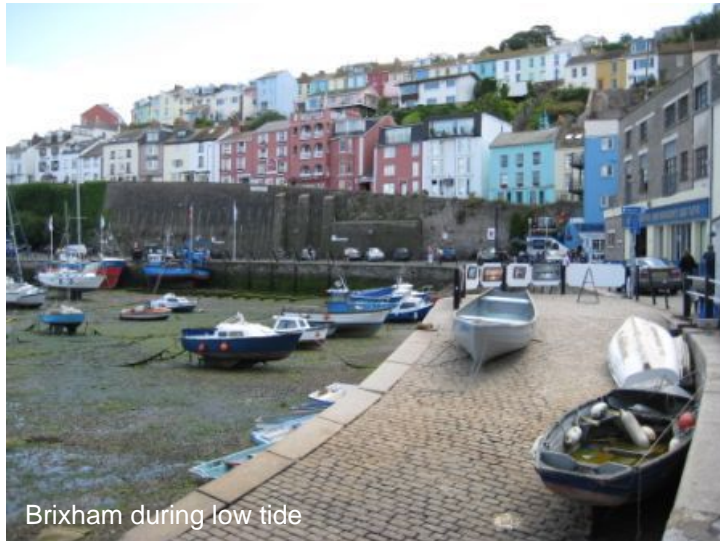


VOYAGE UPDATE: The PICTON CASTLE crew is having a fantastic voyage!

We are having an absolutely superb voyage in the PICTON CASTLE. As I write these words our barque is racing east up the English Channel at 9.4 knots with yards squared having sailed away from the hook this morning off Brixham in Devon. Ships and traffic everywhere and truly a sense of sailing through history.



Brixham during low tide

Trans-Atlantic Passage

But backing up a bit, we had an excellent passage across the Atlantic - 2800 miles - 24 days - sailed almost every mile under canvas - mostly fair winds, sometimes strong and a couple days of calms. We sailed within sight of the Azores before heading north-easterly for Ireland and the western approaches to this English Channel. We saw plenty of whales on this passage but no flying fish; that will come later off the coast of Africa and the trade-winds. Our new gang steered every inch of the way and did a good job too. A mid-ocean "Seamanship Derby" tested their newly learned skills of knots, compass, and knowing running rigging in a fun way.

Old World British Isle Seaports

After sailing across this North Atlantic we put into the little, tiny harbour village of Baltimore, in West Cork County, Ireland at the urging of my friend Captain Jan Miles who had been there with the schooners PRIDE OF BALTIMORE I & II, and were absolutely enchanted by this delightful, friendly and perfect port to end a trans-Atlantic run. Then of course we had to have a bit of a gale, blowing pretty hard right out of the WNW, so not so bad. We put two anchors down – one 1,200 pounds – the other 1,500 and with 1-1/4" chain, -three shots out on each and a bit more on one. Steady force 8 with periods of 9. Blew strong, but the ship didn't budge a millimetre. Baltimore was a treat, we all loved it there...

Then off to Cobh, Ireland – bigger and next to Cork. And next across the Celtic Sea to Falmouth, Cornwall, England with strong fair breezes, about 200 miles. The last time this ship was in Falmouth was as the m/v DOLMAR (in 1994 as a Norwegian coaster bound for Nova Scotia to become a barque...) an old fellow on the wharf identified her as the old HMS PICTON CASTLE, no clue how he did that as those old plumb stem trawlers look pretty much alike to me and she had been converted into a coaster anyway. Falmouth treated us nicely with its quaint and ancient stone boat basin and old waterfront buildings, ice-cream shops and pub or two. A picture of our barque has now joined old black & white images of square-riggers from the ages gone by on many a wall now. Then onto Brixham in Devon, ancestral homeland of Sir Francis Drake. And also near the wreck of the famous 4-masted bark HERZOGIN CECILIE which went aground in 1936 after sailing successfully around the world with a cargo of grain. A lovely old seafaring town it is too. It is to England what Gloucester is to the US and Lunenburg is to Canada. Brixham is still the biggest fishing port in England and a very busy one even though it could fit into a corner of Lunenburg Harbour. They have managed as well to serenely combine Tourism and Working Waterfront, in fact, as in Lunenburg, Tourism depends on a working waterfront for its draw. We



Nobby, Claire, Ronan and Tegan

also got meet up with old PICTON CASTLE shipmates from voyages past. Anna who cooked aboard in 2000, now with a couple of kids, Kimbers and Dave who live in the UK now and we even had the first PICTON CASTLE Family aboard; Nobby and Claire and two youg'uns Ronin and Tegan, 3 and ½ years and 7 months respectively. Nobby and Claire were 1st and 2nd engineers on the first world voyage so their kids are truly Castle-Kids. Jane from the 4th world voyage joined us as well.



Picton Castle at sunset

North Sea and Kiel Canal

We are now bound for the Kiel Canal which is a nice short cut to Danish waters. Soon we will be passing the White Cliffs of Dover and dipping into the North Sea. We have great gang aboard and Donald keeps feeding us well.

Looking Ahead

What's ahead for the crew of the PICTON CASTLE? Where to begin! Lots of seagoing, learning day by day the way of a sailing ship at sea and in port. Soon we will be alongside in the very salty sea-going town of Svendborg, Denmark, followed by Copenhagen in the summer-time, meeting up with other sail training ships in ones and twos and in great big fleets such as in Bergen, Norway – Den Helder, Netherlands – Bremerhaven, Germany. We will be sailing up the River Orwell to Ipswich, England where the PICTON CASTLE laid six months on our way across heading for Nova Scotia in 1994. Then we will be heading down Channel again, this time to Milford Haven in Wales where this ship was home-ported for years and the 11 century Norman castle called Picton Castle is located. They could not bring their castle to us so we are bringing our "Castle" to them.

Word is that folks are getting excited about our upcoming visit to her old home port. We certainly are. Then off to St Nazaire, France where the HMS PICTON CASTLE participated in the first assault on Hitler's "Fortress Europe" in March 1942 to put out of service a big dry-dock that could take Nazi battle-ships. Across the Bay of Biscay to La Coruna, Spain which has the oldest light-house in Europe first established by the Romans ever so long ago.

Mediterranean and Trade-winds

After France, where we also have some great old shipmates looking after us, then down the coast in reliable Northly winds off Portugal and into the Mediterranean Sea with stops at historic Gibraltar and Majorca before heading towards Morocco, Dakar, Senegal and the Cape Verde Islands and crossing the Atlantic (and the Equator) for a classic tropical trade-wind passage for Fernando de Noronha off Brazil. From the 'Old World' to the New World, challenging North Sea sailing and old cobble-stone seaports full of Tall Ships, to hot sunny Africa and flying fish trade-wind passage-making to unique tropical islands, this truly is a once in a life time voyage, I am sure I will never get to do it again. If you are thinking about joining us don't wait forever...

Visit our website today!

www.picton-castle.com



Mousehole, Cornwall