

**Ted Palmer's Shrimper Week Log**

This year, Shrimper Week took place over two weeks, no longer just one week - to make it worthwhile trailing and ferrying to Brittany. Some had merely crossed the channel to St. Malo or Roscoff; others had trailed 1,200 m from Holland, from the Isle of Man or from Scotland.

Sail No.	Boat Name	Skipper	Crew
	No Boat	Martin Howard	Merlin Planterose
38	Alba	Wilfred Coon	Ann & Peter Coon
124	Bumble Chugger	Robin Whittle	Gillie Whittle
245	Boyers Shrimper	Mark Osborn	
288	Moby Dick	Harry Breuking	
435	Black Sheep	Ian Fisher	Christine & George Fisher
455	Georgie Girl	Karen Weston	Ian Niven & Avis Niven
480	Pintail	Ronald Langkemper	Emily Langkemper
488	Albert	John Clogg	
520	Kittiwake	Ted Palmer	Robert Antipov
549	Lady Isabella	Bryan Gullan	Anthony Gullan
566	Whitecap	Herman Legger	Jasper de Boer
598	Scalawag	Claud Lanyon	Sheila Lanyon
676	Outrigger	Tony Coups	Rosemary Coups
849	Clementine	Barry Mellor	Carol & Richard Shaw

We all met up to launch the Shrimpers on the non-tidal River Aulne at Port Launay on **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> July**. It would take a good journalist to describe the variety of contortions exhibited by our shoal of Shrimpers in launching; displays of techniques, skills, experience, trailer design, slipway gradient all help to keep the bystander interested (and entertained). Some had launched early and cruised up river and canal - but the weather did not contribute - it was very wet and windy, however it was a very pleasant, peaceful, tidy and uncrowded choice of launching site providing also space for parking.

Next day, **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July** we were off down river to pass through the sea lock at 2 hours before high water and then steamed off 12 miles down the twisting tidal river into a stiff NNW with frequent rain squalls. The ignition on Harry's outboard failed at the lock so he was towed by a variety of enthusiastic potential salvage claimants until eventually John fouled his prop with a line, which upset his engine. Herman and Jasper stayed behind with John - by now aground on the riverbank and kept the VHF channels humming. Ian took over the tow so by 1600 - 1800 we all arrived (minus John and Herman) to pick up moorings or anchor at Landévennec where the river flows out into the vast expanse of the Rade de Brest. That evening we had a drinks Reception, Press Conference and Dinner (free) with the local Mayor and dignitaries. We also had the opportunity of meeting up with our French colleagues of the Association *Française de*

*Propriétaires des Cornish Crabbers (AFPCC)* with their President, Pierre Déleage. Pierre had fixed a fine programme of cruising, racing and entertainment for us with his team of André, Michel and wives and two RIBS to keep us in order. We were also joined by more French Shrimpers making our total about 18 boats.

Next **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>** we beat with two reefs against tide, a stiff force 5 and a short sea over to Tinduff where we had a picnic in the sheltered harbour supplemented by a gift of local strawberries and tomatoes. After lunch, all but two made it against a force 6 gusting 7 W by N to Roscanvel on the west side of the Rade, it really was bumpy and gusty and Karen managed single-handed with the end of her boom dipping in the water from time to time. I am sorry to say that in the heat of the battle I caught Karen and the Coons on starboard and they kindly bore away. We had reasonably sheltered mooring off this pleasant little village where we were able to pick up our "papers" for Brest and the AFPCC programme. We then marched up to Salle de Fêtes at the Mairie for another reception by the local Mayor and dignitaries (and speeches). By then we had our beautifully designed Cornish Crabber tee shirts and had seen we were advertised as a "tourist" attraction. The village was in a festival mode and that evening we had paella on the quay provided by the locals.

By **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>** John (without boat) and Herman had joined us and Harry had left us. The weather was still dull, unsettled, windy and wet but we had two short races in the morning; both won by the Whittles but closely fought by Pierre, Karen and the Mellors. We were free after that - some cruised, some slept, some walked, some got their cars and some visited Brest (about 5 miles across the Rade).

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup>** - thick mist (a sign of better weather?) and less wind. Racing in the morning with Mark showing his skills but you can't see a yellow boat with white sails when he gets so far ahead in poor visibility (did you really go round all the marks, Mark?).

In the evening we had another super supper in the Salle de Fêtes followed by Breton dancing (not a patch on Scottish) and fireworks on the quay.

Strange goings-on on **Friday 14<sup>th</sup>** - Bastille Day - knots coming undone, dinghies going adrift (arrested by les Douanes) and people falling in the water. Pierre had obtained sponsorship to cover the costs of the week (most meals seemed to be free) so some of us took employees of the sponsors for a sail over to Le Fret, about 4 miles away on the south of the Rade. After an unlimited seafood buffet, it is amazing how well a Shrimper goes to windward in a Force 5 with 5 up (including 3 Frenchman). By now people had collected cars and some chose accommodation ashore. This is one of the strengths of Shrimper weeks - it caters for those grown-up Boy Scouts who are prepared to "camp out" on board and "squat" when necessary and those who are able to experience the luxury of a "sit down" and the foibles of French plumbing.

On **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup>** more guests and seafood at Le Fret after a damp drizzle start to the day. By now most people had spent a night over at the Festival at Brest - a fantastic collection of boats, exhibitions and activities that I can't begin to describe. On **Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>** we stole a march on the fleet by sailing on our first sunny day round to Camaret, 1/4 the way to Douarnenez. We were supposed to do a passage race but this was abandoned after an hour of no wind. By a variety of routes out of the Rade we arrived at Camaret by beer time. By 19.30 we were off by car over the headland to our final dinner (spit-roasted whole pig), speeches and prize giving at Roscanvel - the Whittles won the Cup for racing and Herman the Plate for exemplary conduct (on condition he withdrew his salvage claim). We said goodbye and thank you to the AFPCC after more presentation of souvenirs.

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup>** was the great day of the parade of sail: 2000-3000 boats - sail, row, canoe, steam, motor, all sizes and shapes - proceeding the 30 odd miles from Brest to Douarnenez out of the Rade, south along a rocky coastline. We joined the fleet from Camaret most had to motor to keep up 3 knots until the sea breeze blew us home in the afternoon. We were well marshalled to our mooring up river so we could get ashore, see the sights and enjoy the party. A superb bit of organisation for a sleepy fishing village - except too few loos, boulangerie difficult to find and you could only buy petrol in tons from the fishing port, not just for our empty 5 litre can.

On our second evening in Douarnenez, we organised a DIY BBQ, with the addition of number of homemade delicacies (including some mouth-watering beans). This was followed by a series of hotly contested dinghy (inflatable) races over a torturous course in the river. Anthony (Lady Isabella) won the "men's" race and Karen (Georgie Girl) won the "ladies" plate. Thanks to Ian Fisher for this piece of inspiration.

The party continued with unorganised variety while the Festival put on regattas, parades and demonstrations. Shrimpers scuttled away at various times to find slipways, cars, trailers, ferries in a variety of directions and I hope most got home. Thanks to Barry and Richard who not only knew what was supposed to be happening but shepherded us around and interpreted to ensure that we knew too - I am sure they will pass on our thanks to the AFPCC.

**The following extracts were taken from Robin & Gillie Whittle's Log (124)**

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup>** Woke to wind and rain and grey skies.... More Shrimpers were arriving and we felt sorry for them rigging and launching in the pouring rain. After lunch we'd had enough of sitting in the cabin and set off to explore Douarnenez Bay from the landside. The views must have been magnificent, but unfortunately they were shrouded in mist. The miles and miles of sandy-beached bays were all deserted apart from a few intrepid sail-boarders. We headed for Morgat to check the slipway as a possible place for retrieving 'Bumble Chugger' at the end of the

holiday, and stopped to have a walk over the rocks and out along the jetty. We then continued to Cap de la Chevre, a very windswept headland with views out over the Atlantic and the Baie de Douarnenez to the Pointe du Raz, again hidden from view by the clouds. On our return to Morgat we found a creperie and felt our holiday had really got going after a good meal of crepes and cider.

**Monday 10<sup>th</sup>** I cycled into Châteaulin after breakfast to do some shopping. On my return the last of the Shrimpers was being launched and we then had a fleet of 11 British and 3 Dutch boats. Barry Mellor gathered us all together for a briefing and we set off to go through the lock at 11am, just downstream of the railway bridge. We all got through in one lot, with a certain amount of jostling, and set off down the Aulne, under motor against a fresh breeze. For a few reaches we had the jib up but they were short lived. It was grey with intermittent rain, and it was not until our return journey ten days later that we appreciated what a pretty river it was, with reeds along the banks and trees growing down to the water, later opening up with fields and hills rising at the sides. We passed a little cottage set in a clearing in the trees and a young couple in the garden waived to us and beckoned us over. They asked us if we were going to Brest and joining in the procession to Douarnenez. When we said yes, they cried 'See you there' as we moved on.

We reached Landévennec and found a mooring. It was late afternoon when we rowed ashore for the reception and dinner being provided for us by the mayor. It was a tough row against the wind and very wet - we sat well covered up in our sailing gear, followed by a short walk up the hill past the church to the venue at the Hotel de Beau Sejour. While we waited for the mayor to turn up, we heard about the adventures of the boats that had come out of the lock behind us. 'Moby Dick' (Harry, the Dutch Association Secretary) had problems with its outboard engine, the electrics had failed, and 'Albert' (John Clogg) took him in tow. All went well until 3 miles from Landévennec when 'Albert' got a rope snagged round its prop, which caused serious damage to the mountings of the inboard engine. 'Black Sheep' (Ian Fisher) and 'Georgie Girl' (Karen Weston) were nearby and went to the rescue. 'Black Sheep' started to tow 'Moby Dick' and 'Georgie Girl' tried to tow 'Albert'. 'Black Sheep' was equipped with an outboard engine powerful enough to tow 'Moby Dick', but 'Georgie Girl' did not have enough power to prevent 'Albert' drifting onto the mud in the strong wind, where it became firmly stuck on a falling tide. 'White Cap' (Herman Legger) anchored close to 'Albert' and stayed there. Half way through our meal Carol Mellor set off from the hotel with a hamper of food and climbed down the cliff to where John was stranded. Finally a French catamaran managed to tow him off at about 11 at night. John Clogg recorded that this was the most terrifying part of the adventure as the Frenchmen aboard the catamaran had been drinking solidly for five hours before!! The meal was preceded by a group photograph with the mayor, who looked very casual - no gold chains draped across his chest as mayors usually proudly display on these occasions in England. There were three long tables laid up for us and

a table crossing at the end of the room laden with beautifully arranged dishes of food: cold meats and pate and salads, plenty of French bread and a barrel full of red wine, where we could fill up carafes for the tables. This was followed by a Breton speciality - a sort of custardy tart filled with prunes, and then coffee. The Commune of Landévennec had provided all this free for us. We kept coming across this amazing hospitality throughout our stay.

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>** We had a good night in spite of the nasty chop and had a hearty cooked breakfast of eggs and bacon. Barry gave us all a radio call at 9.30 with instructions to sail to Tinduff for a picnic lunch. We were soon packed up and on our way, well wrapped up in our wet weather gear and with the sail reefed. Tinduff quay is not a particularly interesting place, but the people there, friends of M. Didier, were very hospitable. As soon as we moored up someone rushed over with a crate full of tomatoes, and then another one full of punnets of strawberries - both local grown specialities, and then as the other boats arrived, more boxes were handed out. The sun came out briefly while we were there, and it was very pleasant, but by 2.30 we had to leave to get to Roscanvel. The wind hit us when we got out into the main channel. It became a long, hard slog against the wind gusting 7 with short steep waves building up. We passed the French nuclear submarine base on Ile Longue, and had to alter course round their prohibited buoyed area, which was quite tricky in those conditions. We finally got to Roscanvel at about a quarter to six.

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>** It was a reasonable day when we woke, but it didn't last and was soon grey again. It was to be the start of the serious side of the week - the racing! We met at the quay for a briefing and set off for a 10.15 start: ten boats competed, two rounds of a triangular course quite close in within the bay. The racing had finished by late morning, and we decided to sail the 7 miles across the bay to Brest to check up on our registration for Brest 2000 and have a wander round the harbour. The whole area along the water was alive and buzzing, and there was a great sense of festivity. The roads were lined with stalls, most of them not yet set up, selling food and drink, demonstrating crafts, selling wares, and there were the most amazing assortment of ships and craft of all shapes and sizes tied up along the quays. There were a lot of people milling around, mostly sailors, as it wasn't open to the public until the next day. We found the 'Accueil', a huge marquee filled with people arriving to collect their information packs, finding out information about Brest and Douarnenez, and lots of officials scuttling around sorting out endless enquiries and problems. We were sent round to various desks collecting our goodie bag, our boat number, and information about the racing at Brest and Douarnenez - all very efficient.

With all the formalities completed, we looked around at some more of the ships and wandered back to 'Bumble Chugger'. The scene had changed a lot - the pontoon was now packed tight with boats and a smallish open boat was tied up next to us. The occupants, two young men local to the area, were very friendly

and handed us each a glass of their home-made orange wine. It was very good and we got the recipe from them, so next February when the Seville oranges are in, we will try a brew!

This filled the time before our next sortie for a meal at the chateau, for which we had been given free tickets in our welcome pack. It was quite a long walk and we were amongst a large throng of people heading that way. All along the paths leading to it, running along beside the Penfeld river, were stalls and tents, again a lot of them not yet occupied, and here we collected hampers of food. They were set up for groups of six, so we had to wait until we could join up with four others. Two couples soon arrived, young and French, and we collected our basket and went to sit in a row on a wall overlooking the Penfeld. A very tasty meal of bread with some sort of fish pate, a thick fish and vegetable stew, followed by the local dessert speciality - prune 'far' or tart.

The drizzle started again and we all moved on our separate ways. We came to a large tent thronged with people eating their suppers and there were loud sounds of applause so we went in. There was a wonderful band, or to be more accurate a wind ensemble, performing - all sorts of ages dressed up in silly clothes. The instruments included trumpet, clarinets, saruzaphone, tuba, saxophones, bongo drums and a big bass drum on a pram. They were really enjoying themselves and producing bouncy, stirring music. After tapping our feet to several pieces we moved on and listened briefly to a Breton bagpipe band, and then back to the boat. We had decided by then to stay the night at Brest and leave early in the morning to get back for the racing at Roscanvel.

#### **The following events were taken from Wilf Coon's Log ("Alba" 38)**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July** After a local ham and salad breakfast, we realised that a vehicle at Roscanvel would be beneficial and were grateful to Carol for a lift to Port Launay to collect our jeep. The ride through the end of the National Park was lovely. Peter didn't come - he crewed for Mark in Race Day 2 and they did well. Later, we went to Pointe des Espagnoles with Mark on foot and overlooked Brest, the roads now getting full of square riggers preparing for 2000. The point has a fort, built by Phillippe II of Spain, to help keep the English and Dutch out of Brest. We returned to Roscanvel for another magnificent dinner provided by the French SOA and the week's sponsor firms. We discovered Le Far, a Breton pudding with dried plums. Afterwards there was more socialising with the friendly people of Roscanvel, now reinforced by scores of other locals participating in Roscanvel's big week.

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July** The Shrimpers returned hospitality to the week's sponsors by giving them a sail to Le Fret, 5NM away, past the nuclear submarine base, for a lunch there. Beforehand there was an extra in the programme: in full view of the sponsors being ferried to their Shrimpers, Ted streaked. He was drying himself

cormorant style, after an unintended swim at his mooring and the timing of his indecent exposure on Kittiwake's roof was priceless. In the afternoon, we visited Camaret with Claude and Mark for sightseeing.

**Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> July** We went to the exhibition at Brest, which was outstanding. Some 30 large square riggers, scores of historic vessels and hundreds of old small craft from all over Europe plus the shore exhibitions covered the whole of the naval dockyard and overflowed past the castle into the civil harbour. The way the authorities managed the hundreds of thousands of sightseers was exemplary. Alba's crew stayed, awe-struck, for six hours. Roscanvel seemed so quiet when we got back. There was authentic folk dancing on the quay and Albert and Alba were granted honorary membership of Roscanvel Fishing Club.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July** The weather had settled, with a steady NW breeze and warm sunshine. There was to be a picnic at Anse de Bertheaume, across the Roads followed by an easy run back to Camaret. Peter and the skipper set off early on the 9 NM trip to the picnic beach and Ann positioned the jeep at Camaret. All the other Shrimpers must have had more pressing affairs because our picnic was a solo one. The seaside holiday village at Trez Hir was pleasant. We crossed to Camaret and found a pontoon berth there. It was time to go by road back to Roscanvel for Shrimper Week Prizegiving. The supper was a spectacular hog roast, dramatically presented and well served. All the great and the good of the week were rewarded with prizes and keepsakes, especially so Herman for the help he had given relating to Moby Dick and Albert. Barry - flotilla interpreter - thanked the French SOA and Roscanvel community for the weeks affairs.

**Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> July** There was a beautiful dawn and a light breeze for the day of the Parade of Sail from Brest to Douarnenez, which the Shrimper flotilla was to join off Camaret. The local paper said 2500 craft took part: the line stretched for six miles anyway. The sight of the rocky islets of Pte du Tourliquet, where we joined the line, will be forever memorable. We rounded Cap de la Chevre and crossed Douarnenez Bay, breaking off at Ilse Tristan for our moorings in Port Rhu. Once we landed, we found the atmosphere in Douarnenez charged with excitement; this was Douarnenez 2000, determined to be as good as Brest was, but in its own way. We wandered in a large group round the harbour, where the square-riggers had pride of place but every other square metre had historic or interesting boats to be seen. There were exhibition stands full of interest and maritime music from all over Europe. As dusk fell, five crews joined us for a convivial meal in La Crie, which now had a grandstand view of the harbour.

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> July** Time to explore Douarnenez Bay. Pentrez, just a name on the chart, took our fancy. It turned out to be a holiday village at one end of a 3 mile long beach, favoured by land yachtsmen, who were performing in force. We anchored outside the very sporting surf and had a good walk on shore. How much Brittany resembles Cornwall, but on a much larger scale! We ate well in a

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rustic beach restaurant and negotiated the surf back to Alba, where the crew swam. Once back at Port Rhu, there was a flotilla barbecue on a grassy island in the river. Almost all the crews were there and great culinary skills were evident. An inflatable rowing race was ordered. There were some remarkable skills demonstrated (especially by Karen and Anthony) but others were less impressive (Peter, who forgot to unship the outboard and John, who was treating his inflatable carefully, both of whom resorted to dodgems instead of speed). This shore party brought all the crews together and was real Shrimpering.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July** The name Ty Marc on the chart amused us. Ty is the same as Cornish Chy and means "home". We visited Mark's House! It was a good choice: when we arrived at LW springs, the rocks were covered in good-looking mussels. The crew landed and collected two buckets full, while the skipper got the sauce cooking. 15 Minutes to pick, 30 minutes to eat, excellent! Afterwards we decided to go to Morgat, exploring. Peter wanted to camp ashore so we jomped tent, spare bunk cushion, sleeping bag and small kit 3 km uphill to the only spare site, quite late at night. Once back on board, Ann suggested a check that our ferry tickets were still safe somewhere. Safe they were but, shock horror, dated for tomorrow, not the day after, as we believed. We had got sand happy and lost a day in our count. Now at that stage, we had belongings scattered all over Brittany - Car at Camaret, trailer at Port Launay, boat in the water at Morgat and tent in the country. Tomorrow would be busy!

**Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> July** A round up of belongings was completed, without too much hassle, thanks to a good start by a prompt and amused taxi driver. Whilst the skipper was collecting jeep and trailer, Ann organised the crane-out time and Peter humped his gear back down the hill. We left Morgat - largely unexplored - 1600, leaving time for a memorable last meal at St. Pol, getting to the ferry with 45 minutes to spare.

**Reflections** It was a superb holiday, in a very smart and Shrimper like manner. The kindness of the gentlefolk of Roscanvel was marvellous. Brest and Douarnenez 2000 will be remembered forever. The region we visited, Presquile de Crozon, is entirely worth a re-visit. The organisers on both sides of the Channel deserve great thanks. Shrimpers ought to have radio communications when operating in heavy weather.

### Shrimper Week Awards

Shrimper Regatta Challenge Cup:

Plymouth Plate:

Roger Dongray Trophy:

Roger Whittle

Herman Legger

Wilfred Coon