

# ISLE OF MAN AND BELFAST LOUGH ON *LYDIA* FOLLOWED BY THE I.C.C. 85<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CRUISE

## Trish Phelan

Due to a number of constraints, our cruising on *Lydia* in 2014 was always going to be a bit disjointed. We booked to attend the ICC 85<sup>th</sup> Rally in Glengarriff, but also wanted to do some family cruising in June, together with whatever else we could fit in during the summer months.

Our "To Do" list from 2013 was almost completed, so the outline plan was to head north as soon as our grandson, Finn, was on school holidays.

We departed Howth on 31<sup>st</sup> May at 08.45. The crew was Joe and Trish, our eldest son John and his son Finn, aged 14yrs. With very little wind (5 knots from southeast) we motored until past Rockabill. A slight increase in wind speed from the same direction enabled us to motor sail to Ardglass, where we tied up in Phennick Cove marina at 16.15. We had a walk around town, and then went to the Golf Club and enjoyed a fine supper.

We rang the harbourmaster in Peel to check the availability of a berth in the marina – it being TT week! He assured us that he would squeeze us in somewhere! With this information we departed Ardglass at 06.45 in a south wind force 4, rising to 5/6 during the morning. With full sails we had a lovely cruise and arrived at the harbour at midday waiting for the sill to open and boats to leave. We tied alongside a boat from Ardglass next to fishing boat on the wall. We were on the opposite quay to the harbourmaster, but it being "Mad Sunday" we were not complaining! We spent a lovely sunny afternoon watching the spectacle of hundreds of bikes and bikers doing their "thing" in Peel. The following morning the male crew members took off on the bus to Douglas to watch the TT races, while I shopped and went for a walk on the headland above the town. That evening, we ate in a restaurant on the quayside and retired early as we were leaving on the tide at 04.20.

We set sail for Bangor with a west-southwest wind force 4. Over the next few hours this died to force 2, so we motor sailed with the main only. At midday we went through the Copeland Sound with 3 knots of tide against us and the engine at 2,500 rpm. We arrived at Bangor marina at 13.00, went to the diesel dock to fill up and were tied up, next to another HR31 (from the Orwell River) at 13.20 hours. John had to be back in Dublin the following afternoon for a meeting, so next morning, at 10.45, we departed Bangor marina in a force 5 northerly to go up the river and tie up for the night



at the Abercorn basin. We visited the Titanic centre and then ate on board.



**Three generations of Phelans at the Abercorn Basin with the Titanic centre in the background.**

The following morning we departed the Abercorn basin for Carrickfergus marina, where Finn did a fine job of bringing us alongside the pontoon.

John was returning to *Lydia* the next day with his wife and daughter, as he was taking part in the SB20 Northern Championships in Carrickfergus. Racing on Saturday was abandoned due to lack of wind – this was accompanied by monsoon-like rain! Racing on Sunday was very exciting as the wind increased- once it hit a force 6 the SB 20's all started to “fall over” – the quote the OOD! The family all departed on Sunday evening by car, so Joe and I sorted out the boat, did some shopping and got ready for the trip home the next day.

We departed Carrickfergus at 09.30 with a force 4 southeast wind. We motor sailed with one reef in the main and engine until 16.45, when we managed to set full jib for an hour. Our sailing was short lived as the wind decreased for a time, before increasing to force 5/6 on the nose! Between Lambay and Irelands Eye we had to add a can of diesel to the tank as we were getting very low and the thought of running out as we approached Howth was just not an option! At this stage it also started to rain very heavily. I spent the last half hour on the approach to Howth on the bow, watching for lobster pots. We were tied up on our berth at 02.35, tired but glad to be home.

We were away for 10 days and had covered 277miles.



## ICC 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary cruise on *Lydia*

It's now time to get *Lydia* to Crosshaven to join with the other boats taking part in the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cruise.

The crew for this delivery trip is Joe, Trish and 14 year-old Finn- who wanted to do his first overnight passage! We departed Howth at 09.40 in a force 2 east wind, motor sailing with a full main. The wind remained light but from a more north easterly direction, so we rigged a preventer on the main and sailed off in glorious sunshine. At 14.50 we're abeam Wicklow Head. The wind increased slightly so we rolled out the jib, cut the engine and had a lovely sunny evening sail, eating our stew as we sailed along. At 23.00 we were abeam Tusker Rock, with 5 miles to the Fundale, with the engine on. At 00.15 we were abeam Carnsore Point. At 00.30 we pick up a pot while we were sailing in force 4/5 north east wind with a very strong tide with us, so we were anchored stern to the wind and tide, on the 5 metre line, with the red lights of the Carnsore windmills looking very close by. This was a very difficult situation but eventually Joe managed to free us – the rope was not around the prop, but around the rudder. We were hopeful at this stage that there was no damage, so as soon as we popped free we tidied up and decided not to try the engine until daylight. The wind was still from the northeast force 5, so we sailed along very nicely. We tried the engine after daylight and all seemed well. The wind direction stayed very constant, but as it increased up to force 6 we put one reef in the main and the boat felt a lot more comfortable. We sailed all the way to RCYC where we tied up with some other ICC boats at 14.20. So Finn had got his first overnight passage, the "incident" providing a lot more excitement than he had bargained for!

The Crebbins, on *Ocean Gypsy*, arrived overnight from the Scillies and were tied up on the next pontoon when we awoke the next morning. Joe and Finn took the bus to Cork, where Finn got a train to Dublin, while we got the boat ready for our crew for the rally – Peter Killen, and his wife Beverly. Rose and Robert Michael arrived in Crosshaven by car, the Michaels having delivered *Mystique* the previous week. They offered us a lift to Carrigaline, so that made the final provisioning a great deal easier. We enjoyed pre-dinner drinks with some of the crews down for the rally and then joined *Mystique's* crew for dinner in the Harbour Café.

Peter and Bev arrived by car the following day and managed to get their gear on board before the heavens opened! The crew of *Mystique* joined us for a pre-dinner drink and then we all made our way, in our party gear, to the marquee for more pre-dinner drinks and speeches. We sat down in the dining room of RCYC for a very fine dinner, followed by more speeches and then general chat.

At 11.50 on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July we depart Crosshaven for Kinsale. The wind is from the west and gusty – up to 31 knots in the rain squalls. At 15.20 we are rafted up outside *Ann Again* in Kinsale. In the late afternoon we enjoyed a very pleasant few hours at the home of Heleen and Nigel Lindsay-Fynn, overlooking Kinsale harbour. The crews of *Mystique* and *Lydia* then joined together for a dinner in "Crackpots" in the town, which was much enjoyed by all.

We departed Kinsale at 11.50 On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July for Courtmacsherry – a first for all the crew of *Lydia*. It was flat calm with the sun (just) shining! We motored all the way, following the well-marked channel into the pontoon where we tied up 14.40. We noted that Low Water was at 19.45, and then went for a walk, stopping for coffee and cake at an Aviary on the main street, where we sat in the sunshine and relaxed. The promised barbeque started at 20.00, with tables and chairs out on the



main street. All 22 boats were well fed and watered – the local pub was put to the pin of its collar to procure enough wine glasses (and wine!) to keep the visitors happy. Then the music started -a one man band who judged the age group perfectly with appropriate music. Soon everybody was up dancing- even those who had been claiming all kinds of ailments in the previous days! We celebrated Jen and John Crebbins wedding anniversary in good style. Lots of the locals arrived to see this crowd of old fogeys dancing the night away!



#### **Raft up at Courtmacsherry.**

Departure the next morning was tide dependent, so we cast off at 11.30 and made our way carefully out through the channel – we had 1.6 metres under the keel at the bar! Once out of the channel we had a fine sail in a north westerly force 5. We put in one reef and later 2 reefs as the wind increased to force 6. We dropped anchor in Castletownsend after a trip of 26 miles. We had been invited for drinks on *Eleanda* (our big sister!) Going from a HR 31 to a HR 62 was a huge shock to the system, but we enjoyed the tour of that beautiful boat, and all the chat, in lovely sunshine. We returned to our little *Lydia* and had dinner in the cockpit – a lovely end to a great days cruising!

The following morning we had a swim, breakfast, then went ashore in the dinghy to explore the town. We got some shopping and then went to the Castle for coffee and scones, served in the garden by a direct descendant of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Captain Townshend, once again in glorious sunshine. We hauled the anchor at 11.40, eventually disentangling ourselves from a rope by launching the dinghy and unravelling some “knitting”. There was very little wind so we motor. At midday the engine alarm sounds. There is slightly more wind so we roll out the jib while Joe and Pete take the hoses to bits – there is a blockage to the impeller. Everything is put back together and we



get under way again. The wind is increasing from the northwest and at 14.45, as we pass Lot's Wife at the entrance to Baltimore it is up to force 5. We are soon tied up at the pontoon at Sherkin Island outside *Leda* with Seamus O'Carroll and crew on board. We added two cans of diesel to the tank and topped up with water – now we're ready for the next part of the cruise!



The second official event of the cruise was a seafood supper preceded by a Prosecco reception on the lawns of the Islander's Rest Hotel on Sherkin. And what a feast it was! –we learned the next day that we had consumed 40kg of unshelled local prawns, not to mention buckets of mussels, fresh and smoked salmon, and lots of meat for the non-fish eaters. For this event we were joined by the crew and trainees from the sail training vessel, *The Spirit of Oysterhaven*. After the feast many repaired to the bar to watch the World Cup matches.

The following morning we decided to treat ourselves to breakfast (and showers) in the hotel. After a leisurely breakfast we departed Sherkin at 11.15 for Crookhaven, through the north passage. The wind was west-northwest force 4. As we got near Crookhaven we had a call on the VHF from *Ann Again* asking if we would like to follow them into one of the hidden gems of west Cork – Goleen. We had spent a couple of days in Goleen the previous October, but had never been there by sea – this was too good an opportunity to miss! We got rid of sails and watched as *Ann Again* prepared to reverse into what looked like solid rock! All was revealed as we got closer – we decided that we could motor in and being only 31 foot, could turn at the pier. Soon we were tied up next to *Ann Again* and we stayed there while we all had lunch. It was a marvellous experience and we would not



have missed it for the world!



### Lunch at Goleen Pier.

We continued on to Crookhaven where we picked up a mooring and got ourselves ready for the next event – an invitation from the OCC to a raft up drinks party, organised by John Bourke! A very pleasant few hours suddenly disappeared and it was time to go ashore for dinner which had been organised in Nottages Restaurant. We went for a walk first and visited St Brendan the Navigator Church of Ireland church which was preparing for a wedding the next day. The meal ashore was very enjoyable and it was a tired crew that eventually made it back to *Lydia* after a most interesting day.

We departed Crookhaven at 08.25 on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July for Lawrence Cove on Bere Island. It was a dull drizzly morning with a south west wind force 3. We motored to the Mizzen and then put up sails and motor sailed with the engine ticking over at 1,800 rpm. It continued dull and dreary all the way to Lawrence Cove where we tied up on the pontoon at 12.15. We had a visit for coffee from Peter's brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Jill. They were very welcome, especially, as this resulted in an invitation to dinner that evening! We spent the afternoon catching up on boat matters, shopping, and laundry. We then made our way to dinner which was co-hosted by Peter and Bev's daughter and family. We had a lovely evening – great food, lots of wine and good craic!

We had a very slow start to Saturday morning. It was a horrible morning- wet with poor visibility! We eventually got off the bottom at 12.05 – just 0.1m under the keel! – bound for Glengarriff and the 85<sup>th</sup> celebrations! Once we were in the channel we used the jib and engine as we had only a force 2 from the west. All was well as we approached Glengarriff, until the engine alarm sounded. This time



the fan belt was slack – and it became obvious one of the bolts had sheared. We were now in quite confined waters so it was a scramble to hoist the main and prepare ourselves to sail up alongside *Mystique of Malahide*, ready to drop all sails at the appropriate moment. Unfortunately there was no crew on *Mystique*, but we managed to get tied up without too much trouble.

Bruce Fennell of *Beezneeze*, having seen our approach came over in his dinghy to assess the situation. His offer of help with bolts and equipment was much appreciated. Meanwhile the crew of *Mystique* arrived back and we soon had our Hon. Treasurer and Commodore on their knees in the small confines of our 31ft *Lydia* while the ship's captain had a much needed kip! The problem was getting the end of the sheared bolt out – after a huge amount of effort, a temporary solution was put in place which it was hoped would get us to Lawrence Cove on Monday or Tuesday where we hoped we would get the proper facilities needed.

At this stage it was getting very near the proposed pick-up time for our ferry ashore to the Gala Dinner. We all put on our glad rags and enjoyed very pleasant pre-dinner drinks in the two cockpits, in glorious sunshine, knowing the party couldn't really start without the Commodore! The Eccles Hotel did us proud – we had a lovely meal and all made it safely back to the ferry for a pain-free lift home!

Sunday was the last official day of our cruise. Bev was departing after the official lunch, with her in-laws, who after the lunch, were driving back to Bere Island. Peter had organised a lift back to Crosshaven to pick up his car and then drive to Bere Island to finish their family holiday. *Lydia* was cleared, and we were all ready for the ferry ashore for the official winding up lunch in the Eccles Hotel. This time it was a buffet and after closing speeches everybody started to make their departure either back to their boat or by road. We waved goodbye to Bev and Pete and then got the last ferry back to *Lydia*. We needed a bit of quiet time to recover, before our son and family arrived the next day! – they had been on holiday in Derrynane for the previous week.

Monday dawned wet and windy with very poor visibility. As we prepared the boat for the family influx, we wondered what on earth had made us arrange a week's holiday for the family of four, plus an extra cousin, as well as ourselves, on a 31 foot boat! The cockpit cover was the key! The two 14yr old boys had elected to sleep on blow up mattresses in the cockpit. We had the added bonus of the offer of a bed in Peter's house if Lawrence Cove was our destination!

By 13.00 the rain had stopped. We went ashore in the dinghy to meet up with John, Mo, Finn (age 14) Cait (age 9) and Archie (age 14). We had lunch ashore, did some shopping and then Mo and myself went with the kids to Garnish Island, while Joe and John took their gear to *Lydia*. John joined us later on the island, which we explored in glorious sunshine. The ferry man kindly dropped us back to *Lydia*. Later we ate ashore and returned in two trips. We all settled down for the night, with a plan to head to Lawrence Cove in the morning to get a permanent repair done on the engine.

Mo had to return to Dublin for a business meeting, so John brought her ashore while we got ready for departure. She was to return that evening and get the ferry to Rerrin. We hoisted the main, put the engine on to charge the batteries, and dropped the mooring at 08.50. The wind was from south, force 2. We kept a good eye on the block which was rammed in place holding the alternator as a temporary solution to our engine problem. Once the batteries were charged we turned off the engine, hoisted the jib and coasted along, doing 4.8 knots in a nice calm sea. At 10.50 we turned the

engine on for the entrance to Lawrence Cove, and tied up on the pontoon a short time later. Our first priority was to get the engine sorted. After talking to Patrick Harrington at the marina, we got in touch with John Murphy, who arrived on his way home to assess the situation. He spent a couple of hours dismantling and isolating the problem. He then announced that he needed to make a new piece in his workshop, but that he would be back later –probably before midnight! He then looked at all the kids and changed that to first thing in the morning! We cooked dinner after he left and then all settled down for a cosy night!

John Murphy arrived bright and early next morning and did a couple of hours hard work, getting us back in working order before heading to the ferry to attend to another callout on the mainland. He was efficient, pleasant, a neat worker and very competitively priced. We would be delighted to call on him in the future and recommend him to other sailors.

Meanwhile, *Mystique of Malahide* had arrived next to us, and due to a kind offer, the kids now had two dinghies to mess about in. That, along with catching and dissecting jellyfish kept them well occupied! The weather forecast was not good for rounding the Mizen. We had also decided that with three kids on board we really needed to be tied to a marina, rather than on a mooring or anchor. As Mo was back from Dublin we also had a car at our disposal. We went to the Lookout (at the other end of the island) for dinner that evening, and the kids spent those couple of days, cycling, swimming, using kayaks which the Killens had put at our disposal, and generally messing about. It was at this stage that I got a text from Dublin telling us of the sad death of fellow ICC member Seamus O'Carroll R.I.P. This news was hard to believe as we had dinner with Seamus and the crew of *Leda* the previous Saturday, and lunch on the Sunday in the Eccles Hotel.

With a very wet forecast for the next couple of days, Joe and I decided to take up Bev's kind offer and avail of their hospitality for the night – this meant the cockpit did not need to be used as sleeping quarters! It was that evening in Dessie's pub that we were approached by an English man from a neighbouring boat, to know "how on earth did we fit 7 people in a 31 ft. boat?"!!

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July we sailed over to Castletownbere and tied up at the new town pontoon. We went ashore, explored the town, had a fine seafood lunch, did some shopping and returned to *Lydia*. John got talking to the fisherman tied up behind us, and tried to buy some fish from him. The man apologised that he hadn't time to fillet the fish, and then handed over a bag with seven enormous plaice and a bucket of crab claws. As he refused to take any payment, we decided the only way we could thank him was to pass over cans of beer- he seemed very happy! We returned to Lawrence Cove and the lads took off to clean the fish while I cooked the crab claws. We baked the fish in the oven, and this accompanied by potatoes and a salad was a feast fit for a king – we ate in the cockpit and enjoyed a lovely family evening.

Our cruise is drawing to a close. I have to be back in Dublin by Thursday to pick up relatives at the airport. John and family departed Bere Island on the early morning ferry, heading for Dublin. Joe and I do some shopping to cover the next three days, have some lunch at the newly opened coffee shop in Rerrin, and depart Lawrence Cove at 14.30. We have a southwest wind force 3, and by 15.30 we are sailing along under main and jib, heading for Mizen. We have dolphins on the port side and are being lifted up to the mark. What a way to spend a sunny Saturday afternoon! As the wind dies we put the engine on and motored round Mizen at 17.30. We had noticed a pot about 50m from us – just as we came parallel with it we saw at least 100m of floating rope just ahead. We got the engine



off and altered course just in time! Shortly afterwards we had about 50 bottlenose dolphins on the port side, however they stayed at a distance and did not come alongside to play around the boat. Once round the Mizen we motored for the rest of the day and picked up a mooring at 20.50 at Sherkin Island. We enjoyed a drink in the cockpit, had dinner there too and had an early night as we had an early start the next day.

We dropped the mooring at 07.00 on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July. Once we were abeam Galley Head (10.10) we had full sail up in a northwest wind force 4. We had been in touch with our daughter-in-law, Mo who offered to collect us in Kilmore Quay the following evening – we were anxious to be home to attend Seamus O’Carroll’s funeral on Wednesday morning. So we wanted to do as much mileage today as possible. We alternated between engine and sails and eventually ended up gybing downwind towards Ballycotton in a west wind force 4. We picked up a visitors mooring at 18.35 – it had been serviced in 2013! There were no other boats around. Once again we dined on board and were happy with our mileage of 60 miles for the day. As we had done a lot of motoring over the past few days we added a can of diesel to the tank, and then turned in for another early night.

We slipped the mooring at 05.30 in a flat calm. A couple of hours later we had wind and rain filling in from astern. At 14.30 we saw a fin circling nearby but were unable to identify the type, however a while later we saw it again and realised it was a harbour porpoise. We carefully made our way through all the lobster pots between the Waterford River and Kilmore Quay – at least most of them had flags on them which made them easier to see. We tied up at the pontoon in Kilmore Quay at 14.30 – we had been in touch with the harbourmaster and arranged to leave *Lydia* there for a couple of days. They kindly gave us a finger berth. We added another two cans of diesel to the tank for the return trip to Dublin (which Joe planned to do with our grandson, Finn, when the weather permitted). We had plenty of time to shower, clear the boat, have something to eat and be ready when Mo collected us at 18.30.

Two days later Joe and Finn returned to Kilmore Quay by train and bus. Unfortunately a Dart train ahead of the Wexford train broke down and they had almost 2 hours delay, which was not what they needed to get to Arklow with a favourable tide. They departed Kilmore at 15.00 in a force 3 east wind, which went due north as soon as they turned the corner at Carnsore Point! So it was engine all the way to Arklow, where they tied up on the pontoon at 23.00. They had a foul tide since 21.00 thanks to the Dart breakdown!

13.30 was departure time the following day. It was a lovely sunny day with the wind force 4 north-northeast – more diesel! At 16.10 they were abeam Wicklow Head and tied up at our berth in HYC marina at 20.30, tired but glad to have *Lydia* and themselves home!

The second part of our cruise took 28 days and the mileage was 500 miles.

We really enjoyed our cruising this year, especially the family involvement in both of the cruises. The 85<sup>th</sup> rally was an action packed 9 days, with great events organised, great company at every venue, and huge credit due to the organising committee for the amount of time and effort put in to make it such a success. For me personally the two highlights of that cruise were the trip into Courtmacsherry, and our lunch stop at that hidden gem of West Cork, Goleen.



## **Ports visited on *Lydia* 2014**

**Howth**

**Ardglass**

**Peel**

**Bangor**

**Belfast**

**Carrickfergus**

**Howth**

**Howth**

**Crosshaven**

**Kinsale**

**Courtmacsherry**

**Castletownend**

**Sherkin Island**

**Crookhaven**

**Lawrence Cove**

**Glengarriff**

**Lawrence Cove**

**Castletownbere**

**Sherkin Island**

**Ballycotton**

**Kilmore Quay**

**Arklow**

**Howth**