

2019 Cruising in Company

by Geoff Hilditch

2019 has been a successful year for the Cruising programme, with a combination of the traditional cruising in company weekends, more “spontaneous” weekends organized via the new WhatsApp Cruising Group and some longer cruises which various members joined in.

A number of boats took advantage of the unseasonably warm weather over the Easter weekend to sail together to Rhoscolyn for one night and on to Porth Dinllaen for a beach BBQ for the second night. (see separate article by Mark Walker).

The next outing took place when six boats braved the very cold weather for the joint RWYC/Sadler Owners cruise in company over the early May Bank holiday weekend to Conwy for the Saturday night and back to Beaumaris for Sunday night.



The fresh NNE wind was bitterly cold and there was quite a swell running in Conwy Bay - the photograph I took of Simo showed this well!

*Dave to Bethan
“Did you close the sea cocks
on the heads, dear?”*

Most crews met ashore at The Bull for an hour or two, where we were joined by Mark Walker who was in need of refreshment after his coastal walk from home to Beaumaris!, before returning on board to eat. The boats returned to their home moorings on Monday morning.



A number of members sailed together in May as part of the OCC cruise up to Oban and beyond while Joint Venture and Aslan sailed together for 3 weeks to Strangford Lough via the Isle of Man both ways.

Danny Jo, Simo and Aslan met up in Douglas, IOM over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Joint RWYC/SSOA cruise in company 20th to 22nd September, 2019

6 boats and a total of 20 sailors joined in all or part of the final cruise in company of the 2019 season which was blessed with unseasonably hot and sunny weather in the main.

The Caernarfon based boats left on Friday morning and motored up to and through the Swellies with the tide in a flat calm with wall to wall sunshine.



An Easterly breeze filled in as we passed Beaumaris but never really strong enough to sail so the flotilla motor sailed all the way to Conwy via the Penmaen Swatchway. As we approached the beacon at the mouth of the river at Conwy the wind veered SE'ly and freshened to a F4 but all the boats had, by then, dropped sail and were on their allotted berths in the marina, shortly after local HW. Once again the marina gave us a 25% rally

discount, so thanks to Jon Roberts and his marina staff for that.

Most crews walked in to Conwy to the Liverpool Arms for a beer or three before returning to eat on board their boats.

As forecast, the wind freshened during the night (*the Irish Sea forecast being SE 5-7 occasionally 8 in the North*) but it really was a warm night - definitely more akin to mid June than late in September!



Saturday offered a relaxing morning, doing jobs on board or strolling back into Conwy to walk on the town walls or through Bodlondeb woods, or both.

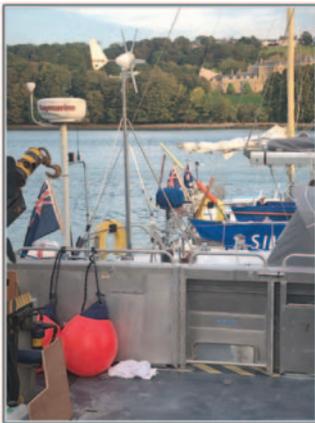
The wind remained fresh and gusty from the SE but there was barely a cloud in the sky and the temperature was in the early 20's when the boats left their berths (*Danny Jo left a little earlier intending to sail to Cemaes Bay for the night*). The rest of us planned to head for Menai Bridge where I was hoping there would be space for the boats to lie alongside the pier and pontoon so, once round the beacon, we all set well reduced sail plans as there were some fierce katabatic gusts off the hills for our trip a mile or so offshore up to the Penmaen Pool. Once off Penmaenmawr the wind really strengthened with us all seeing 31-34 knots in the gusts, so some of us shortened sail further. However the seas were more or less flat so the sailing was fast and exhilarating (*Aslan logged up to 7.3kn through the water on a couple of occasions*).

Danny Jo sailed past Puffin Island but turned back when the wind backed to NE which, had it continued, would have made Cemaes untenable and so they decided to rejoin the rest of us at Menai Bridge for the night. SE 6-7 to NW 4 in the space of 10 minutes, with 5 minutes flat calm in between, then SE 5 again 20 minutes later - the joys of sailing in North Wales!



The flotilla reached Menai Bridge and all crews met in the Auckland Arms before all but Danny Jo's crew (who were being treated to another of Mark's repertoire of culinary delights aboard) went on to sit down at the Britannia Indian restaurant in the High Street for a very nice curry (where we were joined by John & Mavis Chamberlain who keep their Sadler 34 at Pwllheli).

A row of defaced blue ensigns!



The weather had changed by Sunday morning, but it was still unseasonably warm and dry when we passed back through the Swellies and carried the last of the stream up to Felinheli where we picked up moorings for a couple of hours to await the tide back to return to Caernarfon - just time for full breakfasts all round! The weather broke on Sunday but most boats were back on their home moorings before the rain started in earnest!



Thanks to everyone who took part in some or all of the cruises and here's to some more successful and enjoyable cruises in company in 2020!

Geoff Hilditch - Cruising Captain RWYC - Yacht "Aslan"