

BARROW



Graigueanamanagh

PHOTOS FROM THE HBA ARCHIVES



The second largest fully rigged ship in the world
Russia's *Kruzenshtern*



Aqualegia



Scotch Quay, Waterford: some of the boats were sitting comfortably in the soft mud the following morning



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BOYS

Last July a group of heritage boats made the trip down the Barrow and to Waterford to see the Tall Ships. Some of the skippers share their experiences with *Inland Waterways News*

EXTRACT FROM *AQUALEGIA'S LOG*

Well, today is the day, Wednesday July 6 2005, from the Shannon to the Suir, a first for most of the boats, although some may have been down this way in the '30s and '40s during their previous working lives. We have left New Ross and are meandering down the Barrow towards Cheekpoint. Cruising under the Barrow Bridge, we turn to starboard catching the rising tide on the Suir. This is exciting. Disappointing news is that *68M* has had engine problems and is still moored in New Ross. However, Gerry is aboard *Vicki May*, leading the fleet.

On the right we pass Bellevue, Waterford's container terminal, today busy with spruced up tugs, used later to escort some of the Tall Ships. Instructions are coming in from the lead boat to hold off until called in, as the tide is not high enough in the channel beside the boathouse, our mooring spot. We wait and discuss the possibility of being refused entry at this late stage, because of security issues like Dublin some years ago. The tide is now rising fast and there is the first mast on the horizon – need to move out of the way. The Tall Ships have started to make their way up the estuary. We anchor off on the south side and watch them go by. They are all so majestic – the genuine old ones and the replicas – can't believe we are so lucky to be in the middle of all this splendour.

Finally, we get word for the barges to come in – *95B* first, followed by *31B*, then *Dabu*, *Ebenhaezer* and *Aqualegia*. As we make our way up the channel, a civil defence rib comes alongside to speak to us – we are on the last bend in the river and they are going to turn us back? But no, the nice man relaying the message from a friend on shore. Phew! Okay, now manoeuvring into final approach – yonks, another civil defence rib. This is a large one with important looking individual standing in the centre, coming alongside to turn us back? But

no, it's Mark Maguire welcoming us to Waterford. The stress! Let's get off this river!

We turn to port and into the mouth of the channel, mooring along the sterns and bows of the large barges, forming a jetty for the rest of the fleet. We had made it – we were in Waterford.

Beth O'Loughlin

AT LAST THE TALL SHIPS

How lucky can you get? An opportunity to cruise from St Mullins to Waterford and the Tall Ships, on someone else's boat! In my case GCC Canal Boat *68M*.

Tuesday 5 July, we leave the IWAI Lough Derg rally in Scarriff and head for St Mullins. The tide is at seven o'clock and the fleet is ready. Four barges and five cruisers leave to join boats already in New Ross.

Some tricky turns upstream in a five knot tide and we are safe at the New Ross Marina. Manager John Diamond is on hand ensuring everyone is OK and has everything they need.

Wednesday 6 July is the big day. The sense of excitement is palpable. The cruisers slip ropes and begin the descent to Waterford. *68M* is ready. Engine running, ticking over nicely. I have the bow rope waiting for the order – but it doesn't come. I approach the wheelhouse. Gerry has a look of disbelief on his face. The oil pressure has disappeared. Engine stopped. Boards are pulled up. Oil levels checked. Engine started. No oil pressure.

In seven minutes flat, both of us are aboard *Dabu* and heading downstream.

As for the Tall Ships, the crew parade through the town was a colourful and noisy affair, with visitors and crews alike enjoying themselves.

The sheer style and size of the ships is awesome. From the second largest fully rigged ship in the world Russia's *Kruzenshtern* at 104.2 metres to Belgium's *Williwaw*, a 12.8m ketch. Eighty five sailing boats, all in the one

place. Ireland's *Asgard II*, *Jeanie Johnston* and *Dunbrody* taking pride of place.

From our mooring position at the mouth of St John's River, we could cruise up and down the line of moored vessels. The *Sagres*, *Christian Radich*, *Shabab Oman*, *Eagle*, *Tenacious*, *Prince William*, *Royalist*, *Pride of Baltimore II* to name but a few. *Vicki May* making the short journey on more than one occasion.

We had three days to visit the ships. The carnival atmosphere permeated every aspect of Waterford city for the three days. Business premises had a maritime theme in every window display. The festivities ended on Friday night with the customary spectacular fireworks display.

Saturday 9 July saw *Asgard II*, *Jeanie Johnston* and *Dunbrody* lead the fleet down the River Suir on the Parade of Sail to the race start area, five miles off Hook Head.

With the Tall Ships fleet gone, the IWAI fleet promptly took up the vacant berths on the quayside. I headed back to the IWAI Derg rally and Gerry went to New Ross to look at an oil pump...

Pat Nolan

ANCHORS AWEIGH!

We had great plans to head to the Shannon for the summer in our newly bought 40ft, pre-World War I Dutch barge *Anchor*, but changed course and joined up with the fleet of boats on their voyage south to Waterford and the Tall Ships.

In June, after the Athy Water Festival, our journey began. Each weekend we travelled, exploring some of the amenities and watering holes along the way. The Barrow Navigation is 41 miles long and has 23 locks. This means a lock on average every three miles. There are also plenty of road bridges crossing the Barrow and many of these were built centuries ago before any engineer could have anticipated the need for pleasure craft to pass under them. The lowest of these bridges is at Carlow where the air draft

HERITAGE BOAT ASSOCIATION

is a mere 8' 6" at best. What a sight it must have been for the locals to see the barges, *Dabu*, *68M*, *95B*, *31B*, *Williams & Woods* and *Aqualgia* all trying to pass under, most of whom only had a clearance of millimetres. The definition of a cruise-in-company at Carlow Bridge was where everyone piled onto one barge to provide ballast to get her under the bridge. Then after mooring below the bridge, walked back up to the next barge and repeated the whole procedure over again (and again).

Below Carlow we visited the towns of Leighlinbridge, Bagenalstown, Goresbridge & Graiguenamanagh before finally arriving at the sea lock at St Mullins. A huge thanks is due to all the Waterways Ireland staff who helped us along the way. The scenery was absolutely stunning and it continuously changes every couple of miles on the way south.

We travelled as much of the Three Sisters as was possible, bringing *Anchor* to the limits of navigation each time. We experienced travelling with the Tall Ships and cruised out beyond Duncannon in the estuary. A lot of firsts were achieved on our first year on the water – more than we could have hoped to do and look forward to many more years of boating.

Eunice and Cliff Jeffers

EBENHÄEZER SETS OFF

After the IWAI Shannon Harbour Rally, *Ebenhäezer* set off. She was to join the rest of the HBA fleet at St Mullins and continue in company, to Waterford and the Tall Ships. This leg of the journey was performed single-handed.

It was expected the journey would take six days (based on the barge's log book and loss of time when without crew). Eight were allowed given the canal water level was a foot down. The weed cutter wasn't due for another month. In fact the journey took less than five days. The canal level was indeed at its lowest level, and weed growth at its highest due to the hot weather. Lock-keepers questioned if we could get through certain sections. Despite initially slow progress, the canal section to Athy was pretty uneventful, other than some weed on the propeller and stopping for crossing cattle!

Ebenhäezer fills the Grand Canal locks. Ten years ago we were virtually guaranteed a delay in every lock (in fact one or two lock-keepers used to blame the barge for being too big to fit!) – it's quite the reverse now, due to

improved maintenance. Indeed, looking at the logbook, some locks only took eight minutes.

Apart from two dogs, I had no crew for the Barrow stretch and set off on Thursday morning. Fantastic, I was dealing with feet in the Barrow locks - not inches! All I needed to do, was prepare lines, barge poles, fenders etc. to allow for coming alongside my next mooring point. In addition, essential equipment for single-handed canal/Barrow passage is: a grappling hook for gripping bare canal banks when mooring; 56lb weights as emergency breaks in a strong following flow and additional boathooks/bargepoles positioned both sides, fore and aft.

If the plan had been to proceed to Waterford City and not to halt in St Mullins for the cruise-in-company, this trip would in fact have been possible in five days (depending on tides). It is quite a tribute to the efficiency of the lock-keepers, and continuing improvement of conditions on the river, that a 63ft barge can do the Barrow in two easy days, with a single-handed skipper and two dogs!

Rachel Hanna

GRAINNE GOES FROM ST MULLINS TO WATERFORD

The Barrow is tidal south from St Mullins as we already knew, but this had been reinforced at our skippers meeting on *Dabu*. Mike Miller had come aboard to go through the upcoming voyage with us.

'Remember', he said 'and watch where you are going. Keep out about the width and a half of a boat on the left-hand side going down, mind the rocks and above all take care at the Scar. And don't forget to watch out for ships when you get to New Ross!' A stunned silence descended on *Dabu* but after a sharp intake of breath our enthusiasm returned. We were bound for Waterford and the Tall Ships and nothing would stop us! The first thing that greeted us as we walked beyond the lock was a private boat sitting slightly aside in the mud. 'What happened?' someone asked, to which a man replied 'I ran out of water on leaving the lock'. Now that was a warning for us, this would be the same result for us if we got it wrong, now we are dealing with the tides!

Our timetable book on the tides at Cheekpoint became the most important item aboard *Grainne*.

We had hoped to attend a barbeque in New Ross, but alas, the mooring proved impossible at the local boat club so we decided to moor at the new jetties further downstream. The connection from the jetties to dry land

had not been completed, but we were safe there.

The rocks and tides proved no problem and we even got over the Scar safely with water to spare. However, I cannot say the meeting with a very large ship was the same. While at the helm, I noticed a snow-white building in the distance. Then I thought it was a lighthouse, but why so far inland? Ooops... it was moving!! It was a ship! So I got on the radio to warn the boats following us, and we navigated past her successfully.

We knew in advance that all of Waterford port would be taken up by the 85 Tall Ships, so we had agreed that we would moor at Scotch Quay, just outside the Waterford Boat Club. The barges tied along the wall and we in boats tied off them in turn. The ropes had to be adjusted during the night to allow for the falling tide, so there were a couple of men who got little sleep that first night. Some of the boats were sitting comfortably in the soft mud the following morning, including *Grainne*.

Waterford welcomed the Tall Ships in style. Thousands of people turned up to see the them, and it was quite a spectacle! We got firsthand sight by cruising up right beside the ships, many of us visited the ships as was possible as they were open to viewing every day. There were fireworks at night and a very large street parade where the atmosphere was electric.

Bernadette Quinn

VICKI MAY AND THE HBA TO THE NORE!

South from St Mullins, en route to New Ross, Waterford, and the Tall Ships, we paused at the mouth of the Nore. It was our first day on tidal waters and little did we know, our life for the next three months would be measured by the moon rather than the sun. And river tides are different, different effects at different parts of the river and various distances from the estuary. And don't forget 'the river', it rained last night on the Slieve Blooms, there will be a right flood coming down behind the tide with all kinds of flotsam. Crikey, that tree trunk went past us doing about eight knots, twice the length of Vicki May and two foot in diameter! I mutter a prayer of thanks for our deliverance and promise to keep a better look out for incoming torpedoes.

The months passed, the summer was over, and we faced the long trip back to homeports. One last journey to be made, a little unfinished business! Inistioge and the Nore awaited. 'You

'While at the helm, I noticed a snow-white building in the distance. Then I thought it was a lighthouse, but why so far inland? Ooops... it was moving! It was a ship!'

can't take four barges and a rake of other boats up at the same time, there's no room!' But it was now or never, we only had a window of one possible weekend left before we headed north. Inistioge quay would just have enough water for us at the top of the tide, an hour or so either side and the wall would be dry. So it was we left New Ross mid-morning on a rising tide, timed to arrive at a holding point known as 'the Red House' about a half mile short of the quay.

'Vicki May - 68M!', the radio crackles. 'Can you check out that old pier as a possible overnight spot in case we have a problem and need a plan B?' We race off to take a few soundings before reporting back, just as the fleet passes the Red House, right on time for the final run in to the quay. We moor the barges at right angles to the wall, steel bow to stone. Within an hour they are aground, settling on the gravel. The cruisers tie up against the barges and soon are aground themselves. Before long the tide has taken the river and the entire fleet is, literally, 'high and dry'. We walk around our boats, admiring each other's props, commenting on scars acquired en route, and congratulating each other on arriving safely.

And then it was over, not just our Nore experience, but our expedition to the Three Sisters. As we sailed out of the Nore into the Barrow and turned our bows northwards, there were no more untried waters to explore. We were retracing our steps. I daydreamed at the wheel as we headed for the Scar and St Mullins, there to leave the salt tidal waters behind, not knowing when we would return. I mused on the Nore, and was glad we had passed her by on the way down. And I remembered the story of the old farmer trying to make a match for his three beautiful daughters and him showing them off to a rich fella from the big city, he had kept the best till last.

Paul Martin

OUT TO THE HOOK

After a memorable week in Waterford, our hunger for the estuary was getting to us. In 2004 we had taken our boat *Blackslee* through Limerick and out the Shannon estuary to Carrigaholt. We had some experience and know how of wind strength and tides. A beautiful morning greeted us as we set off for Hook Head Lighthouse, following the path that the Tall Ships had taken the days before. Checkpoint was our mark - we were on the estuary.

Nearing Passage East we had to give way to the ferry crossing to



The HBA fleet enroute to Waterford and the Tall Ships

Ballyhack. The ferry joins the two sleepy villages and operates every 15 minutes. Duncannon stood out very proudly showing off her embankments of year's past and the lovely sandy bays beyond sure looked inviting. We stopped off in Dollar Bay and had a swim in beautiful Mediterranean blue water before heading off again past Broomhill Point.

On to Churchtown and in the distance to the left we could see the piers at Dunmore East. Our focus now was on the oldest lighthouse in Europe and *Blackslee* was edging even nearer. As we approached the excitement grew and beckoned us to her black and white markings which reminds us of the importance of lighthouses particularly in years past when there were no radios or navigation aids. Now that we are back home in Enniskillen its only by looking at the map that we can fully appreciate the true extent of our inland waterways adventure this year.

Helen Carson

THE TRIP TO CARRICK-ON-SUIR

An essential tool for the trip from Cheekpoint to Carrick-on-Suir is the navigation charts from *A Guide to Carrick by the Suir*. The guide recommends a two-hour window each side of high tide in Carrick-on-Suir.

We cast off and point the bow for the great bridge in Waterford. The lifting bridge, subject of so many AA Roadwatch reports soon exceeded the boat. Not for the humble Seamaster 30 the requirement of a bridge lift or the accompanying three mile tailback, just the sound of traffic overhead, our four year old howling and the laughs of the 13-month old looking on in wonderment.

Past the moored fishing boats, retired vessels including the last floating Guinness Barge from the Liffey we soon approached the old railway bridge. A majestic piece of engineering, it is somewhat eerie passing through it. It has been stripped of its central swivel section and barricaded at both ends to stop trespassing.

Our next major landmark on the river was the large commercial oil storage tanks and bridge at Fiddown. The area between Portlaw and Fiddown features sandy shoals, which are covered at high tide and exposed otherwise. The channel from Waterford to these shoals is effectively deep and clear, in this area the water depth is tide dependent and as we had left Waterford on a very early rising tide we dropped anchor for a while.

On the rising tide we ventured to Fiddown and again decided to allow the tide to rise further and dropped anchor for a little time out.

The final stretch of river to Carrick-on-Suir was well marked and we passed through the clear waters of the cut to enter the old navigation and in turn the new floating jetties where it is possible to moor at all stage of the tide.

The facilities at Carrick are excellent, and the groups who have been involved should be commended for the work done in developing an excellent visiting point. The town has all sorts of facilities, including a playground for those with young children. We received a warm welcome and local advice from local boaters.

The return trip to Waterford was equally magnificent. We had taken local advice and left Carrick-on-Suir as the tide was still rising. We would highly recommend a visit to Carrick-on-Suir by boat and will return again.

John Dolan