

SAILING ZAZA HOME

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My wife and I had owned a 24' Maurice Griffiths sloop in the late 70's, but the advent of children with their attendant demands on time and money meant selling her and turning to more earth bound pursuits. Eventually my long dormant addiction to the wet vices resurfaced, to only be temporarily sated by the acquisition of a windsurfer, it gradually became clear that only a cruising boat would satisfy the craving!

Now living in Lancashire with two teenagers, we needed a boat with reasonable accommodation, that would take the ground comfortably, be within our budget and of course be fun to sail. A tall order which prompted me to read up about multihulls for the 1st time and eventually plumb for Zaza our Telstar 8M trimaran.

Mike the previous owner kindly gave the whole family a demonstration sail from Bosham on a windy march day in 1994. She impressed us with her speed, ease of handling and sail carrying ability; not to mention Mikes nonchalance in sailing her back to the wharf when we ran out of petrol!. We took possession from a rather regretful Mike at Easter. Initially I had considered towing Zaza home but had been unable to obtain a trailer, then finding transport costs prohibitive decided to sail her home; it also looked like it would be more fun. We spent a busy couple of days stocking up with food and gear and installing a catalytic gas heater on the bulkhead at the forward end of the port berth. This has made a tremendous difference to the habitability of the boat, not just at Easter.

Five minutes after leaving Emsworth, we ran aground at speed with the rudder down, pushing the back of the stock off! Feeling very stupid we made a temporary repair and carried on. Though avoidable with more care I thought a kick up rudder would be no bad thing - has anyone tried it? We sailed into the solent in a W6-7 and a very lumpy sea, I was relieved to discover how stable Zaza was but found it impossible to make progress to windward or tack, her head being constantly knocked off by the waves when we tried to go about. Now having read Mikes "sailing techniques" I wonder if we were under canvassed, having 2 reefs in and the storm jib set. We sailed into Bembridge and took the ground to repair the rudder under a blaze of stars before retiring to eat in our cosy cabin.

Gale force westerlies continued so we left Zaza at Bucklers Hard to await better weather and a free weekend. A friend (Del.) and I returned for the next leg on a long weekend in April. We left the Solent on Friday night in rain squalls and a southerly wind sailing close hauled over a lumpy sea heading for Start Point. Though conditions were uncomfortable we made 5.5 knots and had the satisfaction of overtaking several larger boats. In the morning Start Point had not appeared so we headed north and eventually sighted it. We concluded with embarrassment that it's elusiveness was probably due to the steel washers we had used to pack the mounting bracket out for our new grid compass - now it has rubber ones! It is mounted directly under the tiller on the vertical face of the rear of the cockpit. We were sailing quite comfortably on a reach in a force 5 when a horrible crunch heralded the mast support pillar smashing through the fibreglass base at the forward end of the centreboard case. We

immediately reduced sail, and appalled, inspected the damage. That this should happen in such moderate conditions clearly speaks of a design fault, and on reading the Telstar owners newsletters has obviously happened to others too. We eventually motorsailed into Plymouth feeling very weary and for my part unwell, berthing in the nearest (and astronomically expensive) marina. At least I had the satisfaction of throwing up in one of their designer washbasins before we moved to the more reasonable and friendly Ballast Pound marina.

The next available weekend I drove back to Plymouth loaded with tools to sort out the damage. I repaired the front of the centreboard case with epoxy and glass tape and put an aluminium scaffold pole under the mast for support. It was the end of May before Del and I had another free weekend and were able to take the train down to Plymouth for the next leg. We were favoured with a gentle easterly wind for the sail along the coast, and entered Mounts Bay with St. Michaels Mount highlighted against the reddening evening sky. Sadly we had to motor the last few miles as the wind died. We entered Mousehole to the curious gaze of promenading holidaymakers who were wondering if a 16 foot wide boat could actually fit between the pier heads. They were not alone! We dined on fresh mackerel from the local fisherman, and then wandered around the attractive old town before finding a vantage point in the harbourside pub to admire Zaza from. No sooner had we returned aboard than a hefty thud announced the arrival of the weighty, slightly inebriated harbourmaster come to collect his dues on his way home from the pub! The next day the wind had gone round to the north east so we beat round to St. Ives rather than carry on across the Bristol channel as we had hoped. Still it was a thrill to pass Lands End and the Longships, which looked scenic in that gentle weather rather than forbidding. On Monday we were pleased to manage to leave under sail but then made slow progress until the wind left us altogether, we motored till we were nearly out of fuel, but didn't carry an enormous supply and our outboard a mariner 9.9 is not particularly economical using about 3/4 gall/hr. at 5.5 kts. By the early hours of Tuesday we were motionless on a glassy sea with the log line hanging vertically from the stern. The warm starry night, blood red rising moon and the phosphorescent wakes of the porpoises swimming by were however some compensation. Daylight revealed Milford Haven tantalisingly unattainable as we continued to drift, in fact we became so bored that we were reduced to washing and cleaning not just the ship but ourselves too! Eventually a barely perceptible air arrived and I was gratified to find Zaza ghosting along at about a knot, such a breath wouldn't even have given my previous boat steerage way. We moored at Dale just inside Milford entrance after a 28 hour passage averaging 3 knots, so much for my expectations of a fast trip! Having rowed ashore for fuel for boat and crew, we were disconcerted to have the petrol pump run out after dispensing just 6L.!, happily the pub was better supplied. Our long weekend was coming to an end so we continued up the Haven that evening to Pembroke Dock marina, pleasant as marinas go and convenient for the station.

Another month went by before we could be free again for the higher pursuits and so found ourselves, along with Del's son Matt on a train for Pembroke Dock. We left the dock that Thursday evening, once fuelled up and fed and motored down the Haven past its stark bright oil terminals. Once at sea the light N.E. wind picked up a little and with a fair tide underneath us we swept between the Smalls and South Bishop whose lights were easily visible. The wind kindly veered to the east and we had a lovely reach across Cardigan bay, sighting Bardsey island on the starboard bow the next afternoon, which went some way to restoring my navigational credibility. We moored in the delightfully unspoilt

anchorage of Porth Dinllaen that evening, completing the 100 N.M. passage at a rather more respectable average of 4.7 knots. My enquiries at the pub for petrol, a phone, and food were met with three unelaborated noes, the landlords rejoinder to my somewhat quizzical look was to state "some people come here to get away from it all you know!"

Our early start next day was rewarded by a comfortable spinnaker run and what a contrast to my old monohull; no pole necessary, sheets and guys simply attach to the bow of each float, and no rolling! Zaza also has a squeezer on the spinny which again adds to it's ease of handling. Her stability and lack of heel make cooking and chartwork down below so much easier, whilst these assets coupled with her acres of deck space make her feel very safe when working on deck. The wind died away by early evening so we were reduced to motoring to escape the sight of Anglesey. However fuel was running low, so we alternated between sailing at 1-2 knots, fearing we wouldn't make the Lune in time for the 8.00 a.m. tide, and motoring, worrying that the petrol wouldn't hold out. Again it was a clear night with the Morecombe Bay gas platforms as helpful waypoints and the loom of Liverpool and Blackpool glaringly obvious. We arrived at Lune 1 buoy at 6.00 a.m. with scarcely any petrol left and no wind at all, nevertheless decided to press on as far as we could up the river towards Glasson. To my astonishment and delight we made it to Glasson with a pint of petrol left! It was clearly too much to expect everything to go right and so it turned out; the mooring buoy I had laid in preparation for my arrival was well and truly aground on that low neap tide!