

CRUISE FROM HELFORD TO YEALM RIVER AND BACK IN AUGUST 2014.

"Gala" our H22 had gone in the water at the end of March and had then sat on the mooring unused until the middle of June, my wife "Vicki" having had open heart surgery at the beginning of May. Her op had gone well and she wanted to go sailing but it soon became clear that "Vicki" would not be up to long passages this season so we spent long lazy weekends at anchor in our favourite spots locally.

When August came and the chance of getting away on holiday, I had to plan to avoid long passages, the Isles of Scilly, our favourite place, was out of the question this season so we decided on a two day trip to the Yealm River, stay a while and come back when the weather allowed. We left Helford on passage to Polywyn Cove about 2 miles north of Mevagissey on Friday 22nd, we set off at 1520hrs with a forecast of NW4 on just the genoa. It soon became clear a little more sail was needed so I raised the main with one reef, crossing Falmouth Bay the wind picked up to a NW4-5. The next 2.5hrs we creamed along at between 5.7 and 6.3kts, just a great sail and one to remember, we had sailed fast in the past but never so long and as consistent. After passing Dodman Point we lost the wind and started the engine, partly to charge the batteries and also because it was now getting late, we motored into Polywyn Cove and dropped anchor for the night at 2000hrs.

Saturday the CG were giving a forecast of NW3-4, ideal we thought for our 28 mile passage to the east, the tide was with us 1430-2030hrs but that would mean arriving at the Yealm at low water which is not good so we left at 0920, no wind and with the sea now like a mill pool we motored all the way to the Yealm with the barometer dropping from 1023-1009mb, we moored up to a pontoon at 1520hrs. Before we left home we had booked a table at the Ship Inn for an evening meal, just great food. On Sunday we were invited by friends for Sunday lunch and we were picked up from the HM Office. Monday was very wet and windy and the long range forecast was not looking good for getting home, they were giving SW gale for Thursday.

We decided to head back to Fowey on Tuesday and Helford on Wednesday before the SW gale on Thursday. The forecast for Tuesday was variable becoming NE4-5, the tide was with us 1020-1620 but it was not good to leave the Yealm at LW so we set off at 1300hrs, there was a big SW sea running from the day before but no wind. This meant motoring again and we got into Fowey at 1715hrs. Fowey harbour was very roly so we headed up to Wisemans Pool for a quite night on a mooring.

The forecast for Wednesday was E4-5 going SE5-6 and SW4-5 later, not wishing to have any SW wind we planned to leave early. The tide was with us 1100-1700hrs; we left Wisemans at 0830hrs and set the genoa only, out of Fowey at 0900hrs. The sky was black and the wind was picking up E4 and then SE4-5, we were bouncing along in a rough white sea, it was a great sail. By the time we started to cross Falmouth Bay the wind had picked up to SE5-6 and we had to dodge tall ships heading into Falmouth for the race which was to start that

weekend. Looking around, all the other yachts were a lot bigger than us, including two of the Challenger Fleet but we were keeping up with a Moody 36, hanging on now and keen to get into the shelter of the Helford River. Just then we saw a small yacht close into the cliff under Rosemullion Head get dis-masted, one minute she was sailing the next the rig was gone, I reported it to Falmouth CG on the VHF, this was no place to be in a small boat but our Hurleys put up with a lot more than most of us would like to sail them in. Having sailed all the way up to the river we picked our mooring up at 1420hrs. The Tide being wrong for getting ashore we stayed on-board that night.

The next day being still on holiday and not having to go back to work until Monday, we decided to head into the pontoon in the morning and go home for a shower.

Saturday we went out to Gala again and stayed on-board that evening, for an early get away on the Sunday for the Tall Ships Race from Falmouth. There was just enough wind to sail on our genoa and we headed over Falmouth Bay, the closer we got to the Carrick Roads the more boats we had to dodge. We continued on past Black Rock to St Just in Roseland before heading back to Pendennis Point, I think everything that floats in the Falmouth area was on the water that day! We sailed slowly back with the Tall Ships and snapping off lots of photos as we went. When we got up to the entrance of Helford River we turned and motored up the river to recharge our batteries, once up as far as the moorings, I had never seen the river so empty except for punts bobbing where yachts normally are!

A great holiday and one to remember in so many ways.



Bruce and Vicki Carter, SCM Hurley 22, "Gala" moored on the Helford River, Cornwall.

