

Saorsa II — 2010 Cruise

Part 013

2010-07-24 10:17 ADT (13:17 Z)

Warmed by the morning sun even as the gentle south-east breeze cools, I sit in my spot on the aft port side of the cockpit and look around. Even now, at mid-morning, all is quiet and peaceful.

We're in our first Bras d'Or anchorage, a small cove east of Marble Mountain. Getting here yesterday was a bit of a challenge even though the distance was short.

So far today, I've made coffee and savoured it in the cockpit. The anchor lamp has been taken down and put away; the ensign has been hoist. Porridge followed coffee, and then a morning row in the dinghy let me try a photo of my Mistress content in Her anchorage.



Illustration 30: The peaceful anchorage of Clarke Cove, near Marble Mountain

On returning from the rowing exercise, I find the crew has gone back to bed and is asleep. That irritates me; I'm not sure why.

My internal journey continues even as the cruise unfolds. I was and still am quite unprepared for the life changes of the past few months.

I thought the transition from busy department Director to cruising yottie would be simple and easy. Far from it! The emotional anguish has been difficult in the extreme. It manifests itself mostly as loneliness with a dash of depression infused with deep longing for something. But, there is much more going on than that. These are only external signs; the real turmoil is internal.

Outwardly, the cruise continues to progress remarkably well. As one might expect, there have been a few surprises along the way.

From a sailing perspective, the most notable is the wind strength. My Mistress needs two new sails for this part of the world. One, a smaller mainsail; the other a smaller headsail. More than a few times we have been sailing with our canvas reduced to the minimum and still been over-canvased.

Another surprise, although I suppose I should have anticipated it, is the amount we have used the engine. So far, 200 hours of engine time on the trip. That translates to about 500 litres of diesel fuel and 1,000 nautical miles of distance.

Looking up, my gaze takes in the surroundings. This is truly a beautiful spot.

2010-07-24 16:19 ADT (19:19 Z)

My goodness, but I do enjoy swimming naked in the sea! It's a delicious blend of sensuality, hedonism, eroticism, and a return to the womb. Yes, amniotic fluid is essentially identical to seawater in composition.

What an idyllic day this is. The sun shines down warm, hot even, from a sky with a few fluffy clouds.

Twice today, I have gone swimming and probably will again.

This morning, I put the outboard on the dinghy (yes, crew still asleep) and went over to the nearby marble beach at Marble Mountain. Went for a swim off the dinghy. Positively delicious.

Then, this afternoon, I went for another swim and checked the log impeller, propeller, rudder, and general condition of the hull underwater. All looked fine.

2010-07-31 10:45 ADT (13:45 Z)

This morning, my Mistress lifts Her bow to a true North Atlantic swell for the first time. Small, only about three feet and about forty feet between crests, but the definite slow pronounced evidence of the ocean's deep breathing is unmistakable.

We left St. Peter's this morning and said good-bye to the Bras d'Or. Now we head sou'west towards the great port of Halifax.

Bras d'Or, or "*The Lake*" as it is known locally, was a delightful experience in many ways. The scenery, the people, their music, the wildlife (even had a bald eagle fly over the boat), all were lovely. A true gem and a part of the cruise to be cherished.

We are motoring as it is a fine day but with very little wind. Two days ago, a sou-westerly gale blew through here. That would not have been a pleasant time to be at sea.

My inner journey continues. In many ways, more tempestuous and challenging than the outer journey.

2010-08-01 17:18 ADT (20:18 Z)

Anchored in Tangier Harbour after a 110 mile passage from St. Peter's.

Yesterday, July 31, at about 11:00 ADT (14:00 Z) we reached the easternmost point of the cruise as we rounded Cape Canso at the green bouy "CV1", approximately 060° 50.8' West longitude. Cape Canso is the easternmost point of land on continental North America.

The passage to here was done entirely under engine power and was largely uneventful. We did see our first shark of the cruise, a Great White, as he hung about the east end of Chedabucto Bay.

The part of the coast is very well marked and pilotage was reasonably easy as we hopped from one sea bouy to the next. Even so, care was needed as rocks, shoals, and ledges dot this coast in abundance. They wait, ready to claim another victim.

We had clear weather throughout which made light characteristic identification easier as we moved along under the light of a half-moon.

Owing to our rapid progress, due in part to a favourable current, we arrived off Tangier Harbour before dawn. This forced us to heave-to off shore until sunrise as I'm reluctant to enter an unfamiliar harbour in the dark.

This proved to be a prudent decision as, even in daylight, following the safe channel around half submerged rocks was not simple.

We dropped anchor north of Hog Island about 22 hours after leaving St. Peter's.

2010-08-03 19:27 ADT (22:27 Z)

The sun is getting lower in the sky over our anchorage here at Tangier. We arrived here just after sunrise and the crew slept all morning and most of the afternoon. So, I had the day mostly to myself.

I finished reading Farley Mowat's book, "The Boat Who wouldn't Float". What a delightful yarn he spins. Sort of makes me wish I had found the time to visit Miquelon. I knew when I started this cruise that there would be more places to visit than time to do so. I suppose there's no point in second-guessing choices, but I can't help but wonder what might have happened had I followed Jean and Françoise out of l'Anse-a-Beaufils to Miquelon. Ah, well, that's how it is.

Time to hoist the anchor lamp; tomorrow, on to Halifax.

2010-08-02 11:07 ADT (14:07 Z)

Slowly. Cautiously. Gently entering the channel which connects Tangier Harbour with the top end of Shoal Bay. A clear channel on the chart with good depth. But, also, a chart spattered and pock-marked with the peculiar wee cross symbol that indicates a hidden rock.

Heart rate a little elevated; breath just a bit too quick and shallow. Calm. Inner calm through force of will. Then allow that inner calm to exude and pervade. Calm is needed here. Calm, clear judgement at the helm.

Rocks. Visible a boat length away.

Rocks. Hidden beneath the water just outside the channel.

Waiting. Lurking.

Rocks which have been here longer than man. They wait for the unwary, the imprudent. Rocks which can smash open the hull of the stoutest vessel.

So, we proceed, with calm caution.

2010-08-02 12:51 ADT (15:51 Z)

Just south of Egg Island light off Nova Scotia's eastern shore. A little bit of a breeze. Just enough to sail on a broad reach with the working headsail. Making a little over 3 knots steering west sou'west.

An odd hazy day. The barometer has been rising steadily the past 36 hours and is now at bit high at 1022. Yet, we have rather ominous looking cloud overhead and a bit of haze.

A long low swell rolls my Mistress just enough to be annoying.

End of Part 013.