

Cruise/ Race Weekend: July 3 and 4

Written by Tony Brogan

Pictures by Tony Brogan, Heather Sloat, and Sam Keating



Before moving to Tony's Report, here are some comments from One of the organizers: Sam Keating.

'We lucked out this past weekend and had beautiful conditions with lots of sun. Line honours went to John and Anne on Turbodactyl.'

Once we got into the circle raft, there was good company, each on our own boats, with some entertainment from Jim on his guitar.

We were treated to a gorgeous sunset, the likes of which can only be truly enjoyed from a boat. Then, as we were all tucking in, the rise of a beautiful moon finished off a great day.

On Sunday, it was a relaxing start with many opting to row ashore for a walk before heading back home. A good, and safe, time was had by all.'



This weekend was scheduled as the Vendee Saltspring. I was looked forward to yet another yellow jersey win!. But Covid regs deemed it not to be and when Gyle volunteered to organize a race cruise to Montague, how could I resist? Then it was to persuade Colette to come. That it was a similar event to the successful Around Salt Spring argued that it would be a fun overnighter so she agreed to come and have a sail with some purpose!!.

There would be a channel 72 roll call at 09.30 Saturday with a 10.00 start to the race. It was hoped for a dozen boats but in the end there were just 6 boats on the start line. The course was a day sail port hand around Prevost island and then NE up Trincomali Channel to the north end of Galiano, crossing a transit between the Hydro marker notice and the mark for Atkins reef. Then we would look to coordinate a large circle anchor with the boats' stern tied to each other and "do" supper all aboard the individual boats..

The winds were light but there was a breeze and we opted for the 135 genoa and main with the spinnaker packed and readied on the bow if required. Most boats carried or towed dinghies, but Radiant Heat "Cheated" and had no dinghy. We would catch a ride if going ashore, use the public wharf or just stay aboard.

The start was standard with a SE wind with a bias to the South, not the forecast easterly. We set a course for the start line to the starboard end with 90 seconds to go. We were a little late over the line but crossed at speed. Others were mostly better placed and well over in time. We set a course, as usual, for the Chain islands.

Second Wind and Shingebiss were well placed and Ptubodactyl was off into the lead without hesitation. The fleet tacked back and forth to get past Second Sisters and was already spreading out.

The wind moved easterly and the route into Captains Passage was either to head for Batt Rock or North of Welbury spar. We chose the Starboard tack toward the spar as did Ptubodactyl. We followed her while the fleet behind had a struggle to make the turn with Shingebiss and Second Wind a quarter mile back. Battle Axe and Stargazer were further back still.

The tide was due to go from ebb to flood about 11.30 and I hoped to catch the tail end of the ebb in Captains passage before riding the flood up Swanson Channel and then up Triconmali.

The wind set us down into Welbury bay until we passed over the reef in deep water and headed for the Scott point shore. Looking well back, I could see the following boats had a giant lift with a shift back to a southerly wind and were now headed straight to the Prevost shore and rapidly closing distance . Ptubodaytyl was out in the channel near Welbury spar.

Finally 15 minutes later the lift reached Radiant Heat and we were lifted 90 degrees allowing us to sail along parallel to Scott Point and finally clearing it and head across to the Prevost side of the Passage. What were the currents doing?

The wind grew lighter but we were getting current assist a little and when we turned and tacked away near U60 we were with the current and putting distance again between the following boats and keeping Ptubodactyl in sight . We had 4.5 knots over ground .

The wind grew patchy and the tide line appeared two thirds of the way down Captain's passage. It was announced by a change in the water to a funny little shimmering chop as though the water was agitated. Within 10 boat lengths we were down to 2.5 knots over ground.

Getting past Point Liddell was a struggle and Radiant Heat took a longer tack down to the Channel Islands to meet an approaching wind line, and as it happened, there was less adverse current. Then getting a lift on the starboard tack from the Islands we made Point Liddell with room to spare while boats behind struggled to be released from their private patch of still light air. Ptubodactyl was well ahead flying a spinnaker up toward Portlock Point.

We now made good speed assisted by being on a beam reach and having current with us. The following boats were now far behind, and the trimaran in view, as we turned Portlock point. We set the spinnaker on a deep reach in a modest breeze giving us a good steady 4 knots over ground.

We were set for a good run up Trincomali, sometimes on dead down wind and sometimes a deep reach. We moved over the Galiano side for better current assistance and gradually closed the gap on the gybing back and forth Tri, lengthening the lead on the following boats who stayed on the Prevost Shore for the longest time.

And that was the race as each in turn flaked sails and motored into the proposed anchor spot outside Montague harbour on the North side.

But for Jaqui, it was an exciting one as she rounded her first ever mark. This is her pointing it out:



Hearing radio contact with J Passage we contacted them to find their location and motored in to be invited by Jaqui to raft up to her ocean capable little craft: a 24 ft full keel Passage. That was nice. Bumpers deployed, breast lines secured, spring lines attached, and we were set for the duration. J Passage had 200 feet of chain deployed in less than 40 feet of water. We were well anchored.

Heather crewing aboard just days after buying herself a real "Race boat", a Martin 242, offered us a beer and some aperitifs. That set the tone for the balance of our stay.

Meanwhile the fleet came in and laid out individual anchors and then reversed up to our sterns' to stern tie to us and to each other until we had a virtual circle of rafted boats but still separated. A perfect adherence to covid 19 recommendations.

The rest of the afternoon evaporated into a pleasant evening as we chatted back and forth.

BBQs were fired up. Wine bottles opened. Beer cans popped and all were fed and watered!.

Jim pulled out his guitar and entertained us with a few numbers, including his own composition, that had all joining in for chorus and hand actions. Fun.

Finally at dusk we one by one left the circle as boats moved to individual anchorages. Before turning in while doing a final check of the anchorage I was greeted by a glorious full moon rising, fully reflected in the water, bathing the harbour with a silvery glow.

We slept well that night rising to a sunny morn and a heavy dew. Lots of Kick Ass coffee was brewed and consumed as we watched our neighbours gradually appear one by one, stepping out on the decks stretching and yawning.

It was late morning before we raised sail to leave our hostesses Jaqui and Heather.

Under white sails we took the last of the ebb, passed the entrance to Montague Harbour and down to the south exit into Triconmali. By then the tide was flooding and although a light 3 knot SE breeze kept us moving we were set to the north.

Crossing to Captains Passage we were lifted and the current was less and less until we made the passage itself and found the rest of the ebb still running there. The wind freshened to 6 knots or so and through the passage we were back to a mild flood pushing us home to Ganges.

We were back tied up by mid afternoon and as we prepared to leave we reflected on our good fortune of living in a spot on earth allowing us to spend such a pleasant weekend with club members, friends and family.

There is nothing quite like messing about in boats. (You will get another chance July 25/26 on our next Race/Cruise event! FCR)





