

South Cornwall Summer Cruise – John Phillips

I have been sailing out of Dartmouth for over ten years, the last five of those in my Shrimper *Froya* (809). Previously I mostly sailed a cruising dinghy, first a Wayfarer and later a Devon Yawl, so to me the Shrimper is a large boat, luxurious even - I can cook and sleep aboard without needing to erect a boom-tent!

Year by year we have ventured further away together, turning left eastwards to the Exe and on to Lyme Regis, and westwards to Salcombe, Plymouth, Fowey and Falmouth. In 2018 we ventured further west - the light easterly winds, which settled in for much longer than expected, took us around Lizard Point and across Mount's Bay.

Froya left her mooring at Dartmouth on 24 June 2018 and reached St Mawes three days later. We anchored each night, first in Salcombe Bay near Gara Rock, then just past Rame Head in Whitsand Bay and for the third night, at Polkerris in St Austell Bay. Just over 50 miles of easy downwind sailing on flat seas with the tide helping us along: just what Shrimpers love!

Leaving Polkerris, we were sheltered at first by the Gribbin headland to the east but once clear we had a splendid easterly breeze to drive us SE towards Falmouth, and a super rollicking sail for some 15 miles. The waves built up and a tall ship outward bound from the Fal was pitching noticeably. Closer to St Anthony Head the seas became still steeper, so it was a relief to sail in to shelter, and anchor in flat water with the gusts passing overhead. A very satisfying passage.



Tall ship leaving Falmouth

We pottered around Carrick Roads for the next four days, visiting the usual haunts and going ashore to St Mawes and Falmouth. Falmouth Yacht Haven was busy, with the last of the visitors to the Falmouth Classics Regatta preparing to leave. Our overnight anchorages included St Just Pool (with 20 other boats, including two Brixham trawlers) and a quiet corner in the Percuil River, upstream of St Mawes and just south of the sailing club. Unfortunately the shallow area on the east side of Carrick Roads, which is sheltered from easterly winds, is used for

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water-skiing (especially evenings and early morning), which makes it uncomfortable for anchored boats.

I had promised to be home in time to meet my wife Sheila back from her holiday (and to crew in the Dartmouth Classics weekend). However there was no sign of the anticipated south-westerly, so *Froya* was left on a Falmouth Haven mooring and I took the train to Totnes.

A week later I returned to the boat (miffed by the £5 charge each way on the harbour taxi) and was joined for three days by my brother. The bright blue skies and light winds continued, and we enjoyed a perfect day out to the Helford River. The light northerly gave us an easy sail there, inshore, enjoying the scenery across Falmouth Bay, and the river was as lovely as ever.

By midday the sun was baking and the wind had died so we anchored and sun-bathed. For the return to the Fal, the wind sprang up again and we finished the day with a very refreshing beat back.

Tim returned to his shore duties, and I set off to explore down the Lizard peninsular, past the Manacles, anchoring overnight south of Cadgwith in Church Cove.



St Mawes Harbour



Approaching Helford River



Picturesque Cadgwith

South Cornwall Summer Cruise – John Phillips

The next day conditions were still calm so I ventured around Bass Point and anchored in Housel Bay. There I waited for slack water, then motored around Lizard Point, just clear of the rocks and reefs that extend out from the cliffs.

A further six miles and we reached Mullion Cove in very light airs and a flat sea. It was a lovely anchorage but after lunch I realised I was missing a rare opportunity to go still further west. Motoring more than sailing, we crossed the ten empty miles of Mount's Bay and reached Mousehole, just south of Penzance and Newlyn.

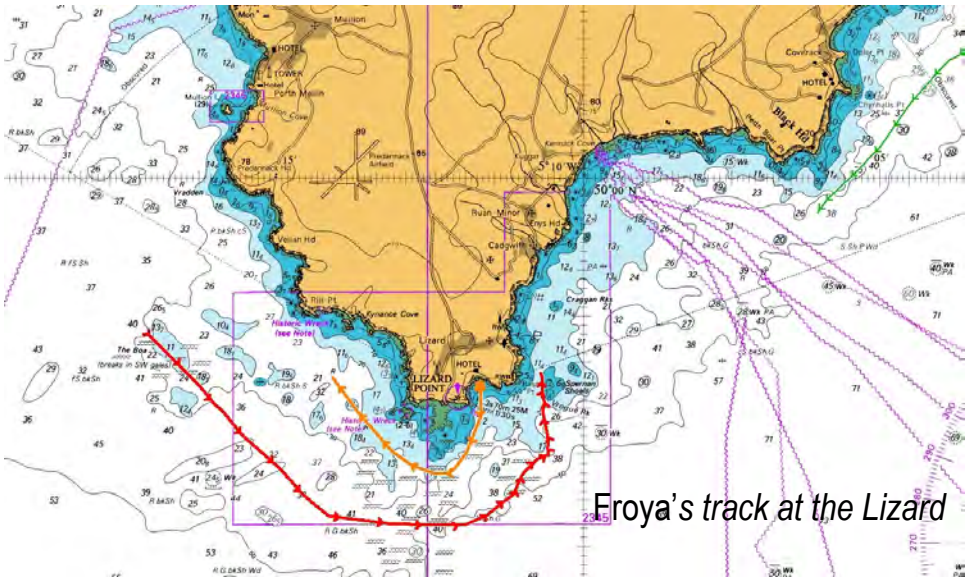


Vintage sailing boats at Mousehole

Here I was surprised to find a lot of activity. An array of historic sailing vessels engaged in racing/parading around St Clement's Isle in the late afternoon sun; I had chanced upon the biennial 'Sea Salts and Sail Festival'. A lovely sight, followed by an evening in the village of liquid refreshment and loud singing!

Perhaps I should have stayed a day or two longer and visited Newlyn or Marazion, but stories of what happens to small boats west of the Lizard were lurking in the back of my mind so we scarpered back across the bay to more familiar waters.

The return rounding of the Lizard was somewhat rougher than expected. In the first place I was drawn magnetically (I can only assume) over The Boa, a shoal which the chart clearly marks as 'breaks in SW gales'. Fortunately it wasn't a gale.



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Passing Lizard Point was achieved to plan and without problems but, thinking I was now safe, I turned inshore too early and met a strong adverse current off Bass Point. By now the SW wind had increased somewhat, which was lucky because I seemed to be driving through the overfalls for a long time, before finally escaping the tide-race and reaching Church Cove.

Recovered from the adventure we spent the night in Coverack Cove, then to Fowey for water and petrol and a pontoon mooring, followed by Cellar Cove (river Yealm entrance), and a final night in Start Bay before our return to Dartmouth, arriving home on 20 July.



John Phillips - *Froya* (809)

