

## Postcard from North Wales. April 2010

With craning in day rapidly approaching, we still hadn't had a dry day to get the anti-foul on. However, with 3 days to go the sun came out and it was all hands on deck, or rather under the hull and sanding and painting was rapidly completed before the heavens opened again.

When the crane arrived we saw more rain and cold northerly winds. On checking all seacocks were in their correct positions we found the bilges swimming with water. Was this rain inside or what? Further investigation revealed that a water pipe underneath the basin in the heads had come off: maybe we hadn't fully drained the system before winter and it had frozen and pushed off. We now had the contents of the recently filled water tank to dispose of and it was a good test for the newly installed electric bilge pump. We ended up with the cleanest bilges of any boat.



After 4 wet hours waiting and helping others launch, we eventually hit the water and motored off to our mooring, spending the rest of the afternoon and evening sorting ourselves out. The winds steadily increased before bedtime so I decided to tie off the wind generator which was going like the clappers and would be one less noise to keep us awake.

On entering the cockpit I was aware that the hull had a list to starboard and found that our inflatable had been blown under the hull on the rising tide. We hadn't secured it at the bow as we normally do.

We quickly donned waterproofs and lifejackets and I climbed over the guard rail on to the edge of the tender. With Wendy hiking out on the starboard side dinghy style I managed to get sufficient pressure on it to extract it.

I then noticed that the painter had looped over the life raft frame and in flicking it off, the end on the cleat also parted company. We watched as the tender disappeared into the darkness up the creek. We located torches, started the engine and had our first night trip of the season, carefully avoiding other moorings to recover the tender, which had fortunately snagged on a link line. Enough excitement for one day and lessons learned.

When the better weather arrived we set off for Aberdaron in a gentle NE F3 and slight sea. Fantastic, just what we needed to get back into the swing of things. The only possible obstacle on route was Bell Rock which was just to the north of our track and so it was a relaxing sail.

However, just off Hells Mouth the wind died and, not wishing to spoil a lovely day by motoring far, we made for the nearest sandy cove which happened to be Porth Ceriad.

The anchor had only been down for a few minutes when a dolphin swam between us and the beach. Overhead a buzzard was being chased off by crows which were nesting in the cliffs. This was definitely the place to stop.



The following day again saw a good NE F3 so we decided set off to Pwllhelli, spoil ourselves with a night in the marina and walk into town to do some shopping. In the evening we had a good meal in Pwllhelli Sailing Club and made use of the other excellent facilities in the marina.



The next morning saw a 07.30 start and the narrow exit channel in full flood. Numerous whirlpools made it impossible to steer a straight course but fortunately there was no oncoming traffic.

On the very gentle sail to Mochras we were once again accompanied by dolphins, this time three, including a mother and her calf. Of course the wind dropped again so we ended up motor sailing the last couple of miles. Sadly the fishing line revealed nothing that day so it was a canned meal that evening on board.

*Happy Sailing!*

*Terry and Wendy*

