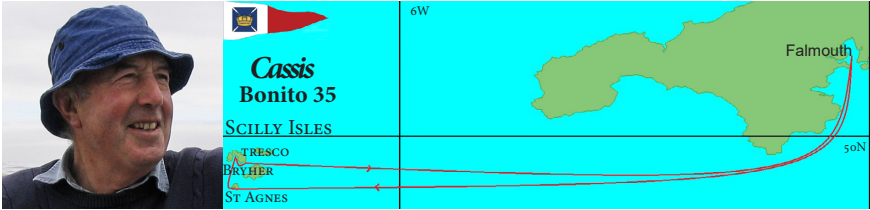


Cassis to the Happy Isles

Jeremy Burnett



I had just passed my 85th and was beginning to wonder what else the cruising world had to offer. Was this the time to call it a day?

Maybe not:

*'Old age has yet his honour and his toil
How dull it is to pause, to make an end
There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sails
There gloom the dark broad seas'*

As these romantic thoughts were going through my mind, there occurred a fortunate conjunction of events. Family appeared, returning from a cruise to the east. Son, wife and grandsons. Grandsons happy to now stay ashore. Parents keen for more sailing. The weather forecast was for several days of north winds, a blessing for Cornish sailors. Suggestions made:

*'Come my friends, 'tis not
too late to seek a newer world
To sail beyond the sunset
and the baths of all the
western stars
It may be that we will
touch the Happy Isles.'*

Thus *Cassis* left Falmouth early on an August morning, and shaped a westerly course, in a steady northerly breeze. Soon we were past The



William and Juliet

Cassis to the Happy Isles

Manacles, and our course south of The Lizard took us towards the Wolf Rock lighthouse.

The crew, both of whom are marine biologists, were delighted by the visible diversity of life. Pods of dolphins, gannets diving around, and a sunfish, not seen before, lazily flapping a fin. The sun was warm.

We passed to the south of the lighthouse, and in the late afternoon crossed the north-south shipping lanes and closed with the isles (Scilly!)

The Cove at St Agnes was fairly full, but we found a spot inshore and anchored. I saw several boats I knew from Cornish ports, and also our Rear Commodore in *Tai Tai*, who passed by for a 'distanced' chat. His dinghy crew, a large hound, was eager to get ashore!



Cassis under way



New Grimsby moorings from the castle.

William and Juliet had a plan to spend time walking on Tresco, where they had not been before. After a peaceful night we moved over to Tresco Sound and picked up a mooring off New Grimsby. The weather remained idyllic.

'We are not now of that strength which in old days moved heaven and earth.'

I decided to forgo the walk ashore and spend time on board. I was

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lucky to find an old copy of *The Times* with its crossword untouched. The view across to Bryher was lovely, the beach sand white. Two large French yachts were anchored close inshore. Due to their hull shape they were able to dry out upright. There was an interesting coming and going of small craft and dinghies, and I was visited by a group of beautiful black swans.

The walkers returned having had a great day. We waited for the tide before going back down the sound to Porth Cressa.

Leaving early next morning, we sailed back to Falmouth. The sting in the tail was a coldish beat, into the northerly, across Falmouth Bay. A small price to pay for what had been a short but enjoyable cruise.



'All experience is an arch where thro' gleams that untravelled world.'

(with apologies for liberties taken with '*Ulysses*' by Lord Alfred Tennyson)