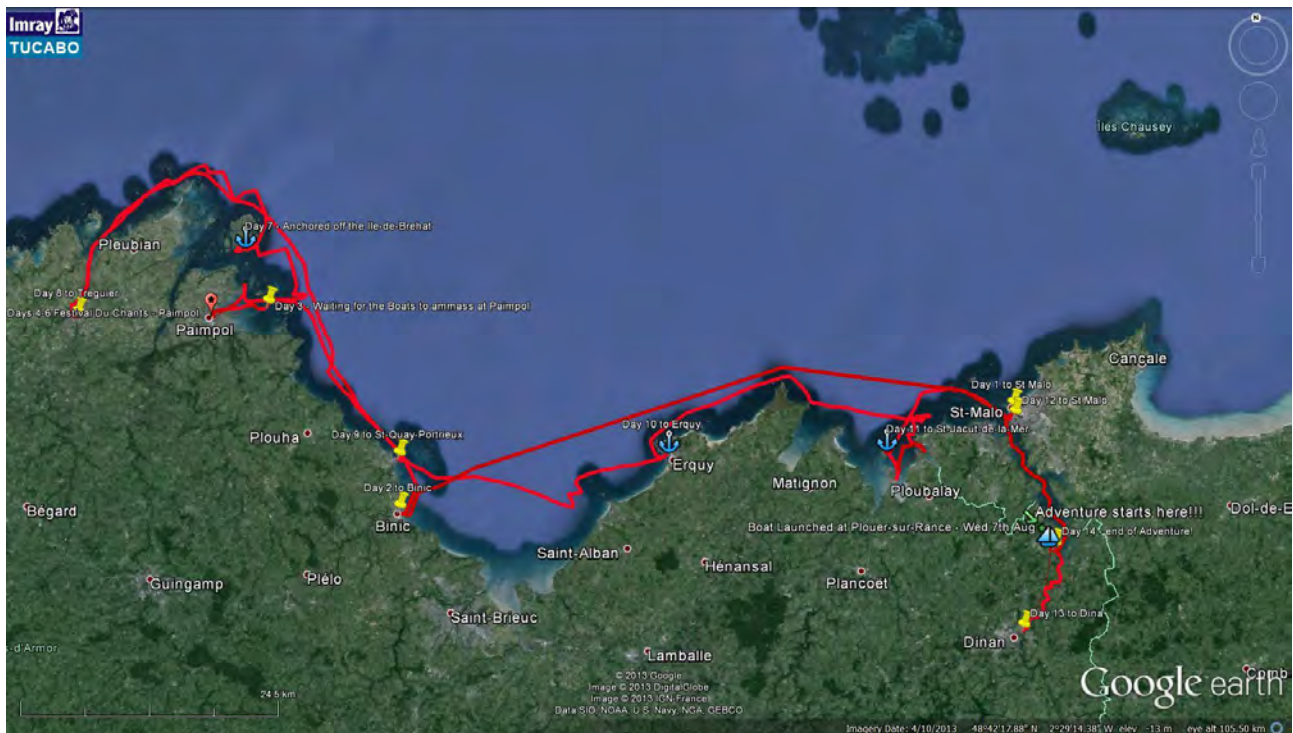


"Polly's" adventures in Brittany -Ships Log 6-19th Aug 2013

Mark and Lisa ferried their 19ft Cornish Shrimper (1067) Polly to St Malo to cruise the Brittany coast line and take in the Paimpol



Festival du Chants. This is their story...

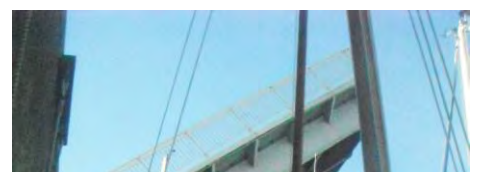
Plouër sur Rance - St Malo

Tuesday Aug 06, 2013 14:12 CEST

The Portsmouth - St Malo ferry docked at 07:30 in the rain! Polly had crossed the Channel for the first time... A night crossing and a chance for someone else to take the stress for a change! Obviously getting older and less adventurous / looking for the easy life at last!

Setting the car's 'Sat Nav' for Plouër sur Mer we drove along the picturesque river Rance in torrential rain. Through a tiny village, down to a remote marina to a launch slip. It was seemingly deserted. We ordered 'deux cafe' from the shack at the head of the slip. They didn't know any English. Lisa paced up and down wanting to pay someone to launch. We started to rig the boat and people passed saying 'bonjour'. 'Polly' does turn people's heads; she is traditional green with wooden spars, all looking new and shiny still. Definitely a 'she'.

Young and shapely in a trendy 'vintage' dress. The sun came out and clouds blew away. The Marina man turned up to say hello and told us where to park the car and trailer. 'How much' we asked? 'Non... only if you stay'. How laid back can you get? The boat was duly launched and trailer and car secluded in a boat park. Easy with combi trolley and shelter of the trees.



We got 'out' of the marina, over the sill with an hours grace, (it would then close for six hours over low water) and motored out of the narrows to the wide open of "La Rance". Sails up for a beat in the glorious sunshine passing some idillic villages. La Rance is in inland sea 15 miles long ending, or starting, depending on your approach, in a tidal barrier generating hydro power. We arrived at said barrier and waited for the lock to open. Then radioed in to find it next operated at 6pm. We waited in the sun. Guitar came out.

The lock was 'an experience' with pushy English boats and everybody squeezing in. The bridge swung open, stopping the road traffic, and were were out in the sparkling Atlantic. A short motor trip round cliffs with castles perching on rocky outcrops, into St Malo. Then another lock, this time big enough for big commercial shipping, before entering St Malo's inner harbour, adjacent to the magnificent walled city. Mooring in the town quay, we made our way for dinner at a Creperie: 'BaraGwan'. St Malo's wall town encloses a maze of cobbled streets and high, dark Granite, houses. Lots of cafes selling mussels and chips. Lots of souvenir shops. A band aptly called the 'fuckin'hell orchestra' were playing in the square. Guitar, horns and accordion. Actually rather good: Gypsy rock. We wandered back to the boat for a night cap with booze bought on board 'La Bretagne' last night.

St Malo - Binic

Wednesday Aug 07,
2013 08:45 CEST

The alarm went of at 06:35. Timed to get the ebb tide west and allow a straight passage through the St Malo lock before HW. The sound of rain tempted us to turn over.

However, if we didn't get out of the basin by 10am we would be there all day! Hence, Mark got out and donned oilies passing

Lisa's down to her. She put then on over pyjamas and nipped into the shower block. I paid and readied the boat and convinced Lisa to go to buy some croissants. Not an easy sell... wearing pyjamas... in the rain, everyone else in bed!



We set off to investigate the state of the lock and were lucky enough to only be tied up alongside a towering granite wall momentarily. By 09:30 we were heading up the main channel out of St Malo, dark brooding clouds overhead and a nice F3. Lisa takes the opportunity to get out of pyjamas before the sails go up and we 'fetch' to a lighthouse. A long reach passing rocks seemingly randomly strewn around us and out into the bay. We made 8kts with tide, passing the spectacular 'Cap Frehel' headland before bearing away across the 'Baie de S-Brieuc' with giant rocks littered across our path! Cardinal spotting became a speciality, iPads GPS at the ready if we needed to cheat! We didn't. It really is just like line of sight dinghy sailing with easy transits on the shore to compensate for the huge tide.



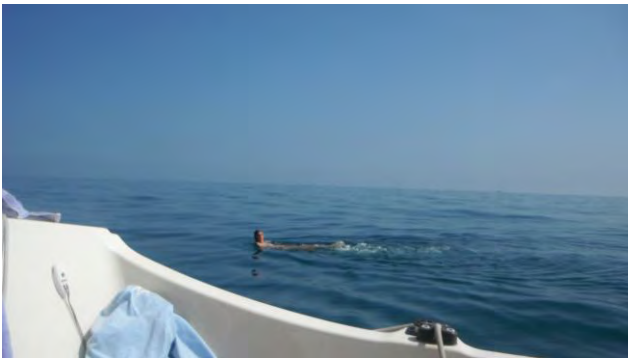
Arriving at Binic at 4pm presented a problem though! No water to get in till 18:30! We gingerly headed in and anchored in the sandy bay using the new small 'Danforth' anchor which is now holding remarkably well in on good onshore breeze. Tide is coming at 2.6m per hr! Can you believe that? Tea was made with a bounce factor down below!

Boats started mustering at 6pm. We noseied into the harbour and clung onto a huge wall. The spacing between the ladders and bollards was too large for a small Shrimper! The wall was encrusted in limpets. When the water met the prescribed height inside, the gates opened, bridge lifted and out poured the contents of harbour... Boats catching the evening tide to wherever. We entered and found a mooring spot alongside a pontoon, next to a British boat; Peter & Shiela, sailing out of Castle Cove sailing club. We moved out to let a bigger boat in and rafted up along side them. Showers were in order. We are now having a restaurant meal in the "Neptune". Quite posh. Very busy. Very French. Now waiting for the main. Log being written into the Imray track capture software.

Binic - Paimpol

Thursday Aug 08, 2013 08:45 CEST

Lisa went to buy provisions from the Boulangerie spotted last night, while I readied the boat for sea. We had to get out of the harbour by 9:00 or we would be there till the next high tide. 'Pain au chocolate et cafe' went down very well as we motored out of the harbour. The wall which loomed above us last night now being a mere couple of feet



above the water. We slowly got the sails up in the light Northerly. It looked like a beat all the way. However, the wind freed and we hugged the coast passed St. Quay Portreaux. The wind then disappeared and we continued to drift in 2kts of tide. The sun came out and I went for a swim. We tested out the rope ladder and concluded that it was best over the rudder, with the feet jamming into the blade. Mark perfected the technique, one legged, (due to a knee problem!) and had much amusement

watching Lisa trying to get latched in. The wind started to come in and was not possible to keep up with the boat swimming, so we continued to sail/drift until level with the natural harbour entrance outside Paimpol, which from a distance just seemed to be a mass of rocks. The tide tried to take us past and we ran through the narrow channel in building breeze.

We ate lunch en-route and then anchored to wait for the water to rise sufficiently to navigate the channel to Paimpol. A launch came up to us and took our details, gave us a berth number and time to enter the lock. Time to get the guitar out... again!

The horizon became a mass of sails, all converging on the pool where we were anchored. Boats of all shapes and sizes, but all with traditional lines, amassed around us till it was



time to up anchor and sail the 3 mile Chanel to the Paimpol lock. 18:05 was our allotted time. Not sure if this was setting off or arriving though! Our journey up the channel was spectacular... Other traditional craft under sail, with the banks lined



with spectators for mile after mile! Arriving at the lock the crowds did not abate. Nor did the crowds of boats! We just missed getting in to the first lock and had to wait. We went to a wall to avoid motoring in circles, but next time the lock filled up before we could get close! So we hovered and made sure we had pole position for the next lock full! Nearly getting squashed on several occasions we were in and tied onto an old blue open fishing boat, converted into pleasure boat. We were first out of the lock and through a second open lock to cheers and clapping from the massed crowds! Maybe they thought we had sailed the English channel to get here? Well we had, but not by ourselves!

Our finger berth is perfectly situated by the far end with other small craft and a stones through from the circle of cafes. Music is coming from speakers on the lamp posts! A drum sounds. A drone starts up. Pipes pick out a melody. Time to get the guitar out... again.

The number of boats is impossible to describe. They fill the large harbour. From huge sailing ships to rowing boats. Tanned sails or cream sails de-rigour. Bunting a must. Our red ensign looks a little pathetic! And we left the flag pole at home since the last got broken in the 'Round The Island' race.



The Paimpol festival will be described elsewhere. (And if anyone has got this far reading you really should book tickets to go next year. The French do know how to put on a festival!) calling it a "festival du chant Marin" belies the range of world music on offer. Every street corner has a band. Countless boats have stages. There are three 'big marquees', plus a harbour peninsular stage and a small 'arena venue' in the adjacent park. So I'm sorted. (Only problem being the knee that demands it should be rested! another not so good story, but talking to other sailors, an all too common one.) Then there are food stalls, French craft stalls, boating stalls, fashion stalls. And so on. So Lisa is sorted.

Paimpol - Ile de Bréhat

Monday Aug 12, 2013
09:00 CEST



For this log we will leave on the morning of the day after the last day of festivities. We were in bed by 2am and music was still playing all around. The alarm went at 8:15 to catch the first lock out. It was grey and there was rain in the air. We rolled over and eased out at 8:30. Boats were now moving and Lisa went to pick up last minute provisions before getting our place in the lock queue. We moored up so Lisa could take a 'little trip, and then barged our way in between bigger boats. We are learning! We held too along side 'Providence of Brixham', a 1900's sailing trawler. Running out into the channel at 10:30, we got the kettle on to have coffee with our croissants. The wind picked up as we hardened up around the headland so we turned back to finish our breakfast and get our oilies on.



Back in the channel were all the big ships having come though on the high water, so we had a change of plan and followed them out of the main Chanel. We chased 'Etoile de Roy', the 'Pirate' boat and got some photos. The sun came out for the purpose. On the way back we crossed many more... 'Fee de..', 'Biches'! Etc. It was then a short beat in a good breeze to the Ile de Bréhat. We motored into the harbours to find a spot to dry out, but it was too crowded. So we dropped anchor of the beach at 'Men Allan' bay and had a peaceful, lazy afternoon in the sunshine. We had purchased a whole box of veg from a display boat closing up on the last day and so had fried fennel, peppers and tomatoes with cured sausage in red wine. The rocks are all pink granite which glows in the rays of the dying sun. The boat is bobbing gently up and down. The wind is a quite chilly North Westerly. I am just going to go and light the paraffin lamp for the night.

Ile de Bréhat - Tréguier

Tuesday Aug 13, 2013 10:00 CEST

We had a leisurely start, waiting for the tide to turn in our favour, for a beat round the headland west to Tréguier. First a quick reach round the back of the Ile de Bréhat in the sun. Turning into the wind required full oilies. The tide swept us round, the sea churning as it squeezed round the rocky headland. There were rocks everywhere with distances



very hard to judge and a narrow gap between a Cardinal and lighthouse to find. Once in the channel the sea calmed down and it was a simple matter of following the green posts into the river. Tréguier is 3 miles up a deep river that is navigable at all states of the tide. The only issue being the currents that rip along! We approached nearing low water. Entering the tree lined valley we got the sails down and motored the last couple of miles. Rounding a bend, the medieval town with honeycomb spire open into view. We berthed in the large marina climbing the exit board at an alarming angle. After paying and showering we went into town for dinner at 'Bistro de Ernest': Foie gras and grilled Prawns for me and Lisa had a lemon tart to remember!

The town was quite spectacular. Like going back in time. Timber framed houses in all states of repair and a massive cathedral.

We had coffee in the yacht bar and charged our phones and iPad. 'Depot de Pain' was advertised. When asked what time the lady said 6:30 or was it 10:30? Bed time for an early start!

Tréguier- st Quay Portrieux

Wednesday Aug 14, 2013 06:16 CEST

The alarm was set at 06:15 to leave the river at slack water and catch the tide as it started its flood East.

Lisa was sent to the 'depot du pain', but it was firmly shut. The sun did not rise till 7am! Impatient we set off down the river. The grey gave way to a glowing pink, and then deep blue, with a slither of bright light on the upper edge of the port bank. A light breeze tempted us to cut the engine and we eased gently into the channel and the flooding tide. It was a run to start, but the wind started to swing. Round the headland again, like a Lemmon pip squeezed between the fingers. The wind was now on the nose, as predicted, but we bore away keeping our pace. Decision time. To anchor and wait for more wind, go up river to a village and call it a day, or push on another 10 miles or so to St. Quay Portrieux. We had another 2 hours of favourable tide before it turned so we pushed on.

We quickly got round the Ile de Bréhat, but the the wind died and we drifted at 2 kts just driven by the tide. Lisa cooked Risotto with peas and smelly cheese for lunch as we had "non pain" due to the misunderstanding in opening hours! Very tasty too. The backing wind made our course a fetch as predicted but it then died as the tide turned and we needed the engine. Even with the engine we struggled to do 4 kts against the tide. We went into the cliffs to look at the beaches from which WW2 crews were rescued. 315 ft high cliffs. The highest in Brittany with no obvious paths to them. Ideal to hide away.

The last leg under engine was a bit tedious, but the wind did eventually come.

It had been a long day. Forecast for tomorrow is not much better! Force 5 has been delayed, "thank God" says Lisa, "damn" says Mark.

St Quay Portrieux is a strange place. Lovely beaches spread over 4 coves. Ugly concrete apartments. Mobile home park next to modern yacht harbour. Like a French Torquay: except, instead of 'fish and chips' shops and semi clad teenage girls with big breasts hanging out; here we have 'moules and frites', (or Crepes) with thin French girls sucking away on cigarettes.



St Quay Portreaux - Erquy

Thursday Aug 15, 2013 12:00 CEST

Thursday was 'A level' results day, so we went into the marina bar for a late breakfast and had a face book and i-messenger conversation with Alice. A, B, C. Media, Art, English. More than enough to get her into Bournemouth to do Fashion Design. Very happy all round. Jack was busy producing his film and so we set off content that our offsprings were at one with the world.

There was not a lot of breeze, but it did build slowly. Our objective was just across the bay, but because of the late start we missed the favourable tide. A few wind shifts later and we were beating. It was getting late and close to low water when we entered Erquy: a picture postcard setting with two parallel sea walls protecting a fishing harbour with one row of restaurants tucked under the cliffs. If last night had



been Torquay, this was St. Mawes. Upper class. No moules and chip. No French equivalent of UKs chip fat ladies. Only one Creperie. Less cigarette smoking. We left the boat with the bathers on the beach and walked across the sand to a fish restaurant where we had the 22€ special: Fish soup, sardines followed by Breton Far. We needed to get

back to the boat before the tide started to come in again. We intended to walk along the



harbour wall but it was cordoned off, (you will see why later!) so went across the mud instead; I slipped, much to Lisa's amusement. We rigged a stern line to keep us afloat in the morning and then it was dark. Boats started to congregate. Then at 11pm the firework display started. It was like having prime viewing for New Year's Eve fireworks on the South Bank. They were perfectly synchronised lighting the sky with the most impressive show. It didn't let up for half an hour, showering us with burst of golds, yellows, reds, blues, silvers. We eventually got to bed, the end of a perfect day.

Erquy - st Jacut du Mer

Friday Aug 16, 2013 10:30 CEST

We woke up to a grey sky and no wind. The boat bottomed at 9am and we went ashore for a coffee before heading off round cape Erquy. The only open cafe was a spit and sawdust dive that was already serving two locals alcohol! We had 'deux cafe au lait'; the WC facilities excelled however with rotating toilet seat plastic cover!

The wind built as we ran to cape Fréhell. The ant size people grew larger as we approached. The cliffs loomed large above and the water boiled as it squeezed round the point. We could see 'Fort de Latte' and went to take a closer look. Then a bearing of 120 degrees to Briac sur Mer. There was a town at that bearing and so we sailed towards it. However, an unmarked cardinal appeared and all of a sudden the islands were in the wrong place! The tide had swept us 30 degrees off course. We just missed a reef and had to beat back 2 miles into the 'St Jacut' bay. There was a fleet of tanned sailed boats racing. We were sailing up to thier finish line and got a gun as we crossed! They were also Cornish Shrimpers and Crabbers. Quite amassing. The old crabbers looked much more stylish then the modern version. We explored the creeks in the rain, but there were too many boats to find a mooring, so we headed up the bay to St. Jacut harbour, which while a beautiful spot, dried out 2 hrs after HW!! The whole bay drying at half tide. We anchored then realised and moved rapidly! We found a nice island where other boats were anchoring and cooked chorizo sausage with cous cous for dinner. Then an early bed in a building wind with grey skies.

St Jacut - St Malo

Saturday Aug 17, 2013 10:30 CEST

As I lay in my bunk looking through the porthole the dark grey sky gave way to blue. A ray of sun reflected off the water making a dancing circle of light that made its way round the boat as we gently drifted around on the anchor. The deserted island with a white sandy bay looked very inviting. We motored in and lay a stern anchor as well as a bow anchor to stop the boat ride up the beach. We then made chocolate gallettes flambéd with drambue for breakfast! We had no bread!

After exploring the island we hoisted the sails and set off round 'Le grand Jardin' to St. Malo. Given yesterday's navigational issues Lisa plotted the course with china graph pencil on the waterproof cover of the chart and the Mark put a reef in the sail.

It was a 'run' to start, with a massive tide sweeping us onto the rocks. We gybed off and kept a look out for the port hand buoys that marked the entrance. Not easy to spot! We then picked up the lighthouse on the route the ferries take. St Malo's walled city looks spectacular from the sea. Past a castle the city walls growing larger. The wind got up as we neared land and we got in the shelter of a headland to get the sails down. However, the peak halyard's splice got jammed in the block and main wouldn't come down. My hat blew in the water in the panic! We turned to free the halyard and get the hat! However, there was too much happening and the hat disappeared. Eventually the sail came down. Lisa tied up the flogging sail and we motored to find the hat. We gave up and drove in only to find it being eaten by seagulls in the entrance to the marina. To start we were turned away by the attendant as they were too full, due to a race arrival. However, when they realised we were only 6 m they found us a finger berth and we quickly found the showers! Then into St. Malo to explore again.



St Malo- Dinan

Sunday Aug 18, 2013 08:30 CEST

We woke to the sound of rain on the decks. The alarm had been set to get the next to last lock up "La Barrage" on the dropping tide. We put our oilies on, untied and set off, by motor, the mile up to the lock. We were there with just two minutes to spare and were the only boat going up. The traffic stopped for the lift bridge and we made our way in.

La Rance was glassy with the rain having turned to drizzle. We motored up stream until we found a restaurant with landing stage and went to have 'petit dejeuner' and waited for the wind to fill and stream to stop ebbing so aggressively before setting off. It was too early for Jack and Alice to answer any iMessages via the internet at the hotel.

Lisa had a sleep and I played guitar while clouds cleared and breeze filled in. We ran against the stream until there was no water left, then tried to tie up at la Plouer to check on the car etc. Not easy. The water stays low for some time before the sluice gates on the hydro power station are opened then it rises very rapidly. We left it a couple of hours to give water up the drying channel to Dinan. The river narrowed to a steep walled gorge, where the wind disappeared and the motor had to be used. Past some ancient plaice fishing huts, now defunct due to the hydro Barrage. Also past some old tidal mills which used to capture the energy of the 12m tide in the same way as the modern tidal barrier.



With some relief the lock at Chantelier was operating and we passed through, exchanging the tidal estuary for brown canal. A picturesque 3 mile motor along the winding river/ canal brought us to the sight of Dinan high on the cliffs above. A medieval town with timber framed buildings and cobbled streets reaching down to the canal. It was late and we moored against a ramshackle finger pontoon before heading up to find a restaurant for a last posh meal! Probably the best so far! Prawns in spicy creamy sauce, Duck breast with foie gras, and cheese to finish it off. We then stopped to listen to some Jazz coming out of a little cafe, with a superb Sax player. I sat on a bar stool with no leg support and then getting down found I could not walk, the cartilage in my knee having rearranged itself. (I had torn it six weeks earlier whilst racing and was due for an operation on return from holiday.) It blew up like a balloon. Getting back down was a serious problem, and the night very uncomfortable. Not Good news for the last day when we needed to get the boat out, mast down, and all sorted.

Dinan - Plouér sur Rance

Monday Aug 19, 2013 08:30 CEST

The last day was only a short motor back down the canal, through the lock and back to the slip way at Plouér, but I could hardly move around the boat with the swollen knee. We set off early to catch the start of the ebb, retracing our path in the early morning sun.



The brown canal waters being exchanged for clear sea water, then through the narrow sill gate into Plouér Marina and our slipway.

A few hours later the boat was back on its trailer ready for the ferry journey home. The end of a most memorable voyage. Polly's first big adventure!

Mark Pollington, Polly (1067)

Round trip: Plouér sur Rance; 48°31'.42N 1°59'.45W

Start: Monday Aug 6, 2013 End: Monday Aug 19, 2013

Duration: 11sailing days

Distance: 216NM

Made with Imray-Tucabo charts, on my iPad! What an excellent tool; it made clipped onto the mast down below decks, recording our every movement. Log entry software included.

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