

# Easter Donkey Rally

by Mark Walker - “Danny Jo”

A faint northwesterly whisper raised barely a ripple on Caernarfon bar as Admiral Hilditch’s intrepid fleet rode the ebb past Fort Belan. The donkeys, known to youngsters as diesel engines, could be heard chuntering away as they diligently converted fossil fuel into atmospheric carbon. Aslan, Blue Note II, Danny Jo, Joint Venture, Kiwi and Simo had ambitious plans for the Easter Cruise in Company. Or rather, had had ambitious plans, but these had been frustrated by the extreme clemency of the weather. No one fancied motoring for hours and hours to Aberdaron only to motor for hours and hours back again. So we settled for the Caernarfon Bay pub-crawl again.

Judging the northwesterly sufficient to move Danny Jo’s four-ton keel through the water, her skipper put the donkey to bed. “Let’s show those idle dogs what sails are for” he quipped, perhaps a little rashly. The crew may have wondered if there was any limit to the skipper’s insufferable smugness, but said nothing. Mackerel lines were set. Nothing was caught. Well, nothing but seaweed. The rest of the fleet disappeared into a thin haze of unburnt diesel particulates. On Danny Jo a can of tuna was opened and lunch was

served, eaten and cleared away. Llandwyn Island was very slowly becoming more distant, but then so was Rhosneigr, our destination. Defeat was at last conceded when it became obvious that without the donkey’s help she would not get there before closing time.



*The fleet at anchor at Traeth Crigyll*

Anglesey has some delightfully quiet and picturesque anchorages, but on bank holiday weekends Traeth Crigyll at Rhosneigr is neither. A buzzing, spurting squadron of jet skiers found, to their delight, that the yachts had anchored in a perfect configuration for a high-speed slalom course. Bobbing around in their wake, the paddle-boarders gazed in fascination at the discomforted sailors in their cockpits as if they were pandas at the zoo.



*Jet skiers and paddle boarders*



*Blue Note II cooling the tonic*

There was nothing for it but to make for the pub.

Saturday morning. The jet skiers were having a lie-in. It was quiet enough to hear disconnected snatches of conversations bouncing across the glassy sea - “one slice of bacon or two” - “no, no, you idiot, I said clockwise, not anticlockwise” - “so, I said, does Sid know, and she said” . . . Come high water, anchors were weighed and mainsails were hoisted, only to hang as limply as a posse of Trumpian ties. It was the donkeys, again, that carried us across Caernarfon Bay to Porth Dinllaen. Blue Note II, going flat out, cut a huge V into the hitherto mirror-like sea. Flatly denying his fiercely competitive streak (*to get the best anchorage of course*), her skipper explained that the fridge would only work when

the donkey was at full throttle. Not to mention that there was only one thing worse than warm tonic: no gin.

At a previous visit to Porth Dinllaen last year, two RWYC boats had rearranged the visitors moorings during a rather damp early morning squall. The authorities must have been warned the RWYC fleet was on its way back, because by now the nice yellow visitors’ moorings had all been removed for their own protection. Okavango and Martinique having joined the fleet at Porth Dinllaen, Admiral Hilditch’s squadron had swollen to nine vessels (*although astute readers will have spotted that only eight vessels have been named*).

A flurry of WhatsApp messages and multilateral interboat negotiations were required to agree the criteria for an acceptable barbeque site. Everyone agreed that secluded spot away from the crowds would be lovely.

The women further agreed that a nearby toilet would be handy. The men further agreed that easy access to liquid refreshment would also be handy. So the secluded spot remained secluded, and we dug two fire pits in the shadow of Tŷ Coch, a pub that must surely

have a pipeline connection to the brewery. Blue Note II may have a dodgy fridge, but her barbeque equipment leaves nothing to chance - the charcoal lighting gear, for example, appears to be a scale model of parts of the now defunct number two blast furnace at Port Talbot.

