

Sailing Galicia 2017



Late Again, First 32s5

The Origins of the Dream

2017 the fifth season in the Late Again partnership (Trevs and Wags – Julia & George Trevelyan, Ruth and Peter Wagstaffe, all RLymYC)

- time for a long cruise - a plot under discussion to sail around Britain
- but Wags experience a cold wet cruise in N Brittany June 2016
- a desire to leave the mildew behind - Oestara's cruise in 2015 (the Lassens) is an example to follow –let's all sail towards the sun
- Celia & Richard offer all encouragement, so do Bob Bell, Tim Harford, Bob Barlow, Martyn Kemp, Dick Moore, Peter Bruce, Dave Weller (all Biscay veterans - the Wise Ones).

What needs to be done?

Decide the time-slot (two months + passage time)

- Develop a **passage** plan
- equip the boat
- find two **passage** crews
- allocate the cruising weeks between the partners
- invite the **cruising** crews
- create an outline for the cruising, so's people can plan their joining and leaving
- dream about the Rias and the Islands and tell people what you dreamt.

From dream to achievable plan.

Time available is June and July 2017 plus a bit at each end for passage-making

Most equipment issues arise from contemplating the deep-sea passage between Ushant and Cape Finisterre: weather forecasting, reporting progress, contingency fuel, battery-charging, prospects for prolonged downwind sailing

By February we know the first half of the cruising weeks are for the Trevs, second half to Wags

Two passage crews easily engaged, since enough people think Blue Water is fun

Finding cruising crews no problem either - who doesn't want a week on a boat in the sun?

Outline for the cruise is also easy - four Rias, four weeks cruising each partnership, first cruise heads South, second heads North, partners share a week in the South, return home starts from Muros in last days of July.

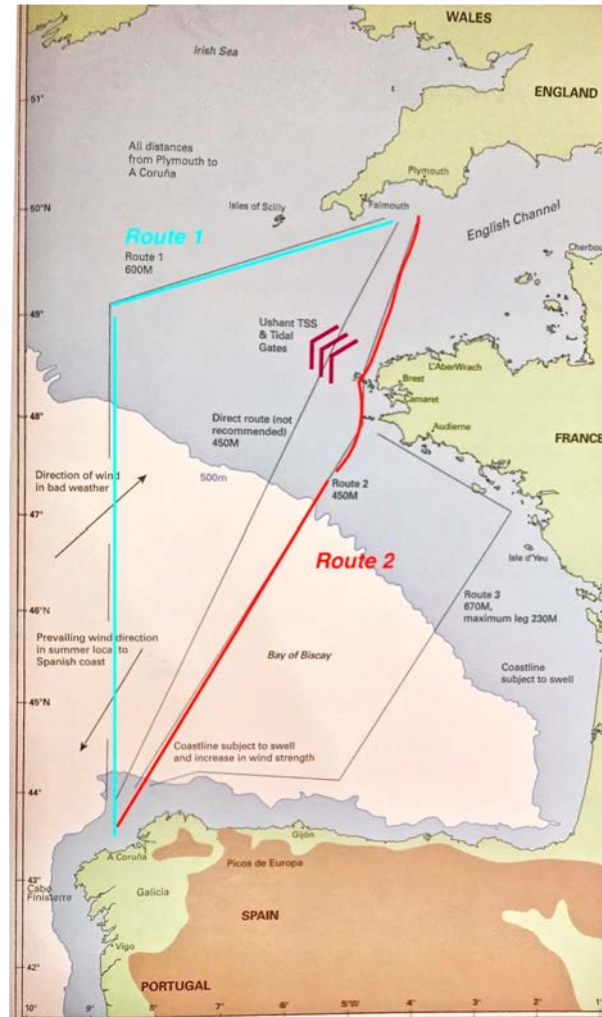
The **passage plan** requires more judgement: broadly two choices:

Route 1 is to head WSW from the Western Approaches, beyond the Ushant TSS, and lay La Coruna when it bears due S (9 deg W)

Route 2 is to head for Ushant, inside the TSS, and sail SW for the objective - 150 NM shorter.

We attended a CA seminar in London on crossing Biscay, to collect opinions; and talked to the Wise Ones at RLym. The CA experiences were wonderful in their diversity; the Wise Ones in their clarity. We agreed to follow Bob Bell who said:

'I've crossed Biscay six times, and I always go via Camaret'



Why Route 2?

Route 1 seems wrong but romantic for small-boat sailors:

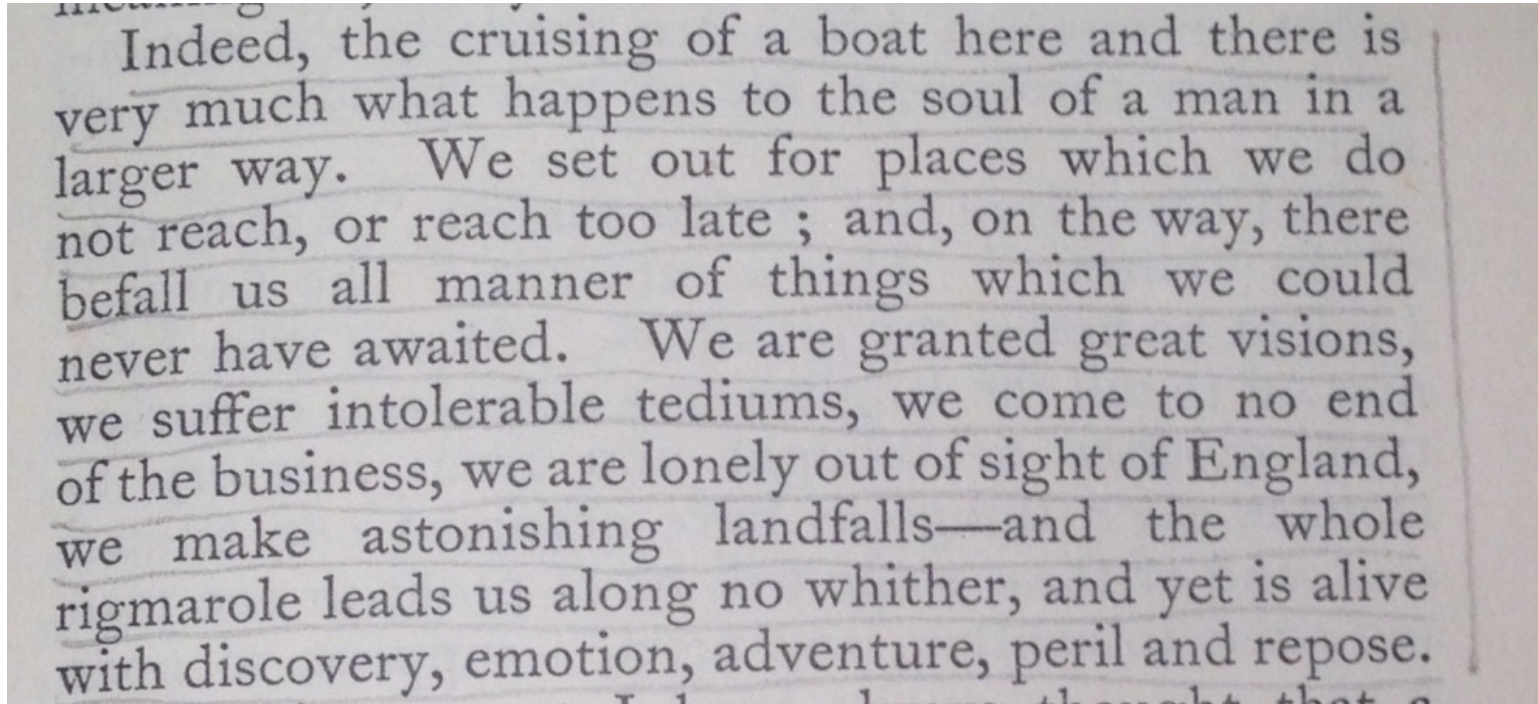
an extra day on the ocean matters; the desire to get a massive offing doesn't seem relevant to modern close-winded sloops; the stated advantage, that the approach to land from N&W will reduce exposure to Atlantic wave patterns isn't significant in good-weather summer passage-making.

Route 2

is attractive because it's shorter; you can wait up near Ushant if the weather is uncertain, and you can refuel if your passage has consumed a lot of fuel before Ushant.

BUT we always kept to to the right of track when beam winds allowed!

While we're being philosophical about cruising, some favourite words from Hilaire Belloc, Anglo-French writer, orator, poet, sailor, satirist...(1870-1953), marked with approval by one of my family in the 1930s:



Indeed, the cruising of a boat here and there is very much what happens to the soul of a man in a larger way. We set out for places which we do not reach, or reach too late ; and, on the way, there befall us all manner of things which we could never have awaited. We are granted great visions, we suffer intolerable tediums, we come to no end of the business, we are lonely out of sight of England, we make astonishing landfalls—and the whole rigmarole leads us along no whither, and yet is alive with discovery, emotion, adventure, peril and repose.

Preparation in Practice - with a planned launch early April & target departure of 25 May we:

- Get the rig checked professionally - work to do on cracked spreader-ends and replacing a halyard
- Order and have fitted a new tri-data system - the old one failed over-winter
- Fit NAVTEX, LED tri-radial and stern lights, and an alternator-to-battery charger (speeds charging at sea)
- **Learn what the pro-level PredictWind can do for us**
- Service the motor in the usual way, and provide 60 litres of spare fuel in cans (doubles our cruising range under motor to 60 hours or 300 miles)
- **Get a second pole for twin pole downwind, and test the system**
- Contract to take an Iridium Go so that our shore partners can give us weather advice over and above NAVTEX when we're out of mobile range
- Paint the bottom and get ready for sea
- Plan catering and purchase supplies
- **Deal with the unexpected**

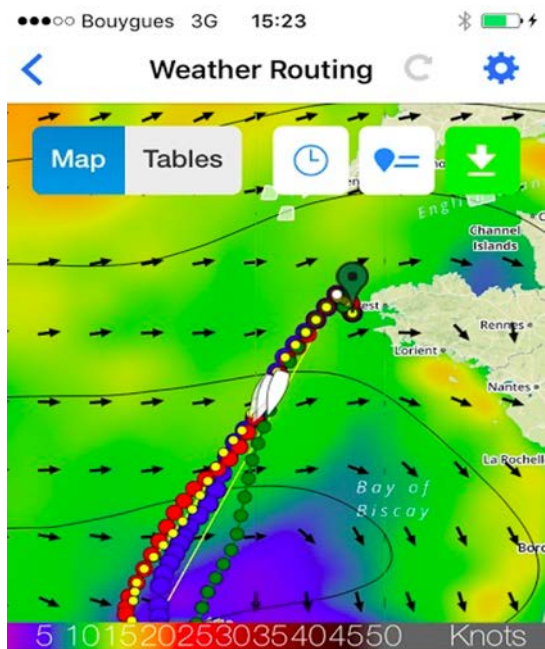
(More detail follows on the items in **bold**)

What PredictWind can do for you

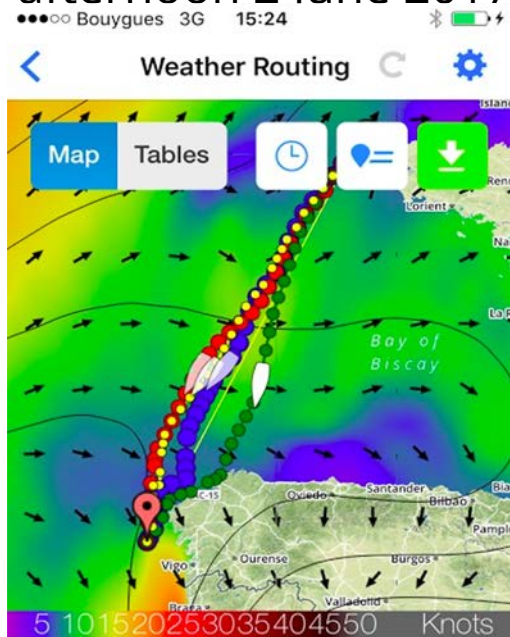
If you load your boat characteristics, speed/wind polars, your policies on motoring in light winds, your starting point and destination, the waypoints in your planned journey, PredictWind will advise on optimal departure times, sea conditions, alternative routings and arrival times. Magic!

Examples of a four-day forecast Peter obtained by mobile as we passed Ushant Island on our way South are displayed in the following slide.

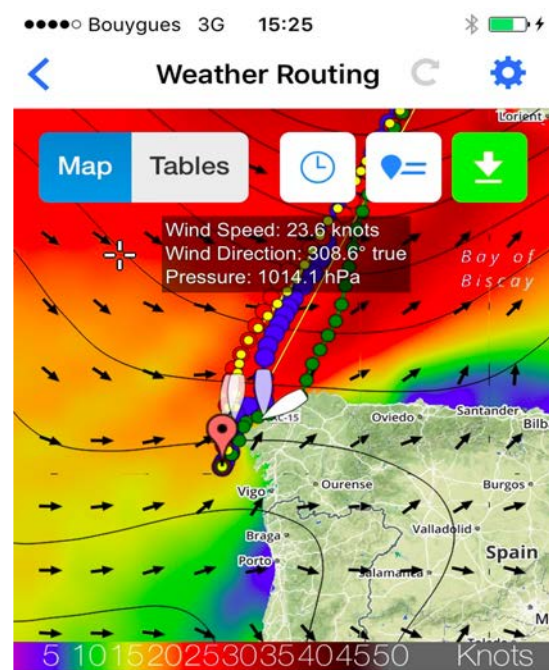
Three forecasts obtained Friday afternoon 2 June 2017 off Ushant Island



Sat noon: all well



Sun noon: still good



Monday early: wind rising/heading!

The Wind in Practice

From noon Friday 2 June, just past Ushant, the wind got up from zero to NW F4, which gave us a beam-wind for our passage SW – as forecast. 330 NM to cover, which would take us to 0600 Monday at 5kts.

The forecast of fresh, backing winds Sunday/Monday were a bother. We checked home team (Julia and Ruthie) via Satphone through Saturday and Sunday, and the backing breeze stayed on the cards.

So although our water-speed was good enough at 5 kts , on goes motor Sunday noon to get 6.5 kts, hoping to shave a few hours off our arrival time to beat the new wind. We also settled on La Coruña as our first port of call at that time, rather than Muros.

This was an example of predictions pressuring behaviour. Ivor, who argued to carry on under sail alone Sunday mid-day was proved right: the heading breeze did not arrive until Monday night, about 18 hours later than predicted, and 12 hours after we tied up in La Coruña!

Twin Poles for Dummies

Winds were pretty solid Northerlies in Biscay April/May 2017, so we thought: 'we should rig to catch these'.

Step 1: get hold of a nice pole



Step 2: fit a block at the top of the jib-furler

Step 3: rig a jury halyard in the block, half mouse-line, half 6mm braid on braid, and tie off both ends at the tack of the genoa.

Step 4: furl away with the genoa for the rest of the summer.

Step 5: when wind is astern and the mood takes you, run your No 2 genny up the second luff-groove on the braid-line hallyard, take off your mouse-line, make fast the jury halyard to the furler, put away your mainsail, and spread'em out!

(Sheeting as for Spinnaker-guys works best)



On trial before departure



A fine spread in the Galician sun, rolling down to Pontevedra, week 3 of the Trev cruise



Tea-break in mid-Channel on the journey home: wind dead-aft, 25 kts plus, boatspeed 6.5, anyone looking anxious?

Coping with the Unexpected

Departure set for Thursday 25 May 2017

On Tuesday 23 May we tied up on the scrubbing posts so the electricians could do a little job on the paddlewheel at low tide: the boat slipped backward on the posts overnight reported to us at 0800 on 24 May that there was severe distortion of the



We consulted boatbuilders and surveyors: ***check the matrix inside the hull for damage!*** A crack is found above where the hull has flexed. Berthon Boat Co has a team available.

**DELAY DEPARTURE
AND DEAL WITH IT!**



We were lucky:

- To get good advice (Chris Wilks, surveyor) and find a yard who were keen to get us on our way (Berthon)
- That the damage wasn't to the hull rather than the matrix
- That our insurance carried the can from the outset and accepted the yard's judgement on what had happened.

We were unlucky

- that we were coming up to a 3-day week-end, and Berthon observes all holidays
- That Tim couldn't wait for the 6 days needed before the job was done.

We were lucky again, that Annie was available and we were back to 4 on board when we were free to go on Weds 31 May. And we learnt the importance of kicking keels when the boat is in slings.



The passage begins
Weds 31 May at 13.30:
and the wind fails at
Hurst!

Leaving the Solent (thanks Sue!), calm in mid-channel Weds evening, light airs all Thursday, still calm as we left L'Aberwrach early on Friday 2 June (Annie and Ivor pictured).



This is the weather we've seen before: so we have a good passage, and the rough stuff doesn't arrive to delay us



Sat noon: all well



Sun noon: still good

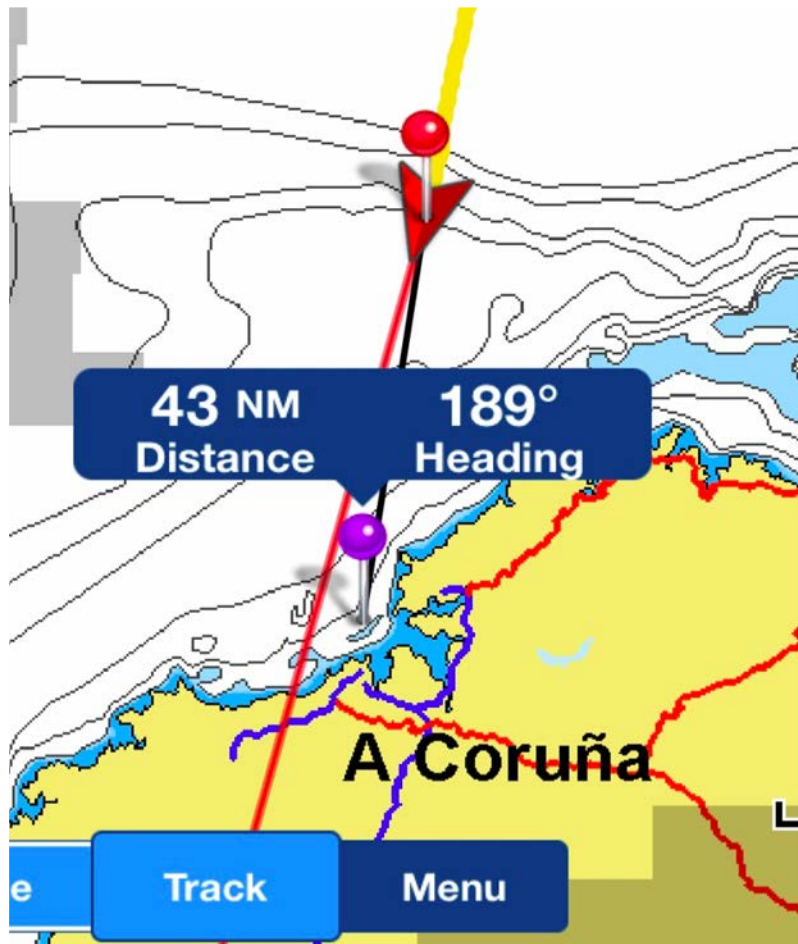


Monday early: wind rising/heading!

Sunday 4, Monday 5 June

There were reasons to hurry as the Cruising crew were gathering in la Coruna
(Julia and Dave, with the non-sailing Catriona)



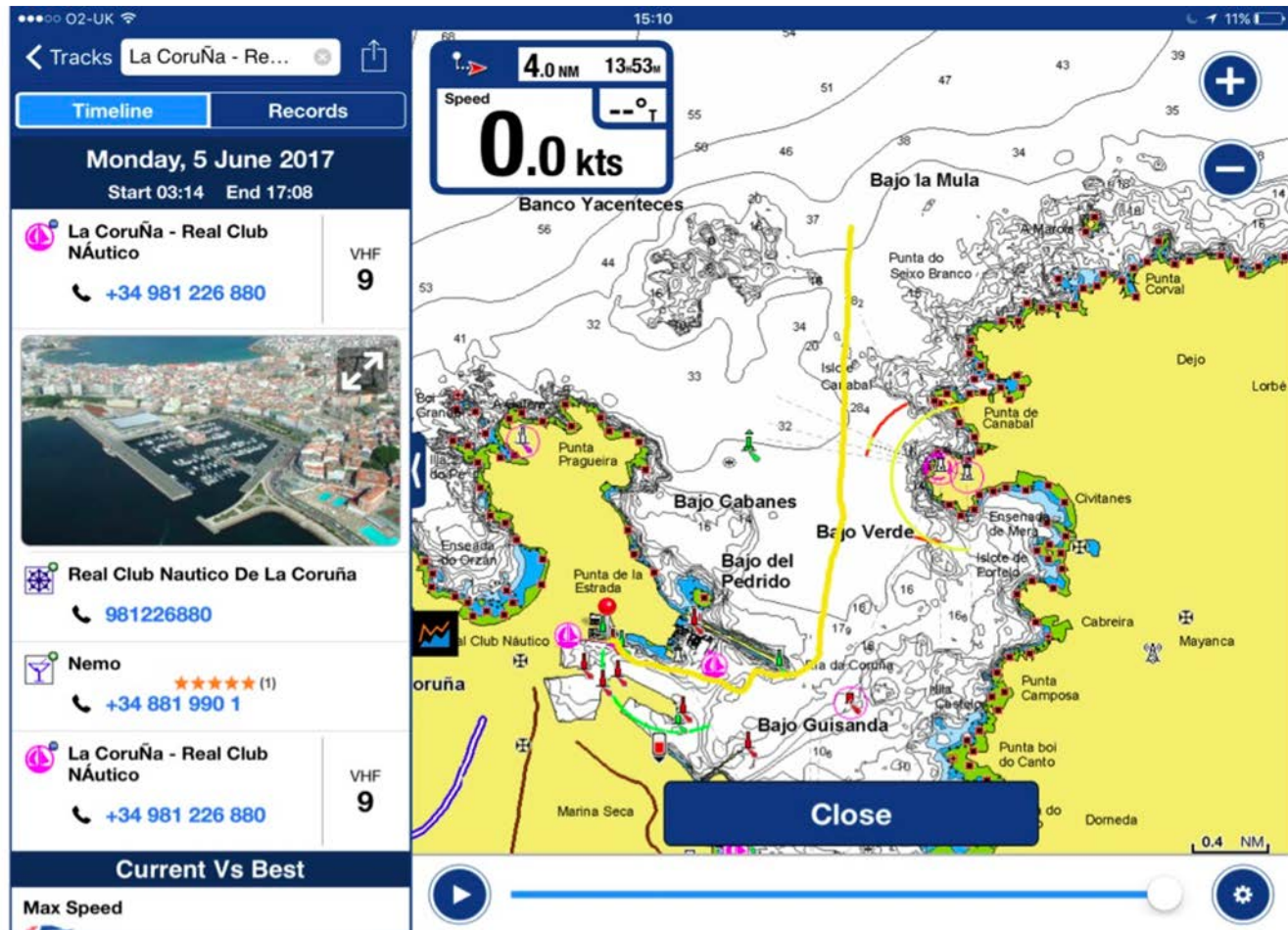


At 20.00 BST Sunday Navionics was giving us 43 NM to go on a heading a little W of S, our mobile contact with land was improving, and Julia was able to send us a harbour plan with the berth she had arranged at the Marina Real de Coruña.

We had this on our phones as we motored around the mole at 05.00 BST 5 June and moored up: 4 days 12 hours sailing time from RLym, 550 NM, an average speed just over 5 kts.



Our track preserved on the iPad: what a good harbour!



Trev Cruise Week 1

Departure from Corunna towards Muros after a brief recovery day ashore.
Crew are George, Julia, Ivor, Dave and Annie: farewell Peter for now!
First leg is nearly 50NM along the Costa Da Morte to Camariñas- light W to start,
filling in NW later, sea confused on top of large Atlantic rollers.

Fine headlands
along the way -
here the Illa
Sisargas, Sisarga
Grande facing.

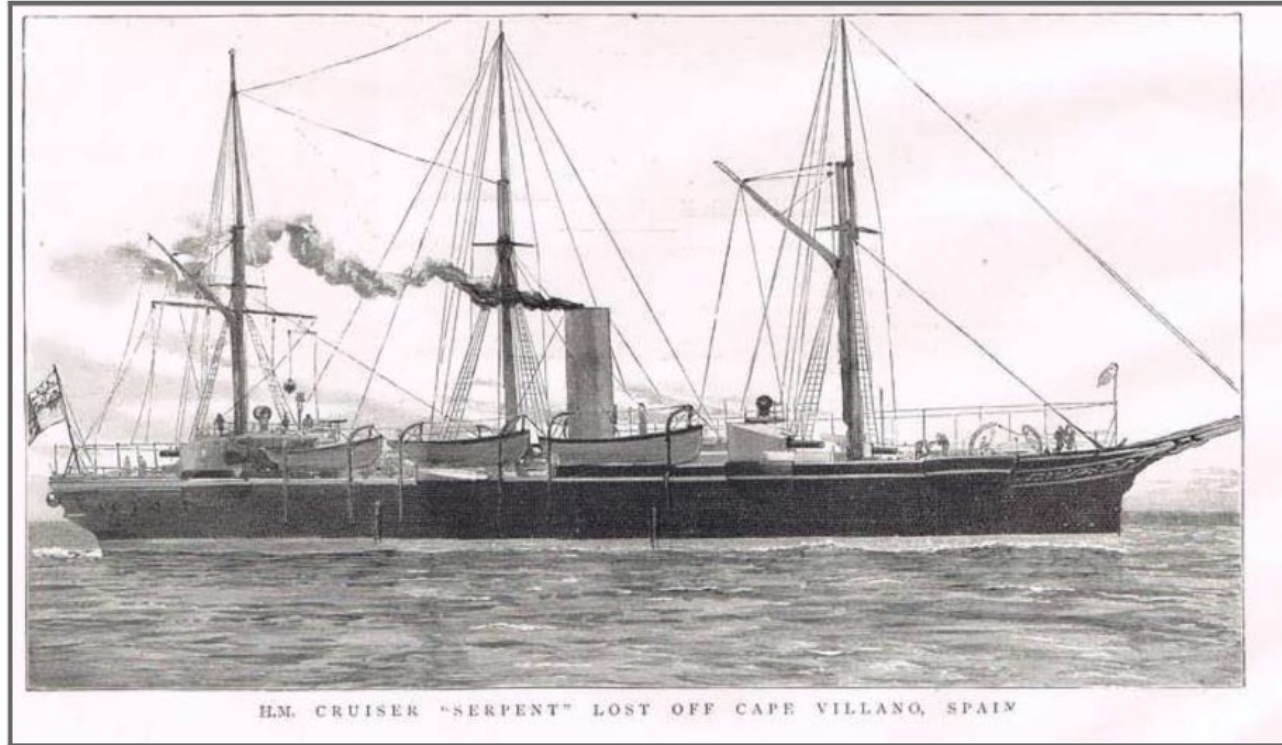




And, just before Camariñas, the Cabo Vilan, where the British torpedo cruiser 'Serpent', 'Archer' class, on its way to the West Africa station, hit the shore in November 1890, with the loss of over 170 lives. Poor visibility, swell but no gale, and possible compass error. The Costa da Morte indeed!



The poor 'Serpent'
- 6x6-inch guns at
deck level and
torpedos - rolled
like hell and was
probably seeking
shelter from the
swell. Only 25 life-
jackets for a crew
of 175 - which led
to a change of
policy in the RN at
least. A casualty of
the Scramble for
Africa.





Our
approach to
Camariñas:
Dave
amongst the
dolphins

Looking for the entrance to Camariñas marina (pilotage by iphone and iball!)
after a long day at sea
at 20.30.



Camariñas: An isolated harbour, beautiful and sheltered, where we while away a morning before going on down to Muros: Julia and Annie ready to sail.



Task for day two was rounding Cape Finisterre, and tucking into Muros 10 miles beyond



This painting is by John Thomas Serres, done in August 1800, and reproduced in Alan Russett's book on the artist: a 'delicate depiction of this headland, undramatic but invested with so much history and nautical folklore'.

We thought it tallied well with our own view!



Both objectives for the day achieved on a bumpy sea with a light tail wind, captured on dodgy pano



We arrived in Muros after a 35-mile sail, to find a charming stone-built town with ancient squares, arcades and markets, a new, less-than-half-full marina, and a personality *marinero* called Pedro.



Pedro is wearing an advert for Muport, a combination of marinas from Muros to Pobra which offers a 20% discount on marina berths, resulting in marina fees in the low 20 Euros. We sign up! No need to book ahead.



The new Muros marina - and the town in fiesta mood: as it often is!

Next day Ivor and Annie left us for England, and Dave accompanied us south to the mouth of the Arousa Ria, where there's a beautiful little marina at San Vicente on the O Grove peninsula: good facilities, excellent boardwalk along the shore, a favourite of the Lassens, which became ours too. Land & seascapes to die for!



Much quieter inside the breakwater than outside



Boardwalk and beach at San Vicente



A sculptural tribute to the locals who devoted themselves to clearing the coastline of oil after the sinking of the tanker Prestige in 2002 (they're wearing masks). The ship left 60,000 tonnes of crude oil on the Galician coast - twice as much as the Exxon Valdez did in Alaska in 1989.



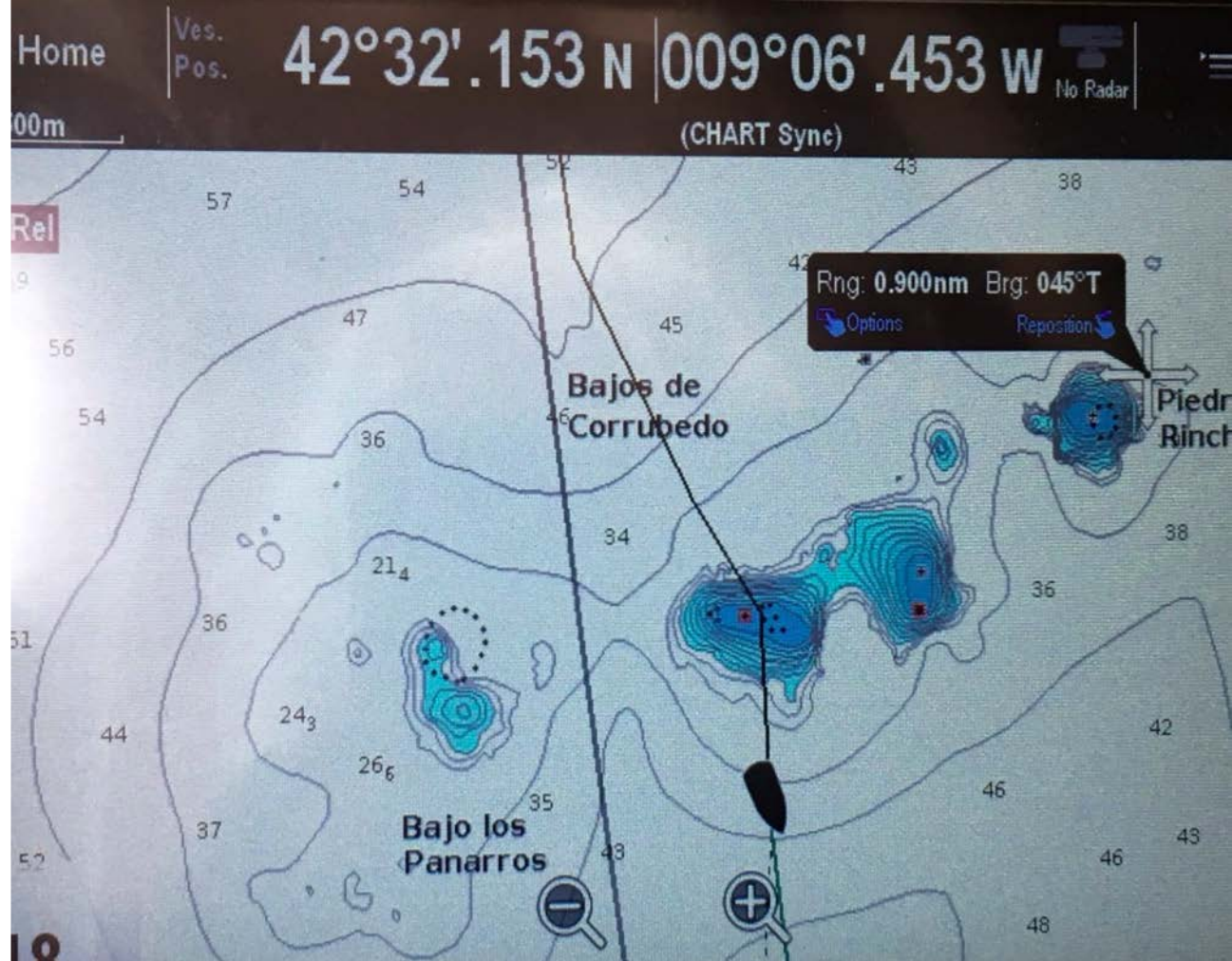
Grandson Ben and Julia on the rocks at San Vicente in our second week and second visit



Confession-time

On the way south from Muros to San Vicente, under sail, we noticed small fishing boats congregating over shallow spots in the sea. We altered course to avoid the boats, and checking the plotter soon afterwards we found we had diverted over the shallowest spot - min. depth 2m.

We didn't see, feel or hear a thing!
Shades of HMS Serpent...

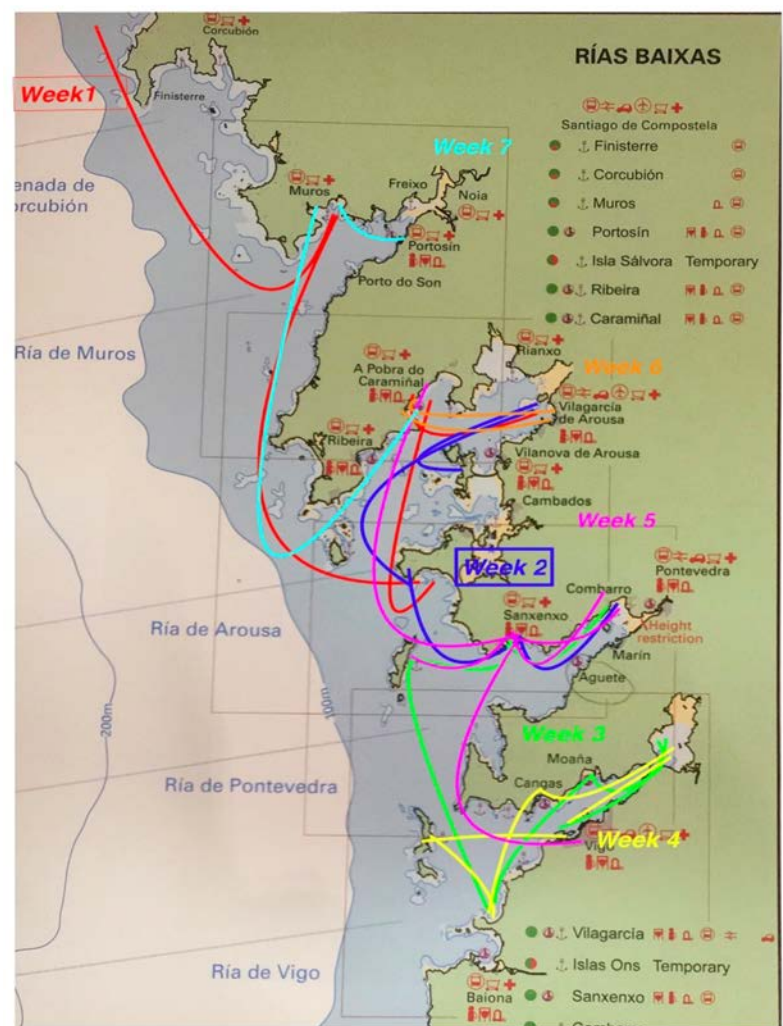




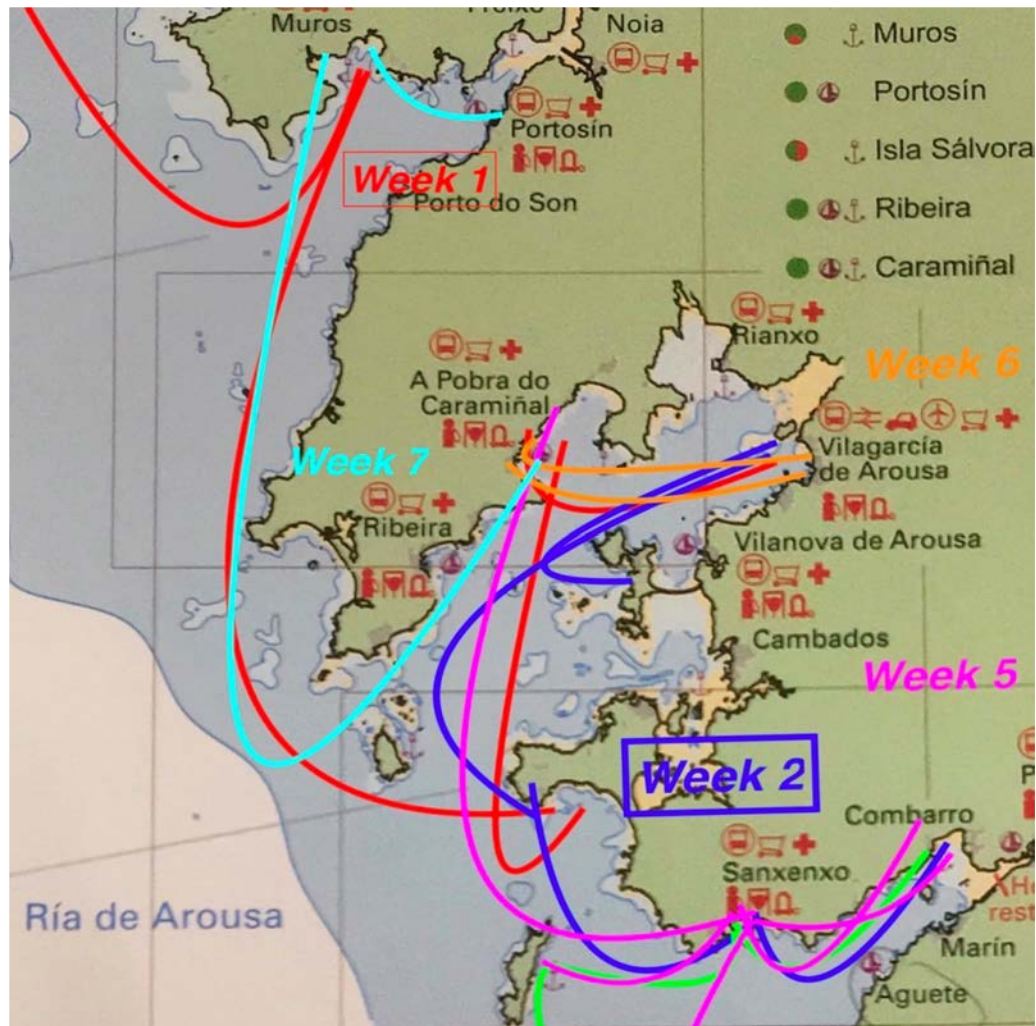
From San Vicente we sailed into Galicia's largest Ria, Arousa, and made for the marina at Pobre de Caraminal, opposite Villagarcia de Arousa. Pobre also enjoys an under-occupied marina, good hill walking, good facilities of all sorts: Villagarcia has excellent links to the rail network, and a good yacht yard, where we wanted some jobs done on the motor at the beginning of the next week, when our new crew arrived from America. So Sunday 11 June we went up to Madrid by hire-car, to collect the crew, and Dave entrained to the airport at Corunna.

In our first week we did two days passage along the Costa da Morte, and visited Camarinas, Muros, San Vicente, Pobre and Villagarcia. **BUT** we can't take you through each of the remaining weeks of the cruise day by day. Instead we record here where all the weeks of the cruise went, and the following slides offer highlights.

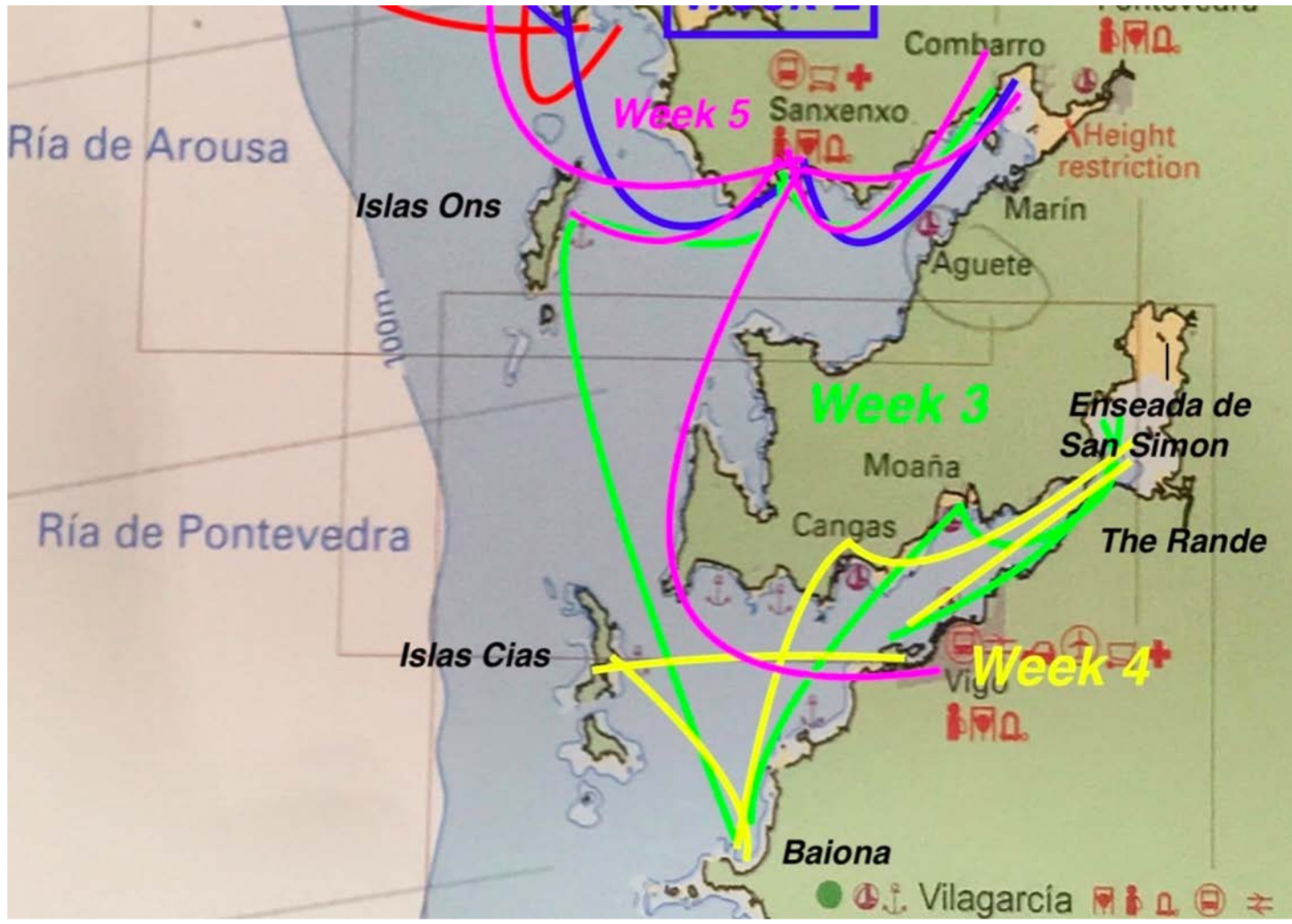
- ❑ Week 1: George, Julia, Dave, Ivor, Annie - Coruna to Muros, then on to Vilagarcia, via San Vicente and Pobre: Ivor and Maggie leave at Muros.
- ❑ Week 2: G&J, &, from USA, Ben and Nee- Vilagarcia to Combarro via San Julian, San Vicente and Sanxenxo
- ❑ Week 3: G&J, Gerry & Carolyn McCafferty (RLym)-Combarro-Porto Novo-Islas Ons-Vigo via Baiona and San Simon
- ❑ Week 4: The partners (G&J, Pete & Ruthie (P&R)) -Vigo to Vigo via San Simon, Cangas, & Islas Cies
- ❑ Week 5: P&R, Colin - Vigo, Sanxenxo, Combarro,Pobre
- ❑ Week 6: P&R, Colin - Pobre-Vilagarcia-Pobre
- ❑ Week 7: P&R, Trudi: Pobre to Muros, Muros-Portosin



In detail: the Northern Rias



And the Southern:



Highlights of the Rias and Islands

1. Muros
2. The islands, especially Islas Ons and Islas Cies
3. San Vicente
4. Combarro
5. Enseada de San Simon
6. Baiona
7. Vigo
8. Santiago de Compostella

Many others, but these will have to do!

Muros and San Vicente we've seen already, so we go to **the Islands.**

Three main groups: Aquino off the Ria de Arousa, Isla Ons off Pontevedra, and the Islas Cies off Vigo and Baiona. They play a key role in sheltering each of these Rias, and provide anchorages along their eastern shores. We admired Aquino/Isla Salvora in passing, but the other groups are more visited.

They are closely linked: mid background are the Islas Cies, less than ten miles south of of the Isla Ons. Hundreds of visitors come daily by ferry.



In Week 3 we enjoyed the beach-landing at the N end of Ons, on the Playa Melide, made good use of the walking trails, and after half a day sailed on down past the Islas Cies to Baiona.



Following two videos show the difference the islands make to sailing amongst the Rias: the first is our descent in Week 3 to Baiona from the Illa Ons, flat water and a gentle sailing breeze: the second, for contrast, is our rounding of the Illa Sissargas on the Costa da Morte in week 1, no protection from the full Atlantic swell in a light wind still requiring motor for passage-making.





In our fourth week, with Peter and Ruthie, we hammered out to the Islas Cies from Baiona. A force 4-5 was blowing straight from the islands, but we didn't feel like delaying, since it was a now-or-never moment: and we found a perfect anchorage on the Playa de Rodos - described in the Guardian as 'the best beach in the world'.



The walking (or climbing) was sensational: with views S to the second island (San Martin), and two of the climbers at least enjoying the sun.



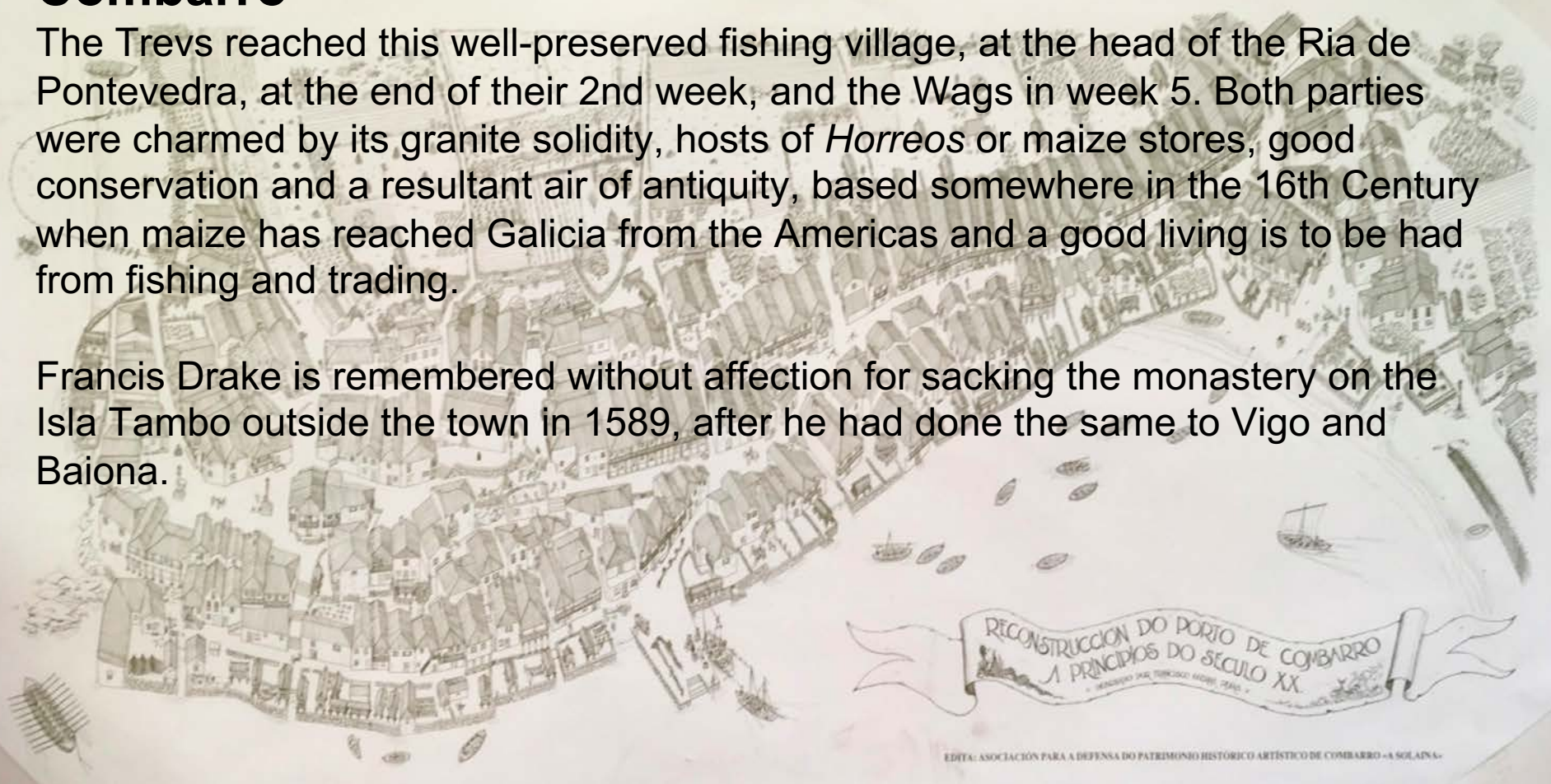
We were impressed by the ruggedness of the W side of Isla del Faro, and the beauty of some of the other anchorages



Combarro

The Trevs reached this well-preserved fishing village, at the head of the Ria de Pontevedra, at the end of their 2nd week, and the Wags in week 5. Both parties were charmed by its granite solidity, hosts of *Horreos* or maize stores, good conservation and a resultant air of antiquity, based somewhere in the 16th Century when maize has reached Galicia from the Americas and a good living is to be had from fishing and trading.

Francis Drake is remembered without affection for sacking the monastery on the Isla Tambo outside the town in 1589, after he had done the same to Vigo and Baiona.



Horreos by the shore at Combarro, and splendid galleried houses



The Rande, the Enseada de San Simon, and Jules Verne

We sailed twice into this beautiful bay, under its modern suspension bridge. Main purpose was to chill in the marina at San Adrian de Cobres, and to explore the Isla de San Simon which lay opposite. But we gradually became aware of the historic significance of the site, and its contribution to myth and fiction.

First, the site is dramatic in itself, with the great bridge spanning the narrows of the Rande:



Then, it turns out it was a great battle-site in the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702

The Battle of the Rande, where the Dutch and British fleets get wind that the Spanish Treasure fleet has diverted to Redondella, beyond the narrows now spanned by the bridge: they swat aside the defenses, and sink or burn over 20 Spanish and French ships, including the treasure-ships. A great victory, but turns out the loot was almost all on its way to Madrid on Spanish ox-carts! But the Brits took away a couple of tonnes of silver and gold and struck some coins bearing the boast: VIGO



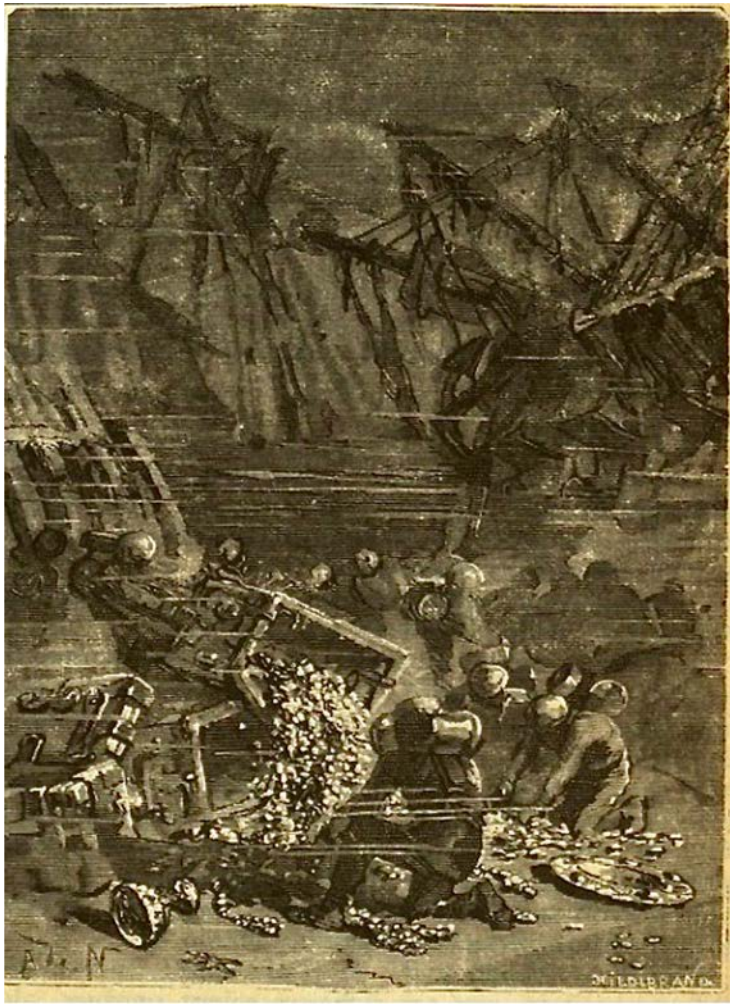


Queen Anne's Loot, minted 1704. That's a silver sixpence on the left, and a golden medal on the right. Note the representation of the Rande narrows on the medal, complete with burning ships. The legend on the medal says:
CAPTA:INCENSA:GALL:ET:HISP:CLASSE

But equally interesting is the event's impact in fiction. Outside the Real Club Nautico in Vigo sits Jules Verne.

Why? He put Vigo on the world map in the 19th Century, because Captain Nemo and his submarine Nautilus funded their journey twice round the world under the sea (20,000 Leagues) by relieving the wrecks in the Rande of their bullion. The people of Vigo are grateful for the memory!





Captain Nemo's loot,
from the First Edition of
'20,000 Leagues under
the Sea' 1870 (note the
primitive breathing
equipment used by the
sailors)

Baiona

We sailed twice into this fine city, first in the third week of our cruise on our way south from the Islas Ons. It is defined in the approach by the fortress at Monte Real, just right of centre, which also gives its name to the yacht club which lies on its north side.





Gerry conning us down to Baiona past the Islas Cies, and the replica of Columbus's caravel 'Pinta', in the harbour within.





Julia and Ruthie: sailing to Baiona for the second time, in a fresh breeze!



A surprise find in the Yacht Club - the record of the Lymington-Baiona race which ran from 1978 to 2002 - and the view from the Club's ramparts across the beach and into the bay.



The impressive Parador Hotel within the castle walls (good for beer and meals)



One view from the castle, showing the exit NE to Vigo



Vigo: The largest city in all Galicia with 800,000 inhabitants. Main business is fish-processing, but don't let that put you off! A fine marina in town centre in the shadow of an even finer yacht club, built in the image of an ocean liner.



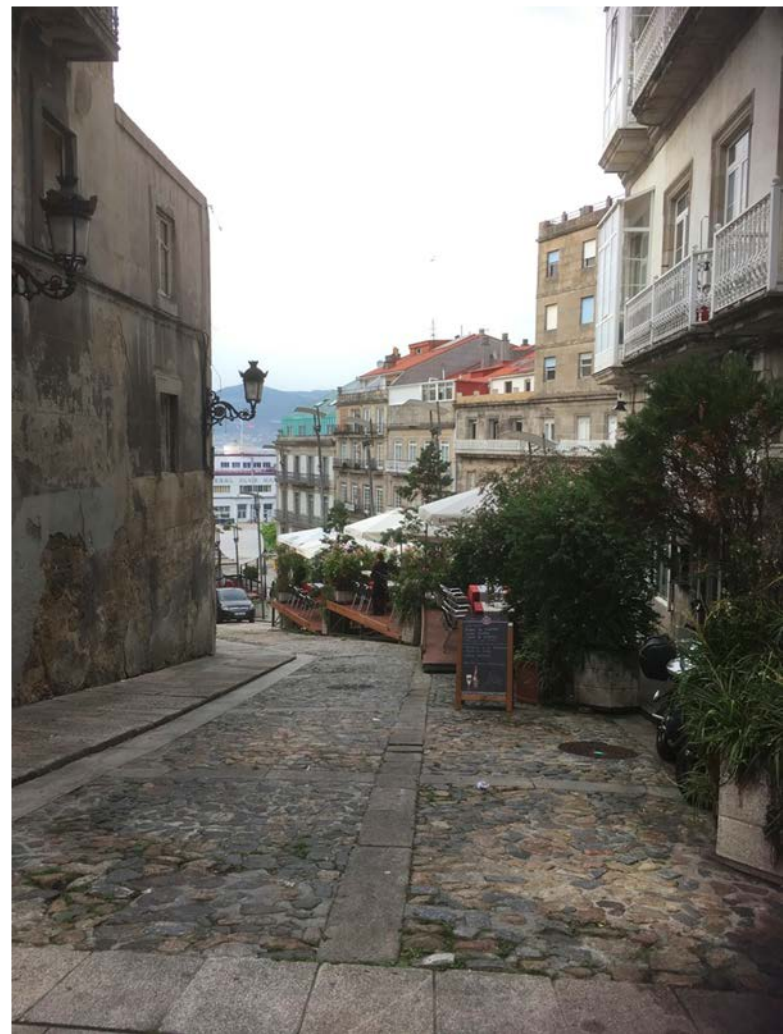
With a
matching
interior



And the cosy
Marina amongst
The office blocks
And shopping
centres



The town itself has a large old quarter, with the best eating out we found anywhere, in terms of variety and quality, and great views over the Ria and the islands from the *castro* which dominates the town.



The view from
the *Castro* to
the Islas Cies



Santiago de Compostella

This beautiful town dominates all 4 Rias as a transport hub for coastal and intra-Spanish transport, and internationally with its own airport. Hard to imagine the most philistine sailor passing through without taking time off to take in the atmosphere and see some of the sights.



Two things characterised the the town for us: first the pilgrims, who arrive continuously in athletic, suntanned groups, often singing



Then old Santiago Matamor himself, on his white charger in his cathedral, slaying 600 moors in one battle 800 years after his death as a Christian martyr.

Today he dominates the city, from the delicious almond cakes that carry his name, to the legends of his body being carried to Galicia after his death, and the discovery of his tomb at Padron at the beginning of the 'Reconquista' in the ninth century.

He is the Spanish Patron Saint (despite attempts to displace him during the counter-reformation with the more peaceable St Teresa of Avila). Spanish troops committed to the Iraq war in 2002 carried his symbol!



Q1. So, **to conclude**, how did the parts of Galicia we cruised score as a cruising ground?

A. The cruising scored highly. Reasons?

- A dramatic land and seascape, with an interesting and welcoming hinterland, including Santiago de Compostella, of course
- Predominantly warm summer weather, often breezy
- An apparently non-tidal coast, with the local rise&fall never turning into streams at headlands, because the new tide bubbles up from the deep, and disappears the same way
- Plentiful good quality marinas, more than we could visit in each Ria (except Muros, with two). Comparable facilities in each Ria to an arm of the Solent
- Some splendid yacht clubs (Vigo, Baiona, Portosin, Vilagarcia)
- Short cruising runs within the Rias, so family-friendly sailing – we cruised with a grandson for a week, and he enjoyed it much more than a later Channel cruise
- Marina charges very reasonable to reasonable (€15-30 nightly, often discounted for multiple nights)
- Berths available in all marinas, however late you arrive
- The delights of the Islands, and their role in sheltering the Rias

Q2. Do these qualities justify the time it takes to get there?

A2. If you're OK with passage-making in principle, the run to Corunna from Lymington (550 NM) is not excessive:

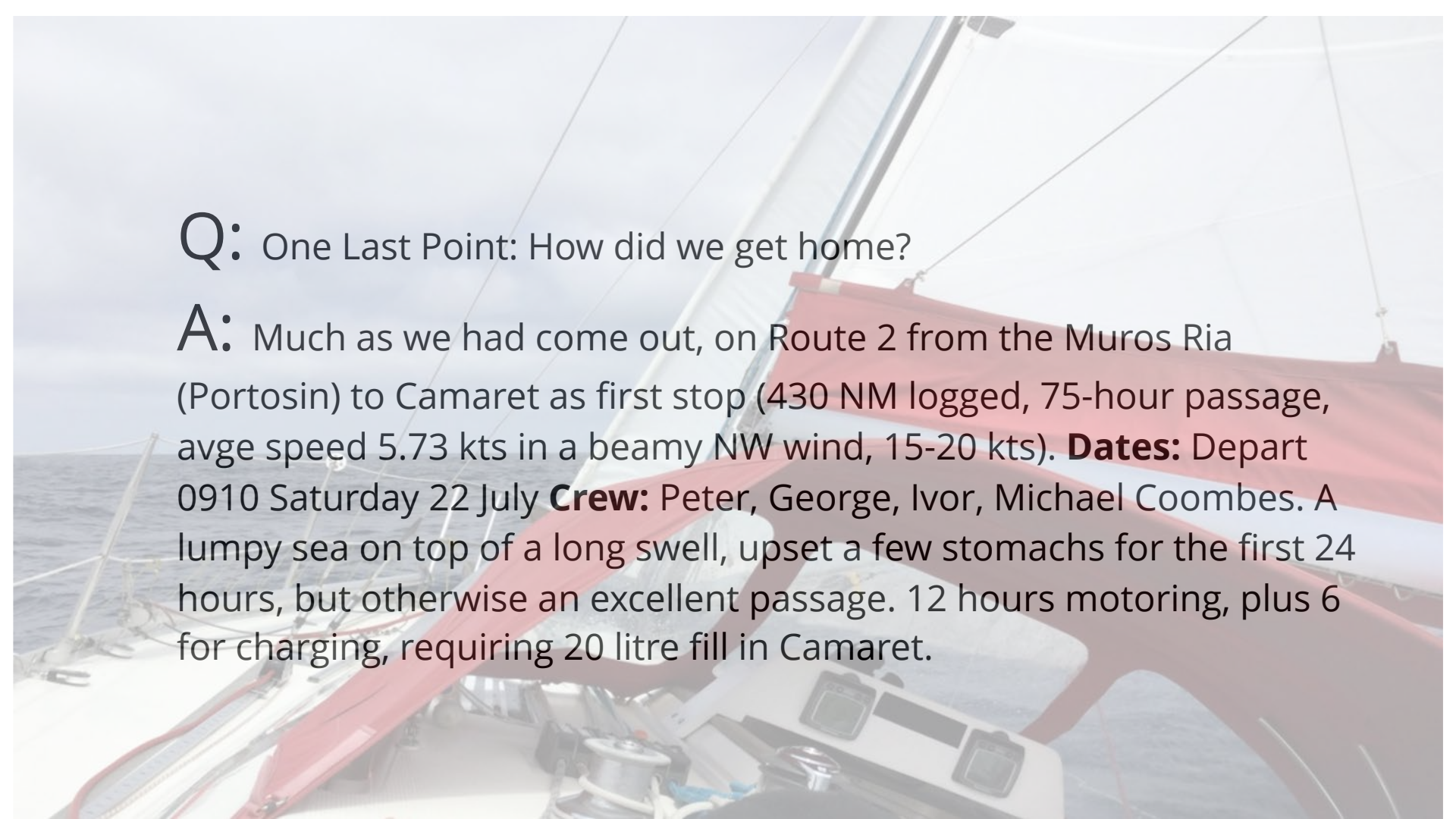
Baltimore, for West of Ireland: 420

Kiel, for the Baltic 520

Crinan, for West of Scotland 540

Bergen, for the Fjords 600.

Some of us, who've never surrendered to the lure of Atlantic passages, feel these distances are just fine!



Q: One Last Point: How did we get home?

A: Much as we had come out, on Route 2 from the Muros Ria (Portosin) to Camaret as first stop (430 NM logged, 75-hour passage, avge speed 5.73 kts in a beamy NW wind, 15-20 kts). **Dates:** Depart 0910 Saturday 22 July **Crew:** Peter, George, Ivor, Michael Coombes. A lumpy sea on top of a long swell, upset a few stomachs for the first 24 hours, but otherwise an excellent passage. 12 hours motoring, plus 6 for charging, requiring 20 litre fill in Camaret.



Portosin, (above) where the Wags brought the boat Friday 22 July, and the return crew gathered the night before departure; And Esteiros, near Muros, where the Trevs had rented a house for a week at the end of their cruise (a great success).





Two days into the crossing, 20 knots across the deck, 2 reefs in the main, boatspeed 6 kts, and Peter at least is looking pleased!



George was happy too: it's a comfortable steering position!



The only boat we saw after leaving
Fisterra, Cheeky Monkey, Sun Odessy 45,
on an exact reciprocal, and they appear
to be toasting us!



Sunrise next day puts us 40 NM from Camaret, with the Chaussee du Sein mark bobbing up in the right place an hour later.



Three matelots ready for a run-ashore in Camaret (Peter, Michael and Ivor)



Q: And the last bit?

A: Better still. 24 hours for rest, refuel, wining and dining, and we are motorsailing Tuesday afternoon up the Chenal du Four in light airs and fair tide, and when we are clear set full sail for home. Now dead downwind we try various formats – goose-wing, spinnaker, goose-wing again and finally, for the last twelve hours and in a rising force 6-7, twin poles to romp us home. Tied up on the Rlym pontoon at 0100 Thursday, where Julia takes our lines.

223 miles logged from Camaret, 35 hours elapsed, 6.4 knots average, and much faster over the last miles from St Albans Head when the wind is up and the flood strengthening – which is why Julia was surprised to get our call from the N Head buoy at midnight!



