

# Situation Report 007; 2012-07-29

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From the Pope Island Marina in New Bedford, we refueled (52 litres of diesel) at Fairhaven Shipyard before setting out. On passing the hurricane barrier at the harbour entrance, we set all plain sail and had an excellent time sailing before a sou'westerly 3 gusting 4. A four hour sail saw us in Onset harbour where we anchored in 12 feet of water to 10 fathoms of chain.

Onset is a lovely little town, friendly folk and a great diner which serves artery-clogging breakfasts. We stayed a few days, caught up on some chores, did laundry, and so forth. Onset is a good spot to wait for a favourable tide to carry one through the Cape Cod Canal. The tidal current is very strong and any attempt to force through against the tide is essentially futile.

From Onset, we transited the Cape Cod Canal on July 17 and then made our way to Scituate harbour both sailing and motoring in very light southerly winds.

I was unfamiliar with Scituate but was pleasantly surprised to find it is an excellent spot for the transient yacht to stop and find all of the necessities. Launch service to the rental moorings is fast and convenient, grocery stores and other shops are a few minutes walking distance from the town dock, the facilities at the dock are excellent. All in all, a highly recommended stop for a yacht passing this way.

The following day, we dropped the mooring at 06:50 (10:50 Z) and made quick work of the short sail up to Boston, MA, where we took up a transient mooring at the Boston Waterboat Marina. It was a grand feeling to enter this historic harbour under sail and make our way through the intricate channels which characterise this place.

A few days in Boston allowed for a respectful visit to the USS Constitution and associated museum and a walk along the "Freedom Trail" which highlights key places and structures from the revolution that gave birth to the United States. The "Old North Church" was particularly interesting. We also took time to see the sights and sounds of this very vibrant city and found this hurdy-gurdy musician (see attached photo) and his dog outside the old State House.

From Boston, another short sail to Marblehead, MA. This town claims, with justification, to be the birthplace of the American Navy. While in Marblehead, we were invited to a brief sail in the harbour and dinner at the Marblehead Yacht Club by Don G., whom I had met during my 2010 cruise. Don and Mimi, and their friends Phil and Nancy were charming and affable hosts. The following day, we were invited 'round to Don and Mimi's house for breakfast followed by a walking tour of the town which included a newly installed exhibit chronicling the important role of this small town in American naval history as well as the original painting *Spirit of '76*.

From Marblehead, we transited the Blynman Canal and Annisquam River to shortcut the trip 'round Cape Ann. With open water before us, we set out for Portsmouth, NH, where we arrived safely in Little Harbour after an eleven-hour day underway. Little Harbour was clogged with moorings, but we found a sufficient gap and anchored on very short scope of 7 fathoms chain in 16 feet of water. During the night, when the tide changed, *Saorsa II* rolled abominably for several hours in the swell. A most uncomfortable and almost sleepless night.

Determined to get out of Little Harbour, we set out in the face of a poor weather forecast with aspirations of making Richmond Island near Cape Elizabeth. During the day, rapidly deteriorating weather and the US Coast Guard's issuance of a "severe thunderstorm advisory" forced a prudent decision to seek refuge in Cape Porpoise harbour. This tiny spot is the home to a working fleet of lobster boats and is seldom visited by a yacht. With great good luck, we were directed to a vacant mooring by a lobsterman who was otherwise engaged unloading his catch. A quick call to the Harbourmaster confirmed it was a private mooring, but we were welcome to use it in the owner's absence on the understanding that we would be "evicted" immediately should the owner return.

Minutes after being secure on the mooring, a horrendous series of thunderstorms and wind squalls swept over the area. Clouds of deep black and purple raced toward us and blotted out all. Rain descended (more horizontal than vertical) in a torrent and the flash crackle of lightning was immediately followed by the bang. Such a light show.

The following day, we gave silent thanks for the use of the mooring which kept us safe and headed out again for Cape Elizabeth. The winds were a solid northerly force 5 gusting 6 or 7. Double reefed mainsail and partially furled headsail was, at times, too much canvas. *Saorsa II* raced through the water like a train going down grade. The speed through the water was peaking at over 7 knots. We were fortunate to have a windward shore and relatively flat water (wave height in the 2 or 3 foot range) in which to sail. A boisterous rollicking good sail and we soon were off Richmond Island where we dropped anchor in 20 feet of water on 13 fathoms of chain. A beautiful peaceful anchorage in which we were the only boat. We stayed a couple of days to rest and enjoy the lovely setting.

Stopping at Richmond Island / Cape Elizabeth was planned to position us for a quick run into Portland, Maine. The strategy worked and on July 27 we motored in almost flat calm about ten miles to a slip at the Portland Yacht Services. We needed a marina stay to do some laundry, conduct another piece of work on the refrigeration system, re-provision, water ship, refuel, and generally get recharged.

With great good luck, the US Coast Guard's training vessel *Eagle* was in Portland for a crew change. We took the time to go aboard for the "tour" of the vessel. A beautiful ship which is now used to instill leadership qualities into future Coast Guard Officers from the Academy. If those we saw during the tour are an example, then the future of the Coast Guard is in good hands.

During our stay in Portland, we dropped into a local Pub. While standing at the bar ordering pints, I was accosted by a fellow sitting there. It was none other than Steve V. whom I had last seen on the Hudson River off Manhattan on 23 September, 2010, during my earlier cruise. He is in the middle of a cruise "Down East". We exchanged notes and talked sailing as one does and marvelled at the small world in which we live.

Now re-provisioned, we are ready to head out and explore the rugged coast of Maine. Tomorrow, *Saorsa II* will again be underway "Down East".