

RCC Cadet Cruise September 2021

Isles of Scilly and back

Emily Bush

Awarded the Sea Laughter Trophy



Wild Goose at anchor in Tean Sound.

for the week. After one member of the crew was taught the importance of heat when cooking rice, we went to sleep in our very comfortable cabins.

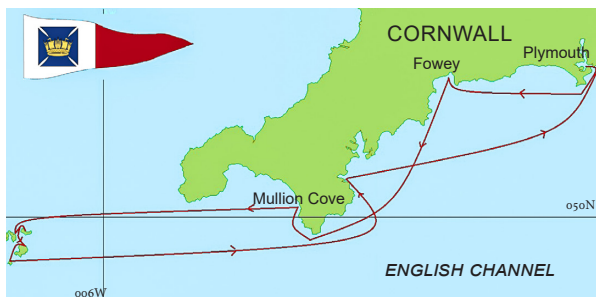
The next morning, we set sail at 0900 after a sausage sandwich breakfast. We rounded the Lizard, eerily shrouded in mist and hardly a breath of wind, via the inside passage (overtaking *Sweet Briar* on the way) and tucked into Mullion Cove to anchor for the night. We met *Sweet Briar*'s crew here, swam with a friendly seal and explored the sea caves and smugglers passages under the striking cliffs. Cards and G&T aboard *Wild Goose* followed swiftly after. The next day was the passage to the Isles of Scilly

What a cruise! Our trip began at Mayflower Marina where we boarded *Wild Goose*, James Eaton's beautiful Oyster 485 and after a quick brief and boat induction by Cadet Captain and skipper Will Eaton, we were off. The crew of Emily Bush (RCC), Ossian Bracegirdle and James Allison relished that first night sail to Fowey in a bid to start to catch up the other cadet boats on the cruise leaving from Falmouth. They were on board *Sweet Briar*, very kindly loaned to the cadets by Andrew Pool (RCC) and *Wheal-Go* chartered

Sweet Briar with skipper Mike Skidmore and crew Tom Bott and Hugh Wilson



Emily Bush



and we had a fantastic breeze and calm seas allowing us to sail on a broad reach with the spinnaker up the whole way. Our top speed was 9.3 knots but 'who was helming' at the time became a much debated topic, let alone whether



we were going in the right direction! A few pods of dolphins came to say hello and a couple of rounds of 'eye-spy' and '20 questions' later we arrived in the beautiful Isles of Scilly.

We anchored in the shelter of Old Grimsby Sound. I am always surprised by how tropical the islands feel; the bright white sandy beaches and manicured gardens of Tresco can easily make you forget you're in the UK. Our top priority when we arrived was to hunt for more tonic water to take to *Sweet Briar* when they arrived

shortly after. Perhaps Tresco Stores was not the place for a serious re-provisioning but needs must. We had also hoped to meet with *Wheal-Go* but sadly the beginning of various issues with their boat meant they were towed into St Mary's.

On our third morning we woke to bright blue skies; summer wasn't over yet. It was very hot and we had soon all jumped in for another swim in the crystal clear water. We went for an explore around Tresco, tried the legendary ice cream from *Wild Goose* and *Sweet Briar* anchored in Old Grimsby Sound



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St Agnes Dairy and climbed up Cromwell's castle near New Grimsby Sound. Being keen surfers, Tom Bott and I were amazed to see the surf break on the two rocks named 'Golden Balls' west of St Helens, it was breaking in big blue barrels at the North of Tresco. Sadly, despite some effort we couldn't find surf boards for hire.

That afternoon we headed to Tean Sound which was slightly more sheltered than the original plan of St Helen's Pool and a fun navigational challenge following the narrow channel. The elusive Cornish mackerel eventually found the fishing line and, after some more swimming, we took the dinghy ashore for supper at the Seven Stones with the *Sweet Briar* crew. Unfortunately, the charter boat continued to have engine troubles and couldn't join us but we were looking forward to seeing them soon.

Brunch was mackerel on toast followed by an expedition to the bakery on St Martins for pasties and crab sandwiches. We left the dinghy on Old Quay which is the most picturesque and unspoilt area we visited. It is easily accessed at high water,

very convenient and a short walk up to the bakery. It was at this point that the *Sweet Briar* crew played their first prank by climbing aboard *Wild Goose* and ensuring the washing up gloves were flying proud of the mast. And where was the fishing line?

We had a lovely sail that afternoon to anchor at The Cove between Gugh and St Agnes, including a gentle sail onto the anchor to brush up on boat handling skills. Here we finally caught up with *Wheal-Go* which meant all the boats were



Ossian ensuring Will met his transit into The Cove

The crew of *Wheal-Go* in The Cove.
(l-r) Ruth Avery, Bob Page (skipper), Rory Trafford, Georgie Waite, Emily Chavasse, Matt Irwin



Emily Bush



All the cadets together at last in The Cove

together and there were even a few more girls around - up to this point I had been completely outnumbered. After a risotto on board, we had a big fire on the beach and chatted and sang sea shanties until the stars were out. It was great to have the whole Cadet cruise together and really fun meeting everyone.

On day six, we woke, swam, walked round St Agnes, swam again, got revenge on *Sweet Briar* by hiding some oars and waved goodbye to *Wheal-Go*. We needed to provision as we were getting a bit low on all the essentials (gin this time) so popped to the shops on St Marys.

This was our last day in the Scillies and the weather was due to turn as more wind and rain were forecast the next day. We had been extremely lucky with the weather on this trip, with wind for our passage there and back and hot, sunny days when we were there. *Sweet Briar* opted to make the most of the day's sun and left for Cornwall that evening for a night sail but *Wild Goose* decided to sail to Watermill Cove which would be sheltered for the night before setting sail for the mainland the next day. St Mary's harbourmaster had first suggested the anchorage to *Wheal-Go*, who joined us and cooked fish on an open fire on the beach.

The following morning, we were up at 0600 and the wind had picked up to 20 knots. We set our course straight for Wolf Rock. It was very lumpy and waves were breaking over the cockpit - a day for full oilskins. We had sandwiches on deck for lunch, quite tricky to make at 45 degrees. We saw lots and lots of dolphins playing in the stormy waves and even saw a vertical minke whale mid-breach, completely out of the water. Only James actually saw this (so he says) but it did emerge to surface a couple more times and we heard the whoosh of air from its blow hole.

We anchored near the entrance of the Helford River at 1600 and met *Sweet Briar* there. They'd had a fantastic night sail under the stars with phosphorescence

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flickering on dolphins' backs in the darkness. We also met Peter, Wendy and Will Whatley (RCC) aboard *Henry* and were very kindly invited aboard for drinks and nibbles. *Wheal-Go* had to leave for Falmouth as their charter ended the next day, but the crew of *Wild Goose* and *Sweet Briar* were joined by Will Whatley at Helford River Sailing Club for a supper of scampi in a basket.

On the final day we motored into Falmouth to watch the Falmouth Working Boat Nationals, it was lovely to see these traditional boats and colourful sails. Unfortunately, the wind had completely died so we had to motor most of the way back to Plymouth. One of our crew, James, had spontaneously decided to sail to the Canary Islands the next day, for a transatlantic yacht delivery, so we helped him prepare before our cruise ended.

We all had a great time, made possible by Cadet Captain Will Eaton's dedication to providing a cruise in such a difficult year, realising the potential of UK waters when international travel was so uncertain. Thanks must also go to Andrew Pool for generously lending his lovely boat and to Bob Page for persevering with a very unforgiving charter boat.

We can't wait for the next Cadet cruise in 2022. If this year is anything to go by, it's going to be great.

A slow start to the Falmouth Work Boat Nationals in the Carrick Roads

