

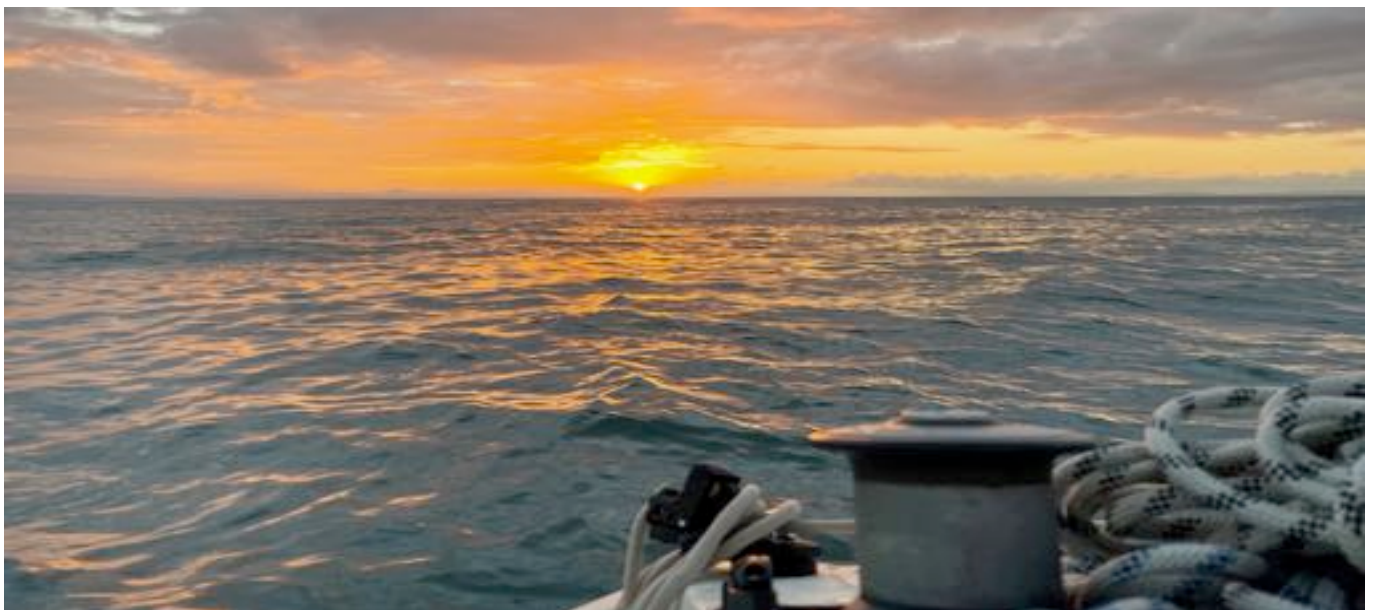
A circumnavigation of Lundy - David Mitchell & Jonathan Beard

As Camel week drew to a close, our minds wandered to cruising. We had enjoyed a very successful trip to the Scilly Isles in the heatwave of July 2021. Unfortunately Covid scuppered our 2022 plans, so we were itching to take our Shrimper 21 *Tikki Dym* (26) further afield. We planned to take her up to Pembrokeshire where I spent many childhood holidays.

The weather this year was not so warm and calm, but we saw this as an opportunity to see how we would fare in less than ideal conditions. We certainly got what we wished for. This year saw some innovations in the boat. Gone was the rather inadequate micro-fridge, replaced by a larger version with freezer compartment, which slotted in front of the sea toilet and still allowed the use of the cushions in the forepeak. Jonathan was in charge of victualling, and with Annie's help we had lovely stews, and a curry, on board on four of our seven nights out. We also had fresh milk, a real treat, particularly in the morning when brewing up.

The tides were a little out of kilter setting out, but would be good for the return, so we left on the evening of the 9th August, making our way around to the east of The Rumps to anchor in Port Quin bay. We enjoyed a beautiful evening and settled down to a good night's sleep. The only fly in the ointment was the failure of our anchor and navigation lights, despite Jon's best efforts with WD40.

All was well until the early morning. By 0220, the wind was rising and the swell was bouncing off the cliffs making the anchorage very "rock and roll". We decided it was a good time to get up and go. One problem of getting older is that our little compass is difficult to see in the dark, so knowing our course was 358° we steered by the Pole star on a clear night with a quarter moon.



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Soon the wind got up even more and we were able to practice reefing in the dark, another one of the fun things you can do in a shrimper, entirely from within the cockpit. That done we were off corkscrewing through the swells for just under 14 hours. Amazingly only one of us was sick, despite the choppiness of the sea. We passed Lundy several miles to the west and saw guillemots, gannets and dolphins in abundance during our channel crossing of around 70 nautical miles.

We came into Dale just after 1600 under a grey sky with good visibility and anchored just off the pontoon, in a nicely sheltered position with nobody nearby. We then went ashore and found out why. A local fisherman told us we were over a bunch of rocks that would dry at low water. Back we went and re-anchored about 50 yards further out on sand with very good holding. A short while later we were seated in the Griffin Inn sampling local beers, watching the rocks appear at our first anchorage.



Anchorage in Dale

Dale provided a very sheltered anchorage from the building southwesterly wind and the next morning we set off to explore Milford Haven. We sailed about 13 miles up to near Landshipping Quay, stopping for a lovely lunch at Lawrenny where there is a pub and a delightful café doing seafood and wine. We passed some paddle boarders after lunch who took some very nice photographs of us sailing elegantly up the river Cleddau. It was less elegant when we turned back into wind and had to short tack back towards the main harbour.

As the weather was closing in with 35+mph winds forecast, we booked into Neyland Yacht Haven. They very sensibly booked us in for 2 nights in view of the forecast. They had hot showers and a lovely café serving excellent breakfasts, plus a small well frequented restaurant. A good place to stop in bad weather.

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The next day was very windy and wet, so a crew walk was in order, 4 miles up to Johnson on the cycle path for coffee and back. Cultural activities were scheduled for the afternoon, so we walked to Neyland, seeking a pub for the rugby. We struck lucky in the Forrester's Arms, enjoying a boisterous afternoon watching England struggle against Wales, with a crowd fuelled by Thatcher's cider.

The following day was calmer, winds 17-25kt from the southwest and a flat sea in the haven. A perfect day to sail, so we beat our way back up the haven to Dale, through the oil tankers and Irish ferries. It's a great place to sail with plenty of water and very sheltered in the most part.

Dale Yacht Club has struggled financially in the past. Their solution is to turn their catering over to a restaurant that provided us with a lovely meal and more good Welsh beer. We used the pontoon in the evening to avoid wrestling with our tiny tender after dark, and then spent a snug night on the hook ready for a morning start.

Dawn arrived with a stiff breeze, but the wind was forecast to ease from midday. After a good breakfast in the café, we set off at 1030 on the last of the ebb, to Tenby and Caldey Island. We had a rollicking ride on a broad reach (one reef) out to the St Gowan Shoals in a following sea that came close to 3m. We regularly hit 9 knots down the waves, and peaked at 11 knots on one particularly large one. We bobbed along beautifully and never felt in the slightest danger of losing control. We gybed on the shoal close to the south cardinal mark and came happily to Caldey island in about four and a half hours.



Snug against the harbour wall in Tenby

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Caldey has control of the land to the low water mark by Royal Charter, so visiting boats are not allowed to land. After half an hour the sun was out. The fleshpots of Tenby beckoned. We shook out our reef and set off for ice cream. The harbour in Tenby is beautiful, situated in the middle of town. We came in just after low water before any of the bigger tourist boats to Caldey. We tied up alongside the harbour wall and met the very friendly harbour master, who was happy for us to stay briefly, without charge, to go into town.

Tenby was very jolly, buzzing with holiday makers. We found ice creams and sent a photo to a friend who has a small flat there. She immediately replied and we were treated to tea with fabulous views over the harbour and Carmarthen Bay. After this we slipped out and anchored in Jones Bay on Caldey, among the gulls and seals. We had a lovely calm night at anchor watching the stars.

0600 saw us under way, making for Lundy. What a difference a day makes. Calm seas and a light breeze made for a lovely reach over 30 miles to Lundy. The island is a great big lump of granite off the North Devon coast. The west side is very rocky and inhospitable.



At anchor off the south east corner of Lundy, sheltered from prevailing winds

Lundy is split by 3 walls, named the quarter, half and three-quarter walls, which makes knowing where you are fairly straightforward, provided you remember which one came first and you keep count! We saw seals, goats, sheep, deer, longhorn cattle, pipits and skylarks as well as the usual gannets and gulls. The puffins had left by this time of year and were out at sea. All this gave us a good appetite for lunch and a beer in the Marisco Tavern, where we were also charged a landing fee of £10 a head.

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Approaching the west coast of Lundy and photographs from our walk around the island

We rounded the day off by swimming, scrubbing the boat's waterline and log (it now works again!) and discovering that the electrics had dried out and our lights were working.

After a slightly roly night, we were off early to punch the last of the flood to Hartland Point. We then set a southerly course toward Port Isaac and were swept down to Pentire Head in good time. We utilised our shallow draft to put me ashore at Daymer to fetch the car, and had the boat emptied and tied up on her mooring by mid afternoon.

This trip presented some more challenging planning around changing weather and some lumpy seas. The boat handled the sea well, but the autohelm could not cope with a big cross sea. It also drains the battery quite quickly, necessitating running the engine to keep up charge. We are looking at whether solar panels may help with this. The crew of three (myself, Annie and Jonathan) coped well with the longer days, and the boat is well designed to allow those off watch to get good rest. 185 nautical miles in total with 26 in Milford Haven. Our confidence in *Tykki Dym* grows, and we are planning a longer cruise next year.