

# Four Counties cruising solo in a Shrimper 19

## *A Shrimpers log – ‘bluejay’ 1152 – Mark Jenkins*

*This summary is intended to capture the spirit of a solo cruise which spanned the end of May until July 9<sup>th</sup> in a Shrimper 19, ‘bluejay’, involving a warm-up, a westbound cruise, 2 weeks in and around Falmouth with a brilliant ISW and then a brief description of the return east to The Solent;*

### **Warm Up**

*Lymington to Poole return to prepare ‘bluejay’ with two new engine batteries and a farewell to Shrimper 19 friends Martin (and Jack) starting their Round Britain adventure with the Old Gaffers Association. Estimated NMs 45, engine use 5hrs*

### **Westbound - Lymington to Poole - Tuesday May 30<sup>th</sup>**

*After the little pre-amble of Lymington to Poole return, I prepared ‘bluejay’ this morning and set off again to Poole YC with the inshore forecast of “E/NE 3-5, 6 in the east (Selsey Bill)” and a light cloud cover. 2 reefs was a bit conservative but I had time on my side for this first short hop.*



*‘bluejay’ leaving Poole 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023*

## Poole to Weymouth – Thursday June 1<sup>st</sup>

*Leaving Poole Harbour spot on 08.30, The Hook Sands looked horrible (that's easterlies for you!) as I peered to port to see Bomo pier, the scene of that horrific 'incident' this week. The Brittany ferries Barfleur, then Condor followed me out with waving passengers. Old Harry rocks was soon abeam, Swanage looked quaint, passing Peveril Ledge at 09.30. Doing 4-5 knots SOG, the jib was given a rest to save flogging the new material. 20 mins later, a jibe off Durlstone then the measured mile between 09.51 and 10.01 confirmed the accuracy of my chart-plotter speed steering 270 degs. One surge hit 7.3kn and then a radio check with NCI St Albans on Ch65 confirmed Chapman's Pool would be a lovely spot for a crumpet, homemade apricot jam & coffee but so would Lulworth which came abeam at noon. Instead, the sailing was such fun I didn't stop as a Personal Best for Poole to Weymouth beckoned, even with 2 reefs!! 5 hrs from entrance to entrance is fine with me. Sure enough, Weymo harbour master on Ch 12 put me on the holding pontoon just before the bridge so I could eat well and decide if the Customs House pontoon was preferable to Portland for the night. I chose the former and tied up alongside two Tall Ships. A volunteer mate used to own Shrimper 159 in Rock and promised me the 12 kids on each boat would be quiet to ensure a good night's sleep!! So just £22 for all the facilities, time to adjust the forestay, scrub the hull with a long brush and just time to write this before meeting the Commodore of Weymouth S.C (they have racing tonight)*



*'bluejay' tied up in Weymouth*



## Portland to West Bay – Friday June 2nd

*I decided to motor round into Portland Harbour to ensure smooth departure. I planned to leave at 08.30 to be at Portland Bill at 10.00 and head for West Bay for brunch. I suspect the visitor's pontoons at Lyme Regis will have been taken in during these persistent easterlies so it could be an afternoon Jurassic sail with an evening approach to Exmouth – who knows, go with the flow; wow I love sailing with favourable wind and spring tides!*

*These forecasts need careful analysis but the winds and weather remain superb for heading west from Hants to Kernow. The Solent to Poole was 'standard' and Leg 2 to Portland was hard to beat (pardon the pun, this week I have forgotten how to tack!)*

*This morning the wind was howling into Portland harbour, the skies were grey, inshore forecast was again E, NE 4-6 and fishing boats were coming back into the Weymouth; this didn't bode well! Fully equipped with winter waterproofs, flares, handheld and a bag of safety 'stuff' in the cockpit, I ventured out at 08.30, spotting lobster pots everywhere and two thoughts crossed my mind; Lyme Bay will be flat when I get there and it would be hard to return to Portland or Weymo if the conditions worsened. Passing the ledge at Grove Point, I veered 20 degs west which eased the spray over the coach roof. The jib plus south-bound tide were sufficient to maintain 5kns SOG without the engine.*



*Approaching Portland Bill*

## **Portland to West Bay – Friday June 2nd**

*Staying half a mile off the Bill, the lighthouses soon came into view and the tide looked slack so the waves were consistent with a good distance between them. Hoisting a doubled-reefed main is just so easy on a S.19 it takes less than a minute so off we set on a pleasant run. The sky still looked dark and at 10.00 exactly, the flat Pulpit Rock was abeam (see above), the timing was textbook. Resisting the temptation to head towards Chesil Beach I set a course of 330 degs which should land me at West Bay after 3 hrs calm-sea, force 4, NOT force 6. Some forecasts could put us off a lot of great sailing! What a screamer and calling up Mr Harvey the harbour-master for W.B and Lyme Regis, the former was the preferred choice as these easterlies have closed the outer pontoons at L.R. At W.B they are not stable but offer better protection than L.R. bluejay tied alongside with a degree of satisfaction at 13.00. 'Sailors Law' says the wind would go SSE soon after I tied up and had paid £23 and sure enough the sea breeze did just that, generating an uncomfortable swell. After some negotiations between Mr Harvey, the joyride rib owners and I, bluejay was allowed into the inner harbour from 18.30 to ensure a night of calm and good sleep. Tomorrow at 07.00 Mr Harvey opens his HM's office, which is also the Chandler's and houses the toilet/shower. Dinner at the Seagull was the usual joy and allowed a full charging of mobile, VHF handheld and tablet to plot the easy course to Exmouth. This has been another short, fast hop and still no need to tack from The Solent to the Jurassic Coast! Here's to a windy, sunny Saturday and catching a westbound tide; what could possibly go wrong*

## **West Bay to Exmouth – Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*West Bay was quiet in the inner harbour as the ensign was raised at 7am and Mr Harvey, the HM opened his doors for 'facilities' - one wet shower/toilet which was fine for an 08.30 departure with the tide and a F4, gusting 5 north-easterly:-perfect downwind sailing on a flat sea. Scorching passed Lyme Regis, it wasn't long before the very tricky mussel farms 2 miles off Sidmouth needed negotiating. I went inshore, just off Sidmouth beach to give me a better downwind angle to round Straight Point and then on into Exmouth.*

*An easy entrance and a very courteous greeting from Lily (S.19 #90) who came out to the first port/starboard navigation buoys marking the channel. Thank you Richard Tillett for all your kind help and advice. Today I was at sea for 6.5 hrs due to the failing wind where, yet again, the Shipping forecast was more than one Beaufort scale higher than was experienced inshore. Exeter Marina does not usually have visitors berths at this time of year but some 'Shrimper Charms' saw me tucked in under the lifting bridge for £20. Furthermore, I have reserved some for July 7th when I am guessing a few of us will be sailing back east, hopefully with the similar winds astern!*



### **West Bay to Exmouth – Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*Exmouth seems a perfect stopover going west on springs as an early start to catch the fresher winds tomorrow co-incides with HW, so to fly out of the entrance before the tourists have arisen bodes well to hop into West Devon and the potential joys of Torquay or Brixham. Steve the HM here is very helpful to sailing boats as is Jake, the CEO of Stuart Lines, who will try and help with the scarce mooring buoys next month. I have all the contact details should you need them. Reading the books, I'm not tempted by Teignmouth on springs so it will probably be a happy return to Rockfish in Brixham to write up tomorrow's short (and hopefully) fast hop south. Please keep the fresh N and E winds blowing in this part of the world. All for now as I read my manual on how to tack a Shrimper!!*

### **Exmouth to Torbay – Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Steve the Exmouth marina manager was having a full fry up at 8am instead of lifting the bridge to let me out, so what could I do? Join him for a bacon butty and a cappuccino! With HW Exmouth Approaches at 07.30 the tide had just begun to ebb but I motored up river to lovely spots including Starcross where (ex-Solent) Shrimper, Dick Pizey now keeps his S.19, Daislebee. I suppose all good things come to an end but today was not a fast sailing despite a shipping forecast of ENE 3-5, V2 at times. I only found V1 or 2 at best! I turned south at 9.30 and shot out through the mile or so marked channel, 3 hrs after HW with waves coming high enough to wet the cockpit. The 'Laundrette' lived up to its name! Once out into the bay everything quietened with dying winds as Teignmouth came abeam.*

### **Torquay to Dittisham - Sunday June 4<sup>th</sup>**

*With no waves, the swell from days or weeks of easterlies meant the sails flapped with annoying repetitiveness and the total journey of over 30 miles and over 5hrs was partly due to attempting a light wind, slow, downward zigzag course. Entering Dartmouth, it was great to tie up alongside Lowenna (S.21 #32) to enjoy a cuppa and a slice of Norma's fruit and nut cake with Johnny and Nicky. We sailed up to Dittisham and picked up the mooring of Peter Hammond (Guilemette 554) to discuss his new rigging and spars and to accept his kind loan of his mooring just off the FBI - Ferry Boat Inn. All three of our boats will sail to and from the ISW. So, a beautiful day, marvellous scenery in two of the nicest rivers, Ex and Dart, weird winds but good spring tides round the headlands and said farewell to Lyme Bay, at least for a month. Tomorrow is a rest day, scrubbing off and exploring Totnes. Then I have a run ashore for a few days with family in North Cornwall and being 10 days ahead of (worst) plan go home to Keyhaven by car.*



*Leaving Dartmouth*

### **Dartmouth to Plymouth – Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup>**

*The 'Electric Ladies' set off at 08.00 to Rame Head then Fowey. It was good to see Cat and Marion off west as we had spent a lot of this spring on tidal and passage-planning. Obtaining Navionics update from the very same office at Sutton Marina as in June 2019 when they sponsored one of our dinners begged the question; where have those 4 years gone since ISW Plymouth?! Then calling around for hoists/jet wash proved fascinating where I'm happy to expand details. Suffice to say, Mayflower were fantastic and half the price of QAB or any other I could locate. Hopefully the scrub will improve performance and SOG! Thirdly, meeting so many ISW-bound fellow Shrimpers here at QAB was fantastic and thanks for joining in the fun; it-looks like a big party in Mylor or Helford or Fowey - anywhere really, next week!! Several owners between Dartmouth and Fowey are working on how, individually they will arrive at Falmouth, with many already there, some leaving it to mid-,next week. Whatever it looks as though the weather is good and just a few winds need to change 30 degs from forecast to be perfect too.*

*As always Richard Salisbury has been uber helpful and positive, having done his recent sail to Fowey and Mevagissey. The latter appealed to me for tomorrow's short hop but the need for a dinghy in this fishing harbour just gives Fowey the edge for me. Peter kindly provided a lift from The Barbican back to Dittisham to collect the Audi I use as a wardrobe and extra cockpit locker!*



Start Point Lighthouse

### **Plymouth to Fowey – Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup>**

*Penultimate 'Short Hop ' as I left QAB, Plymouth with virtually no wind. About 40 yachts were floating astern at the start of a regatta and as I reconsidered my departure. S.21 #22 was struggling to make progress - not an SOA member?? However, I slipped at 10.am with the cruising chute (from an RS 400) set up at the pontoon which takes 2 mins compared with my debacle off Start Point where I failed to get it pulling nicely in equally light winds.\* See below if you are keen on the rig I use. So, Plymouth Breakwater after 40 mins under power, Rame Head after an hour and then a strange mix of 5kns motor/3kns sailing with the chute varying position in the light airs. No main nor jib set. Passed Looe Island where a yacht took anchor and then Polperro where I saw Sapphire (Ruth/Tim) I passed the measured mile, similar to the one off Durlston, Dorset 2 weeks ago with good readings. Passing two significant cardinal buoys Ranneys then Udders (with a ringing bell) it is amazing how little tide there is even with a full moon tomorrow. Single handling for the first time in this bay makes me wonder if returning eastbound it will be a choice similar to Lyme Bay; namely to follow the lovely coast and go much further, perhaps stopping at Meva/ Fowey or just go Dodman Point to Rame Heads which could be only 23 miles.*



## **Plymouth to Fowey – Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup>**

*I hoped for a sea breeze which had been very apparent in Plymouth Harbour but it never came. The inshore forecast, Ch 64 for tomorrow is S.3 or 4 veering SW 3, sea moderate, which may just smash my 'Short hop sequence without a beat' lucky run! I'll let you know. We have about a dozen Shrimpers still sailing westbound ahead of ISW all at varying times and places which is inevitable. One of several endearing features of this trip is how many of the ISW attendees have managed to get together for coffee, drinks or a meal before the formal gig starts - it's been that way since my first ISW in 2019. Thanks to Liz Saudek for involving the Plymouth SOA members and putting us in touch*

### **\*Chute rig**

*Today in light winds and single handed, I kept it very simple. No other sails up and engine on tick-over ahead for some of the doldrum moments.*

**Tack** tied to forward end of bowsprit on a 1ft leash

**Head** hoisted with a dynema halyard from coach roof grab-rails

**Clue** attached with a single (I was never going to gybe today) long sheet taken round the aft starboard cleat, round the winch back to helm sitting to port. So easy with options for urgent recovery if the dream of stronger winds materialized - which they didn't. The net result was no fewer engine hours but much lower revs so I could listen to the cricket and consume virtually no fuel while the red chute did its job.

## **Fowey to Falmouth – Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup>**

*Anyone not yet visited Fowey Gallants SC is in for a warm welcome and an ace chef if they can stop off there. £18 per night at Berrill Quay is a bargain and 24 hr facilities make the club a personal favourite! Remember your £1 coins for the showers. Leaving Berrill Quay in Fowey for Albert Quay to use the Gallants SC facilities and to pay the Harbour fees (£18) large tugs were evident as National Geographical Explorer moored just 100yds away. Cornish Bakery opened at 8am for the excellent Union coffee and the Spar at 7.30 for Sunday papers providing the usual rude reminders of what is wrong with the world when all is well at sea. 08.30 departure towards a big black cloud and a forecast of rain- could I avoid a single drop of rain the entire passage from Hampshire to Cornwall? Keeping two large cardinal buoys to starboard (those rocks off Gribbin Head and the Gwineas look horrible for a night passage!) viz was about 10 NM looking south. I'm anchored off Gorran Haven having left Fowey in a nice breeze. Now becalmed but hoping the breeze will kick in as the ebb starts soon off Dodman Point. After so many great sails, it is slightly sad to need the engine but wow, those Gwineas rocks are to be avoided!! Meva didn't really appeal with fore and aft moorings but may pop in on the eastbound leg?*



Fowey at 0830

### **Fowey to Falmouth – Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup>**

*I hear Falmo will be busy today with parade of sail and Shanty festival - much sex, drugs and rock n roll so perhaps better I arrive later this evening?! The breeze fill in again, just allowing me to sail 260 degs at 3.5 kns then a wonderful experience of being off St Anthony Head as the Pendennis Castle came into view at 12.45 and England brilliantly took 3 wickets at Edgbaston! Another cheer was the Parade of Sail classics mainly heading out to sea after their festival. What an apt moment to 'crack the cork' but alas this would have to wait until this evening when dinner is planned at the Shack with Cat and Marion. Thanks to Tony at Pendennis Marina for squeezing me onto a packed pontoon so the sill restrictions didn't interrupt my car collection and party celebrations later. This seems a good marina when not at Mylor. Facilities, proximity to museums, town and the Docks railway station all work well for me*

### **Westbound ending – Monday June 19<sup>th</sup>**

*So, the single-handed trip has come to a very satisfactory end to 'Shrimp' from Keyhaven to Falmouth Pendennis marina. Now at Falmouth Docks railway station to collect my car from QAB, Plymouth. I will calculate distant travelled engine hours and berthing costs for those who maybe interested but the fantastic weather with not a single drop of rain nor a tack(!) combined with fun socials with many Shrimper owners along the way has made this a great trip. Email has proved easier than Whatsapp for this westbound trip; I'll be adding others for the trip east I suspect smaller groups will form as we all have different timelines and preferences for longer/shorter trips. I look forward to seeing everybody in Mylor on Friday.*



*'bluejay' sailing into Penryn, Falmouth*

**Westbound summary:** *Lymington to: Poole, Portland, West Bay, Exmouth, Torquay, Dittisham, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Fowey and Mylor;*

*Estimated NMs 220, engine use 30 hrs*

*Highlight: flying the cruising chute from Rame Head to Fowey*

### **ISW Falmouth Friday June 23<sup>rd</sup> to Monday July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*International Shrimper Week (ISW) took place around Falmouth, based in Mylor exploring nearby creeks, included a short hop to Helford, a slightly longer sail to Fowey and many great sociable and fun events. A 12-day programme made even better by good weather, fair winds, very little rain and a good mix of Shrimpers on S.19s and S.21s, 'old hands' and ISW 'newbies' Numerous reports/logs and hundreds of photos will be reported on ISW but a unanimous huge 'thank you' is owed to Steve Przybylsci and his committee.*

### **Eastbound passage to the Solent, single-handed Mylor to Plymouth – Sunday July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Au revoir to the Falmouth area after two weeks at 10.45 in nice WSW winds, passing Dodman Point three hours later, putting a reef off Gorran Haven and running on Plymouth breakwater being met off Cawsand by 4 dolphins . Tied up at Q.A.B at 20.00 for dinner at the Harbourside café, Barbican. July 3<sup>rd</sup>, Plymouth to Mylor by train for ISW end of programme BBQ, collected car and back to QAB*



## **Plymouth to Brixham – Tuesday July 4<sup>th</sup>**

*04.15 alarm, passing breakwater at 05.15, Bolt Head at 08.15 and the morning in Salcombe at the short stay pontoon with welcoming harbour team and a run ashore. At 13.30 the rain started as the second hop of the day saw black skies astern, passing Start Point at 15.15, the Dartmouth Mewstone at 18.30 and Berry Head at 20.00. Really heavy rain before drying out at Brixham MDL and last orders at the Prince William pub next door*

## **Brixham to Lyme Regis – Wednesday July 5<sup>th</sup>**

*Unquestionably the most tiring day of the entire trip. Left under heavy cloud at 11.15 considering a return to Exmouth or a much longer haul to LR which would be another 'first time' on this trip. Under significant squalls, the swell rose across the Bay and LR was not easy to spot without navigation aids. Perhaps going so far south to avoid the Sidmouth fishing farms made the approach unusual but it was only the yachts racing (Wed' night) that gave it away. A welcome night ashore at the local SC recalling many dinghy sailing stories including them holding the OK Nationals last week – 150 boats*



*'bluejay' tied up at Lyme Regis harbour*

## **Lyme Regis to West Bay – Thursday July 6<sup>th</sup>**

*The shortest hop of all, but still a lovely sail along the coast to the (always) welcoming Mr Harvey at W.B. The plastic pontoons were like 'Crazy horses' at a funfair, so into the evening I slipped into the inner harbour where I had berthed a month before!*

## **West Bay to Weymouth – Friday July 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Another early alarm and a good forecast except for the strengthening winds east of south. Left W.B at 05.00 and lost satellite fix along Chesil beach not what I wanted. After months of 'Bill Preparation' I felt confident but would have liked to see some other boats going east but not even a fisherman! I communicated on Ch 65 with Portland NCI who agreed to watch me round the inshore passage which he duly did. In fact, going 150 yards off the rocks meant the sea was moderate, even though the noise to the south had to be blocked out! Fortunately, I made the 10am bridge lift in Weymouth with 3 mins to spare which meant I could berth and do another car collection from the bus station.*

## **Eastbound ending Weymouth to Keyhaven via the Needles – Sunday July 9<sup>th</sup>**

*To many Shrimpers, Portland Bill, St Albans Head and the Needles conjure up ideas of big, rough seas. In these past 5 weeks of solo sailing, St Albans served up the nastiest – by a long way. I got the tides absolutely right at all four critical points but west of St Albans to Anvil Point, I kept looking at my rigging as confused seas jumped all around the boat as I hit 7 kns SOG close inshore. What a relief to pass Peveril, see Old Harry and the Needles all at once. I had thought about a brief stop in my Poole YC berth but as the wind went SSW and the sun came out, I carried on into The Solent, tying up at Keyhaven YC pontoon at 15.30, just as England hit the winning runs at Headingly!*

*Finally, well done to Gerry in Amigo (S.21) for completing an eastbound passage of Five counties – Kernow to Sussex as he returned from ISW to Chichester.*

**Eastbound summary:** *Mylor to: Plymouth, Brixham, Lyme Regis, West Bay, Weymouth and Keyhaven*

*Est' NMs 180 engine use 25 hrs.*

*Highlight; Anvil Point to the Needles, Force 4 SSW in 4 hrs 15 mins gorgeous broad reach*

**Total passage summary:** *Excl' warm up but including westbound, ISW and eastbound passages: Est' distance travelled 520 NM, Engine used 75 hrs, consuming 48 litres of forecourt diesel Days on board 33, nights on board 27, Teabags consumed 50, Best pub Lemon Arms, Mylor Bridge*

*Mark Jenkins*

*'bluejay' 1152*