

Lundy Yet

by Patrick Slade



Patrick, Help! My attention snapped to this subject line on an e-mail from Jeremy Warren, organiser of many Wayfarer adventures and this year, sending out last minute guidance for the Rally to Lundy in July. The issue here was whether Covid restrictions and staff shortages would stop us from camping on the island and getting food at the Marisco Tavern. Important considerations yes, but only side dishes of the main course: sailing across the 22 miles of Bristol Channel from Watermouth in Devon to the anchorage on Lundy. 10 Wayfarers had signed up and I, along with my wife Cath, was fortunate enough to join Jeremy on the 'Mother' yacht, Andy Wills' High Spirits. In many ways this was the rematch of our trip in 2020 which had to be diverted from Lundy to the Gower (see 'Lundy Not' article last year). While that was a great adventure, this time things seemed to be aligning for a successful visit to the island....favourable neap tides, plenty of daylight and most importantly, settled warm weather. As it turned out it was so calm that we spent most of the time motoring over glassy blue waters but the lack of exhilarating sailing was more than compensated for by gorgeous sunshine in the open sea.

So, on the Friday afternoon a collection of very experienced Wayfarer sailors started to arrive and rig up on the beach at Watermouth. As well as many of those who went last year there was also Will



Hodshon in his boat Nipegegi, in which he completed a record breaking non-stop circumnavigation of the UK in 2019. Crewing for him were his 12 year old daughter and her friend.

We all congregated for a detailed briefing and BBQ at the Watermouth Sailing Club and introductions and prizes were presented in the warm evening sun with drinks provided by Trevor Nott of the Club. The plan was to breakfast on the beach in the morning and launch so as to catch the start of the ebb tide off Bull Point at 12:30. Staff shortages had closed the previously enjoyed Tea Cup Café breakfast so Cath and I used our campervan to fry large quantities of bacon so most people got a bap to start their day on the water. Boats were floated and sails raised as the tide filled the cove but motors were soon fired

up to chug out into the channel and head west. Then commenced some very slow sailing in conditions much more suitable for paddle boarders. The North Devon coast gradually slipped past and we took the opportunity to take photographs from High Spirits while keeping a close watch on everyone's position at the even hourly radio check-in. A leisurely afternoon sliding across the smooth sea with even an interlude from Steve and Richard broadcasting their ukulele sea shanties

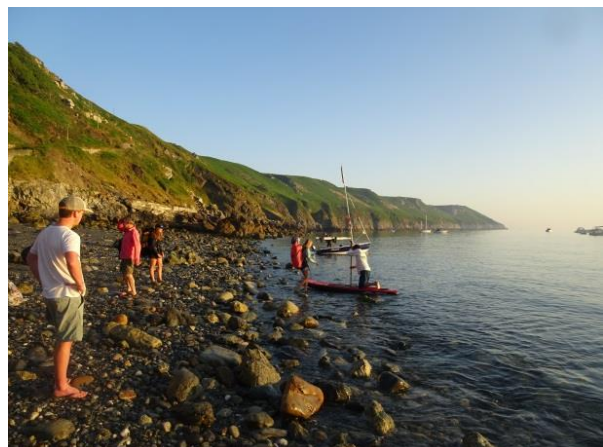
over the VHF! Lundy started to take shape from the its hazy early morning smudge and although the sea state was very calm and glassy the movement of the tide became apparent as we passed lobster pot buoys. The tide tends to sweep you south west past the southern tip of Lundy and Jeremy had been at pains to point out to everyone the cone within which it is best to approach the anchorage but we were fortunate to pick up a little breeze for the last 4 miles and enjoyed some sailing approaching under the imposing cliffs. Anchoring for the night (with a good length of chain) had been decided as the best option since the forecast was very light and hauling out would be extremely difficult on a rocky beach with sand just the size to jam centre boards.

Transfer of kit to the shore is always something of a mission on these adventures but it all seemed to go smoothly, an inflatable paddle board being an ingenious ferrying solution. It was warm and calm enough for some people to swim ashore from their boats and by keeping the camping gear lightweight, the notorious hike up to the campsite on Lundy was managed in good spirits! (It is worth noting that it is helpful to have a bag that you can put on your back, better to enjoy the exotic atmosphere of the island as you climb!)

Jeremy negotiated a supper for us from the manager of the Marisco Tavern and we all enjoyed drinks and food in the perfect evening sunshine, exchanging stories of dinghy adventures. There was time to visit the lighthouse with its spectacular views and enjoy the pleasure of having arrived under our own steam. As well as visitors walking and nature watching there were groups of divers and climbers and some who had flown their aircraft in to the small airstrip. Most of us camped but several walked back down the hill and slept on their boats at the anchorage.



Rising just after sunrise (0515) we packed up and hiked down to the beach, High Spirits tender helping ferry people to their boats, and set off to catch the favourable tide at 0715. Very little wind promised to fade away completely later in the day but it made for gorgeous dawn light.



Motors were required but we all had a fine voyage back to Watermouth, arriving by early afternoon and we could almost imagine we were amongst the Greek Islands. Will Hodshon's daughter and friend even took sole charge of Nipegegi for the last 5 miles after he transferred to High Spirits. One boat elected to stay and wait for the evening tide and had a little more wind, a lovely sunset and a visit from a dolphin, arriving back at 11 pm.

Thus completed a brilliant adventure on the open sea, not perhaps the excitement and challenge of a tough beat or exhilarating run through the waves but a fabulous experience of the wild ocean in beautiful calm conditions. Thank you Jeremy for superb organisation and safety and Will for joining in with High Spirits.

(I made a short (11 mins) video of the trip from the yacht High Spirits:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/33dtl2ka57p8iht/AADzhuycaKy4aC80VAFwARtea?dl=0>)



L
U
N
D
Y

2
0
2
1