

Pai Nai's Summer Cruise2005



**Cherbourg, Guernsey, Jersey, Granville, St Malo,
Plouer-sur-Rance, Carteret, Dielette, Newtown River**

Summer Cruise on Pai Nai 2005



Pai Nai Leaving Jersey on passage to Carteret

I had waited 10 years before being able to join Dave in retirement and sail off on Pai Nai to enjoy an extended summer cruise we had planned to do for years. So here we were on Saturday 11 June 2005 loaded up on the pontoon at Marchwood Yacht Club ready to go and full of anticipation.

We could only get away later that afternoon, cool for the time of year, so a short sail over to the Folly in a SW4 under Main and Genoa where we picked up a buoy for the night and were serenaded to sleep by the Isle of Wight music festival!!

Our plan was to get across the Channel a.s.a.p but a strong SW was forecast for several days so we could only cruise in the Solent, no need to take risks, plenty of time, so it was a visit to Yarmouth and Lymington with lots of walking to keep ourselves amused. The annoying thing was the weather was sunny and clear and when in harbour the thought goes through

your mind “perhaps we could have gone” but when we walked up on Tennyson Down and looked out to sea we knew we had made the right decision. By Friday we decided all was not lost, we could join the Trident Rally that weekend at the Folly. A foggy trip from Lymington to the Folly with visibility under a mile, but no matter, time to test out our new toy for the cruise a Garmin 172C chart plotter. We had played with it a few times before leaving for the holiday. This piece of equipment really was worth every penny and in those conditions certainly gave us confidence in conjunction with the GPS with a visual confirmation of our position. An enjoyable rally in company with Little Drum and Dandra, and the forecast starting to look good.

Sunday 19 June. The Solent to Cherbourg. Distance 82 Miles

At last a good forecast SE 3-4. So a departure at 07.15 in beautiful sunshine bound for Cherbourg. It was a great sail with full Main and Genoa and with the engine just ticking over this gave us 6 knots from the Needles to approximately half way across then the wind died. The wind filled in nicely from the SW 3-4 for the last 10 miles arriving in Cherbourg at 21.45 to be greeted by friends on another Marchwood boat.

The next 2 days were spent doing the usual things in Cherbourg, up to the Hypermarket to stock up on booze, and pleasant lunches of Crevettes, French bread and red wine on board in lovely sunny weather.

Wednesday 22 June. Cherbourg to St. Peter Port. Distance 45miles

Clear blue skies and NW 3 so we left Cherbourg at 07.45 bound for St. Peter Port, Guernsey. A good motor sail, a bit lumpy off Brefort and Cap de la Hague but nothing to worry about then a comfortable trip with perfect timing at Platte Fougere. We went through the Little Russell at 8 knots and tied up on the outer harbour pontoon in St. Peter Port at 15.10 along with plenty of other boats all waiting to enter the harbour which we were able to do at 17.30. We were on a very convenient pontoon near the facilities and shops. We had planned to stay a few days making use of a brilliant bus service. A circular route round the Island where you can hop on and off as we did and pay just 50p each time. Once again strong winds held us up longer than we wanted but that gave us a chance to see things Guernsey had to offer. If you are in Guernsey do try and find time to visit the Guernsey tapestry, a millennium project depicting the years 1000 – 2000 in 10 panels. A really amazing piece of work beautifully displayed with personal audio system. A must for any needle women among you. We also made use of Guernsey YC for a very good lunch, also during our stay it happened to be the Guernsey Harbour Carnival with the hilarious “Man Flight”, similar to our Bird Man of Bognor event, which took place from a purpose built scaffold in the harbour, so we had the perfect view.

Tuesday 28 June. Guernsey to St. Helier, Jersey. Distance 27miles

Having heard a promising forecast the evening before, we had moved to the outer harbour ready for our early passage to Jersey. At 06.45 we departed in a NE3, fine weather with motor and full main. By 07.45 the wind had shifted and increased to ESE6, right on the nose, and now a pretty rough and extremely wet ride.

There was no option to turn back as the tide would be running hard against us so having put 1 reef in the main Pai Nai ploughed on as she does and skipper and crew just had to sit it out, but unpleasant as it was we knew our trusty Trident would look after us. This lasted for 10 miles and as we closed on the coast of Jersey the wind was coming off the land and dramatically changed to a very warm and comfortable E3-4. At 11.00 we rounded Corbiere lighthouse and in the gorgeous warm sunshine enjoyed the lovely coastline and had almost forgotten about the last uncomfortable 3





Elizabeth Castle, St Helier, Jersey

hours. We entered the Elizabeth marina at 12.30, glad we had persevered and after having a lovely shower and snooze, felt human again. Later that afternoon a very pleasant boat owner came along the pontoon to admire Pai Nai with the comment “How nice to see a small, well designed and lovingly cared for boat sneak in quietly” (Makes you feel good doesn’t it)

Unfortunately he was stuck in harbour waiting for a new gear box to be fitted to his Contest. Again we were held up a day or two longer with wind directions against us but Elizabeth Marina is very smart and convenient if not a little pricey at £14.00 a night.

Saturday 2 July. St. Helier to Granville. Distance 30 miles

The forecast sounded good, so at 05.15 we moved out of the marina intending to wait on the outer pontoon until low tide to start our passage to Granville at 10.00, however, the navy had different ideas and had occupied the whole of the pontoon so we had to moor on a pontoon at La Collette marina instead.

At 09.50 in a SW3-4 we headed out of the harbour, with full Main and Genoa and a tickle of the iron horse we were on our way to French shores. With clear blue skies it got hotter and hotter, the wind dropped to an E2, so we settled down to a gentle motor, the sea beautiful clear blue and as if things couldn’t get any better on the stroke of midday a family of dolphins accompanied us for a spell. Don’t they just gladden your heart!

In the 16 years we have owned Pai Nai there have only been 2 other occasions down the West Country when we had their company and they always make me feel rather privileged. At 15.50 we entered the marina over the sill and with efficient marina staff waiting to offer help were swiftly tied up for the weekend along with all the other French boats. There were superb facilities, a very smart promenade around the marina, and only £7.00 a night including electrics. We had been making good use of our refrigerated ice box at all ports of call after leaving the Solent and it certainly made cruising a great deal easier not having to shop every day, especially as we were enjoying some really hot weather. There are lovely walks round the headland at Pointe du Roc where we had sailed, Granville is a delightful town with cobbled streets and plenty of restaurants to choose from further along by the old harbour. A little way out of town is the Christian Dior museum and garden which is worth a visit.

Hoping to move on after the weekend, our plans were yet again thwarted. By Monday it was blowing NW6 and so it continued, Tuesday SW6-7, Wednesday W6 and Thursday NW5-6, the weather not as hot as when we arrived with a few spells of rain. Granville is not the place to be in strong SW’s. It blows straight into the harbour and is incredibly uncomfortable, so much so that on the Tuesday at one point we had to get off the boat we

were feeling so ill. We also heard on the Thursday from another English visitor about the bombs in London. The marina staff were now getting anxious for us to leave. When we arrived they were expecting 100 boats during that week for the start of the Tour de la Manche a la Voile the following weekend, so every day we were having to explain that we were “une petite bateaux” and it was “tres agitee” for us. Thankfully they were sympathetic so it was smiles all round when the forecast improved for Friday.

Friday 8 July. Granville to St. Servan. Distance 23 miles

On a beautiful clear sunny morning with a NW4 we slipped out of Granville at 10.30 on a spring tide with full Main and Genoa bound for St. Malo. We had a really cracking sail as far as Pointe du Grouin where it started to get a bit lumpy due to the big tide and the rocky area. Quite hard concentration on navigation was needed along this beautiful stretch of coastline to the Rochefort mark. We then altered course to take us through the Chanel Petits des Pointus. We didn't go into St. Malo, preferring instead to go further round to Port des Sablon at St. Servan and what a superb choice it turned out to be. At 15.10 we just missed being able to go straight into the marina, the easily read matrix sign showing 1.2 meters over the sill (a fin keel needs 1.3). There are 2 buoys just below the sign that you can pick up while waiting for enough depth of water, and you can while away the time with views of Dinard on the other side of the river and watching the huge fast Catamarans come in. Well they look huge when your sat in the cockpit of a Trident and they only turn at the last minute. At 17.10 we entered the marina and again met by very efficient staff who escorted us to a private pontoon mooring for the weekend where it was much quieter. With wall to wall sunshine now, and the setting round the marina, a rocky peninsular with the smell of pine trees it felt very Mediterranean and we felt a real sense of achievement as we were now only a short distance from the River Rance, our



Sunset at St Servan

target for this cruise. OK so it had taken us 4 weeks to get there but our enforced stays on route had also been enjoyable. So time to celebrate and push the boat out with Sunday lunch being taken on the terrace at a very chic restaurant “La Corderie” with views of the Solidor Tower (a museum dedicated to the old “Cape Horners”) and the River Rance.



River Rance and Solidor Tower

Monday 11 July. St. Servan to Plouer-sur-Rance Distance 9 miles

You have to check the times of the opening of the barrage and also the depth over the sill of the marina to leave to go up the Rance, so we left the marina at 07.20 for the 20 minute trip up to the barrage where there are several pick up buoys to wait on. Once through the barrage what really strikes you is the expanse of this beautiful river that opens up in front of you. It was another sunny morning with just a little mist over the river and very tranquil. Using our new toy, the chart plotter, we navigated our way, very carefully, to Plouer- sur- Rance where the river narrows. The lights were green over the sill in this small marina set in an old tide mill pond, so at 09.45 we went straight onto the visitors



River Rance barrage

pontoon just inside the entrance where there's not a lot of room to manoeuvre. It was hot and peaceful with not a sound other than the birds. This was a very rural setting with a bar and restaurant in the marina, but best of all was the very friendly staff who would order your bread and croissants to be delivered ready for breakfast the next morning, what service. The supermarket was a 30 – 45 minute walk away, depending how fit you are. We had been keeping in touch by text with our friend and fellow club member Roy, the previous owner of Pai Nai, who was on 2 weeks holiday, he was now in St. Servan in his Arpege "Debonair". What had taken us 4 weeks to achieve he had done in 4 days!! After he had cycled from St. Servan to Plouer to join us for lunch on Wednesday we decided it would be brilliant to celebrate Bastille Day together in St. Servan the next day.

Thursday July 14. Plouer-sur-Rance to St. Servan.

Having checked the lock in times at the barrage it meant a 05.30 departure for the 07.00 lock in. It was just about getting light when we motored down the river, with a lovely mist making it very atmospheric as the dawn rose. We arrived at the barrage at 06.45 along with several other boats and as we only had 15 minutes to wait didn't bother to pick up a buoy. However, it seemed that the French were to have their little joke on us and decided not to lock in until 08.00. We then joined our friend on the visitors pontoon in St. Servan and planned our celebration for the evening. Because the French are an hour ahead of us, it would be 23.00 before it was dark enough for the fireworks and music on the ramparts over in St. Malo, so having dined out in the evening (Roy had kangaroo and has not been the same since) we passed away the time in St. Servan watching the sunset along with the locals. It was a

fabulous view point for the firework display and a super atmosphere as the music drifted over on a really hot evening. We were planning to leave the next day to start our return journey, and our stay in the area since arriving the previous Friday had been everything we had hoped for, with wall to wall sunshine and a very relaxed atmosphere it turned out to be the highlight of our trip.



Marina at St Servan

Friday July 15. St. Servan to St. Helier Distance 38 miles

With a NW3, hot and sunny we left in company with Debonair at 11.30. We motor sailed with full Main and Genoa as far SE Minquiers but the wind went light so had to motor until midway between SE and NE Minquiers when it freshened and were then able to motor sail with just the Main for the rest of the trip. We arrived at La Collette marina at 18.30. Being the weekend they were packing them in like sardines in the Elizabeth marina so we stayed at La Collette, although the staff did try to turn us away saying it is for locals only, but as there was no notice to this effect we stood our ground and stayed.

Its rather tucked in a corner this Marina but the showers and loo's are excellent, and can thoroughly recommend St. Helier YC for lunch over looking the harbour entrance.

Sunday July 17. Jersey to Carteret Distance 28 miles

At 10.30 we left Jersey and with a NW3 with main and engine we made our trip to Carteret. Hot and sunny again (how long can this last?) we made our way through the Violet channel, not the usual preferred route as the rocky Violet Bank runs for 3 miles off this SE corner of Jersey, but conditions were perfect and Dave assured me we would most probably come across some dolphins as he had done previously when sailing through there with a friend. The wind did perk up a little off the Ecrehou islands but not enough to do any serious sailing so we trundled along only to be joined not by dolphins but a racing pigeon who decided it was pointless flapping all the time when he or she could get a comfortable lift on our boom. Said pigeon stayed with us until about 3 miles off Carteret when it promptly took off only to fly back in the direction we had just come. (Bird brain!!!) We had timed things right and were able to enter the marina over the sill and tied up on the pontoon at 15.15. The next 2 days were spent idling away the time with walks on the sand dunes, making good use of the Yacht club bar and taking a trip into the market at Portbail by train. This was a half hour ride through the countryside, but what could have been a very pleasant ride was thoroughly spoilt by some lunatic French train enthusiast who insisted on giving an extremely loud commentary all the way there and back. (This included reciting the snack bar menu). The market was good however. We also met Louis, a very interesting young man who had sailed up from Lorient nonstop in his Transat boat, single handed and no engine. He was planning on doing the mini Transat race last September.

Wednesday 20 July. Carteret to Dielette Distance 11 miles

We left Cartaret at 06.00 in a NW5. We were still in company with our friend but sea conditions were pretty awful, had we been on our own we might well have turned back.

The wind was right on the nose and it was a big spring tide, it was only a 2 hour trip so we sat it out as Pai Nai ploughed through it all with engine and a steady reefed Genoa. We arrived at 08.15, relieved, shattered and very wet. Dielette is a

lovely relatively unused marina, most yachtsman preferring instead to do the Channel crossing from Cherbourg. There is a free mini-bus service from the marina to the town of St. Pieux,

and as in most French marinas the facilities are excellent and we can thoroughly recommend the very elegant yacht club. There is also a lovely sandy beach. We spent



Marina at Dielette

Thursday evening dining in the YC restaurant and drinking coffee outside one of the local bars watching the sunset over Alderney in the distance. The perfect way to reflect on our cruise as the next day it was back across the Channel and home.

Friday July 22. Dielette to Newtown. Distance 84 Miles

With a much improved forecast NW3-4 and fine weather we left Dielette in company with Debonair at 06.50 under engine and full Main. It was interesting up through the Alderney Race with wind over tide on such a huge Spring tide and touching 12 knots. Rather lumpy and it seemed forever before we actually got out of the race and into calmer waters. We were then able to carry just a little bit of the Genoa to help us. By mid afternoon it was only a W3-4 and with the tide now going West it is was quite uncomfortable for going below. We arrived at the Needles just at the start of the flood tide, the wind picked up and we were doing 11 knots through Hurst. Debonair was already in Newtown and a quick check on the radio confirmed he was cooking dinner for



Back in home waters: Newtown Creek, Isle of Wight

us. At 20.00 we were tied alongside back in home waters having achieved our ambition and returning to Marchwood our home port next morning.

A few facts and figures of our 6 weeks cruise,	Distance travelled	392 miles
Engine running time	78 hours	Diesel used 12 gallons
Mooring fees average	£9.40 per night	(most expensive La Collette at £15.00, (cheapest Plouer at £5.60, per night)

Marian Quantrell