

## **Log for Distribution 9<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

### **Cruise from Crosshaven to Itchenor**

My last log, written on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, left Wotan safely tucked up at the Royal Cork in Crosshaven. On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> August Chris Creak, Grant Phillips and I met up at Southampton Airport to fly to Cork to bring Wotan home to Itchenor.

Friday morning dawned rather grey and damp. However there was high pressure to the west of Ireland that was set to stay there for the next week, so we could expect settled weather for our passage home. After doing some shopping and a few minor repairs, we left Crosshaven for the Scillies at 1035. We had a good wind on our port quarter. As the day wore on, the cloud cover dispersed and the sun came out. We were able to keep sailing until early on Saturday morning, when the wind dropped during Chris' watch and we had to motor. I took over from Grant at 0400, but he stayed up on deck to see our landfall at the Scillies as this was his first overnight sail. At 0510 we identified Round Island light and the loom of the Bishop's Rock light. We also spotted what looked like a red and white light, which we concluded was a fishing boat, as it appeared to pass in front of a ship transiting the TSS off the Scillies northbound. It was not until much later that we realised that this fishing boat was in fact the radio mast on St Mary's!

I had never been into the Scillies before, so I was delighted by the rocky seascape, which greeted us. We entered St Mary's Road via the North Channel. We had to avoid Steeple Rock, which is well marked with westerly cardinal mark and Spencer's Ledge, which is marked by a southerly cardinal. This entrance could not be described as rock dodging and was really quite straight forward. We picked up a visitor's mooring in St Mary's not before we had speared the seabed with our boat hook! I was somewhat worried about the depth of water. The chartplotter tidal predictions indicated that we would touch the bottom at low water. I took out the leadline, in true Capt Baines style, to check the depth. The echosounder and leadline depths agreed to within a smidgen. The only solution was to seek a second opinion from Reeds, which indicated that we would have a foot or so to spare. I chose the Reeds' opinion. We all headed off in the ferry to Tresco to avoid being anywhere near Wotan if she grounded!

We took the ferry to Tresco. Grant gave himself a nasty cut on his knee when he slipped on some weed as he climbed off the ferry at Carn Near pier. Somewhat surprisingly he did not threaten to sue the ferry operator, as he is always threatening to put his lawyers on to me for the libellous statements made about him in this log! Tresco is a small rocky island. New Grimsby Sound runs down the west side of the island and the Tresco flats lie at the southern end of the sound. There were a number of yachts anchored in the sound including a French square rigger. A French schooner was happily aground on the mud, with its crew furiously scrubbing its bottom. We stopped off at the imaginatively named New Inn for a pint of Betty Stoggs, a local brew. We continued our walk north, before retracing our steps and walking around the east side of the island and back to Carn Near pier. In doing so we almost completed a circum-perambulation of Tresco. We visited the church

and we were moved by the number of islanders who had fought and died during the two World Wars. The Smith Dorian family, who are the Lord Protectors of the Islands and obviously the owners of the big house on the island, had lost two sons in the First World War and four sons in the Second.

On our return to St Mary's we took a walk around Hugh Town, the town of St Mary's. We had a look at Porth Cressa, an anchorage on the south side of St Mary's, which, unlike St Mary's, is well sheltered from northerly winds. We went ashore by dinghy to have dinner at Juliette's Garden, which had been recommended to us by Grant's brother. We landed in a bay half a mile to the south of the restaurant, without any trouble, but the return journey proved to be much more of a challenge! Juliette's Garden had wonderful views over Hugh Town and the islands to the west. By the time we got back to the dinghy the tide had risen and there was quite a swell in the bay. The dinghy was hit by several waves and filled up with water. Chris lost his torch and his glasses, but in the dark there was no chance of finding them on the beach. This little episode goes to prove Newton's fourth law of motion, that those going to dinner in Wotan's dinghy always get their bottoms wet!

We left St Mary's at first light on Sunday. Just east of the Scillies, we set the spinnaker and we had a great run due east at 6-7 knots. Off the Lizard the wind backed and we had to head up to windward and closer in towards the Lizard to avoid running by the lee. We were boarded by the Customs off the Lizard, who were searching for drugs. They spent an hour checking us out. Before they left I asked the leader of the rummage team to take the wheel while we brought down the spinnaker, which he seemed to enjoy! We docked in Falmouth at 1700. On the way into Falmouth we crossed our outbound track, thus completing the Atlantic circuit. Henri, my daughter, joined us later that evening.

On Monday we had a good sail, with two reefs in the main, to Fowey 20 miles down the coast. We arrived in Fowey at 1530 and were helped onto a visitor's buoy by Andy an Ocean Cruising Club member, who had built his own 40' yachts and sailed it across to the Caribbean and back, with his wife Jules. They came aboard for a drink, with their son, who had sailed across the Atlantic with them.

In the morning, we set sail for Salcombe some 45 miles down the coast. There was no wind so we had to motor most of the way. Over the VHF we heard that HMS Nottingham was conducting live firing exercises. We could see the destroyer and flashes coming from its guns, which was rather exciting. We arrived in Salcombe, a beautiful West Country harbour, at 1430. I had been sailing in Salcombe since I was a teenager, so our first port of call was the Ferry Inn, which had been my favourite watering hole. That evening, Henri received a phone call offering her a permanent job, as you can image she was very excited.

We left Salcombe at dawn as we had a long trip across Lyme Bay and Weymouth Bay to Chapman's Pool below St Alban's Head. Chris cooked us a magic breakfast, while we motored east. It was not until 1445 off Portland Bill

that we were able to start sailing. We had a great sail from Portland Bill past the Shambles and into Chapman's Pool. Chapman's Pool is surrounded by high cliffs. There is a slipway, a number of fishermen's huts and a single fishing boat lying on a mooring. Henri cooked us a wonderful dinner, which we ate sitting in the cockpit watching a man catch five fish off the beach. Just as we were off to bed there was a nasty bump. We were aground. We had to weigh anchor and recast it further out in the pitched dark. Fortunately the chartplotter was working so we had some idea what we were doing!

We set off at 0800 to catch the tide through the Needles Channel. The weather was wonderful. We had a great sail from St Alban's Head, past Anvil Point and well into Poole Bay, before the wind died. Henri took her first sextant sight, which was within 2 miles of our GPS position, very impressive! About 5 miles off the Needles we started the motor and motored up to Cowes, where we dropped Henri off to go to a rock festival on the Isle of Wight. We sailed intermittently and motored back to Itchenor. We waved furiously at Sindbad, who was having a birthday barbecue at East Head with his mates. We docked at Itchenor SC jetty at 1710 to be met by Bim. Within a short space of time about a dozen friends turned up to welcome Wotan home.

We dressed Wotan out with the courtesy flags of all the countries we had visited over the last two years and partied!

With this I am going to hang up my pen!

With best wishes from all aboard Wotan

7<sup>th</sup> September 2007