

# South Coast Garda Sailing Club

## 1st Disorientated Battered & Bruised Course.(Otherwise known as the Proficiency in Personal Survival Techniques, STCW 95, Regulations, VI/1)

Congrats to the members who participated and gained their well and hard earned certificates. The feedback from all the members was that this was a worthwhile course which was demanding and an eye opener when it comes to surviving the elements.

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### Annual General Meeting.

The AGM of the South Coast Garda Sailing Club will be held at 8pm on Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 at the Rochestown Park Hotel. All members are invited to attend. The agenda for the AGM will be circulated prior to the meeting. Any item for discussion should be forwarded to the Club Committee prior to their next meeting in Anglesea Street at 6pm on 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2008. These committee meetings are open to all members of the club to attend.

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## Sea Survival Course.

The course commenced at 8am with lectures on sea survival and finished at 6pm. Past maritime incidents were examined to illustrate how people either did or did not survive the encounter with disaster. A light lunch was provided (for obvious reasons) and immediately afterwards the class went to the environmental pool for instruction and practice followed by a final simulated exercise.

Instruction consisted of how to get into a survival suite and bleed air pockets from it both on board and while in the water. How naive we were, when the instructor showed us how to enter the water from the great height of 4' .....so easy. Its only when the waves, rain, howling gale, lightening are thrown in for good measure that things began to appear to be going pear shaped. Of course throwing the life raft into this was easy except when they (Instructors) insisted on turning it upside-down every time and getting us poor souls to practice righting it. Worse was to follow when we were brought up to the high platform and directed (not asked or suggested) to jump with all your equipment into the pool. 'Right hand hold your nose and left hand locking

this by holding your right arm ....and jump'. .....It's a long way down.....splash.....and down.....and down.



## The Final Simulated Exercise.

For the final simulated exercise we were some distance away from the pool and Harry Field was the nominated skipper of the foundered vessel. A cunning plan was devised so that the South Coast Garda Sailing Club could really show what we were made of. Sterner stuff than the Naval Service or the staff of the National Maritime College expected. However they (Instructors) had an even more cunning and devious plan.....suddenly the lights went out and we were plunged into darkness and the call went out 'ABANDON SHIP ABANDON SHIP'. The gallant disorientated crew in absolute darkness had to make their way in a gale 'oh no not again' to the high evacuation platform except this time there was thunder/lightening/ torrential rain/waves/howling gale and still dark.....and now you want us to jump into the dark .....and into that.....you must be joking.....no time for that 'Jump 1, Jump 2.....down....splash....down.....up...water, don't talk it only lets the water in. As usual the life raft was upturned and had to be turned over. Scramble in, again for the fifty first time and count everyone. Of course, the usual floating body was found outside and had to be

recovered and dragged into the life raft. Ah the rescue.....the helicopter came into view and plucked the crew two at a time from the icy water and brought them to safety. Being lifted in this manner from the water was difficult and had its own dangers



*Looking suspiciously like a line up at Quantanimo Bay.  
Prior to the final exercise all smiles for now!  
Sean Kelleher (Anglesea St), Harry Field (Douglas),  
Mick (Shark) Collins (Togher), Mike Murphy and Paul  
(Pulse) Hogan (Anglesea St).*

Of course, the usual floating body was found outside and had to be recovered and dragged into the life raft. Ah the rescue.....the helicopter came into view and plucked the crew two at a time from the icy water and brought them to safety. Being lifted in this manner from the water was difficult and had its own dangers.



*l-r front: Mick Collins, JJ ' Keffe, Sean Kelleher,  
l-r Back Row. Captain Badiul Alam, Eoghan Allen, David Power, Paddy Allen,  
Harry Field, Paul Hogan, Dave Moore, Michael Murphy, Eddie Mac Eoin.*

Warm showers, change and into class for debriefing and written examination.....was it worth while.....yes it was. With exception all of the participants felt that this was an essential and worthwhile. Hopefully the skills and experience will never have to be used.

Again, our thanks, to St Paul's Garda Credit Union, who sponsored this event for us. Without their support over the years many of our events and project may not have come to a successful conclusion. Sometimes we can take support for granted but without such support from St Paul's Garda Credit Union the club would have to raise 2500 euro for this course.

## 1st Prize giving event for South Coast Garda Sailing Club

As a Committee it was felt that acknowledging members of the club who had achieved distinction in racing/cruising and participation in club event had not previously been recognised. So on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December such an event was held and it is our hope that the next committee will continue with this work.

A special presentation was made on the night to all the former Commodores of the club dating back to the beginning with Martin Landers. It is important to recognise the important contribution that all of these members made during their time at the helm. We as a club would not be where we are today without their sense of venture and adventure. Well done to Martin, Paddy, Eoghan, Harry and Mick.



*Martin Landers being presented with an award for being a founder member and former Commodore of the club*

### St Brendan the Navigator Trophy.

Best offshore cruise involving endurance, seamanship and navigational skills.



*Paula accepting the St Brendan prize from Club Commodore Paddy Allen on behalf of the crew of 'Explorer'*

Winners were: The French Cruise crew consisting of Paula, Claire, Sean, Victor, Mick and Paddy.

Runner up cruise prize.

For the cruise to west cork.  
Eoghan, with assistance from full crews with Helen, Paul, Dermot, Mick Coughlin.

Best racing result of the season.

Eoghan Allen

Member who made a significant contribution during the year.

None other than Paul Hogan. This was for Paul's contribution and efforts at getting Explorer ready for sea at the start of the season and encouraging members to take part in racing events.

Member who was not a club skipper who had most days at sea.

Dave Power. Dave took his time out from research occasionally to get out on the water and it seems to have paid dividends in that Dave is hoping to take his 'Costal Skippers' exam this year. I suppose we may have to refer to him as Dr, Skipper Power in future.

International Police Presentation.

On behalf of the Committee I wish to thank the International Police Association who made a special prize to all the members of the 'French' team to mark the occasion. For the future we are delighted that the IPA have decided to sponsor an inter club and Police Sailing Competition in 2008. Some discussion has already taken place with other Police Forces in this regard.

## French Offshore Cruise Report 2007.

### **A Perfect Storm.**

16th June 2007 -

Crosshaven - Brest- Camaret Sur-Mer - St Marys (Isles of Scilly) - Tresco - Crosshaven.

Crew. Victor Shine, Sean Kelleher, Claire Kenealy, Paula Falvey and Paddy Allen.

With any offshore cruise it tends to create a tremendous flurry of activity within the South Coast Garda Sailing Club. The preparation for a voyage which will take Explorer over the horizon and into an area where there is limited support or radio coverage requires such an effort. So all the necessary work has to be undertaken in a short time, and many members, even members, who are not on the crew, helping. Some undertook tasks such as refuelling, servicing equipment, down to generally seeing that she is clean and tidy. As with any vessel of this size there are a myriad of small tasks such as replacing deck lights, charts which have to be updated and new chart discs for the chart plotter, interior bulbs, even down to having the courtesy flags for both UK and French waters. Naturally the customary Breton flag is one which we are happy to fly in recognition of our Celtic brothers. It has been known for centuries that the Welsh and Bretons are really just Irish at heart. It's just that they never learnt to swim as far.

The checking of the array of safety equipment such as lifejackets, safety harnesses, life raft, flares, eperb (ah wha), safety lines, guard rails and of course the dan buoy is carried out for a very good reason. The safety of all on board depends not alone in having the equipment up to spec but also in its application.

So early on the morning of the 16th of June, the two Galley Slaves.....op's sorry. The two budding novices paid a visit to the local supermarket and purchased the necessary

provisions sufficient to feed six people for up to three days. Have you tried to cater for six adults recently! Boxes of fruit, sweets, turkey, and the best of Clonakilty was hoisted over the rails and packed away down below in every nook and cranny. Last to go on board was the turkey; all prepared by Victor's wife Terry and the large fruit cake compliments of my wife Mary Rose. By 10am all crew being accounted for, we cast off and headed out to sea to begin a 600 mile sea voyage. By Roche's point the customary check was carried out with the Irish Coastguard initially on C16. With the best regards from Irish Coastguard 'Rodger Explorer has a safe voyage and goodbye' we set our sights in the direction of the French Coast. With these pleasantries completed crew were exercised in the MOB (Man Overboard) drill. Who, what where, when and if someone is lost overboard what do we do about it. Well it depends really if it's someone really important like the cook then we go back.....otherwise.....!!

A reasonable crossing was made in good time as far as the Gas Rigs and as usual did us The courtesy of remaining on our starboard side rather than moving about. Very difficult if they keep moving....like lighthouses....and rocks. Evidently the owners take a dim view of WAFFI's (Wind Assisted F\*\*\*\*\* Idiots) passing between them.



By early the next morning after an uneventful overnight we passed the Bishop Lighthouse some distance on our Port Side and began crossing the first of our shipping

lanes. These were finally crossed without any great difficulty by 0800 on the morning of the 17th and we came around to a course of 140°. Up to mid morning visibility was about 5 miles and then it began to deteriorate. A number of large container ships and a tanker crossed both ahead and astern of us. At one point the 'Stena Bulk' a large product carrier called us up on C16 and requested our intention as he had difficulty in determining our course (so had we). While we were well clear of the marked shipping lanes there was an abundance of traffic and so an extra watch had to be maintained. Due to the wind direction sailing was becoming increasingly difficult and at one stage we found ourselves on a course of 040° and on a collision course with Dover!

Picking up île D'Ouseeant and the lighthouse at Pte de Creac'h was a welcome sight and it also indicated that we had successfully crossed one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world and dodged everything- this time at least. Staying well clear of île D'Ouseeant we came onto a course of 130° and began to pick up the cardinal marks at Les Pierres Vertes (Westerly) and further on Less Pierres Noires and Baasse Royale. I understand there is a fairly spectacular wreck just north of this mark. At 0500 on the 18th , course was altered to 100° as we were on the approach channel to Brest. We were cautiously feeling our way when we were hit by two substantial waves which carried away our beam light. This was later to prove to have been a serious loss of a vital piece of equipment, which we were unable to source in Brest. Out of the dark we picked up the Cardinal marks on the shallows of L' Astrolabe and we altered course to 070° for a short while until we had positioned ourselves to the starboard side of the approach and again altered course to 060°. Many times the call went below 'White/Red Light flashing at about 2 o'clock...any idea!!!! In other words can you identify and where are we? Both radar and chart plotter proved invaluable in this intricate approach. Being able to provide an accurate picture to the helmsman/woman especially in less than familiar waters is a great help. With dawn upon us, we were able to visually identify the isolated danger mark at 04°39'W and 48° 19'N. A sigh of relief all around, as we made our finals into Brest and onto the

marina. Where not surprisingly, sleep was the top of the agenda. Some of the more active members of the crew took pity on us and let the sleeping dogs alone for a while. In a short time the remainder of the crew had 'Explorer' back to looking like the luxury cruiser that we have all seen. After two days at sea it can look like as if all the gear is thrown into a tumble drier and turned upside down.

Oh Oh!!!!!!! Why are those girls looking at us like that.....and .....why does she wear a uniform and why is she waving a clutter of half sheets at us like that?.....what does she want?.....Usual visit from 'French Customs' who have a look at our documents, passports but after the usual banter they declare us compliant. Oh...and they advised us where to get the best deals on wine and if we had any difficulties they could assist.....I suppose they help everyone like that. The parting words were in relation to rocks....we replied that we were not involved in any drug related activities....at least that's what I thought she said. Any suggestion that this could in fact relate to a near miss with a moving rock many years ago is without foundation.



*No Comment*



*Are we there yet!!*

Two days in Brest and then onto Camaret Sur-Mer for a further two days. On the way we passed the French Naval Headquarters at Brest and had a fine view of their Fleet and the Submarine Pens which have survived the War. In fact most of the coastline still displays evidence of fortifications dating from the Napoleonic era up to World War 2. Gun emplacements, Pill Boxes, Searchlights and other interesting structure are a common feature.



*Barry's Tea- French style.*

After a further two days in Camaret Sur- Mer we checked the forecast and pondered over the choices of either stay put or go on for St Mary's in the Isle of Scilly. Eoghan

sent a text regarding the weather and it suggested that going to the nearest pub was the best option for a week at least!. A slightly dejected crew looked up the current

weather forecast at the Harbour Office in Camaret which stated that wind was from the South and force 6. Lumpy but as we would be running before it, we decided to set out. Departing Camaret at 1600hrs we checked in with Brest Coastguard Radio and advised them of our intentions and destination.

Conditions were fine but with a swell. For safety reasons we stayed well south of the île De Beniguet and the Chaussee Des Pierres Noires. While this is a delightful area, it abounds with rocks and small islands. The chart indicates three wrecks which are visible....and we did not intend to be number 4. Traffic was light with just one small coaster and a yacht observed making their way towards Brest. The lighthouse on île D'Ouessant was easier to pick up this time as we still had daylight and we altered course to 340°. Sails were reefed back fully and the jib was furled most of the way in and we were moving along at a nice pace of 6/8 knots. Then with the D'Ouessant fading into the horizon things started to go wrong. Mick (Shark ) Collins shouted down to turn on the navigation lights and then called that the compass light was not working and would I try the switch again....Peering at the electrical switch panel some confusion appeared on my face....where is the compass light? Of course one does not exist as the compass light and \nav lights are all on the one circuit. So no compass light.....and remembering the light we lost over the side.....oh no! Paula to the rescue who had to sit for several hours with a small torch pointed at the compass and did a magnificent job despite being as sick as a parrot....several times. With the wind increasing and it becoming more difficult, it had to happen and it did ....we jibed twice and 'bang' went the car and we lost control of the main sail. Victor to the

rescue and with some rope was able to tie down the car onto the rail, but this only lasted a few minutes and bang went the makeshift repair. This time we really secured it and as soon as we had, it was noticed that the jib sheet had severed, how we don't know, but that it was now flapping uselessly and all of this while we were in the

Northbound Lane of the shipping channel. Somehow the sheet had now wrapped itself around the jib which had come adrift and we had the next best thing to a spinnaker in front of us in a f8 gale and no way to control it. Attempts were made to secure this by working on the exposed deck but as usual things did not go as planned...the deck light, all of just one month old stopped working. Without light we considered it too

dangerous to work on the exposed deck. Batten down the hatches and drive on. With Victor on the helm and Paddy plotting we got hit by a tremendous wave which carried away the seat (which Victor was sitting on) and one of the horseshoe buoys. Paddy was knocked from the chart table (sleeping) into the Starboard Aft cabin which was occupied by Paula and Claire. Sean was later overheard saying that they had a slightly different version.....(I was never convicted of that offence).



*Safety lines being the order of the day. Mick and Paula leaving Brest*

Trying to keep the boat on course was difficult as the following sea was trying to push us onto our beam and so motoring was the tactic to prevent this. This made the going quite fast and at one point when I was on the wheel I noticed that 'Explorer' was doing all of 15Knots. Why could we never get this speed on the Blackrock race! The crew got very little sleep throughout the night and did an absolutely magnificent job. To give an indication as to the conditions, at one point during the night I looked out and saw Mick Collins on the wheel and Sean winching, while at the same time a wave had engulfed both of them.

With dawn arriving, the problem of the jib could be addressed and Victor carried out a running repair and in mountainous seas succeeded in securing it. While we were just within a few miles of the Isles of Scilly according to the plot, we were unable to see it

on radar just yet. This was probably due to the fact that they are low lying and with the high waves were not seen. Eventually St Mary's and Gough were picked up and a little later visual sighting of Peninnis Head. Once the cardinal mark of the Spanish Ledge was correctly identified, we were ready to enter. On a course of 307° Explorer entered the safe anchorage of the Isles of Scilly and went to pick up a mooring buoy when the last bit of bad luck came along. Just as the buoy came up, the boat hook gave way and promptly sank from view...what else could go wrong? After much scrambling, shouting and some appropriate remarks, the vessel was secured and after checking in with Falmouth Coastguard we went to sleep.....and then some more sleep. That day we all went ashore for showers and a look around. The usual shops were visited and later that evening we had a meal in the Mermaid. The Isles of Scilly must be one of the last remaining unspoilt areas and highly recommended for a quick visit.

Last day on the Isles of Scilly and we departed St Mary's after refuelling and taking on some provisions and we set off for Tresco and Bryher in New Grimsby Sound. This time we successfully snarled one of the mooring buoys and when secured, set off for an

island hopping adventure. Final destination being the Island Hotel on Tresco, where the now ritual of clotted cream, scones and coffee finished off a relaxing day.



*Paddy, Claire, Sean, Mick, Paula and Victor at the Island Hotel on Tresco*

The final part of the journey from Tresco to Crosshaven was ahead of us. This time the crew broke down into watches getting as much needed sleep as possible for the night ahead. Final radio checks were made with Falmouth Coastguard, who reported difficulty in hearing our transmission clearly. The overnight passage was uneventful and we arrived in Crosshaven in the late afternoon of the 23rd of June.

The crew and vessel had come through a testing experience of seamanship, navigation and endurance. We were the crew of the sailing vessel 'Explorer' and we have come through. Would we do it again.....someone said pain has no memory.

## Upcoming Events.

### Launch Date.

Launch date set for the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. Just about nine weeks away. So all hands are requested to give a hand. So please, please....give a hand....its your boat. If you are available to help contact Paddy @ 087-2786794

### Cruising Programme 2008.

At least two cruises are in the early planning stage for this year. If interested contact Paddy Allen on 087-2786794. As flights have to be arranged it is essential to book early.

#### 1. Cruise of the south.

Dept Crosshaven and eventually going to Dingle. Many stops at various secluded spots would nearly be a guaranteed. Eoghan and Dermot are the people concerned. No time set yet but possibly towards the end of May.

#### 2. Offshore Cruise.

Dept Crosshaven on or about the 14<sup>th</sup> June and calling to Tresco and St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly, Penzance, Fowey and eventually Plymouth. Flight back with Air Southwest from Plymouth to Cork.

Return trip.

Flight Cork to Plymouth on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June and return trip to Crosshaven arriving on or about the 28<sup>th</sup> of June.

Naturally visiting ports will vary from time to time and be decided by the crew. Sick heads may necessitate a longer stop over!. Total cost should be about 50 euro for the flights. Food and fuel is extra.....No not the fuel for the aeroplane just the boat.

## Further training courses.

A navigation refresher course will be held after the 17<sup>th</sup> of March at a venue to be announced. The course will be given by Michael Murphy who is currently the Chief Officer on board a cable laying ship in the Indian Ocean. I'm sure he will have some valuable information to give us. This event is open to all member of the club. It is important to have a working knowledge and understanding of navigation. So keep a weather eye open for further updates on this course.

So far your Committee has held three training courses since May 2007. Also two social events which were well supported by members took place. All of these have, we hope, contributed to the running of the club. A special word of thanks has to go to the Club Secretary JJ O' Keeffe who organised these events.

## Cork Week.

Cork week takes place this year from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July with racing from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, it is hoped to enter "Explorer" this year after the trouble the last time over the new handicap system. Cost of entry is approximately €1,000 euro which would be recouped from those competing on the boat at a cost of €10 per person per day. If anyone is interested please let me know by text @ (086) 8160740 or [info@gardasailing.org](mailto:info@gardasailing.org). when replying let me know what days you are interested in. If I don't have enough interest by 31<sup>st</sup> March I will abandon the idea.

## Lost & Found (Lost Really).

One Spinnaker in a big blue bag if anyone has it let me know a.s.a.p last seen summer 2006, that's the same year we put the boat in the Naval Base for the first time. (If it don't turn up soon I will have to resort to putting an incident on "Pulse") same contact details as above.



Apologies for the lateness of the News Letter but I have been away and then in Bed Sick, I am aware there is a deadline of 25<sup>th</sup> February for Items for inclusion in the AGM which is now passed I am sure the Commodore will accept them for another week or so.