

Cruising on the Dole - Part I by John Gray

Mirror dinghy with centreboard modification

I was sick. Seasick! Emptying my breakfast over the side. Followed by last night's meal. Followed by vile retching and the water I swallowed between spasms. I'd always been a "poor traveller", as they say, sick in everything from a tramcar to a plane. Even been sick two or three times before in a dinghy, but always at anchor under the tent after a heavy evening meal.

Now I was cold, shivering. Dressed in full sailing gear, jersey, anorak, oilskins, woolly hat and even an old army cape wrapped round me, I still shivered. *Little Mischief*, my 10' 10" Mirror, sailed on ignoring me with her new self steering making me feel unneeded, a passenger. My eyes were going out of focus, drowsy, like going to sleep at the wheel of a car - possibly the seasick tablets I'd taken. Felt miserable; dying to see land again. Any land, even Rhyl which had disappeared in the misty haze over two hours ago. Around me the visibility was about two miles and everything was dull and grey, a gloomy wilderness of seas which were high enough to sometimes break my horizon, but little white as the westerly wind was only Force 2-3.

This was the second day of my first cruise for two years. Missed out previous summer because I was working six days a week including Bank Holidays. Unemployed since the autumn, I'd planned and prepared thoroughly for a longer cruise than my annual week. And now I was seasick!

The first day, Wednesday 22nd June, '83, had started well. Up at 6.30, after three hours sleep due to final packing, and with my wife and a friend we drove from my home in Holywell overlooking the Dee estuary in N.E. Wales, down the hill to Greenfield on the S.W. side of the estuary at 7.45. *Little Mischief* was unloaded from the roof-rack and carried over the rocks to a mud patch to await H.W. about 10.00 hrs.

It was hot and almost flat calm with visibility about two miles, so I couldn't see the other side of the estuary just over three miles away. After drifting a while with the ebbing tide, N.W. towards the Irish Sea just over three miles away, I rowed until at noon a N.W. Force 1 got us sailing and finally out of the Dee estuary past the old Point of Air Lighthouse at 13.00 hrs. Here the wind proved to be W 1-2 so it was a beat for six or seven miles to the west off the sandy shore of North Wales until Rhyl at 17.00. A mile short of the harbour at the mouth of the Clwyd the tide changed and at the end of an inshore tack I met the sands of "Sunny Rhyl" extending way out to sea. We tried, but opposed by wind and tide, couldn't get round them. For the last few hundred yards to the perch which masks the outer end of the harbour approach I gratefully accepted a tow from a fisherman, then sailed in up the river to an empty mooring opposite the small Yacht Club. I was tired and after usual wash and shave (too cold in mornings) followed by a good meal, I was in bed and asleep at 22.30.

Awake at 6.30 to walk on the sand around the boat inspecting the first use of my new drying-out blocks. Despite strengthening *Little Mischief's* bottom with extra rubbing strips and an interior layer of ply and glass fibre, I had never been happy to take the ground and dry out while my 160 lbs. of weight was on board. So I'd taken four blocks of polystyrene,

7" x 4", that I think had been used as packing material, and after melting a hole long ways through each block with a hot poker I passed a 3' - 4' length of blue polypropylene rope through each hole. One end of the rope had a bowline tied; a stopper knot at the other end of the hole kept the rope in place, leaving a tail 2' - 3' long. Fastening the tail inboard and putting the block over the side gave me a useful fender. But as supports under the hull to dry out level on sand, mud or small stones they proved their worth. They were used in pairs, each pair attached from bowline to bowline by a length of heavy shock cord with a hook on each end. Each hook was bent to make it difficult for the hook to accidentally come free of the bowline. If expecting to dry out, then after removing the rudder and before putting up the tent, I'd pass the blocks under the boat from the stern, one pair at a time, pulling forward with the rope tails. The first pair were positioned under the forward end of the cockpit just under the turn of the bilge each side, and the rope tails secured inboard to a shroud plate. The second pair went under the aft end of the cockpit, secured each side to a jam-cleat. So she balanced on the four blocks, keel and skeg.

H.W. was 10.15 that morning, but I got away from Rhyl a little late due to my foolishness when rigging the boat after removing the tent. I tried to raise my mainsail without re-attaching the halliards to the gunter rig gaff. Both the halliards (I'll explain later why I have two halliards) ended up at the double dumb sheave in the mast top, stopped by the shackles. Took a long time and an oar with shackle key attached by elastic band to bring them down again.

Then we sailed down the river to find a mass of white breakers crashing over the sandbanks at the entrance. Cirled round at the river mouth having a look and saw that the narrow deep water channel heading north to the perch about - mile away had a heavy swell but no breakers, so managed to slip out close hauled passing the perch at 11.00. With L.W. around Conwy to the west about 16.00 I had about five hours of the ebb tide to use, fourteen miles in a direct line to go to reach Great Orme's headland behind which lay Conwy, and a westerly 2-3 against me. As the coastline nearly all the way forms a shallow bay I decided, instead of beating inshore, to make one tack well offshore in the main strength of the tide, and one board back again, hopefully arriving inshore near Great Orme's Head or more hopefully a little past it.

So for three hours *Little Mischief* and I sailed close hauled offshore. The Rhyl seafront disappeared in the poor visibility after an hour and a fishing boat near a buoy disappeared soon after, and no other sign of man or land appeared until 16.00. It was during this time that I had several bouts of seasickness and so I was very glad to see land again. Unsure where it was until I was closer, about 17.00, by which time the tide had already turned an hour and the wind dropped off to 1 or less. The land was the Great Orme, but I couldn't get past it, so I headed into Llandudno Bay and anchored near the pier in the west side of the bay at 18.30. Not much shelter, but I was glad to be near land. Putting the tent up in a slight swell rolling in to the beach upset my stomach again and I lost the snack I'd forced down earlier. All I could face for the evening meal was a mug of warm Oxo.

I got into bed at 22.00. Now unless you're a skinny five footer it's not possible to sleep on a Mirror floor. But from the mast to the transom is almost seven feet. This is at deck level, a few inches below the gunwales. I carry an ex-army stretcher with strong wooden poles, rolled up along the forward port side when sailing (the starboard side has my long sea oars; both stretcher and oars held in place with shock cord and a hook to unused forward shroud plates). The stretcher, which cost 50 pence, needed little modification; a scrub to remove what I presume were bloodstains and two short lengths of wood, each with two notches cut, to take the stretcher poles and keep the canvas very taut. A thin yellow back-packer's mattress for extra warmth and because the canvas frequently gets wet with spray or rain, sleeping bag on top and I have a most comfortable bed.

The next day was Friday 24th June and I was sick again before breakfast. But I had to eat and drink so I got down a light snack of well-chewed muesli, Ryvita and coffee. With some difficulty I took the tent down as I was threatening to lose my breakfast, and went ashore on the beach at a small wooden landing stage to phone my wife. Found a phone-box on the promenade but couldn't remember my phone number or the code. Had that number five years. Finally after about the fourth try I got through. This incident made me realise that the seasickness was mentally affecting me and I'd have to consider carefully all my decisions to ensure no important mistakes.

Back on *Little Mischief*, we set off out of the bay under the towering cliffs of Great Orme's Head at 10.30. The westerly ebb didn't start until 11.00 so I was glad of the N.E. 2-3 wind. Thus began a good day. We were leaving a dull coastline behind which I'd never sailed before this cruise, having always taken the boat on the car instead. By sailing I'd saved the cost of the petrol and, cruising on the dole, was determined to be economical. But we were now heading into the familiar sailing waters of, the Menai Straits between Anglesey and the mainland of Wales. Visibility still poor at about two miles, little sun, rather overcast but a good following wind as we headed S.W. Best of all, no further seasickness (until much later in the cruise).

The Menai Straits, which lie S.W. to N.E., are about 17 miles long and the N.E. end is a wide expanse of drying sands, funnel-shaped, about five miles wide at the mouth and five miles deep, approaching Bangor. The deep water channel lies along the Anglesey shore on the west side and much of the area, the Lavan Sands, dries out over 10'. Coming from the N.E. side I determined to try a short cut across the sands to the Anglesey shore which I'd never had occasion to use before. In the poor visibility it was unlikely I'd be able to get the right line to find the unbuoyed channel and it was a falling tide flowing against us out of the Straits. But I was crossing on top of the tide and trusted my centreboard to warn me of trouble. Some years ago I'd removed the useless Mirror dagger-board and case and built a proper pivoted centreboard. Probably the biggest modification I've made to *Little Mischief*, but very worthwhile.

By 13.00 we had crossed the sands without problems and were rather slowly sailing up the deep water channel against the stronger ebb tide towards Beaumaris. My favourite Anglesey town. Old castle, narrow streets, lovely views over Snowdonia, a sailing centre with moorings and old boatyard. At 13.30 I ran *Little Mischief* onto the little beach in the lee of the pier and went ashore for water. Normally I carry 4 x 1 gallons of water and use about one per day. Had a snack on board and went off again to try and get as far as possible down the straits while the wind was fair.

In a couple of miles, though we were still heading S.W., the ebb tide was helping us. The tidal stream in the Straits can be very confusing because the flood stream coming north up the Irish Sea enters the Straits at the S.W. end and then later, after sweeping round Anglesey, enters also from the N.E. end, meeting at a variable point in the northern half of the Straits. So the ebb tide in a similar way divides and runs N.E. and S.W. from the northern half of the Straits at the same time, and we had passed the dividing point.

From Bangor the water narrows to about half a mile, narrowing still further in a couple of miles to a few hundred yards in the infamous Swellies. This is an area of drying rocks, whirlpools, standing waves and a tide race up to seven knots, almost a mile long with, at each end, the towering bridges that connect Anglesey to the mainland. I have been through many times, but never casually. However, it was about one hour before L.W. slack and the Swellies were fairly quiet, and we were through and passing the monument to Nelson at 15.05. As always I saluted him, as to show proper respect to the Admiral ensures

a successful voyage. Of course he understands the limitations of small boat sailors and accepts a sitting down salute.

Then an easy and pleasant 5 - 6 mile run with *Little Mischief's* sails goosewinged and the last of the ebb beneath us until at 17.00 we reached the mouth of the River Seiont at Caernarfon, two miles from the S.W. end of the Straits, to find insufficient water in the river even to row up to the harbour. So leaving *Little Mischief* at landing steps I went ashore through the town walls to the local Tesco for supplies. At 18.00 I rowed the short distance upriver under the swing bridge and dropped an anchor in the mud between moorings on the bank of the river, opposite the best-preserved castle in Wales and the old slate quay. I was careful not to put the tent up until after I'd had a wash and shave, cooked and eaten a light meal. Very satisfied with 22 miles made good.

After an excellent night's sleep of 10 hours during which we dried out on the mud, I was up at 6.30 and ready to go at 9.30. Time to spare, so I went ashore for water. Saw the Harbour Master on the quayside looking at the boat but I did not speak to him as I wasn't sure if there would be a charge to pay and I didn't want to invite it. Cleared the river mouth at 1000 to find wind not as helpful as yesterday, heading us from SW about Force 1.

Tacking slowly at end of flood, reached the S.W. end of the Straits at 11.15, just after the ebb had started. This end is quite dissimilar to the other. A narrow deep exit about 300 yards across between steep-to sand and shingle banks. The northern side is a long, finger-shaped line of sand dunes called Abermenai Point. The south bank, Belan Point, is crowned by a fortress built to resist the French and a year or two back some fool carelessly fired one of the old cannon and nearly dismasted a passing yacht.

The more open N.E. end of the Straits does not really have a bar, but this S.W. end does. However, at H.W. and wind light even if against the tide, it was not evident and I found myself in company with 15 other sailing boats all heading out on the ebb southwards. It was Saturday so presumed they were out for the weekend heading, like myself, for the popular anchorage of Porth Dinllaen (Forth means cove or bay) 14 miles to S.W. The only other open boat was a Drascombe Lugger and *Little Mischief* had no trouble keeping up with the fleet.

The light wind caused 2 - 3 yachts to start engines and pull away but the rest, once clear of the offshore sandbanks, the horns of the bar, started tacking S.W. But clever dick skipper of *Little Mischief* thought there would be better wind and current further out so took *Little Mischief* on a long tack to west until 14.00, when all the other boats and land had disappeared in the poor visibility of about 3 miles. Then he headed due south. It was a lovely day; warm sun. Enjoyed a folk music programme from Manx Radio. But wind died. Rowed on and off for two hours and finally at 18.00 came in sight of Porth Dinllaen and the back of the fleet two miles ahead entering the bay. Tide now against us and I had a hard row to get inside the long finger headland of Porth Dinllaen out of the flood stream.

Decided to stay overnight at Nefyn which has its own little headland inside the bay, so after landing to phone home, without success, I tied up at a spare mooring. A good day with about 17 miles made good despite the light contrary wind.

The following morning I went back to sleep after the 06.25 forecast and woke again at 08.00. No hurry as H.W. at 11.00 and 14 miles away to S.W. was Bardsey Sound which we could not enter until about 17.00 with L.W. slack at 18.30. The tidal stream in the Sound does not change until over two hours after H.W. and L.W. by the shore. We were now about halfway down the 20 mile long by 5 to 10 mile wide Lleyn Peninsula which projects S.W. out into the Irish Sea like a leg and forms the northern end of the 60 mile wide

Cardigan Bay. Bardsey Island lies 1 mile off the tip of Lleyn and the Sound between their high rocky shores has a sluicing current up to five knots, with heavy overfalls in mid-tide. I'd been there before a few years ago when the passage through the Sound had been accomplished quite easily, then, after spending a night at Bardsey itself I'd attempted to cross to the mainland at slack water, but the wind had failed and I was pushed unwillingly through the Sound until a contrary current had helped me to row out again.

While washing up after breakfast under the tent, a passing yachtsman motored alongside my stern, showed a close interest in *Little Mischief* and asked a lot of questions on dinghy cruising. At 12.00 when we crossed the reef at Porth Dinllaen out of the bay into the ebbing tidal stream, I found him sailing his Jaguar 21 and waiting to see *Little Mischief* sailing. He sailed around us for about 15 minutes handling his yacht like a dinghy, looking at *Little Mischief* from all angles and asking more questions. Then with a friendly wave and good wishes he turned back and *Little Mischief* and I settled down to beating against a SW 2.

After about 9 miles, at 15.30, we went into the small sandy bay of Porth Oer out of the tide and hove-to while I sorted out *Little Mischief* and myself ready for Bardsey Sound. Wind against tide had caused a choppy sea but tide had now slackened so could expect smoother water. But just offshore from Porth Oer was the northern end of the Tripods, a two mile reef running south, well under water but causing noted overfalls in the wrong conditions. So I took one long tack to seawards for an hour to pass outside the Tripods until I could lay a straight course to enter the Sound from the N.W. Entered at 17.00, on schedule. No problems. Cleared it at 17.30 and carried on to S.E. until the lighthouse on the flat south end of Bardsey was bearing W and turned on that tack at 13.00 for the landing place in Henllwyn Bay.

Thought that was it. As good as there. Should have known better. Half an hour later realised we were further south and lighthouse now bearing N.W. The end of the ebb in the light wind was pushing *Little Mischief* away from the Island. Started rowing and, approaching the small rocky bay at 19.00, saw that the tide had now swiftly turned. By the race off the point I could see that the flood was running hard and trying to force us north back into the sound again! The last 100 yards to get into the bay out of the tide was a hard struggle with the oars. Thought I wasn't going to make it but so near I had to fight and not give up, and finally we got in and dropped the buoyed fisherman anchor in 18' over rocks.

I had intended going ashore on the excuse (it's privately owned by an absentee landlord) for water, to meet Mr Strick again, the farmer lobster fisherman and his wife who are the only really permanent residents on the island. The others when I was here last were an ornithologist, the lighthouse keeper of course and an elderly solitary nun. The island had at one time supported over a hundred people. My 1902 Pilot refers to 80 residents. It's also known as the Isle of 20,000 Saints. A very holy place to the extent that three pilgrimages to Bardsey were equal to one to Rome. But it was getting late and I was tired after my hard spell at the oars so settled for a good meal. My log says, "Black pudding, beans and boiled new potatoes, followed by tinned pears with sweetened condensed milk poured over. If that doesn't make me sick I'm fireproof". It didn't! Woke briefly in the night to see the lighthouse casting its flickering beam over my head.

The following morning with a forecast of NW 3-4 we left Bardsey at 10.50 and set out for Aberdovey. If the Lleyn Peninsula is like an extended leg, Bardsey Island a ball kicked by the toe, then the heel of the foot is the headland Trwyn Cilan, 9 miles to the east. Once past that point in a NW wind and ebb tide I'd really have nowhere else to go but eastwards across the head of Cardigan Bay either to Barmouth, 18 miles, or Aberdovey, 21 miles, so Trwyn Cilan was my point of no return. Reaching there after three hours of good sailing in

NW 3, I decided it was going to be too late in the evening reaching Aberdovey and so would head N.E. and shelter overnight behind Trwyn Cilan which I could see 2-3 miles away.

By 15.00 I was into quiet water under the cliffs of Porth Cairiad behind Trwyn Cilan having a snack and deciding to spend the night at the popular sailing centre of Abersoch. That was only about three miles away but the last two miles inshore of the small twin islands of St. Tudwals were a slow beat. Abersoch was a long beach full of holidaymakers with several lines of moored boats offshore; must have been about 100. And in the middle of the beach on a small promontory was the local yacht club. I moored to the lee side of the club's wooden slipway and went ashore for water, a hot shower and a phone call home. Deciding that I was better sheltered where I was than at a spare mooring, I settled in for the night after checking there were no objections.

Tuesday morning, with a forecast of NW 3-4 backing W.5 later, we set off again, for Aberdovey at 10.00. Tides are not as strong inside Cardigan Bay but with H.W. at 10.45 we were in good time to make the most of the ebb. After passing St. Tudwals Isles we made the longest open water passage we had yet done. It was 17 miles S.E. to the headland of Pen Bwch Point, which turned out to be quite an uneventful crossing. Wind was N.W. 2-3, an overcast sky and hazy mist giving no sight of land ahead or behind for the middle three hours. Two hours and 8 miles out from St. Tudwals we crossed the Sarn Badrig.

There are three "Sarns" (Welsh for causeway) in the northern half of Cardigan Bay. Each is a reef of sand and stones projecting out into the Bay. The other two are a little further south and project to the west. Sarn Badrig runs S.W. from Mochras Point north of Barmouth and is the longest, at over 10 miles, and most dangerous as it is the only one to dry, from 1' to 4' in several places. I recall watching a TV documentary on the coasts of Wales and the piece of film on Sarn Badrig had been shot on a calm day at L.W. Springs from a helicopter. The commentator had been landed on the Sarn, which looked like a long road with gaps in it stretching into the distance. He looked very lonely standing there talking about the Sarn. "Badrig" means "St. Patrick" and it was believed locally that St. Patrick used the causeway to walk from Ireland.

For me it was a useful distance run check to cross the quarter mile strip of swirling waters, quite different from the surrounding seas. There is a pillar buoy off the end of the Sarn, but if I was on course it would be about 4-5 miles away, so I wasn't surprised not to see it. At 14.00 saw land ahead which proved to be Pen Bwch Point. Crossed Sarn-y-Bwch about two miles off the point and ran the five miles down the coast past Towyn to the bar buoy at the mouth of the Dovey. The onshore wind against the last of the ebb from the estuary gave us some high seas on the shallow bar, but nothing vicious. Then a slow run following the well-buoyed channel between sandbanks brought *Little Mischief* ashore by the pier at Aberdovey at L.W. shortly after 17.00. Felt very satisfied with the 24 mile trip in 7 hours. Went ashore for shopping and water and after briefly looking around the rather quaint, pleasant village I had a look at the inshore moorings, but decided to risk anchoring between two fishing boats, close inshore just upstream from the pier.

(to be continued -102/20)

Cruising on the Dole - Part II by John Gray

(A cruise by *Mirror* dinghy around the Welsh coast)

Aberdovey

Wednesday morning I found myself with a problem. I'd buoyed the Bruce anchor used from the bow, but late the previous night in an attempt to stop *Little Mischief* swinging stern-to-wind in the tidal current, I'd foolishly dropped a folding grapnel over the stern without buoying it. Now it was jammed under a mooring chain - to judge by the feel of it - and I'd be unable to reach it until L.W. late afternoon; so I put an empty water container on the warp and decided to go for a sail up the estuary.

The Dovey Estuary is about 4 miles long and over a mile wide, and except around H.W. is a maze of drying sandbanks. It had started to ebb by the time I set off, but a good W2-3 behind me pushed *Little Mischief* slowly and pleasantly up the northern coast for a couple of miles till I decided to return, as we were having problems with the centreboard touching, and I was unsure of the channel.

Back at the Aberdovey moorings at 15.00 I found it was still too early to raise the grapnel, so sat there on *Little Mischief*, being entertained by nearby Church bells playing a whole range of tunes from "Abide with Me" to "An English Country Garden". Also watched parties of youngsters under basic canoe instruction; others in two dipping lug yawls learning to sail, and yet another group building a raft on the muddy foreshore. This group finally managed it and all 12 of them paddled off round the pier. There are Outward Bound and Aqua Sports centres here.

I finally managed to release the grapnel and set out for Aberystwyth at 16.30. But first we had to cross the bar. Wind W 2-3 was heading us and onshore. Tide out of the estuary had an hour before L.W. so conditions seemed likely to be similar to the previous day. But they were much worse. More and higher breaking waves, and of course they were now against us, going out close-hauled. Several times I lost the course and was tacking in between the waves, up and down like a roller coaster and making only slow progress. Once past the bar buoy I had to keep looking around to see where it was, to keep my course in the SW channel. After we'd taken four breakers on board I thought the worst was over and started bailing, but then two more big ones crashed on board, so switched to my big bucket-bailer used - for that purpose - for the very first time. Struggled on seawards and finally got clear. It had been touch and go for a long 10-15 minutes, that had excited me so much I found myself shouting encouragement to *Little Mischief* as though she was a horse in the Grand National and I was the jockey.

Once offshore there were only a few white caps, but a heavy, confused sea. We lay close-hauled for Aberystwyth which, after the first couple of miles, I could see 5 miles ahead. Tacking once before crossing Sarn Wallog, we reached the harbour mouth where, by some fluke of the wind, we were becalmed right at the entrance. Luckily the seas were smooth, so rowed round the corner, picked up the wind again and sailed to a spare mooring on mud at the edge of the fairway at 20.00. I'd just got the tent rigged when very heavy rain started.

But the tent is quite rainproof as it's made from very tough white nylon-reinforced PVC, and covers the whole boat in two pieces, with a good overlap at the mast. I use a boom (and gaff) crutch which fits into a slot built on the transom, and the simple but useful topping lift also takes some of the strain. As the forward end of the boom needs to be higher than the gooseneck to give more headroom, I remove it from the gooseneck and insert my spare rowlock from the sculling socket into a brass tube screwed and glass-fibred in place on top of the boom. The rowlock then fits to the mast like jaws. Using one of the mainsail halyards, the boom and gaff are raised about 12 inches. As I rather distrust the Mirror gooseneck, this rowlock fitting in a tube is also a safety feature to be used if the gooseneck should fail.

It got dark before I'd washed up the evening meal, and so I lit two candles (the big torch is kept for middle of the night emergencies), fitting them into my new "Mirror Candle Holders" (Patent Pending). They gave a lovely warm light under the white tent, and just before getting into bed some comic from the sailing and fishermen's club on the quayside switched on a megaphone and enquired "the price of tomatoes from the marine Percy Thrower in the floating greenhouse".

Thursday, 30th June, H.W. was at 11.40 so I slept late, until 08.15. Felt I deserved it and awoke to the first bright sunshine for some days. Before getting away at 12.30 I rowed *Little Mischief* across to the quay for water and a look outside. It was NW3 and, as an incoming fisherman said, "Lumpy". Back on board I made an unseamanlike muck-up of getting away from an awkward position at the quayside. Trouble is so often I don't plan my movements well enough in these situations, and of course there had to be helpful advice from the usual spectator. We slipped out of the harbour with me feeling a fool and *Little Mischief*, I'm sure was ashamed of me.

It was a straight, fast but wet SW passage to New Quay. Arrived at 15.00, which was 15 miles in 3½ hours. We kept fairly well offshore as the land recedes in a smooth curve all the way, and I could see New Quay from about 5 miles off. The seas were sometimes higher than I'd have preferred, and came at us in groups of 3 or 4 at a time from starboard. They could build up from nothing in literally a few yards, then I'd see them breaking white about 20 yards to leeward, but caught by only one that broke over my stern quarter.

New Quay was a surprise to me. I'd been there once before very briefly by car, and remembered just a little harbour with a few boats. Must have been Winter. In the approach now I could see a few masts over the breakwater, but nothing else except houses climbing up the steep hillside above. So I was surprised to round the breakwater and find rows of moored yachts and other boats already drying out on sand, and close behind them a beach crowded with holiday makers, well sheltered by the cliffs and breakwater. I felt rather out of place in the full sailing gear of oilskins and woolly hat among the swimmers and sun worshippers.

I attached *Little Mischief* to a spare mooring, fore and aft like the others, and went ashore to do a little shopping. Then returned to find she had dried out nicely on the blocks, on level sand, so I put the tent up from the outside. Almost a new experience.

The following day I wanted to get to Cardigan; about 15 miles. H.W. was 12.00 but I started earlier, at 11.20. The forecast said SW 3-4 so I couldn't expect a fast passage like yesterday. It was in the most careful seamanlike manner that I left the mooring among all those pretty yachts.

We were only about ½ mile from the breakwater and about 300 yds. offshore, sailing slowly in the lee of New Quay Head when I had what, to me, was a new and wonderful experience. Made me feel like a real blue water sailor! It started when I happened to look round to starboard where a yacht leaving harbour at the same time as us was heading northwards, and I saw a big splash some yards in front of her bow. Wondering what could have caused it, I watched and then saw a bloody big fish jump out of the water near the yacht - then another - then two together. A school of porpoises!

The yacht moved on northwards and as I watched I could see from the surface splashes that the school was heading to cross our course. Soon *Little Mischief* was in the middle of them, playfully jumping right out of the water, singly, in two's and three's. On both sides I saw some swim up to us a few feet below the surface, then turn away. The finale to the show came - and it was a finale because afterwards I saw only the occasional splash as they moved away - when four porpoises leapt out of the water about 10 yds. off our port bow, in close line abreast on our heading. Must be real show-offs to do that when they know someone is looking.

After that almost anything would be an anti-climax, and the rest of the day was just that. About 13.00 the wind increased 3-4 with many white caps as the ebb stream struggled against the SW wind. We tacked on and off shore, but only made good 3 miles between 12.00 and 15.00. (With hindsight I think there was no help from the ebb stream as it would be diverted offshore to W by New Quay Head). Then I saw a small shingle beach set in the high cliffs with a narrow valley going inland, a few houses, and cars on a tiny promenade. It was called Cwm Tudu and I decided to go in and review the situation. After chatting awhile on the shingle to a Mirror owner on holiday without his boat, I decided to stay, possibly for the night. My new friend collected a few healthy looking men from the beach and they pulled *Little Mischief* over a bank of shingle into a pool which was fed from a small stream running down the valley, so it didn't dry out.

I put the tent up and prepared to spend the night there. About 18.30 when most of the holiday makers had gone, I was making the evening meal, looking over the stern through the open tent, when I saw the local bobby coming down the shingle. No hat, hands in pockets, so I knew it couldn't be serious. As we were floating in the pool he couldn't come right up to the boat, but called across asking in Welsh if I spoke Welsh. I don't, but after 30 years in Wales I'd heard the question enough times to know what he was saying.

"No", I replied, "I'm Scottish". I always find it best to let them know I might be a foreigner, but at least a fellow Celt and not English. "Scottish", he said, rolling the word around his mouth as though testing it. After a few questions on what I was doing and proposed to do, he then explained in a rather embarrassed way that they'd had a phone call from someone who'd heard the recent reports of some arrests about 30 miles to the south, a few days before, for drug smuggling from boats. Their informant had felt I looked suspicious by appearing in that cove in a small boat! After putting down my name and address in his little book, he wished me a friendly good night and wandered back up the shingle.

The weather became dull and overcast, with some rain, and while the wind didn't seem to have changed, the breakers on the shingle were much larger. Also the 17.50 forecast referred to wind veering to W, which would be almost directly into the cove. So after phoning home, I packed up and prepared to sail. While I waited impatiently for the rising tide I noticed less breaking waves at the mouth of the little stream, though it was rather close to the rocks, so when the water level allowed I towed *Little Mischief* from the pool into the stream mouth and pushed off from there, making a clean launch at 21.45.

It was a wild ride the few miles back to New Quay with the flood stream, and SW 3-4 gusting higher. A few times when I leaned back over the stern quarter in a gust I wondered what was going to go first - mast, shrouds, rudder or tiller? I was glad my mainsail was reefed. It's a simple single slab reef with two cords to pull down the tack and clew cringles, and four reef points to tie. These are on a line from just under the bottom batten, slightly downwards to the tack. So I end up with a flat sail about 2/3 full size, and the boom less likely to hit me in a gybe. The halliard attachment to the gunter rig gaff is a problem solved by different people in different ways. My method was to remove the single sheave set in the mast head, cut it in two and mount the two halves one above the other in the original slot, as two dumb sheaves. The top one was mounted on a strip of stainless steel slotted in. Then an additional halliard run through and attached with shackle to a gaff band at the reefing point. Probably one of the simplest, but most effective, modifications from a safety point of view I've made.

The bare rocky cliffs sped by and soon it was quite dark. Round into the lee of New Quay Head and then it started raining as I was tacking past the breakwater light into the moorings. As we got closer in under the cliffs the wind got fluky. How I finally got *Little Mischief* to a mooring was another example of my lousy boatmanship, for I tried to get hold of three different vacant mooring buoys, and bumped into the mooring chains of two yachts, before I finally succeeded at 22.30, close inshore. I was glad of the dark and the rain; it kept spectators away. An hour later I was thankfully in bed.

Saturday, 2nd July I was up promptly, deciding as I had only 10p in my pocket, tobacco finished and little food left, it was time to go home, sample my wife's cooking, mow the lawn and sign on. So after breakfast I waded ashore and found the Harbour Master, who told me to leave *Little Mischief* where she was. Made sure she was securely moored fore and aft with drying out blocks and tent rigged; I was on the road hitch-hiking soon after 10.00, and arrived home at 17.00.

Four days later I hitch-hiked back again from Holywell to New Quay in SW Wales in 52 hours, arriving at 14.30 in time to wade out to *Little Mischief* on her mooring before H.W. at 17.00. She was just as I'd left her, and we were glad to see each other. I'd been undecided whether to go further south, but the forecast at 17.50 for S 3-4 made up my mind. We'd return north tomorrow.

Thursday, 7th July the morning forecast was 2-3 variable, but I said goodbye and thanks to the helpful Harbour Master - no charge for the mooring was mentioned - and cleared the harbour at 10.30 heading north.

The flood stream would start at 12.30 to assist us, the sky was blue, hot sun, wind very variable but mainly N, and never more than F1. Frequently calm so I frequently rowed. Got so hot I stripped off, except for floppy hat, for a couple of hours, then put shorts on again as I didn't want sunburn on sensitive areas. Saw what in total in Cardigan Bay must have been a million small jellyfish, from 1" to 6" in diameter. Frequently listened and enjoyed the reports and singing from the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen on Radio Wales. I didn't know it at the time, but much of the above pattern was to be repeated over the following days.

By 18.00 we'd only achieved 9 miles in 7½ hours and. Aberystwyth was still some 7 miles away. I'd have carried on a little longer, but at this point the shore changes character. From New Quay there had been some cliffs, but also shingle beaches. From here north to Aberystwyth was an unbroken line of high rocky cliffs with no suitable anchorage, so I put in towards the last shingle beach before the cliffs and dropped both main anchors over sand and rock. For years I'd carried two anchors (and a grapnel), but found myself

unwilling to use both because of the tangles that any rope I use seems to get into. However, this year I'd made a drum for each 30 metre warp. Normally stowed in the open compartments under the mast, but when in use they fit one each side of the forward end of the centreboard case onto a removable stainless steel rod, which fits into a small bracket mounted on top of the centreboard case. That cured all warp tangles and is a pleasure to use.

There was a lovely sunset. After the washing-up I sat in the stern, back against the boom crutch, smoking a last cigarette and watching, minute by minute, the dull red orb slowly disappearing into the Irish Sea. At times like these one can well understand ancient man worrying about where it went, and wondering how it appeared again from the opposite direction.

Next day we set off at 10.15, but due to light northerly winds and an ebb tide against us until 13.30, progress was again slow. While rowing about 50 yds. off the cliffs I heard deep moaning sounds. Looked around and saw about six grey seals basking on a large rock, with some more careful types watching me from the water. I rowed slowly and quietly in towards them to see how close I could get before they moved. It was about 20-30 yards before the last one slid into the water. Shortly after a light breeze came up from the north and I tacked offshore. Had gone about 4 miles when I noticed we were being followed. A seal was swimming in my wake about 30 yards away, popping up his head about every 20 yards to check where I was. After about ¼ mile more I turned *Little Mischief* into the wind just after he had dived and sat there waiting to see what would happen. His head came up about 10 yards from the stern. He looked at me, and then turned his head away as though he really had no interest in me. So we sailed on and he swam on behind us. We turned inshore; he turned with us. But then inshore he lost interest and disappeared. Perhaps he was like so many landlubber friends who cannot understand my sailing for the joy of sailing, and assume I must go fishing.

Finally rowed into Aberystwyth Harbour at 18.00. When on our way south we'd sailed from here to New Quay in 3½ hours. Now it had taken two days to return.

(to be concluded - 103/18)

Cruising on the Dole - Part III by John Gray

(A cruise by Mirror dinghy around the Welsh coast)

Aberystwyth

Saturday morning, 9th July, the early forecast was the usual "Variable, 3 or less". Cleared harbour at 10.30, heading north for Aberdovey, 9 miles away, with ebb against me until mid-afternoon. Wind was mainly light and heading me, or calm, when I used the "10' strides" as I liked to think of rowing. The last few miles were tacking against a N2 to the Aberdovey Bar Buoy. No problem like last time as wind was along the shore and over half-tide flood, so we sailed easily the mile to Aberdovey Pier where I tied *Little Mischief* to a ladder and climbed ashore for water and phone. Met the Harbour Master (to be exact, he made a point of meeting me) who remembered our last visit and that I hadn't reported to him. Rather an officious type, but I was polite and regretful and he arranged a drying mooring for me a few hundred yards upstream, close inshore. In the night I awoke and could see by the street lights that the dried-out sandbank was very uneven. From my limited viewpoint at the stern, *Little Mischief* seemed very unstable, but she was level and didn't seem to move, so I went back to sleep.

Forecast at 06.25 was E 3-4 which raised my hopes of a run back across the northern head of Cardigan Bay to Lleyn Peninsular. HW was 08.45 and we left the mooring at 09.30 and, with a good east wind and plenty of water, took a short cut across the sandbanks to clear the estuary. Then NNW up the coast about a mile offshore, reaching Sarn y Bwch off Pen Bwch Point at 11.00. This was our take-off point for the 17 mile crossing. Weather was hot, visibility poor at 2 miles or less. Tide against us until 15.30. Crossing Sarn y Bwch, the good East wind died for about an hour, then picked up to E 1-2 when all land had disappeared in the misty heat haze.

I had decided on a NW course for the headland of Trwyn Cilan to give a later choice of turning NE to Abersoch, or more westerly to Aberdaron. This course would take us across the end of Sarn Badrig, but if I was too much to the south I'd hope to see the Causeway buoy which was a mile or two off the end. I had two compasses, both of the small hill-walker's pocket type by Silva. The larger had a mirror so I used that for shaving and kept it in my toilet bag as a spare. The other is, I think, the smallest and cheapest that Silva make. It had been knocked off the thwart several times during the trip and on 2 or 3 occasions it had been found in the bilge water when bailing out. But it gave true and faithful service throughout, so that at 15.00, after 3 hours without sight of land, we entered the disturbed waters at the end of Sarn Badrig and then saw, about a mile to the west, the Causeway Buoy. Such a pleasant warm feeling to know where you are and that the navigation has been good.

I spent much of that day stripped off to just a floppy hat, listening to Radio Wales. Rosie Swale was interviewed about an Atlantic crossing she intends to make, then I heard later a most interesting programme on Val Howell's round-the-World voyage. In the evening at anchor I enjoyed a programme on one of my favourite sailor/writers, Hillaire Belloc. Until this trip the radio had been strictly weather forecasts only.

We potted on steadily northwestwards. Wind varied between 1-2 until 17.00, when I became suspicious that there was a change on the way. The sun had become overcast. It got chilly. Visibility to SW seemed less than elsewhere on the empty horizon. Then the wind died and the sails slatted. I started getting dressed and tidying up *Little Mischief* thinking it might be rain, and if so, wind. While bent down stowing gear in lockers I suddenly became aware of a strong wind blowing. Hurriedly I put on oilskins and lifejacket while *Little Mischief* steered herself in a SW3. After 72 hrs. with mainsail to port, it felt strange with sail to starboard. My senses told me loud and clear that we were heading in the wrong direction, but I trusted the compass and it didn't let us down. We went well for half an hour, then the wind slowly died to 1 and veered to N.

At 18.00 I saw Trwyn Cilan ahead, faint but definite, so decided to head for the 3 mile wide sandy bay of Porth Neigwl, otherwise known as Hell's Mouth, which forms the instep in the "foot" of Lleyn. With a fluky variable wind, and some rowing, it was 20.45 before I dropped the hooks in the eastern corner. Noted that this crossing had taken 11 hrs. 15 mins, compared with 7 hrs. going South; distance similar at 24 miles in total. I remembered the last time I'd come in here, several years before; while heading for the shore in a light wind to find a campsite. I'd been surprised to find *Little Mischief* being lifted by swell, then noticed the line of breaking surf on shore. Now we're not used to this in the Irish Sea, but I'd read all the right books on how to land in surf, so I took all the right actions; stowed sails, rowed in stern first (not easy in a *Mirror*, even dropped an anchor just off the beach. When I landed, the "surf" was about 1' high! Well - it was good training!

Monday, 11th July I awoke for the 06.25 forecast, sat up in bed planning the passage of Bardsey Sound, then, satisfied that there was time to spare, went back to sleep until 08.30. At 11.45 set off for Aberdaron, 6 miles to the West. Kept inside the bay out of the ebb stream, mostly rowing in a hot sun. Reaching the other side of Hell's Mouth a light SW came up which then veered to W and blew 3, then veered more to N4 at 15.00. Rather hectic sailing for the 20 minutes it took to get out of the bay and round the headland, before the wind dropped off again to N1. Finally beat into the beach of holiday makers at Aberdaron and landed at 16.30. After some shopping, set off again at 17.30, on schedule, in N 2-3 for Bardsey Sound. The main north-going flood stream was due at 18.30, but I was hoping to use an inshore young flood that starts earlier.

The sun had gone behind cloud and the Sound had a dark, forbidding look about it. Bardsey Island, 12 miles away, was a dull dark mass and the high rock cliffs of the mainland shore, about 50-100 yds. away, were distinctly unwelcoming. The seas were reasonable but the wind was a gusty 3 off the cliffs that made me glad I'd reefed before leaving Aberdaron, but we were through and close inshore round Braich y Pwll headland in 25 minutes when the wind died again.

But soon it came back light from the North, and in the strong flood stream - it was nearly Springs - we tacked on and off shore, in and out of the waters above the Tripods reef. They were calm, but with menace in their round swirling bubble-like surface. Then ahead I saw a line of standing waves, breaking white, opposite Dinas Bach, a large outlier. Tacked close inshore while current swept us towards the waves, but we just missed them. So the Tripods weren't so quiet.

When 4 miles from Bardsey Sound I rowed into Porth Iago, with some difficulty as the tidal stream was trying very hard to force me past the entrance to the small rocky cove. Only about 200 yds. deep, with a 100 yd. wide entrance narrowing to a small, sandy beach, it is well sheltered except from SW. But rowing around I found a nasty looking underwater reef near the middle, so carefully dropped both anchors on sand.

In the morning I awoke at 04.45. Knowing this to be about LW I had a look outside and found *Little Mischief* only about 5 yds. from the reef, which now seemed to tower above us. I shortened the scope of the anchors so I could enjoy an early breakfast. But then an uncomfortable swell started coming in and I lost my breakfast to the fishes. Don't know why I bothered cooking it.

Left at 07.30 with a good flood tide until HW at 11.30. Visibility was poor, at about ½ mile. Wind very variable and light or non-existent, so rowed a lot. With early start and lost breakfast I felt tired and lethargic, but finally passed the point at Porth Dinllaen, 82 miles, at 11.00. By 13.00 I'd crossed the bay after some delay due to wind and tide having turned against me, and had run *Little Mischief* aground on a shingle beach just to the west of Nefyn Point. It was a quiet spot, practically no one in sight, backed by high grassy cliffs. Wind had died again; hot cloudless blue sky; so I put a grapnel over bow with enough warp for 2-3 hours of rising tide, then took a long line ashore from the crown of the grapnel. So *Little Mischief* sat happily just off the light surf and when I returned I'd be able to pull her in with the long line. I then found a path up the cliffs and wandered off to Nefyn. The reader who has paid close attention to this narrative will now realise I'd made a stupid error. The only excuse I can offer, other than early senility, is the sickness in early morning.

It was a very pleasant walk of about 3 miles to Morfa Nefyn, and then to Nefyn, trying unsuccessfully to phone home three times. The cliff path overlooking the bay is a lovely walk with beautiful views. About 15.30 I arrived on the path above *Little Mischief* and was horrified to look down and see her high and dry, about 15 yds. up the shingle. Cursed myself for all kinds of fool. The tide was ebbing - not flooding!

Then spent two hours unloading heavy gear, and using a couple of wood rollers moved *Little Mischief* about 15 yds. down the shingle, by which time the water had ebbed a further 15 yds. Then a couple of holiday makers, the only ones in sight, offered help. Resting every few yards, we carried *Little Mischief* past weed covered rocks and left her on a sandbank near the water. Still no wind, so not worth trying to go further north that day, and besides re-stowing gear I had a couple of small maintenance jobs to do. Floated off at 19.30 and rowed round Nefyn Point to the moorings where I'd tied up before when sailing South.

Wednesday morning, 13th July, and the 06.25 forecast was again, "Variable, less than 3". They just hate to mention the word "calm". After a good breakfast, though I was running short of food and only had 17p in my pocket, I rowed out of the bay at 08.40 with visibility about ½ mile in misty heat haze. It was dead calm so rowed until 13.30. When the tide turned against us a light breeze sprang up from the West (is it just coincidence that so often the wind strength or direction changes at change of tide?). Finally came ashore out of the ebbing tide about half way between Trevor and Belan Point, at the small promontory of Towyn Maen Aylan at 14.15; 102 miles in 52 hours. A sandy beach with a caravan park behind attracted me for drinking water. Use of the phone left me with 2p, so when I noticed the camp shower block and remembered it was about a week since I'd had a shower, I quickly got towel and soap from *Little Mischief* and, trying to look like a caravan holiday maker, stole a lovely hot shower.

Left at 15.00 to begin what turned out to be a special kind of sailing. Still hot, but visibility had improved so I could just see the entrance to the Menai Straits at Belan Point 5 miles to the North. Tide was foul, but wind SW 1-2 and it was enough to stem the tide if I kept about 100 yds. off the low-lying shore in around 4 ft. of water; frequently a lot less. Speed was a steady, satisfying 1½ to 2 knots. I sat in my favourite position in these conditions, on the floor facing forward, legs on or under the thwart, back against the aft

buoyancy tank cushioned by the buoyancy aid. Jib and mainsail sheets quick release cleated, and tiller under my arm. The mainsail cleat, which I'd carved myself, was new this cruise, and used with a finger cleat fitted under the tiller and a length of shock-cord stretching from gunwale to gunwale and jamming at the finger cleat, I had a self-steering aid which was simple and effective. Used it considerably and often wondered how I'd managed before to sail single-handed without it.

We slowly passed the long beach at Dinas Dinlle using the crowds of bathers as depth gauges, and at 17.00 were approaching the drying sandbanks which form the southern horn to the entrance of the Menai Straits. These banks dry up to 7 ft. and extend for 2 miles offshore to the West, and LW was about 19.30. The sandbank offshore dried first as I slowly approached, but I could see a gap fairly close inshore. As we made our way into the gap the ebb stream became stronger as the banks dried, and the gap became narrower. Wind now aft and sails goose-winged in the light breeze, but eventually *Little Mischief* was just stopped dead by the ebb stream. I tried rowing but water too shallow to get a grip, so out of the boat and towing with the painter. Sails still goose winged and pushing, we struggled to make the final 400 - 500 yds. into the deep water channel at the Belan Narrows, dragging *Little Mischief* a few times over sand in 3" to 4" of water. Then a repeat of the earlier pleasant sailing as, still goose-winged, we slowly sailed about 2 yds. off the fairly steep-to shingle beach through the 300 yd. wide Narrows.

The ebb was still flowing out of the Straits at about 2K in the middle as we finally cleared the cannons of Belan Fort at 18.30. It felt good being back in the familiar Menai Straits as we potted along the mainland shore to the river mouth at Caernarfon at 19.45. Again insufficient water, so while waiting for the flood I stowed sails and went ashore for a stroll round the town. That was a mistake as I passed three fish and chip shops feeling hungry with the appetising smells, but no money! Then up-river and anchored same spot as before, opposite the Castle. It had been a good, satisfying day.

In the morning my radio/alarm woke me as usual for the early forecast and I saw that we'd have to move or dry out with LW at 08.15. So rowed to river mouth and anchored to make breakfast of porridge and Ryvita. In light SW wind with flood stream just started, we set off at 08.40. Pleasantly warm sun in blue sky as we ran, goose winged, NE up the Straits made for perfect sailing. Passed Port Dinorwic, about 32 miles, in the first hour, which gave me an estimate for reaching the Swellies about 10.30. Ideally one should pass through this dangerous area at HW slack - 13.00 - but I knew we could pass quite comfortably an hour before that. I had before made the passage single-handed in both mid-ebb Springs and mid-flood Neaps, but that was in a Wayfarer and they were both hairy rides. It was now a day after top of Spring tides, and 10.30 would be about mid-flood, but decided to chance it as the sooner we got past, the longer the favourable tide on the other side.

I saluted Nelson again and thanked him for his help as we passed at 10.10, and was through the Swellies under the Suspension Bridge at 10.25. Thought at first as we passed under the Britannia Railway Bridge with the new road built on top that the water was going to be fairly quiet. It was not so. I steered the mainland course trying to keep about 3 boat-lengths from the weed covered, rocky bank until opposite the Platters Rocks where the best course is more mid-stream. But at one point the swirling current forced us straight for the bank. No time to use the oars, which were shipped at the ready, but half a boat-length from the rocks the current changed and we were whipped away again. There was a lot of nasty white water boiling over the mid-stream rocks and a series of big breaking standing waves behind the Swellies Rock, which dries 10'. One of the main problems of sailing through this area is that it is rather sheltered, with high, tree-clad

banks, so the wind needed for steerage-way becomes fluky and can die away leaving one very much at the mercy of the current.

We passed Beaumaris at 11.20 going well, goose-winged, in that useful SW 1-2, and sailing alongside a yacht that came out from the moorings we chatted with the two men on board for 1½ miles before we turned eastwards across the Laven Sands. Soon after passing Beaumaris the tidal stream became foul as the flood came round Anglesey and up the Straits against us from the NE end, but the wind in the more open area had increased to 2-3. In the main channel the seas had become very choppy, but were smoother over the shallow sands. It was not a good crossing as the wind backed to E, dropping to 1 or less and forcing us more southwards than I wanted, so eventually reached the mainland coast over a mile SW of Llanfairfechan at 14.30. It had been a good day up to that point with excellent sailing, but now with light head wind, weak but foul tide, the rest of the day was a frustrating mixture of tacking and rowing NE along the coast past Llanfairfechan and Penmaenmawr. There I gave up in a flat calm at 17.15. I'd have liked to have gone a further four miles into Deganwy or Conwy, but felt it wasn't necessary in the settled weather conditions to reach their shelter, so anchored in the slight bay at Penmaenmawr.

On Friday morning, 15th July, the forecast was a good W 3-4, veering NW later. I wanted, in fact needed, to get home today if I could. Food supplies were almost gone and then, soon after I'd started cooking my breakfast porridge, my last Gaz cylinder ran out. We were off at 08.30. Wind W 2-3. Blue hazy sky. Visibility less than 3 miles. LW at 09.45, with HW about 15.45 at Greenfield in the Dee Estuary, 31 miles away.

At 09.30 we turned East under Great Ormes Head. Seas were reasonable; nothing vicious as wind was now with the turning tide. At 11.30 my log notes that "Land long out of sight. Wind still W 2-3. Would love a fag!" I'd run out of tobacco yesterday. Shortly afterwards quite a large ship passed 2 mile to North, heading West. Due to sandbanks up to 5 miles offshore, ships usually pass much further North of my course, so thinking we might be a little off course I changed from E to ESE. Then I laughed to myself to think that the Captain of that ship might be changing course to North at the sight of *Little Mischief* out there.

At 12.45 saw the coastline faintly about 1-2 miles to the South, and recognised the Sun Centre on East side of Rhyl. Then, half way between Prestatyn and the Point of Ayr where we'd turn into the Dee Estuary, that lovely wind died - but only for about ¾ hour while I rowed with the helpful tide. The wind returned from NW 2-3 and we turned into the Dee at 14.30. Goose-winged we headed SE up the 3-4 mile wide estuary and, at 15.45, *Little Mischief* was turned into the little creek at Greenfield, and 100 yds. upstream, out of the wind, she nosed gently into a grassy bank. Really a beautiful finish both to that day of 31 miles in just over 7 hours, and to my longest cruise of 300 miles in 19 days.

Being on the Dole does have some cruising advantages!
