

Quiberon Bay and Back

By Motor Boat

June 2 – July 16



Rod & Sue Perry

By Motor to Quiberon Bay and back, a first visit June /July 2017

Silver trail is 38ft Broom with twin Yanmar engines. Fuel capacity two 100 gln tanks. Passage planning at 16kn. Two people on board.

Charts Imray C34-C39 and Imray North Brittany portfolio

June 2. Alarm goes at 0430, still dark. Captain in his wisdom has determined we need to be away bound for Dartmouth by 0500 to optimise the West going tide.

0505 leave the Yacht Haven as first painted fingers of dawn beginning to appear. Weather good, high cloud, sea very calm, visibility poor. On our way. Very beautiful watching the dawn over the marshes.

0540 leave Fairway buoy to Starboard and set course for Dartmouth making a slight dog leg to stay well clear of Anvil point and the firing range at Lulworth. Clear Portland Bill by about 6 miles and then as ever the boring run across Lyme Regis Bay. Weather continues light and sea very calm. 0800 encounter fog visibility about 1 mile.

1000 finds us 3 miles from Dartmouth entrance. Visibility now clear and motor up river obtaining berth in Dartmouth Marina after refuelling.

Trip 87.7 miles Fuel used 310 litres. Time taken 5 1/2 hrs approx. Might have saved a few miles with a less conservative course; however we are not out for heroics.

A perfect trip for motor and carried the tide virtually the whole way.

June 3. Decision to stay a day in Dartmouth reversed as weather appeared to be getting increasingly windy after today so decided it was better to get across to Roscoff while we had the chance.

0455 Another early start. Left marina, not a lot of light, overcast and F3. 0555 cleared Dartmouth encountering slight beam swell but weather sunny. Called Solent Coastguard to inform them of our passage. By 0755 we had a solid F3 and a beam swell running at 1 to 2 metres giving us a bumpy and rolly passage but the boat coped with it well. This continued all the way across until close to the French coast.

1100 In the Roscoff approaches where we met up with the Brittany ferry going very slowly on her way in. We were now in new territory for us and being uncertain slowed right down. In practice the approach to the marina is wide and well marked but there is a channel on the port side up to Carentec As we were mucking about the RIB from the marina came out and took charge as the ferry needed to come in. He took us round the

marina to the South entrance (which the pilot book advises against; however we had plenty of water). I figured he knew what he was doing. 1145(BST) secured Roscoff marina.

Journey 102.1 miles Fuel used 432 litres. Time taken just short of 7hrs. A long and bumpy trip but good to be across.

June 4. Windbound in Roscoff. Walked to Town, about 1/2hr walk. Very nice little town, plenty of restaurants. Landfall of Mary Queen of Scots in exile. Returned the long way round – not intended.

June 5 and 6. Still windbound in Roscoff. Captain suffering from toothache so decided to catch the ferry back to Plymouth, hire a car and get it fixed. No apparent relief from windy conditions in the near future.

June 7. Caught 1430 ferry to Plymouth arriving at the rather inconvenient time of 2000. Stayed night in a hotel near the terminal and picked up a car the next day for Lymington. Visited dentist, returned to Plymouth June 12, ferry back to Roscoff.

June 13. Imray chart C35 applies. Fuelled up ready to start the trip “round the corner”. First stage a gentle 35 miles to L’AberWrac’h; which brings me to the subject of Isle de Batz. There is a passage to the south of the Isle which saves some 5-10 miles from going round to the north. In addition we have been told that it can be quite bumpy north of the Isle. However looking at the chart the passage is narrow and very rocky, n.b. no heroics. When we took the ferry we were able to get a good look at the entrance and it appeared well marked and not so narrow. Further, people we spoke to said it really was not too bad. Waypoints set we decided to do the passage.

1010. Set off from Roscoff and turned to the west into the passage. Indeed it is wider than it looks and very well marked with cardinal buoys of one sort or another. A sharp lookout is required to pick up the next cardinal and match it to the chart and/or plotter. Also a fair amount of traffic, fishing and leisure boats, so the maxim of keep one in front can be applied. We kept the speed down and eventually popped out at our waypoint just by Basse Plate N Cardinal.

Once clear of the Isle we encountered a sizeable swell, F3 and good visibility. From waypoint it is pretty much a straight course (261ish) to Amana or Ross N Cardinal. We left it to N but there is some room inside;

then to Lizen van Ouest N cardinal and finally Libenter W Cardinal to make the well marked channel and up river to L'AberWrac'h

1300 Secured on inside wall L'Aberwrac'h.

Trip 34 miles Time 2hrs 50.

L'AberWrac'h was pretty dead, that is pretty and dead; few restaurants open and nearest supermarket some way away. However very pretty river and mooring. However we were pleased that navigation worked out OK and for a safe arrival.

June 14. L'AberWrach to Camaret through Chanel de Four. It seems to me that in a motor boat the Chanel is not as terrifying as the pilot books make out. However fog is common and of course if you are motor boating you need to pick your weather. Also the pilot books are written with a sailing boat in mind and therefore a speed of say 6 kn. We passage plan at 16 kn. Perhaps three things to bear in mind:

- Choose weather – no heroics – there is likely to be swell at N end of Chanel
- Get the timing of your starting point at Le Four Lighthouse right (see pilot books) to pick up beginning of S going tide, or plan for slack
- Put your waypoints and route carefully into chartplotter in case of fog

0730 Left marina. Weather F2-3 sunny and visibility good.

0930 Arrived Le Four waypoint passing close to Gde Basse Portsall W Cardinal on the way. From there a somewhat zig zag course through the Chanel which is very well marked. Once through The Chanel turn between Le Fourni and Vieux-Moines channel markers and point for the headland hiding Camaret, crossing the approaches to Brest.

1030 Secured in Notic marina. There are two marinas and Notic is the inner one close to the Town (much nicer). Fuel is in the other one.

Trip 35.6 miles 3 hours.

June 15. Stayed in Camaret. A pretty town with plenty of restaurants and a supermarket within easy walking distance.

June 16. 1045 Left Camaret for Benodet. Unfortunately no fuel as equipment was broken. We last fuelled up in Roscoff and since then have done 72 miles. Our estimate to Benodet was 60 odd miles. Paranoia about fuel is a healthy thing in a motor boat. We decided that we should have enough so set off. Weather hot and sunny F2-3 with usual swell. Round the headland and set course for the Raz de Seine, another threatening piece of water. We used Gill and Mike Barron's pilot book which was excellent. Three things strike me about the Raz. Pick your weather, this is not a nice place to be if you are much above F3; plot your route through carefully and use 3 or 4 waypoints; and as with the Chanel du Four get the tide right (go through at slack tide). We had a tranquil journey through to our relief, but we took a longer route through than is possible, entering at 1155 and exiting at 1215.

Once through the Raz the wind increased to F4 and there was a perceptible swell. We encountered a lot of fishing boats but otherwise an easy trip to the well marked entrance to river Odet and Benodet. Benodet marina is on the starboard side of the river on a bend and the ebb tide rips through there. Unfortunately the whole of the hammerhead on the outside had been reserved for an 8 metre rally so we were sent to a finger pontoon but advised not to attempt mooring until the tide had slackened. Good advice.

Trip 64 miles 5.3 hours

June 17. Enjoyed Benodet town on our bicycles. Beautiful weather.

June 18. Fuelled up. A number of marinas restrict the amount of fuel you can put in, say 100 Euros. After that limit you cannot use that card again. It is advisable to have at least two cards. No problem in Benodet but fuel pump was a touch sensitive requiring help from harbour master.

Fuel 476 litres which has given us an average of 3.55 litres per mile.

1150 Left marina for trip up the river. A very pretty river with a lot of tide. Just before Quimper it opens up and gets shallow so turned around and made a leisurely journey back. Attempted to get into our marina berth but it was impossible with the strong tide so went across the river to St Martine where there are a number of pontoons going along the river. St Martine is small but picturesque and if we return to Benodet we would tie up there rather than Benodet marina. There are regular ferries across the river to Benodet.

Trip 11.5 miles a pleasant day trip.

June 19. Stayed in Benodet.

June 20. Left Benodet for Port Louis. Weather calm, hazy sunshine, F2-3. 1200 Left Marina. Uneventful trip, saw a number of dolphins. 1500 Arrived Port Louis marina (across the river from Lorient). Harbour masters particularly helpful and there are free bicycles but book early. In our view Port Louis is much nicer than Lorient marina. Trip 37 Miles 3hours.

June 21. Walked around Port Louis.

June 22. Caught ferry and bus (2E per person) to Lorient.

June 23. Left Port Louis for Port Halligan on Quiberon Bay. Overcast, F3, sea state slight. 1020 Left Marina. Sea was lumpy but nevertheless a good passage. Care needs to be taken approaching Quiberon Bay as a lot of rocks and confusing cardinal buoys. 1256 tied up in Marina. Trip 28.2 Miles 2.7 hours
Met up with Tony and Andrea Jarvis.

June 24and 25. Stayed in Port Halligan. Had one of our bikes stolen which was very irritating. Decided we had gone as far South as we wished so time to make the return journey.

June 26. 1155 Left marina for Port Louis. Overcast, lumpy sea, F3-4. Uneventful passage, saw more dolphins, arriving at 1355. Located the fuel berth in Lorient marina and fuelled up, 160 litres each side but not full. 1450. Secured in Port Louis to be welcomed by T& A Jarvis. Trip 30.4 Miles 3.2 hours

June 27 to July 2. Spent in Port Louis. Borrowed bicycles from the harbour master one day and cycled to and around Garves, lunched at small café. Weather turning against us becoming wet and windy. If you have to be holed up Port Louis has plenty to offer.

July 3. Time to make progress back towards N Brittany. 0900 Left Port Louis for Camaret missing out points between. Overcast, F2-3. Weather turned foggy but we had sufficient visibility to navigate through The Raz du Seine with wind remaining light. Arrived at Camaret 1445 and went for fuel. Not a very convenient fuel dock with a strong tide running. We were restricted to 180 litres so used both cards to give us 360 litres. Not full but paranoia eased.

Trip 88.7 miles 6.4 hours

July 4. Took advantage of the weather window to head for Roscoff.
0810 Left marina weather fair, F2-3 entering Chanel de Four at 0845 where we were pleased to see sunshine and good visibility. Picking up our waypoints we emerged from the Chanel at 0950. From there on we met loads of small fishing boats which we had to dodge, and perhaps a 1metre swell. 1145 arrived at Bass Plate cardinal for the Isle de Baetz channel which was safely navigated and secured Roscoff marina 1225.
Trip 60 Miles 4.4 hours

With the good weather we had knocked off best part of 150 miles of our return journey and were now within striking distance of home, so felt pretty pleased with ourselves.

July 5. Lay day in Roscoff. Caught the free bus into Roscoff, visited the market and had a very good lunch. By which time we had missed the last free bus so caught a taxi back to the marina. We had drinks with Andrew and Sue Sutherland and their crew Robert and Annie, all very jolly.

July 6. Roscoff to Trebeurden. Fuelled up in Roscoff 295 litres.
1325 left marina weather hot and sunny, F3, sea calm visibility good. Needed a good look out as there were a lot of lobster pots. Lovely motor boat journey, arrived Trebeurden approaches 1335 and tied up in the marina 1450. The approaches are well marked but can nevertheless be confusing. Trebeurden has a sill entrance with variable access (e.g.31/2 hours at coefficient 90) around high water. A very pleasant little marina but with reverse polarity on the electrics. Although our manual gave all sorts of sinister warnings we were assured by a kindly neighbour that it didn't do any harm and nor did it.

Trip 16.3 Miles. 1.1 hours.

July 7. Day out in Trebuerden. A lovely beach and a pleasing little town. To our surprise we were able to obtain free electric bicycles from the harbour master. We understood when we went to the supermarket in the town which is at the top of a long steep hill. All in all a very enjoyable day.

July 8. Trebuerden to Treguier.

0900 left marina. Weather now "on our side". Sunny and warm F2-3 sea state calm. The exit from Trebeurden needs to be planned carefully as many rocks and it is a brave man who cuts the corner. Once clear, set course for Bar ar Gall W cardinal and from there a straight course to Bs Crublent for the approaches to Treguier river. We met some powerful tides off Tregastel Plage and approaching Les Sept Isles. 1150 entered

river. The approaches and the river are well marked but there are a number of bends and the channel markers are not where you might expect them and are not obvious so care and identification of marks is important. About 5 miles up the river to Treguier, very pretty. A lot of tide in the marina so mooring is tricky and direction important i.e. facing current. Very helpful harbour staff made life easier for us.

Trip 31.6 miles 3 hours

July 9 Day in Treguier. Boat chores then walk into town. Lovely church and old town. Met up again with Jarvis' also on their way back.

July 10. Treguier to St Caast.

0730 Left marina ; overcast,F2-3

0810 leave the river, significant swell. 0905 sea lumpy and uncomfortable, wind increased F4. As we approach St Caast things calm down a bit but poor light. 1130 secure on nice berth (thank you harbour master).

Trip 49.9 miles 5.1 hours.

July 11 Took the walkway along the beach into St Caast (thank you EU or more accurately Germany, France and UK). A lovely town with a magnificent beach and a somewhat Edwardian air to it. Met up with a nice Guernsey couple in an Aquastar next door to us for drinks.

July 12 overcast and quite windy. Took the bus to St Malo to explore walled town and have a good lunch. Bus back. All public transport is very cheap.

July 13 Still in St Caast. Jim and Jean Venn arrive in Venture Lady. Need to uncork more bottles.

July14 Of course Bastille night. Big preparations on the beach but fireworks don't start until 1120. Interestingly fireworks are let off by the fire brigade. We can see in the distance the rather more superior display from St Malo but nevertheless a good show from St Caast.

July 15. St Caast to St Peter Port

Fuelled up, only 60 litres each side but just to be sure.

1050 Left marina wind F3 intending to carry the tide all the way. 1200 wind now F4 and sea lumpy necessitating reduced speed to 12 knots. The Guernsey couple were also going back and we were in sight nearly all the way. Picked up fuel on way into St Peter Port, 435 litres. St Peter Port

very crowded and sill was too low for entrance so directed to waiting pontoon. Harbour staff not particularly helpful but we were rafted up. Had to repair the port windscreen wiper as the rivet had sheared off. Between us we managed that; wipers are very critical on a motor boat.
Trip 52,5 Miles Hours 4.2

July 16 Homeward bound. 0845 Left waiting pontoon. We had fog in the night and there was still a mist. Wind F3-4 and overcast. 0900 cleared Little Russell and the fog came in, visibility 200 metres. AIS was very helpful as we did not need the radar. From this point to the end of the Alderney race we were in the fog. Started to get lighter at 1040 and had cleared by 1140. Wind now a solid F4, with a lumpy sea – uncomfortable. 1405 reached The Bridge buoy and then through Needles Channel. 1445 Secured in our berth at Yacht Haven having carried the tide with us all the way.

A celebratory glass of wine was indicated.

Trip 92.2 miles Hours 6

Conclusions

A very satisfactory and enjoyable trip. A mixture of weather but if unpleasant then we waited as motoring in above a F4 is uncomfortable. French restaurants and particularly those around marinas are pretty poor. Boat behaved beautifully.

Total mileage 810.2 Fuel used 2828 litres giving an average of 3.49 litres per mile.