

Falmouth to A Coruna, Spain in Sixpence - July 2020

I'm not sure how legit it is to describe a final trip this summer in our Albin Ballad from Cornwall to A Coruna but here goes.....

In March 2020 we bought Seize the Day our Moody 425 having seen her only once in the yard at the Rubicon Marina, Playa Blanca, Lanzarote Our plan was to sail her home during the summer, via Madeira, the Azores, Galicia, Brittany. Well that of course didn't happen.

We still owned Sixpence — a boat we had cruised very extensively and I had sailed single-handed in Jester Challenge events. She was equipped for ocean sailing and our marketing strategy was aimed very much at those with long distance sailing in mind. As it turned out she was bought by Ricardo who lives in Galicia who asked my help to sail her to A Coruna his home port where he lives. His experience was almost solely in dinghies.

He arrived at Lostwithiel on the 17th of January, and Sixpence was in the St Winnow yard on the Fowey River, with a launch booked for high water on the following day. Fortunately his expectations from the advert were more than fully met, and I had a recent survey which he was happy with.

Over the next few days, we had a mini shakedown cruise from Fowey across to Helford, St Mawes, and Carrick Roads finishing in Falmouth Yacht Haven. Ricardo had the benefit of my experience and knowledge of Sixpence and instruction on how to handle her. I was able to sort out the things that inevitably needed sorting out at the start of a sailing season.

We set off for A Coruna on Friday 24th July at 0620 in a light Southerly and overcast skies. As we headed on a Southerly tack to clear the Lizard, the wind picked up and the sea with it. Poor Ricardo suddenly found out that he suffered from seasickness and had to take to his bunk. I offered to turn back but he was insistent on continuing, so we did.

For me this was a typical Jester Challenge start - a beat out of the Western Approaches and I had set a waypoint to pass outside the Ushant TSS. As it was, I decided to pass inside the TSS in case Ricardo's condition worsened and we needed to make for a port— which we did, and I stopped at Camaret for the night. We continued the following morning passing through the Raz de Sein in bright sunshine and benign conditions.

That night and for the next 36 hours the wind remained firmly from the Southwest at about 25 knots. This was not comfortable sailing, but I knew the wind would veer Northerly which it did and we were able to make our course for Cabo Prior and A Coruna. The weather improved and so too did Ricardo's seasickness and he was finally able to enjoy the sailing, with cruising chute set and bowling along covering the ground at 130 miles a day.

After a wet and windy final night passing through the acceleration zone Northeast of A Coruna, we docked in bright sunshine to be met by Ricardo's family, and great Galician hospitality. The following day I flew hometo 14 days quarantine (thanks Boris for announcing that on the 26th)

Chris Jackson November 2020