

We had a wonderful Shrimper Week based at St. Malo, very hospitably hosted by the French, but after a week of dodging rocks and some coolish, windy weather, we hankered after the sunny, relaxed time we had spent based at Loctudy three years ago. So after an amazing final-night dinner at the Chateaubriand Hotel in old St. Malo, we were up bright and early on Friday 20th June de-rigging *Bumble Chugger* (124), and after a very hot 3½ hour drive we arrived at Loctudy.



It all looked much the same as we remembered it, and after we were settled on our pontoon and had inflated *Bum Chug*, our tender, we set off for a gentle row across the harbour entrance to Île Tudy. We were concerned that the café we remembered as bustling and noisy seemed rather deserted, but on our return journey it was beginning to fill up and buzz as it should!



Saturday dawned with blue skies and a good north-easterly wind, which took us across the bay to the River Odet. After sailing under the impressive road bridge we turned into the Anse de Kerandraon for lunch and from there to the Anse de St-Cadou, a peaceful, tree-lined river. From our last visit we knew a large sandbank appeared in the middle of the river at low tide. Unfortunately the boat drifted

away from the anchor and we ended up high and dry, heeled over! A good opportunity to scrub BCs hull and later, with some clever kedging with the anchor, we were able to spend the night upright in a deeper part of the river!

It was an early start on Sunday to get down river before the flood started. Less wind today so we motor-sailed out to sea, past the Voleuse Cardinal to avoid the

Roches de Moustierlin and eastwards into Concarneau, where we entered the marina under the imposing castle battlements. It had been cool out to sea with hazy sunshine, but once ashore the sun broke through and it was very, very hot. John Cofield was moored nearby in his *Mystery*, and he came and chatted and recounted stories of his time with Shrimpers. We explored the harbour in *Bum*



Chug, passing a funny little ferry that looked like a bus and was called *Le Gouverneur*, which was busy ferrying people across to the castle and then back for a meal at Ti Clementine, an excellent place: delicious galettes and crepes with a bottle of cider. On the way back, we sat for a while on the sea wall watching the last of the yachts and motor boats coming in from the sea - a calm and peaceful scene.

Heading westwards on Monday it was all motoring, with a hot blue sky and no wind. We chugged around the Pte du Cabellou and on past The Dragon cardinal buoy and by lunchtime we reached the Aven river. We went up the beautiful wooded river, overlooked by amazing chateaux, to the picturesque town of Pont-Aven.

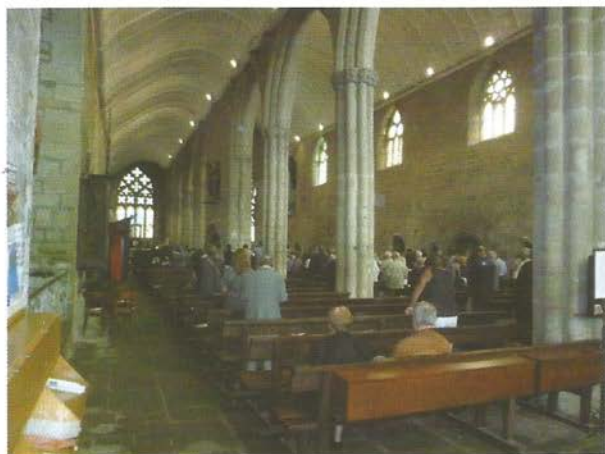


We could not stay long, with the tide falling, and returned to where the Belon river branched off the Aven. Some way up the river we dropped anchor and had a very refreshing swim before heading to the anchorage at Belon, where we picked up a buoy for another peaceful evening, though the seagulls tended to disrupt the quiet with their raucous squabbling cries.

On Tuesday the wind was due to freshen and be in the north east, so it seemed it would be a good day to zip back to Loctudy. The promised wind did not materialise and after five hours of motoring we were looking forward to tying up

to our pontoon and getting some lunch. We were greeted at the marina by a motor boat announcing that the marina was closed as 60 boats were coming in from a race! After visit to the Harbour Master's office, a small berth was found for us, squeezed in among the fishing boats. We stayed on this pontoon for the rest of the week, and the fishermen came and went and were very friendly. Very large mullet swam around under the boats, and terns were circling ready to dive on unwary tiddlers. The 60 large racing yachts duly arrived and disgorged their crews, and we had a grandstand view of their comings and goings. They left early the next morning to race back to L'Orient, though they had very little wind.

It was late morning by the time we set off up the river to Pont-L'Abbé. The tide was low but rising, and we had to follow the marked channel quite carefully. We passed the house of M. Richarde, who was a Shrimper owner we'd met on our last visit, and with the jib set we arrived in the town and tied up against the wall. We



walked up past the church of Notre Dame des Carmes, where a funeral was taking place. We hadn't seen the inside of this very old and beautiful 14th-century church so we slipped in at the back and stayed for quite a long time listening to some quite beautiful singing, which greatly affected both of us. It was a funeral service for M. Jean Le Minor 1923-2014.

There was more wind for our return journey and we were able to sail back and out to sea for a little way.

On Thursday we awoke to the unusual sound of rain pattering on the cabin roof. It did not last long but we had threatening grey clouds above us instead of our accustomed clear blue. There was a reasonable amount of wind, so Rob was able to keep to his wish of sailing to the Odet - no motoring. It was a busy day on the river, with several fleets of Optimists and five gaff-rigged dinghies, which dodged in and out of the moorings with us and were a very friendly lot, waving and smiling at us. A lunch and painting stop up the Anse de Combrit before returning



to Loctudy. The wind had become quite strong and gusty, and unfortunately one big gust tipped us right onto our gunnels and dowsed our cameras and swept away our boat hook. We were glad to get back to the calm of our little berth and our gin and tonics!

Again the weather was not so good on Friday with heavy rain showers lashing down in a strong wind, but there were enough sunny spells for us to enjoy a walk along the river bank with a picnic lunch and painting things. By the afternoon the skies had cleared and, as it was likely to be our last day, we had a final sail up the Loctudy river, as far as we could go before the water started running out, and back round the island in front of Île Tudy. We were right to make the most of the day, as Saturday had grey leaden skies and steady light rain. We planned a trip in the car, perhaps to L'Orient and the submarine pens, but the weather was so miserable that we only got as far as Concarneau and returned to an afternoon in the cabin, with our usual diversions of Scrabble, Crepette and Black Jack!

The rain came and went, and in a clear spell we set off for a final meal at the crêperie near the church in Loctudy. It was much as we remembered it from our previous visit, and they were very welcoming and friendly. Good galettes and crepes, but deluging rain when we came out. We sheltered in a bank's doorway until it had eased off a bit, and then made a dash back to *Bumble Chugger* and were tucked into the cabin before the next wave of rain came through.

Sunday, with the weather improved, we got the boat out and de-rigged and started on the long trek back to Calais. Rather than staying on the motorways we diverted to the more scenic coast road and found a pleasant farm track near Étretat to back BC into and spend our last night aboard.

Gillie and Robin Whittle – *Bumble Chugger* (124)