

Clontarf to Santiago

---extracts from log of Eros---Summer 2007

3/06/07-----Morning departure postponed.Had to communicate Maurice Mcloughlin's tragic death on Kerry Mountains to aged mother in Vernon Gardens.Will not forget the stoical manner in which the the news was received.

11.00 hours: Departure from Clontarf to Dun Laoghaire to add stores.
Weather---dull, misty, discouraging.
Wind-----Northerly F 1-3

4/06/07

09.00 Depart D Laoghaire,intending to go non-stop to Kilmore Quay or better depending on weather etc.

wind: N.N.E. F2-3

sailing conditions-good

14.00 Wicklow Head.Texts suggest that Maurice's remains will be back in Dublin sooner than expected..

16.00 Decision--Must attend funeral. Head across Arklow Banks, north of wind farm, for Arklow.Nasty wave spews into cabin, wetting cushions.

5/06/07

Bus from from Arklow to Dublin.

6/06/07

Funeral from Clontarf to Balgriffin cemetery.

Beautiful day for sailing, hiking etc.Very v sad occasion.

Good to meet fellow Wayfarers. Bus back to Arklow.

7/06/07

09.00 Depart Arklow, across sand bank and south.

Text home---"Heading for Tuskar, morale good"

11.30 Position: 52°34'

6°04'---15miles north of Tuskar.

Wind:N.E. F3-4

Weather --Fair

19.00 Pos. 52°04'

6°30'----5miles S.W of Tuskar.

Wind:N.N.E. F2-3

Course 250°

8/06/07

08.00 Pos. 51°34'

7°05'-----60 miles S.W. of Tuskar.

Wind; NNE. F2-3

Course 190°

Great run from Arklow.

Solar panels, batteries working well. Using sheet to tiller steering with great success.

15.00. Pos.51°27'

7°32'

Wind N.E. F1-2

Beautiful sunny day. Enjoying slow lazy pace

21.00 Pos.51°07'

7°44'---20 miles south of Kinsale gas field.
Wind N.E. F1-2
Course 190°
Gorgeous red sunset.
Lots of time to dwell on sad demise of my brother Tom and terminal illness of my sister
Marianne

9/06/07

07.00 Pos. 50°40'
8° 16'-----40 miles S.W of Kinsale gas field.
Course 200°
Wind N.E. F 2-3.
Pleasant sailing weather. Listening to B.B.C. 4 weather forecasts.
Talk of thundery showers tomorrow and low moving into Fitzroy--where I'm headed!!
Sheet to tiller steering working a charm. Sleeping/ resting well.

11.00 Pos. 50°17'
8°26'
Course 200°
Wind N.E. F2-3
Weather ; sunny and pleasant.
B.B.C. weather-----Low moving into Biscay!!!

17.00 80 miles west of Scilly Isles.
Dull, misty, wind up and down.

23.00 ; Very dark, light rain, wind getting up. Time to reef.

10/06/07

06.00; Pos. 48°57'
9°20'
Wind; S.E. F 3-4
Fell asleep during weather forecast so I don't know where low is.
Very misty.

12.40; Just heard on B.B.C. 4 that low is due in Fitzroy tomorrow at 7.00.
Joined by fellow traveller--- a ringed pigeon. Tired but looks healthy. Accepted my food
and water, slept for hour or so and then flew away.

15.40 Listened to exciting game of hurling on R.T.E. Draw between Limerick and Tipp.

11/06/07

00.10 Waiting for weather f. from B.B.C.
Beautiful starry sky.
Wind; S.E. F 2-3
Sailing peacefully at 3-4 knots.
4 days and 300 miles out of Arklow-----approx half way between Arklow and Coruna.
100 miles west of Brest.
Fishing boats ----I think -- in the distance.

20.00 Pos. 47°22'
9°20'----240 miles to Coruna.
The wind has headed me for the past 5 or so hours---- slowed progress considerably and
added significantly to distance I'll have to sail to North Spain.
B.B.C reception getting very faint.

12/06/07

Not a good start to day. Wind blowing stubbornly from 180°, exactly where I want to go.

09.00 Circed by a grey naval vessel which seemed to be flashing signals at me.

Switched on V.H.F.----After some French, Spanish and finally English after my riposte as Gaeilge I got the following introduction--"small sailing boat on my starboard, this is French warship on your port---over"

"Big French warship on my port, this is Eros.--over"

I was in the middle of a French naval exercise zone and was instructed to sail a course of 60° until further contact.

14.00 "Eros this is French warship.Your position and course please?" I had just switched on my handheld G.P.S. and was able to supply the information pronto.

"You may now sail S.E. until I contact you. Thanks for your co-operation"

Thank you very much indeed----you have forced me to sail towards Biscay for past 5 hours---an area I've been trying to keep well to east for past 3 days.

When next contacted would request warship to relay my position home and e.t.a. in Spain.

16.00 Released to sail "whatever course you want. Fair sailing and thanks again for your co-operation" Wish it were that simple--wind is blowing freshly from Coruna.

My signal to him was now so faint I had to abandon request to inform Dublin.

18.00 Finally broken 400 miles out of Arklow.

Gale warning for S. Fitzroy. I'm still in N. Fitzroy, thanks to headwinds and French warship!

13/06/07

08.00 Pos. 45°58'

7°39'

Wind; S. F4-6

Now sailing 45° off target----very frustrating but there may be a silver lining---still in N Fitzroy because of warship and headwinds and the gale warning for S Fitzroy is being repeated. A lot of shipping during the night and at present. I now seem to be on the inside (Biscay side) of shipping traffic headed for Finisterre.Feels safer in here at present as all ships seem to be following a similar course.

12.00 gale warnings for Trafalgar and S. Fitzroy----some consolation as I'm still in N. Fitzroy but the wind is building.

Options----persist against headwinds towards Coruna and gales or S.E towards Biscay with a number of options on N. Spanish coast e.g.Gijon, Santander.

Maurice, if you only hadn't slipped and fallen to death I'd be in Spain by now, texting you on how crossing Biscay was a piece of cake etc, etc.etc.

15.00 On a course of 110° towards Biscay weather forecast area, which so far is not mentioned in gale warnings-----fingers crossed.

17.00 Gale warning for N. Fitzroy.

Perhaps, perhaps by going towards Biscay it has slipped past to my west.

19.00 Shit hits fan , big time.

14/06/07

Mopping up after dreadful night.Got the full blast for 5-6 hours.

Eros held course under double reefed main, tiny portion of rolled up jib at about 50° off the wind, with tiller lashed in centre position.

Skipper stayed below for duration of gale, pondering the imponderable and hoping , dare I say praying, that with every crash, bang and wallop, another piece of Eros hadn't broken away.

Began to take in a lot of water---I suspect windows on starboard side or possibly deck fittings.

At 1.00 on morning of new day the gale stopped, suddenly.

At 2.00 bailed out a couple of buckets of water, shook out a reef from main, unfurled most of headsail and went to sleep.

06.00 Within 100 miles of Gijon and 110 of Coruna.

Whether I decide on Gijon or Coruna the wind seems to alter direction and head me.
Hit by a succession of squalls----brief but intense.

12.00 Discover that lockers on starboard side are full of water and that many of my charts and pilots are soaked, probably destroyed.

Hand-held radio, voltmeter and god knows what else are irreperably soaked as is a considerable portion of food.

21.00 Through the clearing squalls and gathering dusk, lo and behold --mountains, Spanish mountains. Halelujah.

15/06/07

01.00 Decide on shortest route to coast--approx 40 miles to Ribadeo or Vivero.

Winds strengthen and head me whether I point to Ribadeo or Vivero.

03.00 Very slow uncomfortable progress-----weather squally---bailing every half hour.

Idea of doing walk to Santiago began to formulate. My sister's Lukaemia was running riot and I had fears that she might die before I got home. I would do the Camino from Coruna to Santiago and dedicate it to her as a means of letting her know how highly I esteem her and of telling her gently how precarious her position is..

06.00 20 miles to Ribadeo.

Fresh headwinds---lumpy sea.

Everything in boat getting wet except for shirt I keep in plastic bag to clean reading glasses.

Coastal shipping , grey and menacing in clearing mist.

11.00 Ribadeo at last, 8 days after leaving Arklow.

In good shape personally but boat a soggy mess.

16/06/07 to 21/06/07

Ribadeo----excellent marina, good facilities, friendly staff at 8.50 euro per day!

On arrival I chatted to English couple in Barbican 34---intrigued by my steering system. Tried my cupla focal in Spanish in Marina office. Just as well I had a few as they spoke no English

Put out my gear to dry in warm sunshine---clothes, cushions, soggy books etc. etc.

Tucked into bottle of whiskey and fell into sleep of serenely dead.

Awoke 6 hours later to sound of lashing rain----at least my gear has now less salt in it.!

Met Elo and Prieben from Denmark off Njat 36.which they were delivering to S. Spain. Elo, a veteran singlehander with over 30,000 miles to his credit reckoned the gale was one of the worst he had experienced.He was impressed by survival of my Etap 22 but then we were 40 miles apart and he may have got worse conditions.

Not at all impressed by his colleague's failure to function in time of need.

With Elo's aid sealed bases of stanchion posts and other deck fittings on assumption that water was coming in there.

20/06/07

09.30 Pay my marina dues and depart for Coruna-----approx. 80 miles. Did not get weather forecast but things looked good. Barometer high, sun shining.

Pace frustratingly slow, wind freshening and beginning to head me again.Determined to get to Coruna and meet my daughter.

16.30 Began to realize there was tough night ahead. Wind now on nose and building. Water coming in on starboard side.

18.00 Decision to run into Vivero. Seas big but with wind on beam, progress good.

20.00 Lines taken by friendly sailors on marina ----invitation for drinks from skipper of Cygnet Magique, Tim, who turned out to be from Sandymount but has lived in England since 1980's. On his way to Med with Caroline for 5-10 years.

22/06/07 to 23/06/07

Vivero; Nice town but more expensive than Ribadeo. Marina not as good as Ribadeo. Harbourmaster very friendly and spoke good English. Impressed by my ship's papers-- I.S.A certificate de origine. Met a lot of English sailors on their way to warmer climes, like Tim.

24/06/07

06.00 Depart Vivero for Coruna.

Good sailing conditions. Hope to be in Coruna in 12 hours.

17.00 In Coruna. Tied up at small marina. Because Olivia, my daughter, is at main marina, a few texts are exchanged before we finally meet.

Fiesta in Coruna. Old Celtic celebration of midsummer-----very similar except grander than St John' bonfire night in the west of Ireland when I was a child.

There must have been a hundred fires on the magnificent beach, which virtually touches the city centre.

25/06/07

Resolved to do the Camino from Coruna to Santiago. Got details at Tourist Office.

26/06/07

Repairs to furling gear. The foil had broken in gale so I could only use it when fully open. Got great help from some English sailors, Colin and Joe.

Sealed starboard windows.

Meeting more and more sailors who are living year round in their boats.

27/06/07

Shogun from Aileach berths alongside. I remembered it from Carlingford. All crew members doing Camino. They had called into Poolbeg on their way south and had their pilgrims passports stamped at St. James's Gate. Got my passport in a church near marina so from now on I too was a pilgrim.

28/06/07

The motley bunch of pilgrims from Ireland assemble----Padhraic the businessman and his 2 teenage children Jenny and James, Tom the farmer from Cooley who had suffered dreadfully from seasickness, John the architect from Armagh and the skipper of Eros.

El Camino Ingles-----so called because the English speaking peoples of England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, did not risk travelling through France during the 100 years war, 14th/15 century but instead sailed to Ribadeo, El Ferol. but mainly Coruna and then by foot to Santiago. a distance of about 100km.

First day's walk a mix of suburbia, lovely fertile countryside, few stops and over 30km to first night in Bruma. Pilgrims albergue in Bruma was recently opened. Spotless dormitorio and kitchen. Caretaker drove us to next village for evening meal and wouldn't accept a cent for his efforts. Small panic when James, teenage pilgrim from Dundalk went missing for short while.

29/06/07

Bruma to Oroso--approx 22km. Impressed by agriculture, lack of poverty, solid houses similar to those in Brittany. Very distinctive drying houses/stores on stilts all over the place. Pension in Oroso great value because we are pilgrims.

30/06/07

Santiago-----magnificent Cathedral, magnificent square and a lot of satisfaction to get here by sea and foot all the way from Clontarf where Eros shot into the sea like an arrow, having snapped the launching rope!

Got lovely accommodation just when everything seemed to be complete.

1/07/07

Got Compostella--- official accreditation for having completed Camino de Santiago

2/07/07

Trip and overnight in Finisterre. Apart from lighthouses there is very little development on Cabo Finisterre, the main conurbation being where Sutton is in relation to Howth Head. Many pilgrims journey to Finisterre as a kind of wind down after their exertions getting to Santiago-----met people who had walked from Paris and Berlin to Santiago.

Good accommodation, pilgrims rates still applying!

3/07/07

Back to Eros in Coruna by bus. Met new people including David Bevan from Foynes bringing Beneteau from S. Spain to Foynes.

9/07/07

10.00 Depart Coruna.

Pleasant day, sunny but very little wind so far.

Had monitored weather forecasts pretty carefully in small internet cafe. According to Weatheronline sailing conditions for next 5 days across Biscay were favourable so I hope to make Scilly Isles in 4 or 5 days

13.00 Pos. 43°35'

8°22'

Course 0°

Wind W. F1-2

18.00 Pos. 43°52'

8°19'

Course 0°

Wind; W. F. 3

Excellent sailing for past couple of hours. Spain receding fast. 30 miles out of Coruna.

20.00 Pos. 44°09'

8°13'

Course 18°

Wind N.W F. 3

Speed ;4.5kn. 48 miles out of Coruna

10/7/07

10.00 Pos. 44°57'

7° 56'

Course; 20°

Wind; W.N.W F. 3-4 97 miles in 24 hours--best run on this trip

Had close encounter with working trawler last evening. Down below enjoying cup of tea when I noticed dimly through port window a substantial trawler on collision course. Fishermen on deck clearly saw me but I had to bear away to avoid collision----so much for sail over power!

Serious water intake again on starboard side----depressing.

19.00 Pos.; 45°40'

7°32' good progress--steady W.N.W wind----- sea a bit lumpy---no traffic today-- water intake serious, decided to cut cushion in big strips of sponge to save my vital charts and give me a respite from bailing.

22.00 Pos. 45°53'

7°28'

Course 18°

Dull, misty and very grey----distance to Scilly-242miles

11/7/07

06.00 Pos. 46°20'

6°53' on target to break 200 miles in 48 hours

wind--getting light but still doing 3kn.

sea - flat. I think the lumpy sea of past 2 days was caused by continental shelf.

-- slept for 3 whole hours last night --not a good idea but I feel great.

10.00 Pos.46°33'

6°47'

Course--15° for Scilly Isles.

Wind; Light N westerly

203 miles out of Coruna---best total so far for 48 hours

16.00 slack winds for a couple of hours.

hanked on jib on inner forestay working very well----repair on furling gear proved very temporary but I was confident of backup .

Beginning to pick up B.B.C very clearly

18.00 Pos. 47°0'

6°37' winds slackish but I'm still getting over 3kns. Pleasant sunshine--flat seas--did some Spanish lessons and listened to Van Morrison--"There will be days like this"

22.00 Pos. 47°16'

6°30' 153 miles to Scilly.

Misty. Eros ghosting along in halo cast by nav. lights.Little point in peering at mist all night as I cannot see beyond arc of light--- will have a nice sleep!

12/7/07

Slept for 5 hours and awoke feeling great--- my sheet to tiller steering had done the trick and I was on correct course for Scilly-- had also done 22 miles.

09.00 A lot of shipping now passing in front of me--south going , exiting the seperation zone west of Ushant--I think.

10.00 Pos. 48°06'

6°30'

Wind S.W. F. 1-2

104 miles to Scilly

On target for midday tomorrow.

A lot of rubbish in water----whole black bags dumped over a square mile or so!!

12.00 Forecast-dodgy! F6-7 for Plymouth area-where I'm headed---"gale later"
I'm 67 miles from Cameret/Brest and 93 miles from Scilly. Decision time--Cameret or Isles of Scilly?

Because of poor visibility, shipping, tidal currents etc I've no appetite for heading east to France.

14.00 difficulty in hearing forecast. I think it said low was not due in Sole--west of Plymouth--until 07.00 tomorrow--that's 17 hours away.

strategy--go hell for leather to Scilly, using my outboard if necessary!

18.00 Forecast for Plymouth and Sole-- F. 5-7-----"gale later"

With a bit of luck and speed may make it to Scilly before "later"

Pos.48°47'

6°20'--70 miles to Scilly---hope to make it about 8 or 9 in morning before shit hits fan,again!!

13/7/07

Friday 13th but I'm not superstitious, just keeping an open mind!

01.00 Pos.49°19'

6°23'----35 miles to Scilly.

Wind; southerly and I'm bombing along at 5-6 knots.

06.00 14 miles to go ----.wind building all the time from south--difficulty in controlling boat in rising sea so I drop main completely and unleash storm jib which I had hanked on earlier on inner forestay. Thought I was north of separation zone but a ship passed in front of me heading west!.

Had to hand steer last 12 miles because of following sea. Hoped my waypoint for Peninis lighthouse was correct because I could no longer leave the tiller and check!

08.00 Tied up safe and healthy in Hughtown, capital of Scilly Isles.

Took a bit of a hammering in final 2 hours but storm jib was great running downwind at 6-7 knots

Wind and rain worsening now so decision to run for Scilly just paid off.

Two elderly English gentlemen in a Southerly 34 inquired if I had done an overnight from S Ireland in those conditions.

Anyway what's this nonsense about Friday 13th?

15/7/07

08.00 Depart Hughtown for Kilmore Quay. Distance 120 miles

Grey, rainy ,poor visibility but forecast for next 24 hours is favourable.

eta for kilmore 15.00on 16/07/07

16/07/07

14.00 Tied up securely at Kilmore Quay. Met the usual suspects and had 2 good nights in Kehoes.

18/07/07

06.00 Depart Kilmore Quay. Bright ,sunny morning.

Wind; S,W, F.2-3

18.00 Tied up in Wicklow.

19/07/07

09.00 Depart Wicklow

13.00 Clontarf.

P.S. On the 7th Sept. 07 my sister, Marianne, died.

In mid Oct. when tidying up Eros for winter storage I discovered a hole, at least 1 inch in diameter, punched by the danforth anchor on the inside skin of the anchor well, thereby allowing well to empty itself into Eros.