

## **Cruise to Southern Ireland 14th July 1995**

The flotilla of boats, Calumet, Wandering Star, Risky B, Alden and Fred iv assembled in Glasson Dock in the early hours of Sunday morning after a delay of 24 hours due to bad weather.

At 0030 hours the destination had not been decided, the shipping forecast being different from the wind direction being experienced.

It was agreed the destination of Beaumaris or Port St. Mary would be made at the Lune 1 buoy.

It was cold, wet and windy at Lune 1 when the decision to go to Beaumaris was made and a course set down the Lune deep. The five boats were being tossed about like corks in the Force 5 westerly wind over a four knot tide.

Daybreak found the boats, just managing to sail as the wind backed to the south. Arrival at Beaumaris was made at 1400 hours by all boats apart from Risky B who we could hear transmitting but was unable to hear us.

All boats picked up moorings at Gallows Point in close proximity to each other and the crews crashed out to wait for the next tide for a trip through the Swellies.

Risky B arrived some eight hours later, having attempted to conserve fuel and picked up a mooring nearby.

A quick trip to obtain fuel for Risky B and the boats proceeded to the Swellies. Nose to tail with our intrepid President leading we had no problems. Once through, the southerly Force 6 over a 5 knot tide gave all boats a very rough ride down to Caernarfon passed the new marina which did not seem any nearer completion than in August of last year.

Four boats formed in line on the stone key and signalled (Morse B) for the bridge to open. The bridge opened giving access to the harbour when Risky B informed us his engine had failed four miles up the straights. With 5 to 6 knots of tide running he was left to pick up a mooring.

The four boats entered a very congested harbour and milled around looking for berths. The Harbour Master, Harry, is very helpful and given time will indicate berths and take lines. This led to good close handling skills being required to keep good control in a Force 6 wind with little room to manoeuvre.

Wandering Star's Skipper informed all crews' skippers and the world in general that she had sufficient advice from all sources and complete with wagging finger, proceeded to berth the boat in a competent manner.

In the harbour, weather forecasts, diesel and information were available, fees are £6.80 for the first two days dropping to £4.80 thereafter. Facilities provided by the Royal Welsh Yacht Club are excellent and include use of showers (50p) and a full size snooker table.

We stayed in Caernarvon for three days waiting for the south westerly wind to change or drop.

Even the locals will not brave the Caernarvon Bar in a S/W 6.

On the second day we were joined by Risky B who had cleared his fuel contamination problems.

The wind eased to 4/5 southerly when the flotilla eased its way over the Bar en route for Don Laoghaire. This section of the Menai Strait can be equally as dangerous as the Swellies in a strong south westerly wind.

Much help was given by two commercial craft who gave two skippers a free ride to plot the track through.

Once committed beyond the Bar you have five minutes to change your mind or the 6 knot tide makes it impossible to return.

Once over the bank and into Caernarvon Bay the trip to Ireland was rough with wind over tide conditions for the first four hours and shrinking visibility down to 200 yards which prompted the crew of

Calumet to observe that a ÒFag BonkÓ was imminent, we think maybe this is an amorous fog!

It was a great relief when the Kish Bank Light was spotted and an outline of Dublin Bay loomed out of the light of the dawn. On approaching Dun Laoghaire Harbour the number of ferries and a Sea Cat as well as the blustery wind prompted the skippers to change course and head for Howth Marina.

Alden, Calumet and Wandering Star arriving together, Fred IV, who had sailed longer, some three hours later followed by Risky B some three hours after that.

Arrangements were made with the Marina by radio but no berths were allocated or directions given. The boats had to mill around while places were allocated which placed a strain on tired crews and frustrated other yachts that were trying to leave. When finally berthed the facilities were good and charges were £10/night/boat.

Dublin is a delightful place and seeing it is made easy by use of the Dart (Dublin Area Rapid Transport) ie. a train

Frustrations grew as we waited for a suitable forecast to go to Carlingford loch but this did not happen. After three days at Howth we decided to sail back to Holyhead. Risky B decided to sail direct to Glasson.

The start was segmented, Risky B 06300 hours, Fred IV 0700 hours and Wandering Star and Calumet at 0800 hours.

The predicted south easterly wind never arrived and a southerly 4 blew for most of the way giving an exhilarating sail where Alden for most of the trip held between 5 and 6 knots peaking at 7 knots whilst surfing down the waves.

On approaching Holyhead Harbour we ripped our No. 1 Genoa, backing it in an attempt to get out of the way of the sea cat.

Holyhead Harbour was made and a club mooring picked up (Charge £5/night). At 5.30 the following morning Fred IV set off for Glasson.

After asking local help the remaining three boats set sail for Churchtown Bay en route for Conway. Calumet picked up a lobster pot line around her prop which gave Richard some early swimming practice to set it free.

All skippers and most of the crew swam in Churchtown bay. The water was clear but very cold. In the afternoon we set sail for Conway round the Skerries. The views round the top of Anglesey were breathtaking and Alden in an attempt to get closer had 20 minutes in white water which took all of Mr. Perkins 50 HP to get back out.

Later in the evening we made Conway Fairway Buoy and entered Conway Marina. Berths had been arranged by radio and had been allocated. the cost for a boat was £12.night. The marina was very well run but at the moment is lacking in facilities. A newspaper is 20mins walk.

After three very hot days there we ste sail in fine weather for Glasson Dock. Arriving at Lune 1 early we stemmed the tide for half an hour and berthed in Glasson at 0300 hours Saturday 29th July having logged 307 sea miles in the 13 days.