

## Laseround UK

On Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July we received an email from Andrew Hill-Smith:

‘Dear Sailor,

I am **sailing** round the uk in my laser dinghy during 2023 solo and unsupported, for charity. I am planning to be in the area in the next few days. Might it be possible to grab a hand with landing and boat storage overnight if possible?’

From a quick look at <https://www.laseraroundtheuk3.uk/> I saw Andrew was raising money for excellent causes:

- [MNDA](#) – Motor Neuron Disease Association
- [Place to Be](#) – Children’s mental health charity
- [Andrew Simpson Foundation](#) – promoting sailing for young people

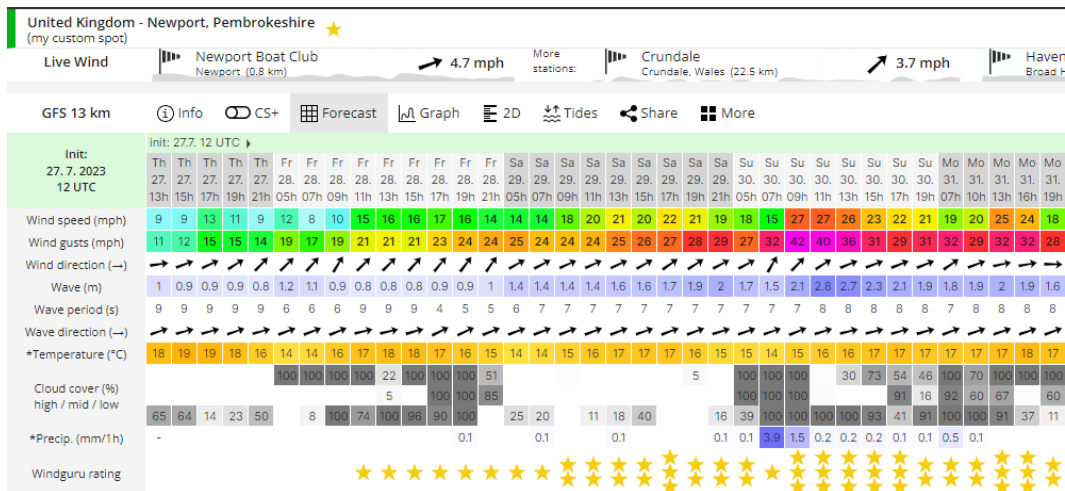


He had already sailed an amazing distance since leaving Stokes Bay near Gosport in April and ‘turned left’ – along the south coast, past Dover, up the north sea, all the way round Scotland through the western islands, past the Isle of Man, and recently along the coast of Wales – astounding!



Andrew and I spoke on that Wednesday evening; he was due to sail from Aberdovey to New Quay on Thursday, expecting pass Newport in the next couple of days – weather depending. He knew he’d be tacking into a stiff headwind and I told him the Nevern is tidal with high tide in the afternoon.

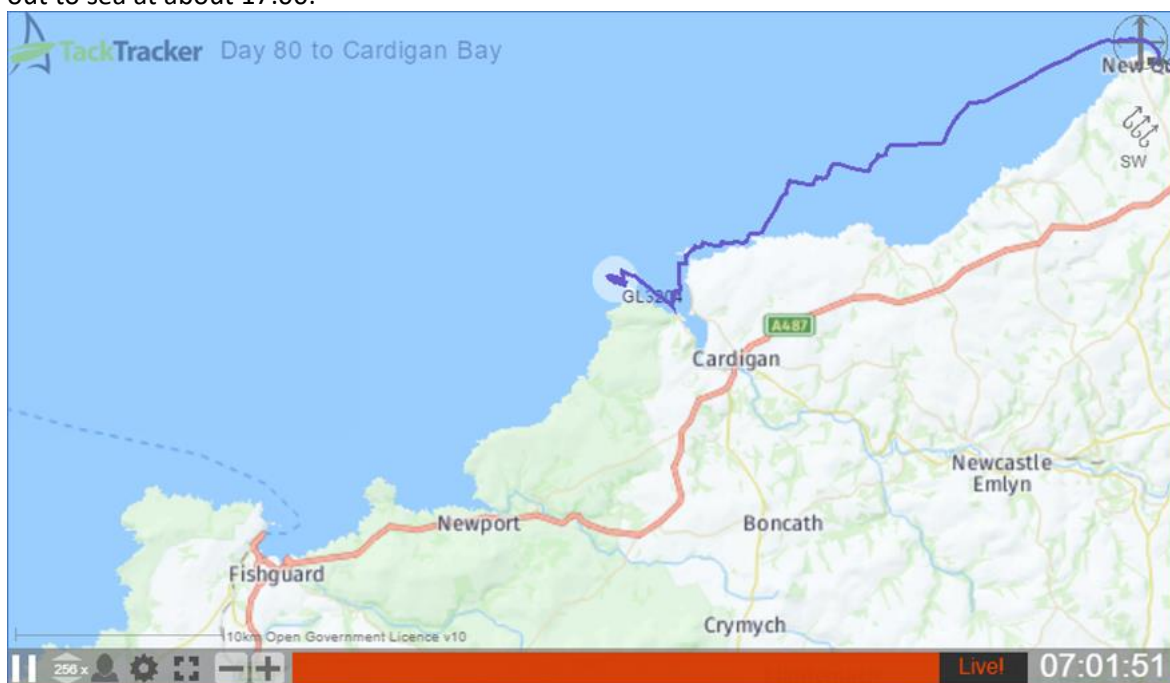
I thought it would be wonderful if Newport Boat Club could give him a warm welcome, a hot shower, good food and a drink: in short to make Newport a ‘port in a storm’ given the forecast:



On Thursday July 27<sup>th</sup> I sent a note round Newport Boat Club’s sailing community alerting them to Andrew’s arrival, hoping that if someone could take some pictures, we could encourage NBC members to donate to his causes. But timing would be key to make it to The Club due to the tide.

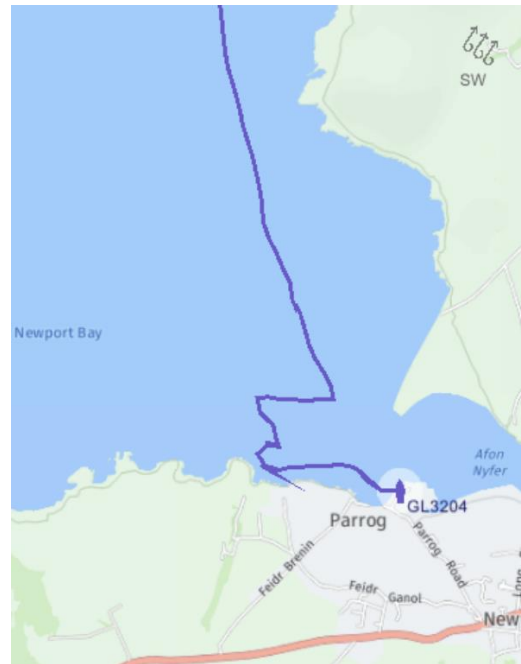
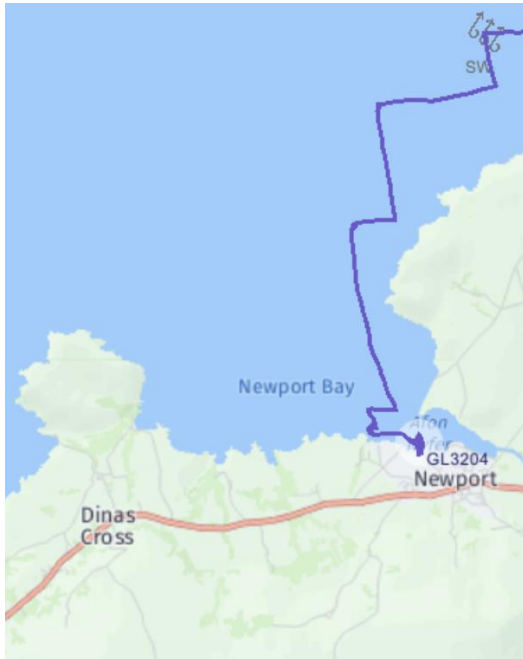
Andrew arrived in New Quay on Thursday and planned to get to Cardigan on the Friday. With challenging weather over the weekend, he aimed to sail from Cardigan to Newport promptly on Saturday. Here’s a link to his [TackTracker](#) where you can see where his is and where he’s been.

My update on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> morning thanked members for offers of help and included a link to Andrew’s tracker so we could follow progress from New Quay. We spoke on Friday afternoon after he arrived near Poppit Sands and debated the possibility of getting to Newport given wind, tide and availability of NBC club members to help. We decided he should go for it – it was gusty as he headed out to sea at about 17:00:



I set up a WhatsApp group – including a link to Andrew’s daily tracker - for Club members who’d offered to help deal with whatever state of tide Andrew would face at Newport: Pete Morris got the Club Laser trolley ready.

18:21 Mike Hann flagged that Andrew's Tracker has stopped off Moylegrove. Concerned about the rocky coast, I called Pete Fletcher at Penralt Garden Centre to see if he could see a little white sail: he tried his farmer Ken Barnaby but without luck. I hoped it was just that the tracker timer had stopped after 8 hours limit. 18:36 Niki South messaged that Gordon had driven to Caibwr and spotted Andrew heading to Morfa Head – relief all round. 19:05 Gordon saw him rounding the Drewi into Newport Bay and thought there should be enough water to sail up the estuary – he used a torch near Cwm to indicate the way.





Andrew managed to sail up the tricky Nevern estuary and Pete met him with the Laser trolley. Commodore Niki South welcomed Andrew to Newport Boat Club and offered him a hot shower, a pasta meal – thanks to Dewru of Pasta al Mano – and a drink at the bar. Andrew's offer of accommodation up the coast evaporated so Niki and Gordon kindly gave him the spare bedroom – and a bar of Waitrose soap! Later that evening Gordon and Andrew planned the following day – on Gordon's advice Abercastle seemed a better bet than Porth Gwain due to steep cliffs and harbour walls likely to interfere with the wind.

On Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> after Niki's 06:30 porridge, a group gathered to wish Andrew 'bon voyage' as he left on the early Saturday tide in a bright Newport morning.





Andrew set off down the estuary on the falling tide, navigated the shallows of the bar and tacked out past Dinas Head. Since he was heading to Abercastle, I sent a WhatsApp to my school friend Phil Ripley who has a holiday home there. Although he was not there he alerted some neighbours including David Miles that Andrew was on his way.

At 12.36 Mike spotted Andrew's tracker showed he'd got to Abercastle – but in a lot of wind. Here's the update we received from there:

'All done. I looked out and saw him in the shallows. Nev had already given him his usual Abercastle welcome to any dinghies. I helped him get his mast down in a Gale and roll up his flapping sail. I've carried all his stuff up to the car park wall, then helped him carry his Laser up to the wall. He's just finished drinking a cup of our coffee and is now showering in our Wet Room 😊'

Andrew posted:

'Mid afternoon tea and cake. What a reception guys. I'll let Dale YC know how it should be done!!'



Meanwhile back at Newport the multi-talented Mike Hann announced:

'Hi. I've done one of my driftwood paintings to celebrate Andrew's visit, as arranged. I will use it for the raffle prize at the laying up supper [on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August] with the monies raised going to the charities Andrew is supporting. 😊'



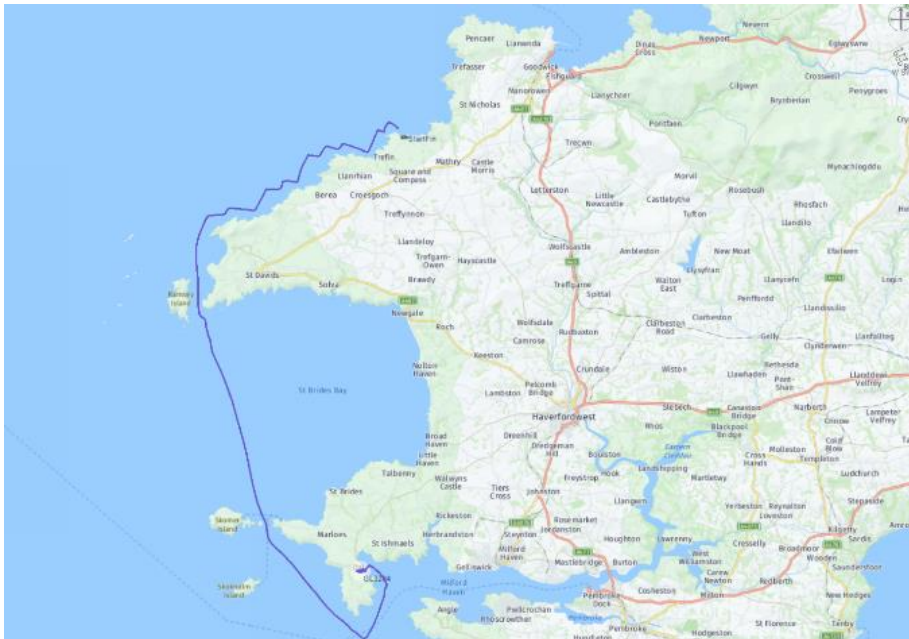
#### Abercastle to Dale

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> Andrew rang Gordon in the evening for advice on getting through Ramsey bitches and past Skommer and Gordon thought he might need a hand in the morning.

On Monday 31<sup>st</sup> Gordon retrieved Andrew from his lodgings in Goodwick in the morning and drove him to Abercastle to save him the bus and walk and helped him launch. Gordon South sent a note: 'Andrew setting off from Abercastle early this morning. Then not long after in fairly heavy seas off Porthgain.'



Andrew had to tack into a south westerly until he could turn bear away to the south and reach safely through Ramsey Sound then across the whole of St Brides Bay and through Jack Sound before turning north towards Milford Haven, to land at Dale.



That evening Andrew Hill-Smith's WhatsApp was eloquent:

'I am so pleased to have made it since it involved a fair bit of planning and I was quite worried. Many thanks to Gordon for helping with transport and launching. It is much appreciated.  
Newport, you are the best!'

We wish Andrew Hill-Smith every success on his way round the rest of the UK's coast-line back to Stokes Bay. Here is he '[TackTracker](#)' where you can see where he is right now.

Andrew Kenyon  
Sailing and Boating Secretary  
Newport Boat Club

[www.newportboatclub.co.uk](http://www.newportboatclub.co.uk)

5<sup>th</sup> August 2023