



SFCC Scilly Summer Cruise 2007

Boats on the Cruise:

'Blue Moon'	Simon and Lynn
'Celtic Maid'	John and Lynnette
'Kalulu'	Chris and Elizabeth
'Riviera Magic'	John, Kath and Ian
'Seabird'	Dermot
'Termaric'	John and Roma
'ZigZag'	Tony L and Tony D

Exe to Falmouth, 28th July – 1st August.

Summers like this year's disaster require careful reading of weather trends and an element of luck if a cruise is to succeed. By the third week of July a hint of a northerly shift in the jet stream suggested a possible break in the season's abysmal weather pattern and the decision was made to gather in Dartmouth on Sunday 29 July. Next day, in bright conditions but a cool and stiffening breeze, Blue Moon, Celtic Maid, Kalulu, Riviera Magic, Seabird and ZigZag rounded Start for an exhilarating beat across Bigbury Bay to drop anchor off the village of Cawsand. After a tranquil night Seabird, unfortunately unable to join the cruise for the duration, returned to Dartmouth while the rest weighed anchor to continue west. Rare (for this year!) anticyclonic conditions saw the wind backing SE giving a comfortable broad reach all the way till we rounded St Anthony light into Falmouth Bay. Blue Moon, with time in hand and at only 21.5ft LOA, decided to stop off in Fowey and resume a more leisurely pace for their protracted summer cruise.

Helford to Scilly, 2nd - 4th August.

The direct 63nm passage from Falmouth meant either an after dark arrival off Scilly or departure at a particularly unsociable hour and sensibly, with so many not having visited the islands before, the decision was made to break the passage in Mounts Bay stopping over off Marazion. Accordingly the next day was spent at the discretion of each crew but with everyone bunkering, taking on water and provisions and spending time ashore or exploring the Fal before meeting up at the beautiful anchorage off Durgan in the Helford for another tranquil night. Relaxed and well-prepared for more exacting conditions west of Falmouth, we left with a slight downriver breeze, to round the Manacles and then as the wind picked up stronger than forecast enjoyed an exhilarating reach requiring a reef until we were round the Lizard. The sequence of depressions in the Atlantic had left their residue of lumpy and untidy seas, and with a brisk south westerly against a big spring tide off the Lizard, it was a relief to leave the overfalls off the headland and the Boa astern and tack across the more sheltered waters of Mounts Bay. The night was spent anchored close under the western side of St Michael's Mount, protected by the Hogus Rocks, in an anchorage that 2000 years ago would have sheltered Roman galleys and the vessels of coastal tin traders.

We left at 0900 next morning into a moderate south westerly, which by Tata Dhu had all of us motor sailing till clear of Lands End. Wind against spring tide once again briefly threw up a disturbed sea off the Runnel Stone but this soon settled as we moved into the longer Atlantic swells. Indeed, with the wind again backing slightly we were able to set a fetch direct for the islands. As we closed deteriorating visibility obscured the coast and off-lying reefs but fortunately by this time Kalulu and Riviera Magic had arrived and Celtic Maid was content to benefit from ZigZag's familiarity with Scilly waters. Persistent south westerlies had left an uncomfortable swell from which there was no relief except in drying anchorages and the least comfortable night of the cruise was spent with Celtic Maid and Kalulu rolling uneasily on buoys in St Mary's Pool while Riviera Magic and ZigZag grounded badly despite being tucked well inside Porth Conger, St Agnes.

(contd.)

The Islands, 4th – 8th August.

Next morning at 1100 Riviera Magic and ZigZag moved to the swell-free half-tide anchorage of Green Bay, Bryher. While quite a few boats were in the islands it was noticeably quieter than usual for August with Green Bay offering plenty of space. Bennett's Boat Yard now offers 24hr access to water on tap and rubbish disposal (all contributions towards the new Community Reading Room) and an electric hot water shower available whenever the yard is manned. These are welcome improvements to one of the finest refuges in the islands making it no longer necessary to dinghy to Tresco for water, and after an excellent night the crews of Riviera Magic and ZigZag felt refreshed, revitalised and clean!

Once afloat, ZigZag sailed to St Mary's to collect the crews of Celtic Maid and Kalulu and the whole party dinghied to Tresco. Initially overcast skies soon gave way to persistent rain which unfortunately scuppered plans to visit the internationally renowned gardens but an excellent group meal was enjoyed at the New Inn followed by a late afternoon stroll round the more developed southern half of the island. Then it was back to Green Bay to await the tide for ZigZag to resume taxi duty to Hugh Town. Celtic Maid and Kalulu were still suffering from the discomfort of St Mary's Pool and, encouraged by seeing the anchorage off New Plymouth, decided to follow ZigZag back past the Hulman and Little Rag Ledge and over Tresco Flats. Though the southern limit of the Tresco moorings offers limited space to anchor in shallowing water it provided much more comfortable conditions for a good night's rest.

The next day, Monday, promised wall-to-wall sunshine. Riviera Magic headed for Tresco with her crew's sights set on the "Tresco Tesco". For the other crews an exploration of Bryher called, starting along the sheltered eastern side past Hangman's Island with views towards Tresco. Until the late 16th century when the encroaching sea divided them they had been two districts of a single island called St Nicholas (the patron saint of sailors): Trescaw (the place of the elder trees) and Breher (the island of hills). The stroll continued over Shipman Head Down and returned via the wild, boulder-strewn west coast with its dramatic views past Scilly Rock, Mincarulo and Castle Bryher to the Bishop Light and the reefs of the Western Rocks, the graveyard of so many ships over the years. Finally we left the turmoil of Hell Bay to cut across the island to the contrasting gentleness and tranquillity of Green Bay. That evening was spent enjoying a pint (or 2) in the Fraggie Rock.

Scilly is not a place to rush but crews on two boats had schedules to meet and it was decided to use the forecast fair weather on the Wednesday to return to Falmouth. Celtic Maid, Kalulu and Riviera Magic departed for Porth Cressa for a last day in Hugh Town. ZigZag anchored off the broad curve of white sand which is Par Beach, St Martins, and her crew walked across Chapel Down to the Daymark. Sheltered from the cool breeze, bathed in warm sun, replete on the delicious produce of Higher Town bakery they were easily persuaded to remain in this idyllic anchorage for the night.

Return, 8th – 12th August.

At 0630 on Wednesday morning ZigZag emerged from Crow Sound to link up with the other three who had left to the south past Spanish Ledges. What started as a close haul, became a fetch, and then eased further to a beam reach at speeds touching 6kts, until the wind dropped as we passed the Lizard and finally backed into the south east giving us head winds. By 1945 we were all safely on the Yacht Haven in Falmouth where we joined up with Termaric who had spent time in Falmouth and Mounts Bay but whose plans for Scilly had, unfortunately, been thwarted. Riviera Magic and Celtic Maid left next morning for Dartmouth, Tony D (off ZigZag) for the train to Dawlish, Termaric and Kalulu for Tolverne and ZigZag for Ruan Creek. On Friday Kalulu and Termaric went up to Malpas where they again met up with Blue Moon before sailing for Fowey while ZigZag had a cracking chute reach in smooth seas from the Dodman to Cawsand Bay. Friday saw everyone back in Dartmouth and finally Saturday produced a superb fetch/narrow reach back to the Exe.

It was a most enjoyable cruise in excellent company to a unique cruising area. We had some exhilarating sails and enjoyed some delightful anchorages, shared some memorable meals and new experiences, and felt the satisfaction of knowing we achieved a successful cruise in a season better known for its frustrating weather.

Tony Leigh 'ZigZag'.