



Chronicles of the Yacht

White Knight of Purbeck



An attempt to Cruise Round Britain in 2022

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Edited and moderated by Chris Jones



**MAYDAY - EMERGENCY
VHF RADIO PROCEDURE - DSC**
Use only when there is imminent and grave
danger to life or vessel

VESSEL NAME:

MMSI:

CALL SIGN:

Check radio is switched on at PANEL and SET.

Select Channel 16 and High Power. Lift the cover on the red ***DISTRESS*** button and press the button through the countdown.

Wait 15 seconds. If there is no reply, press the transmit button on the handset and say **SLOWLY**:

1. ***MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY***
2. ***THIS IS . . . Yacht -xxxxxxxxxxxxx - 3 times***
3. ***MAYDAY . . . Yacht - xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx***
4. ***MY POSITION IS . . . latitude and longitude, or a true bearing and distance from a known point. Don't guess.***
5. ***I AM . . . state the nature of distress***
6. ***I REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE***
7. ***I HAVE . . . (number) of people on board***
8. ***INFORMATION . . . such as liferaft, flare fired, etc***
9. ***OVER - this means 'reply to me'***

Release Transmit button.

Listen on Channel 16. If you hear nothing repeat the call.



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As an imprisoned bard might once have put it “They may have taken my liberty, but they cannot take away my freedom to dream”

“All men dream, but not equally.

Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act on their dreams with open eye, to make them possible.”

T. E. Lawrence, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom



Introduction

The Idea

This log chronicles our adventures in “*White Knight of Purbeck*”, our Contessa 32, exploring the coast of Britain.

Long long time ago when I were but a lad I dreamed of sailing and in particular of sailing around Britain. Then as John Lennon once put it “Reality is what happens when you are planning something else.” Over the next 45 years various versions of “Reality” got in the way, but the dream remained.

Slowly the competing “realities” and thieves of time; work, family and other “commitments” were overcome. Supporting elements also started to align: a share in a sturdy and suitable boat, less immediately demanding and more manageable family and work commitments. So, the idea and dream could be realigned and formulated into a plan.

We had already completed several elements of sailing around Britain over many years, mainly in Scotland, the Irish Sea and parts of the West Country. In *White Knight* our furthest North had been the Isle of Mull in 2019. So Mull would be the spiritual “Closing of the loop”.

During 2019 and 2020 we had refitted *White Knight* and brought her to her new home port of Caernarfon. 2021’s plans had been reworked so many times they scarcely deserved to be named “plans”. We did get in some good sailing from Caernarfon and completed the most necessary works to prepare *White Knight* for an extended cruise in 2022.

The “Plan”

The cruise was broken into sections of about 200 miles, achievable in about a week. Looking at the Great Britain Chart (Imray C80) each stage also has some interesting cruising grounds worthy of further investigation, even if only to “File for Future Reference” so allowing 1-2 weeks per leg seems reasonable.

Leg	From / Towards	Approximate timescale	Interesting areas en route
1	Menai to Scilly	Easter to May	Ireland or Penbrokshire
2	Scilly to the Solent	Late May	West Country
3	Solent to Harwich	Early June	Thames Estuary
4	Harwich to Hartlepool	Mid June	Yorkshire Coast fishing ports
5	Hartlepool to Peterhead	Late June	Northumberland and Fife
6	Peterhead to Shetland	Early July	Moray Firth & Orkney
7	Shetland to the Outer Hebrides	July	Minch and St Kilda
8	Outer Hebrides to the Clyde	July	Skye, Small Islands and Inner Hebrides
9	The Clyde to Menai	Early August	Irish Sea and Isle of Man

Not all the crew members can (or want to) make the whole trip so some sort of approximate timetable was desirable to plan crew change overs. But given all the variables it is also dangerous to expect to be held to a precise timetable to reach specific destinations on a specific date. So, at best the “Timetable” was only for very rough guidance.



"I know roughly where I hope to go, I may also know the time now, But I do not expect to know exactly when I will be where with any certainty. Crews should plan on that basis too."

Then the plan changed

My youngest daughter Elin and her friend Lou cooked up a plan to join the Royal Western Yacht Club's Round Britain & Ireland 2 Handed Race. At 19 and just turned 20 they would be the youngest pairing ever to compete, Lou would be the youngest skipper ever and Elin the youngest female competitor ever. Searches for a suitable boat drew naught or ridiculously over-priced charters. By mid-February their plan was struggling for want of a boat. I blinked and with the support of the Co-owners offered *White Knight* to Lou & Elin.

The following log entries and notes chart an extraordinary year as we combined Lou & Elin's race with my long held dream of sailing round Britain.



The Logs

Leg 1 Caernarfon to Milford Haven

Date	4-5 April 2022		
From	Caernarfon	Towards	Milford Haven

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
12:00		1760		W3		Depart Victoria Dock
12:30		1762		W4		Belan Narrows
13:00		1768		W4		Fairway Abeam. Hand over to L&E
15:00		1780		W5		Off P Dinllein
16:00		1786		W4		Tack off shore
16:30		1789		W4		Tack 52:53.4N 004:45.9W
17:30		1799		W3-4		Bardsey Abeam
18:00		1801		WSW3		
19:00		1808		W5		Reef main & Genoa
20:00		1813		W4		Set waypoint W of Bishop

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ, LB, EJ		
Hours underway			
Log			



I helmed *White Knight* from Caernafon down the marked channel over the bar, which seemed unusually shallow. Later surveys by RWYC showed the “deepest” channel had moved significantly north of the marked channel over the winter.

The overnight passage to Milford Haven was the first chance for Lou & Elin to sail *White Knight* together. So once over Caernarfon Bar Lou & Elin took over the running of the boat, while I went below and kept out of the way.

It was a steady F4 close reach down the Llyn Peninsula past Porth Dinllein and a tack off shore to keep clear of the mouth of Bardsey Sound. With the wind increasing and night approaching as we passed Bardsey a reef was taken in the main.

Our ETA at Ramsey sound would have us arriving in the dark so we shaped a course to the west around the Bishop & Clerk. With Lou & Elin taking watch on watch I retired to the lee berth to surreptitiously monitor progress on the I Pad linked to the boat's instruments. I also spent most of the passage listening to the creaks and groans of the boat in F4-5 occ 6 conditions.

At midnight Lou came off watch not feeling well so Elin elected to do a 4 hours trick at the helm. By 04:00 Lou was still not feeling well so I took over the watch, as Elin tumbled into the lee berth.

Strumble Head [Fl (4) 15s] had been visible for some time. A ship astern was heading elsewhere but with 8/8 overcast there were no stars or moon visible. Keeping South Bishop light [Fl 5s] to leeward gave clearance around the mess of rocks west of Ramsey Island along with the reassuring confirmation and glow from the “Mutts” chart plotter above the companion way. With the wind now well into F5 *White Knight* was forging along at hull speed easing onto a beam reach as we passed South Bishop light.

Crossing St Brides Bay fishing boats started appearing on the AIS then a tanker cutting between Skokeholm and Grassholm before heading NW for Ireland. The first hint of dawn came as we approached Skomer. Then finally the sun rose as we rounded Skokeholm.

Lou came back on watch as we approached St Anne's Head and took us over the overfalls for the entry to Milford Haven.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	5 April 2022		
From	Carenarfon	Towards	Milford Haven

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
00:00		1829		W4		Change Watch Lou not feeling well
04:00				W5+		Change Watch off St David's Head
05:00				W5+		Off S Bishop
07:30				W4		Turn off Skokholme
08:00		1878		W4		Lou back on watch, enter Milford Haven
09:30						Pick up Mooring off Bruton Ferry





Qualifying Passage

Once in Milford Haven Lou arranged for the surveys. During the keel and rudder survey the surveyor did an inspection of the rest of the boat and was impressed with the overall condition but picked up some corrosion in the mast base.

The original plan was for Lou & Elin to do their Qualifying Passage from Milford Haven to Gosport starting on the 11 April, Just as they were preparing to leave they went to fill up with diesel.

Then disaster struck,

The young lad handed Lou the 2.5 bar high flow commercial nozzle rather than the smaller low-pressure hose for small craft. When the water hammer hit the diesel tank was blown off its mountings and filled the bilges with 190l of diesel. Elin had the presence of mind to switch off the bilge pumps before the diesel was pumped into the harbour.

The boatyard managers were initially dismissive seeing two “silly girls who had spilled a bit of diesel on Daddy’s yacht”. It took two hours and the intervention of a respected local yachswoman before they took any action at all, eventually pumping the spilled diesel out of the bilges. Our insurers were informed and were very clear that this was the yard’s responsibility. It then took until the middle of the next day before the yard managers would answer the phone and confirm what they would do about the situation.

Attempts to get in touch with the directors of the company were blocked until Lou’s parents dropped letters through their home letter boxes. Eventually 3 days after the incident I managed to meet up with the most junior Director. Threats of reporting an environmental near miss and complaints about the behavior of the Yard Managers appeared to hit the mark.

By this time the yard had reluctantly allocated a boat builder to clean out the bilges and refit the diesel tank. Izzac was a perfectionist and did a very thorough job of cleaning the bilges and refitting the tank, but with the drinking water tank having been submerged there was still a risk that the drinking water tank had been contaminated. The Yard Manager cautioned against opening the inspection hatch.

One of Lou’s friends a Marine Engineer checked over the repair works. He also checked over the engine and noted that the rear engine mountings were starting to fail. Fortunately, we had a set of spares easily removed from our spare engine.

Meanwhile the Contessa Class Measurer has gained permission from the Class Committee to do surveys remotely so while he sat in the waiting lounge at Berlin airport we FaceTimed, and as directed I pointed the camera at the various bits he needed to check off. A couple of measurements and the inspection was completed within 20 minutes.

Having missed their window to sail to Gosport Lou & Elin revised their plan for the qualifying passage and sailed from Milford Haven round the Fastnet and back to Milford Haven.



Qualifying Passage to the Fastnet

Date	14 April 2022		
From	Milford Haven	Towards	Fastnet

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Gale Warnings				
Time	06:00		Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
18:00		1878				Depart Neyland Marina
19:10	240					Sails up
20:10	240					51:48.45N 005:14.19W
21:00	240			S2	Calm	51:40.10N 005:25.20W
22:10	240			S3	Calm	51:39.53N 005:32.37W
23:10	240			S4		51:38.86N 005:41.52W
00:10	240			S4		51:38.13N 005:50.96W
01:00	260			SSW4		51:37.06N 006:09.6W
03:30						51:36.42N 006:24.4W
04:10						51:36.53N 006:50.5W

Day Summary

Crew			
Hours underway			
Log			

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	15-16 April 2022		
From	Around Fastnet	Towards	Return to Milford Haven

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Weather forecast				
Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
21:10	250					51:37.06N 008:25.08W Nav lights on
00:28	250					51:31.54N 008:51.5W Engine on, Low batteries
06:00						Rounded Fastnet Rock
11:22						51:23.24N 008:57.20W
12:43						51:23.41N 008:45.51W S of ?? engine on for batteries
18:45						Elin hit head 10 mins ago. No bleeding, headache & pain 51:28.64N 007:43.42W
						Lou on helm for next 9 hours
20:00						51:30.28N 007:32.00W Nav lights on
17/4 15:50		2288				Picked up mooring Burton Ferry Tired but elated.
						Leaks around the mast, Tiller Pilot not working

Day Summary

Crew	Lou & Elin		
Hours underway	58		
Log	410 M		



Milford Haven Round 2

I returned to Milford Haven on 23 April for a week to continue the preparation of *White Knight* for the race. First cleaning up the boat after the qualifying passage. Then a pleasant Sunday sail up the Cleddau with Lou's parents Andy & Sarah.

Back in Milford Haven I started collecting the component for the next round of fit out and arranged another haul out at East Llanion Boatyard for the Mast out Survey. Local Rigging company Ratseys sourced a new mast base, measured the sails and applied numbers to the Storm Jib and undertook the rigging survey.

Lou returned from her Cruising Instructor assessment (successful) on Friday 28th. a quick hand over before I headed home for the weekend.

Returning on Monday 2 May, *White Knight* had been hauled out ready for the mast to be removed. A relaunch was arranged for Friday 6 May. Lou was off again to Gosport to run her first competent crew practical training course.

With mast removed I was able to remove the port cap shroud chain plate with a grinder as it was showing signs of corrosion, but on further inspection these were minor. I then fitted and sealed the new cap shroud plate. With the mast out I was also able to fit the new mast step base (which included a lashing point to secure the mast to the keel) while Andy fitted a diverter valve on the Lavac to act as a bilge pump. The hole for the mast through the deck also needed some rebuilding to provide a better seal for the gaiter and reduce the leakage Lou & Elin had complained about. With the main works under control, I was then able to concentrate on other improvements like fitting tiller lines, a Navik windvane steering gear and a new TP32 tiller pilot.

Gordon made plans to come down from Scotland by train on the Friday Evening for the passage round to Plymouth.

The Mast and rigging inspections went smoothly, as did the refitting of the mast and the relaunch. *White Knight* was relaunched on the Friday morning. With *White Knight* relaunched Lou's Marine Engineer friend John was able to fit the replacement rear engine mounts, an awkward job which involved crawling up the quarter berth while I handed tools, held torches and applied levers to reset the alignment and made tea.

By the time I collected Gordon from Haverford West Station late Friday evening most of the major works had been completed. We were just about ready for a delivery passage to Plymouth.

**Leg 2 Milford Haven to Plymouth**

Date	7 May 202		
From	Neyland	Towards	Lundy / Cornwall

Tides (BST)

Port	Milford						
HW	10:40	HW	23:00				
LW	17:00						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
12:00		2288				Dept Neyland Marina
13:00						Tank low, top up 10l Diesel
13:35	218	2295		W4	SI	Engine off, Sailing
14:00	147	2297		W2-4		St Ann's Head Abeam
15:00	200	2302		NW4	SI	Set course for St Ives
16:00	200	2307		WNW3	SI	Navik Wind vane on
17:00	190	2312		NW4	SI	51:25.3N 05:14.3W
18:00	200	2318		NW4	SI	51:20.1N 05:17.8W
19:00	225	2325		NNW3	SI	Dolphins
20:00	188	2331		WNW3	SI	Dolphins
21:00	188	2331		W3	SI	
22:00	200	2335		NW2	SI	Change Watch
23:00						
00:00	185	2338		N1	SI	



The original plan was to sail to Lundy for the night then on down the Cornish Coast. Two things changed the plan., first we ran out of diesel near the mouth of Milford Haven. Lou & Elin had used over 60 l of diesel (40 hours engine running) during the qualifying passage to keep the batteries topped up. With 20l spare we would need to be sparing with the engine. Then the winds turned light and were not forecast to be from a great direction for Lundy nor the leg from Lundy to Padstow, so we changed plan and headed directly for the Cornish coast with an overnight passage.

Cooked dinner and prepared for 3-hour watches turnabout through the night.

During the evening we were joined by Dolphins on several occasions, and through the night.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	8 May 2022		
From	Neyland	Towards	St Ives

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
00:00	185	2338		N1	SI	
01:00	170	2341		NNE1	SI	
02:00	175	2343		ENE1	SI	02:30 FOG & Dolphins
03:00	140	2345		SE1-4	SI	Dolphins, Wind very variable
04:00	161	2348		SW2	SI	
05:00	160	2352		SE	SI	Engine On
06:00	160	2358		SE1	SI	Engine Off
07:00	195	2561		SE2	SI	
08:00	195	2368		SE2	SI	
09:00	195	2368		E1	SI	09:55 Engine on. Dolphins
10:00	195	2369		SE1	Sm	10:15 Engine off. 10:45 1 st Reef
11:00	200	2375		SE4	SI	
13:00	190	2386		ESE3	SI	
14:15	085	2392		ESE4	SI	Tack off St Ives for entry to bay
14:30		2396				Anchored off St Ives Harbour
Crew		CHJ & Gordon				
Hours underway		26:30				
Log		108				



From midnight to 10:00 we were effectively becalmed in very light and variable winds. Fog banks rolled through reducing visibility to the length of the mast. And the dolphins kept coming, every hour or so to visit us. Fishing boats appeared and disappeared from the AIS throughout the night. Cargo ships passed in the night.

With sunrise the fog cleared and catspaws of wind played with us then died. A couple of runs with the engine maintained some semblance of progress and recharged the batteries.

A large pod of Dolphins joined us about 10:00 then, at last, the wind filled in and we were making progress for St Ives. Finishing with a romping sail into the anchorage off the pier.

A late lunch, a sleep, over the side with the tender for a run ashore and dinner.



9 May

Was an "Admin Day" for Gordon to catch up on work. Meanwhile I was able to get a full 20l can of diesel from the harbour master (which required special permission), tension the rigging after the first initial set in Milford Haven and sort out a couple of other minor jobs, before a run ashore to visit the Tate Gallery and explore St Ives.



Back on-board Gordon was onto another late evening Project Teams call to New Zealand. Meanwhile I prepared the passage plan for rounding Lands End and on to Newlyn.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	10 May 2022		
From	St Ives	Towards	Mounts Bay

Tides (BST)

Port	St Ives	Falmouth					
HW	13:30	13:10					
LW	19:50	19:40					

Weather forecast

Summer Forecast				
Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
08:00		2396				Raise Anchor
09:00	290	2401		W4	SI	Short tacking along coast
10:30	290	2408		W3/4	SI	
11:00		2410		W3	SI	Approaching Pendeen Hd
11:55						Tide pushing NW. Engine on
12:00	275	2413		WSW3/4	SL	
13:55						Passed Lands End. Lumpy
14:00	125	2424		SW3	SI	Engine off. All Very Happy
14:30						Turn up channel at Runnel Stone
15:00	070	2429		SW3	SI	
16:00	000	2434		SW3	SI	Sailing past Mousehole
16:15		2436				Berth Newlyn

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ & Gordon		
Hours underway	8:15		
Log	40		



Start was delayed for Gordon to have another Teams call with his team so we were a bit late for the ideal tide to get around Lands End.

Short tacking along the North Penwith cliffs picking out some of my old climbing routes, against an ever-strengthening tide. Eventually we succumbed and put the engine on to push us round Pendeen Watch. Past Cape Cornwall the Botalock Mine, and Lands End cutting inside the Longships.



With engine off we headed on South past the Runnel Stone before turning East to run up into the English Channel, past the Minak Theatre and Lamrona Cove. Then turning North past Mousehole to Newlyn Harbour. Pot buoys all well marked with danbuoys.

No answer from the harbour master on the radio or telephone, but there was one last space on the visitor's pontoon. I rather fluffed the approach but hey we have rounded Lands End and are now heading East.

Pub for a drink then take away Chinese for dinner with our pontoon neighbours and a very convivial evening of whiskey nightcaps for six on *White Knight*. Oh how we have missed being social through covid.

11 May



Another Admin Day for both Gordon & I but also a chance to explore Newlyn & Penzance. A visit to the chandlery (a proper fisherman's chandlers) secured the Cockpit Safety Knife required for the race.

Diner in a restaurant with David and Andy, followed by a walk to Mousehole and a beer in the Ship Inn.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	12 May 2022		
From	Newlyn	Towards	Helford

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover	Falmouth					
HW	09:10		15:20				
LW		09:20					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:30		2436		W1/2	Sm	Depart Newlyn, following coast
09:55						St Michaels Mount abeam
10:00	125	2439		W12	SI	
11:30	110	2446		SW1/2	SI	Off Gunwallow, 11:40 Diesel ran out and tank topped up 15l from 20l can
12:00	179	2448		SW3/4	SI	
13:15	082	2455		SW3	SI	Rounding Lizard Point. Lumpy
14:00	057	2459		SW3	SI	
15:00	057					Engine on
15:30		2467		SW 4/5		Anchored Porthallow

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ GMacK		
Hours underway	6		
Log	31		



The day started with a disaster. Going to fill the water tank I found that a trace of diesel had got into the drinking water supply contaminating it. I completely emptied the tank then refilled it with fresh water treated with detergent. The plan being to empty it in Falmouth after the swell around the Lizzard had given things a good stir up.

We sailed East in company with retired stadium rock band roady and electrical generation Engineer Andy Wills single handing in his Sadler 29.



Passing close to St Michaels Mount we continued to Gunwallow, to photograph the cliffs below my friend Marcus's grandparent's place "Halzephron House". As a child he had been fascinated by the tales of mysterious caves, and cliff paths all with smuggling connections.



Close under the cliffs the diesel run out, so out with the sails and refuel. We continued under sail close in around Lizzard Point and inside the race.

With the tide under us we were carried past Cadgwith, Kennak Cove and Coverack all with their beach fishing boats out along the coast

Past the black rocks of the Manacles sucking and spewing in the swell. We turned west and anchored in 3m off Porthallow for the night. A splendid pub meal and a couple of beers in the Five 5 Pilchards.

Returning to the beach we got chatting with 3 generations of the same fishing family, as they hauled their boat up the beach for the night. Tales of catches past and present near misses and characters long departed. The irresistible lure of this most precarious of existences.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	13 May 2022		
From	Porthallow	Towards	Falmouth

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:00		2467				
09:15						Up anchor
09:40						Enter Helford under sail
10:15		2474		W4	SI	Turned Helford Passage
11:00	040	2475		W4	SI	Motoring up the R Fal past Flushing
12:00		2479		W2	Sm	
12:40		2480				Moored to T01

Day Summary

Crew	CH GMacK		
Hours underway	3.5		
Log	13		



We sailed from Porthallow to the Helford and up to Helford Passage, giving Gordon his first chance to experience sailing a Cornish ria.

Across Falmouth Bay past Black Rock and onto the Fal, and Falmouth Harbour. Crawling up Penryn River until we ran out of water was to no avail, there were no visitors berths available at Falmouth Marina, also not enough water to get to the fuel pontoon so we returned to Customs House Quay and were allocated a swing mooring.

Through the afternoon Gordon was working, so a shore trip to Trago Mills Chandlery Department and a mooch around Falmouth with Andy. As I was planning to return via Cornwall and the Scillies after Lou & Elin had completed the Race I decided not to explore the National Maritime Museum on this occasion. Likewise I skipped the chance to explore deeper into the Fal and Percuil rivers and Maylor Creek with our favorite Pandora Inn. I caught up with the laundry instead.



Having pried Gordon away from his laptop we all went ashore and had dinner as guests of the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club. Race night special sausage beans & mash on crested plates. All washed down with St Austell Brewery's finest ales. Conversation picked up as members started to realize that we had sailed round Lands End from the Royal Welsh Yacht Club in North Wales rather than nipping down from the Royal Western YC just up the coast. That we were sailing a Contessa 32 and it was going to be sailed by 2 teenagers in the Round Britain & Ireland Race added to the buzz.

The tide having receded, it was a long carry to get the tender back in the water for the gentle weave through the darkened moorings back to the boat.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	14 May 2022		
From	Falmouth	Towards	Plymouth

Tides (BST)

Port	Falmouth		Plymouth				
HW	04:30		04:01	17:31			
LW	11:10		11:23	23:45			

Weather forecast

Summer Forecast				
Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:00		2480		0	Sm	Dept Falmouth Fuel berth
10:00	080	2485		0	Sm	
11:30						Off Dodman Point
12:00	070	2493		ESE2	Sm	Heads cleared
13:00	066	2499		SE2	Sm	
14:00	070	2503		SE2	Sm	14:30. Looe Abeam
15:00	070	2509		SE2	Sm	
16;20	066	2516		SE3	Sm	Engine off
17:00						Inside breakwater, sailing from Cawsands towards Turnchapel
17:40		2522				Plymouth YH berth L9

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ, GMack		
Hours underway	8.7		
Log	42		



The last day of Gordon's First Cruise on *White Knight*.

We slipped alongside the fuel berth to refueled with Diesel: - 35l in the tank + 14 in can both to full.

It was flat calm so motoring. First a quick look at St Mawes harbour and the mouth of the Pencuil River before heading out past St Anthony's Head and East along the coast.



There were well marked pot markers in every direction so constant vigilance was the order of the watch. This was compensated for by the fine views of the Cornish Coast

Below a blocked Lavac toilet needed attending to. It was finally cleared using the new diverter valve and a bucket of water to prime the pump.

The new Tiller pilot was rigged and left running on its internal compass (Not yet fully rigged to NMEA 2000 Network).

The Bears came up on deck to "Keep Watch" as Gordon dozed in the afternoon sun.



The wind finally filled in as we approached Penlee Point and entered Plymouth Sound so at last we were able to sail, but only the last few miles to a pontoon mooring on Plymouth Yacht Haven

With the Clovelly Bay fully booked we managed to get dinner in Borringdon Arms to the accompaniment of the FA Cup final and the Eurovision Song contest. We then walked back to the boat to pack and prepare to catch trains in the morning.



Preparing for the Race

With two weeks left before the start of the Round Britain & Ireland Race and a week before Lou & Elin arrived for their final preparations it was on with a long list of jobs.

15 May

First call in on Hannah and family, old friends from Gresford SC. Then catch the ferry and taxi to catch trains to Milford Haven & London. I E mailed our insurers about the diesel contamination of the water tanks (CC to the offending boat yard) while on the six hours train journey to Haverford West.

16 May (our 30th Wedding Anniversary)

First call Ratseys to chase the Rigging Report (Based on a draft I prepared for Denzel. Also picked up rings and webbing tape to finish high reef point.

Next I met with the more senior directors of the boatyard about the diesel contamination. They were still holding line that an insurance claim for a replacement water tank would be contested but supplied a pump and hose to rig up a separate drinking water tank at no cost to us. We agreed I should also continue with the detergents and flushing to remove the contamination from the main tank.

A 6 hours' drive back to Plymouth where I found Cactus Navigation and ordered Simnet to NMEA interface cable & Tee connector.

17-20 May

Back on board working through the list of things to do

- Rig up flood pump
- Flush water tank with detergents etc. after 6 flushes the visible bloom had receded but the diesel taint was mixing with the detergent.
- Resecure the life ring bracket
- Fit the emergency battery housing
- Lash mast to mast step
- Fit new grub screws to the genoa furling foil
- Sew in the high reef point reefing rings.
- Jonathan fitted the new drinking water pump

Trips to various chandlers to hit the "Things to Get" list:-

- LED bulbs for the reading lights (Marine Bazar)
- Emergency Steering U Bolts (Amazon)
- A new high bracket for the stern light to lift it above the Navik's yoke (Marine Bazar)
- Replacements for the lost clevis pins (Allspars)
- Hoses for the new bilge pumps (Boat House Chandlery)
- "Do Not Open at Sea" stickers for lockers and hatches (Force 4)

Also form Lou & Elin's List

- Purchase Heavy Weather Jib (second hand from Exchange Sails)
- Hull numbers (Exchange Sails)
- Race Insurance
- IRC Race certificate

Finds of the week:-

- Marine Bazaar & Plymouth Boathouse Chandlers
- The Galley café in the old Seaplane Sheds
- Clovelly Arms Pub meals

On Saturday 21 May I moved WK to Mayflower Marina for the second week, then after a sail up to Saltash and out into the sound with my old friend Marcus and his daughter Nia, I moved into the apartment on Sunday ready for Lou & Elin to take



over the boat. Jan arrived with Elin on Monday 23 having both recovered from Covid and Elin finishing her First-Year assignments. Lou arrived on the evening train. Chinese takeaway dinner

Their preparations started in earnest, completing all the admin needed for the race. A meeting the Race Director, RWYC Commodore and other race committee members. Most of the week was spent taxiing L&E to various chandlers, shops and other venues, collecting gear and removing unnecessary gear.

Co-owners J&J brought baby George for his first boat trip in the dinghy with proud grandparents and Aunt Sarah.

Lou's parents arrived on Thursday evening with Lou's boyfriend Dylan.

With 2 days to the start, Lou & Elin fitted in a couple of half day's sails to try the spinnaker and met up with the young members of Turnchapel SC. The last bits of "Not Wanted on Voyage" kit was offloaded into the trailer and taken away for storage.

Last minute panic getting an EPIRB and registering it as Aaron was unable to secure one for loan. Aaron's package finally arrived on Saturday afternoon including the PLB for Lou, a Cat C medical kit, and Sir Robin Knox-Johnson's spare hydraulic rig cutters on loan. After another practice sail with the spinnaker on Saturday afternoon Lou and Elin moved WK into Queen Anne's Battery marina for the last night before the race. Loaded stores. Dinner with Elin's university friend Bella and her mum who were on a tour of England tracing ancestral homelands in Cornwall before returning to South Carolina.

Saturday morning we collected Bella and her mum, then a last minute trip to Marine Bazaar to get a pair of Genoa Cars and bits to rig a Barbour hauler for the spinnaker sheets. Dropped them with L&E, fitted Elin's PLB in her lifejacket then legged it for the spectator boat for the start.



Lou & Elin passing Plymouth Breakwater at the start of the 2022 Round Britain & Ireland Race. Of the 53 who expressed interest only 17 boats made it to the start line.



Lou & Elin's report of the Round Britain & Ireland Race

Royal Western Yacht Club Round Britain and Ireland Race 2022 Report
White Knight of Purbeck – Lou Boorman and Elin Jones



After months of tumultuous preparation and support from so many incredible people, we were finally in Plymouth, ready to start the 15th edition of the RWYC Round Britain and Ireland Race on 29th May 2022. The week before our start was crammed with intense preparations; not only of *Contessa 32 White Knight* but of ourselves. We said our goodbyes and slipped

lines from Queen Anne's Battery Marina, towing our fellow competitor, *Polished Manx*², out with us to the start line in Plymouth Sound.

We crossed the start line, that many thought we'd never even reach, rounded the breakwater and headed out towards Eddystone Rock. Our competitors flew by, but we were quite excited to still be able to see Orbit off our port bow, however temporary the sight may have been. Looking at the tracker, we noticed the majority of the fleet halted off Lizard Point, giving us time to catch up. As the sun set, we made some gains back towards the fleet, but were soon in the same pocket of no wind. The decisions of few outlying boats to stay much further south became obvious as we drifted closer and closer inshore towards the Lizard. The entire fleet was stuck between Land's End and the Scilly Isles, doing about 0.4 knots in the wrong direction.

As well as our progress dying, so were our batteries. We suddenly had no GPS, AIS, nav lights, fridge, cabin lights or any power to charge our devices. Only 12 hours into our race, having not left sight of the coast. We were NOT retiring. Both of us adamant that we had worked too hard to give up now, we powered through. Armed with torches, we started listing our options and brainstorming how to fix our first real issue that could potentially shatter our dream. After several unsuccessful attempts to jump start the engine in order to recharge our batteries, we started a deeper troubleshoot. Our watch pattern became 4 hours sailing, 2 hours troubleshooting and then 2 hours sleeping. While Elin worked tirelessly on the engine, Lou was searching the darkness for any lights and charted objects to attempt what felt like a weeks-long "blind nav" exercise in a Yachtmaster exam. We didn't even discuss retiring; we knew we had to carry on and make it work. Our phones were dangerously low on battery now and we wanted another way to reach help if needed - Navionics was no longer an option either. Of course, our trusty paper charts and tidal atlases weren't affected, and they were a godsend. My late grandad's handheld GPS, that I (Elin) was adamant we put in "just in case", ended up saving us.

Lou's biggest worry was "the safety of Elin and this lovely boat that wasn't mine; so crossing Traffic Separation Schemes and shipping channels in the dark with no lights onboard was not something I was comfortable with". To solve this, we disconnected our fridge from the small solar panel on deck and rewired it to our navigation lights. The sun was just about to rise so we angled our solar panel towards the sun at every opportunity. That day, we saved up enough solar power to use our tricolour at night or our VHF, but not both. With the fridge no longer connected, our fresh food was somewhat insulated as we used it as a cool box instead. Elin scrambled a written note to send to our families and the race office to inform them of



our situation. One lesson learned was that WhatsApp notes can send with limited mobile data and don't use up as much battery.

We sailed around the beautiful coastline of the Scilly Isles under beaming sunshine which was incredible after our hectic time with the batteries. Two days of our first leg were spent bobbing around in the Celtic Sea, stuck in another pocket of no wind, significantly delaying our ETA to Galway. On the slow evening approach to Fastnet Rock, we were greeted and escorted north-easterly for hours by a pod of around 300 dolphins. Our phones were still dead so we couldn't capture this special moment on camera, but to be able to experience it alone at sea without looking through a screen was magical. We treated ourselves to half a pack of strawberry jelly each as we watched them playing off our bow. On our approach to Fastnet TSS, we tried to avoid sailing through as per the SIs, but we just clipped its corner. Elin developed a nasty cold with a really loud and painful cough," leading to several of my watches being disturbed by a half-asleep Lou asking me to die a bit quieter".

"Huge respect to Lou's navigation skills for safely getting us around unlit rocks for days up the jagged west coast of Ireland, without electronic aids, other than my grandad's old Garmin Etrex". We began tanker dodging across the River Shannon entrance trying not to get pulled in by the tide. It was a hard nighttime beat through South Sound between Inisheer and Doolin Point, fighting the weather-helmed tiller whilst trying to count the light sequences of cardinals and lighthouses. It gradually built to a force 6 at the entrance of Galway Bay, making our final night of the leg intense to say the least!

We arrived at the moorings outside the gate at 0930, and the timer started for our first 48-hour layover. After a well-needed shower and hair mask in a nearby hotel sponsoring the event, Lou fell asleep in the back of her parents Ford Transit for 6 hours about 30 minutes after stepping on land. We were both rather drained. We fitted new batteries and met a marine engineer in Galway who had a look at our electricity issues and were invited into the home of two lovely ladies for a home-made meal and comfortable bed. The incredible hospitality let us rest and recover ahead of our next leg to Lerwick.

The first stop over went by very quickly and we left Galway Bay for Lerwick at 0931 on a lovely broad reach with our sails out and spinnaker flying in a gentle breeze. We felt optimistic thinking of how we had overcome our setbacks so far and entered the next leg with a sense of calm. As we sailed north once again, we floated in a few patches of no wind which was frustrating when we had previously worked so hard. After rounding Black Rock, and every other little rock off the west Irish coastline, we were on a bearing straight for St Kilda. The steady breeze continued to build as we sailed further offshore and whilst monitoring the weather forecast we could see tropical storm Alex bombing across the Atlantic directly towards us.

Alas, battery problems reoccurred, and we were back to navigating the old-fashioned way, and rewiring solar panels once more. Continuously monitoring our battery charge levels, we were running our engine for 30 minutes every 4 hours to attempt to recharge our batteries. However, still not getting any output back into our batteries so all it achieved was using up our fuel. We set a schedule for turning the chart plotter on for 1 minute every so often to double check our course.

When we announced we were sailing a Contessa 32, people said, "you won't win, but you'll finish" and she got us round every headland! Leaving Northern Ireland behind us, we began



to see and feel the effects of tropical storm Alex. A four-day beam-on battering by force 7-8 sometimes gusting 9 forced us to reef down considerably. We considered using the storm sails but decided it was too dangerous to be on the foredeck in those conditions. Lou kept thinking, "If I fall in I'm 90% dead already, there's no way someone could recover me on their own, in time." Helming on deck alone in this weather, I could hear a roaring sound behind me and didn't turn around to look because I knew it was a wall of seawater and soon enough the crest broke over my head and filled the cockpit like a bath. To which I laughed to myself like a maniac. Many watches later, I was forced out of the leeward saloon bunk at great haste, popping my head out of the companionway to see a towering rock cloaked in fog that we were barreling toward; quickly running out of water. Elin was clinging onto the tiller trying to counteract the weather helm, but we couldn't bear away.

At one point Elin counted 68 bruises on her legs which is a new PB. Through this storm, we barely had time or the stability to eat or sleep which added to the stress on our minds and bodies. You start to hear and see things that aren't really there, and it's scary. We had no contact with the rest of the world this far offshore, so had no idea that several boats had retired. We just kept going because we're stubborn Welsh girls. One of the best things about sailing with Lou is that when one of us was struggling, we helped the other up.

As we sailed up the west coast of Shetland, the fog cleared, the sun was out, and the wind decreased to a force 4 and 5. Again, we underestimated the length of Shetland; round every headland and rock there was yet another. As we closed in on Muckle Flugga, the most northerly point of the UK, the wind direction changed unfavorably which meant instead of bearing away, we were fighting a harsh beat. The wind picked back up again, and we were reefed down yet again. A dramatic and hairy rounding in 10m waves battling the elements. Later, we started heading South towards Lerwick. These last 12 hours were hellish. We were bow into huge seas, really beating us and the boat up. With every wave we slammed down into the next which sent the cupboards flying open, their contents all over the floor, the heads seat came off as well as the mirror. The lee cloths ripped, and our sleeping bags were soaked through in the 3 inches of water sloshing around over the floorboards. The windows were leaking as they were mostly underwater on the leeward side, this included the window above the chart table, so our charts were rather soggy too. Contessa 32s have a well deserved reputation for "going to windward like a submarine".

Trying to find out where we were in very poor visibility, no electronics was hard enough without having to plot our position on a wet chart zooming around below deck, all whilst Lou was also being thrown around "I tried to use the heads and started climbing towards the bow below deck when a wave knocked the hook off the sliding door which sent it flying shut on my hand. Running completely on adrenaline, I didn't even feel it but went to show Elin the side of my finger hanging off with blood down my arm. Elin didn't find it as funny as I did, understandably"!

The near-constant daylight being so far North was very disorientating, at one point Lou thought it was 3pm when it was actually 3am. After nearly being run down by a supertrawler, we could finally see Noss Head, then Bard Head and finally made our approach into Bressay Sound. A narrow, rocky entrance lead us into Lerwick's South Harbour where we crossed the 2nd finish line.



We had at last arrived in our next port, but before heading to shore we had another near disaster. Our genoa halyard had snapped in the storm, but our sail remained hoisted with the compression of the reef, so as we attempted to furl it away, it didn't want to co-operate. We tried hoisting, lowering, furling, nothing would get this sail away and our genoa lines ended up in the water; one whipping Elin in the face. Lou couldn't use the engine with the lines in the water and they weren't recoverable in the conditions. "I put the engine in astern to keep us off the rocks and called for help from Lerwick Harbour for help, very close to calling a Pan-Pan". A pilot vessel was sent out to tow us into the dock and we threw our mooring lines across and stepped ashore, our genoa still flying. As soon as we touched the pontoon, our supporters and fellow competitors were ready to help with a bacon and egg butty, one up the mast to get the genoa down and all offering to help in any way they could. Lou: "I started bawling my eyes out with the overwhelming sense of relief for at least 30 minutes as I wolfed down some of the first food I'd eaten in days". The next morning, we went to Lerwick Boating Club to use the wi-fi, charge our devices and plan the next leg. We were instantly met by renown French sailor Christian Chalandre and told that we had won the leg outright, we were gleefully gobsmacked.

Bruce, former Lerwick Lifeboat Coxwain, really looked after us and managed to dry out all seawater-soaked gear, as well as provide us with an IKEA bag as a replacement for our ripped spinnaker bag. Back under way again, we crossed the start line avoiding the huge, anchored cruise liner, Costa Fortuna. Tropical storm Alex had long passed over, giving us grey skies and a gentle breeze as we beat out of Bressay Sound. A band of thick fog stripped us of visibility and speed for a couple of hours as we continued south. After exiting Shetland's waters, it was a due south bearing towards Blyth. However, the wind decided to be southerly as well, so it was a long slow beat with full sails all the way down the east coasts of The Orkneys and mainland Scotland. Each tack seemed to take us further away from our destination and we spent most of our time dodging oil rigs and vessels restricted in their ability to manoeuvre. 50 miles off Scotland we saw a minke whale fin appear off our starboard beam, it was so close but didn't stay around. About halfway to Blyth, our chart plotter over heated and stopped working completely even after long periods of being turned off. Then the inevitable battery failure happened... After swerving round lobster pots in the dark off the English East coast, the sun rose behind us casting a bright orange ray across the sails. We were closing in on Blyth, worked out which wind turbine and which lighthouse marked the finish line and sailed through. Not able to start our engine with our battery failure, Lou radioed Blyth Port Control to request permission to sail up the waterway into our berth in the marina outside the Royal Northumberland Yacht Club. Our request was granted and the Rival 32 who greeted us, lead



the way back into their home port. With a few spectators on the pontoon, the pressure was on to execute a textbook-worthy sail alongside the pontoon.



Greeted again with a bacon butty, we started our last stop over. After donations of alternator parts from locals in Blyth, we finally sorted out our battery issues and could recharge our batteries once again with the engine. Lou had already decided we would have to retire if we couldn't fix our battery problems as it was too dangerous to cross the entrance of The Thames without lights or nav. Having had a light wind sail down to Blyth, we were less physically tired but more mentally drained.

Our restart was even less eventful - after dodging the lobster pots - the wind was extremely light and barely filled our sails as they flapped disappointingly. The East Coast was littered with wind farms and outside the River Humber, there were 7 wind farms in all directions, mostly on sandbanks. At night, they were swarms of red blinking lights that the tide swept us towards. We spent several hours struggling to sail round Sheringham Shoal Windfarm against the tide, but the sunset was spectacular. There was a huge climate adjustment between sailing from Lerwick to sailing round sunny Lowestoft. It was so much warmer, and the winds and seas were much less harsh. Once we rounded the most eastern point of the UK, we cut right in close to Great Yarmouth, taking the shallowest water possible to stay out of the tide. Shortly after exiting South Road, we hoisted our red spinnaker and sailed as high as we could towards Orford Ness. Elin handled the spinnaker by herself with ease as Lou got an hour of sleep. When she came back up on deck it was time to take the spinnaker down as the wind was becoming stronger from a less favourable angle and more unpredictable. I also noticed patches of yellowish water dotted all around us as we sailed amongst the sand banks – definitely time to drop and head further offshore. Sailing upwind towards Margate, I finished off our passage plan for crossing the entrance to the Thames Estuary, marking out the TSSs clearly this time to ensure we didn't get penalized. We were crossing in darkness but at least we had nav lights and AIS now. Each tack seemed to take us closer to a sandbank and a huge tanker hurtling towards us at 20 knots. We monitored the shipping movements via VHF like hawks, waiting for one of the many ships to weigh anchor or leave the estuary. Without deck lights, they appeared quickly out of nowhere blocking out the light from the land.

Finally, after the sun rose, we were facing the white cliffs of Dover, something else we had never seen. Border Force were very vocal on the radio warning all ships to maintain a good watch for small vessels attempting to cross the Strait. We made a contingency plan of what we would do if we came across a rib full of refugees, agreeing that we would provide any help we could such as food, water and rescue equipment. We knew the finish line was just one coast away and it was all we could think about. Getting stuck at our next headland:



Dungeness, was disheartening, knowing that every time we slowed down we were finishing later.



These were more familiar waters; it went by slowly but sailing south of the Isle of Wight was another new experience. The sun was out still, but the wind had gone again, and we were floating with the tide near several anchored and slow-moving, large ships. The sky clouded over quickly, and the visibility became rather poor. Heavy rain was tipping down on us, dissipating any wind that was left. Eventually, the front passed over and we were sailing once again. A gentle breeze increased and created a choppy sea, and we were battling against wind and tide without gaining much ground.

Just off Portland, our genoa halyard broke again and left it hanging over the guard rails. Elin went to the bow and we used our spinnaker halyard as a genoa halyard which worked quite well. Elin got absolutely soaked bouncing around on the bow in the waves trying to re-slot our genoa and hoist. She was up there for over an hour while

I was juggling lines and a tiller in the cockpit. Keeping the boat into the wind with the tiller between my legs without tacking whilst hoisting and dropping the genoa whilst getting thrown around by the boat was one of the most difficult things during the whole race. I ended up steering with my feet and jumping to open the clutch when Elin needed it lowered again. Thankfully, our safety harnesses kept us fairly safe and, most importantly, onboard. But unfortunately, it wasn't enough to stop me from being launched across the cockpit, planting my ribcage on the port genoa winch. I was beginning to lose hope that we would get our sail back up and envied Elin's determination in that moment. No matter how many times it popped out of the slot, she tried again, and we eventually got it all the way to the top and could carry on sailing. Once Elin was back safely in the cockpit we were both so tired we just slumped against each other and carried on. During this episode, we were very nearly run down by a huge cruise ship who definitely never saw us.

Closing the finish, we got stuck with the tide again at Start Point, our upwind track was actually a N – S route and wasn't taking us any closer to Plymouth. Finally, we could see the lights of Plymouth and eventually the break water came into view. Another Contessa came out in a squall to show their support and escorted us in from a distance, this was very emotional for us as we realised what we had achieved.

We listened to More than a Woman by the BeeGees dancing on the deck and crying whilst eating tinned fish – a sight to say the least. A Brittany Ferry started coming out of the harbour just as we entered, but I stuck to my guns and continued towards the lighthouse, determined not to lose ground so close to the finish.

Broad reach & gybes down the harbour and over the line. Best feeling ever.

A crowd was there to welcome us even so late on a Sunday evening. We were also the most viewed finishing video with 15,000 viewers on line. We were welcomed ashore with chicken kebabs and champagne.



Lou & Elin finished the Round Britain & Ireland Race in 6th place on corrected time out of the 17 starters in their first offshore race. They were awarded the RWYC Endeavour Trophy by unanimous vote of the other competitors.





Tails from the support crew.

Of course, that is not the whole story. The support crew of family and co-owners also had their own adventures.....

Lou's parents had arranged to meet up with *White Knight* for the Galway stop over. Jan & I were planning to meet them for the stopovers in Lerwick and Blyth before heading down to Plymouth for the finish. Well, that was the plan.

After saying our goodbyes to Lou's family and Bella and her mum Jan and I packed up the holiday flat and drove back to North Wales for a well-earned rest.

It was 02:30 when the phone rang. "Dad the batteries are flat and we can't start the engine to recharge them." "Have you tried the other batteries?" "Yes" "OK have you tried the jump leads from the fridge battery and the emergency battery?" "Yes. Is there a starting handle?" "No." "Is there enough battery left to run the nav lights?", "Just, but we had to turn off all the navigation instruments and the radio and the AIS". The Yellow Brick tracker gave an updated position becalmed in Mounts Bay. "Your best option would be to head for Newlyn and get onto the pontoons and recharge the batteries." "That would mean retiring. We are not doing it." "OK, next option is to keep going until morning and use the solar panel to recharge one battery enough to start the engine. Turn off everything except the mast head LED light." "OK"

I did not get any more sleep that night. Yellow Brick updates showed slow but steady progress. By midafternoon we were able to get one more phone call from near the Scilly Isles The solar panel had not charged the battery enough to start the engine but they were carrying on using paper charts and grandad's old Garmin Etrex GPS from the grab bag.

Light winds made the passage across the Celtic Sea slow. Yellow Brick tracker and Windy App were referred to frequently over the next few days. In the meantime, Ian, co-owner of *White Knight*, suggested getting new batteries and taking them to Galway. At first, I was a bit reluctant to be seen as helping out too much, and possibly over concerned that Lou & Elin wanted to be seen to be the ones doing the venture without parental assistance (interference). I was eventually persuaded to join Ian in a "road trip" to the West Coast of Ireland with some fresh sealed AGM batteries. An exchange of texts with Lou confirmed the dimensions of the existing batteries. We sourced the new batteries in North Wales then caught the early morning ferry on Thursday morning to Dublin.

Progress was slow for *White Knight* in the light winds up the Irish coasts. However, the Road Trip the Irish was brilliant. Irish roads have improved dramatically in the last 20 years. What was once a 6 hour drive from Dublin to Galway can now be completed on the new motorway in a little over 2. A break in journey at Ballinasloe yielded a pair of factory seconds Dubarry Sailing boots for less than half the UK list price. Next stop Galway Bay Sailing Club (GBSC) to meet up with Lou's parents and sister, pitch tents and meet the irrepressible Fergal, Vice Commodore of GBSC and host for the RB&I Galway Stopover. Seems we had missed the main welcoming party the night before but they were holding another party for the competitors down at the harbour. Next stop Galway Harbour, an evening meal in a pub then onto the temporary bar set up for the competitors and a chance to meet and drink with some incredible characters all of whom were in awe of what Lou & Elin were doing.



Friday morning 3 June and the UK was celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, in Ireland normality reigned. Updates on the Yellow Brick App showed Lou & Elin were off the Blasket Islands, making slow but steady progress in light winds up the long long Irish coast. ETA Galway some time on the Saturday night / Sunday morning. With a day in hand Ian & I went on a road tour of County Clare heading south to Craggaunowen an open air museum based around the 16th Centaury castle with a Crannog and recreations of other prehistoric settlements.



Star exhibit is the Brendan, Tim Severin's leather curragh, in which he crossed the Atlantic in 1977, proving that the 9th century Irish Saints could have made the fabled voyages in such craft to the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland and even North America before the Vikings.

Over lunch in the café we checked Lou & Elin's progress and worked out that we could just about make it to Loop Head (northern end of the Shannon Estuary) in time for *White Knight* passing.

Back on the Irish roads of old, stone walls and the grass is green, hedges, across bogland and marsh. Past Ennis to join the "Wild Atlantic Way" and the rolling fields to Kilrush. Around the coastal inlets of the lower Shanon and over the isthmus to Kilkee. Back roads down the spine of the peninsula to Loop Head. Scanning the horizon *White Knight*

was just passing to the north of the headland about half a mile offshore. A quick phone call, all well, eta Galway overnight / early in the morning.

Following the Wild Atlantic Way North, breaking out onto the cliff tops and bays *White Knight* remained in sight. Stopping for dinner at a restraint near Spanish Point, Seafood Chowder in its richest Irish form with warm soda bread. The road trip wound on towards the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher.

We arrived just after the carpark attendants had left for the night, leaving the parking open for free. Then the short walk up the now tarmac path to the new viewing terraces on top of the cliffs. A far cry from the rugged sheep tracks of 40 years ago.



White Knight a speck in the distance still plugging north, as the sun set over the Arran Islands.



Meanwhile the leading boats had already departed from Galway and were heading out to pass south of Inisheer and the Arran Islands en route for St Kilda, Muckle Fluga and the Shetlands.



With darkness descending we made our way onwards over the Burren, past Doolin and through Lisdoonvarna, down the tortious and aptly named “Corkscrew Hill”, back round the head of Galway Bay to the tent.

An early morning call of nature and a chance for a Yellow Brick update, *White Knight* had passed Doolin and was approaching the mouth of Galway Bay. 06:00 and a wander down to the Point to overlook Galway Bay, nothing in sight yet. The Yellow Brick was

showing slow progress up Galway Bay in very light winds. Back in the car and round to Galway Harbour via Tesco for some Red Velvet Cheese cake and other goodies. Arriving at the harbour the dock gates were just closing as *White Knight* hove into view and crossed the stage finish line. A rib guided *White Knight* to a mooring then brought Lou & Elin ashore, both exhausted but elated and ready for cake and hot showers in a local hotel.

Ian and I were ferried out to WK with the new batteries and quickly had the engine started. Alongside the waiting pontoon we were able to swap over the batteries and start cleaning the boat up. A week’s worth of washing up and snack food wrappers stuffed into every convenient cubby hole gave a vivid and pungent indication as to how Lou & Elin had catered for leg one. Wet charts and bunks, sleeping bags in bivvy bags and laundry on the cabin sole added to the mele. Meanwhile with cake inside them and hot showers to remove the worst of the salt Lou and Elin were whisked away to catch up on sleep. Elin lucked in being offered a room with Olga, sister of somebody in GSC and mother hen extraordinaire.

By late afternoon Ian and I had restored some sort of order. We had been put in contact with a Marine Electrical Engineer who would come down in the evening to check over the electrical systems and see if there was a fault. Elin resurfaced in time to bring *White Knight* into the dock along side a pontoon and close to Pipe Dream, one of the friends she had made preparing for the Race. Dinner in a harbour side bar and Elin’s first real Guinness. Then coffees and chat with Alan and Paul on Pipe Dream waiting for the Electrical Engineer. Team Pipe Dream were retiring from the Race to sort out some domestic issues which had cropped up and were keen to lend Elin & Lou some bits of kit to help them on their way. When they had first met on the Sea Survival course in February Alan had thought Lou and Elin had little chance of making the start line. He had spent 2 years preparing Pipe Dream for the Race. Of the 53 boats expressing interest only 17 had made the start. Certainly getting to the start had been the biggest challenge so far. Little did Lou and Elin know what was to come in the next leg.

Ian the electrical engineer arrived about 7pm and worked through the batteries, alternator and electrical systems. Apart from the bilge pump which Lou & Elin had rewired incorrectly having disconnected it to try jump starting. Everything was in order. “The best 20-year-old wiring I have ever seen” the alternator was consistently giving 14.54-57 volts on all speeds. Ripple was stable, the drawdown test was good with no signs of earth leakage. With loads of crack and advice on how to improve the electrics at the next refit along the way, it was gone 1am before Ian finally packed up and got away.



With no lie in for the wicked we were up, breakfasted and tents packed in time to get Elin and Lou to the boat in time for an interview with Galway FM.



The note pinned to the railings above the pontoon captured the mood. “*Nothing is impossible – the word itself says I’m possible*”.

With our ferry to catch Ian & I headed off soon afterwards. Lou & Elin with help from Lou’s parents restocked with food before they headed off to Olga’s with their laundry for an evening meal and a good night’s sleep.

09:00 Monday morning, 48 hours after arriving Lou & Elin were off again round the south of the Arran Islands before heading north for St Kilda and the Shetlands. The leading boats left Galway 36 hours ahead of *White Knight*.

Leg 2 Galway to Lerwick

Viewed from home the first part of Leg 2 was in light winds but Windy was showing something horrible building out in the Atlantic, the remains of Tropical Storm Alex. Running the tracks it looked as though *White Knight* would catch the southern edge of the depression as she approached St Kilda. Wind strengths were difficult to predict with any certainty, but certainly above F6 on the starboard quarter. By this stage Elin & Lou had developed a strong social media following particularly on the Contessa 32 facebook group. Informed opinion was discussing the fate awaiting them.

Faster boats with better access to weather data were making their own decisions, several were already well on their way to Lerwick the fastest arriving just ahead of the storm and complaining of very slow passages. Others made a strategic detour to Stornoway. Mia the 25’ Vertue 3 days behind *White Knight* diverted to Loch Swilly to sit out the storm. One of the leading cats had sustained rudder damage and a crew member had broken some ribs so had diverted into the shelter of the Hebrides. *White Knight* carried on. More concerning Yellow Brick tracked started to fail so boats were not updating their positions and *White Knight* carried on.



Jan & I had planned to go up to Lerwick for the stop over the question was not if, but when. So far my estimates of progress had been optimistic of more favourable winds. We booked the Thursday night ferry from Aberdeen. But there was another problem, there was no accomodation available on Shetland. Days scouring the internet drew blanks until I found The Queens Hotel, ideally situated very near the old harbour which the race boats would be using. I booked it, then read the reviews. "Appaling" "my booking was canceled as I arrived", "They claimed never to have received my booking", "complaints to the owner were ignored" and so the littany continued. I tried E mailing the hotel to see if my booking had been confirmed. No answer. For 3 days I tried ringing the hotel. Nobody answered. In desperation I sent a text to Jerry from RWYC who was acting as race officer in Lerwick "Does the Queens hotel exist? If so could you check if our booking has bene received?". Yes it does exist, there is a story I will call you". By this time Jan was blaming me for booking the place, looking for camper vans and even considering camping. Two days later I managed to speak with Jerry. "The good news is it is clean, we are staing there and your bookings have been recieved. But it is chaos, Fawltly Towers has nothing on this. Harvey bought two run down hotels, the Queens and the Grand during lockdown site unseen. Both need substantial renovation but he is struggling. He is using the Queens as an anex to the Grand. By the way we have managed to get breakfasts in the Grand thrown in at no additional cost. The breakfasts are good". At least we were forewarned if not reassured.



Friday 10 June Jan & I set off after work to Carlisle for the night then onto Aberdeen with a breakfast stop in Perth and a pleasant afternoon wandering around the Granite City. The "Sleeping Pods" on the ferry turned out to be reclining seats with a hood in a darkend cabin near the center of the boat. Soon after departing we passed Suenos one of the leading catamarans making its way south.

It was a rough night for those near the bows and stern, our cabin was relatively calm, the stugerons doing their stuff. Yellow Brick updates showed *White Knight* rounding Muckle Flugga in the early hours with the pre dawn. Windy showed F7-8 I dared not look at the swell predictions. 07:00 and we were getting up for breakfast. *White Knight* was East of the Isle of Noss and starting to turn towards Lerwick, it would be a close run as to who would arrive first.

Disembarking and grabbing the first Taxi we dumped our luggae at the Lerwick Boat Club then walked south towards the point. A few miutes later White Kinght hove into view double reefed main and partially furled genoa she romped up the sound. We walked back to the harbour to see them crossing the finish line at 09:00 6 days out from Galway.



Then it all went wrong. They could not furl the genoa. Bruce the Lerwick Boat Club fixed and ex lifeboat coxswain called Lou on the radio. The genoa furling line had jammed they had tried to wrap the sheets around the foresail but they had fallen in the water so Lou had the engine in reverse but was too close to the leeward rocks to go head to wind and furl the sails. The harbour pilots were on the scene in a couple of minutes and took *White Knight* in tow. With main stowed they were brought into the old harbour. "Dad everything is broken". Fellow competitors were quickly on board helping to sort out the sails. Lesley (a previous RB&I competitor) had brought his dog which immediately sensed that Lou needed his help as she collapsed in the cockpit. The genoa furling line had chafed and jammed, the genoa halyard had parted some days earlier, the only thing keeping the genoa aloft were the by now very tight turns around the foil. The lower connector on the foil had twisted and the head of the genoa had pulled out of the track preventing the released genoa from dropping. Matt from Genesis was quickly up the mast to free the sail, which Bruce had bagged and off to a sail maker for repair before we had chance to catch breath.

Simon from Carrick made bacon rolls for Lou & Elin, Lou by this stage had recovered enough to come up to me, "I am so sorry I have broken you boat". A huge hug, "Nothing that can't be fixed". Elin pumped full of adrenalin was all over the place. "It was hell, the waves were up to the spreaders" (10m above the water line). "That's about right" was the local expert opinion, "It gets bad off Muckle Flugga". Jan took them both of to the Hotel. Lou taking our room in the Queens while Jan got another room for her & Elin in the Grand.

Down below was chaos, lockers half full of water, cushions and sleeping bags soaked, but not so much washing up, however snack food wrappers stuffed into every locker. Jan & Elin returned later in the morning to start taking clothing and sleeping bags to Lerwick Boat Club for washing and tumble drying. Meanwhile I started to pull together the "To do" AKA Replace / Repair list:

- Replace bow bi-colour light lost at sea.
- Genoa Luff foil, straighten and fit new grub screws.
- Genoa Halyard. Splice new eye
- Relace lost clevis pin from port upper guard wire
- Charge batteries
- Reset the height of the Engine Starting battery to clear the domestic battery terminal (Bruce made a packing piece).
- A friend of Lou's arranged for a Battery Kick Starter from a local supplier.



- Replace lost shackles
- Dry out and service the outboard which had fallen overboard restrained only by its lanyard.
- Tidy up the remains of the broken cap rail
- Try to reseal the windows again.
- Check the spinnaker which had been washed overboard. (fortunately without sustaining any severe damage).
- I also fitted a pair of digital battery monitors.
- The counterweights from the Navik Wind vane had been lost but could not be replaced so I dismantled the lower vane and stowed it in the fore cabin.

Working steadily through the day with Bruce supplying local knowledge and running us to the chandlers we worked through the repairs.

Lou reappeared in the evening in time to go for a Chinese meal, the only restaurant open on a Sunday in Lerwick. As the ladies headed off for their hotels, I bedded down for the night in the dripping wet cabin on the least wet cushions. Fortunately, my spare sleeping bag had survived in its dry bag. Tails of astonishment from the Bar of the Grand when the Norwegian yachtsmen realized that Elin & Lou were sailing round Britain & Ireland, not just Shetland.



Nature called early the next morning and with no facilities open around the harbour I wandered up to the Grand. Jimmy the night porter pointed the way then checked I would be returning for breakfast. Time for a wander round Lerwick and explore the harbour up to the Shetland Museum and Malakoff's amazing chandlery, both filed for future reference.

Returning to the Grand Jimmy produced a vast pot of tea while I waited for Jan to surface. Built during Victorian times The Grand had been hardly altered since. A Scotts Baronial interior with gilded paneling and red carpets is approached up a flight of stairs from the street entrance. The dining room / ball room which also serves as the breakfast room on the first floor looks out over the main street towards the harbour. A small bar is tucked away on the second floor. Signs point to a night club and conference rooms towards the darkened rear of the hotel. Probably last redecorated at some time during the oil boom of the 1980s the grandeur is rather faded. Harvey the new owner is trying hard to get contractors to do the renovation works so badly needed, however demand for rooms is very high with major infrastructure developments including wind farms, electrical interconnectors and a rocket port all overlying the ongoing demand of the oil and fisheries. Add to that the height of the holiday season boosted post covid and exacerbated by a certain TV Detective Show. Staff are hard to come by so Harvey is in effect trying to run two hotels with only half the staff needed to run one. Some level of chaos was inevitable, but it was clear Jimmy and the rest of the staff were trying hard to do the best they could. The full "Scottish Breakfast" including luscious Stornoway black pudding and haggis was a challenge I only rose to once.

Back to *White Knight* the day started with Elin being interviewed by BBC Radio Shetland. Continuing with the repairs, Lesley Irvin lent me some large adjustable spanners to straighten the twisted genoa foil connector, then a friend of Bruce's lent



me a splicing kit to put an eye in the genoa halyard. Matt from Genesis took a break from his structural repairs to nip up the mast and re-reeve the halyard, also to put electrical tape around split pins and other sharp chafe inducing projections. Genesis had suffered structural damage during Storm Alex delaminating both forward sponsons, so had needed to retire from the race. Multi OSTAR winning Christian and his crew French Olympic oarsman Pascal set off in Christian's S&S 34 Olbia in the afternoon followed closely by Simon and Mike in the Rustler 26 Carrick, despite a dodgy engine. Jan & Elin hired a taxi to do a stores run to Tesco while Lou got on with the passage planning from the stable and relatively spacious surrounds of her hotel room. Mid -afternoon and Elin (with some help from Bruce) had managed to blag a tour of the All-Weather Lifeboat. The RNLI publicity officer got to hear that Elin is a crew member of Aberystwyth Lifeboat so arranged to do a photo shoot later in the evening.



With Yellow Brick Tracker fully charged, laundry all washed, dried and stowed by early evening *White Knight* was back in one piece. Bruce had returned all the cushions cleaned of salt and dry, the batteries were nearly fully charged and a Thai restaurant meal beckoned.

Jan and Elin moved into the Queens hotel for the night, Lou keeping the original room while I had a drier more cushioned night on board. Overnight a large cruise ship, the aptly named Costa Fortuna, crept into the sound and anchored on the start line.

Teenagers don't do mornings but with an 09:00 appointment with the start line they tried. Last minute stowing of bags brought from the hotel. A quick tour of the new battery monitors and disconnecting the

solar charger from the fridge battery to maximise the feed to the domestic batteries. On with the engine, off with the shore party, goodbyes and good lucks. Lou reversed out into the sound. Sails up and across the start line only a couple of minutes late. Jan & I retired, via the tourist information center, to the Grand for breakfast and to peruse a bus timetable to plan what to do with the time before we caught tomorrow night's ferry back to Aberdeen.

After sorting out the hotel rooms we caught the mid-morning bus south to Jarlshof a fascinating prehistoric village buried under the sand dunes with layers of continuous settlement from the bronze age right up to Tudor / Stuart times. From there it was a reasonable walk along the cliffs to Sumburough Head with its multitude of wild life, particularly puffins. Bird watcher abounded but their discussion was of the avian flu which was starting to ravage the nesting colonies on the eastern islands of Shetland, a theme which was to repeat all through the summer cruise.





After treating ourselves to a meal in one of the better restaurants in Lerwick we retired to The Queens for some much-needed sleep. It was not to be.

The chaos reached a new crescendo at 23:00. Whilst well asleep the newly fitted fire alarm went off. Dragging on clothes and spare sweater we joined the other guests in the street outside, no sign of hotel staff or fire engines. Somebody went to the Grand to rouse Harvey. The alarm was eventually silenced but not before a lot of complaining and comparing notes of misery amongst the street bound guests. At least one party had had enough and found a spare room somewhere else. Reluctant to return to our rooms before a through check had been made, we stayed outside. Eventually finding our way back to our room by a circuitous route avoiding

latched fire doors. From then onwards the fire alarm went off every few hours as the technician worked through the night to find the fault. Trying to leave in the morning we got trapped between two fire doors. Jan rang Harvey. "Just push it hard", "the latch won't release we are trapped". Harvey arrived just as I had released the latch with a credit card. The breakfast at the Grand that morning was extra special.

With a day to kill we caught the bus across to Scalloway, the ancient capital of Shetland. Jan had heard of a restaurant specializing in sea food. The town hugs the inlets of the sound with buildings looking more Nordic than Scottish. The ancient keep had been home to a despotic overlord who had also misruled over Jarlshoff in its latter days before being executed for mistreating his tenants. Scalloway was also the base for the heroic Shetland Bus during WW2. Running agents and refugees between Norway and Shetland in small fishing boats during the darkest and most stormy days of the war, the Shetland Bus had provided a vital lifeline and moral boost to Norway. The Museum in Scalloway has a fine exhibition and the local guide is the son of the boatyard owner caring for the Shetland Bus boats from those times. Himself a small boy at the time he brought the subject to life.



Still full of The Grand's breakfast we had tea and a small cake in a bistro by the harbour, before catching the bus back to Lerwick and time in the main Museum. The Shetland Museum is impressive covering all aspects of island history and life. The boat exhibits are stunning with a workshop rebuilding larger fishing boats for the floating exhibition area and wider travels. Some last-minute gift shopping, afternoon tea then off to the ferry.



The overnight ferry back to Aberdeen was much calmer now the storm was well past. After the chaos and adventure of The Grand and The Queens a boring but predictable night in a Premier Inn was called for, alongside a day sight-seeing in Edinburgh and a splendid afternoon tea on the Royal Yacht Britannia.



Meanwhile *White Knight* made slow steady progress in light winds down the Scottish coast towards Blyth. Ashore there was more booking chaos as our holiday let near Blyth was cancelled at no notice. Furious searches online eventually found a last-minute cancellation for an Air BnB in Blyth.

Heading south we found a wonderful brunch stop in Dunbar then explored the coastal route thorough Northumberland past Lindisfarne, to Bambrough (with time to explore the Castle and Grace Darling Museum) Seahouses, to Craster, arriving just too late for the famous kipper

smoke house. Blyth was a significant port for the Northumberland coal industry, now re focused on chemicals and servicing the new wind farms with drilling rigs and enormous cable drums. The Royal Northumberland YC has its own private marina tucked into a corner of the harbour and its National Historic Ship the former Lightship "LV50 Tyne" as its "Club Ship". www.friendsoflv50.org.uk



With *White Knight* still crossing the Firth of Forth and not expected until early on Saturday morning we checked into the Air BnB flat then headed down to the RNYC. Christian & Pascal from Olbia and Simon & Mike from Carrick were in port for their last night before setting off on their final leg, we joined them and RWYC race officers



for drinks and dinner on board. A very convivial evening with other members of RNYC joining in. I was invited by Matt to sail out on his Rival 32 to meet *White Knight* at the finish line.



Saturday 18 June 06:00 and another check on Yellow Brick, ETA soon after 08:00. Time to get up and wander down to the Marina, meet up with Matt, quick mug of tea then off through the harbour, notifying Port Control on the way. Lou was also calling Port Control to seek permission to enter under sail, the engine would not start again.

Greetings and hoots as *White Knight* crossed the finish line then a sail up the harbour past the anglers on the pier. Turning downwind into the marina basin then into the wind to drop the main and furl the genoa. Lines and fenders ready with last scrap of genoa, backed at the last moment,

for a perfect stop alongside visitor's the pontoon just ahead of Olbia. Again, the other competitors were out to take lines and welcome Lou & Elin into Port. This time Matt provided the bacon rolls, while Elin & Lou tidied up.

Apart from low batteries there was no obvious reason for the engine not to start. Lou was convinced the alternator was not working, though it had been checked in Galway and was fine. Matt was able to find a Marine Electrical Engineer who could come and check things over. A call went out around RNYC to see if anybody had a spare alternator, several were offered.

Once Elin had tidied up and removed the laundry the work list was much shorter than at Lerwick. A couple of loose locker doors, run the diagnostics on the AIS and clean the connectors to reduce the VSWR error. Bail out and wipe over the lockers.

Steve the Electrical Engineer arrived at lunch time and started going through the electrical system. There were no obvious faults. He changed some connectors to heat shrink to reduce the risk of corrosion, then took the alternator back to his workshop to test. Being Saturday afternoon no electrical factors were open who could supply a replacement. Tests in the workshop drew a blank other than a slightly high charging voltage. Potential replacement alternators started arriving from the backs of RNYC members sheds. Most would not fit, but eventually Mike from Sunderland brought an exact match which we agreed to replace with new. Steve fitted it. All seemed well. Just to make sure he also disconnected a Stirling Voltage Booster which had been wired into the system many years before. The mystery remained.

We were joined through the day by Alys our eldest daughter and her partner, so a family meal in the evening.



The mystery of the draining batteries kept me awake for a lot of the night. Trawling through the various manuals. Checking the various accessories had been connected to the correct battery terminals, other areas of corrosion and possible short circuits, engine wiring diagrams all churned.

First stop in the morning was to change over the charging batteries. Down on the marina my phone rang, Dylan Lou's boyfriend, Was I on my own?, "yes", "ok", Dylan & Lou's sister Megan had been en-route from Pembrokeshire to surprise Lou (and the rest of us) but Megan's car had broken down. Could I pick Dylan up from the station? "No problem", "but keep it a secret", "Ok". Then off to join the rest of the family & Lou for a slap-up brunch.

Setting off with the empty diesel can and gas bottle as cover, I set off for the station. Lou was in the flat doing the passage planning while Jan, Elin and Alys were sorting out the food shopping. Dylan's arrival was a complete and very welcome surprise for Lou.

With the boat sorted and restocked we could all have an evening off, but the mystery of the electrical failures still kept churning as I tried to sleep. Had they really been resolved as Lou & Elin set off for the busiest waters of the race. The AIS transponder from here onwards was more than a nice to have.

08:00 Monday 20 June. Lou & Elin were back on the water crossing the start line and heading south in light winds. Clearing the flat and heading back to Wales we dropped Dylan at Sale to catch the tram and train home. Still fretting about the electrics Jan suggested we call in on co-owner Ian to get a fresh mind on the problem. Ian found the photos he had taken of the batteries in September 2020. Comparing them with the photos taken in Blyth we were able to confirm that they were wired up the same way. All we could do now was wait and hope.

Over the next week Lou & Elin made slow progress in light winds, including being stopped for 5 hours by a foul tide which preventing them from rounding Flamborough Head.

Meanwhile Jan & I enjoyed a run of more than 2 nights in the same bed after 10 days on the road. A trip to clear Elin's University flat. Also, time to catch up on work and domestic stuff.

As the week wore on, tracking progress on the Yellow Brick, it looked as though *White Knight* would be passing south of the Isle of Wight at the same time as the Round the Island Race. The Contessa Facebook Group were also alive to this possibility. National papers had picked up on the story so were talking about interviews.

Jan & I headed back to Plymouth on Saturday 25 June, by this time it looked as though a finish either on Sunday afternoon or early Monday was most likely.

Overnight Lou & Elin had had to deal with another chafed genoa halyard in a squall off Portland, fortunately the spinnaker halyard sufficed. Sunday started slowly, but gathered pace during the afternoon as more and more people dropped by the Royal Western YC checking on progress, planning for the finish and reception. Hitting the foul tide off Start point progress slowed, local experts groaned and recalled their own battles trying to force a passage along the southern tip of Devon against a fowls tide.



Newspaper interest waned as it became clear that *White Knight* would be finishing in the dark, after Stop Press and with other news pressing.

First sight of *White Knight* from the Royal Western YC balcony was the tri-color crossing the eastern breakwater entrance then tracking along the top of the breakwater. The RWYC reception rib was already out at the Western entrance to meet them with a live feed on Face Book then follow up Plymouth Sound to the finish.

Hoots and cheers as Lou & Elin crossed the finish line at 22:45 on Sunday 26 June to finish their first offshore race.

- Elapsed time 28d 11h 15m 33s (less 6 days in port on the mandatory stopovers)
- 10th across the line out of the 17 original starters and the 53 who had submitted entries.
- Distance sailed 2277NM.
- 6th Monohull on corrected time.
- Youngest team ever,
- Lou youngest skipper ever,
- Elin youngest female competitor ever.

Secure alongside QAB marina Lou & Elin were whisked off to the RWYC club house to celebrate with Champaign and kebabs.





Working with Alys they released this to the press on Monday 27 June:-

Young Welsh sailors break records in prestigious Round Britain and Ireland yacht race

Two young women from Wales have made history by becoming the youngest team to complete the Royal Western Yacht Club Round Britain and Ireland race – described by Sir Robin Knox-Jonson as the hardest sailing race in Northern Europe.

Lou Boorman from Pembrokeshire and Elin Jones from Wrexham spent a grueling 22 days and more than 2000 nautical miles at sea aboard *White Knight*, a Contessa-32.

At age 20, Lou has also become the youngest skipper in the race's 56-year history, whilst 19-year-old Elin is the youngest ever female competitor.

They crossed the finish line in Plymouth at 10:45pm on Sunday 26 May, and were given a warm welcome (including kebabs and champagne!) by family, friends, fellow competitors and members of the Royal Western Yacht Club.

Lou said:

"It's been an extraordinary experience that's really tested my navigational skills and seamanship as well as nearly broken me mentally and physically.

"The lack of sleep coupled with extreme conditions, hunger and stress were enough to make me want to quit. Before we reached Lerwick when we were surviving the storm, I told myself I'd never step foot on that boat again. Luckily no sailor meets my stubbornness to persevere quite like my brilliant 1st Mate, Elin!"

Elin added:

"We really couldn't have done this without all the incredible support and encouragement we've received – so thank you to our family, friends, the other competitors, race organisers, and all the people we'd never met before around Britain and Ireland who helped us along the way.

"I'm really honored that Lou asked me to do this with her, and I wouldn't have wanted to do it with anyone else. It's been really hard, but we've had a fantastic time together and it was so worth it when we finally crossed that finish line."

The race, which is held every four years, began in Plymouth on 28 May 2022. The route includes three mandatory 48-hour stopovers - Galway in the Republic of Ireland, Lerwick in Scotland's Shetland Isles, and Blyth in Northumberland, before embarking on the final leg back to Plymouth.

It wasn't all plain sailing for *White Knight*, as just 12 hours into the first leg from Plymouth to Galway they lost battery power to all the navigation and communications instruments. Lou navigated the remainder of the 6-day leg using traditional paper navigation and Elin's grandad's old handheld GPS.

On leg 2 from Galway and Lerwick, they rode the front of tropical storm Alex for 4 days in near gale force winds between St Kilda and Muckle Flugga. Arriving in Lerwick they



discovered they had won that leg on corrected time. Damage to sails and rigging were repaired with support of members of Lerwick Boating Club and other competitors.

The Lerwick to Blyth leg saw very light winds, and *White Knight* continued to have battery problems. These were fixed in Blyth with the help of members of The Royal Northumbrian Yacht Club and a marine engineer.

The final leg from Blyth to Plymouth also started with very light winds all down the east coast and as far as the Isle of White, before a patch of stormy weather tore the vital genoa halyard (rope that holds the foresail up) on their last overnight stretch.

Lou and Elin were racing in memory of three of their grandparents who had Alzheimer's – and have so far raised more than £3,000. To donate to their appeal, visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/LouandElinRoundBritainandIreland>





After the Race

After the Race *White Knight* returned to Queen Anne's Battery Plymouth bow held high, if a little (very) wet and battered. Two days removing all the surplus gear, high energy food and detritus of the race mopping out lockers and washing away the salt. This was followed by another three days of carrying out repairs to the genoa halyard, broken lockers, sails and numerous other bits and pieces. Generally returning *White Knight* towards cruising mode. One find was a biscuit wedged under the float switch for the bilge pump causing it to keep running. Was this the cause of the battery problems which had caused so much angst? We will never know.



There was also the decision, where to go next? Back to Caernarfon, via Cornwall and the Scilly Isles possibly round Ireland or continue with a modified version of Plan A and continue west up the English Channel and north through the North Sea, laying up on the east coast for the winter and continuing round Britain in 2023.

Each option had its merits and limitations. One over-riding consideration was the availability of crew and the logistics of crew changes.

A discussion with co-owner Ian finally brought the favored option to Plan A(modified) and I set off single handed up channel with other crew members looking to join through July and August.

**Leg 3 Plymouth to Ramsgate Singlehanded**

Date	1 July 2022		
From	Plymouth	Towards	Salcombe / Dartmouth

Tides (BST)

Port	Plymouth						
HW	08:00	20:10					
	14:00						

Weather forecast

Weather Forecast				
Time	06:00		Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop	Low N Scotland moving east & filing			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
	SW4/5 occ 6 > Var > W	SI /M	Showers	G
+24	w/SW 4/5 > NW ¾	SI /M	Showers	G

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
12:40						Left QAB. MFD Touch Screen not working, no log...
13:20	130			SW4	SI	Passed breakwater engine off. Course set for Bolt Tail
14:00	130			SW4	SI	
15:00	130			SW4	SI	50:13.4N 3:56.5W
15:15						Bolt Tail abeam.
16:00	110			SW4	SI	
16:30						Salcombe abeam
17:00	090			SW4		Prawle Point abeam
18:00	010			SW4		Gybe off Start Point
19:00	015			SW4	SI	Approaching Dartmouth
20:00						Secure Darthaven Marina Kingswear

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	7.5		
Log	Not working		



With no crew immediately available and limited time before I had to return to work at the beginning of August the next leg of my trip would be singlehanded, indeed my first single handed trip with *White Knight*.

First thoughts were to aim for Salcombe initially, see how I got on and continue onto Dartmouth if it was feeling comfortable with single handing *White Knight*. Taking things slowly, the first step was to cast off and get out of the marina safely. Having achieved this the next step was to recover lines and fenders with the tiller pilot looking after the steering. Next the main sail.

All going well so far then disaster. The Chart Plotter touch screen was not working and the Log data was not visible. Fortunately, it was stuck in tracking mode so showing enough to see AIS and the route for the next few miles. Under full sail and engine off we passed through the breakwater and set course for Bolt Tail. Bowling along with a SW 4 and the tide under us we had ideal conditions.



The Mew stone, Wembury, Bigbury Bay, Bolt Tail, Bolt Head and Salcombe all flew by. A beautiful day to be out sailing with a reasonable swell to keep me on my toes. The Tillerpilot giving me the breaks from the helm to nip below and check the chart, keep the log and grab a biscuit.

The tide was still favorable as we passed Prawle Point and then Start Point. Turning North into Start Bay the swell died, time for a mug of tea.



Approaching Dartmouth came the next hurdle, leaving the cockpit to get the main down and secured, while leaving plenty of sea room. Also time to rig lines and fenders, but which side? No response from Dartmouth Marina on either radio. OK, rig both sides, head in and hope.



Dartmouth entrance from the sea is one of the more spectacular entrances on the south coast passing between the forts up the narrow ria, past the Royal Dart YC and into the sheltered harbour. Motoring around the marina I found the visitor's berth and tied up, to be greeted a few minutes later by the attendant, then moved to an inside berth. A few minutes later Red Fox arrived from Topsham SC at the end of a passage race. We had known the owners Colin and Ann Leach in the late 1990s when we sailed from Topsham in our Hurley 22 Lady Elinor so time to catch up and pass on best wishes to others who may remember us.

Secured alongside with dues paid it was off in search of food, the pubs in Kingswear do not do food and the café was just closing. Fortunately the convenience store had a quick cook ready meal, so sustenance sorted and time to catch up on sleep.

The weekend was spent with a morning out in Dartmouth shopping, followed by an afternoon continuing to tidy up *White Knight*. Oiling and polish the wood work. Fixing various minor things. Drying out cushions. Also doing the laundry. By Saturday evening *White Knight* was looking almost respectable and ready for visitors again. An evening meal at the local bistro along with a night cap in the Royal Dart YC rounded off a thoroughly pleasant day



Sunday kicked off with more tidying up and drying cushions along with some passage planning for the long leg to Portland. Marcus & Nia came to visit in the afternoon, bringing some batten to help repair the locker under the chart table and a spare ultra-sharp Japanese saw.

Dinner on board and an early night preparing for an 02:00 start for Portland

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	4/7/22		
From	Dartmouth	Towards	Portland

Tides (BST)

Port	Plymouth			Portland			
HW	09:50	HW	21:50	HW	10:40	22:40	
LW	15:40				15:30		

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	Low N of UK Ridge Tuesday with a band of rain			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
LR-LE	W/NW 3-4	Sm/Sl	Showers	Good
SB-LR +24 Hrs	NW3-4 veering W	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
02:00						Depart Dartmouth
02:45	080	4017		NW3	Sl	Mewstone abeam
03:00	079	18		NW3	Sl	
04:00	079	24		NW3	Sl	
05:00	073	28		NW3	Sm	
06:00	074	33		NW2	Sm	27M to Portland Bill
07:00	075	38		NW2	Sm	
08:00	075	43		NW1	Sm	
09:00	082	48		NW2	Sm	Adjust course to pass S of Race
10:00	085	55		W2	Sm	
11:00				W2	Sm	Off Portland Bill
12:00				W4	Sm	E Shambles
13:00				W5	Sl	Portland Harbour
13:15		4074		W	Sm	Portland Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ		
Hours underway	11.25	Log	54



An early start to make the turn of tide off Portland Bill. Leaving the marina in the dark, carefully making sure all lines were taken in, as my eyes became more accustomed to the dark. The chart plotter was still not operating properly with the touch screen having failed despite through cleaning. The iPad with Navionics App loaded was my backup in the cockpit and the chart secured to the chart table. Gradually interpreting the bouys and their transits as we made our way down to the harbour entrance, at last we were in open water. With light winds the engine stayed on with the genoa providing some steadying to the light swell.

Sunrise at sea and the routine of hourly log entries. The tiller pilot was taking a lot of the strain but as yet I was not comfortable leaving the cockpit / hatchway for more than a few seconds. Yet again I was thankful for the forethought of making a comfortable perch for the companionway step, now my favored place to sit with easy reach to the cockpit, Navigation table and galley. Also having the fist mike for the VHF radio mounted by the companion way step, with its internal speaker.

A cooked breakfast to break up the morning with only a few distant fishing boats in sight and a "British Navy Warship" which quickly disappeared over the horizon.

We were not quite in time to make the inside passage round Portland Bill, so kept outside the Race and the Shambles Bank with a strong favorable tide.



Past the long breakwaters to the North entrance before turning into Portland Harbour, past the Weymouth & Portland Sailing Academy home to the Olympic sailing in 2012 and many Topper Squad events since, then finally into Portland Marina. Time for a snack lunch and mug of tea.

Portland Marina is massive, a very long walk from the visitor pontoon to the ablutions block and office. The marina staff use a golf buggy, berth holders use bikes, visitors walk.

After checking in time to get my head down for a few minutes, which turned into a couple of hours. Then a wander into Portland to find food. And celebrate my first night time passage single handed. Budgens stocked Home Cook ready meals, so a treat for the next couple of days

This was also the start of the heatwave which was to build over the next 2 weeks.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	5/7/22		
From	Portland	Towards	Lulworth Cove & Swanage

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	Stong NW in N UK, elsewhere light winds			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
SP-LR	W/NW2-4	Sm / SI	Fair	Good
+24 hours	NW2-4	Sm/SI	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
14:15		4074		NW3	Sm	Depart Portland Marina
14:40	070	75		NW3	Sm	Portland N entrance. Engine off
15:00	080	78		NW3	Sm	
16:00	080			NW3	SI	Durdle Door. Make for Lulworth Cove to await end of live firing
17:00	125	84		W3	SI	Depart Lulworth Cove
18:00	150	88		W3	SI	Power up to avoid St Alban's Race Course to avoid. Wind over tide. Peak tice 19:00
18:50	087	92		SW1		Change course for St Dunstan's Head
19:00	070	92		SW1		SOG<3 knots
20:00	060	96		W3	SI	Past St Alban's Head SOG 4knots
20:35	035	98				St Dunstan's Head abeam. Change course for Peverel Ledge
21:00						Peverel Ledge abeam
21:06		4101		NW1	Sm	Anchor in 4.7m Swanage Bay. Lying across the wind.

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Single Handed		
Hours underway	7		
Log	27		



The morning was spent visiting my with Dad's cousin Linden in Weymouth catching up on family news and hearing of her adventures as a passenger on the Trinity House support vessel Patricia and her bird watching cruises to Antarctica. before catching the bus back to Portland and setting off East.

The plan was to explore the Purbeck coast to Lulworth Cove, possibly anchor for the night or push on to Swanage. At last a chance to see from the sea all those features of chalk cliffs enthused about by my geography teachers.



Durdle Door



The beautifully sheltered, but crowded Lulworth Cove. I did not have long to wait for the live firing on the Lulworth Ranges to finish at 17:00, before heading on East for St Albans head and its race. Keeping well outside the race the foul tide was building.



Even in these benign conditions the race over the St Alban's ledges was impressive. The foul tide was against us and building all the way to Peveril Ledge. But once around the headland the tide eased into Swanage Bay and I dropped anchor just as the sun set. Blissful.

6 July 22

Next morning a short sail to Poole then I dropped anchor next to Brownsea Island for an Admin Day. Suddenly the number of boats increased dramatically. Passing distanced decreased and wash became a near constant fact of life. Speedboats full of young people blasting around partying,

older sailors in Shrimpers, massive motor cruisers bedecked in bikini clad girls and older manicured specimens piling up and down the main channel. Big ferries slowly, majestically asserting their rite of passage.

Checking over the Avon with the intent of a row ashore I found that all the valves had failed. The inner part having corroded and fallen off. No rowing ashore today, I ordered replacements from Ribstore at Point Hamble Marina to be collected on Friday.

Good 4G made for a good day beating back the E Mails and a couple of teams calls to placate work.



Royal Motor Yacht Club, Sandbanks Poole. Host of the annual Seagull regatta.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	6 & 7/7/22		
From	Swanage	Towards	Poole & Lymington

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	R High developing from W settled			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
SB-LR	NW 3-4 > SW5	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good
7/7	N/Nw3-4>Var	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good
+24 Hrs	N/NW >W/SW 2-4 Occ5	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
10:00	036	4101		W2		Depart Swanage
11:00						Poole Chanel
11:30		4107		W2		Anchor next to Brownsea Island
7/7/22						
07:00		4107				Depart Brownsea Island. Explore up to Poole Town
08:00	080	12		NNW3	Sm	Sails up, set course Hentingsbury Head
09:00	070	17		NNW3	Sm	
09:30	090	20		N4	Sm	Cross Christchurch Ledge. Set course for North Channel
10:30	100	26				North Channel
11:30		4131				Dan Bran Pontoon Lymington

Day Summary

Crew			
Hours underway			
Log			



7 July 22

I elected for an earlyish start to explore a bit of Poole Harbour up to the Town Quay before the Motor Cruisers got out of bed. I had explored the middle parts of Poole Harbour previously and recalling its shallows I kept to the main channels before turning and heading out towards the Solent.

Much time and tribulation was spent dodging the poorly marked pot buoys, very different from the highly visible dan buoys used in Cornwall and large orange buoys used in Devon, off the Dorset coast and up into the busy waters of the Solent fishermen seem to think a 2l milk bottle or a netted football is adequate.

Past the low cliffs of Hentigsbury Head and Christchurch Bay before bearing away through the North Chanel to enter the Solent close by Hurst Castle.



A close reach in towards Lymington entrance dodging the race fleets and ferries to work up the channel and moor on the Dan Bran pontoon. Hot shower and lunch at the Royal Lymington YC.

After lunch I visited Jeremey Rogers Yachts to thank them for their support for Lou & Elin. Lovely to put faces to the names and to be given some of the Contessa 32 50th anniversary commemorative mugs. Time to wander into Lymington for a food shop, stopping at the chandlers and for once not buying anything. Returning to the pontoons I got chatting with another Contessa owner who had been following Lou & Elin's progress. He had been onboard the Shieldhall with Sir Robin Knox-Johnson the night they had been crossing Lyme Bay and had tried to call *White Knight* for a chat, unfortunately it was at the time when Lou & Elin were dealing with the snapped genoa halyard so were otherwise engaged. Que sera.

The day was rounded off with dinner at the Royal Lymington chatting with a lovely couple on the next table, overlooking the harbour with all its activity as the race fleet returned.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	8/7/22		
From	Lymington	Towards	Hamble & Chichester Harbour

Tides (BST)

Port	Cowes						
HW	06:50	19:30					
LW	12:10						

Weather forecast

Summary Forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High W of Ireland moving E. Atlatic fronts N of UK			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
SB-LR	Var 2-4 >N 4 for a time	Sm/SI	Fair	Good
+24 SB-LR	Var <3 > N/NE 3-4	Sm	Fair	Good
+24 NF-SB	Var<3 > SW3-4 > N4-5 decreasing 2-4 later	Sm/SI	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
08:00		4131		N1	Sm	Depart Lymington
09:30						St Malo Race Fleet passing heading West
10:00		139		N1	Sm	Beaulieu River Entrance
11:00		143		N1		Turn off Bucklers Hard
11:30	082	146				Beaulieu River Entrance
13:00		153		N1	Sm	Port Hamble Marina
14:15		153				Depart Port Hamble Marina
15:00		120		S3	Sm	N Channel towards Portsmouth
16:00	090	161		0	Sm	Gilkicker abeam
16:20						Cross Portsmouth channel
16:35	110	164		S1	Sm	Main Passage through submarine barrier
18:00		172		SW 2		Anchor East Head

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	9		
Log	41		



The day started bright and sunny with very little wind so a gentle motor out of Lymington then a turn to Port up the West Solent.

Yachts were gathering off Cowes for the start of the St Malo Race, Lou & Elin were both competing through contacts they had made during the RB&I Race. Elin's boat an Open 60 Pegasus of Northumberland was toward the back of the fleet partially due to a later start time but, as was eventually discovered, was still full of water ballast from the RB&I.

Leaving the racers astern I took a detour into the Beaulieu River weaving through the trot moorings to admire the bird life, classic yachts and the Royal Southampton YC's weekend club house on the edge of the salt marshes. With the tide now ebbing strongly it was time to turn off Bucklers Hard.



Back out in the Solent the 20,000HP brigade were roaring about, cutting across bows, skimming past with no consideration for their enormous wash and generally p****ing off everybody in the vicinity. One sea mark of note was the East Leap Cardinal where RAYC legend has it *White Knight* was run aground before she sank after hitting the mark. The repair is still holding good over 30 years later.

Rolling the mighty swell (wash) in no wind I crossed to the Hamble and into Port Hamble for dinghy spares and a very quick lunch. Being charged £10 for the privilege of a 1 hour stop I made a quick exit. With the 20,000HP brigade still charging about creating carnage I decided enough was enough, it was time to get out of the Solent as quickly as possible.

Taking the North Chanel into the East Solent, then past Portsmouth. At least getting away from Southampton Water the number of noisy white penis substitutes decreased a bit. Off Portsmouth a Mayday call came over the radio but no further response came from the sender. Looking about there were no obvious boats in trouble. Once past Portsmouth I took the Main Passage through the submarine defenses, out into the relative quiet along the coast to Chichester Harbour.

I anchored at East Head with a view to exploring Chichester Harbour in the morning. It was a Saturday Night after a hot day, so the anchorage was popular with boats



anchoring fairly close to each other and sitting over each other's anchors. Enjoying barbeques and beer in the sunset. A pleasant way to end a passage through one of the most popular sailing grounds in Britain, which has been totally spoiled by ignorance and arrogance.



Pete rang to say he was coming to join me on Friday, best place to meet was in Ramsgate. With four day sails to be completed in five days plus a day's work at some point there was no time to explore Chichester harbour so an early start to catch the tide in the morning.

Four steps to Ramsgate

There may be three steps to heaven but getting to Ramsgate would take me four. Fair East going tides were starting either overnight or in the afternoons, but as it was neaps the currents would generally be light apart from around the headlands.

Breaking down the legs

- Chichester to Brighton approx. 30 miles say 6 hours around Selsey Bill
- Brighton to Eastbourne approx. 20 miles with a tide gate at Beachy Head
- Eastbourne to Dover approx. 50 miles so a 10+ hour day with a tide gate at Dungeness
- Dover to Ramsgate 15 miles.

The weather forecast remained settled with the heatwave continuing to build. With no protection from the sun early morning starts with an early afternoon finish would be more pleasant than sweltering in the heat of the afternoon, though sea breezes may get a chance to build if it was very calm or the base winds were from the south of west.

With so much motoring in prospect a bunkering stop along with a chance to catch up on the laundry at Brighton Marina was in order.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	9/7/22		
From	East Head	Towards	Brighton

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High W Ireland moving E			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
NF-SB	N>Var>E/NE 2-4 later	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good
+24	E/NE>Var 3-4	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
08:10		4172* (0)				Up Anchor. MFD touch screen not working
08:45	130			N4	Sm	W Pole set course for Looe Channel
09:30	100			N4	Sm	Change course to pass N of Medmerry Bank
10:00	095			N4	Sm	Through Street & Boulder
11:00	060			NE1	Sm	Engine on heading to close shore & breeze
12:00	085			NNE 2		
13:00	065			NE2	Sm	Little Hampton abeam
15:00	065			S2	Sm	Closing Brighton
16:30				S1		Brighton Marina

- Log zeroed

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	10.5		
Log	Display not working		



Getting out of the crowded East Head anchorage was a challenge. The boat ahead was swinging over my anchor. Time for some breakfast and a mug of tea rather than wake the sleepers. Meanwhile the wind shifted slightly and the route to the anchor became clear. The Chart Plotter touch screen was not working, and to make matters worse it was producing random Man Overboard waypoints. Using the iPad link to drive it I was able to get some sense out of the chart plotter. I also reset the Triton displays to give AIS data at 4- and 12-miles range.

As the sun started to climb it got hot and kept getting hotter.

To get past Selsey Bill we sailed via the "Street" and "Boulder" marks into the Looe Channel. Then a long passage past in a dying wind past a low coastline. The wind getting lighter and lighter then calm before turning south as the sea breeze kicked in. Closing the coast to try to gain some lift from the sea breeze helped, by the time we reached Brighton it was up to force 2. A feeble end to one of the less interesting passages on this trip.

Entering Brighton Marina was delayed as dredgers were maneuvering, then having been allocated a berth it was a hunt to find where the pontoons actually were. Local knowledge was freely given. Brighton Marina is very different from other marinas being surrounded by clubs, pubs and the "nighttime economy". There were no marine shops in sight.

Escaping the sweltering sun to the shade of the facilities I grabbed a welcome shower and hit the laundry, followed by a food shop at the nearby Asda. WiFi did not reach the pontoons, but was good under the shade of the facilities block. Meanwhile the hen parties went out on their hour or two hour charter boat trips and the gawpers from the bars peered at the yachts.

It was too hot to bother with the cooker and a cold beer was in order come the end of the afternoon so I joined the gawpers for a cold beer and a light dinner.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	10/7/22		
From	Brighton	Towards	Eastbourne

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						
HW	08:45	21:00					
LW	15:30						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High over southern UK			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
NF-SB	SW>Var > E/S 3 or less	Sm	Fair	Good
+24	E/SE > SW 2-4	Sm	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
12:00						Refuel : - 38l (20 in spare can) all full
12:30	125			S1	Sm	Dept Brighton Marina
14:00	105			S1	Sm	Newhaven abeam
15:00	109			S1	Sm	Birling Gap abeam
15:20						Passed Beachy Head
16:00						Anchored E of Eastbourne Pier 2.5m

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	4		
Log	MFD not working		



The fair tide was not due until early afternoon by which time it would be very hot, so I got an early start cleaning the Avon and fitting the new valves. With a good wash and holding pressure nicely the Avon was fit for duty.

As the morning progressed the dead still air in the marina got very very hot. So back to the shade of the lower deck of the facilities pontoon and a chance to make full use of the wifi.

At noon it was time to move, firth to the self-service fuel dock the off out into the channel and heading East past Newhaven and the growing chalk cliffs. Past Seaford and the spectacular Seven Sisters and Beachy Head.

The first time I had been to Beechey Head was on a similarly hot day in 1968 when my Dad had been badly sun burned while watching spitfires circling overhead as they filmed the dog fights for the Battle of Britain movie.



Having rounded Beachy Head I anchored off Eastbourne Pier for the night, a little bit rolly but good for a very early start.

Navigation warning:-

- Limited berths at Dover Marina, (so I rang and booked a berth)
- Report small vessels to Dover Coastguard

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	11/7/22		
From	Eastbourne	Towards	Dover

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						
HW	09:40	22:00					
LW	16:30						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop	High over England moving E. Cold Front later on Mon / Tues			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
NF-SB	Var<3 > E/SE 3-4	Sm	Fair	Good
+24	E/SE 3-4 > Var<3 > SW3-4	Sm	Showers	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
03:30	070			N1	Sm	Up Anchor
04:00	070			N1	Sm	Sovereign Harbour abeam
05:00	071			0	Sm	
06:00	070			0	Sm	Past Hastings
07:00	070			0	Sm	07:30 Rye abeam
08:00	070			0	Sm	Porpoise (1 st seen in English Chanel)
08:40	045			0	Sm	Dungeness Abeam
09:00	040			0	Sm	
10:00	040	67.1 *		0	Sm	
11:00	051	73		0	Sm	
12:00		76.4				Moored Dover Tidal Basin Pontoons
						• Note Log changed to Triton

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	8.5		
Log			



03:30 start to catch the start of the east going tide, especially to have the flood around Dungeness. In the first light of the dawning, I caught a last glimpse of the iconic 1960s Royal Sovereign lighthouse as it was being prepared for dismantling. Another treasured memory from my Ladybird book of Lighthouses and Lightships.

Passed Hastings the pre-dawn lit up the fishing boats on the eastern beach before the sunrise in Rye Bay.



A porpoise broke surface, the first cetacean I had seen since North Cornwall. It struck me hard that the English Channel was far less rich in bird and wildlife than the west coast of the UK.

Dungeness gradually grew on the horizon, the block of the power station visible first apparently floating until the beach rose above the horizon. Then the old and new lighthouses came into view.





Fiddling with the programming I was able to get log readings to display on the Tritons to replace the log readings that could no longer be displayed on the chart plotter. The 67.1 miles on the log taken from the Triton display at 10:00 corresponded with the log having been zeroed at East Head, at which time the original log reading on the chart plotter was 4172.

Flat calm persisted as we chugged onwards towards Dover. A small warship was patrolling between Dungeness and the Dover Straights in the inshore traffic zone. Further offshore the lines of cargo vessels heading down channel. The chalk cliffs behind Folkstone shimmered in the heat.

Approaching Dover harbour the VTS was busy with traffic entering & leaving, I called in and was asked to hold, pending a departing patrol vessel, then followed a small motor cruiser in through the Western Entrance to the Inner harbour then given permission to proceed through the Wick Channel to the Old Tidal basin.



The old anchorage off the beach is no longer available since the start of construction of the new 300 berth marina, which was not yet open to visitors. Meanwhile the Wellington dock was also closed for refurbishment and the locking times for the Granville Dock did not suit my passage plans.



So, it was the old tidal basin for *White Knight*, alongside the angling boats and Border Force & Royal Navy ribs patrolling the channel to intercept migrants.

Catching up on sleep I missed the Royal Cinque Ports YC, but in the evening wandered into the town for dinner at an Italian restaurant. Redevelopment of Dover town center is progressing apace with new paving and pedestrianization, long overdue

investment aimed at “leveling up”.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	12/7/22		
From	Dover	Towards	Ramsgate

Tides (BST)

Port	Dover						
HW	10:30	23:00					
LW	17:30						

Weather forecast

Weather Forecast				
Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
08:00		76.4				
08:00	060	78		W<1	Sm	Depart Dover W Entrance
09:00	060	80		W<1	Sm	Halyard caught on Steaming light,
09:20	010	81		W2	Sm	Set course N
09:30	000	81		W2	Sm	Cleared Halyard, Sails up
10:00	353	83		SW2	Sm	Deal Bank Buoy abeam
11:00						Ramsgate Channel
11:30		88.7		S2	Sm	Ramsgate Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ singlehanded		
Hours underway	3.5		
Log	12.3		



I departed Dover Harbour, guided and managed by Port Control, at each stage from the Old Tidal Basin, through the Wick Channel and inner harbour then close inside the sea wall to the west. “*White Knight*, Port Control: What is your Best speed Over?” “Port Control *White Knight*: 4.5 Knots. Over”, there was a long pause “*White Knight* Port Control: Make your best speed through the Western Entrance, out”. One huge ferry was approaching another leaving and I was slipping through the gap in between.

At last freed and out into the last bit of the English Channel then turning North! Even better, at last a sail, all the way to Ramsgate.



Hugging the coast past Deal inside the Goodwin Sands, into the Ramsgate Channel and Ramsgate Roads before dropping sail and calling up Harbour Control for permission to enter. A large catamaran made the narrow entrance to the west Marina even narrower. The East Marina and all other bits of available wall were stuffed with Border Force patrol vessels and chartered vessels supporting the interception of cross channel migrants.

I slipped into a berth next to *Depper* a well-maintained Peter Duck ketch en-route from Devon to the Deben, across the pontoon was *Duet*, Augustine Courtauld’s beautiful Gaff rigger, dreamed of whilst he was the solo meteorologist, alone for 5 months at a winter observation post, Icecap Station, located high in the interior of Greenland in 1930–1931. *Duet* is now a sail training boat on loan to the Ceridian Trust.



With a day in hand before Pete arrived it was time to catch up on the laundry and some work admin also a couple of meetings. A café under the arches with wifi served well as an office and charging point for the laptop.



A bit of tidying and polishing on board was followed by dinner in a Little Greek restaurant also under the arches by the inner harbour. It was then only a short wander up to the Royal Temple YC for a night cap with its memorabilia of racing past and its role during WW2 as the wardroom for Officers of the Coastal Forces HMS Fervent.

Wednesday 13 July started with an Admin morning sitting in a café with wifi for some breakfast, catching up with work E mails and Teams meetings with the team. Closely followed by a much overdue haircut. Updates from Pete tracked his slow progress by train in sweltering carriages surrounded by noisy sweaty people. Meanwhile with the sun beating down on the tarmac around the harbour (the cobbles have long gone) it was time to seek some shade and a visit to the maritime museum.

Ramsgate has a long and varied maritime history including coastal fishing, smuggling, cross channel ferry port, trading port and coastal forces naval base. The small maritime museum captures them all and some of the characters which emerged in a small rather delapidated old building on the harbour side. A team from the National Maritime Museum was busy wrapping up several of the exhibits ready to be taken away for conservations work and clearing a gallery for refurbishment. A real gem of a local museum run by locals.

Pete arrived on the station bus in time for some late lunch and a wander around the harbour to the Marina. With Pete and his gear settled into the fore cabin, we had a chance to catch up on news from home and the shenanigans at the sailing club while taking shade from the afternoon sun. In the cool of the evening we explored the historic harbour.

Ramsgate was also our return to working harbours after the expensive modern marinas along the south coast. Ramsgate Marina is tucked into a corner of a much larger Royal Harbour.

Ramsgate was a member of the Confederation of Cinque Ports, under the 'Limb' of Sandwich, Kent. The construction of Ramsgate Harbour began in 1749 and was completed in about 1850. The Harbour has the unique distinction of being the only Royal Harbour in the United Kingdom.

One building which caught our attention was the Smack Boy's Home which:- was built in 1881 of stock brick and is a Grade II listed building. The Smack Boys were apprenticed to the fishing smack skippers of Ramsgate (it was not unusual that the crew of five would be made up of the skipper and four Smack Boys). The home was the result of pressure put on the Board of Trade by Canon Brenan, Vicar of Christ Church, Ramsgate. No other British fishing port appears to have copied this unique facility.

Because of its proximity to mainland Europe, Ramsgate was a chief embarkation point both during the Napoleonic Wars and for the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940.

In October 1939, the Royal Navy established a Coastal Forces base at Ramsgate called HMS Fervent, which operated Motor Torpedo Boats, Motor Gun Boats and Motor Launches until September 1945. From 27 May 1940, Ramsgate harbour was the main assembly point for the build up of small craft needed for Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk. Once the evacuation was under way, Ramsgate was the



second busiest port after Dover, and just under 43,000 men passed through the port, transported onwards by 82 special trains.

Sitting on a terrace above the Royal Harbour (and an excellent Thai restaurant) is the Royal Temple Yacht Club



Tonight's stop on the Tour of Royals the Royal Temple YC in Ramsgate. Tracing its origins to a group of amateur London sailors who sailed from Temple Pier the club was founded in 1857. Racing to the Thanet coast moved the center of gravity to Ramsgate and the establishment of the current club house in 1896. Royal status followed in 1897. Big yacht racing was a feature right up to WW2.

During WW2 the clubhouse became the officers mess and wardroom for HMS Fervant and the coastal defence, MTBs MGBs patrols.

Post war yacht cruising came to the fore and a School of Navigation running RYA courses alongside active participation in international yacht racing. The club like so many is welcoming visiting yachtsmen.

Ramsgate is now a very active operational centre for Border Force and the Royal Navy working on illegal immigration in small boats.



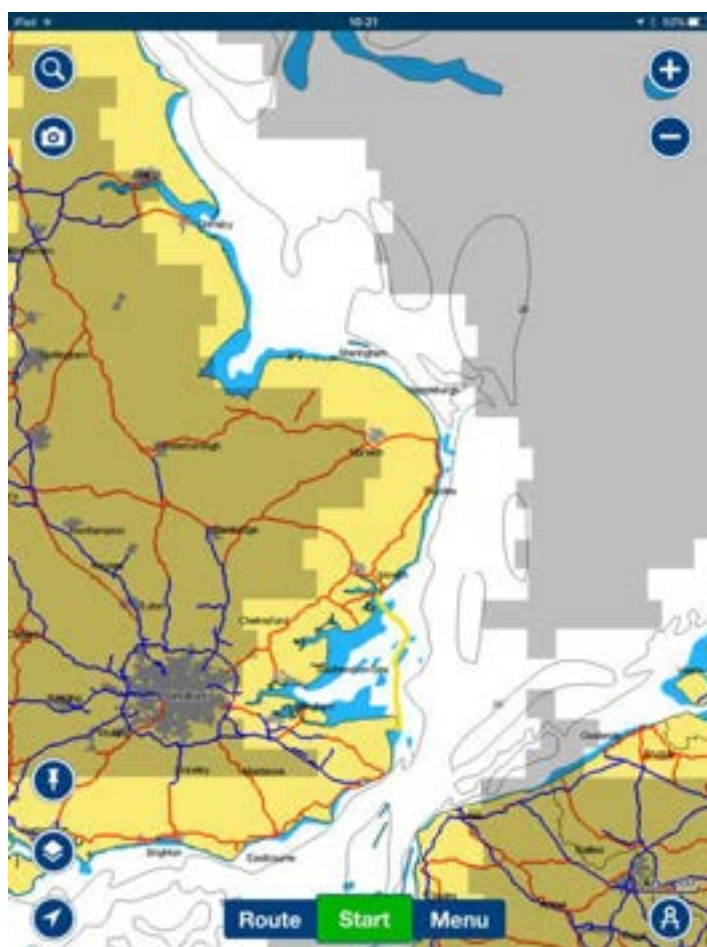


Leg 4 The East Coast

With Pete on board and other friends expressing interest we were now in a position to think about an end point for the trip. Work was starting to demand my return by the beginning of August. The Humber or Blyth would be a reasonable place to stop for the winter not too far from North Wales to do a refit but that would leave much to do in 2023, management may not be too happy for another 2 – 3 months away.

The next reasonably accessible winter stop over would be the Clyde. Taking another month off work to go round the top of Scotland and through the Western Isles though attractive was pushing the budget, already depleted by the RB&I support, a bit too far at a time when the August weather can become less favorable. A short cut through the Caledonian Canal was a more reasonable option, if I pushed my return to work back to the second week in August, but would not leave time to explore the Thames estuary.

The tides for the next few days did not favour exploring deep into the Thames Estuary, So the next step could be to the Essex or Suffolk coast. The Crouch, Blackwater and Colne were attractive but approaching from the south would either require very intricate navigation on a falling tide or rounding the Sunk sands, in which case the Naze and Harwich were nearer. Ian & Sue were also planning to visit over the weekend and would also like to visit Sutton Hoo. So the plan moved towards bold legs up the east coast and through the Caledonian Canal. The Thames Estuary can wait for another year.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	14/7/22		
From	Ramsgate	Towards	Harwich

Tides (BST)

Port	Harwich						
HW	00:30	13:00					
LW	06:20	18:50					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High over Southern England			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
GP - NF	Var 2-4 . NE4-5 for a time	Sm / SI	Sh in N	Good
+24	Var 2-4 > N/NW 4-5 later	Sm / SI	Mostly fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:00		88.7				Dept Ramsgate Marina
09:15	005	89.8		N2	SI	Set course for N Foreland
10:00	020	93.3		N2	SI	
10:15	005	94.5				N Foreland abeam
10:20	355	94.9		N2	SI	Set course for London Array windfarm
11:20	355	103.5		N1	Sm	Enter London Array
12:00						Foulger Gat
13:17	025	110		N2	SI	Foulger Gat N Fairway Buoy
14:00	035	114	NE3	SI		Black Deep
14:16	005	115		NE3	SI	Ease for Sunk N Tower
14:30	310	116				Sunk North Tower
15:00	310	119		NE2	SI	
15:20						N Gunfleet abeam
						Tried Channel to Walton Backwaters. Too shallow
18:30		134				Mooring Suffolk Yacht Harbour

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ & Pete		
Hours underway	9.5		



A reasonable departure time for once 09:00 to butt the last of the South going ebb to North Foreland, then carry the North going stream across the Thames Estuary through the afternoon. With hardly any wind the engine took the strain as we wound through the shallows over the Colburn ridge off Broadstairs, SOG ranging from 4 knots to 2 then rising again as we got into deeper water.



Passing North Foreland AIS targets were showing on the Tritons but with no frame of reference it was difficult to visualize where they were. Most were not moving or not moving fast so probably at anchor. I then tried driving the broken chart plotter from the I pad, at last we were able to get a visual frame of reference in the cockpit. Yes, most of the big ships on screen were at anchor awaiting orders or the tide in Margate Roads or the Tongue Deep Water Anchorages.



Pete, relaxed at last, enjoying the sunshine and steering, left me free to look after the navigation, hydration and feeding. On the horizon the looming turbines of the London Array.

Our route past the end of Fisherman's Gat to the Foulger's Gat would take us through the edge of the Array to Black Deep. Three yachts and a coaster came south through Fisherman's Gat as we approached.



Photos give no real indication of the scale of the array. Covering an area of 100km² with 175 turbines generating 630MW of electricity. Each turbine's hub is 87m above sea level, and to the tip of the blade at its highest point is around 147m, taller than the London Eye. With a diameter of 120m, the blades have a swept area of 11,300m² — one and a half times the size of Wembley Stadium's football pitch.

It took us 3 hours to sail the 10 miles past the eastern quadrant out into Black Deep to Sunk North Tower. By this time the wind had at last picked up to a NE 3 so a reach across the North end of the Gunfleet sands and South of the Cork sands towards Harwich.

With the afternoon wearing on and the tide dropping we were back in shoal waters. Though I am assured this is normal for east coast sailors I am happier with more than a meter spare below the keel, particularly on a falling tide. We tried to get into Hamford Water and the Walton Back waters but with less than 2m depth of water, *White Knight* drawing 1.6m and a falling tide discretion was called for. Back to the main channel and into Harwich Harbour, past the massive "Panamax" container ships unloading at Felixstowe and up the Orwell. We picked up a spare mooring off Suffolk Yacht Haven for the night. A well-earned dinner and cool beer after Pete's first passage on *White Knight*.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	15/7/22		
From	Harwich SYH	Towards	Walton Backwaters & SYH

Tides (BST)

Port	Harwich						
HW	13:40						
LW	19:40						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:45		134		W2		Drop mooring and explore R Orwell upstream to Pin Mill and Royal Harwich YC
10:00						Turn off RHYC
12:30		148		Var2		Anchor Kirby Creek
13:15						Up Anchor and explore Hamford Water
				SE2		Under sail back to Harwich
15:50		159		SE2		Moored Suffolk YH Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ & Pete		
Hours underway			
Log			



With Sue & Ian due to arrive the following morning after delivering a rabbit hutch to Leicester, we decided to explore the Orwell and the Walton Backwaters. Having read Arthur Ransome's books many times this was the setting for his east coast books "We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea" and "Secret Water", the only settings I had not explored before, except a brief stop at Pin Mill in a car many years ago.



Motoring against tide and wind we nosed up past Pin Mill, famous amongst Ransome fans for the Butt and Oyster pub and Alma Cottage, with its classic yachts, oyster smacks, Thames barges and boat houses.

We also passed the intriguingly named "Grog" Buoy, named in honor of Admiral Edward Vernon, who lived out his final days as MP for Ipswich and lived close by. The origin of the name "grog" for rum diluted with water is attributed to Vernon. He was known for wearing coats made of grogram cloth, earning him the nickname of "Old Grog", which in turn came to mean the diluted rum that he first introduced into his naval squadron in 1740.

Turning off the Royal Harwich Yacht Club we returned downstream under sail with the tide under us. Down through Harwich Harbour past the moored Light ships and Trinity House Vessel Patricia, Dad's cousin Linden's favorite cruise ship.





With a rising tide and more depth of water the route across the shoals into Hamford Water was a doddle. Chance to explore into Kirby Creek between Kirby Creek and Skipper Island and sus the area out for further exploration with a drop keel.



A wonderful quiet lunch stop under Constable skies, with a few red seals, oyster catchers, terns and gulls for company.

Returning to Suffolk Yacht Haven for the night, we met up with Chris an old friend from the Topper circuit to catch up on the last couple of years before dinner on board the Haven Ports Yacht Club light ship.





Saturday 16/7/22

First job of the day after exploring the Valhalla at the back of SHY was to try to get the new weights for the Navik wind vane turned down so as not to catch. The yard's resident marine engineer was skeptical of being able to turn them down on his lathe but with a bit of work with a grinder clearance was achieved.



Pete got a call from home, his father-in-law needing a hospital visit would curtail his cruise in the next day or so. With Sue & Ian arriving mid-morning we arranged for Pete to have a lift home the next day.

Time for a day off sailing, so after off-loading a load of spare charts books and other bits "not wanted on the voyage" we set off for Woodbridge and Sutton Hoo.

In the Long Shed, Woodridge, work was well under way on a full scale and accurate reproduction of the Sutton Hoo ship, with a smaller reproduction outside next to the famous tide mill.

Sutton Hoo was parched by the drought as we joined a superb, guided tour around the Saxon burial mounds, before seeking shade in Edith Pretty former home Tranmer House. Jan & I had visited Sutton Hoo in the early 1990s when a major archeological dig was underway, but the exhibition side was far less well developed. Many of the findings from the digs were on display in the new exhibition halls along with a temporary exhibition of the amazing Staffordshire Hoard. The fine intricacy of the metal and jewelry work was astounding particularly given the technology of the Saxon Viking era before magnifying glasses.

Returning via Sainsburys I was able to restock with food & top up the diesel can.



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Date	17/7/22		
From	Suffolk Yacht Harbour	Towards	Lowestoft

Tides (BST)

Port	Harwich						
HW		15:40					
LW	08:40	21:20					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High over central England S-Se airflow			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
GP – NF	S/SE 3-5 Occ 6	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good
+24	S/SE 2-5	Sm/Sl	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
11:30		159				Depart SYH. Sail through Harwich Harbour
13:00						Out of Harwich harbour
13:15	090	167		SE3	Sl	Pye End Buoy
13:30	050	168		SE3	Sl	Cross Main Channel
14:00	030	173		SE4	Sl	Off Deban Entrance
15:00	030	178		E3	Sl	Off Orford Fairway
15:30	060	181		E3	Sl	Whiting Hook abeam
15:40						NE Whiting & Orford Ness abeam
16:00	040	184		E2	Sm	
16:30	020	186		E<1		Engine on
17:00	020	189		E<1		
18:00	020	195		E<1		
19:25		203				RN&SYC Marina. Aground in raft.

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway	8		
Log	43		



An early start to get the laundry done. At £3 for washing and drying this was by far the cheapest laundry bill so far. Pete was also up early to get his gear packed before breakfast in the café. Sue & Ian arrived on schedule to collect Pete then head home for Wales.

Again, the wind was fair to sail down through Harwich Harbour and out to the southern side of the main channel before crossing the main shipping channel from the Deane Buoy to the Rolling Ground Buoy. Following the 5m depth contour past the mouth of the Deben the yacht traffic reduced substantially, then again into the Ald. Keeping inside the Whiting Bank there was only one other yacht in sight heading North.

The strange buildings on Orford Ness standing sentinel to past times, world tensions and conflicts. The foundations of the lighthouse now being eroded by the waves.

Past Aldborough with its beach boats, lighthouse and candy colored beach huts. Outside the Sizewell Bank, the gas terminal at Thorp Ness and the brutal presence of the Nuclear Power Stations. Long low coast, the other yacht turned into Southwold.

Closing Lowestoft another (Belgian) yacht came in from seaward.

Sails down and engine on before entering the Stanford Chanel and the approach to Lowestoft. A quick call the Harbour Control for permission to enter, granted. Through the Heads and a quick turn to port into the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk YC marina. With all berths taken it was a case of rafting up beside a Dutch yacht, but running aground a meter away from alongside. At half tide, this should not happen, but tightening the lines *White Knight* came off the bank then alongside.



The famous heads of the RN&S YC as burnished as ever along with the welcome to visiting yachtsmen. Elin and I had stayed in the room under the rotunda with its 360 degrees views for one of the Topper National events.
18 July 2022

Another workday, working in the bar of the RN&S YC to avoid the searing heat.

The next leg would be the longest of the trip. At least 97 miles to the mouth of the Humber, with a possible anchorage just inside Sprun Point if the wind stayed easterly. Bridlington the next possible stop but with a drying harbour and entering in the dark not attractive. Rounding Flamborough Head opened up the prospects of Filey, Scarborough (c150 miles from Lowestoft) or Whitby.

Another early start (03:30) to catch the north bound tide along the Norfolk Coast at 04:00. To get as far north as possible before it turned south around 10:00 hopefully by then we would be into the slower tidal streams across the Wash. The next tide gate would be Flamborough Head. Elin & Lou had been held back for 5 hours waiting

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for the tide to turn favorable on their trip. The tide would turn North of Flamborough at midnight until 06:30 on the 20th.

The forecast for Gibraltar Point to North Foreland was favorable S/SE or E/SE 3 to 4 possibly 5 veering SW 4-6. In Humber it was S/SE 3-5.

Time for an early night.



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Date	19/7/2022		
From	Lowestoft	Towards	Scarborough

Tides (BST)

Port	Lowestoft		Scarborough				
HW	02:30	14:20	21:00				
LW	08:00	21:00	03:50				

Weather forecast

Author Forecast				
Time	00:00	Gale Warnings	No gale warnings	
Gen Synop	Thundery Low moving NE across British Isles, moving away towards Norway Ridge of high pressure building across Ireland			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
Whitby to GP	S/SE 3-4 > Cyclonic 3-5 > W/SW 3/5 Later	Sm/Sl occ Mod	Thundery Sowers later	Good
+24	Cyc>W/SW 3-5>N/NE 2-4	Sm/Sl	Showers Fair later	Good
SF 12:00	Low Lundy moving NE across UK			
Humber	SE>SW 4/6	SL/Mod	Fair, thundery Showers	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
03:20		203				Depart Lowestoft
03:35	000	204				Clear channel and head North
04:00	355	206		ESE<1	Sm	
05:00	006	212		E1	Sm	
05:40	335	217				Pass N Scroby, set course N Haisborough
06:00	334	219		E<1	Sm	
07:00	333	226		E<1	Sm	Happisborough abeam
08:00	320	233		SE1	Sm	Cromer abeam. 08:15 N Haisborough abeam
09:00	320	241		SE2	Sm	Playlist on radio
10:00	320	247		SE2	Sm	10:30 tide turns foul
11:00	320	254		SE2	Sm	
12:00	320	267		SE3	Sl	
13:00	320	269		SE3	Sl	53:17.4N, 1:05.9E. 13:25 Engine off

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Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
14:00	310	275		SE4	SI	53:20.6N, 01:0.0E
15:00	315	282		SE5	SI	53:24.5N, 00:53.2E
16:00	295	288		SE5	SI	53:27.0N, 00:44.3E
17:00	320	295		SE5	SI	53:32.3N, 00:36.7E Off Mouth of Humber
18:00	320	301		SE5	SI	17:20 dropped main
19:00	320	308		SE5	Mod	
20:00	320	315		SE5	Mod	
21:20	310	320		W2	SI	21:00 Massive wind shift to W and suddenly very warm (land breeze)
22:00	290	325		W2	SI	Head in towards wind farm to get out of coastal shipping route
23:00	310	331		W1	Sm	Top up fuel
00:00 20/7/22	310	337		N1		
01:00	318	344				
02:30		354		N1		Anchor off Bridlington
						2 hours rolling sleep in 0.5m swell.
05:15		354				Up anchor
						Last of tide to Flamborough Head, then rounded at slack water.
						Foul tide building and head wind
08:00	283	370		NW4	SI	
09:00	280	377		NW5	Mod	
10:00				N6		
11:00				N7		
12:00		393		N7		Scarborough Marina
						Check in, Sleep, Breakfast at 15:00

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ		
Hours underway			
Log			



Awake by 03:00 ready for a start in the pre-dawn to catch the maximum favorable tide up the Norfolk Coast. My call to the harbour master for permission to exit and was swiftly answered, then out through the harbour entrance and channel to the Lowestoft Roads. A turn to the North inside Holm Sand and on with the tiller pilot heading for North Scroby cardinal buoy. The traffic was light with a few fishing boats, gas rig and wind farm support vessels.

The pattern for the day was established, crossing between sand banks and wind farms in a light easterly wind which gradually veered South East the engine doing most of the work. Along the Norfolk coast past Great Yarmouth in the early light, and the low dunes Hickling, Hapisburg, then Cromer each with their church or lighthouse standing proud.

By 08:00 we were leaving the Norfolk coast astern outside the Sheringham Shoals and windfarm. A steady course of 320 gave a clear passage though the shoals and wind farms towards the Humber.

10:30 and the tide turned foul but was relatively weak.

12:00 and the wind was at last picking up enough to dispense with the engine.

The 13:00 Weather Forecast changed the outlook to a SW 4-6 overnight making an anchorage inside Spurn Head untenable. So press on for Bridlington or Scarborough.

The afternoon wore on with hourly log readings, cold drinks and attempts to keep out of the sun and the heatwave reached its peak.

With the main blanketing the genoa it was time to take the main in and cross the mouth of the Humber. Phone signal brought a flurry of WhatsApp messages from home and friends. Mike had a job interview so may not be able to join me for the next leg. Domestic matters were addressed then the signal died.

As the sun set the wind was going light then we were hit by a the very hot westerly land breeze pouring out to sea after the hottest day of the year. Keeping inshore towards the wind farms and out of the shipping lane up the coast, the many ships anchored offshore lit up for the night.



rolling in the swell while trying to get some sleep.

Topping up the fuel tank in the dark was a bit of a challenge, balancing wedged funnel, 20l can and trying not to spill diesel in the swell. Time to get a syphon

After 22 hours under way the fatigue was setting in. Entering the Bridlington's drying harbour for the first time, in the dark was not an attractive option. So I dropped anchor off the beach for a couple of hours



Slightly refreshed I was underway again with the sun rise to get round Flamborough Head with the last of the fair tide as the wind shifts round to W and NW.



Foul tide was setting in early as I rounded Flamborough Head. Elin and Lou had spent 5 hours trapped by the foul tide while trying to head south, their track still showing on the chart plotter, I felt their pain.

Gannets, puffins, guillemots, razorbills and gulls abounded as we tacked along the north side of Flamborough Head into a rising head wind into Filey Bay. Reefed down it was a three hour slog up to Scarborough gusts well up into F7 *White Knight* was loving it, I was just too tired to care.

Approaching Scarborough the speed boat trips added to the swell as passengers shrieked in their adrenalin fueled joy. The Harbour master was on the pontoon to help take my lines with typical Yorkshire warmth. Secure and abloused, initial check-in completed, it was time to relax and sleep.

Mid-afternoon and most of the All day breakfasts were not living up to the description, until I found a small café tucked between the amusement arcades and tat shops. Bliss.

Scarborough Marina is tucked into the eastern side of the old fishing harbour surrounded by the amusement arcades, fun fairs, cafes, greasy takeaway outlets and tat shops of any popular seaside town. Faded Victorian railway hotels hug the steep slope up to the main town acting as manmade nesting cliffs to thousands of gulls, piled high with the guano of neglect. Colorful, loud, brash a seaside at its best in the sunshine.



Time for a couple of days catching up with work, a walk to the North Beach and a café with good WiFi for a couple of Teams meetings. A great excuse to enjoy the tea and cakes at the Waterside, phone and wifi signal around the harbour was intermittent at best.

Wandering back towards the town center I approached a park with gaudy Chinesesque pergolas and bridges over a canal. Ques led to a pay kiosk and a ticket for the afternoon's entertainment the famous Peasholm Park Naval Warfare Battles. Schoolfriends had raved about the spectacle too good to miss. Seating was in a terraced garden overlooking the lake, with a guitarist entertaining the growing crowd from a floating band stand. The terraces filled and the anticipation grew.



Out of the canal came the first of the home fleet convoy escorted by grey cruisers HMS Ajax, Achilles and Exeter to be attacked by nameless "the enemy" battleship. The "Battle of Peasholm" had commenced. An "enemy" submarine and revenge strikes by RAF jet bombers running on wires over the lake joined battle. Pyrotechnics and underwater air blast explosions, backed up with thunder flashes and smoke and a stirring commentary. For 30 minutes battle continued with attack and counterattack, cheers and boos from the crowd. The "enemy was at last defeated by pluck, luck and cunning. All very jingoistic and loosely based on the Battle of the

River Plate, made politically correct. The show has been running for nearly 100 years three afternoons a week during the summer, with 20 foot long replicas of real ships each skippered by an on board council employee. *"It is of course the smallest*



manned navy in the world!"

The delight for the evening was a pint (or two) in the Scarborough Sailing Club housed in the lighthouse at the end of the pier. With three older members grumbling away around a table, one the ex-harbour master and the steward giving his best "Uncle Mort" dour Yorkshireman persona.

Next day another round of laundry and booking a refueling by arranging an short term account with the council supplier. Ian arrived mid afternoon, and after an Indian meal up in the town we moved *White Knight* over to the end of the fish dock ready for the night watchman to refuel us. Tanks and can refilled (and the air lock cleared) we were ready for the next legs north.

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Date	23/7/22		
From	Scarborough	Towards	Hartlepool

Tides (BST)

Port	Hartlepool						
HW		12:20					
LW	06:20	19:00					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	Atlntic low approaching Ireland			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
Whit to GP	SSE>Var2/4 >SW4/5	SI	Sh	Good
+24	SW4/5	SI / Mod	Sh	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
07:15		393		SE<1		Depart Scarborough, touched sand bar to W side of harbour entrance
07:30	350	395		SE<1	Sm	
08:00	340	397		W<1	Sm	08:50 Main up
09:00	340	402		W1	Sm	
10:00	320	407		W1	Sm	10:40 Passing Whitby
11:00	320	413		W1	Sm	
12:00						Runswick Bay
13:00	300	427		NE1		13:30 fix: 54:36.4N, 00:54.6W
15:00	300	440		W4/5	SI	
15:45		444		W4		Hartlepool Marina Locking in.
						Berth on pontoon F walkway

Day Summary

Crew			
Hours underway			
Log			



Leaving the harbour we touched the sand bar on the western side of the harbour entrance, but a bit of astern soon had us free and heading up the coast past the gull covered and guano encrusted cliffs above the marine drive then the North Beach.

We had decided not to call in at Whitby because the swing bridge was reported to have broken down locking yachts into the upper harbour, and with no pontoons in the lower harbour there was a risk of being stranded for days even if we could get in.



Instead we explored deep into Runswick Bay where Sue's parents had met when her father was posted as Methodist Minister to the tiny fishing community and fell for the young organist. On past Staithes and the end of the North Yorkshire Moors and the alum quarries to the low-lying dunes backing the industrial Tees.

We locked into Hartlepool Marina with several angling boats loaded with Polish fishermen. Into the vast expanse of harbour only part filled by the marina. Mission for the afternoon was to get a drill bit to complete the repairs to the tiller pilot pin which had broken free from the tiller during the race and held together by luck rather than solid joinery. Ian had fashioned a teak block which we had glued in place in Scarborough. Now with a hole for the pin we had a secure solution.

In the corner of the dock is HMS Trincomalee an Indian built Leda-class sailing frigate launched in 1817, restored as a museum ship in the National Museum of the Royal Navy. We were too late to explore it that afternoon

The evening was started with Thai banquet to introduce Ian to some of the many delights of Thai cuisine. Followed by a pint in Hartlepool Sailing Club.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	24/7/22		
From	Hartlepool	Towards	Blyth

Tides (BST)

Port	Blyth						
HW		13:30					
LW	07:30	20:00					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop	Unsettled with showers across UK			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
BuT - Whit	SW4/5	Sl / Mod	Sh	Good
+24				

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
13:30		444				
14:00	340	445		W3	Sm	Hartlepool Head abeam, set course for Blyth
16:00	340	460		SW4	SI	
17:00	350	468		SSW4	SI	17:10 Heavy Rain Squalls, wind increasing reef main
17:40						Call from HMCG MoB being randomly generated by Raymarine. Raymarine switched off and disconnected.
19:00		479				Royal Northumbrian YC Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ & IH		
Hours underway			
Log			



We spent the morning in the Hartlepool Maritime Museum and the Museum of the Royal Navy. Exploring the Frigate Trincomalee and the surrounding exhibitions. Well worth a visit.

After lunch we set off with the tide for a gentle sail up the coast to Blyth

As we passed the Mouth of the River Tyne we were caught in a heavy shower. Then the Raymarine MFD started generating random waypoints, then a few minutes later, Man Overboard alerts.

As fast as we were able to cancel them the MOB alerts reappeared. Next the MSSI on the Radio started reporting Incident around Mouth of Tyne.

We were called up by HM

Coastguards say that our AIS is reporting a MOB, was there a problem? The Raymarine MFD was switched off and disconnected, its days numbered. iPad and paper charts for chart plotting from here onwards.

We arrived at Royal Northumberland Yacht Club marina just in time for a pint and to check in before the club ship was closed for the night.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	25/7/22		
From	Blyth	Towards	Amble

Tides (BST)

Port	Amble						
HW		14:10					
LW	08:10	20:30					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	Very unsettled with hshowers across the UK			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
BuT-Whit	S.W3/5 >N5/6 > NW 3/4	SI / Mod	Sh Th	G
+24	NW3/4 >Var <3	Sm/SI	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
07:40		479				07:50 Blyth Heads
09:00	350	487		W3	Sm	
10:00	350	493		W1	Sm	
11:00		500		NW4		Amble Entrance
11:30		501				Amble Marina D43

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ, IH		
Hours underway			
Log			



A very short 20 mile hop up the coast to Amble with a light offshore wind entering Amble on the rising tide, but not enough to get over the sand bar at the marina entrance.

Tied alongside we prepared for the coming heavy rain while chatting with another Contessa owner recently returned from Denmark who had been following Lou & Elin's exploits on the Contessa Facebook forum.

The heavens opened as we made our way towards the pier in search of a fish café, ending up in a very busy Fish Restaurant for an excellent blow out lunch with wine to boot.

With the rain easing we wandered back via the lobster hatchery and its fish market where we picked up a large bag of prawns for dinner. The afternoon was spent avoiding the rain, dozing off the wine and reading.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	26/7/22		
From	Amble	Towards	Eymouth

Tides (BST)

Port	Amble			Eymouth			
HW	02:40	15:00		02:00	14:20		
LW	08:50	21:10		08:10	20:20		

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High Ridge building across UK			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
BuT – Whit	NW 3-4 > Var <3 > W/SW3-4	Mod	Sh	Good
+24	W/SW 3-4 >V>SE2-4	Mod >SI	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
05:30		501				Dept Amble Marina
05:40	010					Amble Entrance
06:00	010	504		NW3	Sm	
07:00	340	510		NW3	Sm	Craster abeam, smell of smokehouse. Dunstunborough Castle
08:00	340	516		NW3	SI	
08:15	250	518		NW4/5	SI	Tack inshore, 2m underlying swell
09:00	255	522		NNW4		Tacking past Inner Farne,
10:00				NNW4		Porpoise
10:30	020	531		NNW4		Goldstone Channel passing Lindersfarne
11:00	020	534		NNW4		
12:00	275	539		NW4		
13:00	290	543		NW4		
14:00	305	548		NNW4		14:30 Cross Scottish border
15:00	330	554				
15:45		557				Moored Eymouth, 2m+ swell through approach to harbour.

Day Summary

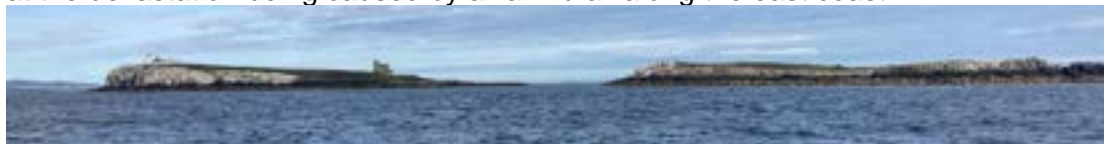
Crew	CHJ IH		
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The rain cleared over night but it was an early start to get out before the tide left us stranded. Heading North the remains of yesterdays swell underlay remained under the surface wavelets. The smell of the famous kipper smokehouse hit us as we passed Craster, closely followed by Dunstunborough the first of the three castles which signpost the low dune coast of Northumberland.



The Farne Islands were closed to visitors due to bird flu but we were able to tack close in by Inner Farne with the reek of guano and screech of nesting terns, guillemots, razor bills, gulls and puffins, a few dead guillemots giving the nearest hint at the devastation being caused by avian flu all along the east coast



Bamborough Castle standing guard over the dunes as we tacked into the coast inside the Farne Islands before tacking off again into the 2m swell.



We took the Goldstone Channel off Lindisfarne, the third castle, before the long haul up the coast across the Scottish Border north of Berwick Upon Tweed.



The swell from the north was not abating as we made the turn in towards Eyemouth harbour entrance. This very narrow (9m wide) entrance faces just west of North and is not visible from the channel between the rocks until the very last moment. The swell increased as the waters shallowed, rocks closed in on each side the backwash pulling us one way and the other. Driven on by the swell we started to surf. The solid protecting wall getting ever closer, a deft swerve to Starboard then to Port and we were in the channel surging forward then sucked back with the swell but ever decreasing until we popped through the narrows into the outer harbour. A seal rolled off the rocks to come and have a closer look. No fish today. Moored alongside Ian's daughter Sarah arrived ready to take Ian home in the morning.

Dinner in the local pub and a good night's sleep.

**Leg 5 Scotland**

Date	27/7/22		
From	Eyemouth	Towards	Arbroath

Tides (BST)

Port	Eyemouth		Arbroath				
HW	02:40	15:10	02:20	14:50			
LW	08:50	21:00	08:30	20:40			

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High, Fair conditions light winds			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
RH - BuT	Var<4 > Sea Breeze	Sl / Mod > Sm	Showers	Good
+24	Se 2-4	Sl	Fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
06:00		557		NW2	SI	Dept Eyemouth 1.5m swell at entrance
						06:30 Navik on
07:00	350	563		NW4	SI	
08:00	345	569		NW4	SI	
09:00	340	577		WNW4	SI	
10:00	230	583		NW4	Sm	09:45 Tack to avoid wind farm construction
11:00	330	590		0	Sm	10:30 Tack back wind dropping
12:00	340	596		0	Sm	
13:00	340	603		E2	Sm	
14:00	340	609		E2	Sm	
15:00	350	616		E2	Sm	
15:30		619				Moored Arbroath inner Harbour

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway			



Pressing on northwards it was an early departure once Ian and Sarah had off loaded for their journey home. As *White Knight* headed out through Eyemouth entrance the seals basking on the rocks either side bobbed up then relaxed, no fish here. The swell outside had eased to about 1.5m and the North West wind gave just enough power to use the Navik wind vane as we headed across the Forth to pass the Ness of Fife and the Angus shore.



Close hauled was not close enough to avoid the wind farm under construction so three quarters of an hour's diversion tacking up the Forth then as the wind dropped tack north again for Arbroath. Engine back on chug chug past St Andrews and across the Tay before the sea breeze from the east set in for the final 2 hours sail to Arbroath. Through the outer and middle harbours before entering Arbroath inner harbour lock gates.

Once closed at 17:30 there was to be no getting out again until the lock entrance opens at 11:00 tomorrow. 64 miles to Peterhead would mean arriving in a busy port in the dark, Stonehaven at 27 miles was a more realistic destination. A call to the harbour master at Stonehaven confirmed I should be able to lie afloat against the harbour wall near the outer end.

After paying dues for Arbroath time to catch up on some work e mails, before heading out to track down some Arbroath Smokies. Hot smoked haddock with a much more delicate flavour than Kippers (smoked herring) a fish supper of Smokies in the Marine Fish Restaurant made a wonderful and memorable evening meal.

Also chance to catch up on the laundry while watching a video of Hot Fuzz in the harbour room.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	28/7/22		
From	Arbroath	Towards	Stonehaven

Tides (BST)

Port	Arbroath						
HW	03:00	15:20					
LW	09:00	21:10					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
RH - BuT	E/SE>S later 2-4 inc 5 at times	Sl occ Sm	Sh	Good
+24	S/SE 2-4 inc 5/6	Sm / Sl	Rain Later	Good occ Mod Later

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
11:40		619				Depart Arbroath Harbour
12:00	150	621		ENE3	Sl	
12:15	015	623				Tacked up the coast
13:00	022					DTG 26M
13:17	131					Tack off
13:30	010					Tack
14:00	010	632				DTG 23M
15:00	030	639		E4	Sl	Scourie Ness Abeam
16:30	135	646				Tack offshore 2M
17:00	025	649		E2	Sm	DTG 10M
18:00	005	654				
19:30		659				Alongside Stonehaven Breakwater

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway			
Log			



With a few hours to kill before the harbour gates opened there was time for a little shopping in the local convenience store then the Arboath Signal Tower museum.

Originally built in 1813 as the shore station for the Bell Rock Lighthouse, the Signal Tower housed the families of the keepers stationed on the 'rock', along with the vital shore staff who ran the lighthouse tender supplying the light. The name Signal Tower comes from the signaling apparatus installed atop of the tower building that was used to communicate between the shore staff (the Master of The Tender) and the keepers of the lighthouse. An identical set of signaling apparatus is installed atop the lighthouse itself. Installed within the Signal Tower was a small observatory outfitted with a powerful telescope; it was through this telescope that the signaling apparatus on the lighthouse was monitored during the day. In an age before wireless communications, the ball system employed by the Bell Rock was seen as state-of-the-art technology. At night, any fluctuation to the light would see the supply vessel set sail for the 'rock' to investigate. The museum also includes other exhibits about the maritime and social history of Arbroath.

An hour was not long enough to explore this wonderful little museum but with the harbour lock gates about to open, it was time to be under way again.

Tacking offshore to gain an offing the promised Southerly element to the wind did not come to pass. Long boards up the coast then half hour tacks offshore to gain a bit more of an offing. The hinterland above the red sandstone cliffs a rich farmland. Occasional small villages tucked close under the cliffs. A 2m swell from the North East still underlying the wind driven surface waves from the East.

Approaching Stonehaven, mist enveloped the coast partially hiding the impressive 13thC Dunnottar Castle built on top of a narrow promontory jutting out from the cliffs. It has witnessed many pivotal moments in Scottish history and appears to have been a stronghold of the Picts from 5000BC. A pair of Ayles Skiffs out for their evening row were playing the swell under the castle while the Lifeboat was also out for evening practice.

Preparing to enter the harbour in the swell was a tricky maneuver as *White Knight* rolled horribly. Waves reflecting off the outer harbour wall and the nearby cliffs.



With all back under control, fenders and the long lines prepared tie to gently ease around the end of the harbour wall, keeping a keen eye on the depth sounder. Plenty of depth at the outer end and a midships line to the vertical ladder held *White Knight* as I took the long lines up to top of the wall. The fender board rigged to protect the fenders from the scouring barnacles.

Good to his word the Harbour Master had left a key handy for the ablutions block. Meanwhile rowers were enjoying their evening around the cliffs and out in the bay.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	29/7/22		
From	Stonehaven	Towards	Peterhead

Tides (BST)

Port	Peterhead						
HW	02:10	14:40					
LW	08:10	20:20					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	High settled over UK. Atlantic fronts Saturday			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
RH – BuT	S/SE 3-5 Occ 6	SI / Mod	Sh / Rain	Good / Mod
+24h	S/SW 4/6 > Cyc 3/5	SI /Mod	Rain	Good / Mod

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
06:50		659				Dept Stonehaven
07:00	060			0	Sm	07:20 set course 020 for Peterhead 661
08:00	020	664		0	Sm	08:30 divert around Aberdeen
09:00	050	669		SE1		
09:30	020	672		SE1		Resume course for Peterhead
10:00	015	674		SE1	Sm	
11:00	015	680		SE1		
12:00	015	686		SE2		
13:00	030	693		SE3	SI	
14:00						Enter Peterhead harbour
14:20						Alongside Peterhead Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ Singlehanded		
Hours underway			
Log			



Having been awake in the early hours to adjust my lines I overslept and missed the start of the north going tide at 06:00. Leaving at just before 07:00 into a flat calm it was a gentle motor to seaward then turn onto 020 for Peterhead.

Shipping building on the horizon including a Russian Tanker anchored offshore and oil rig support vessels coming from and going to the rigs. I diverted offshore to skirt around the Aberdeen Harbour VTS. Another yacht southbound passed just inshore of me.



With Aberdeen safely astern it was a steady plug Northwards. At noon the tide went foul and SOG fell away so the last 12 miles became slower and slower. Oh “if only” (The saddest word combination in the English language) I had not overslept.

More supply vessels crowded around waiting to enter and leave Peterhead Harbour. Calling up Harbour Control they had been monitoring me on AIS and gave me an entry slot behind an inbound Wind Farm survey vessel with strict instructions to keep going towards the marina and avoid another smaller survey vessel working in the harbour.



Peterhead Marina is tucked into the south west corner of the harbour about as far from the town as it is possible to get. The visitor's berths are at the very end of the pontoon system, not as far to walk as Portland but a very tortuous route non the less. I managed to blag a lift into town from a couple who had just bought their first sailing yacht. Peterhead looked grim, somewhat desolate in the grey light of approaching low front. The harbour is full of the massive supply vessels but the wealth of the oil industry does not appear to have made its way as far into the town as say in Aberdeen.

Having found the bus station I had a call from Gordon & Stuart to say the buss would be at least another hour, so I found the Brew Dog pub and ordered a pint and a pizza. 15 minutes later Gordon & Stuart arrived, bemused by the bus timetable. Pizzas and beers all around then a taxi back to the marina. Time to plan the next leg along the Moray Coast to Inverness and the Caledonian Canal. The tide turned North (and west) gong at 06:00 so a whisky nightcap and a reasonably early night.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	30/7/22		
From	Peteread	Towards	Lossiemouth

Tides (BST)

Port	Peterh'd						
HW	02:40	15:10					
LW	08:50	20:50					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop	Atlantic Fronts Crossing UK on Saturday			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
CW to RH	S/SE 4-6 > W / NW 3-5	SI / Mod	Rain > Sh	Mod /G Occ P
+24	W/NW 3-4 occ 5 > Var 2-4	Sm /SL	Showers	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
06:05		693		SSW5	SI	Leave marina, rain
06:25						Engine off
07:00	000	704		SSW5	SI	Rattery Head abeam
07:30	320	707				Change Course
08:00	320	711				
08:15	280	713				Turn to pass Kinnadd Head
09:00	280	718		SSW6/7	SI	Heavy Rain
10:00	270	725		SSW3	SI	Passing Pennan, Rain clearing
11:00	270	731		S3	SI	10:15 Engine on
12:00	331	737		W3	SI	12:30 passing Portsoy
13:00	245	742		W3/4	SI	Tacking up the coast
14:00	265	749		NW3/4	SI	14:55 Genoa in
15:00	260	755		W2	Sm	
16:00	260	760		W<2	Sm	
17:00	280	767		W2	Sm	17:15 enter Lossiemouth Hbr
17:20		768				Secure Lossiemouth

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ, Gordon & Stuart		
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It was to be one of those days where we got all types of weather (except snow) in one day. Rain hammering on the cabin roof, did not receive the welcome of rain in the desert. Hauling foul weather gear out of the lockers and over waking bodies added to the general grimness of the morning. Once ablouted and gear stowed we braced ourselves for the day. No other shipping was moving so we were given a clear run out of the harbour and into the greyness. Swell rolling the uninitiate stomachs, as rain obscured the view and adding its own form of misery. At least we were on a reach rather than slamming into the swell.

Passing Rattery Head, Fraserborough then Kinnard Head we crossed into a new Inshore Waters Forecast area (Rattery Head to Cape Wrath) and as if to reward us the rain eased a fraction. Turning east along the Moray Coast small patches of blue started to appear. The sun was shining brightly, on the other side of the clouds, so with a following wind and reduced swell we ticked off the headlands and villages huddled down in the coves along the coast. Sandhaven, Rosehearty, Pennan and Troup Head. The wind went light and time was pressing so back on with the engine; Gardenstown, Macduff and Banff. The sun broke through and the wind turned west forcing us to tack up the coast; Whitehills, Portsoy (too late for the traditional boat festival), Cullen (home of the eponymous skink), Scar Nose, Portknockie where my friend Trevor and his wife used to run the Fish & Chip Shop, Findochty and Buckie. Genoa in and motor. Afternoon tea with the last of Sue's banana bread, an order placed for more with the relief crew; Port Gordon and the mouth of the River Spey. Finally, the long golden beach leading to Lossiemouth.

Attempts to call the harbourmaster by VHF and phone had been fruitless, so we slowly made in through the harbour mouth and turned hard to Port to grab the next to last visitor's mooring. Being a weekend, the Harbour Master was not on duty, so up to the Steamboat Inn to pay our dues and sink a pint. Then a wander up the river to The Salt Cellar a vaulted restaurant converted from the old cellars used to store salt for the fishing fleet. Sitting outside in the sunshine 12 hours after being soaked in the rain and spray after a wonderful day. Seafood linguini to die for. Then a wander out onto those miles of golden empty sands.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022


Date	31/7/22		
From	Lossiemouth	Towards	Inverness

Tides (BST)

Port							
HW	02:30	15:00					
LW	08:40	20:20					

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	None	
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
RH - CW	W/NW 3-4 > var<3	Sm / SI	Sh	Good
+24	Var2-4 > W > SW 3-5 > SE later	SI /Mod	Sh > fair	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
06:20		768		NW4	Sm	Setoff 2h20 before LW, aground off pontoon berth. Recovered by pushing bow around
07:40	320					Tack
08:00	320	777		W3	SI	Passing Hopeman
09:00	215	782		WNW4	SI	Pod Dolphin Findhorne Bay
11:00	252	795		0	Sm	Seals on sand at Findhorne point
12:00	268	801		W2	Sm	Sea Otter at Cardinal mark
						12:25 Dolphins breaching Channon Point
13:00	248	807		S2	Sm	
14:00		813				Alongside Inverness Marina

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ	Gordon & Stuart	
Hours underway			
Log			



We set off at 06:20 just on the turn to the west going tide, 2h20 before LW, and immediately ran aground off the pontoon berth. Silt had built up all along the visitor's pontoons leaving only hollows at each berth. We recovered by pushing the bow around from the adjacent boat. Breaking free a sharp turn to Starboard, through the harbour entrance then to port to gain some offing.

A head wind was running along the coast, but it was also very variable in direction and strength. Sometimes we were tacking long the coast, sometimes close reaching. Past Hopeman where Gordon's mum had been evacuated during the war

Clearing Burghead we were able to close reach deep into Findhorn Bay and our first sight of Dolphin since North Cornwall. Close in by Findhorn the seals spread out along the sand spit like tank traps. The Culbin Forrest now making up the shoreline to Nairn.

Trying to book a Caledonian Canal transit license on line caused a steep rise in the anxiety levels. All transit licenses were fully booked until September!!! Phone calls to the canal office went unanswered, the incident line was answered but this was a UK wide incident line. Finally I was put through to the Lockkeeper at Clachnaharry Sea Lock. Due to covid staff shortages they were very limited on the number of boats they could let through the canal each day. However If they had any cancelations they were released on line at 17:00. We could not enter the canal at all without a Transit License so would have to go to Inverness Marina. Elin, Jonathan & Jess with baby George were en-route from Wales to join us for some happy baby friendly sailing on Loch Ness.



Entering the South Channel inside Riff Bank a dark object swimming close by emerged as a Sea Otter. Gulls, Gannets and Terns dived on a shoal of fish as Fort George hove into view. Then working into the narrows by Channery Point dolphins were breaching a few meters away oblivious of the nearby boats. Through the narrows and up the Inverness Firth then under Kessock Bridge a tight turn from the River Ness into Inverness Marina.

Gordon & Stuart were soon off to the station for the train home leaving a very fine bottle of whisky.

"Is that the real *White Knight* ex Royal Armoured Corps? We were the first people to sail her". Esmund & Jane White on their Westerly 33 Aruna were just motoring into the next berth and remember sailing *White Knight* in 1979. Tales of velvet cushions, which were totally inappropriate for an army boat, sailing round the Isle of Wight and other tales of daring do followed. Esmund and Jane were circumnavigating clockwise so notes were exchanged.

The online transit license was booked. Elin, Jonathan, Jess & George arrived a few minutes later with little clue as to the anxiety past. JJ&G soon went off to their hotel for the night while I went for diner with Elin.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	1-4/8/22		
From	Inverness	Towards	Caledonian Canal

Tides (BST)

Port	Inverness						
HW		15:30					
LW	09:20						

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings	
Gen Synop			
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
10:00		813				Dept Inverness Marina
12:00						Clachnaharry Sea Lock
17:20		820				Above Dochgaroch Lock
2 August						
09:00		820		SW7		Dept Dochgaroch
				SW7		Loch Ness 43 tacks
15:00		853		SW7		Enter Canal at Fort Augustus
						Fort Augustus Locks
15:30		853		SW7		Tied up above locks alongside hire boat
3 August						
09:15		853				Dept F Augustus
10:30						Kytra Lock
14:00						Laggan Lock into Loch Lochy
15:45						Garlocky lock
17:15		877				Alongside Banavie

Day Summary

Crew	CHJ		
Hours underway			



With Passage booked through the Sea Lock for 12:00 the morning was spent catching up with work, (Yes, I would be back at work full time from next Monday) and stocking up with food fit for teenager and babies. The sun shone as a rather worried George (10 months old) was brought aboard and dressed in his hated Ducky Suit and vast baby lifejacket. Elin having spent 10 hours entertaining him in the back of the car the day before was able to placate him with strange new things to chew and bang.

10:00 and out into the Beauly Firth for a gentle motor around and to join the other yachts circling for the 12:00 locking.

Fenders and lines rigged the crew assigned lines, locking order agreed with the lock keeper. George securely held by Jess as we made our way between the towering walls of the Sea lock. Lines thrown, missed and thrown again, passed around the hooks and returned.



The lock filled with peaty brown freshwater and *White Knight* rose to new heights.



A gentle putter along the canal to Muirtown basin for lunch and a chance to top up the spare diesel can, before the onward passage through swing bridges locks and more swing bridges finally through Dolgarrch Lock and the pound leading to Lock Ness. The heavens opened as Jonathan headed for the bus back to Inverness.

Elin's Deliveroo Chinese banquet arriving just as Jonathan got back with the car. Overnight the rain hammered down.



In the morning Jess's earache had got far worse, migraine setting in. Jonathan would be needed for child and mum care so would not be able to join us for the sail up Loch Ness. With wind SW F6-7 funneling through the Great Glen, it would be no place for Baby George either. Out in the Loch we were well reefed down. Elin took refuge in the fore cabin leaving me the 23 miles, 43 tacks bashing to windward in winds rarely below force 7. Heavy belts of rain added to the glowering atmosphere. If Nessie was about he (or she) had more sense than to show face.



Into Urquhart Bay and the shelter of the Castle, time for a quick comfort break, then out again. By this time J&J were on the road hunting for us. As we made steady progress up the loch the waves reduced but the squalls did not abate. *White Knight* was loving it, between the rain squalls so was I. Only one other boat was out. HMS Magpie a fast cat launch pounded past heading the same way. Finally J&J spotted us approaching Fort Augustus in the calm lee of the land.

Entering the canal cut, boats were stacked 2 deep. We finally found a place to moor for a few minutes right next to the first lock and were just in time to make the last locking of the day up the Fort Augustus staircase. Jonathan back to help with lines. Jess, fretting about the increasing pain in her ear, a lost tea towel and George's feeding times, was clearly in a lot of discomfort. Crowds gawping at the spectacle of boats being lifted and lowered, passing each other in the locks. Finally, through the top lock and into the melee of hire boats trying to get alongside. We held off out of the way until the carnage had subsided, then lay alongside a large hire boat full of friendly Austrians. Elin got chatting with the crew of a lifeboat in transit to Inverness for servicing.

With medication and Jonathan back, attentive, on sick wife and childcare duty normality was regained. Jess had bagged a place in the Bothy Bar & Restaurant for dinner at the head of a quickly building queue. For a welcome dinner after a long day. There JJ & George left us to head back to their hotel and the long journey south. Jess's ear infection was finally beaten back with antibiotics a week later.

Returning to *White Knight* we had a jolly party, a bit of whisky tasting and a sing song with the Austrian teachers we had moored alongside, Elin promising one of her specialties Smoked Salmon and Poached Eggs for breakfast.

Overnight the wind and rain eased, in the morning hire boats would be back on the move.



Elin's breakfast did not disappoint along with Austrian specialties. We then headed off to make as much ground as possible in the day, aiming for Neptune's Staircase and Corpach basin if we could. Getting away ahead of the hire boats we headed up to Kytra Lock passing through with a family from Newcastle on a hire boat, then in their company through Cullochy Lock and Aberchalder swing bridge out into the beautiful Loch Oich.



Happy memories of racing Gordon's Drascombe Lugger through Loch Oich during the Sail Caledonia Great Glen Raid in 2008, lee side rowing to get the lugger moving after a tack and quickly pulling ahead of the competition.

We had lunch waiting for the Invergarry bridge to open, then on through Laggan Avenue to our first down lock at Laggan.

Out into Loch Lochy another memorable leg of our Great Glen Raid where with head

winds we had fought off a lee shore then plugged on up the loch while other competitors had been towed. Today it was equally gloomy with clouds down to the tops of the surrounding mountains. Again a head wind, this time not racing the engine did the work.

We made the lock at Gairloch in time for the last locking of the day so onto Banavie and the top of Neptune's Staircase for the night.



The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	4/8/22		
From	Banavie	Towards	Oban (Dunstafnage)

Tides (BST)

Port	Corpach		Oban				
HW	10:50		10:30	22:50			
LW	17:10		16:50				

Weather forecast

Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
MoK - AP	W/NW 3-5	SI / Mod	Sh	Good occ Mod
+24hrs	NW3-5 > W/SW 3-4	SI / Mod	Sh	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	D i s t	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
08:15		877				Neptune Staircase top lock
11:30		878				Corpach Sea Lock
12:00		880		SW4	SI	Off Fort William
14:00				SW5/6		14:20 Corran Narrows
16:00						Divert to assist Pan Pan
17:00		904				Port Appin & Appin Rocks
18:20		910				Alongside Dunstafnage

Day Summary

Crew	Chris & Elin		
Hours underway			
Log			



The top of Ben Nevis was hiding in the clouds but after a long day Elin was ready to join the other teenagers in the basin for a swim. Then off for dinner at the Moorings Hotel. A pint and excellent food, none of Dad's cooking tonight.

08:00 the locks were reopened as the staff clocked on. We locked in with Colette and started the decent of Neptune's Staircase.

By now a well-oiled team Elin did much of the line handling, chatting with passers-by. Waiting for the Jacobite steam train to pass we were held in the bottom lock, So, we took the opportunity to use the height of the upper end of the lock basin to give Elin



a shortcut up the mast to rerig the topping lift which had broken free on Loch Ness, and to rig a new port flag halyard.

With the Jacobite passed we were released for the last leg of the canal and the last few locks to Corpach basin and the sea lock.

Contrary to the forecast the wind stayed resolutely on the nose all the way down Upper Loch Linnie as far as the Corran Narrows. A tricky joggle out of the narrows with wind against the strong tide setting up a steep bobble of breaking waves, but soon passed. Out in

lower Loch Linnie and the westerly gained an angle through a mountain pass, a reach at last, with Loch Leven opening up the views to Glencoe.





Passing Shuna Island, a large motor cruiser sped past turning tightly round the north end of the island, moments later a Pan Pan call over the radio, Yacht Ophelia had hit an obstruction north of Shuna engines stopped require a tow. Elin was on deck in a flash, I pointed out the yacht stopped in the middle of a mussel farm. We answered the Coastguard that we were close to the scene and would go to assist if we could. Elin started rigging a towing bridle as a rib came out from the fish farm, another large Motor yacht sped past. By this stage the Rib was alongside and it was clear that Ophelia had cut through the fish farm and had got a rope from an mussel rig wrapped around her prop. With more than enough horsepower on scene we were stood down and turned back on course, Elin disappointed no to put her lifeboat training to good use.

Weaving through Port Appin and the Appin rocks we cut inside Lismore and onto Dunstaffnage Marina for the night. Dreams of a meal in the Wide Mouthed Frog evaporated, it had closed for Covid so a taxi into Oban for a wander along the sea front and eventually finding a space in an Italian restaurant.

The *White Knight* Cornicles: Season 4 2022



Date	5/8/22		
From	Dunstafnage	Towards	Croabh

Tides (BST)

Port	Oban						
HW	11:20	23:40					
LW	17:50						

Weather forecast

Weather Forecast				
Time	06:00	Gale Warnings		
Gen Synop				
Area	Wind	Sea	Weather	Vis
Mok - AP	NW3-5 > W/SW 3-4	SI / Mod	Sh	Good

Deck Log

Time	Course	Log	Dist	Wind	Sea State	Notes / Lat:Long
09:50		910		W3	SI	
12:00				0	Sm	Off Kerrera
13:00		920				
14:00		925		SW4	SI	Easedale to Cuan Siund
15:00						Touch bottom Cuan Sound
15:30		931				Return to Croabh Marina

Day Summary

Crew	Chris & Elin		
Hours underway			
Log			



The final leg would take us back to Croabh where we had bought *White Knight* in 2019. The actual crossing of our previous track would be somewhere off Kerrera.



After topping up the spare diesel can we headed out into a westerly F 3. Heading outside Kerrera the wind dropped away to a flat calm. Under engine the boyhood dream was realized as we crossed our 2019 outbound track in *White Knight*. I had sailed a boat around the British Isles, all be it with a short cut through the Caledonian Canal. An ambition held for over 40 years achieved.



As we carried on south the wind picked up again, passing between Inish and Seil we cleared the rocks off Easdale before turning to pass through Cuan Sound under sail. I gybed to avoid the rocks off An Cleiteadh then with a bang *White Knight* stopped, heeled over to starboard, ground and bounced a couple of times before coming upright. We had hit an isolated rock off Rubha Breac. Elin was on deck in an instant then checked the bilges for signs of damage. Nothing, she checked again a few minutes later, still no signs of damage or leaks. So we sailed the last half hour onto Croabh Haven still shocked and a bit shaken. After all the hundreds of miles sailed this summer to hit a rock half an hour from the end of the trip. Never get complacent. It isn't over until you and your crew are safely moored.

A somewhat muted celebratory dinner in the Lord of the Isles, with Sue & Ian coming to collect us and take us home in the morning.





Two Small Cruises to Round off the Season

The Season was rounded off with two short cruises.

In mid-August Jan and I had a long weekend gently cruising from Croabh through the Dorus Mor to Crinan. A gentle walk over the hill from the anchorage was rewarded with a late availability for dinner in the Crinan Hotel. A belated celebration of our 30th wedding anniversary with local langoustines and lobsters and plenty of white wine.



Next morning to avoid the strong winds in the sound of Jura we sailed up Loch Craignish around Eilean Rìgh to the "lagoon". While Jan read and dozed I took the dinghy ashore and walked into Ardfern.



The following day with a fine following wind we sailed through the Sound of Luing into the firth of Lorne and to one of our favorite anchorages "Puilladobhrain" (the pool of the otters).



As we approached Jan was steering as I prepared the anchor, a fishing boat came



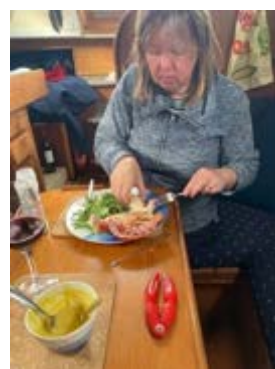
out from between the rocks and came alongside. "Have you got a lighter? Swap you a lobster for a light. We haven't had a fag all day and are gasping". A quick rummage in the chart table revealed a couple of boxes of matches in a plastic tub packed with silica gel to keep them dry. Meanwhile the fishermen sorted a huge lobster from their catch. "Have you got a pan?" "Not that big." "Ah here are two smaller ones" called the skipper holding up two still sizable lobsters each bigger than Jan's lobster from the Crinan Hotel. There then followed some delicate maneuvering as the tub of matches was exchanged for the lobsters. "Aye, keep them in a bucket of water until you are ready to cook them, about 12 minutes each" called the Skipper taking his first drag of the day.



From the anchorage it is a short walk over the hill to Tigh na Truish Hotel (The House of the Trousers) next to the famous "Bridge over the Atlantic" linking Seil to the mainland over Clachan Sound. The Hotel reputedly getting its name from the days when kilts were banned following the 1745 rebellion and the islanders changed into trousers before crossing to the mainland.

After a couple of drinks and securing a sachet of vinegar we wandered back over the hill to

make some mayonnaise to adorn the lobsters.





A gentle motor the next day back to Croabh hugging the coast and exploring possible anchorages, through the abandoned slate harbour of Easdale then through Cuan Sound, avoiding the rocks this time.



The final cruise of the year was the delivery from Croabh, through the Crinan Canal down Loch Fyne around Bute to Largs and finally haul out at Fairlie Quay for a well-earned winter refit. I left my car and the trailer at Largs, then grabbed a lift with Ian and Jonathan who were crewing on this cruise.

10/9/22

07:00 we departed Croabh close astern of another yacht, it was soon apparent they were also heading for the Canal.



By 08:00 we were tacking through the overfalls of the Dorus Mor watched by a porpoise. The sea lock was set ready for our arrival squeezing in behind a large aluminum yacht. There was not room for us to join them in the next lock as a beautiful Loch Fyne skiff had got in ahead. It was a steady putter along the canal, then through the locks to the top pound at Cairnbaan.



Ian left us there to catch the bus back to Croabh to collect the car. Down hill through the locks was easier than going up. Though we were held up for over an hour at the



last swing bridge before Ardrishaig waiting for the bridge keeper. Two more yachts approached so we defended our place in the que, fortunately we all fitted into one lock for the final decent to the Sea Lock and Loch Fyne. A strange crump and a loss of thrust as we approached the sea lock spelled trouble. No ropes over the side. So a few runs ahead and in reverse. Some bis of plastic floated free and seemed to ease the problem but the water was too peaty to see anything definitive. Out in Loch Fyne the wind had dropped so we motored down to East Loch Tarbert, getting into the last free visitor's berth in the marina. The Halberg Rassey Society were having their end of season cruise and had filled the remaining berths.

Jonathan braved the waters to dive and inspect the propeller, removing the shredded remains of a plastic aggregate bag. He also checked the keel confirming the crump low down on the leading edge.



Dinner in the Café Ca'Dora just in time for last orders.

11/09/22

We started the day with a Scottish "Coronary on a Plate" breakfast, Lorne Sausage, bacon, eggs, potato cakes and black pudding. Having made good progress yesterday and with a strong wind warning in the afternoon we only went for a day sail around lower Loch Fyne with Jonathan skippering. Over to the old oil rig building yard now a posh marina at Portavadie. Then exploring all the coves and inlets we could as we worked up the eastern side of the loch. With the wind and rain climbing over the Kintyre peninsular we beat a hasty retreat back to East Loch Tarbert just as the rain came in. the rest of the afternoon was spent dozing and reading while the rain did its worst. Diner an Italian tapas of ready meals from the Co Op washed down with a bottle of wine.

12/09/22

As Ian had to make a Teams Call and get the car back to Largs it was an early start. Jonathan and I headed out into the fickle winds of Loch Fyne undecided whether to take the longer ore scenic route through the Kyles of Bute or to head south of Bute across to Cumbrae and into Largs. We chose the southerly quicker route to give Jonathan and Ian a reasonable chance of getting back to Wales that evening.



Gusts and lulls followed each other until Kilbrennan Sound opened up giving a more stady, but still light wind. Eventually as we approached the southern end of Bute the West wind finally picked up to F5 giving us a broad reach all the way across the Firth of Clyde to Millport on Cumbrae. With a bit of time in hand we turned south to explore the east side of Little Cumbrae and the castle Gordon had been to visit.

Entering Largs Yacht Haven at 13:40 it was time to unload most of the cabin cushions and other paraphernalia to be taken home by Ian and Jonathan for winter storage. Haul out was scheduled for Wednesday 14/9 at 15:00 so a day and a half in hand.

13/09/22

A day of to help friends Gordon and Lorna with their house move, building furniture and clearing the garden.

14/09/22

I spent the morning off-loading other kit into my car and trailer, then cleaning out locker etc.

Gordon arrived soon after 13:00 in time for one last sail, out across to the Cumbrae shore, down to Millport before heading back across to Fairlie Quay. Not a bad way to celebrate my 61st birthday.



The haul out was less straight forward, the pontoon was on a lee shore bouncing 2-3 feet in the swell. Reversing off was going to be a challenge of bold maneuvers to line up with the hoist, get lines on board in the right order and secured for the dock hands to control *White Knight* while the hoist and slings were aligned ready to lift.

Fortunately, it went without a hitch. *White Knight* was hoisted so that we could step ashore, the lifted for the pressure wash. Not much in the way of weed and slime, so the antifouling had worked. And time to examine the crump on the leading edge of the keel. Apparently reasonably superficial and showing up previous repairs. *White Knight* has had a hard life and a very hard, memorable season.





Appendix 1: Preparing to Sail Round Britain

White Knight of Purbeck.

Our cruise around Britain was on board *White Knight of Purbeck*, a Contessa 32 originally commissioned in 1979 for the Royal Armoured Corps YC as “*White Knight 2*”. She was renamed “*White Knight of Purbeck*”, sold and refitted in the mid-1990s then moved to Scotland in 2000.

The Contessa 32s has a well-deserved reputation as hardy sea kindly boats, but after 40+ years hard service many are showing their age.

We bought *White Knight* in 2019 and after a summer cruising the Inner Hebrides brought her to Fairlie Quay on the Firth of Clyde for her first major refit for 20 years (replacing standing rigging, gas and other safety work, refitting the fore cabin and chain locker, started upgrading and replacing the aging navigation equipment).

Covid delayed our plans in 2020, but after a cruise around the Firth of Clyde and Loch Fyne we sailed down through the Irish Sea to Conwy and eventually our new home port of Caernarfon. Through the Covid lockdowns of the winter 2020-21 we installed solar panels, completed upgrading the navigation equipment to NMEA 2000 including an AIS Transponder and refurbished the fridge.

Every planned trip in 2021 was affected by circumstances, however we did manage some interesting trips around Anglesey and Cardigan Bay. Meanwhile running rigging was overhauled or replaced, sails were valeted and repaired as necessary.

By the beginning of 2022 *White Knight* was in good shape for an extended gentle cruise, avoiding extreme weather, if possible, with a small crew.

Planning the Passages

The voyage was meant to be a safe enjoyable cruise visiting interesting havens (anchorages, harbours and marinas) rather than an endurance challenge only enjoyed in hind sight (“I am glad that’s over”), so:-

- Plan for most passages to be undertaken in day light (unless a particularly early start is required to catch a tide gate) or In a few cases a night passage may be warranted, say where the distance between safe harbours makes a night passage the safer option.
- Ports of refuge are identified with entry conditions and constraints listed.
- Alternate nights at anchor with occasional harbours and marinas with hot showers, the crews appreciate this consideration.
- Maintain a “safe” reserve of fuel. This is another thing open to interpretation so working up the passage plans in advance helped inform this. In round terms say passage requirements + 50% or enough to get from the furthest point to a port of refuge +20%.

Passages were planned using a wide range of data sources. Each leg of the cruise was planned months in advance including an outline SOLAS passage plan from the leg’s starting point to likely destinations / ports of refuge working towards the week’s goal. Forecast weather, and tide times could then be added to prepare each



section's plan. Also estimated fuel and water usage, with plans to replenish as necessary.

For charts I had for many years used "Visit My Harbour's" raster copies of UKHO charts. The Rymarine Chart Plotter on White Knight came with Navionics UK charts loaded onto an SD card. On the iPad and I Phone I had both Imray and Navionics Apps. I also had built up a collection of Imray paper charts for much of the route. To fill in the gaps not covered by Imray for the RB&I we got UKHO charts of the Celtic Sea, West coast of Ireland, Northern Scotland including St Kilda, The Orkneys and Shetland.

Over the years we had also gathered various pilot books particularly of Scotland, the Irish Sea, and been lent Pilot books covering some other area. Where there were gaps these were all covered by the Cruising Association Cruising Almanac, backed up with the increasing number of On Line harbour guides including "Visit my Harbour".

Tidal height and stream data is widely available online. I have found the Imray Tide Planner App to be excellent, both for tidal data at a vary large number of UK harbours, but also the Tidal Stream Atlases which animate the hard copy atlases giving a very powerful visualization of what is going on and when. For a hard copy almanac, I like the Reeds Small Craft Almanac, but with so much on line and on app it is largely used as a back-up.

The Crews

Owners: Ian, Jonathan & Chris and their families

Skipper: Chris Jones

Navigators: Chris, Gordon, Ian, Jonathan, Elin

Other Crew:- Jan, Jess, Pete and anybody in the address book who can be duped into joining this mad crazy escapade?

RB&I Race

At the end of February I blinked and offered Lou & Elin *White Knight* for the Round Britain & Ireland Race. With the race starting 29 May and finishing about the 4th week in June this would not allow time to meet my target of getting to the north of Scotland by the end of June, so an alternative cruise would need to be put together.

The bigger challenge was getting White Knight from a reasonably well-founded cruising boat up to a World Sailing Offshore Category 2 Racer, through a qualifying passage and to the start line in Plymouth in less than three months.

The RB&I is approximately 2000 miles starting in Plymouth with mandatory 48 hour stop overs in Galway, Lerwick and Blythe before returning to Plymouth. At Cat2 the basic premise is there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of a 360 degree roll over. So the boat needs to be set up to survive these conditions. Securing the mast to the keel, additional bilge pumps including 200l/min flood pumping capacity and internal and external manual bilge pumps. A host of safety equipment including EPIRB, PLBs, life rings with drogues, lights and whistles. Adequate drinking water and reserves.

Lou & Elin would also needed to complete a 300 mile minimum Qualifying Passage before the end of April. Much of the initial fit out we undertook in Caernarfon.



More Paperwork

Alongside the physical preparations, the boat also needed to be measured, race rated and insured. The Contessa class is a recognized one design with a standard IRC rating, provided the Class Surveyor certified the boat.

Unfortunately for us the center of gravity of Contessa Class Racing is on the Solent and the Class Measurer is based in that area. However, given the circumstances the new Class Measurer took a very pragmatic view, supported by the Class Association. Step 1 fill out a questionnaire with details of engine, batteries water tanks, sail sizes and previous certification and other potential modifications. Alongside this came a lot of excellent advice from a very experienced Contessa owner / sailor who has recently brought his own Contessa 32 up to Cat 2 standard. Satisfied with the feedback the next step was the inspection. This was completed by video conference with the Measurer in an airport transit lounge while I walked around the boat pointing the camera phone as requested, taking measurements as directed. Result a Contessa Class association Measurement certificate which I then sent to the RORC for an IRC One Design Rating certificate.

Our insurance company insisted upon a Mast Out survey by a professional rigger and a Marine Surveyor. The World Sailing rules also required a Keel and Rudder Survey. Lou managed to arrange for the keel and rudder survey to be undertaken in Milford Haven, with plans for the Mast Out Survey in Gosport at the end of the planned Qualifying Passage.

Sponsorship

Whilst I concentrated on preparing *White Knight* to CAT 2 Offshore Race standard, Lou & Elin concentrated on sponsorship to get them to the start line and fund raising for the Alzheimer's Society.



Early support came from the chandlers in Caernarfon "Above the Brine" who sourced offshore life jackets from Crewsaver and other almost new safety equipment recycled from boats they were dismantling.

Friends & family started adding to the "Get to the Start Line Go Fund me page.

A major boost came when Jeremy Rogers Yachts heard about Lou & Elin's campaign and offered to match anything we spent with



them with donations to the Alzheimer's Society. This was very personal to the Rogers family as Jeremy was by that stage badly affected by Alzheimer's. It also linked Lou & Elin's campaign to the Contessa 32 Owners Facebook pages and support snowballed.

With a boat secured other sponsorship followed:-

- Ratseys Sail makers and Riggers of Milford Haven
- Small boatyards, surveyors and others offered reduced rates for haul outs etc.
- Clipper Races (Aaron) lent rig cutters and supplied other surplus safety equipment
- Keith Belfield supplied Lou with his chart plotting software
- Elin amassed an array of first aid equipment.

As you will have read in the main text We got *White Knight*, Lou & Elin to the start line in time for the race, and they returned to Plymouth at the end of June.

Singlehanded

Once *White Knight* was bailed out, mopped out, put back together again, the most urgent repairs completed and the cruising comforts reloaded, it was time to set off again. With the changes of plan, I was without crew for the next stages of my cruise so had to adapt to Single Handed Sailing.

I did not have to change very much in *White Knight's* setup as we had always worked on the premise that sailing two handed is effectively sailing singlehanded with somebody on hand to take over or help at critical moments. Reliable well-maintained kit, tiller lines, a reliable tiller pilot and the Navik Windvane made the basic sailing possible while giving time to do the navigation and domestic elements.



Underway my usual perch was the companion way. I had built a narrow seat from some redundant teak garden furniture which dropped into the hatchway. This made a comfortable enough perch, with good bracing, largely protected from the weather, within easy reach of cockpit, Nav station and galley. Close at hand I had wired the VHF fist mike on an extension cable which also acted as a cockpit speaker. In front I had the chart plotter and multi-functional displays with all navigation data to hand. Sheets were a short step away as was the tiller. Under the spray hood the area was well enough protected in foul weather, and with a big hat not too uncomfortable in the sunshine. Also close at hand were the cockpit knife, winch handles and main steering compass.



With the cooker immediately to port at the foot of the companion way, drinks and sustenance was close at hand. The Nav station to starboard held the paper chart, navigation notes and the logbook.

When the Chart Plotter failed I had almost the same level of data on the IPad. I didn't however manage to work out how to display AIS on the Navionics App.

Psychologically the first Single handed stages were a big step. Careful planning and preparation became very important to me. Leaving and entering marinas was always the most challenging part of any passage. Letting go lines while maneuvering the boat or stopping and getting lines ashore being the main issues. Rigging fenders well in advance and bringing the lines back to the cockpit made things easier. The biggest improvement came using a midships line to tie off first. The other lines could then follow at a more measured pace.

Anchoring posed few problems provided the anchor was rigged and the rode flaked out in advance. Recovering the anchor on *White Knight* is all by hand without a windlass so I always try to anchor in relatively shallow water. 5m vertical weight of chain is more manageable than 10-15m of vertical 8mm chain. The only tricky weighing was off East Head where another yacht had anchored over our rode, so I had to wait for a favorable wind shift to make a bit of space.

Getting rest / off watch time while single handed was a concern before I tried it and got into a rhythm. Generally, I planned passages to be less than 12-14 hours, so getting rest on passage was generally not a big issue. I gradually worked up from a couple of minutes down below to 10 and 15 minutes for a cat nap. I tended to plan for early starts and to always arrive at a destination in day light.

Travelling up the Channel and the East Coast was broken up with layover days and short passages following longer passages. The long passage from Lowestoft was always going to be a long passage even if I had managed to get into the Humber for a break. Anchored off Bridlington did give me a chance for a short but deep two hours sleep, enough to get around Flamborough Head on the last of the favorable tide. Scarborough was my last full layover day. Fortunately by this stage friends were joining me so the pressure was eased.

Overall, excluding times in port preparing *White Knight* for the race and fixing her afterward, the passage round Britain was completed in a little over 7 weeks rather than the 12 I had originally planned. Inevitably given this pace there were areas on the East Coast I passed by including the Thames Estuary and East Coast Rivers, Forth & Tay, maybe next time. Taking the Caledonian Canal short-cut, leaves Shetland & Orkney for another year or two, along with the Outer Hebrides, Ireland, the Cornish rias and the Scilly Isles. From our base in North Wales these can all be explored in 3-4 week cruises rather than taking out 3 months.



Appendix 2: Tour of Royals

Britain is the home of several “Royal” Yacht Clubs. Some like the Royal Welsh Yacht Club gain their “Royal” status from a Royal Warrant, others by reference to a host entity such as the Royal Air Force Yacht Club or the Royal County of Berkshire Yacht Club. Warranted Royal Yacht Clubs include:-

- **Royal Cornwall Yacht Club ***
- Royal Fowey Yacht Club
- **Royal Western Yacht Club of England ***
- **Royal Plymouth Corinthian Yacht Club**
- **Royal Dart Yacht Club ***
- Royal Torbay Yacht Club
- **Royal Dorset Yacht Club**
- **Royal Motor Yacht Club.**
- **Royal Lymington Yacht Club ***
- Royal Solent Yacht Club
- **Royal Southampton Yacht Club**
- **Royal Yacht Squadron**
- **Royal London Yacht Club**
- **Royal Southern Yacht Club**
- Royal Victoria Yacht Club (England)
- Royal Naval Club & Royal Albert Yacht Club
- **Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club** (*The clubhouse was closed when I called by*)
- **Royal Temple Yacht Club ***
- Royal Thames Yacht Club
- Royal Burnham Yacht Club
- Royal Corinthian Yacht Club
- **Royal Harwich Yacht Club**
- **Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club ***
- **Royal Yorkshire Yacht Club**
- **Royal Northumberland Yacht Club *** *Visited twice, once during the RB&I then again during my circumnavigation*
- Royal Forth Yacht Club
- Royal Tay Yacht Club
- **Royal Findhorn Yacht Club**
- **Royal Highland Yacht Club** (*Does not have a club house but makes do with the magnificent West Coast of Scotland instead*)
- Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club
- Royal Gourock Yacht Club
- Royal West of Scotland Amateur Boat Club
- Royal Ulster Yacht Club
- Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club
- **Royal Windermere Yacht Club** (*visited by road*)
- Royal Mersey Yacht Club
- **Royal Anglesey Yacht Club ***
- **Royal Welsh Yacht Club ***
- Royal Irish Yacht Club

* Denotes the 9 Royal Yacht Club clubhouses I visited during the season.
Bold text denotes the other clubs I sailed past close enough to see.