

The Adventures of Dofesaba II 2017

From Lymington to Royan

From May 25th to September 25th
(or “the Big Adventure”)

By Peter & Mary Bell



Introduction & some Explanations.

I suppose like all sailors these days there is a normal reaction to write about one's adventures and, to be honest, after about year 2000 it then behoves one to write a BLOG. Well I did try that, but what with trying to sail the boat and having a jolly good time and then I seem to be incompetent using Blog software – and I then became so frustrated that I ended up shouting at the screen and I know from my work that when I do that, I am not having too much fun. (Also it gets expensive when you put your fist through the screen of a new laptop one has bought almost-purely for the ability to write said Blog – and being partly Scottish I managed not to waste so much money, as to do anything so foolish and EXPENSIVE was silly) However that did not mean I did not consider doing it, and it is almost the same as with Christmas presents – the thought counts.

So to cut a long list of impure thoughts short, this is the blog that was written while we were at sea, but it has been added to & edited with extra pictures and extra wording.

All the log entries are from our real logs and any maps from Google Earth are directly transposed from our log entries.

About log entries – we are almost purists on DII (an abbreviation for Dofesaba II) we do (to be honest - Mary does) take log entries every hour on ALL our trips unless we are very sick or it is VERY tricky sailing, I then transcribe these later when we land, into the official log – making them neater and adding some extra detail if necessary.

Figure 1: Example from our log at the time

TIME	COG	SOG	WIND SPD	WIND DIR	E N G	LOG	BARO	OTHER	POSITION
13.00	145	4.7	11	SE	X	19.2 (2.1)	1015		46 27.9 01 46.7
14.00	187	3.8	12	SE	X	22.7 (3.5)	1013		46 24.6 01 45.3
15.00	66	5.5	11	SE	X	27.5 (4.8)	1013		46 21.1 01 42.4
15.45					✓				
16.00	132	6.0	10.5	SSW	✓	32.4 (4.9)	1013		46 19.2 01 36.1
17.00	107	3.9	7.5	SE	X	36.8 (4.4)	1012		46 17.1 01 30.5
						42.8			(25.7 miles)

Figure 2 : translated into the main log

252.0

Date		Port of		Log of Yacht		Day's run	
22/8/17		Sable D'olonne		Am en Ré		34.3 nautical miles	
HW		HW		HW		Time underway	
LW		LW		LW		8 hours 00 mins	
Variation				Time zone GMT		Average speed 4.3 knots	

Time	Course	Dev	Error	True course	Log	Dist	Power	Wind Dir	Wind Force	Leeway	Baro	Sea state	Cloud	Weather visibility
12.15.					17.1		✓						46 01	
13.00	145	4.7			19.2	2.1	X	SE	11		1015		27.9	46.7
14.00	187	3.8			22.7	3.5	X	SE	12		1013		24.6	45.3
15.00	66	5.5			27.5	4.8	X	SE	11		1013		21.8	42.4
16.00	132	6.0			32.4	4.9	✓	SSW	10		1013		19.2	36.1
17.00	107	3.9			36.8	4.4	X	SE	8		1012		17.1	30.5
18.05.					42.8	6.0								
Stayed here for 2 nights. I had a 1 hr cycle not														

Figure 3 : Comments section of the immediate log

TIME	COMMENTS.
12.15	Left Sable D'Ocane. Saw Ron & Linda leaving
12.30	SAILS OUT - ENGINE OFF. 12.30.
13.00	LUNDA. 13.20 ENGINE ON - GOING TOO SLOW. 13.30 JIB IN. 13.45 JIB OUT AGAIN - SAIL ^{RON & LINDA} CLOSE UP!
14.00	WIND HAS BEEN GUSTING 14 REGULARLY.
15.00	TACKED 10 MINS AGO. V. GOOD. ON COURSE & ON TIME.
15.45	WIND WENT DOWN TO 12 KNOTS
16.00	JIB OUT AGAIN AS WIND 10K.
16.45	TOOK MAINS A BIT AS WIND GUSTING TO 19!
17.00	SAIL OUT AGAIN. WIND BACK TO 17. 17.10 SAILS IN.
18.05	ARRIVED a couple - ^{English} French Boat - MOORED IN BAY.

Figure 4 : Comments transcribed

256.0

From/At	Towards	Hours underway . 8.0
Icon position:		Sailing . 4.0
Latitude	Longitude	Motor sailing . 4.0
Crew		Motoring . 4.0
		Engine hours . 4.0
		Fuel consumption

NOTES AND REMARKS

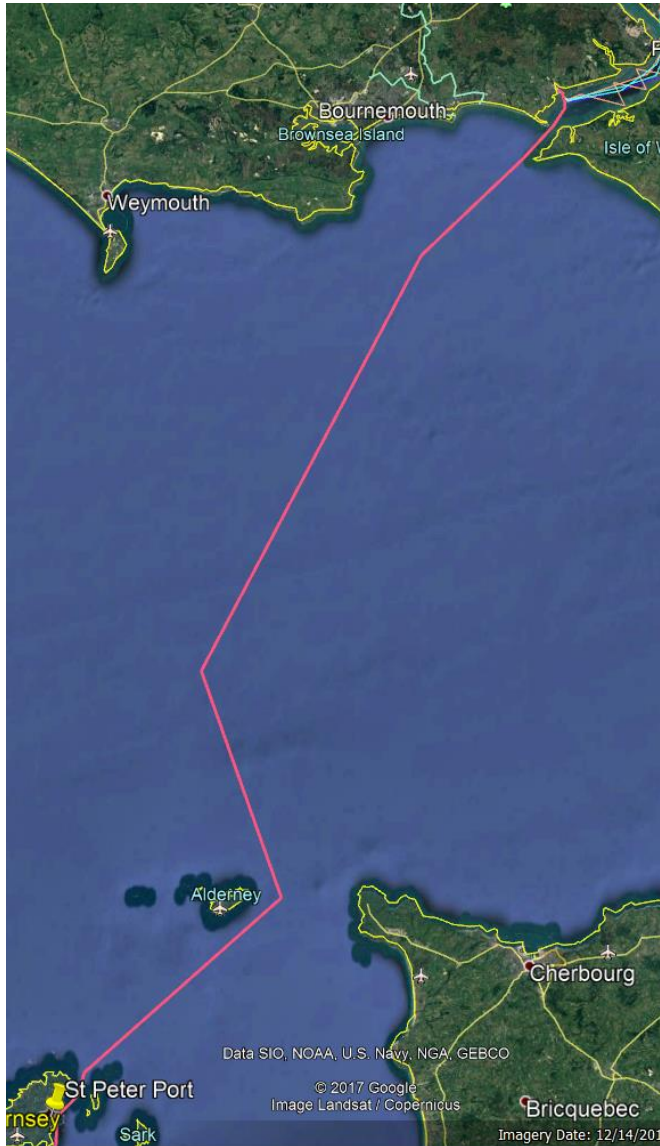
Left SD'O. Saw Ron & Linda on their way out too,
 2.30 SO But not enough wind Eng on & off R&L close up
 we take lots of Photos
 gusting 14
 Tacked @ 14.50 SASS, on course
 Wind up & down Sails in & out.
 main reefed @ gust to 18 knots, but then out again,
 after a long drive in got a couple with Brit boat in central
 hrs. Avoided many small racing boats in shallow water,
 much to do or see but V. pretty cycle on die here
 V. crowded.

You can see there are also a few abbreviations that creep in, but often after arrival, I am either a bit knackered or influenced by incohol and so trying to get it down quickly (the words that is, the incohol just slips down naturally) is not always so easy.

Anyway I am writing this several weeks after returning to Lymington, now that any residual fears & worries have leaked out of my head. I will try to convey some of the feelings we experienced over the 4 months away so as to add flavour to the narrative. I hope you enjoy the show.

The SOA rendezvous 26th May to 2nd June

On the 25th May John Devlin (Cabin Boy first Class) came down to Lymington to join the crew, so that we had 3 on board for what was planned to be a long crossing of approx. 16 hrs straight to St Peter Port on Guernsey, We would then relax all the next day. The weather was forecast to be a pleasant F4-5, well within the capabilities of the vessel and crew.



Well we left Lymington on time as planned 0015 hrs on Friday morning. As we departed the RLymYC pontoons, I noticed that the ship icon on the navigation station was not apparent. This means I had no idea where I was on the chart and it was dark and we were heading towards buoys and breakwaters which I could not see, so an element of panic crept in. While Mary recycled the system several times and John went to the bows with a VERY bright torch, I managed to manoeuvre us down stream at very slow knots. Fortunately Mary was effective and we could see where we were going at last. After this little heart racer I decided to engine till after the needles. Then just as I was preparing to put up the sails we hit the channel – cue for the wind to rise to 22 knots and the sea to become very agitated sending the boat all over the shop. We stayed like this for 10 mins until all 3 crew

started to feel very queasy. We took it in turns to keep an eye out while the others “rested”. Unfortunately while I was resting, the throttle was moved to half power (probably after I had inadvertently kicked the throttle while lying down) and we spent 3 hrs at 3 knots – thereby delaying us by a bit more. However the wily skipper had factored in a few spare hrs and we arrived in the Swinge (a notoriously dangerous race on the west corner of the Cotentin Peninsular- not to be passed though when in full spate) just as the tide turned -couldn't have been more ideal.

Sails went up wind blew 12 knots and away we went to St. Peter Port. We arrived 1/2 hr too early but then went into a very tight berth as 122 French boats had got in before us, and pontoons were rafted 4-6 deep



Sat-Sun
We spent the next couple of days recovering and checking the hostleries of St P.P. Then moved D II onto the local scrubbing grid as I

noticed she was developing a bit of a 'beard' (ie a line of green weed just below the waterline, this tends to be sloughed off when travelling, but we weren't, so it grew)



Once John and I had finished our hot sweaty work it was off for some well-earned refreshment (of the beer kind). Then it was time to take John to the airport.

It was sad to see him go but poor lad he has to work to earn a crust.

On the Monday, start of the Rendezvous, the planned racing was postponed due to excessive fog in the area, so we repaired eventually to the bar at the Guernsey yacht club for a buffet

and a few sherbets.

On the following day the postponed race was now back in the calendar, we came a glorious last. The usual suspects did all the usual winning bits but I didn't. We suffer from not having a clue how to race and also struggle with how to sail. We are great "taking part" sailors, there to make others feel superior. I think we do a great and fulfilling job.

However there was a silver lining, the annual SOA golf tournament, the highlight of the event, (well for me anyway) where once again I came a glorious second as ever. I consoled myself with the fact that I got the only birdie of the day and was at one point leading by 2 shots. But we all had a thoroughly enjoyable 18 holes. After that we went Gin tasting, which is not really 'ma thang' but everyone else seemed to enjoy it. Even tho' we probably had less than a double gin each, several were quite tipsy. Folk are different.

The next day dawned brightly (it didn't fully appreciate what was coming) Highlight doo-jour was the annual "oppy race". I might have enjoyed this better if there had been some wind, but there wasn't and it was down to who could paddle the rudder fastest (which was me) combined with who could steal the march on the others by pulling themselves forward (and thereby pushing you back, to conserve Newton's second law of conservation of momentum) which was Tim. Who unfortunately could also paddle the rudder almost as fast as I could, thereby winning the coveted cup and yours truly in second place, once again.



Back to the boat and change for dinner at the governor's palace (now the top hotel in Guernsey). Several sherbets and a jolly evening had by all. Thoroughly failed to get any cup or medal as usual.

In the morning most folk started leaving but Mary & I decide to stay on for a few days to chill and wait for the better weather forecast on Saturday. Then I received an urgent call from a chap in Oman asking for help on a geophysical project in Dubai. Mary & I discussed it and decided that our holidays can wait as earning some dosh after 2.5 years in the wilderness would not do the bank balance any harm, so I packed my backs, got on the inter web thingy and flights were booked swiftly, I left the following day, leaving Mary in peace for 2 weeks in Guernsey.

So that is where this blog stopped as I then went to Dubai as usual not having a great time – working. We will pick up again when I return to the boat.

Which I did 2 weeks later to find that my lovely son Dominic (Oliver) had joined the boat as crew. Mary had spent two weeks all alone, but she had found a Gym and met some folk, she had also had some scary nights, where the wind had blown and the boat had moved, but being a clever lady she asked the HM to check the boat moorings and so Dofesaba II was kept safe.

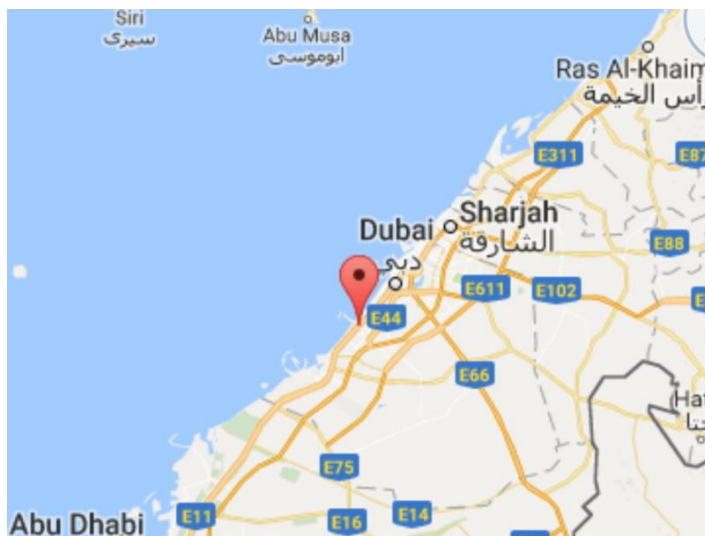


photo exemplifies it for me.

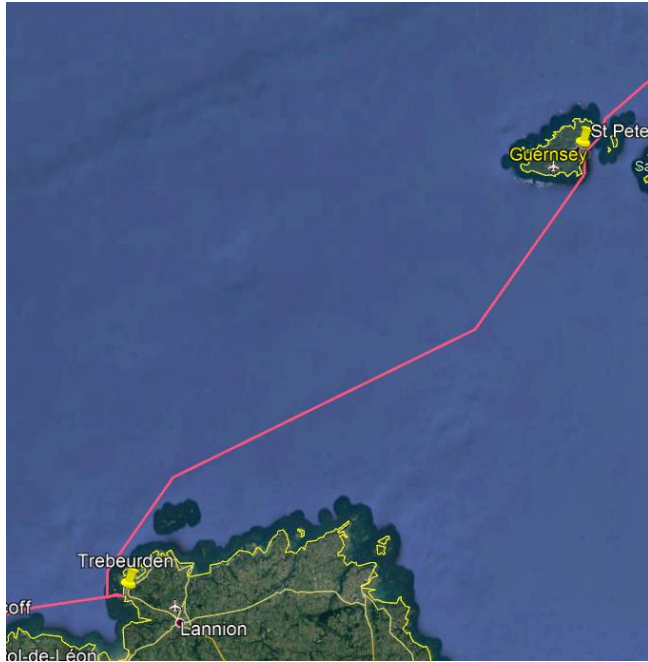
I arrived back from Dubai having finished my work in 14 days with a respectable amount of success, met some lovely Chinese and Turkish people and also enjoyed the wonderful architecture there and fallen in love with the "twisty building" and even spent some free time wandering the streets looking at some of the crazy things that we humans do er... just because we can. This next



But anyway back to the main narrative, I arrived in St Peter Port and then went to the pub with Mary & Dom. We had already agreed that we would be off in the morning so at 1000 hrs we departed for the fuel pontoon to take on Diesel and swap out the dead Gaz bottle. By 1130 we were on our way.

St Peter Port to Roscoff

Trebeurden was and still is about 68 miles away, so a long haul. The wind remained below 5 knots all the way until the last 1/2 hr and after 11 hrs we could not be bothered "mucking about" with sails and all that malarkey. Guernsey



remained in our view for a really long time, summat I remembered from several years ago, seeing Guernsey on the horizon and thinking "hooray soon be there" 'cos then we were in a f7 and I was feeling pretty sick, it then took 4 hrs to get near it. Time as well as space; is an illusion.

This time on the engine we were getting 6 kn as ever, but I was relying on the tide to up the speed a bit (no point in relying on the wind) eventually we arrived in Trebeurden 5 mins early (it has an auto sill) so

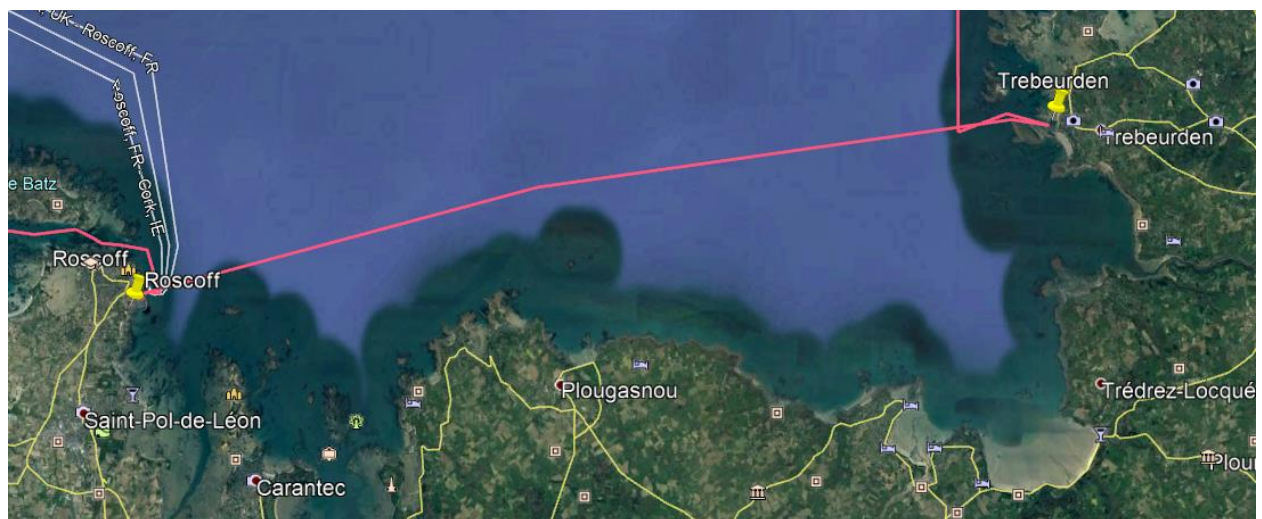
not bad timing at all. Where we found the only café, open. It is not a big place.



We enjoyed Trebeurden, we found a good restaurant (as ever) close to the port. We stayed there on Father's Day (see above) and visited Lannion where there was a Breton whisky distillery (FREE) we sampled as much as a double over an hour, and as we had to walk all the way back to the bus stop, needed a beer by then. All of the barrels in the picture contain French (well, Breton) whisky, maximum at this point 11 years old. The picture shows less than 1/2 of the warehouse.



The next day we spent on the beach paddling in the sea. As it was a Sunday, nowt was open but that did not stop all of us from a nice little paddle and a beer in the beach bar on the promenade.



Then it was time to leave and make our way to Roscoff. Now this is a big port with some big ferries, but it is only 4 hrs away and we had a large gennaker up the front that needed "checking out" after the extensive & expensive modifications that Michael our Chief Engineer had made to it, so that it could lose its nickname of "the bag of fear". The last time we had it out prior to the recent mods, it had taken an hour of hard sweaty graft to get it down, due to it not furling properly. Mike's mods (basically he added a torsion line down the luff) solved that and I can report that it went out & came in again very sweetly with only a modicum of excess personal moisture. Anyway we had a good sail all the way to Roscoff, getting there early afternoon. The next day the fog came down and stayed all day, so did we.

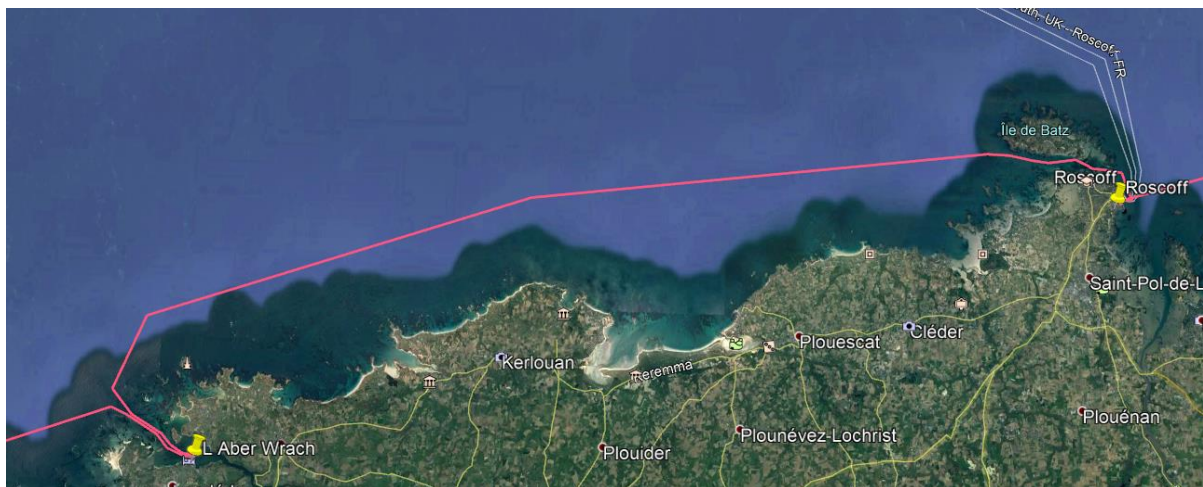


From Roscoff to L'aber wrach via the canal de isle de Batz 20-22 Jun

The day dawned but not bright & early. We had just had 3-4 days of stinking sunshine so hot, that extra hats had to be bought. We had visited the Roscoff market and bought loads of fresh food and had our baguettes delivered in true French fashion. We even had a proper genuine French lunch in one of the quayside restaurants. Retiring in the afternoon to the boat for a petit siest' we waited until 1800 to go out for a snifter to set oneself up for dinner on board. Blooming French went and closed the bar at 1800 sur le dot and so no beer for Peter. Desolee

Next day (22nd) we departed our berth at 0730 and just as we got to the exit the harbour lights turned red, so we could not leave. The very nice HM even sent a rib out to ensure we stayed inside, He was very pleasant about it, alas they did not want us to be run over by the Amorique, a 20,000 ton Brittany ferry that was manoeuvring in the outer harbour. Apparently the paper work for removing the scratches caused by our potential collision and decimation was known to be "difficile". So we had to hang around while he dicked about, as they do not like pleasure yachts getting in the way of massive ferries whilst they dick.

So we hung around a bit longer. It was again drizzly and misty but this did not stop



us trying the inside track of the Isle de Batz. It looks formidable but with a good plotter and several Mk 1 eyeballs combined with sure tidal knowledge, it became an exciting adventure for all 3 crew.

So on we went, (the wind was the usual <8 knots and dead on the nose. Ho hum) to Aber Wrach, which means the estuary where all the rocks are. Go look at a chart, it is aptly named. We arrived there at 1300, just in time for a snack and a beer. By this time as the sun was so hot, Dom and I had bought some hats in the market as well as foie gras and other comestibles that chefs think are good for them. To walk off the rather fine lunch we tried to find the Super Marché which was "just up the hill". Well half an hour later at super speed we found it, then it was half hr. back, by that time another beer was required and a good night had by all.



Aber Wrach to Camaret

Leaving L'aber wrach we again headed south and had to get through the infamous Raz du Chenal du Four which has a fierce reputation. It was important we hit the tide at the correct time and were very mindful of the correct sequence of buoys to aim at. From the chart

there appear to be rocks everywhere but a small channel was discernible through it and that was what we had to find. We got up at 0630 -and we even managed to pry Dom from his pit 15 mins early so that we had a good start. The first part out of the river was fine but after that, out of nowhere was loads of bumpy sea 2-3 m swell. Dom went downstairs for a rest but



had to come up as it was too rough and bumpy in the fore cabin even for him to have a snooze. Again as ever we had 10 knots of wind from dead ahead and could not turn away from it, as we had to get to the , "gate" in time. As we approached the "gate" we could see 2 yachts ahead of us on a similar course and when the

mist lifted, blow me down, but there were another 10 in line astern behind us. Made me feel we had got the timing right. Anyway the good news is that we banged it a good one and got through to the other side of said gate where it was all, nice and peaceful. As we were feeling good I put the sails out and we coasted into Brest at a slow 4.5 knots (we had been scooting along at 8-9 in the chanal)

And so we came to Brest, a major port full of navy ships and with 2-3 marinas. We went to the one close to the centre of town, the Marina du Chateau. We arrived at 1400 hrs but there was a bit of a mix up with the berth, which was all sorted in 1/2 hr. and so off to the town. We only managed the first shoreside bar actually, as we could see many lovely young French maids sitting around doing nothing all day and so we kept them busy (bringing food & drinks).

During this period it was our son Barnaby's birthday so we celebrated as ever with a toast.



Next couple of days we explored Brest, the maritime museum is well worth the entrance fee and while 'a bit french' in perspective and tone, was really good. It showed how devastated Brest was after WWII and how almost everything was rebuilt, based on a copy of the plans of each building in the city, which had been hidden by the French during the war in a very deep council basement. With lots of

hard work and lots of US money, the French rebuilt all the ancient monuments (Inc the roman castle) as it should have been. It took them till 1960 to do most of it, which is a hell of an achievement. They also built a brand new port at the same time.

On the next day we went to Oceanopolis which is a massive aquarium mainly for French schoolchildren again, well worth the entrance fee. During these periods we were also checking out the bars and restaurants as you will see from the pictures supplied.



On our last day we came across the most magnificent modern cathedral I have ever seen, built in 1954 with a spectacular interior to be marvelled at. Some pics for you, which do not get anywhere near the true effect. The internal space is enormous and the external façade is built of a myriad of different sand stone blocks in a town dominated by dark grey granite and whiteish/grey concrete buildings. From a geological point of view a marvel of architectural integration.

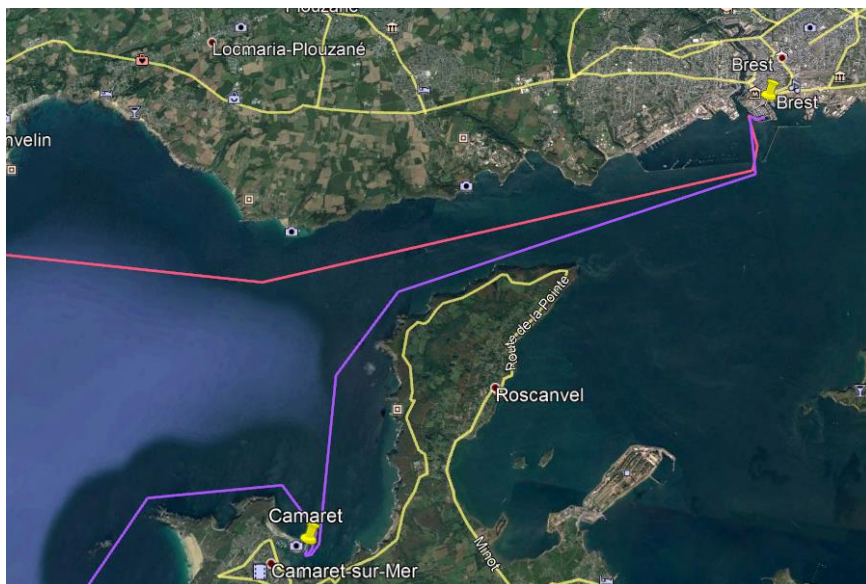


Then it was time for us to send Dom back to work and move on to Camaret sur Mer. As we left Brest we were hailed in English by the French coast guard and asked our destination, this in itself is very unusual (as in, it has never happened before) and we pondered why. Then an hour later France's only nuclear submarine surfaced about 2 miles on the starboard bow and several tugs and

destroyers appeared out of the gloomy mist, while a helicopter buzzed overhead. "Ah ha" I thought all is now made clear. Obviously we were not allowed to get anywhere near the submarine which is why the photo is a bit indistinct.



The next day I read in a French newspaper that the newly elected President Macron had been down to inspect it on a surprise visit, so he just missed us. Shame.



Anyway we continued away from Brest towards Camaret sur Mer. This is a lovely little port with a speculative tower built by Vauban, the architect of many French castles and fortifications, it is almost as if he was the one with "the answer" and they all followed him, anyway you have to imagine the tower below

with 9 canon sticking out and blowing the Dutch- English fleet to pieces. The French were well chuffed about this bit.



Unfortunately it then began to blow and rain a lot so we stayed in what was really a 2 resto/bar town but no one was leaving at all. So being British Mary & I went for a walk in the pouring rain (as ye do)



and found the place where a small part of the Wehrmacht held out for a day or two. (just down the road from the main port) Well the Brits and USAAF did not

really play fair and blasted the area apart including this rather fine Manor House built 1937 to house a local poet. In 1946 he returned and he wasn't happy when presented with his former domicile after the war, and stormed off leaving it as it was - then he died. Consequently no-one has got around to repairing it and it remains a reminder of the destructive power of aerial attack

Not only did we see the effects of the Guerre Mondiale 2 but also some Neolithic menhirs, obviously put there by Obelix. While it was pissing down I was persuaded to model for a shot.



Camaret to L'Orient

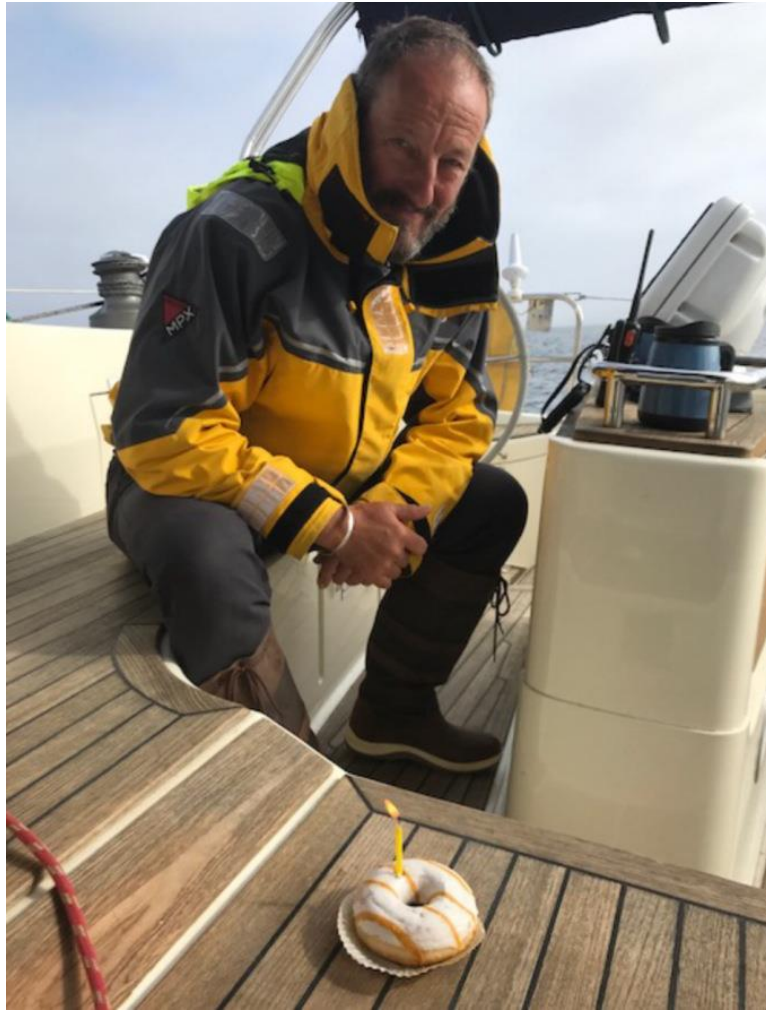
Well we wanted to leave Camaret for several days, but as I have said, the weather was not good. On the one day the weather became good, just before we left (alright the night before as we were preparing) we had a visit from the douaniers. Now we had all read horror stories about these guys (basically the customs men) and how in France they are not so good, however they politely asked to come aboard examined our paper work were very pleasant & did their job in a professional and friendly manner - smiles all round. They then jumped into a rib and scootled off to the mother ship to go and annoy some French chaps.



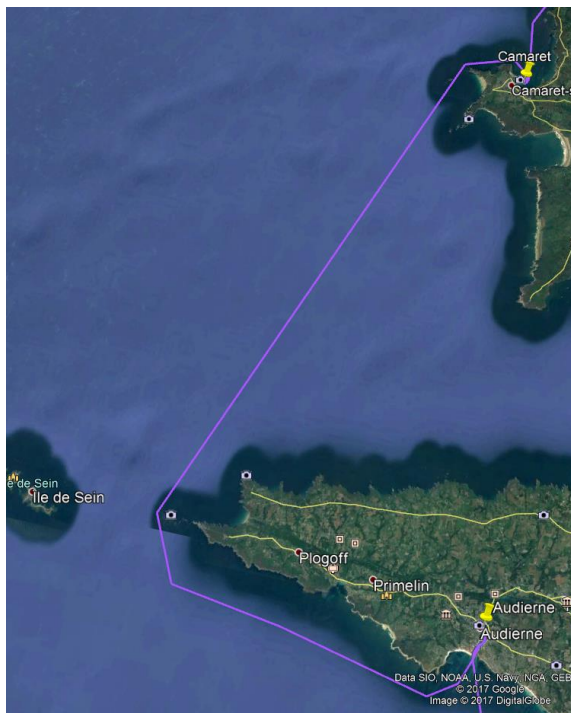
So, after too long we left Cameret/mer at last, heading for another notorious "cap" with over falls and stories of tides that rip you back and forth. It was not a great day and the wind was, as ever on the nose - we had a little sail, but were most apprehensive about hitting the gate at the right time so as to hit slack water which only lasted for 1/2 hr.

Well you will be pleased to hear we made it within 3 mins of expected time and it was a doddle.

It was at this moment that we realised it was my 63rd birthday, so I was presented with a cake - duly consumed. A wish was thought of – and duly made. I think it went summat like “please don’t let me be sea sick again”, but it was a while ago and I am sure I would NEVER have been so woosy.



The next tricky bit was to get up the river to Audierne, a lovely little town rarely



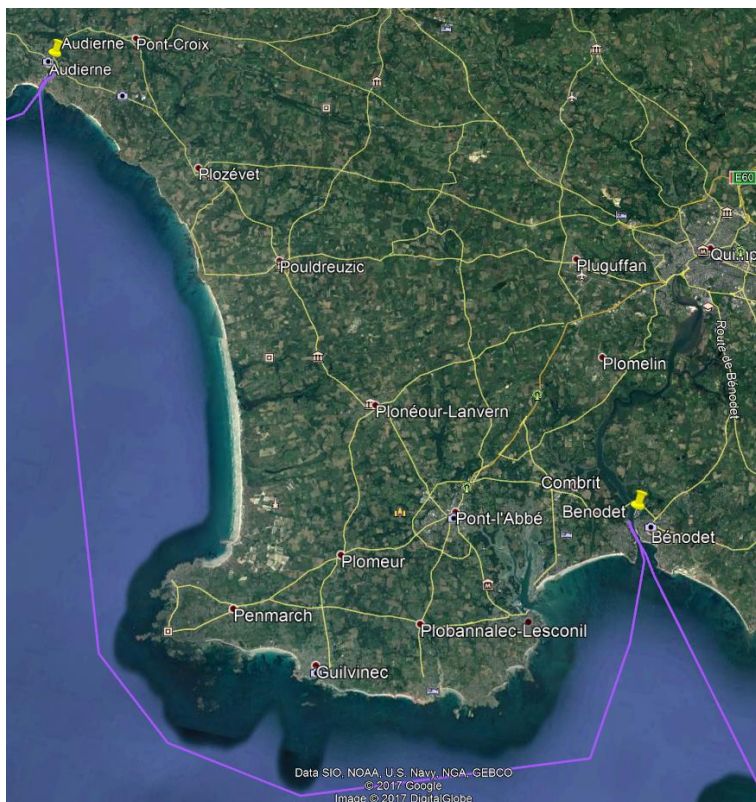
visited (because the approach to safe harbour is quite shallow) but our lifting keel persuaded us to try it, so we did, hitting the channel 2 hrs after high water Zulu (local). Even with my faulty steering (ok I missed the centre of the channel) we still had 1m under the boat. Almost every day I wake up and thank the good Lord for the benefit of a lifting keel until I remember that I paid a LOT extra to have one



Audierne was delightful and we met Martin & Sally there from Polperro, who were a lovely couple with drinks on board alternate nights. Not really much to see there, but we walked around. And found as ever that in all small French towns there had to be an Irish bar (John Devlin pls note - we did this just for you)



And so it was on to Benodet, another day of little wind and all of it on the nose, my poor diesel tank was getting a hammering. We decided to go for the "pretty" port of Sainte Marine as opposed to the marina on the other side of the river called er.... Benodet Marina.



This turned out to be "interesting" as while Sainte Marine was, just lovely and staffed by very helpful folk, you could not get anywhere from it. Yes it had a ferry which started at 0930 but all the buses to anywhere (well Quimper the nearest "lovely city") all left before 0900 so a bit of a disconnect there for the French tourist board to fix.

So it was a taxi at sparrowfart and we spent a whole day in a medieval town with a

gorgeous cathedral and just lovely loveliness- also it was about 27 deg. Giving lots

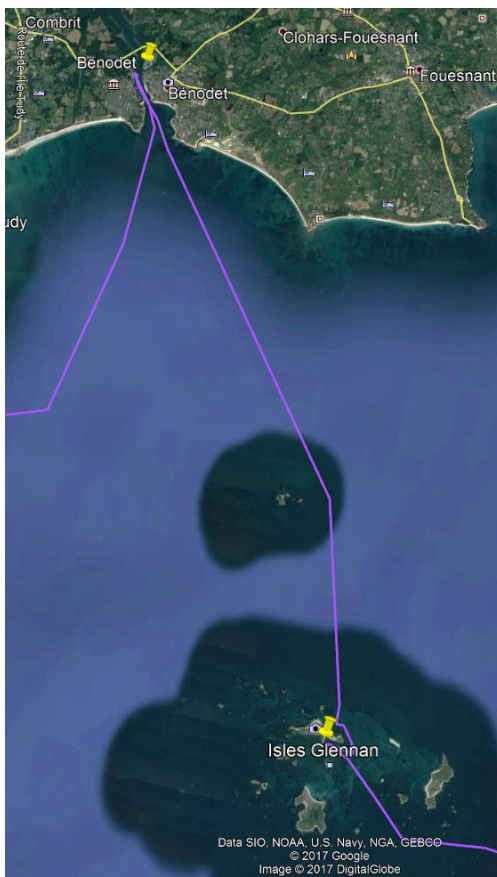
of excuse to check out bars etc. We got the 1600 bus back in time to get the ferry across and back to the boat for dinner.



Inside the cathedral we saw a very clever sculpture of Jesus that had been made to look like a well know emperor- can you guess who and did his nephew (Napolean III er... that's a clue) contribute more funds when he saw it - you bet he did, clever sculptor.



We planned to be away in the morning around slack water (a bit like slack Alice but more mobile) which was at 1030 hrs and so we went to bed with loads of sleepiness, both of us mostly ready for the morning.



Which dawned as ever; ready for a nice easy departure for the Isle de Glenans. There was a little hint of mist at first but this soon dispelled and off we went.

These islands are reckoned by the French to be very beautiful and "naturalistic" & "authentique" (whatever that really means) but we eventually arrived to find it was just a bunch of islands with 2 bars on the biggest one - wicked. (As our Afro Caribbean fellow imperialists would say) Mary & I were underwhelmed but we stayed the day, even tho the water was still too cold - even for paddling. So we visited the nearby Fort, had a beer at the café and sat in the sunshine.

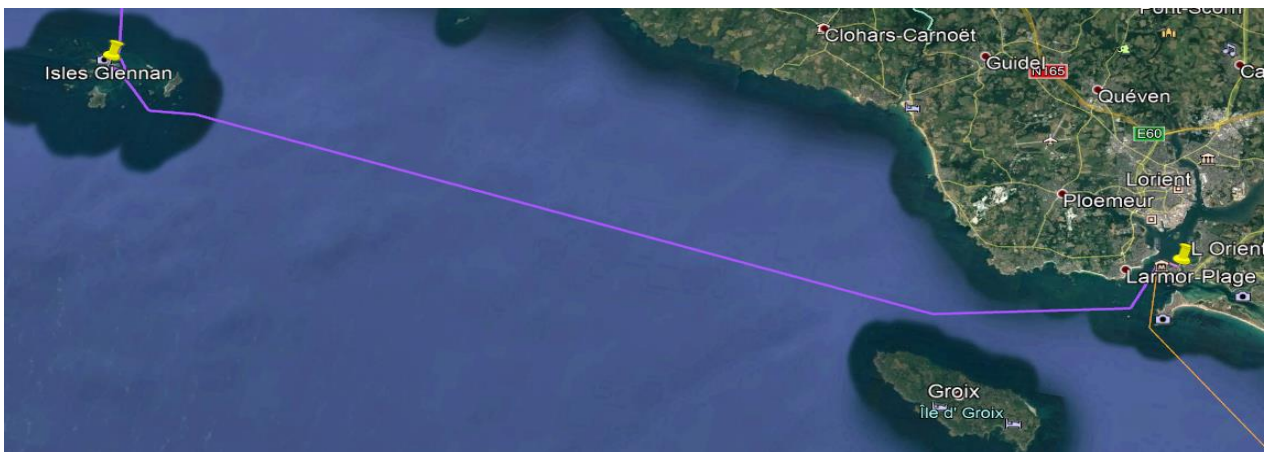
Towards dusk we jumped into the dinghy and set course for Dofesaba II. UNFORTUNATELY I had been a little over ambitious with the power and

as we got to within 10m of the vessel, the battery gave out completely. Now a

more sensible chap would have ensured that we brought the paddles – he would also have charged the battery while sipping a beer in the nearest bar. Well I didn't; and we were being swept out to sea at 1 knot and neither of us could propel the dinghy that fast. As we passed the Moody 36 behind us, I asked very politely if he could provide assistance, sighing quietly, and putting down his rather full Gin & Tonic he came to our rescue. I thanked him profusely and put the battery on charge.



The next day it was up-anchor and off to L'Orient. For some strange reason this up-anchoring that in past times we had not always done well, went without a single hitch - just perfectly. We both enjoyed the moment and settled down for a few hours motor sailing yet again. One hour after departure the wind was still non-existent and the sea almost glassy, when we were as usual the only boat on the Oggin for miles, a cheeky Dolphin popped its head up to say "hello" (Actually they



were porpoises - but so what) So I turned off the engine and said "hello" back. Well they hung around for 10 mins playing about the boat and then buzzed off. So

on with the engine and away we went – then blow me down, back they came and played in the bow wave – it seems they just wanted to use us as a bit of play equipment – so I left the engine on and they played there until their parents called them in for tea – and we said farewell and plodded on to L’Orient where we moored on A15 and off to the local resto for vittals

We stayed in Port Louis for 3 nights which, as has been said, is a lovely petit port but is quite small. It has a massive citadel next door, being the centre of the French East India company (did you know they had one - me neither, but they were doing the same thing as us & the Dutch during the 17 century to wit, establishing trading bases all over Africa & the eastern seas with port managers etc. - trading in slaves and gold and spices. Exactly the same as the British Empire, and the Dutch empire, just in different places to our East India Co.) so a very interesting citadel and museums.

Then we took a vedette (ferry) to l’Orient itself and visited the cite de voile



encompassing the "still viable" U boat pens of the third reich.

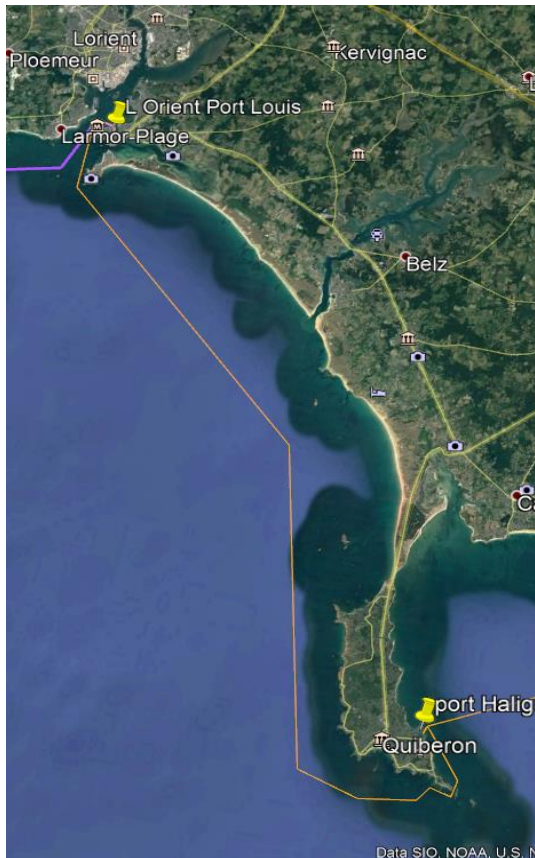
L’Orient is a place I have always wanted to go to. It was the HQ of the U boat fleets and where the film Das Boot was made, well the bits that featured their port.

It was also the submarine pen the allies tried to destroy and were remarkably unsuccessful (even tho' they told the British population at the time and also for many years afterwards, that the U boat pens were destroyed , it is bloody obvious they weren't) it is also where Barnes Wallis's Grand Slam & Tall Boy bombs were first used in anger. I have always believed that they were what destroyed the U boat pens and took them out of action, however I can confirm that ALL the U boat pens in L'Orient are mostly still operational and in fact were taken over by the French navy after the war and used until 1997 when they became too small for their new VERY large nuclear submarines - not bad building for a bunch of slave labourers - I could go on about this for hours, but - back to the adventure.



It was time for us to leave - but the wind was picking up a bit - forecast says 12 knots, Mary says 16 knots (she has a healthy disregard for weather forecasts and sometimes I can understand her POV) any road up , off we go 1 reef in foresail and main.

L'Orient to Port Haliguen



Get out of Lorient and strap me sideways 18-20 knots and away we go. Now we were off to the tricky isle de Quiberon which can have a nasty tide and we again had to hit the gate at the right time and were doing 7.5 knots and I had reckoned on 6. Sometimes a skipper has to know when to slow down, and so we did, extra reef in jib and scandalised main. Instead of a 2m swell making us feel bad, it all settled down. Both of us had been a bit discombobulated but then all was fine.

We got to the gate on time, as ever, but we were at springs and low water and a LOT of rocks and then the skipper decided to sail through (we had 16 knots of wind and a 3 knot cross tide and he likes a challenge)

which he did without engine and felt very butch afterwards. All crew worked really well, particularly on the gybe and the "avoiding that bloody great rock on the port bow" which required some nifty sail resetting. (No photos of that, because we were really busy and a little trepidatious, so no time) anyway into the easy east side of the Quiberon sea and onto Port Haliguen.

I do not have the space or the time to discuss the two famous battles here, but do check out the Royal Navy victory of 1765 but also more importantly for the locals , the Battle of Quiberon of 1795 a massive fustercluck that unfortunately had the British held in very low regard. We know this because we went to Quiberon and visited the museum there, where it is all remarkably well detailed (but in French, so damned hard translation work)

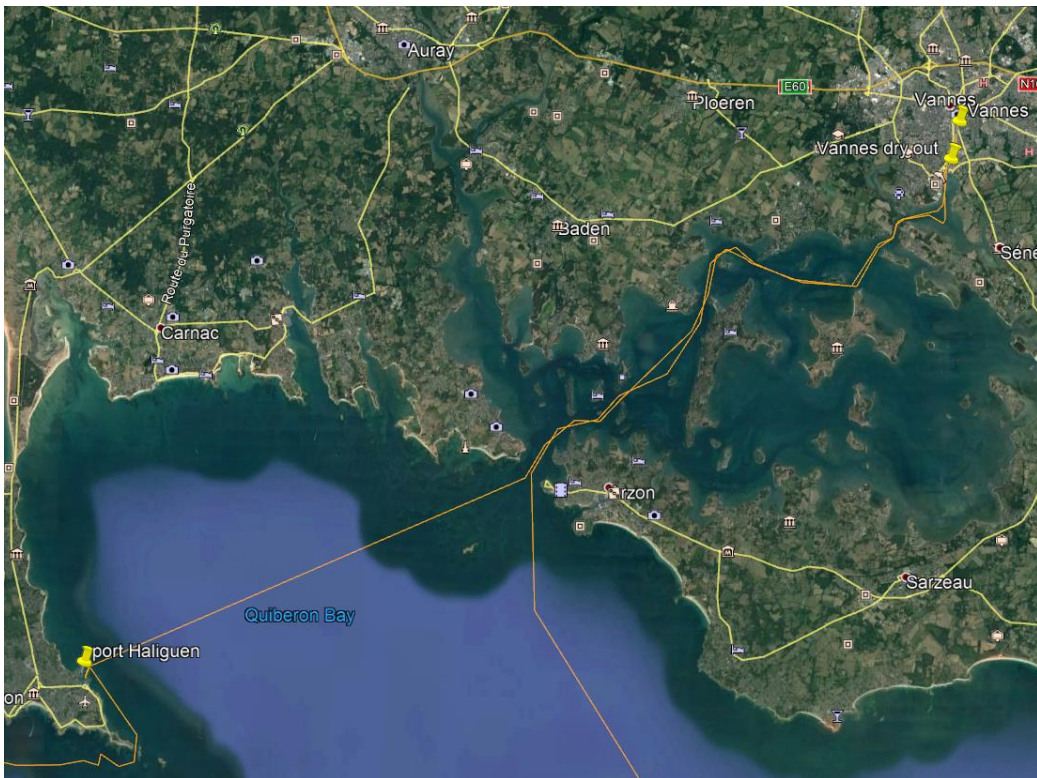


While in Port Haliguen we noticed a statue at the end of our quay, you can see that it is a lobster/crab fisherman staring out towards summat. Well going behind the statue we wondered what he was staring at. So we went to the other side of the old port and found this.



It explains his interest and smile. We could not find any information on this pair locally at all. Probably a little local joke, and why not. The two of them guard the entrance to the main fishing port and they seem to do it very well.

Returning to the boat after our visit we dined on sardines caught that morning by boats in the same marina and salad bought from the market earlier in the day from farms within 5 km, all within 50 m of the vessel - what could be better than that.



Tomorrow it was off to the gates of the Morbihan - get it right and you scoot through between 1 - 8 knots - get it wrong, and there are massive problems. (

we rarely get it wrong you will be pleased to hear) our engine can only do 7.5 knots so we COULD end up going backwards - but we don't do that). Anyway more of that in the next instalment.

Port Haliguen to Vannes

The route to Vannes, capital of the Morbihan, through the gates of Morbihan, (it sounds a bit like MORDOR but it is supposed to be the most lovely part of the



coast, and many wealthy French people have summer houses here - more like summer chateaux to me) we had to get through these gates as the tide turned, not too early and not too late, and so we did, but still there was a lot of swirl as we went up.



Slowing down was the difficult bit, and so we arrived at Vannes swing bridge too early. We waited there with several Brit & French boats. When it opened, the usual "I want to go first" happened and we ended up the second to last to go up the channel which led into the very centre of Vannes, where there were loads of yachts.

This was the weekend of the July 14th; the Fete Nationale or Bastille Day as we call it. During this weekend the locals dress up in the styles of the Belle Epoch (1880-1920) and spend 2 days a- celebrating in fine style. This era transformed Vannes from a sleepy

fishing port to a large holiday capital after the coming of the railway and the steamers. It is a little surreal seeing the more mature women of the town dressed with a bustle, dancing in the streets. However we were “saved” by the sight of the band of HMS Collingwood who are apparently invited every year to march along beside all the locals, a bit of Cordial en Tente I would definitely say.



The French do this sort of thing really well and take it very seriously, and in every street corner there was a small Breton band or a bunch of jugglers or even the local quadrille society training for the evening. We wandered about and checked out the cathedral and all the other beautiful medieval buildings in the sunshine while strolling and viewing.





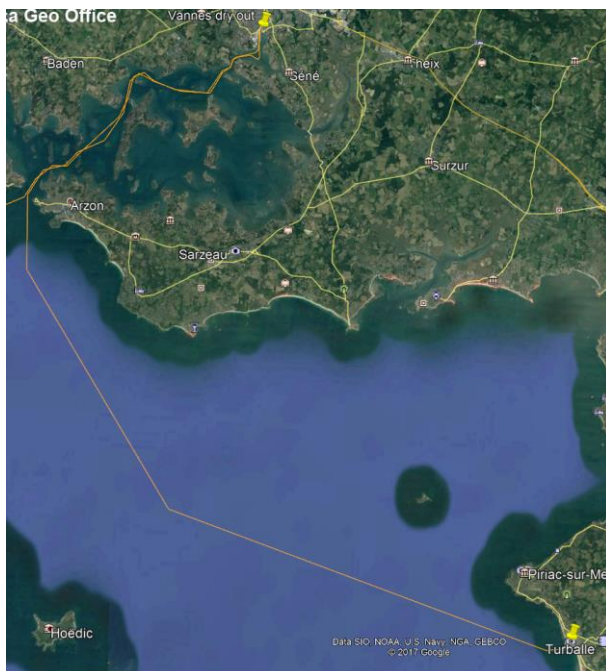
While in Vannes we saw the only Southerly we have seen on our travels since the SOA rally in Guernsey "Keep it Blue" S135 owned by Dr Taylor. Who graced us for a beer one evening and a jolly chat was had.

On the Saturday night was the grand firework display from the Ramparts of the old town ~250k people old, young, families with children and some disabled all

watching and behaving so well, it was a pleasure to be there. It was just lovely.

Anyway eventually we retired late to our pit and slept.

The following day it was time to be off, but I had a feeling that our anode needed checking, so we dried out just outside of Vannes and Lo and behold there it was; gorn. And would you believe it, it was on a Sunday and chandlers don't open on Sunday (and even worse they close on Monday too) however we just happened to be



carrying a spare - but no bolts, so I had to find some in my spare bolt box and cut to size on board and so we could then get away on the next high tide. The advantages of being prepared a la Baden-Powell, a fine upstanding Victorian and Ashanti slayer.

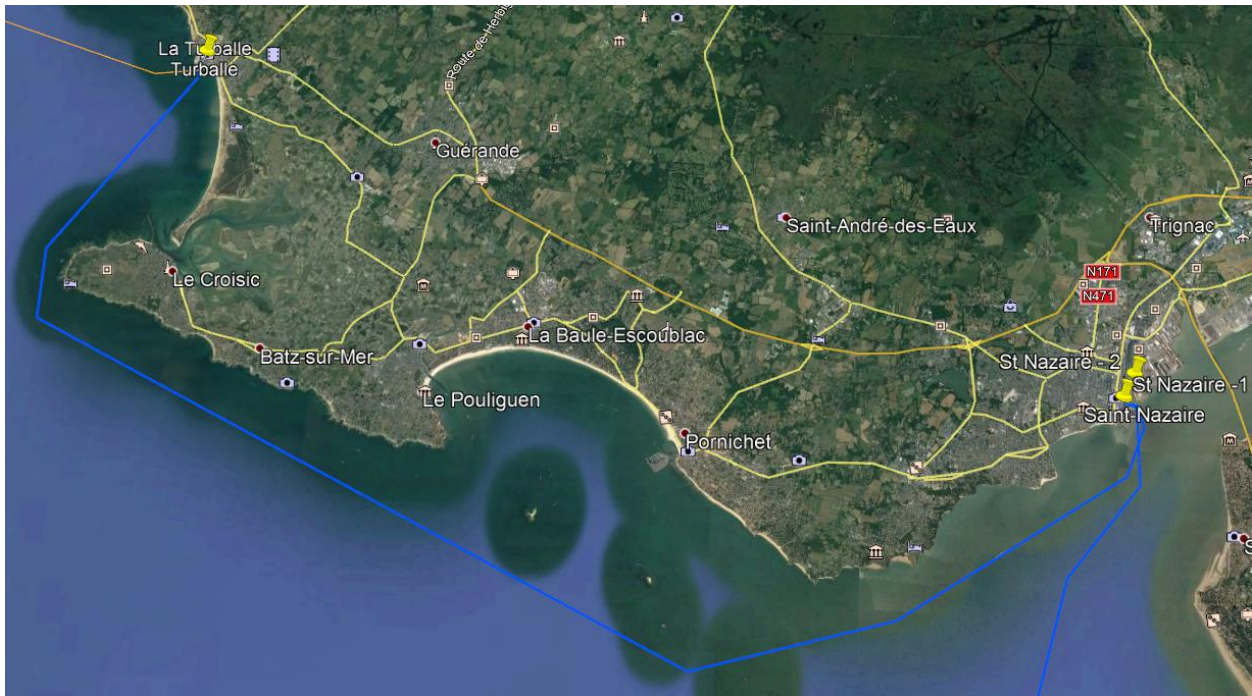


Turballe to Pornic via St Nazaire

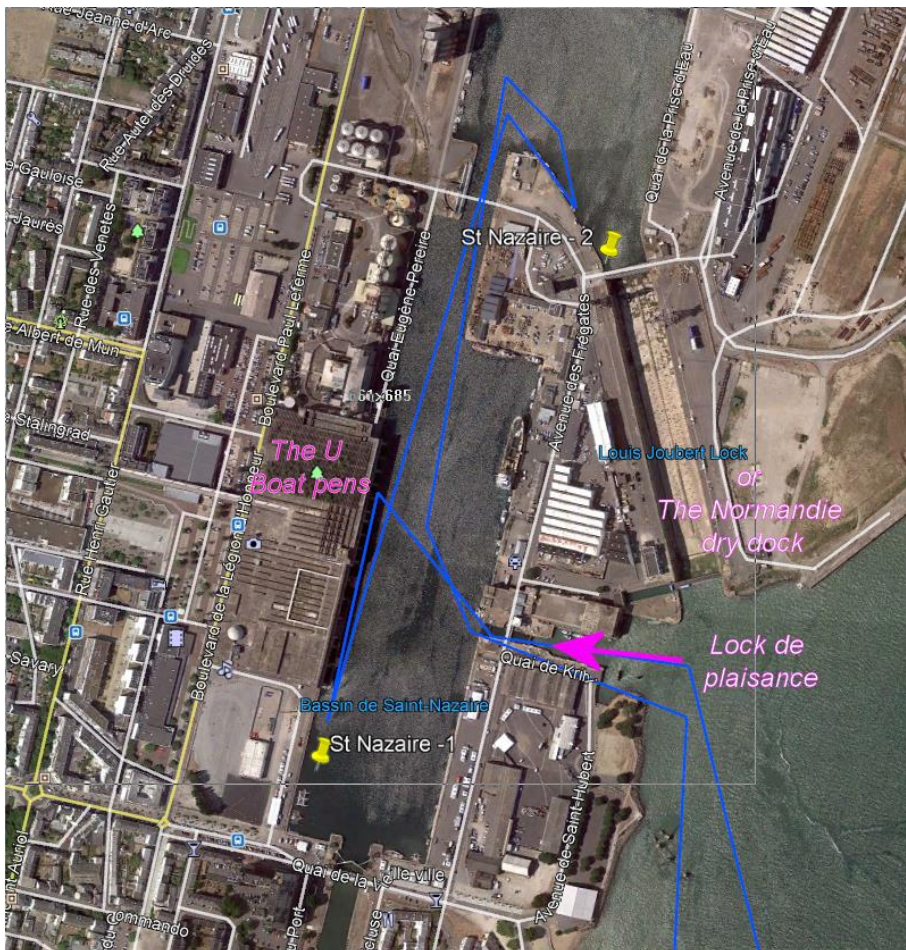
The following day it was back down the Morbihan to the gates of Mordor and ever eastwards to Turballe. Now not many folk have heard of Turballe and there is a good reason for that, it is quite boring, with almost nothing there but a marina, a beach and a few restos. But when the waves are tall and the wind doth blow, any port in a storm is useful.

The next day onto St Nazaire, another sail through the rocks without the engine on, so that Peter could feel he could “do it” the wind was blowing everywhere,

sea all over the place and we zig & zag into St Nazaire. We eventually find the Lock de plaisance around the eastern side of the complex and wait for it to open.



Now I have been on the phone to the HM and he is a little curt - even with my impeccable French and I am beginning to wonder what the problem is. The lock



keeper is not on the same VHF channel as the HM (ch 14 AAMOF) as that would be too clever and he did not know we were coming, as the HM had not bothered to tell him, but seeing us stemming the wind and tide, he eventually relented and opened the lock for us. In we went and then up we went and chuntered out into this immense basin, opposite us were the U-boat pens left as in

1945 and joy of joys, there were some pontoons there too, completely empty. Well relieved, we pulled in and hitched up the power while looking all around us (those pens are quite large when you are very close) - to no avail. I then tried to get off the pontoons onto the quay, but both gates were locked and bolted- so there we were happily tied up underneath a national monument but no way of getting to shore. We called it "The pointless pontoon"



So we then moved off and went forward to the Quay Commercial (as above) and stayed there and then just as dinner was about to be put on the table, yet ANOTHER set of douaniers arrived to check our papers. Fortunately Mary could find the Billy-Doux from the first lot, which kept them VERY happy and off they went after a very polite and pleasant interchange. We then settled for a comfortable and stable night.



Next day we left the boat around 1000 hrs and visited the museum of packetboats, (Ocean Liners) many of which were built in St Nazaire during the Pre-war period and to a certain extent still are today, which was quite good and almost worth the 14 E to get in. You can see from the photo that the museum has recreated the first class lounge of the Normandie – but we are still physically within the U Boat pens. Surreal or what.



Returning to Dofesaba II we found some port officials who wanted us to move "immediately" as we should never have been there, anyway this is a PORT for real boats, not for plaisanciers. (Which by now M & I had worked out as there weren't any facilities for "visiting yachtsmen" in any way shape or form) we were advised to go to the Quay Oblique. Er... so we did (they were all wearing guns, so it seemed a good idea to me).

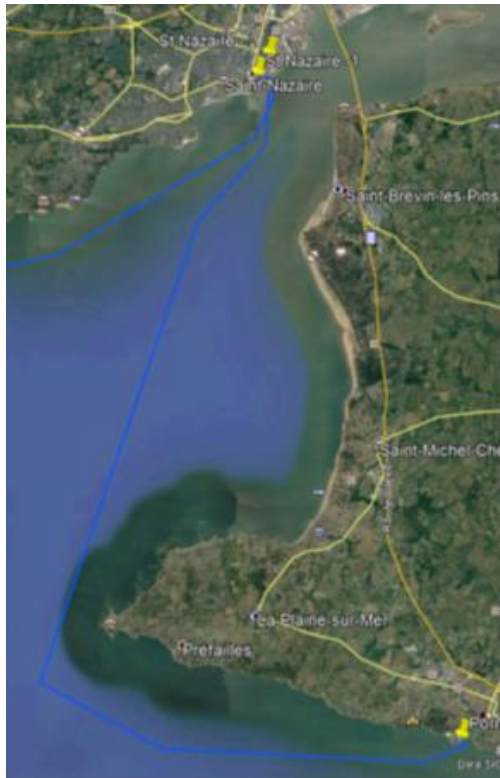
There are a lot of guns in France, almost anyone with a uniform is to be found with a pistol on his belt, go to the countryside and there are rifles shotguns & even cross bows out there in the hands of drunken Frenchman – yet none of them ever feel the need to take out a school or a shopping centre, or any one locally with a different religion or skin colour. Unlike other countries. Must be summat in the water.



Now the "Quay Oblique" is fascinating, as it was at the end of the largest dry dock in Europe and built in 1935 to house the "Normandie", at that time the largest ship in the world. It also featured in operation Chariot, the 1940 commando raid using HMS Campbeltown, which was packed with explosives and rammed into the dock gates, (the replacements you can see in the foreground above) the plan was to neutralise this dock so that the Bismarck & the Tirpitz could not use it as a base for their Atlantic operations. Well this raid was so successful that the French were unable to repair the dock until 1957, and the Nazis kept their 2 capital ships near Norway and the northern Atlantic and so away from the convoys that supplied England. You can see the repaired lock gates in the photo above. We were parked at the far end, on the watery side.

We had a lovely time exploring this completely rebuilt city (Like many other towns on this coast, particularly those with visible U Boat pens. After 1945 by the time the USAAF had finished all that was left visible WAS the U Boat pens) Then it was time to leave.

After 3 Days we left St Nazaire via the "ecluse plaisance" and into the Loire, which conjures up thoughts of lovely blue water and gentle rivers with fields of vines gently ripening in the sunshine. Well the cloud was down just above mast height, the day was grey, the water very choppy and a constant drizzle accompanied us; what a lovely holiday.

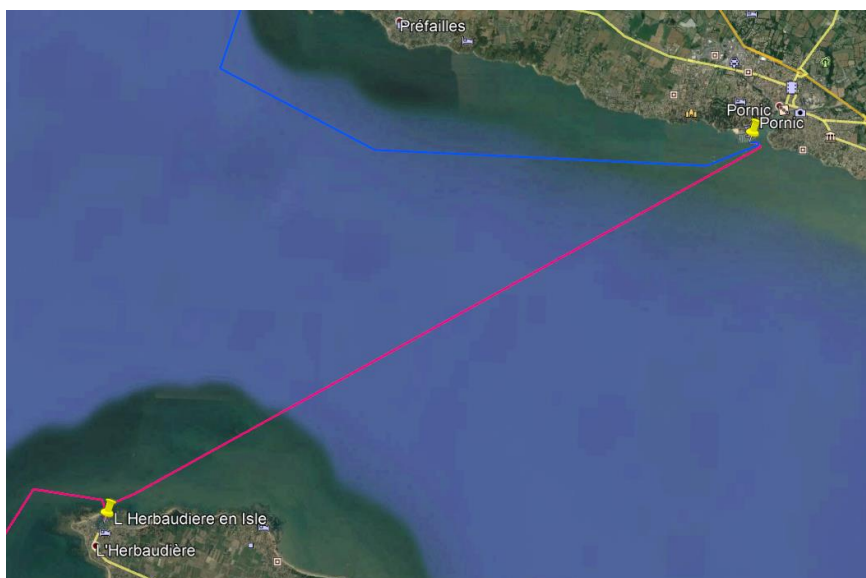


The forecast was for f7 coming in late afternoon when we set off for Pornic, knowing that we had to get there before midday, before the really bad weather set in. which it did almost the moment we got in through the "gates". Why Pornic (one of the most expensive marinas in the area)? - so that we could to return to U.K. For a friend's funeral and another friend's wedding, incorporating a nice easy trip to Nantes to catch the plane.

And so there we must leave us, with Dofesaba2 tied up in stasis in Pornic until we return after Aug 9th to meet the full flow of French holiday makers.

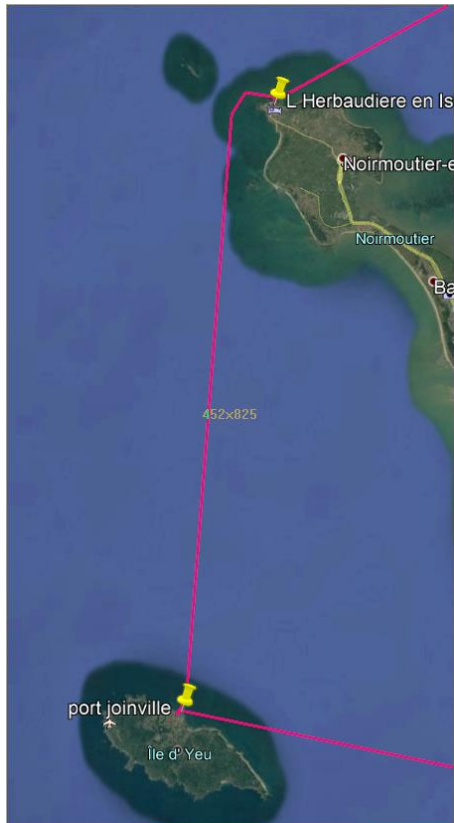
Two week Interlude (cue organ music)

Pornic to St Giles



We returned to UK via Nantes for 2 weeks and then back out to Nantes & Pornic. We were very pleased to see that all was well, just the boat was a tiny bit dirtier, which was soon remedied with ½ hr.s healthy scrubbing.

The next day at 10:30 we left the safety of Pornic, it was grey and drizzly
“Welcome back to France “ we thought, 24 knots head to wind, visibility to <1km.
No sails, off to L’Herbaudiere en Isle, which is on the Isle Noirmoutier and we



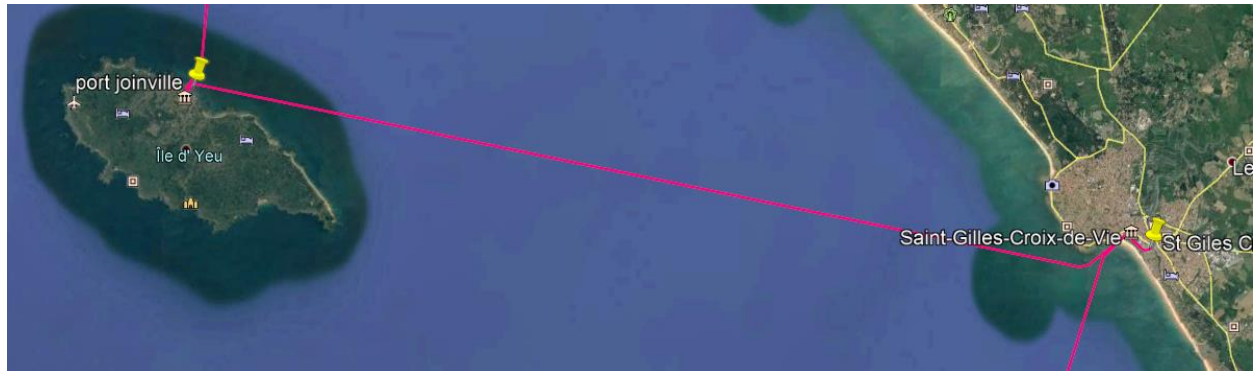
then raft up next to a grumpy Frenchman. We stayed there a day, but as there was little to see and not much to do, we left the next day for the Isle de Yeu.

We left L’Herbaudiere in the morning on a windless day, warm but cloudy. On autopilot and with so little to do, I started looking at the AIS in greater detail and who should I spot 4 M. away on my starboard beam but “Senior Moments”, the boat of Ian, a Scottish friend in the RLYMYC, heading north . So I called him up and we had a “wee chattie”, and then both carried on our respective ways. We were truly ships that passed in the day.

Port Joinville on the Isle de Yeu is one of those very jolly little ports that everyone wants to visit as it is “pretty” or even “jolie” as the French say. Here we managed to fulfil Mary’s ambition to ride a petit train, took us 2 hrs to explore the island with a French commentary, but all we saw was a Castle.



on a promontory built to repel the English, well THAT wasn't very jolie – so I suppose it worked. While we were there we saw some people we had met briefly in Pornic, called Ron & Lynda, sailing 'Misty Blue' so they came over for drinks that night.



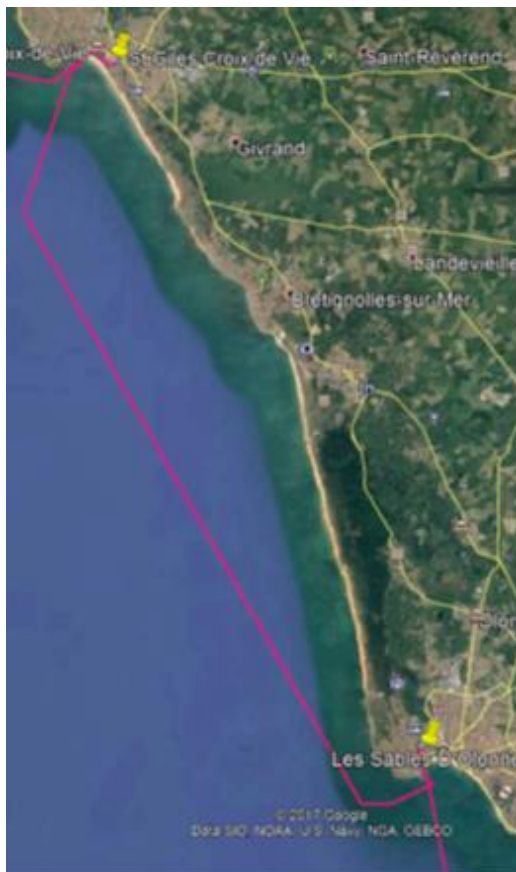
After several days we left Port Joinville for St Gilles croix de vie – a very interesting French “Margate” type place with lots of Candy Floss & port side bars. There was also a Breton Festival going on around the town with many local Breton bands and dances. As ever we visited the local Office de Tourisme and there signed up for a supervised Bike ride around the local Marais (or Marshes) all on paths, well that is what is said – 2 hours only. – who could refuse ?.

The next day we turned up, our bikes sniffing the air full of anticipation, I had been trying to get Mary onto the Brompton for a while, she is not a natural rider. As ever, we were the only English couple but that was not a problem for us, and off we went. It was actually very interesting, we saw many “Marsh” type things like birds & plants and houses – but for me it was just good to be out under an open sky. About ½ way round I noticed that the French lady next to me was puffin’ & a blowin’, really struggling, albeit gamely, on what was obviously a very poor bike (1 gear and half size) – I knew she would never make it back so I offered to swap (we were last by now) which she gratefully accepted, I jumped on her bike and then wished I hadn’t – what a monster, but she cycled off on my Brompton quite gaily. – followed by lots of colloquial French to her husband – now even Mary was going faster than I was and I was struggling. However I made it to the end after 3 hrs and they were so grateful, they invited us to dinner that night, and we had a really good evening. So we dined with Pierre & Marie-Helene with a conversation that was equally French & English and also had plenty of wine of the French variety. It is amazing how much better my French becomes under the influence, but everyone seemed to be able to follow all the conversations – even their son. We departed having had a lovely evening.



The next day we explored, and saw more of the Breton festival and their dancing. This was very familiar to me as Breton dancing seems to be a mixture of Scottish/Country/Barn dancing some of which I was brought up with. The music used drums, a different style of bagpipe, flutes and accordion. (Wouldn't be France without an accordion or two) and in the evening "Misty Blue" visited us for drinks & that was tres jolie too.

St Giles to the Isle de Re



The next day we hugged the coast down to Les Sables D'Olonne. As a follower of the Vendee Globe race I have always wanted to visit this place and now I know why they hold it there. It is ideal – as there is a very large Marina at the end of a long channel with high sides for people to cheer from, apparently 250,000 people come down to cheer EVERY boat in – even weeks after the winners have arrived – that must be very gratifying after 3 months at sea all alone. We spent a whole day exploring and managed to find the 4 Vendee boats that had been left there after the race, including the winning boat, and the kiwi boat that had been knocked down and a jury rig necessary to get him home. It is all still there including the marks and damaged sustained in the knock-down.



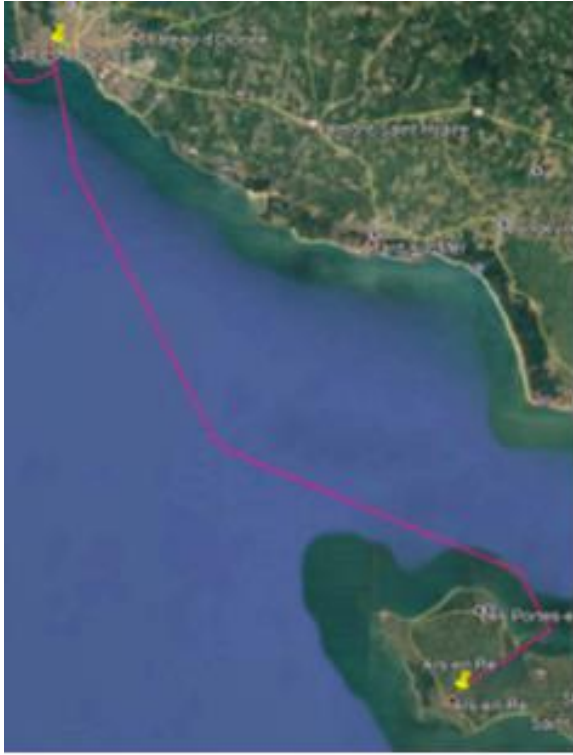
We didn't stay in that harbour, but in the first one on the right – the “town” marina, noisier, but right next to the town bars , Restos and Ferries, and right opposite the grain silos



We were having a sherbet at Yardarm o' Clock and who should we see come into the marina – but the Happy Hobo, or the boat on which we did our Day Skipper, Competent Crew & Cross Channel training. They came and said hello as they were leaving next day – t'was good to see them both –

might catch up in LBS (London Boat Show).

After staying for a few days, the feet became itchy and it was time to move on to Ars-en-Re. The wind cooperated for 2 hrs but then went swirly & up & down, so



did the sails, but we got there eventually, just as it all quietened down and became sunny.

The entrance to Ars is across a long shallow bay, which on a weekend is full of little sailing boats desperate to crash into my hull and impale themselves on my sharp end. Fortunately I am not a good enough sailor to hit anything and we managed to get in without damage, but it was close a few times. Ars is a locked harbour and very small and shallow – we were again the largest boat in the area, but were right in the middle of town. The place

was stuffed with tourists and not many were Brits. It was even difficult to walk down the road there were so many bikes and people.



The Isle De Re is a biking Island – everywhere are bike tracks and cars take second place – it was quite nice. During the

first night some 'erberts (yes even the French have them) let off the Harbour fire & spill response into the harbour, so we woke up to foam everywhere. While the Pompier sorted out the foam, a team of detectives (yes a team) were already scouring the area. It appears said 'erberts forgot to wear gloves while drinking their beer around their campfire, and even Inspector Clouseau knew what to do with fingerprints on beer cans. "We shall get zem eventually, just a matter of

time” said the Insp. to me with a sigh “I ‘ave every confidence”. I am sure he was right.

2 Days later we left for Flotte en re, but as we were passing St. Martin a Scottish flagged vessel said hello and suggested we went into St Martin as they were



having a festival of Sail, well we could not resist, so wheel hard over and a very quick scan of the Almanac while getting fenders out. It transpired that the lock gates had just opened so in we went – to find the most crowded harbour ever. We were almost turned away but the fact that we drew so little saved us (yet again) and we found a berth right down

the end, and then were hemmed in by 4 outer layers of rafted boats – we couldn’t move until summat like 25 vessels had left. Fortunately there was lots to see in St Martin, including the largest number of Brit families we had encountered since Lymington. It turns out that St Martin is very “fashionable” and the prices were



there to match this. There was also the only Tin-Tin shop we had ever seen. That evening a parade of museum boats sailed in line around the bay and into the Harbour. Good to see at least one British boat. It was a bit like the old gaffers but the boats were lots smaller. That night we were invited to the party they were holding on the Quay and we did stay for 1 drink – but went off for dinner. These old French boys started singing at ~ 2100 hrs and did not stop until bang on midnight when all shut up. Within 5 mins there was peace and quiet in the whole marina, wonderful, that’s how to do it.

Sometimes I really admire the French.



We stayed in St Martin for a few days then it was off to La Flotte en Re which we used as an anchorage. We first anchored a bit too close to the harbour entrance so HM buzzed out and suggested we move. Which we did. When the tide went out we walked to shore and found the church and a very nice bar – but the place was full of Okay-yah Brits, which can be very annoying, however we were enjoying the rest of the ambiance so much, we almost forgot the time.



Back to the shore to find the water now up to “ooooh that’s a bit chilly” level as we walked out and clambered onto the boat. Just as we got onto the sugar scoop the boat began to float, so we got home just in the nick of time then.

Isle de Re to the Isle D'Oleron

Next day the wind was very light but enough for sails with the engine on low revs to get us to La Rochelle, under the “BIG bridge” that connects the Isle de Re with



France, and then we passed the massive port and U Boat pens to the west of La Rochelle. As we needed to get some diesel we stopped over in Port Minimes (which is the largest Marina in France with over 3000 berths) for a few hours, well, Lunch anyway, until there was enough water to open the lock to the Vieux Port where we intended to stay in-side la Rochelle.



It was a lovely moment entering between the two medieval towers of la Rochelle harbour, as many years ago I had seen a picture of them in Yachting Monthly and since then always thought it really cool to sail between them on our own boat. I

was not disappointed, once through we turned right, through the opened lock and into a berth, right next to the quay side cafes and bars. Our first beer/Lunch was 10m from the cockpit.

We spent a week in La Rochelle looking at the towers, (3 of them) the underground HQ of the Kriegsmarine complete with bar untouched since 1945, which I thought was really fascinating as it had remained hidden, buried "in a cellar" until 1991, when it was discovered by accident. It still has all the graffiti and hand painted wall coverings left over from when they were done in 1942.



After that we visited the U Boat pens which exist within the commercial port, and are visited only by special dispensation and also only by sea)



We then spent several days visiting many churches & cathedrals, also many bars and restos too, We also just mooched about a bit as we had surplus time, and the weather was “balmy”. Then we visited the French National Maritime Museum (FNMM) based in La Rochelle and even had a beer there. This holds many historic French vessels including those shown below.

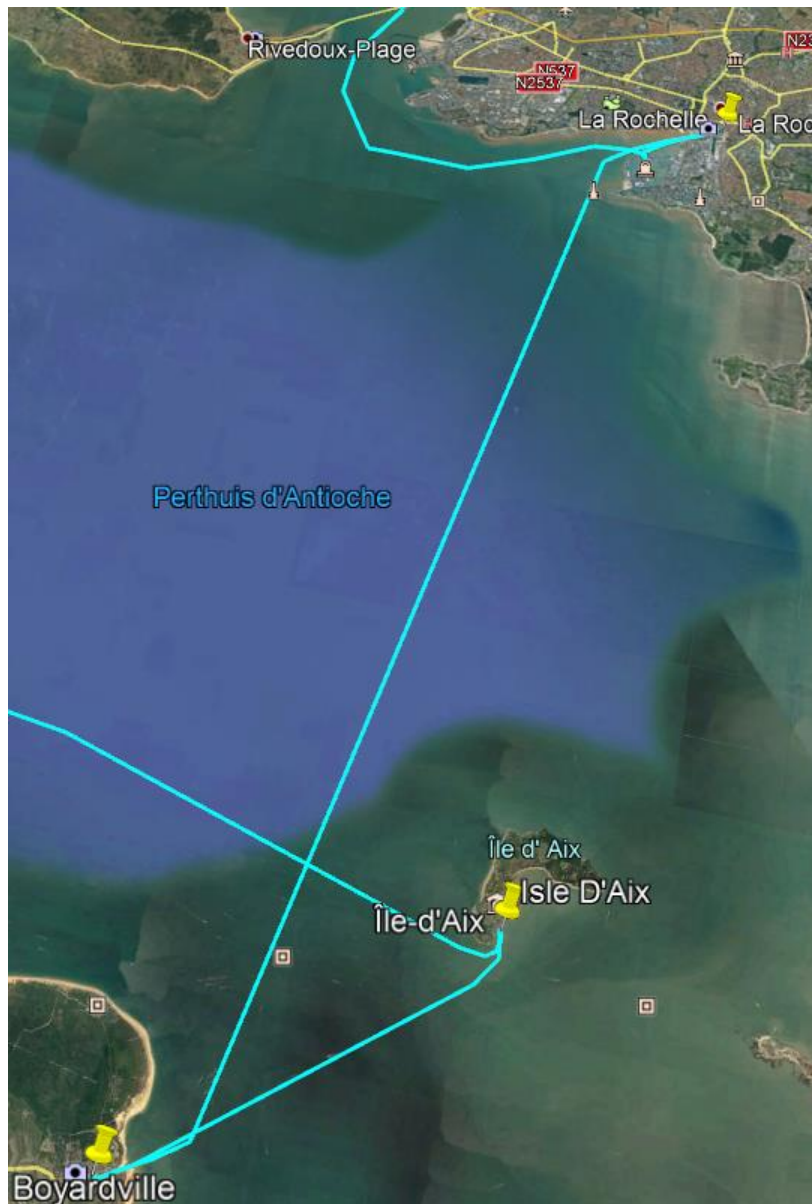


Found some interesting mentions of the first Golden Globe race won by Sir Robin. The French version in the FNMM focusses on the exploits of Bernard Moitessier who sailed his boat Joshua for lots of miles, but gave up the race $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way round, so “allowing” Sir Robin to be the only finisher. There is still debate about who would have won if he had been mindful to finish. Sir Robin gets a minor mention. Every item about B M and his two Joshuas is picked over in great detail with many photos, including many of his family trips. There is no mention of the Joshua grounding controversy at all – a very Francocentric display indeed. While I agree he was a great sailor I suspect he was a weirdy too. Do the two go together ?

Eventually it was time to leave and we decided to go visit the Isle D’Oleron. Our first stop was Boyardville, the supply town for Fort Boyard.

We left the beautifully enclosed Vieux Port through the lock (opened specially for us) – with many friendly waves and “Au Revoirs” and without dramas. We motored through the two towers on a lovely sunny hot windless day, then down the channel to the sea, constantly looking back at the lovely town. Once we hit

the sea, the wind picked up to a gentle 8 knts and all sails out and at a gentle 4.5 knts.



We coasted down passed Fort Boyard (which seemed to have a small rig working nearby for an unknown reason) and also passed the Isle D'Aix, which we had a quick look at before turning to stbd for the Marina.

Boyardville is another small marina designed for 34 foot Beneteaus and so are the lock gates, which we squeezed through and as ever stuck out of our "chosen" berth even after I had removed the bowsprit, which overhung the pontoons quite dangerously. We parked next to the wall and then were joined by a small

Beneteau with 8 folk on board who did not believe in sailing sober, fortunately after dinner they invited us over for several small libations,



– so once again lots of French practice. While in Boyardville I got some cycling in and I found the Fort des Saumonards. This turns out to be an early 19th cent fort with places for Cannons, Mortars and Torpedoes, so they weren't taking any chances then. It was designed to stop "les Anglais" but only lasted 100 years and is now a closed ruin. Well spooky, as it is surrounded by forest and difficult to see from the road. As there was so little to see, we only stayed a few days and decided to up sticks for the Isle D'Aix.

We left Boyardville in a healthy F5, but with only an hour to get there, it was not too bad. We found a lovely place to anchor but then the HM came and moved us on. (When I say HM, I mean a bedraggled chap of 40 with a fag dangling in a gallic manner from the side of his mouth) Unfortunately we really struggled with the wind and the boat hook to get hold of the buoy, so HM helped us very nicely: Mercis. He then charged E14 / night (outrageous until you realised it included "free" trips to shore and back) so off we went with 3 hrs til the return.

The Isle D'Aix is where the Emperor Napoleon had his summer residence (Hence Fort Boyardville and Fort De Saumonards, I suppose, I mean you can't go having your Emperor captured when he is having a little downtime with his Josephine – just not on, could be embarrassing)



Anyway it was a lovely picturesque little island just about to close down for the winter, with little to see but Napoleon's summer House and er... an old church, so we stayed for a beer in the sunshine and returned to the boat for dinner. I was hoping to be able to walk from the vessel after it had dried out in the morning back to the Island (the siren song of a cold beer might have called) but HM informs us that we are berthed on "La Vaz" which turns out to be "Sludge". He was right, so I didn't go walking in it, but when we floated off you could see what he meant. So then it was off to St Denis D'Oleron.

This was going to be our last stop before arriving in Royan and we were already a bit too early. Mainly because we could not go off for our planned week with our friends Les & Janette. They had invited us to spend a week with them in Croatia. Well we looked at ALL transport options via Italy and anywhere really, but these were all taking 2-3 days and over £1000 each, which we both felt was too much. In fact the cheapest & quickest way was via Gatwick airport – which considering where we were, was very silly.

We left on a cold grey day with F5 and some rollers, All sails out but route mainly as ever, head to wind and it was cold and swirly, so on with the Iron Topsail and in with the Jib. As we were leaving, the bow thruster started miss-behaving in an uncontrolled manner – which was alarming – so I made a mental note to check it when we landed. Several hours later we pull into our new berth in St. Denis using the bow thruster for finer points of manoeuvring. We had just got bow, stern and midships lines on when the bow thruster went into full power to port and would not turn off or go to stbd. So I rushed down to the isolator and turned it off. The controller by the wheel had somehow shorted out and nothing I could do would stop it. If this had happened even a minute earlier there would have been

catastrophic and expensive repercussions, but it didn't, and we went off to have a restorative, and make an offering to the gods of poor sailors for our narrow escape. (The next day it was off to the chandlers for a replacement)

Fortunately St. D. was a lovely little town with many restos and things to see. The marina is separated from the main town by about a Km. (on the basis that the marina didn't exist until the 80's and was created by dredging). This altered the tides in the area such that the entrance and marina have to be dredged every year and the spoil is dumped to the north of the marina. Well this backed up so much that it created a sandy foreshore – on which a Camping site now exists – thereby bringing even more tourists into the area) All this explains why the chandler is NOT by the marina, but in the town, and is run by the mayor (hence the Marina) who in his younger days was a crew for Ted Heath on one of the Morning Clouds. You do meet some interesting people in this cruising game.

We also discovered the bay of the leaping fish. Tucked on the other side of the marina was a small café where we sat to watch the sun go down. Even before the first sip I saw a fish leap out of the water. I had a very big swallow and then blow me down another one had a go too. So for the next hour we sat and watched kamikaze fish and sipped a beer. I almost convinced myself I was on holiday.



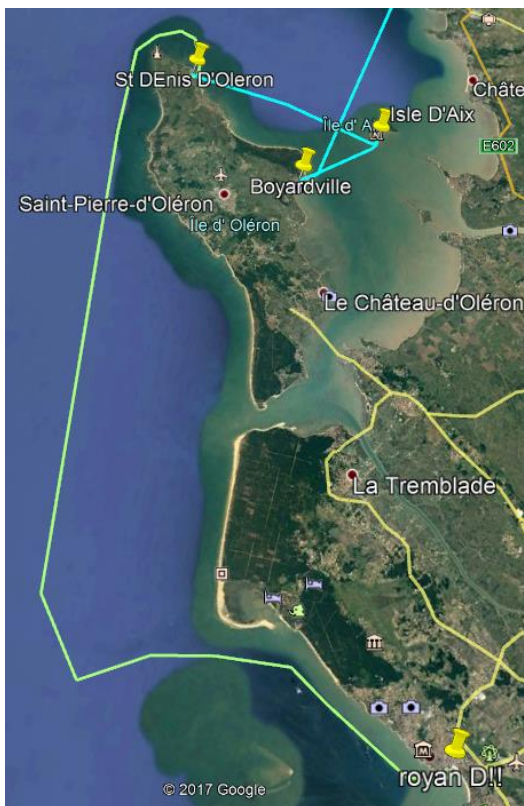
We enjoyed St Denis and found the only Thai restaurant I have ever seen in France. (Let us be fair – we only really scout the harbour area normally and that is not necessarily where Thai restos live – however on this trip we have spent a fair

while touring the bigger towns & cities and enjoying what they have to offer – but not a single other Thai resto have we seen) which we really enjoyed, if only for the novelty.

Soon it was time to leave and the weather had been really bad with 30kn winds and 4-6 m waves in our area. I had even cycled up to the headland to see how it looked and just cycling was tricky. Looking out over the headland (which is admittedly very rocky) I could see the waves crashing into the rocks and throwing spume tens of metres into the air even from where I was standing – at least 2km away. I could see why they put a lighthouse there. The chart showed the headland and rocks extending 3 km. s into the sea to the North – this meant we would have to swing right out to avoid them. (This seemed a wise move) There was a break forecast in the weather in 2 days time, before it all went pear shaped again. If we left then, we would have 12 hrs to get to Royan and also the sea MIGHT have calmed down a bit. If we waited, the longer range forecast was showing bad weather for another week and St Denis had been fully explored. I managed to persuade the crew that we should go.

Isle D’Oleron to Royan – the last leg

So on a very grey & blustery day we left the harbour – funnily enough all alone, and beat out into the 1m waves and 12 knot winds. As we got to the headland,



the waves increased in height and the wind rose to 20kn, so not too bad, the boat could handle it , the waves were 9 secs apart, we had a reef in and sailed “comfortably” around the ragged rocks and eventually southerly. When, blow me down, the wind reduced to 12 knots, the sun peeked out and the waves settled to a 2m swell, it was almost pleasant. Lunch was taken and we prepared for the Gironde.

The Gironde is another of those places where cruising sailors tell each other “you best be careful round there” with lots of tutting, intakes of breath and the sound of tyres being kicked (it’s a shame yachts don’t have tyres) so we were a bit apprehensive and took precautions. As we approached the well buoyed entrance

channel up came the wind to >22 kn and up went the waves to >4m and bouncy went the boat, and the people in it. I could see on the port side waves crashing against the usual French rocks and also see on the starboard side the waves breaking on a shallow sand bank – and as it says in the book – I stuck to the buoyed channel. Unfortunately one of the buoys seemed to have come loose because it was definitely out of line with the others (not as shown on the chart) and as I went towards it the bottom shallowed rapidly. Being not stupid enough to suggest all was well, even tho’ Tom Cunliffe suggests that the mark one eyeball is better than any chart, I stuck with the data presented by the echosounder and avoided catastrophe. Gradually we slipped up against the last of the ebb and made it to our final destination, the Port of Royan. As we entered the wind continued to build, I assume the waves did too, but we were safely behind massive concrete walls and safe from anything. Even the visitor’s pontoon was easy to get onto as the wind was dead on the nose (as it nearly always is when WE are cruising). So we tied up and had a beer to celebrate a long, yet successful day .



Royan is a lovely town, it was a tourist resort during “La Belle Epoch” and retains some of the grandeur and glamour of that era, but only to the east as the whole town was bombed into rubble by the USAAF “by accident” in the closing stages of

WWII. Some of the previous residences are original but a lot, by far the majority are sympathetic recreations of the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, built by wealthy Parisians and Lyonnaise during the 1960's.



The local cathedral is very “French” being designed in that late 50’s early 60’s period when French architects were allowed to experiment with national buildings and didn’t they just. I think it is a very lovely and a brave experiment, albeit that the concrete is cracking and falling down and water creeping through the roof. It is a must see on your visit there.

Soon it was time to leave for England. We spent two days cleaning and preparing Dofesaba II for her hibernation and tied her up tight and lovely with the brand new warps that Michael had had made up for us especially for this moment and so with a heavy heart we lugged our bags into the taxi and off to the station knowing that she was in the safe hands of the Capitainerie de Royan.



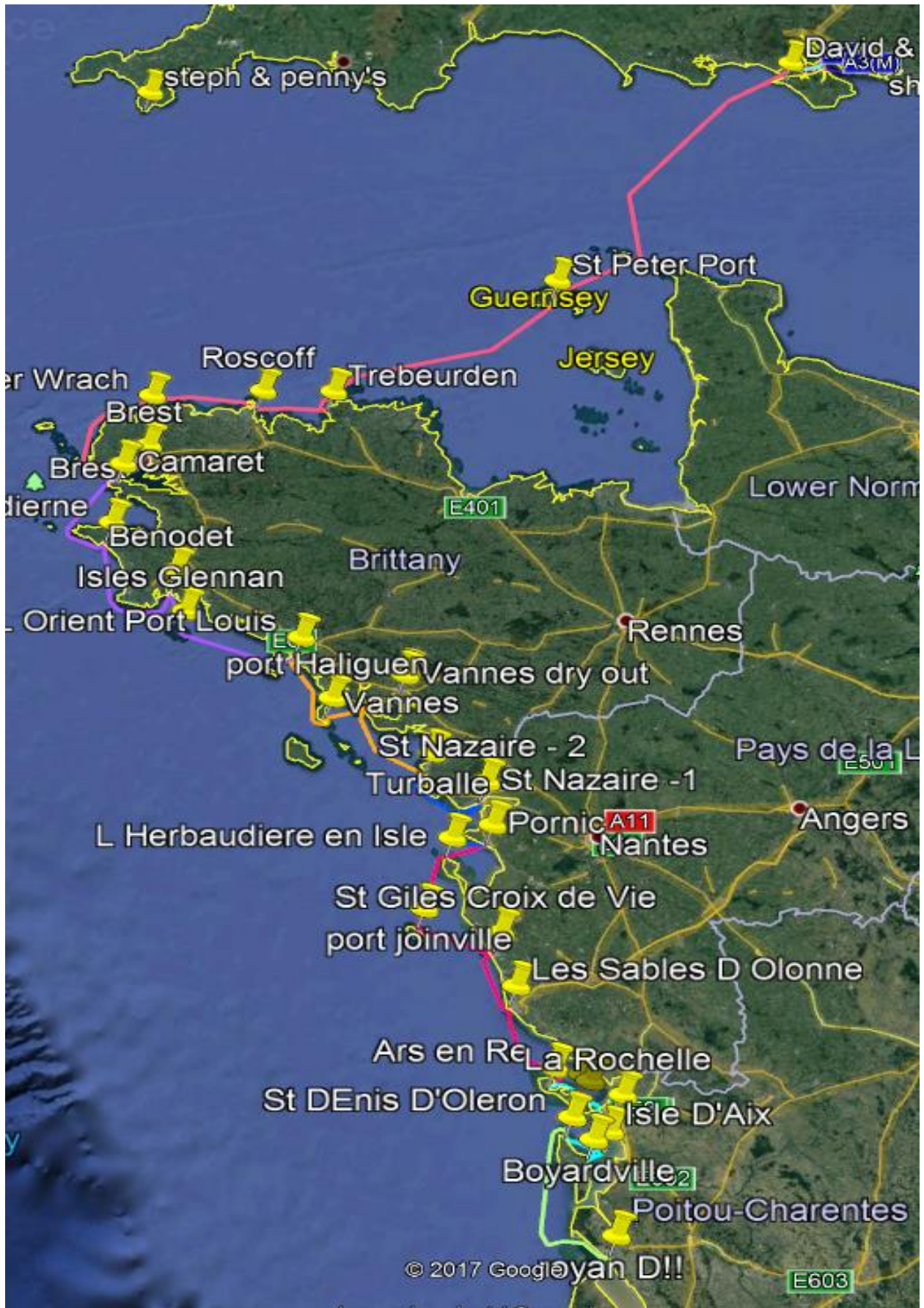
There we must leave our narrative as strictly speaking the voyage was over, however not the holiday, because we spent a week exploring Royan and 4 days in a Hotel in Bordeaux enjoying the delights of both. As usual as soon as we stopped sailing the weather brightened up and was quite glorious with soft winds and long sunny evenings. But home we had to go and what a lovely surprise to see Lymington again. After 2 years now it is really beginning to feel like home, and so lovely to re-meet again all those we have not seen for 4 months.

I hope you enjoyed reading this "Log" - maybe you can be part of it next year as we take Dofesaba II up to Bordeaux and then into the Canals Entre-deux-Mers to Toulouse then the Midi to Carcassonne and Montpellier. Apply at the usual place.

Peter Bell

Skipper Dofesaba II

PS and now some statistics.



The Adventures of Dofesaba II

Season 2017

Date	Start	Finish	Miles	Time under way	Sail hrs	Moto r Hrs	Eng Hrs	Litres of Diesel	Cost in Euros	
30/3/17	Lymington	Bucklers Hard	11.3	2.3	1.0	1.3	158.4			
30/3/17	Bucklers Hard	Lymington	11.3	3.0	0.0	3.0	164.4			
29/4/17	Lymington	Newport	12.7	3.5	1.0	2.5				
1/5/17	Newport	Lymington	15.0	2.5	0.0	2.5				
25/5/17	Lymington	St Peter Port	67.0	15.5	3.0	12.5	185.2	100.0	48.0	
17/6/17	St Peter Port	Trbeurden	66.7	10.5	0.0	10.5				
20/6/17	Trebeurden	Roscoff	16.2	4.0	2.0	2.0	198.7			
22/6/17	Roscoff	L'Aber Wrach	34.1	5.5	1.0	4.5				
24/6/17	L'Aber Wrach	Brest	40.5	7.8	2.0	5.8	209.2	52.0	69.0	
27/6/17	Brest	Cameret	8.5	3.5	0.0	3.5				
2/7/17	Cameret	Audierne	31.1	6.0	4.0	2.0	216.7	45.0	60.0	
4/7/17	Audierne	Benodet	33.0	5.8	0.0	5.8				
7/7/17	Benodet	Isles Glenan	11.9	2.0	0.0	2.0	224.7			
8/7/17	Isles Glenan	L'Orient	27.6	5.0	0.0	5.0		115.0	155.0	
11/7/17	L'Orient	Port Haliguen	24.5	5.5	4.5	1.0	229.5			
13/7/17	Port Haliguen	Vannes	17.4	3.8	0.0	3.8				
17/7/17	Vannes	Turballe	34.0	6.3	2.0	4.3	237.2			
19/7/17	Turballe	St Nazaire	21.8	4.5	1.0	3.5				
21/7/17	St Nazaire	Pornic	17.2	3.0	0.0	3.0	243.2			
	To UK for 2 weeks									
12/8/17	Pornic	L'Houbauderie	9.8	2.0	0.5	1.5				
14/8/17	L'Houbauderie	Ile D'yeu (PJ)	21.0	3.8	0.8	3.0	248.0			
16/8/17	Ile D'yeu (PJ)	St Gile CdeV	20.2	4.0	1.5	2.5				
19/8/17	St Gile CdeV	Sables D'Olonne	17.1	4.0	3.0	1.0	252.0			
22/8/17	Sables D'Olonne	Ars en Re	25.7	5.8	3.0	2.8				
24/8/17	Ars en Re	St Martin en Re	8.6	2.0	0.0	2.0	256.0			
26/8/17	St Martin en Re	La Flotte en Re	2.7	0.5	0.0	0.5				
27/8/17	La Flotte en Re	L Rochelle	9.7	3.0	0.0	3.0	260.0	100.0	135.0	
2/9/17	L Rochelle	Boyardville	12.9	3.0	2.0	1.0				
5/9/17	Boyardville	Isle D'Aix	4.6	1.0	0.0	1.0				
6/9/17	Isle D'Aix	St Denis D'Oleronn	9.1	2.3	0.0	2.3	266.8			
12/9/17	St Denis D'Oleronn	Royan	48.7	9.5	0.0	9.5	276.2	115.0	155.0	
		Places visited								
Totals for the year			30	691.9	140.5	32.3	108.3	117.8	527.0	622.0
Totals for the Grand Holiday			28	641.6	129.3	30.3	99.1	527.0	622.0	