

## July 2010 West Country Trip

The West Country Trip has had many guises over the years. In its infancy Lados did both the going out and the coming back. Sometimes Richard did it and sometimes Jeremy and I did it. For the last few years the Consortium, also known as the Owners, do one leg and Lados does the other. For some reason we always seem to get the return bit which means that we have to drive our cars to Plymouth. How many hoops do you have to jump through to add a named driver to your insurance? Name is the obvious one, age, marital status, job, health, ever been refused insurance, convictions, driving convictions and points, what relationship is he to you, abode for the last 50 years, how long has the person been driving, the date he ( funny that, it is always a man) got his licence, has he got access to another vehicle, how many cars does he own, how long is he to be insured for, where is he taking the car. I don't know all this stuff I have never met the man. Next time, if there is a next time, they can do the insurance bit and we will get to drive their cars home and do unspeakable things in the car park when we get back. That is a different tale for another time- suffice to say there were police involved.

We finally got to Queen Anne's Battery around 16:00 having left home at 10:00. Stonehenge was a nightmare. It dawned on me that it was Friday afternoon and everyone and their collective brothers had left work early to go to the West Country. We decanted everything from the car but before we could ask if there was anything we had forgotten, like money in the glove box, the car was gone. After stowing the food we went to the pub for a drink and to watch Andy Murray get thrashed by Nadal. I think this was where Dan decided that we were going to have to rename one of the Pauls. There were two you see. Paul Ness became, for the duration of the trip, Fast Eddie. Don't ask I can't remember why. T'other Paul, due to his more advanced years was allowed to keep his own name. Personally I found Danny and Denny to be a bit confusing at times.

Note: If you stay in Queen Anne's Battery Marina they change the security code every day. I got caught out by that and had to wait for someone to rescue me.

We left around 10:00 Saturday to go to Fowey. What a pleasant change to actually be able to sail after the last trip when we should have gone in a gin palace not a sail boat. The sun was shining and we didn't have to wear the winter gear. Arrived in Fowey about 17:00 and used Jeremy's birthday present to pick up a buoy without having to lie on the deck. Great, but a little more practice is required. We spent a very pleasant evening on the aft deck. On Sunday morning we waited to leave until the papers had been delivered- a nice service if a little pricey and a Torygraph instead of a Times. Can't have everything.



Fowey in the morning

The next port of call was Falmouth, a trip of some 22 miles according to the Almanac. We arrived late afternoon after everyone in the harbour office had gone home. There were no free spots on the pontoon so we rafted up to a Swedish boat that had just crossed the Atlantic and was on its way home via Amsterdam. They had been at sea for 5 weeks by the time they reached Falmouth which made our 5 hours seem like nothing.

We were 2 stops out of Plymouth and I had to get to Tesco, and after only one meal on the boat the crew opted for fish and chips at Rick Stein's shop. Not only that but Danny Denny Paul and Fast Eddie had pudding. I had brought homemade, ice cream, chocolate cheese cake, frozen tiramisu and other assorted goodies that all had to be consumed by Friday lunch and they wanted pudding at Rick's.

There was a discussion about the next leg of the journey and the optimum time to arrive at St. Marys. Daylight seemed to be good for everyone. Sail overnight and arrive as it was just getting light. That was the plan. The Swedish blokes wanted to leave around 11:00 so we thought that we should go at the same time or a bit later. That would give Dan time to sort out the outboard and for me to take a taxi to get fresh petrol and 2 stroke oil and a battery for his monocular. £6.00 for petrol, £7.35 for

oil, £4.95 for the battery and £15.00 for the taxi. That has to be the most expensive 5ltrs of petrol ever but I did see a bit more of Falmouth than I had seen before.

Dan got the engine working and we left Falmouth around 12:00. Odd time considering that we were planning on getting to The Scillies in the lighter hours of the morning and the trip is about 60 miles. We had very good sailing for 6 hours but unfortunately it was in the wrong direction and there were 2 choices either we carried on until we were some way south of the islands and then motored or we motored due west from where we were. We had tried a tack but that put us on a heading straight back to the Lizard. Not at all helpful when we wanted to go the other way. The motoring straight away option won and we did for 7 hours. Needless to say it was very dark as we approached St. Mary's at 02:00. There was no light from anywhere. The approach into Porth Cressa, the bay south of Hugh Town, according to the almanac has 'dangers on each side (see photo) and submarine cables (no photo of these particular dangers), normal yacht anchors may drag on fine sand'. I was in a shop the next day and asked the shop assistant about a transit from the cardinal marker into the bay. He thought I was talking about Ford transits-odd man, then when I had explained he said 'oh no one goes in there in the dark'. Thank someone for Danny's machine, though it did see all the rocks it did not say anything about seeing submarine cables so it wasn't all that great. Neither the almanac or the machine 'saw' the b\*\*\*\*\* great barge anchored between the rocky bits.



Largish rocks in the way – Lady Emma in middle



Sitting in the rubber duck whilst still on board keeps your shorts dry



Paul not sitting in the duck

When we finally persuaded Jeremy that the rubber duck worked better in the water we went ashore for breakfast. The cafe was full so we had to have full English in the pub. Well Fast Eddie, Paul, Danny and Denny had full English. Jeremy had a poached egg and I had a bacon sandwich. After breakfast we walked to the main harbour where Fast Eddie and Paul took a boat trip to St Agnes so that they could say that they had been on the Scillies rather than just one Scilly. The rest of us found another pub. When we arrived back at the beach to take the little ferry back to the big boat the engine would not start. There was a fairly stiff breeze blowing which made paddling the thing impossible. So there we were, wanting to leave at 18:00 and no way of getting on board. The previously mentioned barge had about a dozen passengers on it out for a jolly to see the Islands and they were all standing on the beach waiting for their lift back in a seriously large rib. We asked the driver if he could give us a lift and a tow. Another trip, another tow. We clambered back on board pulled up the rubber duck and thought about deep sixing the engine. There was a bit of weather coming so the rib driver told us and the barge very quickly left to go somewhere better suited to the SW wind. At 18:00 we pulled up the anchor from underneath a German yacht and left for an overnight passage back to Dartmouth.



The aforementioned B\*\*\*\*\* Barge with rib

The night was uneventful if a bit lumpy but we sailed all the way. We arrived in Dartmouth at 18:00 through a bit of sea mist and moored at Darthaven Marina. Lovely evening again, the mist cleared and the sun came out



Dartmouth – just before the sun came out

Thursday morning another 06:00 start so that we could 'do' Yarmouth for the night, you know hit all the clubs and bars. There was no wind at 06:00, there was no wind at 10:00, there was no wind at 14:00, there was never any wind so we motored all the way home. We passed the Needles just about 21:00 which meant that we had missed the tidal gate and got seriously slowed up coming through Hurst. Well we appeared to be at a standstill and just as we set our sights on the Sconce cardinal the mother of all pea soupers descended like someone had just turned out all the lights. One minute it was there and a second later who knows where it went. The pub the pub my kingdom for a pub – at this rate we would miss last orders in Yarmouth. That was a close run thing but the crew made it to the pub while Jeremy and Fast Eddie and I wrestled with the boards on the town wall. We settled for wine on board.

Friday morning came awfully early yet again but we needed to be at Cowes for the tide and all. THERE WAS STILL NO WIND. A lovely clear day but no wind. There was however lots of pudding still to eat, half a chocolate cheese cake, ¾ of a frozen tiramisu, and most of the ice cream. Jeremy had had some instead of pudding at Rick's. We refuelled then on to the marina where we did all the necessary scrubbing and such for the boat to go out again Friday night and after all that I force feed them pudding.