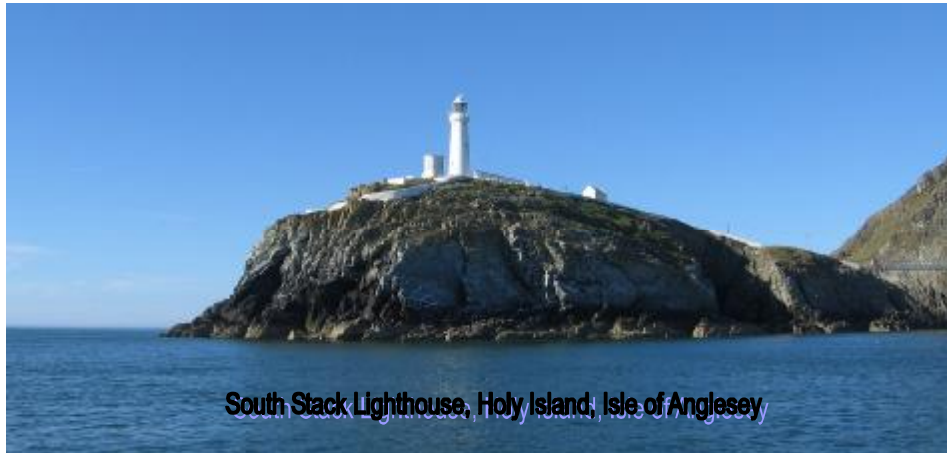


## The story so far:.....

We left Holyhead on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2005 and hoped to sail to Wicklow in Eire leaving South Stack on our port stern quarter, sadly the wind died and we ended up motoring most of the way but at last we had set off, originally we planned to be away by end May, but the apartment building was behind so we could not get away until it was completed.



We arrived at Wicklow and were joined by Graham and Caroline from Amelie who were starting their summer cruise to the SW Eire so we had a nice meal together and that turned out to be our final leaving party. We have had several in Holyhead, and I think our friends just wanted to see the back of us so they could get back to having normal weekends without a Darramy leaving do each weekend! We want to thank all our friends who helped to finalise our departure especially Pete Farrer who spent a load of time sorting out the lap top and assisting with various technical jobs on Darramy, and of course Sue Farrer who helped Sue each weekend to do as much shopping as was possible in all the Holyhead shops.

We left Wicklow for Kilmore Quay on the SE tip of Eire, the plan was to then head west to Kinsale and beyond before heading down to N Spain. Again a day of no wind so we motored all the way, but the sun was shining and we felt we were really on our way at last.

The next couple of days were spent in Kilmore whilst the wind blew from the SW. On Wednesday the forecast said NW winds so we set off for Kinsale after an hour the wind came from the west so instead of beating hard to windward, I asked Sue how her Spanish was she said "Olha" so we turned south and headed for NW Spain, the sailing was superb, and once we had cleared the Celtic sea the ocean swells became a motion which was quite pleasant and we settled into a good routine.

Once we had got into our watches we began to really enjoy the passage good food was now back on the menu and as we travelled further south it became warmer and we were able to peel off our Irish Sea sailing gear. We had favourable winds and

Darramy was going well it became interesting when we had some sea mist and visibility went down to about 1 mile just as we started to cross the shipping lanes that crosses the Bay of Biscay for vessels heading across the bay between Finistere and Quessant the wind decided to go very light and we spent an interesting night dodging these large monsters coming out of the mist. Thank goodness for radar.

Very little wild life around, but we had several visits from Dolphins, which are beautiful creatures and stayed with us for quite a while each time. As we got nearer the Spanish coast the wind picked up from the NE and we were in a force 7-8 wind but it was from behind so that was ok but we had to try and slow the boat down as we would have arrived too early and wanted to arrive in daylight so we changed our destination to near La Coruna which was further west and when dawn came the wind eased, and we were able to have a good sail into a Ria near La Coruna.

The sun had come out and it was glorious we anchored in Ria de Ares which had a lovely white beach and seemed idyllic after being at sea for a few days. We had made it safely and enjoyed the trip across the bay.

We soon became quite lazy and spent a few days in Ares and the surrounding areas before heading into La Coruna for the usual tourist bits and restock on fresh food and do laundry. Etc.

Two nights at anchor in the harbour was enough, big cities are not our favourite places so we set off for another Ria in Corne and it turned into a great sail, but we were finding that as the day went on the wind increased so by the time we arrived it was blowing 25-30 knots, so we anchored near the beach. We began to see quite a few other boats in the various anchorages, Norwegian, French, Dutch German and other nationalities, most were making their way south some to the Algarve like ourselves, others into the Med and some to the Canaries to be ready to head to the Caribbean when the hurricane season ends in November.

Whilst in Corne there was a fire on the headland where we were anchored and the whole of the area went up in flames, we have a great photo of Darramy on the edge of the smoke and flames which some new friends took before we decided to re anchor away from the heat and smoke. It was



quite some fire, and helicopters came in scooping up sea water in giant buckets and flying over the fire to release the water collected. Fortunately no one was hurt, and after that we saw quite a few forest fires in the different Rias we visited.

After Corne we just sailed to other Rias and we found they all were very pretty in their own way most had spectacular scenery white beaches and we always found a good safe anchorage. The local wine went down well, as did local produce but we found it was difficult to buy fresh fish in many places, it was nearly always frozen. We would buy fresh when we saw it and I mean fresh.

We found the Galician people very friendly although they do speak their own version of Spanish so translation was occasionally interesting especially if we went out for a meal, we would order off the menu never being quite sure what would turn up on the plate, but when it arrived it usually tasted pretty good. There seemed to be little crime and we never felt threatened even in La Coruna.

Things generally cost quite a lot less than in the UK, but the locals say how the euro has really pushed up prices.

We had a couple of days in Bayona after visiting the Isle de Cies for 3 days these



Isles are absolutely stunning, just like being in the Caribbean.

It was strange going into a marina for the first time in 5 weeks as we had anchored everywhere and became very self reliant on our systems for producing power, solar panel wind generator and a water generator helped to provide power for all the systems, we only had to run the engine once to charge the batteries. The water maker came into its own and we made over 150 gallons of water in that time. We found this to be a good test for ourselves and with a few modifications we feel confident that we will be able to do longer passages next season and live comfortable without the usual luxuries we have always had at home, we really are enjoying the cruising lifestyle.

In Bayona we really tried to get this e mail business sorted, and after several goes of loosing loads of stuff in cyber space, we eventually managed to send an e mail, although I had to log on as an Irishman, the librarian helping us thought it really funny. However we may be getting somewhere even though apparently I included screwfix in my list of e mail address's. hopefully things can only get better. We have only got a few e mail addresses, you of course, but we have found if someone send us an email we can save their address and include them in all future mailings please ask people to send an email. Apparently it is easier to keep in touch as texts seem to cost a fortune so don't expect to many, but we do appreciate receiving texts from the UK .

We left Bayona on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> Sept for Viana do Castelo in Portugal and had a magic sail spinnaker up all the way. We have made it to Portugal!! The place is quite different to Spain, but very welcoming friendly and this town is very historic and one of the nicest we have ever visited up to now.

Walking along the old quay away from tourists we came across a local fishing family cooking sardines outside their fishing hut within a few minutes they were feeding us sardines and giving us wine. What a way to start with people as nice as that we both feel we are going to enjoy this country. We are going to press on down the coast a bit quicker as we need to be in the Algarve by early October, but the days are starting to shorten and apparently the climate starts to change so we are off to follow the sun.



Further down the coast to Povoia de Varzim where we used the local bus and metro system to go to Porto, a most interesting city, very old plenty of tourists, but a city well worth visiting for a weekend break.

We will sign off now in the hope that the internet café does it stuff and you receive this. Please forward this to our friends and don't forget to send us an e mail sometime. For text our new UK mobile number is 07789465281.

Love to everyone

Brian and Sue