to Pwllheli



Chart Work



Puffin Island

11.30 The sill has dropped shouts Adam and we reverse out of our berth and say goodbye to Conwy. Adam had his full oilies on as do the rest of us as we expect it to be lumpy going out the river. Adam is harnessed on the bow in his favourite place in lumpy seas as he thinks it like a roller coaster. The rest of us hang on as Sean fights the wind and tide to keep in the channel. With our experience of going out over Malahide bar we should have put up some sail to balance us but we never thought of it and it's too late now. I'm watching the depth sounder but we have plenty of water its just the sea has built over the past day or two with the bad weather but it does look a bit calmer further out.

13.20 The normal entrance to the Menai Strait is between the lighthouse on Trwyn Du and Puffin Island. It's a narrow gully with deep water constrained by spits extending from Puffin Island Shore. The tide runs at a considerable speed though this gully and steep seas build up with strong north westerlies, which we have had for the past few days. As we approach Puffin Island we can see the waves breaking so its decided we would use the other entrance south of Puffin Island keeping close inshore to avoid Irishman's spit. It's very sheltered once were under the shadow of the Island. Adam has the binoculars out and is searching for Puffins! We must keep close in to the Island until the round tower and B2, a red can mark, are in a transit of 025°/205°. We can then turn to port and keeping on that transit we will avoid the two spits. Log 6.8 nautical miles, Barometer steady.

13.50 We follow the buoyed channel once we passed B2 now steering 233° to the next buoy, B6 also a red can. Sean has put up the jib and we are now heading up the Menai Straits towards Friars bay. Log 9.1 nautical miles. Dane is on the helm and he enjoying this bouyage navigation and it's giving Sean and I good practice for the Swellies tomorrow.

14.15 Passing B8 a red can and we take a dogleg towards B5 a green conical buoy just north of Beaumaris Pier. We could anchor in the pool directly opposite the pier but it is the other side of the channel, which would be to far to row so we turn in towards the moorings between the pier and Gallows Point. Moorings are viable to visitors outside the North West Ventures Yacht Club on Gallows Point. As most of the moorings dry we only have the choice of the first two rows in from the channel where we can see a few bigger boats moored.

14.45 As we motor around the moorings we see one beside a boat with people aboard. We ask them if this mooring is available and they inform us that as far as they know we will be fine there. We note that there is plenty of water under us, so we pick up the mooring and turn off the engine Log 12.4 nautical miles. A nice short day sail.

As Dane pumps up the dingy and Sean chats to our new neighbours, I make us all lunch. As you can guess Adam is fishing off the stern again. After lunch the ferryman approaches to find out how long we want to stay. We inform him we will be leaving tomorrow and he tells us that we're Ok there as the owner won't be back for a



Trwyn Du Lighthouse



Beaumaris



Fishing again off Beaumaris



Beaumaris Castle

day or two. After lunch we lock up the boat and all pile into the dingy to go ashore. The chandlery on Gallows Point is very good and they have gas. We forgot to bring the empty cylinder, so we make a deal that we will buy the cylinder and if we return the empty one in the morning, they will give us a refund. With the gas, oars and lifejackets hidden we start to walk into Beaumaris, which is well worth a visit. It has more listed buildings than any other place in Wales as well as a castle with a real moat- water and all. Sightseeing and shopping done we had dinner in one of the many old pubs in Beaumaris. Some of the locals were playing pool so Dean and Sean played a game or two as well as Adam getting to play with another boy his age. As we didn't want to be rowing back in the dark (we have found a dark green boat is very difficult to find in the dark) we headed off back down the road to Gallows Point.

On returning to the boat Adam wanted us to have a party on deck, as he loves being on a mooring. We all sat up on deck with drinks, crisps wine and cheese and look around at the shore all lit up now and the clear skies. Before bed Adam decides to pee over the side and to all our amazement the water lit up. Sean went down below and got some more water. When he threw it over board it was like molten lava. I've never seen phosphorescence on a mooring before, only sailing at night, in the middle of the Irish Sea. We all played with the water for a while. Sometimes it looked like fireworks the flow of tide past the boat was creating the best entertainment. After about an hour we finally got Adam off to bed and the rest of us finished off the wine and cheese before retiring to bed. I was delighted that Adam and Dane had seen phosphorescence so brilliantly considering some people sail for years and never see such a great sight.

9th August 2001

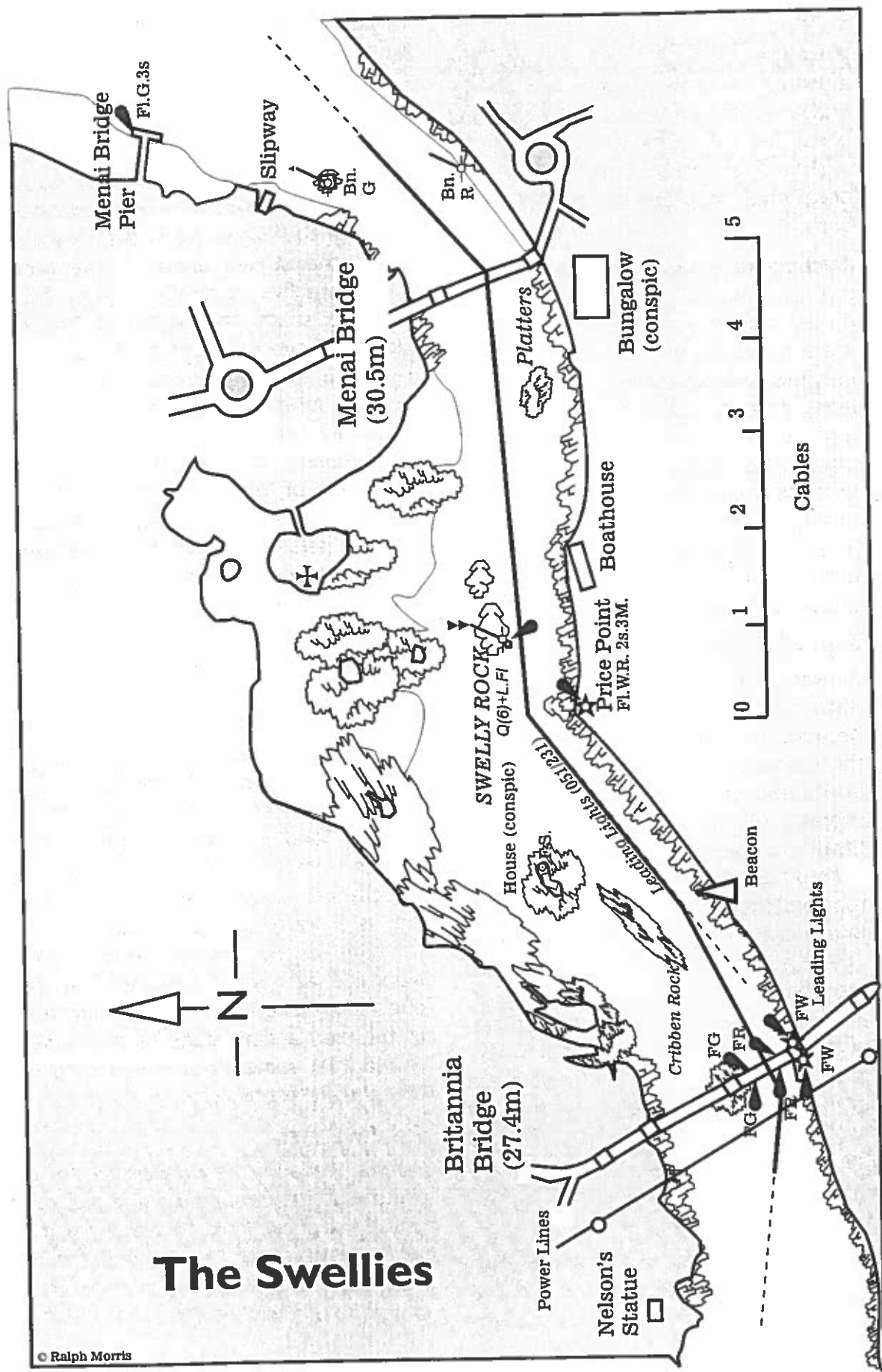
We all woke up quite late. Sleeping on a swinging mooring is so peaceful. After breakfast I checked the tides again and reaffirmed our time of departure as 12 noon.

11.50 Engine on, barometer 1020 mb and we have clear skies and sunshine. The beauty of this area is unreal. The Menai Strait has to be the best place I've cruised after West Cork and is a lot easier to get to.

11.55 Dane dropped the mooring and we turn towards the Swellies. Dane and Adam are on the bow trying to sleep in the sails while we go through the sailing instructions again so they are fresh in our mind.

12.15 Passing Bangor pier and heading on past the Gazelle hotel we can see the bridge I think we were going to be a little early for slack water. It is recommended to wait north east of the pier at Menai Bridge to avoid being swept in to the Swellies

12.40 Arrived a little early so were taking the sailing directions advise and motor around the moorings until 13.00 slack water the book also recommends following a local boat however we seem to be the only one around.





Gallows Point



Bangor Pier



Sleepy heads



Can we go now



Menai Bridge



Under we go



The Swellies



Whitebait Island



Britannia Bridge



Welsh life Boat



Nelsons Statue



40 winks

12.55 Adam is getting restless as he can see the bridges and just wants to go under them now. Log 2.8 nautical miles barometer 1020 mb

13.00 Going for It!!! We pass centrally under the Menai Bridge and immediately adjust our course to starboard to put the Swelly rock buoy on the starboard bow. As we come abeam of the boathouse we turn parallel to the mainland shore so that we can pass midway between the shore and the buoy. Once past the buoy we ease to starboard to head for the cottage on Gored Rock. We continue on this course until we pick up the leading lights under the Britannia Bridge. Keeping those in transit, which is not easy with the tidal set, we leave Cribben Rock to Starboard. We must follow the transit until we are abeam of the triangular white beacon on the shore. We have to go very close to the shore before we can turn to pass though the centre of the bridge span. Once under the bridge we must head to the starboard side of the channel towards Nelson's statue to avoid a wreck to port.

13.20 Though the Swellies. Dane wants to know what all the fuss was about. The most excitement Adam And Dane saw was the life boat speeding up the Menai before slowing to go though the Swellies the opposite way to us as we turn around to watch them we see a stream of boats all following us though. Where were they hiding? Past Nelsons statue the strait widens and is free of obstructions.

13.40 Passing Port Dinorwic. It's changed a lot since the last time we were here. They have built a marina as well as pontoons out side of the Vaynol Dock. A lot of new apartments now line the waterfront.

14.15 We arrive at Caernarfon. The Victoria Dock entrance is very narrow and the tide is setting across the entrance, which makes entry in a long keel interesting. Once inside we turn to starboard and moor up just in front of another wooden yacht quite similar to ours. The dock keeper comes down and gives us the gate codes and tells us the times the gate will open tomorrow. After listening to the weather forecast we will have to leave for home tomorrow to get there before the bad weather hits. We had not planned a night sail but since the gate will not be opened for the early morning tide we will have to leave at around 1600 and sail though the night. We tidy up and take Adam off to visit the castle and have lunch. The castle is just amazing with turrets and walls you can climb. After the sightseeing and shopping Adam has bought a Welsh hat and T-shirt with a dragon on it with his own money and we bought a small dragon for Lana for holding fort while were away.

We have dinner in the Black Buoy pub, which has a playground out side so we can eat out side and Adam, can play. After a lovely meal I go to the supermarket and the lads head down to the yacht club for a game of snooker and a pint. On returning we find we have neighbours. A Sigma 33 has moored up outside of us. Adam is put to bed and we're on deck when the owners of the Sigma 33, called Valkyric, arrive back to there boat with an Indian takeaway. We got chatting and discovered they were from Galway and had just picked up the boat in Bangor earlier that day. He had come though the Swellies a Hour and a half after us with one of the guys from Dickies Boatyard and he



Caernarfon



Isha Victoria Dock



Caernarfon Castle



Leaving Caernarfon

was telling us how they were doing 9 knots though the water with rocks all around .The difference to getting it at slack water as we did.

His crew were arriving on the ferry the following day and they too hoped to head off at around 1600. We discussed weather and since none of us trusted the British weather forecasts (only up to 10miles offshore) he said he would download the Irish weather in the morning as he had a laptop computer on board. As we would have a long sail tomorrow we all said goodnight and headed for bed.

10th August 2001

As it will be a long sail home and we will need to be rested, we have decided that we will just hang around the boat for the day . We all have showers and a fry for breakfast. Dane and Adam fish for crabs while Sean And I try to have a sleep but it very hard as our friends from Galway are provisioning their boat. There is nothing on it so they have had to go to Argos and buy pots and pans, delph, torches, tools as well as the supermarket for food. All of this stuff must be carried over our decks. We get the weather downloaded and it should be all right for the crossing. The forecast says force 4-5SW. It should be a reach home for us. However it will be move like a beat for the lads going to Galway.

15.50 Engine on waiting for Valkyrie outside of us to head so we can get out.

16.00 Left Victoria Dock and motored out past the castle the direction of bouyage changes at Caernarfon from here on out of Caernarfon Bay all Green Conical Buoys must be left to port. The main is up and Adam is in his oilies lying on deck on top of the dingy looking very comfy. Dane is on the helm and Sean and I are looking at the chartlet of Caernarfon bay we got from the Dock Keeper. The sand bars change all the time and it is quite different from the last time we came in here. Barometer 1030 mb.

16.20 Passing though the Belan Narrows just off Abermenai point the rate of tide here is about 5.5 knots visibility is good and the wind indeed seems to be South-Westerly Force 4 if it stays like that it will be a lovely sail home to Malahide.

17.00 We are now out of channel out of Caernarfon and we're putting up the jib. I cut the engine speed 5 knots the GPS gives an ETA for Malahide of 0500 hours it should be dawn by then. I put in a TR to Holyhead Radio.

18.00 The wind has freshened so Dane has put in the first reef and changed down the jib. I've decided I better cook dinner in case it gets heavier; at least we will all be fed. Sean and Dane are having great fun trying to get the best speed out of Isha she really likes this point of sail she just sits in the grove and goes. Cooking Sweet & Sour Chicken is what I call interesting as we get pitched about in the growing sea. I'm glad I prepared most of it in port before we left. The angle of heel has meant I've had to

strap the pots to the gimballed cooker to keep them on. When I mention a second reef the lads look me at as if I want to take away their prize toy.

18.50 Dinner cooked and eaten by all except Adam who is asleep down below now. Dane is going off watch once he has his Swiss Roll and Custard and coffee. Barometer 1030 Log 13.3 Speed 5 knots Course 300° magnetic.

19.30 Adam is up and he now having his dinner he wants to stay up to see the efferphencence again. He's also excited about sailing at night so we told him he could do one of the night watches. Dane is up and Sean is now off watch.

21.30 The wind has being increasing all the time and is now about force 6 gusting 7. As Sean is back up on deck we decide to put the second reef in the main as it's a long way home and the helm was getting heavier all the time. We had never used the second reef and as Sean and Dane put in the reef I noticed the line was fed wrong. This meant the main had to come down again to re-feed the line. The flapping of the mainsail meant some of the battens came out but we managed to hang onto them. I put on the engine because with no main and a small jib and the sea on the beam I could not keep the boat on course. Once the line was re-fed the main was back up and the engine could be put off. Peace and quite was again the order of the day. This rig was much more comfortable and we were still doing 7 knots!! Adam did not like all the noise the wind made in the sails as we reefed and he also was not to keen on going down below in the dark. I put one of the berth cushions across the companionway and harnessed him into position. He could sleep on deck with his fleece blanket over him to stop any splashes from waves getting him. Oh to have a spray hood (on the list for the new boat).

22.15 Log 30.8 Speed 6 knots Position North 053° 14.7' by West 005°05.3'. There is a lot of vessels around and we're all on deck taking bearings and tracking where everyone of them are going. I've never seen so much traffic and just when I was supposed to be off watch Adam is awake again and he to is watching ships and ferries, Trawlers and Fishing vessels. We even had a towing vessel close to us at one point. Coffee and chocolate is the order of the day to keep us awake as Dane steers and Sean and I work out where all the ships are going.

23.10 Log 38.5 Barometer 1032 Course 300° magnetic Wind force 6 gusting 7. Adam has seen the phosphorescence again and is now quite willing to go down below. Dane is also going down to have a rest and change into dry clothes as he is beginning to get cold. His waterproofs are not great as they are Sean's old set.

0200 Log 51.6 The sea is flatter now and the wind has eased a bit. Speed is now 5-6 knots. There is less traffic now but still have some trawlers about.

04.25 Just off Irelands Eye and we can see the first of the Starboard lights into Malahide. The landfall mark still has no light. It wasn't working when we came back from Carlingford earlier in the season. We're definitely near home.



Ready for Sea



Homeward Bound

Sean is off watch and Dane is back up with me. We have just had a cruise liner pass us heading into Dublin Port it look more like a multi store office block and all lit up like a Christmas tree.

04.55 We have put on the engine as the wind has now decided to die. Now we're coming into misty rain and fog just to top off our nights sail.

0520 Dawn is here just in time to see us into Malahide as we pick up the centre buoy. The rain has passed. Dane and Sean take down the main and jib and we motor into our homeport very tired but happy.

05.50 Engine off Log 71.5 nautical miles. Total Log for the trip 216.30 miles. Adam is still asleep and hopefully he will stay that way for a few more hours. Dane has decided to go and have a shower to try and get some heat back into himself while Sean and I hit our Bunks. Not once on the trip did we feel cold thanks to our fleeces. Dane is going to invest in some of his own gear before his next trip. That will hopefully be in our new boat; that is if we sell this one to the Russian who viewed it before we left.

Written By

Denise Doyle

