

Bumble Chugger's voyage to the Scilly Isles

After a great 25th Anniversary Shrimper Week at Falmouth, we decided to sail over to the Scilly Isles via Newlyn and spend a few days there. Sunday 25 June dawned very misty and we couldn't even see the other side of the harbour at Falmouth. Our friend Tony, who was sailing single handed in his Shrimper *S/by Talk*, had decided to do the whole trip in one day. By 9 o'clock the mists were just beginning to lift as we motored out past Black Rock through glassy water. There was not a lot of wind, but we were able to motor sail round the Manacles. Beyond these, we could see a great white blanket moving in from the sea and draping itself over the cliffs of the Lizard. Before getting to it we found ourselves surrounded by many triangular black fins circling us - basking sharks! They must have been huge creatures, fifteen foot plus, and we saw over thirty!

It was ominous moving into the fog, but we gradually acclimatized, and when occasionally visibility was reduced to 20 yards we relied on our GPS map to show us the rocks. The fog started lifting some way out into Mount's Bay, and St Michael's Mount came into sight. Five miles from



Newlyn the wind became favourable and we finally arrived at 3 pm.

The inner harbour at Newlyn was very different from our last visit; fishing boats were still moored to the quay on the right and rafted up 5 or 6 deep, but all the rest of the harbour was filled with pontoons and walkways for a smart new marina. It wasn't quite finished and we were not allowed to use it. There wasn't a lot of spare room but we eventually tied up to a little blue and white boat leaving just enough room for the fishing vessels to squeeze past.

The next morning, after a shower and a quick breakfast, we set off with very little wind under grey skies, again accompanied by basking sharks. We followed down the coast and past the Runnel Stone and then headed out to sea on course for the Scilly Isles, at one point being able to see the Longships Lighthouse behind us and the Wolf Rock in front. The grey skies lowered over us and it began to drizzle; the drizzle became rain, and then it rained and rained, solid sheets of it, for about 3 or 4 hours. We got soaked - it even came through our new sailing suits and it was extremely cold. It was a really miserable sail, but eventually the clouds started to lift and the rain stopped. It seemed to take forever getting past Wolf Rock, and then at last we could see a very faint outline of land. There was a misty haze over it, and this didn't improve as we got nearer. We hoped it wasn't going to persist.

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At last we could make out houses and trees on St Mary's, and then about 3 pm we were chugging round the amazing rock formations of Peninnis Head and into the calm anchorage of Porth Cressa. There were 7 or 8 other boats moored there, but no Tony. Once we were anchored we tried his mobile, but could not get through.



Rob's brother had told us of a fantastic fish restaurant that was over a fish and chip shop in Hugh Town. He didn't know the name but said we needed to book. So we went ashore to wander round the town and luckily found the Galley Restaurant. On enquiring at the fish and chip shop we were able to book the last table for that evening, which was available at 6. It was 5.30 now, so we explored a bit and visited the local church, which was looking very decorative with a flower festival on. The food at the Galley Restaurant was expensive but quite excellent. On our return to *Bumble Chugger* Gillie checked her mobile again and found a message from Tony, who had moved on to St Agnes and was sampling the beer in The Turk's Head. We rang him back at the pub, but he had left by then.

Tuesday - after a visit ashore to get bread, we set off for St Agnes and sailed round into The Cove just as the sun was beginning to break through. Half a dozen boats were anchored there, but no *Shy Talk*. The Cove is between St Agnes and Gugh, with a sandy bar connecting the two islands that covers at high water. We had a lovely walk round Gugh (pronounced Goo), which is more or less uninhabited. All the birds and the flowers growing wild everywhere were beautiful. We had views over a brilliant blue and green sea to the other islands, and we came upon rocky coves colonised by noisy seagulls and oyster catchers.



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Having crossed the bar to St Agnes, it was quite easy to find The Turk's Head. No message had been left for us, and we took our drinks to a table outside overlooking the little harbour and watched boatloads of people being deposited and disappearing up the road into the island.

Bumble Chugger was nearly aground when we got back, and we got very wet getting out, with the waves breaking on the shallow sandy beach.

After a quick lunch we set off out of The Cove, motor sailing up Smith Sound between the Western Rocks and the west coast of St Agnes. There were spectacular rocks all round us, and it was quite difficult to see where the main channel was. We worked our way past Annet into St Mary's Road and from there into the channel between Samson and Bryher on the one side and Tresco on the other. It was fairly low water and it was very shallow. We went aground once, and then luckily an open ferry boat passed us and we were able to follow its zigzags along the channel until it led us right into Tresco Harbour. And there anchored was a little white Shrimper!



We hailed Tony, and stopped beside him while we caught up on each other's news. He had had a reasonable crossing though he'd had to motor most of the way and a lot of it had been in fog. He had visited the gardens and said they were well worth seeing, so we anchored a few yards off and went ashore. We reached the entrance to the gardens, seemingly by a very circuitous route, only to find them shut at 4 pm and we'd missed it by 15 minutes. We returned along a path that took us by the sea - a bit shorter with fantastic views over to the other islands.



The next day the gardens opened at 10 o'clock and Gillie returned for a visit. It was well worth going to, with an abundance of colourful flowers and trees with fountains in an amazing rocky terraced setting, wound through by little paths. The Valhalla Museum was also worth a visit - figureheads and name boards salvaged from wrecks in the area.

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When Gillie returned we all met up at The New Inn and sat in the garden with our drinks in the sun, surrounded by flowers. This was definitely the life! We went to get sandwiches for lunch, but on finding they were £10 each, we returned for lunch on board.

At 2 o'clock we up anchored and did a gentle meander northwards, passing Shrimper *Lucy* moored off Bryher, Cromwell's Castle, and then out through New Grimsby Sound. Old Grimsby Sound took us southwards again by the islands off the east coast of Treco.



We dropped anchor in Tean Sound between Tean and St Martin's. Tony was not happy with the holding on the bottom and went off round the corner to a bay off Tean. Later he picked us up in his smart motorised dinghy and putt putt us to the shore. He had investigated The Seven Stones Inn earlier, and his recommendation was spot on. We climbed the hillside by a narrow winding path, and had our meal on a terrace overlooking a superb view of the sea. On our return, we moved *Bumble Chugger* round to Tony's bay, and we had a very comfy night there.



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On Thursday we awoke to a blue sky but with high clouds, and there was a brisker feel to the SE wind. A gentle breeze took us across to Watermill Cove on St Mary's, but it wasn't too well sheltered and so we continued round to St Mary's Pool, and who should just be arriving but three Crabbers from Falmouth. We all moored up to a pontoon and exchanged notes of our voyages. We then went down to the beach by the harbour wall with our picnic lunch and sketched - a difficult view of the bay with two large fishing boats in the foreground. We then wandered along the beach, and up to a little lookout tower on a hill. Wonderful views all round and we could trace all our voyaging.



We shopped and returned to the boats and caught up with post cards and diary. After hearing the shipping forecast we headed ashore again with Tony and picked up fish and chips below the Galley Restaurant. There was a public garden nearby and we went and sat on a bench in there, as several other people were doing. We all agreed it was the best fish and chips we'd ever had.

It was early to bed for our early morning start. It was not at all a peaceful night, as the black plastic pontoon we were tied up against squeaked against the boats.

We were up early on Friday to hear the shipping forecast at 5.20am. After a quick breakfast we followed Tony out into St Mary's Sound and started the long slog back to Falmouth. It was a grey overcast day with very little wind. We eventually arrived at Mylor Harbour at 6.30pm thankful to have got back.

Robin and Gillie Whittle *Bumble Chugger (124)*