

BREEZING ROUND BRITANNY

John Boston

“**W**e’ll finish this season, then decide whether or not to carry on sailing.” Such was the essence of the understanding with my wife Mary, who had gamely, if unenthusiastically supported my post-retirement efforts to learn to sail my Coaster *Pamela*. Although I had progressed somewhat from being a complete landlubber, I was still getting into scrapes, and ended last season with a nasty wind over tide solo return from Newtown Creek to Ashlett which I did not enjoy one bit.

For her part, Mary had learned to operate the jib sheets and drop anchor, but did not want to helm or use the outboard. Perhaps caravanning would be a safer bet?

The 2016 season started well with Mary and I attending Dick Pizey’s late May Chichester rally. There followed an adventurous day in Chichester just with Steve Maynard as crew/mentor, when we appeared to be the only boat sailing in the harbour. After soon discovering the reefed main was too much with winds around F5 and gusting, we made good time for lunch at Hayling Sailing Club under jib and mizzen, returning equally quickly to

Chichester marina. The boat felt very safe under those conditions, and I gained some confidence. I also learned the art of reverse rudder to bring the stern round when being blown backwards. I travelled the same evening in foul conditions to Northampton for Peter Rhodes’ Pitsford rally. The day of Robbie’s Race dawned very breezy and, although non-participation crossed my mind (it was too gusty for some), I steeled myself to venture forth with reefed main, coming a not



Michel heads for Doelan