

18th-19th June 2004

Fresh home from university after a term of hand-ins and exams the mention of a trip around Land's End was a welcome challenge. We had undertaken the same trip to Falmouth almost exactly a year ago; however had ended up motor-sailing a lot of the way as the wind kept coming onto the nose after rounding almost every headland! The brisk northerlies coming out of a new low provided the perfect wind for the trip. Having come home from work early on Friday Martin was keen to get going and by 17.00 the boat was being loaded up with provisions at Rock and by half past we were off.

Once out of the shelter of the estuary we were greeted by a good NNW 3 to 4, steep seas, and several boats coming into Padstow for the night, one of which was a small French boat no bigger than a shrimper which gave us some reassurance. By 18.30 we were rounding Trevoze Head where we were lucky enough to meet a basking shark feeding on plankton and giving us a good display of his huge mouth. At this point we were able to free off slightly and head South West for St Ives. As with most of these trips we tend to play them by ear and our original idea was to perhaps spend the night in Newquay; however we were making such good progress we were off Newquay at 19.30 so decided to continue to St Ives which was appearing on the horizon some 20 miles off. A strong force 4 gave us a good broad reach down the coast; the occasional threatening line squall driving in from the north had us taking in the odd reef here and there however we were lucky enough to avoid the worst of them.

Before we could head straight for the lights of St Ives we had to get past our waypoint set on The Stones, a line of rocks that run out from Godrevy point which we wanted to avoid! Once around the flashing navigational marker we were able to head straight into St Ives which we reached by 12.30. We found the harbour to be totally dry so dropped an anchor 200 yards off in relatively calm water and turned in.

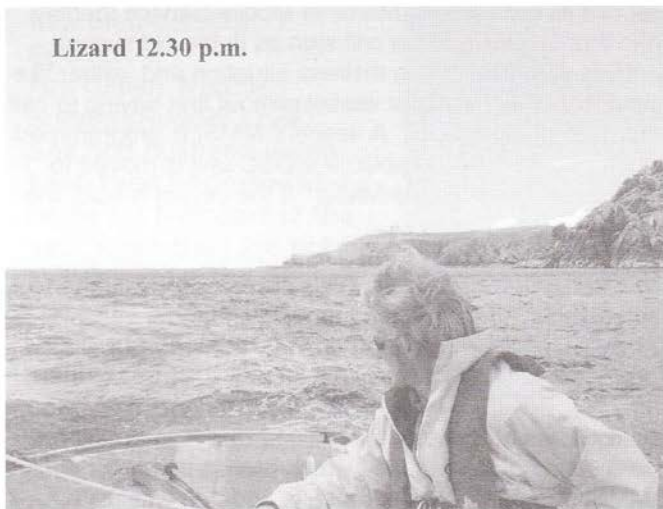
By 03.30 we were awake and keen to move on, as we no longer had the shelter afforded by the low tide. Being a student early mornings are not my forte and I was amazed to see bright sunlight



at 04.00 in the morning! I took the helm for the next leg of our journey down to Pendeen light which we reached by 06.00, still with a good force 4 and steep seas. We timed the tide right around Lands End and shot round. This really is the

most exciting part of this particular trip, the coastline is littered with interesting lighthouses and the remains of old tin mines, and is a spectacular part of the Cornish coast.

09.00 rounded Gwennap Head, inside the Runnel Stone. In the distance the tip of the Lizard was in sight. Crossing Mounts Bay saw the much-needed fried breakfast being created in not the most desirable cooking conditions; however it was well worth it! By now we were on a broad reach with a force 5 possibly 6. We



reached the Lizard at 12.30 and despite the beginnings of a foul tide we rounded it quicker than expected and were soon on our way to Black Head. From the Manacles Buoy our next target became visible, the dark silhouette of Dodman Point. Again our plans depended on the wind and we decided that although Fowey was much further away it would be easier to keep going

than to have to beat into the wind for Falmouth. With one mobile phone having reacted badly to a taste of salt water and mine being low on credit we kept in contact with mum via text message enabling us to inform her of our change in plans.

This final leg was one of the longest and required the most attention as we were close hauled and had trouble keeping way on in the short seas created by a force 6. By 17.00 our destination was in sight and we passed Mevagissey with the company of another boat, which made me realise how few boats we had seen.

We reached Fowey at 19.30 and welcomed the shelter of its steep wooded valleys.

We were grateful for the knowledge that we could fall back on the power of an inboard engine; in fact we only used a gallon of fuel thanks to the favourable wind direction. All in all a very enjoyable trip made all the better by the challenge of strong winds and rough seas, yet another testament to the ability of these solid little boats.