

CYGNET OF LONDON

Our round Britain cruise 2023.

Built 1906, designed by G. Chalmers, built by Alfred Burgoine, Hampton Wick.

Sailing back home outside the Isle of Sheppey. Swan t/t trailing behind. Note the mizzen stays'l.

Photo: Will Thomas



29TH APRIL

We leave Faversham, bound
for....er, Faversham. Keep the
land on the right, keep turning
right.

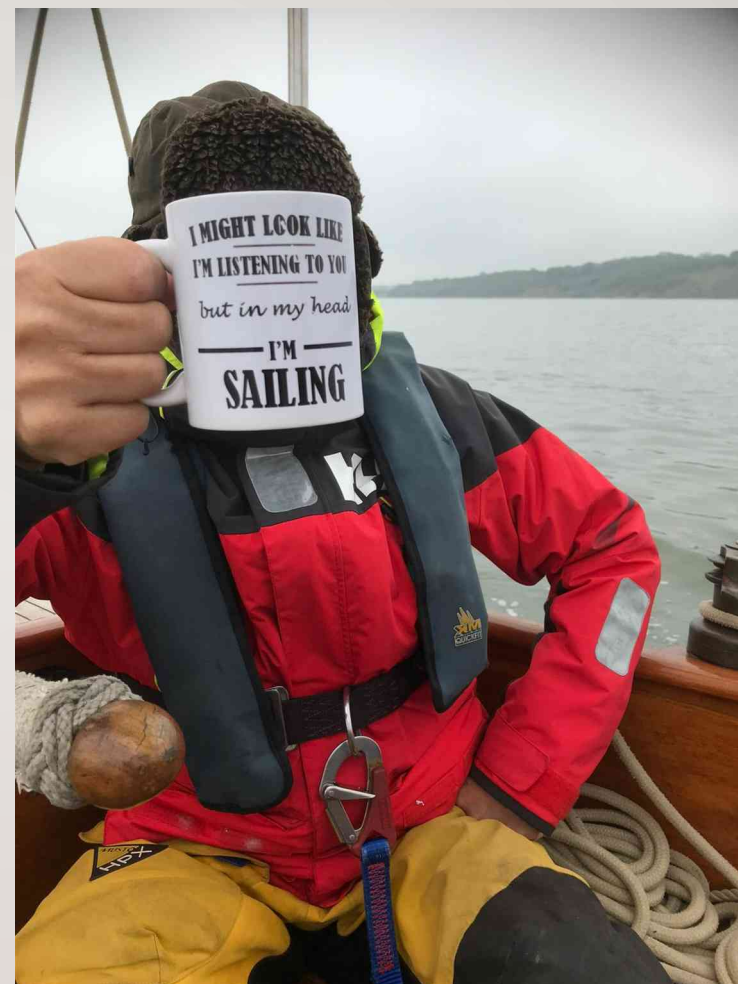
Important crew no. 1, Sharon on
the right. A boozy night in Cowes.



DON'T DO FACEBOOK!

The Skipper. Suited and booted.
Simon...why is the land on the
left?

Had enough already?



1ST MAY

Sharon and I ready for an evening
with my sisters in Shoreham.



2ND MAY

Flaaaase, in a vaaase. Got this idea from Alan Staley, always thought it a good idea to brighten the mood a bit.



3RD MAY

3 of the 7 sisters.



4TH MAY

I'm not smiling...it's definitely wind!

The first few weeks, it turned out that the best thing I'd packed was the electric fan heater.



7TH MAY

Ahh, that's lovely. No idea where, could be anywhere on the South coast, at least the land is on the right now.



11TH MAY

HaHa, your turn. Just the two of us until Dartmouth. Sharon very trusting, it was properly rough when we left Eastbourne. Foredeck in up to the hatch and poop-deck awash. She never blinked.



12TH MAY

Rather large Adder along the
railway track at Dartmouth.
Snakes on the line.



13TH MAY

Extremely able seaman, Will, tucking into his first breakfast onboard between Dartmouth and Plymouth. The best part of any boat is the crew. Will joined at Dartmouth and stayed on board until Levington in mid-July. His Mum was very pleased to see him wearing a life jacket!



14TH MAY

Quick moor up at Polperro. It seemed rude not to drop in, especially as it takes ages to get there by car. We had a good lunch and headed off to Falmouth. Sharon had returned home at this point.



POLPERRO, 14TH MAY

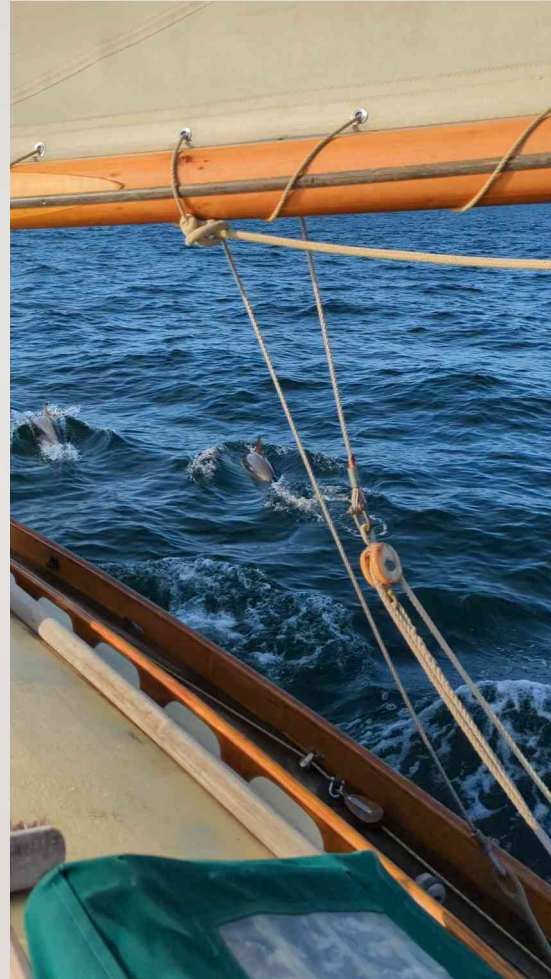
View of the inner harbour. Good
day for an ice cream.



16TH MAY

Everything is okay when the dolphins turn up, we always say on board.

I think these two followed us nearly the whole way around.



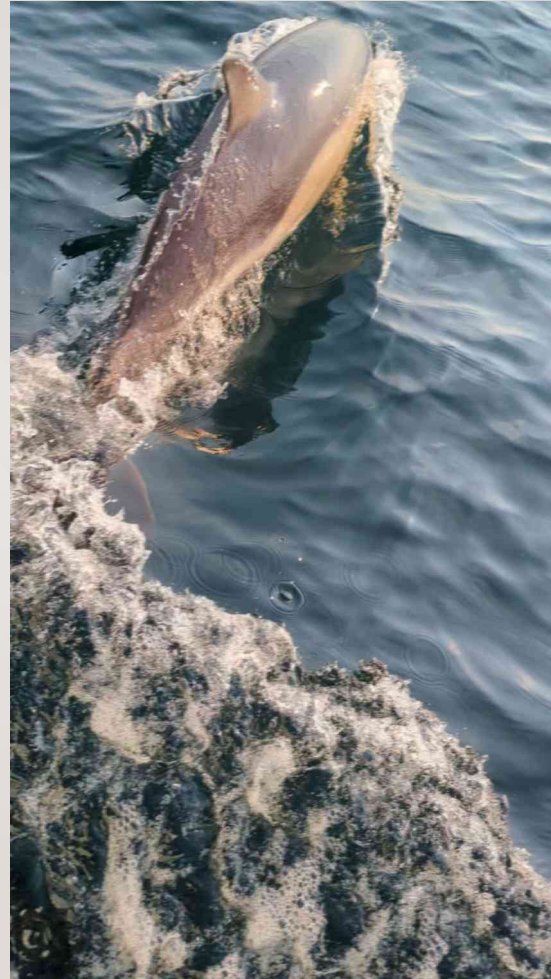
17TH MAY

Spent a triffic evening in Padstow.
Good weather around Cape
Cornwall, took some shortcuts
inside the Longships lighthouse.
Left Newlyn at 06-30, arrived
Padstow about opening time.



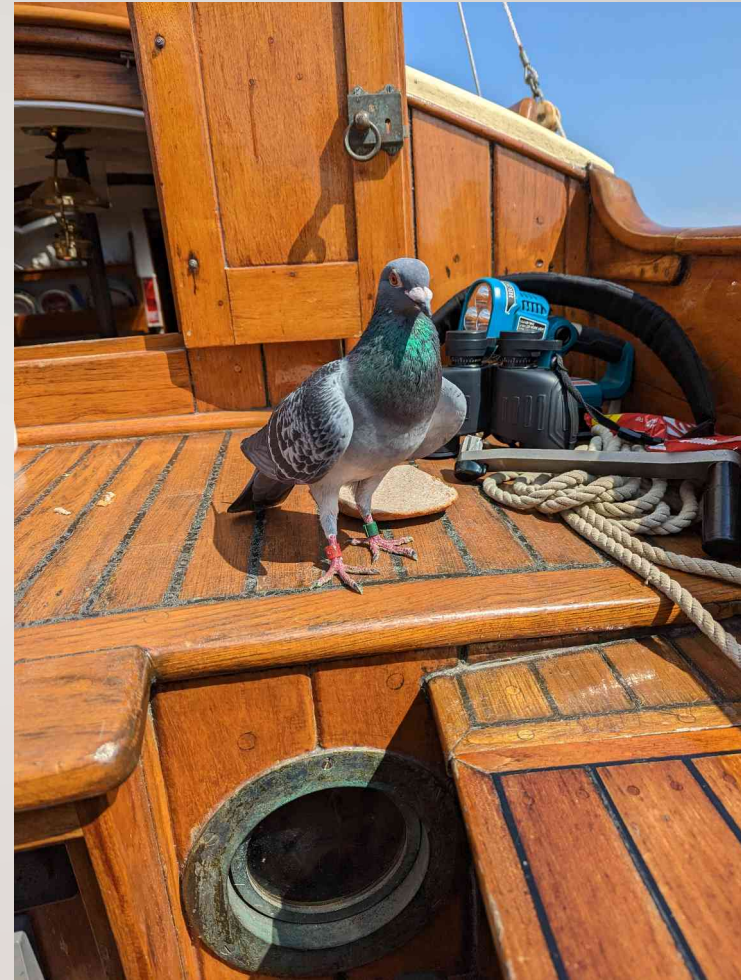
18TH MAY

These two again. They seem to freeride the bow wave. Surfing bums!



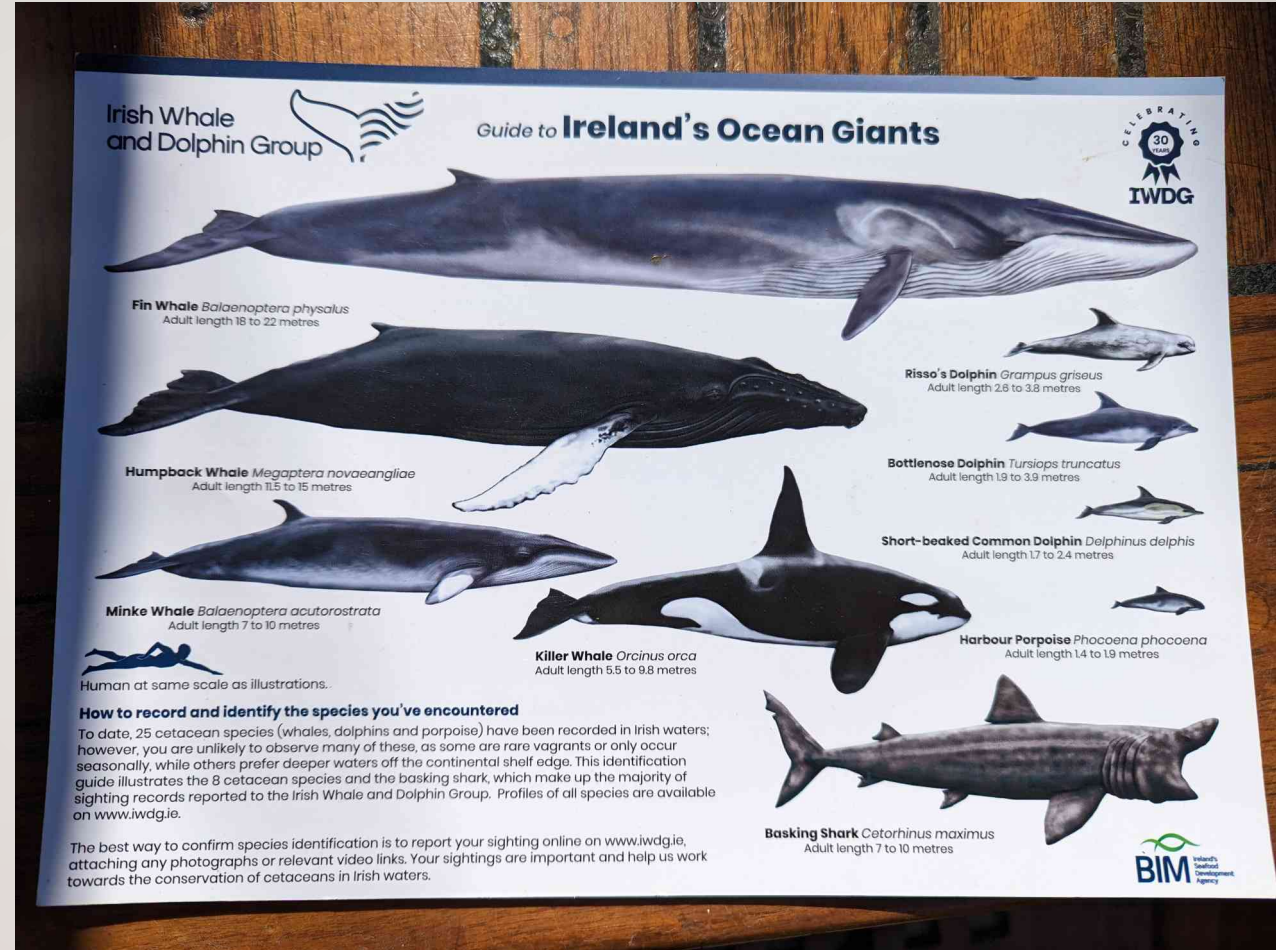
13TH JUNE...UNLUCKY FOR SOME.

This is 'Hitch', the exhausted racing pigeon. He spent the afternoon on the bridge deck, whilst we were sailing across Cardigan Bay. Sadly he didn't make it. We sent his nos to the racing fraternity. It turned out he was way off course. He was an Irish bird.



14TH JUNE

Picked this up in Aardglass, Ireland. For the trip we sighted common, bottlenosed and Risso's dolphins. We also saw spouts from what was probably a Minke whale in the Irish sea. We tried not to see a pod of killer whales on the west Scottish coast, above Skye.



17TH JUNE

Ray on the foredeck in the Crinan, looking like he knows what to do...which is the main thing.

Ray joined at Neyland, Milford Haven and left Cyggy in Oban after an intense week of 330+ nM. We had everything, early starts, anchoring off, strong winds, canals and night sails. He dealt with it all in good humour. You're always welcome back, Ray!



17TH JUNE

Leaving the Crinan canal and heading through the notorious Dorus Mor. As you can see, not much to worry about today.

The other tidal rip here is the Corryvreckan. Boats have gone in, never to be seen again...



KERRERA, 18TH JUNE

We caught up with the fleet. Steve, making a desperate run to the heads across the dining table on board the Bristol pilot cutter, Letty. I think he made it.

Anyone for a bit more cheese!!

Letty was moored here in Kerrera for some weeks, as her propeller fell off. Still not sure who paid the £5k bill.



21ST JUNE

Steve(cheesy feet) and his wife, Bev, sailed with us via Eigg, Muck and Mallaig for a couple of days. They left to get on the West Highland railway to pick up their campervan..if they could remember where they left it. Great couple of days sailing. Thanks for the Oban whisky, yum. Steve took loads of photos with a proper camera. Hopefully see them one day soon.



21ST JUNE

Nature showing off...

MacMountains...Scottish styleee.



THE NEXT DAY...

Loch Phwoarr! Lost in Scotland.



This is what we came for...I
always thought that the UK was
made upside down.



21ST JUNE

Lovely sail from Mallaig. We were trying to get to Ullapool, but it was too far. This is Old Dorney Harbour behind Isle Ristol in the Summer Isles. A bit worried about fouling the anchor on an old mooring, so set a buoy and tripping line.



22ND JUNE

This is Cape Wrath lighthouse. Glad to sail around this corner in daylight and good weather. In 2016, I sailed around the north west corner of Ireland, at night, in not such good conditions.

We spotted a pod of Orcas near here. Luckily they weren't hungry and left my rudder alone.



22ND JUNE

Our mooring for the night...Loch Eriboll, just around the NW tip of Scotland. The nickname for this place is Loch 'Orrible. In the almanac it says to be wary in a strong SW as it blows across the tip and straight down the loch. As you can see we had a good night's kip. Could be in Greece somewhere.



LOCH 'ORRIBLE

Lazy dayz of summer.

We had found out that the main fleet that had headed through the Caledonian had mostly got stuck at one of the first swing bridges. It was going to be out of action for a week or so. I only took this photo to rub it in some more!



23RD JUNE

Bound for Scrabster. Best sail of the trip. Beam reach, 20 knots breeze, good company. Will and I really enjoyed this. We had bottle-nosed dolphins during the day and spotted a Risso's dolphin. Wind did ease for a time in the afternoon.



24TH JUNE

Leaving Scrabster early, after another championship pool shoot-out in the pub, an ominous mist appeared to help us through the Pentland Firth. The only time I got Will to double check my nav. for the next day. It's an early bath if you get it wrong.



24TH JUNE

I think this is Orkney from the Pentland. We didn't quite have the weather or the time to go to Orkney. The good thing is though..it'll still be there the next time we go around.



SCOTCH MIST

...meant we missed quite a bit going through the Pentland Firth. We got it just right as far as the nav. Sometimes our boat speed over the ground was 8-9 knots with a hull speed of 2-3kn. Used AIS to keep track of nearby fishing vessels, as I don't have radar.



24TH JUNE

Wick. We lucked in here. Moored up in an RNLI open day put on in the harbour. Spent a thoroughly excellent day. The place was alive! In the evening the RNLI put on a band, bbq and as much booze as you wanted to drink. I think we turned in at about two am. All they asked was that you made a donation to the RNLI. What a good night.



WICK RNLI DAY

Fluttering flags in Wick. The white building in the background was where they had all the booze, kept cool by leftover fish ice from the boats. After the first hour we didn't care!



26TH JUNE

This, probably young, gull spent quite some time thinking the sail was a cliff! On the way to Peterheeed!



27TH JUNE

This shed in Peterhead, doesn't look much, but the fishing boat on the right is about 50'-60'.



GLAMPING

Curry, red wine and the grand prix on the telly...not a bad cure for a pissy wet, howling night in Peterhead.

We spent the day going around Peterhead jail. Very interesting....they even let us out.



3RD JULY

A little treat in a siding at Dundee.
Just off on the west Highland
railway.

I left Will on board for a few days
and returned, with Sharon, to
Tayport. We were now quite a way
in front of the fleet, having played
catch up on the west coast.



6TH JULY

Ringside seat, anchored off waiting for the tide into Hartlepool. Sharon's family are from there. So we stopped for a few days and again, we had no idea, lucked into the tallship's race. Had a great time exploring the massive harbour. It reminded me of the festival of the sea in Portsmouth 2005.



Another very tall ship...



HARTLEPOOL HARBOUR

Part of the old harbour in Hartlepool. Delightful. Sadly, we had to leave and head for Blyth, which has an excellent Dutch barge club house for the yachtsmen. Then onto Bridlington, where sadly Sharon had to go home again. Will and I carried onto Lowestoft, which is 130 sea miles. Tiring, but amazing going through the windfarms at night and in the wee small hours. Good going sailing too, engine on for very little time.



10TH JULY

Cyggy in Briddy. We gave her a scrub-off and checked the hull and prop. I also bought a new life jacket as Will was having a laugh about my old one and kept saying that it would go off like a damp fart if I ever tried to use it.

I pulled the toggle outside the shop and it stayed up!



7TH AUGUST

Beating down the Swin. The OGA August cruise became part of our homeward journey. Luckily they had decided to go to Chatham. Fortuitous indeed.

This was a hard day for Sharon and I, in a F5-6 for 5 hours, wind over tide. Cyggy, of course, took it in her stride. At several points the whole side-deck was under water. I was so busy I didn't even bother looking. I think we came 3rd.

Not sure who took the photo, but thank you.



9TH AUGUST

We left Cygnet in Levington for a couple of weeks, as that was where the fleet was going to celebrate the circum-nav. Will and I were tired after the trip down from Briddy, covering so many miles in just a few weeks.

This is some of the fleet heading to Chatham to finish the August Cruise. What a lovely day this was, sailing in company. Probably for the first time, for the whole way around.



MID-AUGUST

Cyggy got stuck in Chatham dock as the lock gate system failed for a week or so. Mike on the helm and Pete trying out Sharon's hat...well, it was the weekend. I literally had to thrash Cyggy down the Medway and into the Swale to make the tide at Faversham. We were a bit late starting. It was a good fun sail and we were back in time for tea!



CYGNET....HERE'S TO YOU AND YOUR CREW!

Cygnnet back on her mooring in Faversham. We sailed, Lady Ann, the dinghy for the rest of the season.

We spent September starting on the brightwork for next year. Zoe and Vicky doing a great job.

It's been a real team effort sailing the RBC on Cygnnet. We're very lucky to have a great team; some newcomers and some old hands helping to get the job done. We thank you all for some great memories. Wherever we go in her, folk are very complimentary about the boat and her crew.

Next year we've been invited back to Holland. Also, we're thinking of sailing her down channel to Falmouth for the classics. We'll just have to wait and see..

Simon and Sharon.

