

Shrimper Week, Zeeland & Brittany

9th June - 6th July 2011

Thursday 9th June. We left home on time at 6.45 am, with only last bits of packing to do - most of it was done on Wednesday night. The car and boat both seemed well laden - as usual, our attempts to take less stuff with us had failed. It was a blue-skyed morning and it was nice travelling before the traffic had got going.

At Harwich they were not too happy that we'd got flares aboard 'Bumble Chugger', but we assured them that they were quite small ones as we were quite a small boat! and they let us through, though holding us up to park at the back of the ferry. It was a smart new Stena Line ferry and we had a smooth crossing, sitting in a very comfortable lounge high up on the 9th deck.

We arrived at The Hook just before 5 in the afternoon and were deposited in the middle of rush hour round Rotterdam, which I remembered from our last trip to Zeeland. So it was quite a slow start to our journey through all the acres and acres of greenhouses and waterways. Tomtom got us to Kortgene very efficiently and we headed for the marina area. The marina's gates were all shut for the night; and following the narrow road beside it, found ourselves at a dead end with the water of the Veersemeer ahead of us.

Heading for the Havenkantoor's office, we saw 'Scalawag' moored up and Claud busy rigging. We said our 'hellos', and as it was quite late and everything closed up, we decided to stay where we were for the night. A slight list with the camber of the road, but unfortunately not enough for Rob to fall out of bed! A celebratory gin and tonic and eggs and bacon to start the holiday. A passerby looking over the side of the cockpit was rather taken aback to see my face peering out of the cabin! A little later Adri popped her head over the combing to check that we were alright and to tell us where we should go for the slip.

Friday, 10th June. After visiting the clean, comfortable loos and breakfast, it was time to do a nasty bit of backing, back up our cul de sac between quite a lot of parked cars. Rob did well and we then moved on to a car park on another bit of water by the slip, where we settled to rig the boat. Tony and Cathy arrived soon after us, followed by Adri on her bicycle with our charts and a big flask of black coffee. We launched and motored round to tie up to 'Scalawag', passing Adri's lovely waterside house with mooring for 'Droppie' on the way. After some finishing touches to the boats, we wandered into town with Claud and Sheila, seeing John de Kanter and Diana and Carlos as they arrived. Lunch on board and then a sail up the Meer to the lock. It was fine when we left, but dark rain clouds gathered and a cold wind sprang up, and by the time we got back to the marina, the wind had died and the rain was bucketing down. It was a wet few minutes as we tied up to 'Scalawag' and dived into the cabin - a bit congested as everything was in there.

The rain kept up and at 6.30 we emerged, wrapped up in our wet gear, to walk into the town with Claud and Sheila, Harry and Helene Breuking and Adri and Hans de Muynck. Adri took us to a very pleasant restaurant, the walls hung with various musical instruments, where they served lobster as the speciality of the area. The rain had stopped for our walk back to the marina. Passing the car park we saw that about half

of the 40 Shrimpers had arrived and were in various stages of rigging. I think it hit Adri what a large organisation she was dealing with - seeing the boats in the round, and not just as names and numbers on a sheet of paper.

Saturday, 11th June. A grey morning with a cool wind. The rain came and went and we started the morning tucked into the cabin. When it eased we wandered up to the car park to say hello to the new arrivals. After lunch on board it was time to go and help with the crane launching. The rain had held off for a while, but soon the heavens opened and it was a wet job lining up the boats and getting them into the water. It was a very quick, efficient operation with Andy Mullins being chief organiser. I borrowed Adri's bicycle at one stage, and went round to the main car park to hurry the remaining boats for the crane. Finally the last boat was launched and the mobile crane prepared to leave - he could not wait for the last two boats that were due to arrive late afternoon from the Dunkirk ferry. We went up to the cafe next to the square for a coffee, and met up with Ronald and Emily, with Hugo and his wife, who were very excited to be sailing in their old Shrimper 'Tordella', which they'd sold to the Langkempers several years ago.

Back to the marina where Rob met up with Carlos, who suggested an afternoon sail - it had turned beautifully sunny with some wind - so off they went while Diana and I had a nice chat on 'Bumble Chugger'. Ben FitzGerald popped over several times, as he was having problems with his Honda engine, and wanted to check up on ours. While we were sitting enjoying the sun, Sue and Brian Casey appeared - they had arrived late, but had persuaded the crane in the main marina to put them in. This was one of their first travelling expeditions, and they wanted help to rig. As Rob was not around I passed them on to Tony Coles, who was moored nearby. By the time Rob went to see them, they were fairly well sorted but not entirely happy about their mast. They decided they would not go to Veere and Middelburg the next day, but pick up with the fleet when we returned on Monday.

The welcoming supper was being held at HetVeerhuis just nearby. We all gathered there and were given a welcoming speech by a representative of the royal family, and then a very good meal with champagne and wine. We'd turned 'Bumble Chugger' round rafted up to 'Scalawag', and had a less breezy night with the cabin opening not facing the wind. The Gomes's were rafted up on our outside, and Ian Fisher with George - unfortunately John Clogg had not been able to come, as Jackie was due to go into hospital for a major operation.

Sunday, 12th June. After a good start, the day became fairly cloudy though the rain held off. There was a briefing on the quay and we all set off up Veerse Meer to Middelburg via Veere. We left the marina about 10th, with Rob expecting to drop back as we were using the cruising sails, but slowly he managed to overtake everyone. We were scheduled to have lunch at Veere, but time passed as we tacked up the Meer, and we thought of contacting Carlos to see if they wanted to anchor for lunch. Nowhere seemed protected from the wind, so we decided to eat on the move, and carried on to Veere. The town looked familiar from our previous visit in 2002. We wandered around with Carlos and Diana ending up at a Bistro where they had some lunch, and we joined them in beers and coffee.

We were spending the night at Middelburg, so once we'd left Veer we turned into the Walcheren Canal. There was a lock we had to pass through and then it was a 40 minute chug to the town. A lifting bridge was opened and we all squeezed into the inner harbour. Beautiful gilded and decorated tops of churches rose above the picturesque narrow streets. Unfortunately we didn't get time to explore the old town - I had heard there was a supermarket nearby and we needed bread and milk. This was the Whitsun bank holiday

weekend, so nothing was going to be open today or tomorrow. It was an unsuccessful expedition, as we walked for what seemed like miles and finally found the building - which was closed down! We rushed back to the boat, as we'd asked Ben and Gilly aboard for a drink. A quick soup for supper and it was bedtime.

Monday, 13th June. An early briefing at 8 am as we were setting off to Arnemuiden to be shown round the old Dutch fishing boat museum. We were split into two groups to leave Middelburg, and Rob volunteered to be in charge of the second group. A slight hiccup when he found our VHF receiver was not on board, but Ben and Gilly had a hand held VHF, which we borrowed to keep in touch with Adri.

The town bridge opened for us at 9.15, and we retraced our way back down the Walcheren Canal, branching off quite soon on another canal. A short wait for a road and a rail bridge to be opened for us - Rob made successful contact with 'Mr. Bridge'! A T-junction stumped us, but Tony had an old 1980 chart on board which showed that we needed to turn left. We moored up at the wharf, and when the first group moved on we went into the museum and were given a talk about the development of the 'Hoogaars' while we drank coffee and ate 'bolus' - special Dutch biscuits. The tour round the old workshops and slipway was very interesting. It had been well restored, and the old hand tools that had been used to build the barges had been preserved. Our trip was cut short as Adri said we must catch the noon opening of the two bridges.

We were able to sail back to the very large lock at Veere, eating our lunch on the way. There was quite a long wait while all the Shrimpers and other boats were collected in. The wind was quite strong - 4-5, and we made good progress back down the Veerse Meer. Rob was worried about his VHF receiver which we would need in France, so we called in at Kortgene to check if it was in the blue bag in the car. It was - much to Rob's relief. Quite a few other Shrimpers were in the marina and about to leave, and the tail end of the fleet from Veere was just passing, so we had company going up to the Zandkreeksluis. A threatening black cloud had been creeping up on us, and as we waited for everyone to tie up in the lock, another huge lock so plenty of room for all, the heavens opened and we had heavy rain for much of our sail to Colijnsplaat.

Out on the tidal Oosterschelde we followed the coast seawards, under the impressive Zeeland Bridge, seeing some porpoises arching out of the water. Colijnsplaat was a huge marina and nowhere obvious for us to go. We were first in and had to wait for Adri to arrive. We ended up with the fleet split up over a large area which was not such a good arrangement. Diana and Carlos were nearby, and when Carlos had finished sorting out a problem with his centreboard, we went to join them for some Portuguese wine. It was a good fishing area for terns, and we had wonderful close up views of them diving and appearing with little silver fish in their beaks.

Tuesday, 14th June. Some blue sky today and a much lighter wind. After the briefing, we went into the village to do some much needed stocking up at Spar and the bakery. It was a good day for business with most of the fleet low on provisions. There was no great hurry to get to Yerseke, so we had a leisurely couple of hours aboard sunning ourselves and writing Post Cards.

We left at noon with Diana and Carlos, and as there was very little wind, we motored the 3 or 4 miles back under the bridge and anchored for lunch in a bay near the entrance to the long channel to the

Zandkreekdam. We were plied with more Portuguese wine and good food - our contribution was not quite up to their standard! The wind got up while we were there, and we had a pleasant run down the Oosterschelde to Yerseke. We had to take care where the canal to South Beveland crossed the Oosterschelde - it was a busy main route for large barges and they travelled at quite high speeds.

At Yerseke we were all rafted up on two pontoons: a much better arrangement than at Colijnsplaat. There were not many people aboard as they were on a guided tour round the oyster and mussel cultures, which had started before we arrived. We tied up to 'Scalawag', and after a cup of tea we settled into a Scrabble challenge. Mike Hopkins and Malcolm nearby were deep into a chess challenge. We had an interruption half way through, as Gianni and Matteo Picchio came to say hello. They had only just arrived from Milan, and they came aboard for a glass of wine.

The end of the game was a bit rushed as everyone was drifting to the end of the sea wall where we were all barbecuing. We were not at all well prepared, but we had got a couple of pieces of steak and we begged a corner of Wendy and Ian's barbecue. It was a beautiful evening for eating out. On our way back Claud and Sheila called us aboard for a coffee and armagnac. Their boat is very spacious and comfortable inside, and it was very pleasant chatting to them. As we clambered back to 'Bumble Chugger' we saw the very large moon coming up over the horizon that John de Kanter had told us to look for.

Wednesday, 15th June. A greyer day but still quite warm, and the wind had turned round to blow us up the Oosterschelde to Zierikzee. The briefing was later today, and we had time for a wander round the town before setting off in company with Claud and Carlos. It turned into a long day's sailing with the wind quite light to start with and the tide against us. We went with 'Crevette' along a narrow channel through the mudflats with regimented rows of stakes on either side marking the shellfish beds; it was very peaceful with birds calling all round us. We joined the main channel where huge barges go up and down at great speed between Antwerp and Rotterdam and Dordrecht. We had to have the engine on to make it against the tide, and nearer the Zeelandbridge we motor sailed as it was taking for ever to get to Zierikzee.

Up the long channel into the town, where we all rafted up five deep on a pontoon near to some fine barges along the harbour wall. We put the tent up for the first time as rain was looking imminent. We'd expected to get a dowsing earlier in the afternoon, but in fact the rain held off. After a cup of tea we explored the town: a bigger town than we'd realised with many pretty, narrow cobbled streets, churches and town gateways. We passed Karin König on her Brompton taking their labrador for a run. I don't know how they manage with two bicycles and a large dog on board.

Many groups were collecting for drinks and moving off for eating out. We'd got food aboard, which we followed with a Black Jack challenge which I dismally lost - I'm not doing very well with shipboard competitions! On our final trip along the quay to the loos, we met up with Ben and Gilly and went for a pleasant walk with them along the canal wall in the setting sun.

Thursday, 16th June. The rain started in the night, and it was still pouring down when we got up - it had been a good idea getting the tent up. We hibernated in the cabin and played Crepette (which I won). Most of the fleet were much hardier than us, and dressed up in their wet weather gear to go to the briefing.

We learnt that plans had been changed. Bad weather was forecast for tomorrow, so the fleet would move back to Kortgene straight away instead of staying a second night in Zierikzee, and the racing would be held

today instead of Friday. As we'd arranged to meet Dutch friends for the evening and Rob could not get hold of them, we were committed to staying put. There was hustle and bustle all round us as boats started unravelling their mooring ropes and leaving. The rain had eased up so we set off to the loos and then on into the town where we visited the market and the Maritime Museum which was an interesting old gaol with some nice pictures and model barges. Unfortunately the main museum was closed for renovations. When we returned to the marina it was looking very bare and desolate with only five boats left. We were told to raft up with 'Tordella' as they were staying the night in town, and soon the other three left and we were alone.

We passed the afternoon reading and writing and doing our puzzle books, and did a small shop in the town. The rain came and went and thunder rumbled overhead. The wind had become very strong and I was twitchy about our sail tomorrow. Just before 7 we went up to the quay to meet our friends and had an excellent evening with them. Our bedtime of 11.30 was an all time late!

Friday, 17th June. The clouds and rain had passed and there was a clear blue sky, and the wind had abated - no horrendous sail back to Kortgene as predicted. After a wander round the town we returned to the quay. Ronald and Hugo were about to set off in 'Tordella', so we were just in time to get 'Bumble Chugger' out of their way and clear the quay for a big motor boat that was waiting to come in,

We motor sailed most of the way back to the Zandkreeksluis. Here a big yacht lost one of its fenders while waiting to get into the lock. It drifted into shallow water, and they were very grateful when we were able to retrieve it for them. They hailed us once we were back on Veerse Meer, and handed us a bottle of wine, which was very nice of them. At Kortgene, we went straight round to the back of the marina to the pontoon by the slip. It was 1.30 pm by now and the rain arrived, so we tucked ourselves into the cabin for some lunch. By teatime we'd got the boat out and round to the main car park. A hitch when the trailer stopped pumping up, but fortunately Rob's diagnosis of a blown fuse was correct, and we got it going again. In between sharp bursts of rain, we got the boat packed up and had showers ready for the final night dinner.

This was at the restaurant 'De Korenbeurs' where we were greeted with a glass of champagne and given a superb buffet meal. We were at a table with the Lanyons, the Gomes, the Teathers and Tony and Cathy. Trevor gave a good speech and presented the trophies: the Plymouth Plate to Robin Wearn for his voyage from England to Holland, the Lady Daphne Seamanship Trophy to Ian and Wendy Walker, the Roger Dongray collage to Ronald Langkemper for his account of last year's Shrimper Week, and a towel each for two people who fell in! Farewells to everyone and back to bed on board in the car park - midnight tonight.

Saturday, 18th June. A gale arrived in the night and a lot of rain - glad we were not afloat. We set off early in convoy with Carlos - our route was the same for the first few hundred miles. The start of our journey passed places familiar from the boat and we followed the road over the Zandkreekdam. Some miles of flat Dutch landscape, and then into Belgium, the countryside becoming more tree covered, stocky white cattle grazing in the fields. On into France, the scenery changing all the time and into the rolling countryside of Normandy. Moving south the weather brightened, but the wind continued to blow hard.

We stopped for a short break and a cup of coffee, and then on and on until Carlos drew in at a service station just north of Rouen and we said our goodbyes: we were carrying on west and they were branching south for Portugal. They would make much better time without having to slow up for us on the hills, as we didn't have their power. All through our drive we were buffeted by the wind and black stormy clouds raced

across the sky deluging us with rain now and again. The rest of the journey seemed very, very long, but passed fairly uneventfully. The rain had stopped and the wind had lessened. We were worried about petrol for a while but found some in time. Brittany is very lacking in petrol stations along the road. We later realised that all the big supermarkets had petrol pumps. Tom Tom directed us to Plouer sur Rance very efficiently, and we finally arrived in the pouring rain just after 7 o'clock - our predicted time when we left Kortgene at 8.30 am had been 4 pm.

Rob did a good job following his nose to the Port Pleasance Marina. It didn't seem to have changed at all in the four years since we'd been there before on our way to the Morbihan. We parked in front of one of the boat sheds and waited for the rain to stop. Soon we were able to stretch our legs with a wander through the marina. Back to the boat for a whisky and a bacon and egg supper and we were feeling much recovered and ready for a Black Jack challenge and an early bed.

Sunday, 19th June. Woke to a calm, blue-sky morning. What a change! We rigged and launched and parked the trailer where we had before. We stopped at the funny little cafe/creperie at the roadside to explain what we'd done, as being Sunday all the boatyard was closed. I don't think they understood, but fortunately when we moved on to the Marina Office the very nice English speaking Harbour Master, who we'd met before, was in the office, and the car and trailer and return journey were all sorted out very satisfactorily.

So we set sail on the second phase of our voyaging off down the Rance. There was enough wind to sail but it was quite cold and the blue sky had disappeared. Rob was excited when he saw a 505 sailing towards us, and we saw a Montague harrier in the distance, but it was otherwise a short uneventful sail to the barrage. The barrage was much less impressive than I'd expected it to be: it was quite low on the water - I'd imagined a huge structure. While we waited for the lock to open, we tied up to a buoy and had our lunch. Once we were into the lock we had quite an alarming experience with a smallish motor boat coming in zigzagging about. The two occupants seemed unable to control the boat and were very laid back about it. We were waiting to be rammed, but a yacht on the other side of the lock suffered.

The drop to the sea was about 20 foot, and once through we motored the short distance to St.Malo. We went into the main marina as the tide was too low to enter the picturesque inner harbour. We moved through the marina past the hundreds of large plastic jobs, and found a quietish pontoon on the far side. As we tied up the rain started, so we scuttled into the cabin, good timing, and Rob did some passage planning for our trip tomorrow. There is a festival of music in St.Malo today, so we can hear loud music floating over the water. Bad luck that they've got rather damp conditions. Our pontoon was at about the furthest distance we could have found from the Harbour Office - a long trek along a maze of pontoons and up an almost vertical ladder to the quay. The range of the tides around here is huge (30 ft).

The rain had eased, so we wandered along the quay road round a huge crescent of sand, jostled by crowds of people who had come to the music festival. We had planned to look at the far part of the town, but we got waylaid by a group of singers and stopped to listen - they were very good. Just beyond them was a crêperie, so we had a first treat of Brittany fare, with beers and egg, ham and cheese galettes - very delicious. We were very taken by a funny little dog at the next table!

The rain had returned as a fairly steady fine drizzle, so having found a Boulangerie we did not explore the rest of the town but tucked ourselves back on board 'Bumble Chugger' for 'heavenly' cake, cricket and Black Jack.

Monday, 20th June. Still intermittent fine rain as we left St.Malo harbour at 9 am. There seemed to be a maze of buoys and markers and rocks, but the GPS got us safely out.

We were due to go about 35 miles, which seemed much too far to me, but Rob assured me that it was the longest leg we were getting over with first. The wind was not in a favourable direction, so we had to tack and ended up doing 50 miles! We motor sailed most of the way, the wind fairly light to start with. It increased during the day with stronger gusts coming through, and a reef had to be put in, taken out, put in again ... a job I do not like doing, especially in wavy seas! The day seemed interminable, and our arrival time kept being put back - 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock. Finally got into St.Quay-Portrieux at 7.30 after 10 ½ hours sailing. On the last few miles, a fierce squall came through, and we needed two reefs and the jib reduced. It was quite difficult to see the buoys and cardinals marking the channel through the rocks in the driving rain.

We arrived extremely wet and very relieved to be able to moor up and relax. On the next door pontoon was an English boat which we'd gone through the barrage lock with. The owners came from Chichester, but spent half the year living on their boat and were frequent visitors to the Brittany coast. We settled in with a stiff drink, supper, Black Jack and an early night.

Tuesday, 21st June The morning was spent visiting the Harbour Master, stocking up at the local Spar, doing some washing, and route planning for today's stage. Then it was time to set off at midday. Following my complaints, Rob had changed our itinerary making our next stop Lézardrieux not Tréguier, a much shorter passage. This of course pleased me a lot, and by the time we got to Lézardrieux, Rob agreed that 23 miles was quite enough for a pleasant sail!

The wind was up and down, but the reef came out as we headed up the coast on a reach, and we even saw some blue sky and sun. It was nice to be keeping close to the land, and be able to enjoy the views of the cliffs and small sandy coves and scattered villages. After 11 miles we headed west towards the entrance to the River Trieux; it was near low water and jagged rocks seemed to be all round, but well marked by cardinals. We passed the Ile de Bréhat with its very different extraordinarily shaped piles of rocks. The wind was against us once we were in the river, and it was slow progress tacking. We passed through some lovely scenery, first with expanses of water and rocks and lighthouses, and then as the river narrowed, a rocky shore with wooded hills above. There were many boats moored along the edges and several out sailing from the local sailing club.

After a while of slow progress, the sails were packed away, and I made a cup of tea as we motored on, reaching Lézardrieux about 4.30. We continued on up the river to inspect a cable stayed bridge just beyond the marina; an interesting and quite old bridge. The countryside on the far side changed dramatically from the rocks and wooded slopes on the north side, to rolling fields and animals grazing. Returning back down the river with the jib giving us extra help, we saw two English yachts bearing down on the marina: we did a quick burst of speed to get in one of the remaining free berths on the visitors' pontoon. While we were settling in and hanging out the washing to finish drying, a couple from a nearby large white plastic yacht came over and took a lot of interest in 'Bumble Chugger'. They were considering

downsizing and thought that a Shrimper could be just what they wanted. Hopefully we encouraged them with enthusiastic sales talk!

The diary and log were written up, and the Harbour Master's office visited, and then we set off up a steep winding road to explore the town. This led us into the main square which was surrounded by pleasant houses and a church with an interesting belfry; everywhere was decorated with masses of colourful flowers. We wandered along and found a bread shop - baguette for tomorrow and eclairs for supper. We realised we hadn't had cider with our galettes in proper Brittany fashion, so we crossed the road and settled ourselves outside a café. Various musicians began appearing, starting with the barman playing his bagpipes. Then a lady with a keyboard set herself up just beside us and we were a bit concerned as to whether we would stay, but in fact she played wonderfully well and some great music - blues, Scott Joplin and other popular tunes: then a man with a banjo arrived and played with her. We were entranced and moved onto second bottles of cider, which was probably not a good idea! There was obviously going to be an 'event' later in the evening, as loudspeakers and microphones were being set up.

We stayed until the pianist stopped, and then we staggered back to the boat feeling very mellow! It was a remarkable happening to chance upon. A good supper, and then I was annihilated at Black Jack. Nearby a large barge loaded with sand was being unloaded; it was mesmerising watching the efficiency of the grab and the bulldozer. It was rather noisy, but when they stopped sometime after 9 o'clock, we could hear singing and music drifting down from the square.

Wednesday, 22nd June. A lovely calm morning, but by 9 o'clock the wind was up. The forecast said that it would basically be a Force 5 today, with gusts of Force 7 during the morning. We had decided to visit Ile de Bréhat in the morning and set off for the journey to Tréguier in the afternoon when the wind should have dropped.

It was quite a fast rolling run back down the River Trieux, with the wind rising. It was nice to turn off the main channel at Ile de Bréhat and into the quieter water of Port de Corderie, though nowhere seemed to be sheltered from the increasing wind. We picked up a buoy and decided we had time for a quick walk before the tide started ebbing and left us high and dry. The sun came out and shone on us as we wandered along the narrow winding roads, some bordered by high stone walls. The main road was busy with groups of people who must have come off a ferry, and were doing a round of the island with their maps and haversacks. We kept to the side lanes as much as possible, and it was very reminiscent of the Isles of Scilly with flowers everywhere and cosy stone houses basking in the sun. It was a tough row back to 'Bumble Chugger' against the wind, then lunch aboard before it was time to leave with the water dropping fast and the sun disappearing behind cloud.

Once clear of the island, the sea became quite rough and the wind was going up rather than reducing in contrast to the forecast. With the rough weather we decided it would be advisable to go out to sea and back into the Tréguier River rather than taking the planned route, a narrowish short cut through the rocks. This added on several miles and as we sailed out to sea the waves became huge and we were continually drenched with water. The view from the top of waves was just solid white and the wind howled - it was up to a Force 7 now and gusting 8, definitely the worst conditions we had ever sailed in. As we were on a different route from the one Rob had planned, I was instructed into how to find and enter new marks into the GPS Map. Difficult with the turbulent movements of the boat and constant dowsing with water, and very scary with the nearby rocky shore we were navigating. For four hours we slowly made progress with

the main double reefed and the jib three quarter furled: it felt at times as if we were lost in endless mountains of water with the wind whistling like a banshee. Some of the way we'd had the motor going but that had soon died on us - not surprising with the amount of water that poured over it. Slowly, slowly the first of the new marks came into sight to our great relief. The GPS Map is certainly an incredibly clever machine - don't know how we would have got into the Treguier River and avoided all the rocks without it. Then the mark for the main channel into the river and then we could head towards the shore, with the waves becoming less daunting.

We were certainly more sheltered in the river, but were still hit by fierce gusts. Rob was still unable to start the engine, so we made slow progress tacking up the river. We passed a large cruiser marked 'Douane Français' and soon after a rib with six red-suited individuals aboard roared up behind us, and asked us to slow down, which was difficult under sail! Two of them boarded us, and asked us a lot of questions and wanted to see our papers. I expected them to want to look in the cabin, and I was wondering what they would make of it - everything had been thrown around by the seas we'd been through and was all jumbled up in an untidy heap! They didn't want to look and were more interested in seeing our SSR (Small Ships Register) certificate, which fortunately Rob had in his document bag. They were finally satisfied and roared off back to their ship. They must have had a tip off about something, as we heard later that they'd spent several hours searching one of the boats in the marina. All very exciting!

We were going to have to stop somewhere to get the motor sorted before arriving at the marina. In a fairly sheltered bay we tried to pick up a buoy, but were having difficulty so Rob had a few more tries to start the engine, and suddenly it started much to our relief. On we headed up the lovely wooded Tréguier River with the spire of Tréguier Cathedral appearing above the trees. As we entered the marina there was a cacophony of noise from the big yachts with the wind rattling and whistling through their rigging. Rob motored on to a further pontoon and found a quieter spot. It was difficult to turn in with the strong wind, but a lad and his mum came over from their big hullabaloo and helped us in. We were both soaked through in spite of our expensive wet gear, so drying off and into dry clothes was our first priority, then a strong whisky to revive us!

It had been a very shattering, stressful day. It should have been a fairly short trip, but because of the tacking we'd done 27 miles and through the worst conditions that either of us had ever been in. I was definitely saying 'never again', but I keep getting caught out!

Thursday, 23rd June There was a very helpful Harbour Master at Tréguier. We discussed our plan of heading to Lannion, but it sounded unsuitable with the tides, and he suggested Trebeurden and gave us the marina opening times. He told us where we could look for a new oar for 'Bum Chug' - the heavy seas had broken one in half. We were not successful, but we got a paddle which would do temporarily.

While Rob tried to sort out petrol, started passage planning, and deflated 'Bum Chug' (we really didn't need a tender as we were spending every night in marinas), I went off into the town to do some stocking up. A steep climb to the central square, and then my French was well tested finding a supermarket. There were a lot of interesting side streets I would have liked to explore, but I knew Rob wanted to get off fairly soon. In fact we did not get off until 1 o'clock as Rob was having trouble getting details into his GPS.

It was a much gentler morning, but by the time we got out to sea it seemed more than the forecast 5. By mid afternoon, the wind was down a bit but it was an uncomfortable wet sail, with the waves quite big and

very confused. It seemed a long trip, 33 miles, and it was great to at last be creeping in among the rocks at 8 ish with the marina masts showing in the distance. I think that even Rob had found the last couple of days a bit taxing, and with more westerly winds forecast he suggested a plan B - one more day on the north coast going to Morlaix, getting the boat out there, trailing to the south coast, and spending more time sailing around there. He definitely got my support for the plan!

Arriving at Trébeurden, the gates were not open at the entrance, but we only had about 10 minutes to wait on a buoy before the red lights went green. We had been tempted to go over the sill while the lights were red as we need so little water, but reading about the clever operating system of the gates it was as well we hadn't tried, as we would have got stuck! We found a space on the visitors' pontoon, and again had to get out of sopping wet clothes and revive ourselves with whisky. Someone came over to say 'hello' - Brian Lea. He was interested in our Shrimper as his wife was the cousin of Roger Dongray, and their daughter had helped build No.9 'May'. He knew Trevor Heritage well. We invited him for coffee in the morning. Spag Bol and Black Jack and another early night.

Friday, 24th June. Plans had changed again. It was going to be difficult fitting in tides to Morlaix, there was no slipway and we'd already been up two amazing rivers: also Saturday would not be such a good day for travelling. So we were off today to collect the car and trailer. Great relief for me - not to be setting off out to sea again!

The Harbour Master was not very helpful, so having booked in for two nights, we set off up a very steep hill into the town and to the Tourist Information Office. As we left the marina some big yachts came in, probably some of the fleet racing across from the River Yealm - an annual event. At the TI Office we got times of buses and trains to get us to St.Malo. We booked a taxi to Lannion to get the train from there, as the bus would have made us miss the earlier train. In fact when we got to Lannion, we found the train had been cancelled because of works on the line. We had an hour to wait, so we wandered down to the river to eat our 'pain chocolat' and watch the waters rise and the fish swim by. There were gates and water falls all down one side of the river for canoeing competitions, but all was quiet today. At 11.57 we got a coach from Lannion to Plouvel Trebor, where we caught a fast train to Rennes. From Rennes we caught an incredibly fast suburban train to St.Malo. It had very fast acceleration and was going about 140/150 kms/hour, bouncing around on a small local track. It was scary! Rob kept saying 'blimey' - each time in a higher octave!

It got us safely to St.Malo where we got a taxi to Plouer sur Rance. Here we collected the trailer and car with no problems and with no charges incurred, and in one and a half hours we were back at Trebeurden. In the marina it was busy with all the crews arrived from the Yealm - clothes hanging out to dry and great bundles of sails. The crews were congregating on some of the boats, celebrating their success or otherwise. In the evening they all disappeared for some function, and we ate aboard and Scrabbled. Rob won, but he was so far ahead and I hadn't played badly that we agreed that at some stage the scores had been entered on the wrong score pads.

Saturday, 25th June. The slip just outside the marina had a very shallow slope. We planned to wait for the water to get to the end of the ramp and get the trailer positioned over the vertical drop at the end of the concrete. We went off to get the car and trailer in position, but were thwarted by a chain across the top of the slipway. By the time we'd been to the Port Office and paid for a card to open the chain, the water was well up the ramp. To get the trailer deep enough, the car had to go in much deeper than it should, and with

the electrics for the trailer well submerged we were worried that the whole system would short, but we were very lucky and were able to pump the trailer up and drive out and up the ramp. The next problem was that I couldn't open the chain. Eventually I had to go and ask for help from somebody who looked as if he might be launching a rib. He probably thought me very pathetic - I'd been using the metal part of the fob instead of the plastic bit! We then got the boat safely into the car park and de-rigged.

Off we set to the south! Two stops - one with worrying noises from the trailer wheels. We stopped in a garage forecourt and Rob sawed off a screw end inside the mudguard, and disconnected the brakes on the trailer which were binding. Later we noticed that the boat had sunk down very low, and Rob remembered that he'd not closed the valve that let air pressure into the wheels, so he had to do some pumping up. We were lucky not to have another mishap as we did a scary whoosh down a hill, round a sharp corner and over a very bumpy railway crossing which we hadn't expected. It caused a lot of banging and bouncing, and rattled our teeth somewhat! It was a longer journey than we'd expected - I'm not sure that Tom Tom took us the best route. We arrived at Loctudy soon after 3, and an hour later we'd launched down a very excellent slipway and found where we could leave the car and trailer for the next week. The sky was pure blue and it was hot - wonderful!

From our previous 505 visits to Loctudy, Rob was going to take us to the crêperie he remembered. Everything looked a bit different after 25 years. We found the beach where the 505s had launched and the camp site where we'd stayed, but no sign of the crêperie. Further walking took us to the main square, where we had our ciders outside a bar listening to the bells ringing out, then crossed the road to a creperie. It was pleasant and cool inside, and we watched some little birds in a cage in the garden. Very good crepes. We'd done a big circle round the town looking for the beach, and it was quite a short walk back to the boat, on our way moving the car and trailer to a field beyond the marina.

Sunday, 26th June. Up bright and early for a bright blue sunny day. The water looked very clear and there were big fish swimming around. On the way out of the marina we picked up a buoy while Rob laced the main onto the mast. The engine refused to start when we wanted to set off again, and it was a slow tack out of the harbour against the current. Loctudy has two very active harbours next to each other; one catering for the fishing fleet, and the other for pleasure boats.

We sailed round to the beach with its memories of 505 French Nationals there, then back into the harbour, up a leg of the river returning to pick up a buoy just off Ile Tudy, where I had a lovely couple of hours painting a view of the houses along the waters's edge. The tide was still coming up so after a while we motored 'Bumble Chugger' onto the beach, and went for a stroll through the town, everything shimmering in the hot sun. In the harbour area there were several restaurants and bars, and we settled under a brightly coloured umbrella to enjoy a 'bier blanc'.

A bit more time on the buoy to finish my painting while Rob went for a swim, then we set off across the bay to the River Odet. The engine had decided to behave itself and got us out of the moorings: most of the rest of the way we sailed - there was not much wind, but it was lovely to be able to dawdle along and not be rushing on to keep to a timetable. We had the choice of Sainte Marine Marina on the west side of the river or Benodet Marina on the east. We chose the former and were led by the 'capitaine' to a well sheltered spot away from the main 'visiteur' pontoon.

It was quite a long walk back along the pontoon and round the edge of the bay to the Bureau du Port. It was a busy area of restaurants and bars and many people. We were rather put off by loud recorded music blaring out from a stage where later there was a live band and singers. We could hear the music from our berth until mid evening, jazz and trad, but not too loudly. Unusually it was much too hot to go into the cabin, so we had a Scrabble challenge in the cockpit - a few mislaid pieces through the floorboards but it was cooler. On the last go our scores were the same, but Rob had put down his last piece and he got 3 from my remaining tiles. Bother! By the time we'd finished, the cabin had cooled and we were able to cook supper.

Monday, 27th June. What a difference in the scene! Grey misty murk and intermittent rain. The forecast had been for clouds and rain but we hadn't quite believed it. It had cheered up a lot by the time Rob had showered and we'd done some shopping, and there were even patches of blue sky. The engine was being temperamental again, but we managed to get out without damaging the big boat on the pontoon in front of us. Coming in when Rob was turning 'Bumble Chugger' round, he was doing some very nifty manoeuvring with the bowsprit within inches of the big yachts side. A very self-important owner was fussing around and he was there again in the morning!

There was enough wind for us to gently head up river tacking between the many moored boats. A very beautiful river bordered by many trees, the occasional grand house peeping out through gaps in them. We turned off the Odet into a tributary - the Anse de Combrit, and drifted in with the rising tide. A tern took a ride with us for some distance sitting on the top of our gaff. After a while we retraced our steps and anchored for our lunch near a local wooden boat which was aground on the mud. This was my next subject for a painting - it didn't work very well but I enjoyed myself. It was made particularly challenging as 'Bumble Chugger' was swinging around all the time, so I had a different view in front of me each time I looked up! Rob did a drawing of some stone steps and greenery.

When the depth sounder started beeping, we up-anchored and continued up the Odet - more lush green trees on either side, and a stone quay where half a dozen young lads were having a great time diving in and swimming. There was not a lot of wind and we were against the tide, so we motor-sailed most of the way to the Anse de St. Cadeau, another lovely tributary of the Odet. A mile or so in we dropped anchor in a bay of the river hoping it was going to be deep enough at low water. It had turned very hot all afternoon in spite of the gloomy start to the day, and after a cup of tea we both went for a swim. Lovely and refreshing. It was a perfect evening again though hot. We played Crepette in the cockpit with our gin and tonics and listened to Wimbledon on the radio, before going into the cabin to cook supper when it was cooler.

Tuesday, 28th June. It was quite windy in the night, but as promised we stayed afloat, just! A different feel to the weather today; clouds and blue sky and a cool wind gusting up the river. Rob blew up 'Bum Chug' while we waited for the water to rise enough for us to set off down the Anse de St. Cadeau. Turning into the main river, a large expanse of water opened up though only a narrow, well marked channel across it was deep. We met a dozen or so canoeists who were paddling hard against the tide. A lot of them were children who waved enthusiastically at us. A bit further on we passed the canoeing centre, with canoes piled high on the bank, where the group must have come from.

It is not possible to sail into Quimper because of low bridges. A mile out from the town we came to a cluster of moored yachts, and fortunately found one unoccupied buoy. The water was too low for us to get ashore, so we had a cup of coffee and warmed up while the water crept up to the bottom of the steps up the

bank. It is extraordinary how the temperature changes from exceedingly hot one day to a blustery cold wind the next. We paddled 'Bum Chug' ashore and followed the path along the river. It was quite a long walk, but we finally got to the older part of the town clustered around the cathedral. Unfortunately this area was set up for the tourists, with a lot of Bond Street type shops selling very expensive goods. The cathedral was a fine building, with intricate stone tracery leading up to its two spires. Inside was impressive, but slightly overpowering with a huge number of stained glass windows, and canned holy music which we don't like. We wandered around some of the back streets - very picturesque and not overrun with tourists, stopping at a café for a cup of tea.

It was a long trek back to the boat, especially as we'd stopped at a supermarket on the way, and had heavy bags to carry back to the quay where we'd left 'Bum Chug'. It was hot too, with some of the clouds giving way to sunshine. The tide was going out by now and with the wind, which had risen to a Force 6, behind us we made good progress back down the river. We decided to go into Bénodet Marina this time and had help tying onto the visitors' pontoon from a couple from Mylor. It was a very exposed situation for a small boat, and after a visit to the Capitainerie, we were shown a more sheltered spot. The man from the Capitainerie took a lot of trouble finding a suitable place for us - we were impressed. Having moved 'Bumble Chugger' round we were very happy in our sheltered spot out of the current and out of the wind. While we were having our pre-supper drinks, a Frenchman passing by on the pontoon offered us half a packet of Tuc biscuits, which he had started but did not want to finish. We accepted gratefully and offered him a glass of wine, but he refused having had his beer.

There were an amazing number of fish in the marina, about a foot to 18 inches long in shoals of 8 or so feeding from the top of the clear water. The skies had cleared and it was hot in the sun again, but the wind was still persisting as we settled for bed in our sheltered little corner.

Wednesday, 29th June. The wind had died in the night, and there was plenty of blue sky when we woke. We had quite a hunt for bread - the boulangerie near the port was 'fermé mercredi', and it was a long walk to find another one at the top of the hill. I'd asked the way in one shop and had only half understood the answer. As we dithered at the next fork in the road, a lady drew up in her car, pointed us in the right direction, and turned back the way she'd come. She must have overheard our question. It was very nice of her to have bothered. Armed with two baguettes we returned to the marina, looking in on the church on our way. A long crocodile of people were traipsing aboard the pleasure steamers going up the Odet. The boats had looked rather empty when we'd seen them yesterday - more takers today in the sunshine. At 10.15 we set off, deciding Bénodet was one of the best places we'd stayed at.

The wind was quite light, and we had a gentle sail across the Baie de Bénodet and round the Roches de Moustierlin. There were several small fleets of sailing boats out being instructed by accompanying ribs. Four cats had wonderful bright multi-coloured sails. We followed the coast round a mile or so out to sea, and suddenly the 6 ft depth sounder started beeping. Gave us quite a fright, and looking over the side of the boat we could see rock appearing to be just below the surface in the clear water. The beeping stopped, and we held our breaths until we could no longer see the rock.

Concarneau appeared beyond Laouen Du point across the Baie de la Forêt. It was confusing as to how we should go in, and I didn't help with disinformation, but we found our way into the marina - a lovely setting with the stone ramparts of the old city down one side. We tied up to an English boat whose owner started quizzing us with dozens of questions! His son-in-law's Dad was a Shrimper owner, Paul Tyler, and I

confirmed he was a member of the Association. Later the Harbour Master came round and asked us to move to another pontoon as we were taking up space where a big yacht could moor, so we found ourselves in a more secluded spot.

While we waited for the Maison du Port to open after their lunch hour, we wandered along the quay and into the old battlemented town, a maze of narrow streets full of souvenir shops and trippers. We headed through and up onto the ramparts with lovely views over the water. A green buoy had been given a hard knock and we stayed some time watching three workmen trying to straighten its stalk.

The quite cold wind had warmed up and it was hot again with the sun out as we listened to tennis and sketched back at the boat. We watched a group of young boys jumping off the top of the battlements into the water - quite a height: they spent some time on a strip of sand at the bottom of the walls. The Harbour Master returned: very apologetic, but could we move. He promised he would not disturb us again!

As the evening cooled down we set off for the town to find a Pizzeria. Seeing a sign painted on the side of a house we went up the hill to a square, but the sign must have been out of date: lovely view out to sea but no Pizzeria. We returned via small back streets and came upon a nice looking crêperie and decided to go in there. Very good crêpes and cider. On the way back to the quay we saw a couple more signs to Pizzeria, but I think we'd had the best meal.

Thursday, 30th June. A 'technicolour' clear blue morning. Rob worked out waypoints for the Iles de Glénan and I went to try out the one and only horrid looking marina loo, which was a fully automated cell - very claustrophobic. I waited for someone to come out, the light went green so I went in. I closed the door, it was dark, and suddenly water started gushing round my feet and ankles and I couldn't open the door. Panic! There was a red circle by the door which I tried pressing, and to my relief I was able to escape. The light outside the door was now red and great gushing noises came from inside. When the light went green I ventured in again very hesitantly, though it had to be done! Rob followed me in and was similarly unimpressed.

We found a bread shop and on looking at the forecast on the way back to the boat, decided the next day might be a better day for going to the Iles de Glénan - Force 5 forecast for the afternoon and night, so once we were ready to set off we gently headed round to the next bay and into Port le Forêt. On the next pontoon were the same people from Concarneau with the son-in-law's Dad owning a Shrimper. They came over and offered us hot water for a drink, but I'd already put the kettle on. Soon after that they left for Loctudy.

We lazed in the sun and had lunch - no sign of any Force 5 arriving, and at 2 o'clock headed up to the Bureau du Port. I commented on a hugely wide stern of a yacht up on the quay. This was the start of a fascinating 2 hours. It was a vast yacht sponsored by the Banque Populaire. The mast was lying on the ground and it was huge and 100 ft long. An enormous crane was getting ready. We stayed to watch the process of the yacht being put in the water and the huge mast being lifted onto the boat and all the stays and ropes being attached. It was all done with great precision, both by the crane driver and the 8 or 9 black shirted members of the crew, who beetled round the boat sorting out a bemusing array of ropes. One of the crew members was winched up to the top of the mast to undo the crane's fixing strap. There was a problem with one of the leeboards getting stuck half way down, but when we saw the yacht later both the leeboards

were raised. After a while her engine was started and she glided round to a pontoon at the far end of the marina.

Continuing our interrupted walk of a mile into the town of Le Forêt, we stocked up on provisions for our night at anchor at the Glénans, and looked into the pleasant little church. They were still busy on the yacht when we passed by quite a lot later, busy connecting things and sorting great piles of sails, and the boom was now fixed in place.

A quiet evening on a fairly deserted pontoon and an early night.

Friday, 1st July. A lovely morning and some wind to send us on our way to the Iles. I'm glad we delayed our trip as yesterday the sea looked very odd and flat with the horizon a hazy blur. There was very little wind, though it had picked up by the evening.

We left before 10 on a sparkling blue sea, and with some help from the engine were anchored off the beach at Ile de Penfret for lunch. The forecast had said the wind would be north east, and we were surprised to be heading into a southerly wind, but Rob decided we must be into the sea breeze, and it remained a brisk breeze all day, not dying until after 8. The spot where we'd anchored was just off a beach used by the Lorient Sailing School in Europe. Dozens of dinghies were pulled up on the beach: lasers, 2-man dinghies and Hobie cats in several sizes. During the afternoon the sailors arrived on the beach from their lunch time break. A colourful array of sails was pulled up the masts and soon they were afloat including many sailboards. It was a perfect area of water within the islands for sailors to learn and practise. There was obviously quite a wide range of abilities from novice to quite experienced.

After a while of painting, we realised the anchor was not holding and we were drifting towards the shore. We moved back to a small bay where a couple of other yachts were anchored. I did some more painting, but we were not at all sheltered from the wind and the waves, and it was quite uncomfortable being bounced around. We moved on a couple of miles to a small boats anchorage off Ile de Bananec, heading for the north shore believing it would be more sheltered there. Still very bouncy, so we moved round to the south side, which was marginally better. Both areas were provided with plenty of good, strong buoys to pick up. We settled down and listened to tennis - Murray beaten by Nadal, and had supper. Rob almost had a whitewash at Black Jack.

Saturday, 2nd July. Neither of us had a particularly good night - the wind picked up again and rattled stays around us, and the boat rolled and pitched.

It was a relief to get up earlyish and get under way. It was a shame we didn't have calm weather as shown in the Pilot, though when we arrived we could see down through the clear water and could agree with the Pilot that it was the next best thing to the Caribbean!

Rob put in waypoints and we set off safely through the many rocks heading for Loctudy. To start with it was a good reach, but the wind died as we neared the shore and we had to motor the last couple of miles. It was right at the bottom of the tide as we entered the river, and we headed straight up to the Rivière du Pont l'Abbé, which according to the Pilot was probably silted up. The sand banks at the entrance to the river were swarming with 30 or more people with dogs and children, all raking the sand and collecting shell fish in their buckets.

The channel between the banks was very narrow, but we got about a mile before we ground to a halt. We anchored and had lunch, then moved on again, again being stopped for lack of water, anchoring and doing artistic things this time! We got right up into the town at our next try, being stopped by mud just before a steep ladder up the quay wall marked 'Visiteurs'. A passing American and his wife kindly took the bow rope and pulled us in the last few yards. We were very low on food and as the shops would be shut tomorrow we set off up into the town. A very attractive old town and very hot. As we staggered out of the supermarket with all our goodies, we stopped in the main square and had a refreshing beer in a café/tabac.

Back on the quay all the boats were looking much more presentable with plenty of water around them, and only a few rungs down the ladder to 'Bumble Chugger'. I went into the cabin to put the food away and heard Rob being accosted by someone on the quay. He sounded very defensive to start with and then very friendly. There were slight language problems but we finally realised that this gentleman, Jean-Yves Richard, was a Shrimper owner. He had seen our Shrimper moored and had waited a while for us, he was about to drop a message into our cockpit when we returned. He was the owner of No.365 'Dajy' and kept her moored at Loctudy. His wife was not keen on sailing so he'd replaced the mast with a short stub mast and had shortened the bowsprit. Rather a shame, but he assured us that he could reinstate her to sailing mode without too much trouble. He was very insistent that we should go and see her on pontoon I22 when we returned to Loctudy, which we did. He was very interested in our doings, and I promised to send him a copy of the Magazine and information about the Association. We exchanged addresses and telephone numbers and said long drawn out 'goodbyes', with much hand shaking.

A quarter of a mile down the river we passed M.Richard's house, which we recognised from a photo he had shown us. A very fine house, the garden running down to the river. We took a photo of it. On the opposite bank was M.Richard with a video camera waving to us. Lots of waving from us - I hope he got a good shot of us sailing past his house! An uneventful trip back to Loctudy - the river looking very different, wide water and no muddy banks showing, though we were careful to keep to the marked channel. In the marina we headed for the berth that we'd had a week ago G.05, tucked away at the back. In the port office we were told we could stay there as the owner was away until Tuesday, and we booked in for three nights.

We settled down for the evening in a wonderfully stable 'Bumble Chugger' - no rocking and rolling around. Difficult to believe that that was how things were just this morning. Very hot.

Sunday, 3rd July. High, windy looking clouds when we woke, but they cleared and it was another baking hot blue sky day, the heat ameliorated a little by a cool breeze. We had a relaxed getting up and potter aboard and checked 'Bumble Tugger' in the car park. All seemed well though covered in a coat of blown sand and looking fairly messy. Our plan was to spend the day walking and sketching.

We set off with a packed lunch and my painting things to find the path along the river to Pont l'Abbé. The map we had was not very comprehensive, and although we found some lovely little tree lined paths with glimpses of water winding round inlets near the marina, we also did a lot of trudging along fairly main roads before we found a track to take us down to the river again where we could recognise landmarks we'd seen from the water yesterday. A small path took us along the side of the river, and we stopped at a grassy bank for our lunch. Just across an inlet from the river was a beautiful little house nestled in the trees, just right for my promised painting session.

Wimbledon Men's Final was on this afternoon - Nadal v. Djokovich, so we wanted to get back to listen to that. Rob found a shorter, much pleasanter, route back but it still seemed a long way and very hot. Rob had a nasty tumble over a sleeping policeman, but was OK to carry on. A very exciting final to listen to as we cooled off drinking all the available liquid we had. Djokovich had the lead by 2 sets, then Nadal seemed to be making a comeback and got a set, but Djokovich got the 4th set. We needed still more liquid, so we went up to the bar on the quayside and had some refreshing beers. It was much cooler now with a brisk south westerly blowing, and it was nice to get back to the shelter of the cabin, bacon and eggs and Scrabble.

Monday, 4th July. Another beautiful day, and not quite so hot. It was the day for a last sail and a last paint. I sketched the Bureau du Port while Rob had a shower and a shop. Then we had a final sail up the river; the cockle diggers were out in force again. The tide was ebbing so we didn't get any further than we had before, and we drifted back with the gentle wind to our previous mooring point at Ile Tudy. The water disappeared before we reached the buoy, so ended up having lunch at a steep angle! A family was foraging in the sand around us, presumably finding shell fish: dozens of school children of all ages gathered on the quay. Some went swimming and some went off in small motorboats with their life jackets and rolled up sails. We saw them later enjoying themselves in Optimists and small catamarans.

Once we were horizontal again, a quick painting, and then off out to sea with the sun sparkling on the water. A quick trip along the Sailing Club beach, where there were lots of bathers and sailors - more Optimists with their brightly coloured sails, and back to G05.

Rob had seen a nice restaurant in Loctudy and he was taking us for an end of holiday meal. While we were sitting in the cockpit before setting off, there was a flurry of flapping wings and tweeting and something landed on the boom in the rolled up mainsail. It was a young rock pippit, and its Mum arrived and sat on the flagpole twittering in a concerned way. The fledgling flopped off into the cockpit and made an out of control, swooping flight onto the next door boat, trying to land unsuccessfully on the slippery metal rail, but then found a stable perch on the roof. He sat there for a while and mum finally flew off, returning in 15 minutes with a mouthful of insects. By then the youngster had fluttered off out of sight down the row of boats. She called for while around our boat and the next, then flew off. I hope baby was found and survived.

In the town we found that the restaurant opening time was 7 o'clock, and as we had 20 minutes to wait, we retraced our steps to a Heineken bar. Back at the restaurant at 7, it was still shut and we saw another notice we hadn't seen before - 'Fermé Lundi'. Back down the road again where we had an interesting meal at another restaurant. Rob was a bit taken aback by his platter of assorted unappertizing shell fish, and my main fish dish was well scattered with mussels. I was adventurous and ate a few and was rewarded by some chips from Rob's rather tough steak and chips. We both wondered if we'd survive the night, but we were all right. Ambled back along the fishing boat quays and the fish auction area to our last night afloat.

Tuesday, 5th July. Our holiday was at an end, and our hot clear blue skies were at an end. We woke to grey clouds. Quite soon a fine drizzle started and by the time we'd had breakfast it was raining hard. We delayed our visit to the loos, but by 10 o'clock the sky was still uniformly grey and no sign of a let up in the rain, so we put our waterproofs on and made a dash for it.

Rob collected the car and trailer, and as the rain had eased a bit, we decided to get 'Bumble Chugger' out. This was easy on Loctudy's fine wide slipway, and most of the time we were derigging the rain had reduced to a fine drizzle. I chatted to a couple who'd just had their boat craned in earlier in the morning for their month's stay in Loctudy. Not good weather for the start of their holiday. They seemed to know well all the places we'd visited on the north and south coasts of Brittany, and she knew East Anglia a little, as she'd been an au pair in Norwich.

So we were all set for our 145 mile trip back to the Rance, leaving Loctudy via the bread shop which meant some tricky driving through the town with the boat in tow. Our search for petrol proved more difficult. We made a couple of unsuccessful turns off the main road, thinking we were following possible signs to supermarkets and petrol which proved to be red herrings. Our third attempt at Carhaix-Plouguer was successful, but getting out of the town was not so easy: narrow winding streets with several blocked off in readiness for the Tour de France going through the next day. Poor Tom Tom got very muddled. In the end we managed to get back to the Intermarche where we'd stopped for petrol, and followed our noses back to the main road.

Generally the day was cloudy, wet and windy. Rob changed his original plan to spend the night above Dinan and we headed for Plouer sur Rance knowing there was a sheltered area near the marina, and from there it would not take us long to get into St.Malo in the morning for the ferry. The wet conditions were a bit tricky for driving, as we'd had to block off the boat trailer brakes, and we had a couple of nasty skids. It was a relief to arrive soon after 5, and as it was still raining on and off we settled down in the cabin for the evening.

Wednesday, 6th July. The rain had gone again and we had a short walk along the creek by the marina to inspect the Rance, before an easy trip into St.Malo.

There was the usual hanging about before we got aboard but there were no holdups with searches or questions about flares. It seemed a long 8 hour crossing - we were both impatient to get home. Then there was just the long journey back to Woodbridge - good to be safely tucked back into No.67 again after our long and exciting absence.

