

## TRIEUX RIVER

... at Last !

This log is about correcting a ‘cop out’ two years ago, when the objective was to enter the Trieux River, but instead headed for a wide open port, St Quay Portrieux.

At least on that occasion, we reached Brittany for the first time.

But with gritted teeth, we are determined to get to the Trieux this time.

We, that’s me and my  
Victoria Frances 26  
- ‘Jenaka II’



28 May 2018

Forecast: Variable 4, NE4/5 Later Occasionally F6.

06.15 Dropped mooring EM6

Main up for visibility.

Motorsailing out through the North Ships Channel, Portland Harbour.

Tide near top of springs. Tidal strategy was to get neaps as I approached the Trieux River, despite the fact that springs might produce some challenges in navigating through the Channel Islands.

This would be my first daylight crossing of the Channel. In the past my approach has always been to leave at night so that there was plenty of light as I piloted myself on to a strange coast, The Netherlands, Belgium and in this case France.

Experience has taught me that you can do as many night crossings as you like, but approaching anywhere near the Cherbourg area at day break you will still end up 'searching' the coast out, as more often than not, it would be shrouded in coastal mist.

Transitted the West going TSS entrance, no ships.

However, approaching the East going TSS exit, several ships coming at intervals out of the TSS.



AIS on plotter working excellently, telling me where to look and eventually there they would be approaching. Initially an indiscernible shadow three miles away, then taking clear form and colour.

Of the four East going ships we had to cope with, I could have easily have passed under their stern before the next approached, but by this time the channel tide had turned with a burgeoning ebb.

So as not to lose my east longitude and be swept towards the Swinge, I decided to wait, using several 360° turns until AIS showed no ships approaching.

This enabled me to approach Alderney in line with it's NE to SW length aspect, keeping well away from the ebb pouring into the Swinge and lining up my approach into Bray harbour from the NE.

Visibility had by now become very clear.

18.00 Arrived mooring No.4 , Braye. Having been into Braye a few times I at last heeded advice from Gilly Watson “Take your egg link chain stop with you”.

Excellent advice, as the wind only has to give a hint of going into the NE, the moorings become uncomfortable.

So as other yachts arriving connected up to the mooring buoys with their rope strops, I smugly ignored their curiosity as I rattled my chain through the buoy – same snatching movement through the night, but this time I would definitely be exactly where I was when settling down the previous evening !

Over to the ‘Divers’ pub for a healthy, ham, egg and chips !



Having been into the Divers a few times but not noticing sitting on the mantelpiece a “Cox No.2 Submarine Bolt Driving Gun”, meaningless unless you have been a clearance diver or read the book ‘Cox’s Navy’ an account of the salvaging of the WWI German High Seas Fleet, scuttled at Scapa Flow.

Stayed a couple of days, having first visited the Harbour Master to get precise times for going through the Swinge in a couple of days time.



I have never been down the Alderney Race, so as a poor substitute, walked out to Longy Bay, often quoted as a good place to await the turn of the Race, or a refuge from it.

31 May 2018

11.15 Recovered chain strop – persistent rain as we moved out into the Swinge, in company with two other yachts.

Rain stopped as we drew level with the ‘Les Etacs’ gannetry.

As before, a guard flight of three gannets came out to check us out, all seemed clear as they let me pass without incident.



This is an impressive place, being the main gannetry in the Western Channel.

Such beautiful birds hardly deserved what always seemed to me a most unattractive name as ‘gannet’.

Once passed Les Etacs vis. closed in a little, but no real fog.

Away in the distance the SE corner of Guernsey started to show itself, a neat little trap, as you should ignore it and start looking out for the low lying land on the NE corner, that will line you up for entering the Little Russell.

Soon my nemesis started to be evident fine on my port bow - Roustel Tower. A literally frightening sight in the dense fog of two years ago, but now a faithful friend giving me a clear line to Brehon Tower, opposite the entrance to St Peter Port harbour.

Coming down the Little Russell the mysterious ‘flats’ in the sea, they look like independent mill ponds, sparking off my memories of east coast experiences, where such sea state indicates an imminent arrival onto good old East Anglian mud.

Usually about this time, such fears are assuaged by the Condor High Speed Ferry hammering down the Little Russell and providing excellent pilotage. Not on this occasion.

Starting to turn from Brehon towards the harbour entrance and faffing about taking down the main.

Trying to look over the harbour wall to ensure no superstructures are moving – I have seen what happens when a yacht meets a coaster trying to maintain seaway steerage speed out of the harbour, all seemed well.

What was that I was once told, always in close quarter yacht handling, keep a 360° lookout.

Where the heck did she come from, hammering in, not from the Little Russell but from Sark, there was the Condor.

Stopped approaching harbour entrance, as “Discretion being the better part of....”

Watched through the entrance as the Condor completed her pas de deux with the RoRo ramp. (Past reports have shown that they both don't always get it right !)

Having motor sailed most of the way, this would be a good idea to go over to the fuel pontoon and top up. But that yacht on the fuel pontoon looked a bit strange. She was leaning very precariously into the pontoon, with mast just off the top of the quay – she was definitely aground – these were indeed real springs.

So straight to berth on the outside pontoons, but where was the friendly HM dorey to guide us to THEIR preferred berth.

Never, mind there was a gap between those very large yachts, so a wonderful bit of long keel boat handling brought us in alongside, text book !

‘Did my colleague ask you to berth there?’ asked the member of the HM’s staff.

More rhetoric than question.

So un-birth, move, re-birth. Such excellent practice for a singlehander.

Never mind, all those 60’ plus Swan Internationals arriving for their rally no doubt kept the HM focused.

I had a feeling that any one of these Swans might just take off, with Jenaka hanging over the side as a fender.

Remained in St Peter Port waiting for my ideal conditions for venturing into unknown territory.

Next morning talking to a grande dame of Guernsey in Creaseys Dept. Store. over a cup of coffee, who explained that in the 50s she broke all the sacred rules of the island and went out with her father fishing the grounds around the island.

Then went on to solve yesterday's mystery. "Did you see the unorthodox arrival of the Condor yesterday. On real low springs, she doesn't risk the Little Russell". Hmmm.

01 06 2018

Moved off berth to fuel pontoon.

Having refuelled, came back to original berth to find it taken, St Peter Port was busy.

Having learnt my lesson yesterday, I awaited arrival of HM dorey to be advised.

"I've just the berth for you".

I followed him round, unusually, into the local's area and told to raft with a cruiser flying the Guernsey ensign.

Slightly bemused, I went on my way to victual in town.



On my return the owner of the local boat engaged me in such a fashion that I perceived the nature of this individual required me to end the 'discussion' with :

"I am sorry I have neither the practice or the skill to help you".

I moved off, he moved off and I moved back - to berth peacefully!

02 06 2018

Left St Peter Port in sunny weather and eased east of St Martin's Point to say cheerio to a line fisherman and his little daughter who I had met on the pontoons, they fishing with a dozen other boats.

13.30

Rouche Dovres tower coming out of the summer sea mist on port bow.

14.00

Tide is pushing our speed up to 7 knots.

15.30

Brittany coast coming out of the mist, 10 nm on the bow.

As we closed, attempting to place outlying rock formations on my pilot plan into perspective.

But everything not totally 'fixing'.

Way over to starboard a green starboard hand buoy comes into view.

So to fully fix my position approached said buoy, sacrificing my transit bearing in the hope that this buoy really was ‘Les Sirlots’, and so it was to be.

Hurray, nothing like certainty. Now starting to really believe in my brand new B&G Vulcan 7 plotter.



Resumed transit bearing that should soon reveal “La Croix” light house, which we soon passed ‘close to’ on our port side.

Now confidently heading towards ‘Bodic’ light house, which looks like a space shuttle ready for vertical take off.

Well into the Trieux River with beautiful wooded banks each side at 7.1 knots.

Not quite prepared for it, but up ahead was what seemed like the rocky banks closing in across the river with a narrow canyon entrance.



I knew beyond this 'massif' was the port of Lezardrieux.

The narrow entrance opened up the closer we approached and once through there on our starboard side was our ultimate objective – Lezardrieux.

Wary of where to berth in the marina, I chose the virtually empty mid river pontoon for the night.



19.20

Secured alongside, celebrating the completion of a three year plan in the making.

03 06 2018 to 06 06 2018

Stayed in Lezardrieux tolerating the forlorn, cold misty weather.

One day took bus to Paimpol to have a look at the approach and sea lock, should I ever brave sailing in over a beach to get to a marina.

Purchasd electric heater whilst in Paimpol to get some comfort in Lezardrieux.

My last evening in Lezardrieux was rather melancholic to say the least.

To cheer myself up and throw caution to the wind, I decided that I would go ashore for a shower.

As I walked along the pontoon, 50 metres off my stern the Sapeur-Pompier (Fire/Lifeboat) with flashing blue lights was, it would appear, having their Wednesday evening exercise session and practicing recovery procedures.

There was a fire engine on shore.

Came out from a refreshing shower feeling more confident about tomorrow's departure, I paused before descending the 10 metres down the ramp.

By now the gendarmes had turned up, the 'lifeboat' was in alongside the fuel pontoon and the firemen standing back in a huddle as the gendarmes walked towards the fuel pontoon.

What I had thought was the head of a practice dummy alongside the lifeboat when I walked to the showers, was in fact a body, at this moment covered by a tarpaulin on the fuel pontoon.

07 06 2018

08.00

Left pontoon on a beautiful fine morning with initially some river mist which cleared the further I got to sea.

09.45 Les Silots SHM off on the port beam

Fog to the west of the Roches Douvres. Visibility came down for a while to 100 m.

The fog came to nothing and cleared after 45 minutes, with St Martin's Point starting to take form way ahead on the port bow.

18.15

Secured alongside at St Peter Port.

09 06 2018 to 12 06 2018

Stuck in St Peter Port waiting for a benign forecast.

Took the bus to St Martin's Point.



Later walked up to the Belvedere Fields and visited the Belvedere Light

13 06 2018

04.45 Dropped lines

05.00 Harbour Entrance

05.15 Six of us Heading North

05.30 Well into the Little Russell with 4 knots of tide under us, giving us a motor sailing total of 9.1 knots.

07.30 The other yachts departing company, two heading on a bearing for Dartmouth and 3 for Cherbourg.

07.45 Casquets in the mist off starboard beam.

08.15 Casquets clearly seen and we are being 'spat out' into the channel at 9.0 knots.

08.40 Starting to cross the east going TSS exit, with 40 nm to East Shambles cardinal.

09.00 First sighting of east going shipping.

11.45 Leaving west going TSS entrance.

Well that's them out of the way, time for a Channel Catnap!

Came round to look ahead and passing from right to left was....

... M - S - C !

... just 200 metres away.

Lesson, always use the wind-up egg timer when catnapping.

Coming up to the East Shambles cardinal buoy, but slowly as tidal stream hurtling west into the Portland Race. Kept well to the east of the cardinal.



19.00 Secured alongside NSA pontoon.

Challenges faced: - More alongside than at sea !

Doug Odgers  
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RNSA  
Portland Branch

