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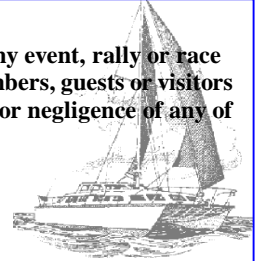
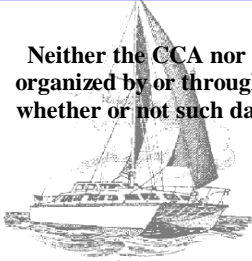
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Disclaimer

Neither the CCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the CCA whether sustained by members, guests, or visitors, or caused by the said members, guests or visitors whether or not such damage or injury could have been attributed to or was occasioned by the neglect, default or negligence of any of the officers, committees or servants of the CCA.

Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.



February 2009

Hello Members,

Dear Fellow Members, The snowy weather took its toll on February's Meet and Eat.

Don't forget to enter into your 2009 diaries the events that we are hoping you can attend.

The AGM will be held mid-day Saturday 28th March at the Gun PH Keyhaven

We look forward to seeing you.

Members are asked to suggest venues for the 2009 bank holiday rally and our annual cruise to follow on from the second bank holiday in May.

Last Month we were in the Rance at Mordreuc and intended to travel with a rising tide and head for Dinan. After a peaceful night we awoke to brilliant sunshine and no sign of the forecast bad weather. We ate breakfast at our leisure, untied from the freebie buoy and motored gently up the river. The tide was rising and the banks on either side were busy with herons, and all manner of wading birds enjoying a fish feast.

One could be forgiven for thinking you were not in France but in the far-east as on the banks of the river there are many small huts mounted on stilts with fishing nets hanging out to dry in the early morning sun. The river is quite wide here but as you continue towards the Chatelier lock it becomes much narrower.



The Rance is wide in places



Fishing huts with nets on the bank

The lock and swing bridge open between 0800 to 2000 local time provided there is at least 8.5m rise of tide.

HW Chatelier is 2-3 hours after St Malo depending on the barrage.

This lock is much smaller than the previous lock at the barrage by St Malo. We are first to arrive and find the lock gates closed barring us from entering. There is a current caused by the overflow from Lyvet this current coming down and the tide rising causes just enough swirl to make it difficult to just stop and hold the boat on station before the lock. There is a wall to the left of the lock with just enough room for one boat to tie up and wait for the lock gates to open.

We grab it.

Although we don't have long to wait other boats are now also waiting, one an English boat is trying to hold station without much success, he keeps running aground as he tries to turn, two other French boats, more used to dealing with this lock when the tide is low. One hands us a line which we fasten to our rear cleat and he then drifts back with the current handing another line attached from his rear cleat to the next boat who secures it to his bow. No sooner have we done this and the lock gates open and we are then allowed to enter. It is safer and easier for us to let the two French boats go in first as the wall we are tied to has an overhang that would foul our mast should we continue forward.

The French boats enter and tie up and we back off and follow them, the other English boat is still stuck in the mud bank as the lock gates close.

Once through the 3M to Dinan in the canal proper, is now unobstructed overhead and has a minimum depth of 1.8m. and as we leave the lock, immediately on the port side is the marina and pretty village of Lyvet, on the starboard side are several moorings and the local yacht club.

Food for thought - one years berth in the marina at Lyvet would cost approx £600.00 for a Catalac up to 9m. - one tenth of what it would cost to be in a marina in Poole, Dorset.



The marina at Lyvet showing just the last two of the pontoons

The next place of interest is a mile further and on the starboard side is a wall 300yds long with a picnic area, fresh water and respectable toilets, this is another free stopover and well worth a night stopover.

A small road leads from here to the village of Taden approx $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. The village has a pub that stocks fresh baguettes, milk and a few necessities. It also has a market on Friday evening, the stalls selling local produce, cider, wine, cooked meats etc. It was here on one stall we met an Australian lady who has built up a thriving business locally. She produces her own cheeses, apart from the normal Brie, Camembert she produces Cheddar and Stilton. The locals seek after her cheeses and needless to say the many English who live in the area. Should you wish to explore Taden further there is a large camp site that has a launderette with several washing machines, swimming pool, several shops and enough activities to keep children amused all day.

We continue on past towards the most amazing medieval town of Dinan. It is now several years since we first visited Dinan, we were under the impression that we would only be able to do so with our mast stepped as the Macmillan Reeds Nautical Almanac used to clearly point out that prior to entering Dinan and the port there is a power cable that crosses the canal with a height below that of our masts. We were fortunate during that time to follow a large yacht whose mast being much taller than ours, motored straight into the port with us close astern.

Dinan is on the starboard side of the Rance and there is a long pontoon before the port proper, although this is reserved for canal hire boats we have usually found it almost empty during the week, only becoming busy during high season and at weekends when holidaymakers return, or collect their hire boats. Just past this pontoon are finger pontoons, with many local boats and few spaces. The vedettes moor past these finger pontoons. If you have ventured this far, your only option is to turn round and either moor by the wall on the other side, this is free and allowed but it is also the area where both yachts and vedettes turn.

The cost of a berth in Dinan for a week's berth won't break the bank, in high season it is approx £50.00.

Port of Dinan water jousting centre of picture



The town is up the steep hill to the right.

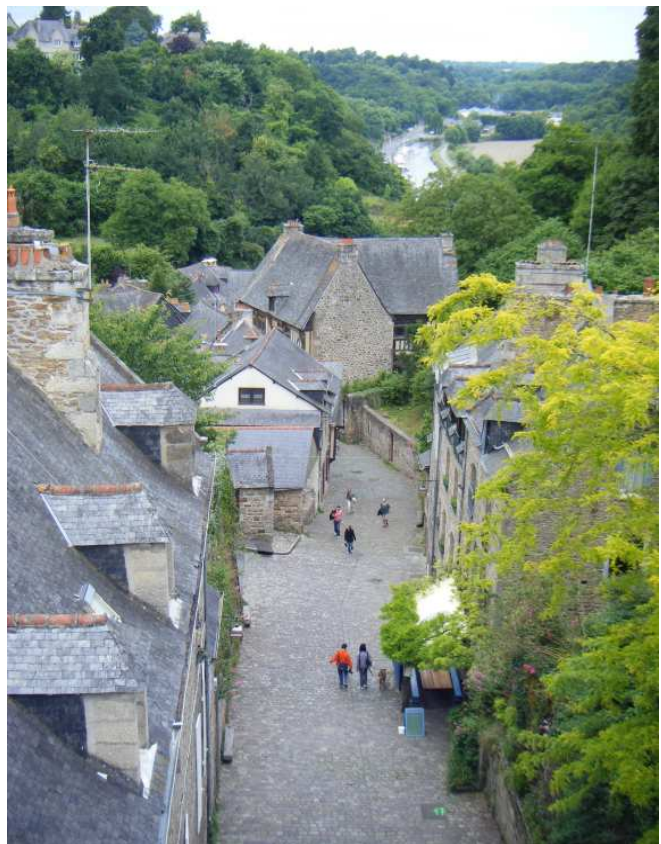
One of the jousting teams

The town is lined with cobbled streets and as you climb up towards the centre, you see the small medieval houses with windows and doors that are anything but square, no pvc double glazing here, you can see it is still unchanged and has to-date not been spoilt. Many other medieval towns I have visited, the first thing you see are the ramparts adorned with satellite dishes or mobile phone masts. Dinan and the area of the Rance in general gains much of its income from tourists and has resisted the temptation to open arcades with slot machines etc. that the modern youths of today seem to enjoy.



Port office at Dinan

Right: view from top of the arch half way up the hill, Rance visible top right of picture.



We continue climbing up the cobbles through an arch in the ramparts and eventually we reach our goal, for in the square is the largest and best French market we have found to date in France.

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A word of warning the loo's in the market are, alas, also of the medieval kind and not recommended for those suffering from overindulgence in the grape, the previous night. Our fresh food shopping done we meander back down the cobbled streets towards the port, stopping only for madam to study the menu's displayed at the many eating holes we pass on the way. We visited Dinan four years ago on our way back to Cherbourg after three months sailing, I mention this because during that time I had not visited a barber to have my hair and beard trimmed. There are many unisex barbers in France and having a trim can be quite costly. It was here with temperatures in the 30c bracket that I saw a one man barber shop, the patron, a portly gentleman spoke very little English but understood my need. He proceeded to open a cutthroat razor and after sharpening it he cut both my hair and beard with it. He did not use scissors at all. He did a really good job and looking at me, he even had the cheek to say to Sue that she now had a new man. We learnt that he was a Breton man with a large Breton belly. The men of the area have the Breton belly the women the Breton b-m.

On arriving back on our boat we noticed that many more boats had decided to visit the port. One boat was having difficulties so we helped them tie up only to find out that they were the people from the Channel Islands we had helped in the barrage when their boat hook parted company. It transpired that they had always sailed a deep keel yacht in the past and recently purchased their present cruiser. They admitted they were struggling with the effect of wind-age on the tall topsides and noticed that we did not seem to have the same problem. We were invited on board to sample the local grape, enjoyed a pleasant chat. The lady of the boat commented to Sue how cool she appeared entering the lock even listening to her Walkman while she tied the warp to the lock wall. We explained that the Walkman was in fact a two-channel radio, which we demonstrated. They decided it was a must have bit of kit to add to their boat.

Since last month's newsletter I have had several e-mails asking for more information of these two-channel headphones. They are not the usual walkie talkies they use two separate channels, the advantage being that both users can talk at the same time to each other and you have both hands free, as you do not have to press a talk button or say over before speaking.

I purchased them from Argos, they were listed in the children's pre school toys audio section and cost under £15.00. I have checked in the latest Argos catalogue and find that they no longer stock them.

However the information on the box they came in is as follows:
(Cyber Talk) 2-channel headset walkie talkies. Ages 5 and up.
Address: ARG, 489-499 Avebury Boulevard,
Saxon Gate West, Central Milton Keynes Bucks. MK9 2NW.

While in the area it is well worth taking a stroll or dinghy further on past Dinan down the canal to the next village of Lehon, about 2miles. This has a monastery and even in the height of the season is un- crowded except for a few local residents making use of the large outdoor swimming pool. I can recommend the restaurant shown over the bridge.



Lehon monastery view from towpath



Bridge over the canal to the cobbled Lehon.

Having arrived in Dinan in the morning and completed our shopping, we stayed only one night and left the following afternoon to head back down the canal to Taden. The following day with news from our friends in Christchurch that they intended to cross to Cherbourg we agreed to meet them, in two days time on the Channel Islands.

The next day with a steady westerly breeze we sailed down the canal for 6 miles and picked up a freebie buoy on the westerly shore of Minihic. On the opposite bank is the popular St. Suliac but with the westerly wind blowing in that direction, Minihic is the comfortable option and to continue out past the barrage with the present wind would mean us having to pay for a night in St. Malo.

A word of warning to all who intend to enter the Rance with petrol engines, fuel is not easily obtained unless you have either a bicycle or are prepared to carry cans for over a mile, and even then, some supermarkets are forbidden to allow you more than 5 liters. I understand this is to prevent terrorists from buying it. France is not alone with this ruling. I encountered this rule, and was refused petrol, when trying to fill a 25litre tank while at Newport on the IOW.

The place to get petrol before entering or after leaving the Rance is opposite St. Malo at Dinard. Even when the tide is out there is a dredged channel on the starboard side that is used by vedettes etc. Fresh water is also available but the hose has an automatic cut off and both Sue and I have been soaked when using it.

The following morning with little wind we half sailed and half motored the 42 miles back to St. Aubin and again tied in the small inner harbour. Our Friends had crossed to Cherbourg the previous day, but unfortunately they had experienced rough seas and strong winds, at one time they were both sea sick and were now in no mood to continue until they both fully recovered. As they were unused to sailing in this area and not wishing to sail straight to

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Jersey, we waited for a weather window and then agreed to meet them outside the entrance of Port Bail.

While in Jersey we take the opportunity to fill the fuel tanks to the brim, petrol being far cheaper here than in the UK or France.

The trip to Port Bail from St. Aubins is not easy for a sailing boat, because one is limited by the tide ie. You need HW + or - 1 ½ hours to enter Port Bail in safety, you also need HW - 2 hours before you are afloat to leave St. Aubins. Distance 33miles this is one trip where one has to push the tide 50% of the time or head for the much closer St Catherine's bay just 17 miles along the rock strewn south coast of the island by way of the Violet passage.

Later that evening the forecast from Jersey Coastguard for the following morning sounded reasonable so when we had enough height of tide to float we headed for St Catherine's just past Gorey. The wind was light but sufficient to enable us to sail all the way and we anchored behind the breakwater in smooth calm water. There are plenty of local mooring buoys in the area but no visitor's buoys. The water is clear and the holding in sand good. The only danger when entering is from the Plateau rocks in the centre of the bay. We have used this anchorage several times in the past and provided the wind is from east to south have not experienced any swell. A pleasant evening was spent watching the members of the local sailing school in wayfarers, and optimists perform.

The following morning the weather clear and with little wind we headed for Port Bail the wind being light we actually hoisted the spinnaker as we passed the rocks and sandy beaches of Les Ecrehou on our port beam. I have not been to Les Ecrehou and today had we not been constricted by time and commitment of meeting our friends it would have been the ideal weather to explore. Our friends arrived outside Port Bail before us and were gently sailing along the coast fishing. They followed us in and edged into the far right hand side of the harbour away from the moorings and town, anchoring by the sandy dunes that only boats of shallow draft are capable of. Later that evening we enjoyed a bar-b-que on the sandy shore with the fruits of their fishing. He wished me to winch him up the mast to untangle a halyard that had broken free during their rough trip across the channel. I agree to do on condition that he winched me up my mast to enable me to replace my VHF aerial that was suspect. On inspection I discovered the aerial was fine but the inner cable was rusting. The effect of this was that I could receive ok but my transmission was poor. The strong westerly winds returned with vengeance for the next few days and we were eager to get away. Our intended cruise to the festival of the sea at Brest still our goal.

The Jersey coastguard weather forecast improved with the sea state easing from rough to rather rough and for the following day it was described as moderate with swell. The outlook later in the week - stronger winds. We agreed to head for St. Malo then continue west along the French coast as the winds were forecast SSW. We would be able to get some shelter, protected by the coast of Northern Brittany. We stayed one more day to allow the sea swell to drop further and left the shelter of Port Bail heading south with a SSW F3 just too close meaning we had to motor into it. After an hour we noticed our

friends were dropping back and discovered that their 20 HP engine was cavitating with the waves. They wished to continue, and this we did but another hour later, they were now only traveling at under 3knts. At this rate they would be in trouble when the tide turned. I knew that we would not be able to get back to Port Bail, as by now the tide would be out. The sensible option, turn west and sail to Jersey. This we did and had an excellent sail. We were joined on passage by a pod of dolphins the highlight of the day. Needless to say we arrived with not enough height of tide to enter St. Aubins and our friends elected to go into the marina at St Hellier. We were fortunate to find room on the wall at St. Aubins our third visit this season. The Athena 38 was still moored on the wall; a friendly wave from the owner who's face seemed familiar but couldn't place him. To my surprise a Jersey man whom we had met the previous year at Taden on the Rance owned it. He had recently upgraded from a Twins to the larger Athena 38. The weather worsened and we found ourselves trapped for the next three days, at least we were safe apart from a small fishing boat that appeared to be abandoned on the wall between the Athena and us. We were informed that it was owned and used by an unpopular Jersey man who was in employment on shift work and only used it occasionally. The boat stank of rotting fish and appeared to be in poor condition but was equipped with an alarm that beeped whenever an inquisitive seagull ventured on the deck. It should not be in the harbour as he had a mooring outside. The harbour master informed us that the owner had been instructed to move it to it's mooring and that the owner would be along to move it later that day. Needless to say the tide came in and went out but the beeping smelly fishing boat remained unmoved.

To put the wind in perspective it was blowing from the south straight into the bay of St.Aubins and during the second night it breached the wall further along the bay, causing flooding on the road to St. Hellier. We were safe and spent this night while afloat fending off the fishing boat from our stern and the front of the Athena. Tired both the owner of the Athena and I waited till his boat touched bottom then he went home. I retired to bed when we touched bottom at 3.30 AM.

I awoke the next morning to find much commotion and was surprised to see the fishing boat that was still floating when I went to bed was broadside against the hulls of the Athena. Its rear cleat had been ripped out of the transom. Fortunately, there was no damage to the Athena. The harbour master immaculately dressed in his uniform returned with the tide to removed the fishing boat. A small crowd gathered to watch. This one would think would be a simple job but as he stepped from the bow of the Athena onto the fishing boat the reason for the smell became obvious the decks were covered in fish oil and he slipped and slithered all over the place. To his credit he remained composed and upright despite the oil and now loader beep from the alarm and mirth of all onlookers. The fishing boat disappeared with a roar of approval as the onlookers wandered away.

To be continued next Month. ED.