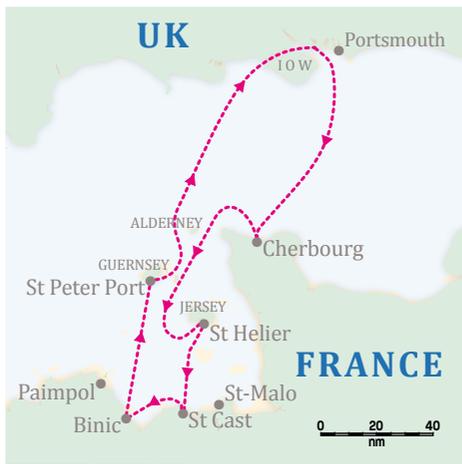




Low-pressure cruise

With the barometer falling, the MBM fleet took on the challenging coastline around Brittany, visiting new ports and, as ever, making lots of new friends

REPORT BY NEALE BYART



The itinerary was to include stops in Cherbourg, St Helier, St Malo, St Cast, Binic, Paimpol and St Peter Port, but things didn't start too well. Our departure was delayed due to strong winds, which meant we arrived in Cherbourg a day late. A lucky weather window allowed us to move on quickly to St Helier, before another system came through and kept us port-bound for four nights. With no let-up in the bad weather, we needed to formulate a new plan, so we decided to miss out St Malo and head straight to the new all-tides marina at St Cast. This was a new destination for the Cruising Club, and a delightful place it was. A scenic coastal walkway leads you into the town about 10 minutes away, where

numerous shops and restaurants and a fantastic beach awaited us. Despite being all-tides, there is a sizeable reminder that you are in the bay of St Malo, where 12m (40ft) tides are common, as a huge rock island appears inside the marina itself at low water.

The weather was still not playing ball, with yet another low-pressure system heading our way, so we lost another day, arriving in Binic a day late.

Entrance times into Binic are tight and we had to spend a day separated from the fleet a few miles up the coast at Saint-Quay Portrieux – the only other all-tides marina in the area – after *Blue Fin* attended to an overheat on one of the participant boats. Yann Barbier, the helpful Binic harbourmaster, kindly ferried the



St Cast marina with its large welcoming basin, but the low tide (right) shows just why there are so few boats moored in that particular area

MEET THE MBM FLEET



1 Liz from *Aquarius Nord West 370 Sports Coupe*
2 Neil from *AquaVit Fairline Targa 47 GT*
3 Eleanor, Lauren & Dominic from *Aurora Sealine SC35*
4 Sue & Peter from *Breda Windy 44 Chinook*
5 Michelle, Holly & Phil from *Breeze Fairline Targa 44 GT*
6 Karen from *Chrivana Falcon 34 Velici*
7 David from *Dellavee Princess 58*
8 Richard & Sharon from *Elinor B Princess V45*
9 Graham & Mark from *Fizz Fairline Targa 47 GT*
10 Amanda from *Free Spirit Bénéteau Antares 30S*



11 Sally from *Free Spirit III Sealine S42*
12 Penny & Stephen from *Gite Aquador 32 Cabin*
13 Mark from *Haylu Fairline Targa 47 GT*
14 Geoff from *La Dolce Vita Evolution 31*
15 Jenny from *Lady Iris Fairline Targa 40*
16 Drenagh from *Oxygen Bavaria 37*
17 Howard from *Quiet Way Sessa C35*
18 David & Robin from *Sabre Swordsman*
19 Bill & George from *Time Lost Cleopatra Camargue*
20 Lynda from *Velocity Princess V45*

abandoned crew of *Time Flies* to St Quay to be reunited with the rest of the team.

Faced with a dwindling number of days, and weather forecasts still showing nothing but low pressure and fronts, we missed Paimpol and headed for St Peter Port a day early. This meant arriving in time for the St Peter Port Harbour Carnival, which featured a man-powered flight competition and fireworks.

It was like groundhog day listening to the poor forecasts and, with no guarantees of a passage back across the Channel on Sunday, a few boats took advantage of a window of opportunity and departed for home on the Friday. If they needed to be back at work on Monday, they made the right choice, because Sunday was too windy and the remainder of the fleet arrived home on Monday after a very flat crossing.

Despite the dismal weather, we had achieved a great deal. We dropped just two ports from the itinerary, which proves you don't need high pressure to enjoy a boat in British waters – you just need a bit of luck and the ability to spot and make use of whatever weather windows you get.

You can read more about the cruise on our blog at www.motorboatsmonthly.co.uk/cruisingclub



Ryan Field and Claire Frew aboard Cruising Club support boat *Time Flies*, a Ribeye 740SX



Starters orders: The inaugural start-of-cruise briefing at Premier Gosport Marina



Main pic: Victoria Marina, St Peter Port



See the Cruising Club gallery or visit www.motorboatsmonthly.co.uk

bit.ly/JIKPjo



A cruise dinner was held at the St Helier Yacht Club



A true classic, *Sabre*, a Fairey Swordsman, departs St Helier Marina in Jersey



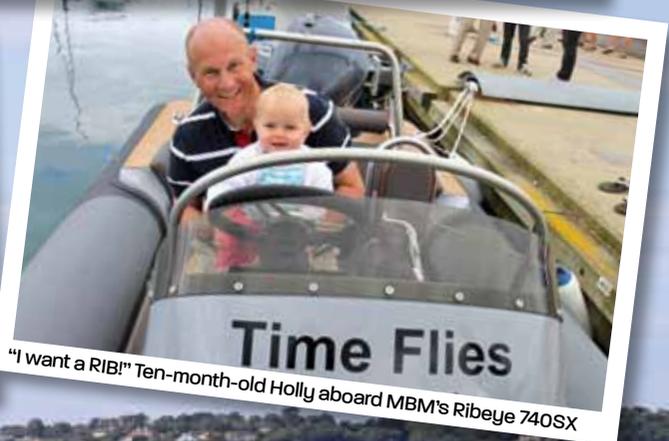
The market at St Helier, Jersey, offered a taste of France



Pontoon party: the weather was challenging but everyone enjoyed their stay at St Helier



On passage: *Time Lost* and *Gite* heading south for the Brittany coast and St Cast



"I want a RIB!" Ten-month-old Holly aboard MBM's Ribeye 740SX

Catching the bus at St Helier took on a whole new meaning



The fleet assembled in the sheltered basin at Binic



Take off! The man-powered flight competition at St Peter Port harbour



Free Spirit and *Chrivana* homeward bound in the Alderney Race

Spare a thought

We experienced several breakdowns on the cruise, which reinforces the need to carry spares. As well as an overheat, requiring a new impeller, and some dirty fuel, which required new filters, we also lost a boat in Binic due to a failed starter motor. Simple to fit but impossible to find at short notice, a spare starter motor might seem excessive to carry, but it could be the difference between an inconvenient day spent in the engine room and a ruined holiday. We also experienced – not for the first time – a duo prop boat losing a propeller. For duo prop boats, a spare rear prop and fixing kit could save the day.



With thanks to:

- Ribeye** for supplying a 740SX RIB
- The Drystack at Trafalgar Wharf** for assisting with storage and boat lifts
- Raymarine** for supplying navigational equipment including the new e7 and e9 chartplotters

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