

## Torrential Rain, Tent Pegs and Trailers by Steve Mitchell

After attending the 2006 International Week in Falmouth with my father in law. I vowed that this year I would take my wife Jackie and son Fyn down to the Fal to show them what they had missed. Now that Fyn is getting older and the ablution requirements of ones wife are not met by a 27 year old 19ft boat, I pre-booked the campsite at Trethem Mill and a mooring at Pascos a year in advance, to give our holiday a fighting chance of being a success. The plan was to trail *Spray (19)* loaded up with all out camping gear and spend ten days picnicking and generally chilling out on and around the Roseland Peninsula.

We had booked the first two weeks of the school summer holidays. The months of April and May arrived gloriously. How we were looking forward to our well earned break. Then it went steadily down hill. Floods across the country and unfortunate thousands homeless. How I felt for those affected. No problem in Cornwall though I thought. How wrong I was. 3 days before we were due to leave we had a call from the Campsite saying that the field we were to be pitched in was waterlogged, our booking was cancelled and we would be lucky to get in anywhere else.

The prospect of ten days on board *Spray* filled Jackie with horror and my questions as to the location of her sense of adventure fell to deaf ears. Our plan was slowly on the ebb. I set about finding another campsite hopefully within commuting distance of mooring number C19 in St Just creek which was eagerly awaiting our arrival.

A few hours later and no joy. I had not rang any sites on the Roseland as was assured by Trethem Mill there were no vacancies. So on the off chance I rang the Camping and Caravanning Club Site at Veryan to find they had vacancies but no electric. Jackie would have to rough it and leave the hair straighteners behind. I assured her the wind swept surfer look is common in Cornwall.

With Veryan being only a ten minute drive from Pascos the plan was back on.

We made the journey from Bulford to the Roseland overnight on the 25 July armed with a forecast of gales and torrential rain, hoping that it would at least not last 10 days. We arrived at Pascos Boatyard to be met with a stiff westerly force 7 and 3 foot waves in the creek. Leaving *Spray* in the boatyard we headed for Veryan to strike



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camp. It took a gruelling hour to erect our oversized geodesic tent. Once settled inside with a pot of tea and sheltered from all the Atlantic could throw at us, a head popped in through the door to say that we had pitched too close to our neighbour, leaving only a 5 and half metre gap and not the regulation 6. The tent would have to be moved due to risk of fire ! We duly complied and it continued to rain. Spirits too were getting damp.



The next day, to my delight the weather broke and I made way to the boatyard to rig *Spray* and by late morning she sat bobbing on a mooring looking quite at home amongst the many other Shrimpers. It was looking good, for a moment.

Our first days sail was forecast Force 6 and 7 so I decided to head for the shelter of the upper Fal. A fantastic sail under 2 reefs and lunch at anchor in Church Creek was a much needed tonic to brighten our day. We returned via Restronguet Creek to our canvas haven to be battered throughout the night with more torrential rain and wind. It still had not abated by breakfast. Tent pegs had to be hammered back in and it rained. Plan B was hatched with a day in Falmouth and a visit to the Maritime Museum. A remote controlled yacht is now on Fyns Christmas list.

On the third day we woke to blue skies and the warmth of the rare summer sun radiating through the tent. What followed was five fantastic days of sailing, paddling the inflatable canoe in and out of the rocks, fishing, combing abandoned beaches and coves seemingly only accessible from the sea. Plenty of wind and calm seas as the somewhat chilly wind turned to the north made for long trips around St Anthony Head. Wetsuits were



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required for our body boarding trips. Am I getting soft in my old age or is the sea in Cornwall really that cold? I ask myself. Spending evenings watching the sunset over the Carrick Roads with a glass of grape juice made things all worthwhile.

I would challenge anyone who was not taken in by the tranquillity and solitude of the church at St Just in Roseland and Jackie was no exception. I think the plan was paying off and dates for next year were already being set.



All good things come to an end and the time had come to start planning our departure. Hugh from the boatyard had told me of a good place to recover *Spray* on the beach on the rising tide. This was all going to plan until our trusty Volvo, which had easily towed *Spray* down onto the beach, decided it was not going to be able to tow the boat back up the shingle shore. A friendly holiday maker kindly yanked

*Spray* out on her trailer with his humongous Mercedes 4 X 4 before we were engulfed by the tide. It was only after he had left that I noticed she was not sat on the trailer properly and would not be towable any great distance. We drove along the beach and put her back in the water and this time the Volvo could not even get up the beach without a trailer. In a scene not dissimilar to that of the Dukes of Hazzard I span the car up the beach.

We repositioned *Spray* on her trailer once the tide sufficed. I then attached a very long line and recovered the trailer and boat from the safety of level dry boatyard. Only one problem, whilst we were doing this the tide had flooded and confined us to the boatyard. I figured it would be 3 hours before we would have ground to leave. Midnight !. and midnight it was. With Fyn fast asleep we made our back to Veryan towing *Spray* behind us.



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We look forward to next year to do it all over again albeit with a new 4 X 4 that I have been given the go ahead to buy. (or launching at Mylor may be the cheaper option)

**Steve Mitchell** *Spray (19)*