

**Highlights from the Cruise of the
Rolling Snowball
14th July to 14th August 2018
including
The Festival at Douarnenez
25th to 29th July
as seen from the deck of
Carlotta**
by Piers Rowlandson

As the winter winds howled around the thatched eaves, thoughts turned to summer and the anchorages and ports of Brittany. I started a WhatsApp Group, following in the footsteps of Ben Collins the year before, and people started to share plans.

Andy joined me in Cowes and we set off for Yarmouth. A south-westerly breeze kept building, and *Carlotta* and *Corncockle* agreed to take advantage of the conditions to press on to the Channel Islands. The wind headed us so we made for Cherbourg, while *Corncockle* took advantage of the shifts to make Beaucette Marina.

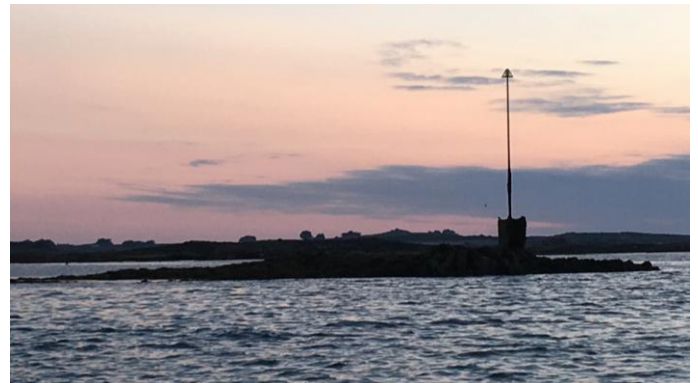
Highlights

1. While we were quietly enjoying moules/frites in Le Café du Port, the French won the World Cup; it seemed the town went mad. People rushed out into the street to stop the traffic and embrace. Every man woman and child was waving the Tricolor, some were wearing matching wigs, and cars hooted non-stop.

2. Beaucette Marina is not as well-known as St Peter's Port but has a lot to offer. The entrance could be hazardous in strong north-easterly winds. The approach can be daunting so it is important to stick closely to the buoyage. There is a pool with mooring buoys outside the narrow entrance, where one can drop sails and wait. The Harbour Master (HM) came out and showed us into the Marina; we had plenty of room to moor up on a long pontoon, where our friends in *Corncockle*, were waiting. There were the only two boats on the visitors' pontoon. After a quiet night, we went over to the fuel berth. The staff allowed us to fuel up, take on water, and leave the boat for an hour while I went

to the office to pay and Andy went to the restaurant to ask for bacon and egg sandwiches. "No problem!" said the cheerful cook who had only just arrived. Beaucette Marina also hires bicycles for those who want to explore.

3. Treguier River. We arrived after a rather tedious windless passage as it grew dark and elected to anchor in the mouth of the river having passed La Corne tower and a green post called Balise Tete Jaune which marks a long reef of small but very sharp rocks. *Corncockle* joined us. The rise of tide was 10m so we dumped out 30m of chain and another 30m of rope. I was worried that we might swing onto the bank at low water but we had an uneventful night and were rewarded by a great sunrise. We motored up river to Treguier town where HM helped us into a finger berth. It was slack water. Manoeuvring when the current is running is best avoided.



1 - Balise Tete Jaune (Piers)

4. In Treguier, the market for fruit, cold meats and various other things happens on Wednesday and provided mouth-watering victuals for the scurvy crew. Wednesday night is music and Bretton dance night in the Cathedral Square; something not to be missed. Not so attractive was the flotsam that built up around the boat and blocked the heads inlet, and potentially the engine raw water inlet.

5. Treburden is characterised by a friendly marina, once over the sill and a beautiful beach bordered by rocks where we snorkelled. There are great bars on the promenade overlooking the beach.

6. We arrived in Roscoff to find *Corncockle*, *Cine Mare*, *My Yvonne*, *Gwen Bleiz*, and others waiting for the right conditions for a passage to L'Aber

Wrac'h. The facilities have vastly improved year on year and we had an excellent meal in the restaurant. The free bus circulates between the slip road to the ferry car park, the old town of Roscoff and the out of town supermarket every fifteen minutes: invaluable. Some OAP's seem to spend the day just circling around, so good are the views! The rock-strewn, tide-scoured chamber of horrors, as Tom Cunliffe calls the Canal de L'Île de Batz was at its most benign as our small flotilla set for L'Aber Wrac'h.

7. Shanty singing and a meal in my favourite restaurant adjacent to the car park, were the highlights in L'Aber Wrac'h. The mile long climb up the hill to the supermarket has to be endured if you want to buy anything, except bread and croissants which are available in the bar opposite the said restaurant.

8. We explored a passage behind Le Four lighthouse to watch a kite festival taking place at Argenton, on our way to L'Île de Molène, which we approached with the big blue balloon jib flying. It was indeed settled weather making it safe to anchor up by the lifeboat in the harbour. We were joined by *Amelie Rose*, *Corncockle*, *Gwen Bleiz* and others.



2 - *Amelia Rose* (Piers)

A short walk around the island takes in the watch tower, the church with a ship suspended from the ceiling, which I took to be a votive offering. The huge cistern for collecting rain water, was funded by Queen Victoria after the heroic islanders rescued the crew of a British ship wrecked on the rocks.

9. With the big blue balloon jib drawing, we sailed from Base Royale past Cap de la Chevre and anchored up in Anse de St Nicholas, where we encountered a French gaffer bound for

Douarnenez. More snorkelling. The next day we had a fast sail up the coast to Morgat, where we took up a white buoy between the beach and the marina next to a French gaff cutter called *Girl Joyce* owned by the artist Yvon Le Corre. A festival was in progress. Hazy memories of a good night out.

10. Douarnenez 2018. The festival went by in a whirl. We took part in a chaotic race (parade of sail), involving an astonishing variety of gaffers and

3 - Parade of Sail (Piers)



luggers some small and some enormous.

It was great to see an old Hillyard. A five boat raft up and party organised by *Corncockle* caused the mooring to drag. Music on the main stage, and shanty singing in the beer tent kept us amused ashore. A storm was forecast. We were anchored on the edge of the moorings so we elected to run for cover in Port Rhu. The town has a lot to offer and we explored L'Île de Tristan, Les Halles: fish meat and veg on display, a park with Roman

remains and rare breeds and the Classic Boat museum (free to participants in the Festival).

11. The storm had gone through. We waited another day and set off for St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, making good progress up the Chanel du Four in light westerly winds. 140 nm and 31 hours later, the wind had got up and we were approaching the gap between St Mary's and St Agnes in wind over tide conditions with breaking waves and an Atlantic swell on the beam. The low-lying reefs and huge rocks with spume thrown high into the air, makes one fully aware of the dangers that sailors face as they make landfall here. With a sigh of relief, we dashed past the rocks and into St Mary's Sound doing 7kts, rounded up and dropped sails. HM guided us to a yellow buoy in the harbour, where we rocked and rolled for the next 20 hours. The showers next to the HM's office are public, clean and not excessively crowded. Excellent meal ashore in the picturesque Atlantic Pub.

12. We motored the 8nm to New Grimsby Sound between Bryher and Tresco the next day and were pleased to find flat water and a sheltered anchorage. Two days were spent exploring the Abbey Gardens, the "Ruins" and the two forts.



4 - Abbey Gardens Tresco (Piers)

The fish of the day in the New Inn was excellent. We moved to St Agnes to explore and eat more fish in the Turks Head.

13. It was time to head back to the mainland. We left the Cove at 22.00hrs and a following wind guided us past Wolf Rock, while the stars watched over us from a clear night sky. Dawn saw us off the Lizard and by lunchtime we were moored up on a green buoy opposite the Helford River Sailing Club. It would be invidious to say that the HRSC is the best in the world, but after a long night a sea, the showers were most welcome and the friendly staff swiftly served up a meal that more than satisfied all requirements. Somehow we summoned up the energy to attend the last hours of the regatta party on the opposite bank.

14. We sailed past a house boat on our way to the Falmouth Yacht Haven. Stores were replenished, a gas bottle exchanged at the Bosun's Locker in the High Street and we took on water, but the fuel berth had run out of fuel, necessitating a stop at Mylor on our way to Restronguet. We anchored off and made our way by tender to the Pandora Inn. The Inn was crowded but the service was excellent and we did not wait long for our food.



5 - Falmouth House Boat (Piers)

15. We arrived in Plymouth as the sun was sinking and cautiously made our way past the three chain ferries and racing yachts, under the bridge and up the Tamar River to the Crooked Spaniard at Cargreen. Imagine our disappointment when we were told by the Landlady of the Crooked Inn that the Crooked Spaniard had been closed for ten years! We ate on board. Next day we moved down the river to Plymouth Yacht Haven to enjoy the two day British Fireworks Championships.

16. Andy returned home and I took *Carlotta* up the Lyner River to anchor in complete peace and quiet, while bad weather blew through. The passage to Dartmouth in company with *Arriana* who was also

single handed, was a story of contrary winds, squalls and rain. It was a relief to take up a buoy in Dittisham and rest. The Red Lion pub and shop up the hill from the Ferry Boat Inn provided much needed supplies, and the next morning the two boats set off on an epic solo voyage to Studland Bay. There was no wind at first so we motored steadily across Lyme Bay, aiming to be at least five miles off Portland Bill. Having rounded the Bill, it seemed only sensible to carry onto Studland, and we were blessed with a fast beam reach as the sun went down behind the Jurassic Coast.

17. Next morning, not wishing to break the silence, I sailed off the anchor and headed for the Needles Channel. Lazy navigation led to a short cut through rough water that only just missed the shallows between Dolphin Bank and the Shingles. That would have been a most ignominious end to a wonderful cruise. Luckily disaster was averted and *Carlotta* joined nearly 90 gaffers at the Folly. Home at last.