

The Official Newsletter for the Conwy Marina Berth Holders Association

Welcome to the first edition of this CMBHA newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for you the members to voice your opinions, share your sailing stories and experiences and keep up-to-date on the work and issues that the CMBHA officers and committee undertake on your behalf.

The success of the newsletter is in the hands of the association membership. If you've got something to say or something to share then your contributions will be more than welcome in any form from a scribbled note to an electronic document.

Now, to get the newsletter off the ground I've knocked up a couple of articles and we've had a couple of other articles submitted by members and I hope you enjoy them.

So let's see those stories, hear those tales and benefit from the advice of the more experienced boating members of the association.

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Des Owen

"Carpe Diem"



Around the Island

A novices first solo voyage around Anglesey

by
Des Owen

We live and sail in a beautiful area don't we? Snowdonia and Anglesey offer not only superb coastal views, as we sail local waters, but challenging and diverse conditions especially for the sailing novice.

I've only been sailing since last year when I bought my first sailing vessel "Carpe Diem", a Carter 30 fin keel yacht about 18 years old. With just my one years experience I certainly qualify as a novice. To get myself up to speed as quickly as possible I enrolled in the RYA Day Skipper course run by the Conwy Sailing School and followed this up last



Approaching Carmel Head

September with the night school based Yachtmaster & Coastal Skipper shore based course. Enjoying and passing both courses I felt ready to try and sail the beast without the aid of crew and further a field than the immediate sailing areas of Conwy Bay, Llandudno & Red Wharf Bay.

I decided I would like to attempt the solo circumnavigation of Anglesey as my first single-handed voyage because of the challenges involved, the scenery and the timescales I had to work with. I decided to take three days for the whole trip.

I spent many hours working out the tidal streams for the journey and chose, on the basis of these calculations, to travel anti-clockwise around the Island and mooring at Holyhead harbour and Port Dinorwic (Y Felinhelli) overnight on the Wednesday and Thursday nights respectively.

Having assembled my weather forecast data for the trip I set off on Wednesday 11th April 2001, from Conwy Marina, as soon as the sill gate dropped.

The wind was forecast Northerly force 2-3 which provided me with a super sail on the same tack along the entire east coast of Anglesey initially fighting a foul stream but after only a few hours enjoying the full flow of a fair stream. This combination at times provided a speed over ground of eight knots according to the GPS. Sea state was no problem at all in these fairly benign conditions and I enjoyed the

sunshine and sailing immensely. I spent some time the night before reading up on the first possible danger area of the trip – Carmel Head – that is said to be the most dangerous part of the entire coastline.

I decided to keep about two miles out to avoid the charted overfalls of the area and found a super course outside of Middle Mouse, a small Islet south east of Carmel Head. Overfalls exist near Point Lynas and the first rougher conditions were experienced here – but enjoyed.

I passed inside the flashing Skerries lighthouse as the sun was falling lower in the sky and the scenery was certainly a delight.

Carmel Head was no problem and I felt good as Carpe Diem and I passed that particular hazard without noticing any overfalls or problems at all.

Next, I headed for Holyhead harbour and followed the charted bearing that forms a line through the North and South Stack lighthouses. I followed this line until the large chimney was in-line with the end of the new harbour wall. When the alignment was made I headed straight for the end of the harbour wall which is easy to see. As I approached the harbour entrance I followed the wall into the harbour keeping about 20 metres from it after giving the harbour wall end a more respectable clearance due to the poorly marked rocks around the area.



Past South Stack Lighthouse

I got on the VHF and called the Holyhead Sailing Club on channel 37. The service from the sailing club was nothing short of excellent. The club has a boatswain who directed me to an empty mooring, which I picked up with ease – surprising myself. The boatswain (Andy) is also available to ferry you ashore and back if required until about 2100 hours – free of charge - excellent.

The sailing club provided a good value meal before I returned to the boat later in the evening to plan the next leg of the voyage. I'd left my glasses in the club and without any hint of inconvenience Andy the boatswain and his wife collected them from the club and delivered them to my boat. Now that's what I call service. The cost for mooring for the night was £8 for a boat under 40 feet and I thought this was great value considering the free ferry facilities.

So, having enjoyed Holyhead for the night it was time to set off towards the Caernarvon Bar (CB) and Y Felinhelli. The pilot recommended setting off from Holyhead at HW – 2 hours to avoid the worst of the tidal streams and overfalls – which are considerable in the area of the north and south stack lighthouses. I decided that this would not leave me enough time to reach the CB within the limits of the +/- 3 hours local high water as recommended. So I set off about 1000 on Thursday morning and headed due north for a few miles then due west to latitude 53.46 so that I could then head due south towards the bar but without having to get too close to the lighthouses.

Well, the best laid plans and all that...I was having a lovely sail with the boat heeling nicely over in only 15 knots of wind but I was getting nowhere fast. The streams run up to about 4 knots in the area I was sailing and in hindsight it would have been a lot quicker to power through very close to the lighthouse cliffs of Holyhead Mountain, which are steep too.

Although not a race I realised I was running out of time to get to Caernarfon Bar after spending so much time trying to get around the headland. The tidal stream though would run fair from about 1400 hours and I banked on that and the forecast south westerly F3-4 to get me there on time.

The wind was actually south-south westerly which made it difficult to find a single tack for the sail along the west coast. After 1400 hours however I tacked out a few miles and found a tack all the way to Llanddwyn Island near the C1 and C2 buoys that mark the entrance to the bar. A cracking sail with the help of the engine for a few hours got me to the bar about HW + 3½ which was a bit late really and not recommended especially when the sea state is a bit dodgy. I decided that the alternative of sailing on to Porth Dinllaen for the night was not as attractive as it might have been on a nicer day. So I went for it and at C3 cleared the bar by about 1 foot, which makes the blood rush a bit quicker I have to say.



The Skerries

Once past C3 wending my way through the other buoys is fairly straightforward keeping green to starboard until Caernarfon where the buoyage system changes at the south cardinal buoy.

Sails down now and engine on as the wind dropped completely in the evening as I headed for a mooring at Y Felinhelli which is a delightful place to bed down for the night. I stayed on board for the night and confirmed my departure times through the Swellies in the morning which must allow for reaching the

Swellies at HW Slack – which is actually (as I'm sure you know) well before HW.

A misty dawn broke in Y Felinhelli on Friday morning as I waited for the slack at 1300 hours. The Swellies is a pussy cat at the right time and you can even watch for the exact moment the tide stops flooding and cross what seems like a pond – following the exact line as recommended in the pilot.

I motored to Puffin Island due to the complete lack of wind and decided that at HW there should be enough water over the Dutchman's Bank to avoid going around the back of Puffin. There was enough water by about three metres and I then headed back to Conwy following the channel route that's become so familiar over last year as I've started to learn how to sail.

My next trip will be to take company around the Island but travel in the opposite direction. In August I plan to sail to the Isle of Man in company – at least the first time anyway.



Full speed to the Caernarfon Bar

Easy GPS Data Entry

How to use a PC to enter your waypoints and upload them to your GPS

By Des Owen

I think I most appreciated my Garmin handheld during my recent single-handed voyage around Anglesey when it was difficult to move from the cockpit to look at the chart.

The answer for me was a series of waypoints that made up a route. This allowed me firstly to identify landmarks that I would otherwise not be sure about and secondly to make sure I was keeping to my designated course.

As part of my voyage plan I therefore set about entering waypoints by hand into the Garmin 12. I soon found this tedious and thought there must be an easier way.

I searched the World Wide Web and found a couple of shareware products that allow the waypoints and routes to be entered, plotted and printed on a PC and then uploaded to the Garmin.

This article shows you how to download and use just one of these products, **GarTrip**.

We'll look at other software in another newsletter.

What do you need?

A Data Cable

Firstly you'll need to obtain a **data cable** to form the link between the GPS and the PC. Data cables are available for most machines and I paid about £26 for the cable to link the GPS 12 from Garmin. Check out your local Chandlery – which is where I found mine.

The data cable connects to the Garmin with a specialised connector and to the PC via a COM port (the small nine pin socket at the back of the PC. Normally there are two, COM1 and COM2).

The Software

GarTrip can be downloaded from www.gartrip.de a German Web site but the pages are in English. The software is for evaluation and saving of files is restricted until you pay a nominal registration fee of 30 dollars US, which is about £22.

Talking the same Language

When you connect the PC and the Garmin you'll need to make sure that the GPS is set to talk the same language that the software expects.

Each software package may be different but in the case of the GarTrip the *Interface* setting on your Garmin should read

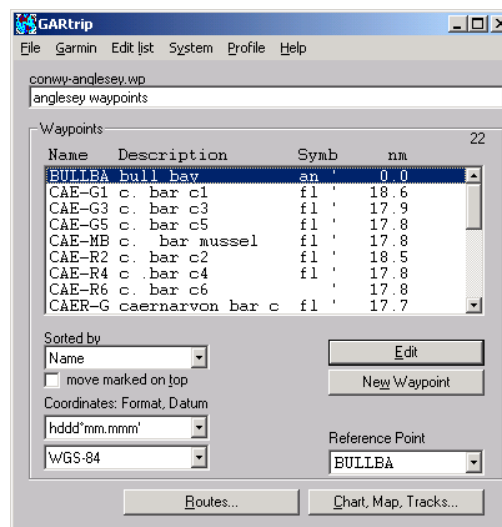
GRMN/GRMN or Garmin/Garmin

But read the instructions supplied with the software as this may change over time.

So you've got the data cable, connected the PC and the GPS, you've downloaded the GarTrip software package and the GPS is set to talk the same language as the GPS.

Before we look at the package in detail the next important consideration is to decide which datum to use. I'm not qualified to offer advice on this but what I did was to set the GPS datum and the software datum to the same as the datum shown on my popular charts – Ordnance Survey of Great Britain.

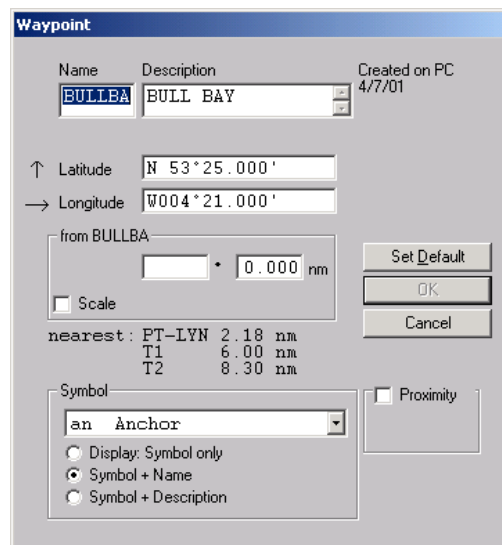
GarTrip



GarTrip Main Screen

The GarTrip main screen shows a list of waypoints saved under a file name called conwy-anglesey.wp. In the unregistered version you get full use of the software but you can only save up to 30 points.

Selecting a waypoint and pressing edit or double clicking produces the following screen:



The Waypoint Edit Screen

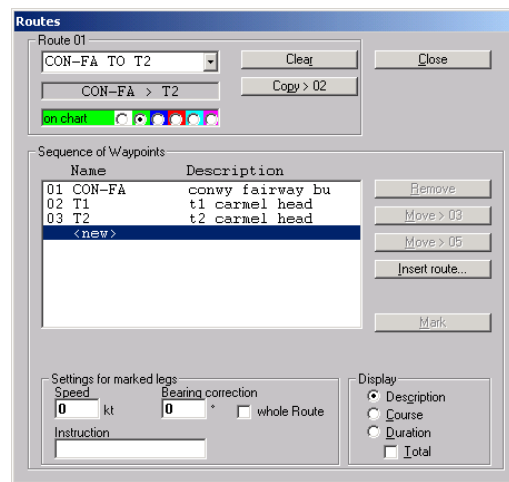
A useful screen this and I found entering waypoints quite easy.

The proximity check box allows the waypoint to offer a warning to the user when the GPS is in the vicinity or proximity of the point – useful.

You can select a symbol for the waypoint that will be displayed on your GPS unit.

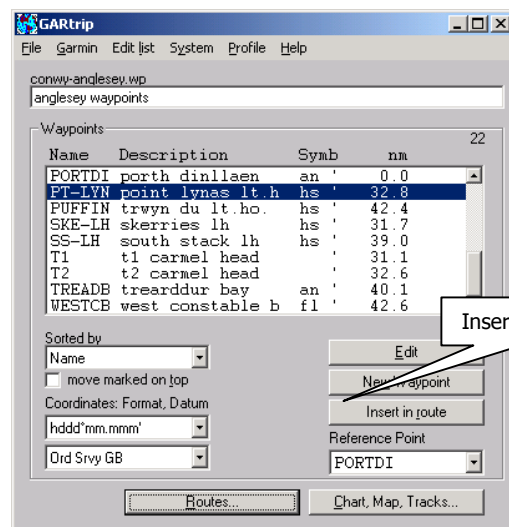
Note that the system also tells you how far the current waypoint is from a selection of other waypoints in the list. This is useful as a check to see if you have mistyped an entry.

Once you have entered the waypoints that make up a route you can select Routes from the main screen that will produce this screen:



Route

The screen shows a part entered route. To create a route or add points to the current route simply leave open the routes window and the waypoints window – select a waypoint and hit “Insert in Route” which is a button that only appears when both windows are open.

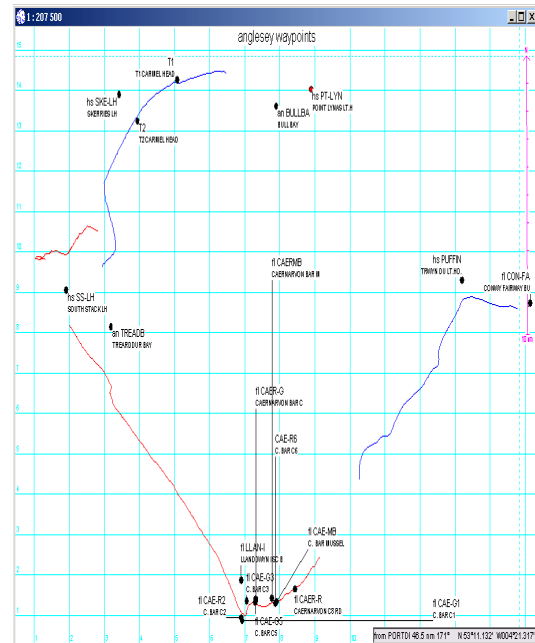


Waypoint list with “Insert in Route” button

Menu options allow you to upload and download data between the GPS and the PC, choose the correct serial port and select configuration options such as units of measurements.

The fun stuff starts from the Chart, Map, Tracks button.

Tracks allow you to graphically view a scaled display of where you and your GPS have been:



Tracks Sequences around Anglesey

Not bad eh? This excellent display lets you see how close to your waypoints you travelled and how efficient your route actually was.

You can edit the tracks, zoom and pan to look at your complete voyage or just parts of interest. In the above display you can see the exact route I took across the Caernarfon bar.

Conclusion

That’s all I’ve got room to show you on the GarTrip package but there is a lot more to play with.

I think the package is pretty good – for me the screens are a bit untidy – but apart from that it represents excellent value for money at about £22 for the full registered version.

It’s easy to use and is quite intuitive. I managed to have the package downloaded, installed and talking to the Garmin within minutes so go on give it a try – it’s fun.

If you’ve found a shareware product that you like why not write a review for the newsletter and e-mail it to des@thefoxgroup.co.uk. Screen shots are easy, just press ALT+PrtSc to copy the image of the screen and then press Ctrl+V to paste it into your Word document.

Stand up to tension main halyard, Eclipse bucks like a circus mule, I lose my footing, spin through 90 degrees and slam my lower back (arse) into the washboard slides.

Winded & seeing stars I slumped into the corner of the cockpit. Peter wraps the sheet tighter around his wrist, looking even more worried. Still no signal on the mobile. 1700 hrs, I can see the coastline now.

Peter's comment, "If I get through this I'm never going on a boat again". Obviously he's forgotten he's going back on the ferry. Large fishing boat dead ahead 1/2 mile away with 20 metre out riggers holding his lines. Hope he's going to change course. Wind's dropped to 23 knots, sea still rough, and echo sounder off the scale at 250 metres. Still ten miles to go, SOG now 6.5 knots ease throttle to 2500 rpm. 1800 hrs Tall chimneys to north of Dunlaoghaire in view, wind down to 15 knots.

1815 hrs DTG 3 miles. Mobile phone rings, Margaret saying she'd been worried sick and why hadn't I rung her as promised. I gently bit my tongue!. "Book the ferry then ring me back & let me know when you'll be arriving" I said sweetly. Black Horrible clouds sweeping towards us, it was obviously going to "precipitate". Called Dublin Radio with our arrival message, they didn't seem interested. Called the Marina, told them I was booked for a week, passed the safe Water Buoy 1 mile from the breakwater.

Mobile phone rings, Margaret in a panic, Super Sea Cat from Liverpool broken, out of service for four days, bloody Italian muck!. Precipitation descends, within 5 minutes we look like two drowned rats. "Margaret, you'll have to go from Holyhead", silence, "let me ring Gail (daughter) and sort it out", "right ring me at 7 we should be in the bar by then" I replied.

We were past the breakwater now, past the entrance of the fishing harbour. What looked like a floating dry stone wall loomed up, it was the inner breakwater built from 1 metre square packs of stone. Channel marked with red and green "telegraph" poles. Turned sharp left after the last red pole, and up the inside of the breakwater, I'd asked to go portside to, the reply from the marina, "Please yourself your on a hammerhead!". There it was Delta two, with a 40 foot motor cruiser taking up about three fifths of the room available.

The precipitation precipitated on. Engine on tickover, glide slowly past the hammerhead, thousands of Irish Eyes were smiling in anticipation of us making a cock up. Pushed the tiller all the way to the left, Eclipse swung to the right in a gentle arc. The stern of the motor cruiser with Avon attached rushed towards us, selected reverse, revved the engine, Eclipse slid to a halt, the fenders kissed the pontoon, Peter and I stepped off and tied her up. A classic mooring demonstration. I glanced up, the Irish eyes were no longer looking our way, we'd arrived. 1845 hrs 11¼ hrs run 56 miles on the log. Checked in at the marina porta-cabin, then up the steps to the Yacht club, Double Jameson's for me, a pint of Guinness for Peter. Second double later, mobile rang, "we'll be on the Stena Sea Cat tomorrow, gets in at 10.30" said Margaret. That was it, the holiday could now start.

Run Down

by
Alan Currie

Monday 26th June returning from an overnight stay Moelfre having motored all the way there (The bloody wind is either non-existent or always on my nose when I leave Conway)

On the return, - a beautiful sunny day - the wind was ideal, the tide was under us, the autopilot was working a treat - this is what sailing is all about. The autopilot had been set to clip Puffin and head for the Fairway buoy but the tide had other ideas and was wanting to set us into the entrance to the straits.

However with frequent adjustments we were doing nicely until about a quarter of a mile north of Puffin a Contessa 32 came storming down from the north to their moorings in Beaumaris. They were heading directly for our port side, - as we waited for him to go astern of us, we realised there was no look out on the offending boat. With no engine on to accelerate out of way - we frantically asked the autopilot to turn to starboard - frantic screams from Maureen and myself caused two heads to pop up above a canopy with a loud - "SORRY" from the occupants of the other boat - neither could get out of the way fast enough and a mighty collision took place - ramming into my port side amidships.

My crew was now shaking with fright at the severity of the collision and I was frantically pulling life jackets from the locker as I was sure there was going to be a big GLUG GLUG. However the 14 inch square hole it tore in the hull was above the waterline, and after exchanging details over the VHF continued on our way - shattered but unharmed. The Contessa seemed to have suffered minimal damage - his stem head doing 99% of the damage.

Later on in the evening I phoned the telephone number given to me over the VHF and repeatedly got - We have no record of this telephone number -

Worry now started as great as the impact - but after a combination of redials and adjusting the numbers around eventually got through to the owner of the other boat and obtained - with reluctance - details of his insurance - after which he made the absurd suggestion that we take it no further - he would repair his and I would repair my own - needless to say he was told what he could do with that idea.

Moral of the story - no matter how beautiful a day - wear a life belt and also have ready a very noisy instrument to wake up anyone who comes to close to you without giving clear intentions and lastly always have a crew member who can scream more loudly than you - without which the accident could probably have been worse. We have learned that collision regs only work when both boats know what is going on. We will not be so presumptuous in future."

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Editors Note - *I can certainly empathise with Alan as exactly the same thing happened to me in exactly the same place. My offender was reading his charts*

on auto-pilot whilst his look-out wife read the paper. Wallop – full on glancing blow – what a complete plonker – you know who you are !!! We should name the area the Puffin Triangle!

Feedback

- ✓ The Marina management have asked us to point out that card-carrying members of the association can get 2p a litre off diesel and 3p a litre off petrol – **but only when paying cash.**
- ✓ Don't forget your discount is still valid in Tradewind Marine formally known as Mailspeed Marine. A new owner has taken over and we wish them every success.
- ✓ Stories, comments, feedback can be sent to Des Owen at des@thefoxgroup.co.uk or handed to a committee member.

Picture Gallery

Each issue we'll reserve space for your pictures. To start the ball rolling here's a few more from me trip around the island:



Coming into Holyhead Harbour



Tranquil Port Dinorwic



Dead Calm in the Straits



Plas Newydd



Towards Point Lynas