

## Drascombe Rally 1995

Extracts from an account of the 1995 Morcambe Bay Rally of the Drascombe Association by Stewart Baggs.

Attending the association rally for the first time Stewart, with his crew 'Gibby', found that only his boat 'Moonshine', a Drascombe Lugger and Norman Whewell's drifter 'Rice Pudding' and crew Frank were present.

Meeting at the club at Glasson they were soon launched and motoring off into a head wind and choppy sea towards Lune No. 1. Clearing the estuary under sail and in radio contact Stewart used the engine to restore a proper course. The engine revved without effect and it was assumed that the shear pin had failed and it was decided to fix it later.

Under a reefed main Stewart and Gibby made good speed whilst Stewart dived into the outboard well to replace the shear pin. However when they caught Norman they found that he was only hove to until they caught him up.

Both boats made over 4 knots to Halfway Tower when a 30 degree course change was made into Walney Channel. Shaking out the reefs they ran against the ebbing tide and increasing waves, much concentration being demanded of the helmsman.

Mooring together in the lee of Piel Island they drank mugs of hot than and eat Irish Stew. The crossing of 16.5 NM had taken four and a half hours as Norman had predicted. Norman was surprised how dry the Drifter was after such a choppy crossing.

After a nights entertainment in the Ship Inn they turned in and slept soundly until next morning when they went ashore to explore the island whilst waiting for the tide and the wind to ease.

Dropping the mooring they set off under reefed main amidst a flotilla of other boats. The wind was cool and fresh and they wondered why so many boats were motoring under such good sailing conditions. They made several tacks to clear the channel and, passing a grounded yacht, headed out towards the open sea. Norman's directions were to head for Blackpool Tower until you see the west cardinal buoy and then turn left.

The wind was a steady force four, the sky was blue and the sun was hot. Coffee was made, photographs taken and eventually Lune No. 1 was sighted.

Once inside the estuary they were broad reaching against the tide and soon past Sunderland point and heading for the slipway. They dropped some sail and found the back eddy by the slip where they were able to make a seamanlike landing.

Stewart thanks Norman for looking after them and hopes that next year there will be more boats.