

thought an early start in order and was swept into the night. The suicidal tendency subsided, but not until Epic was in open sea. I had failed to realize the significance of a pre-dawn start. It was much too dark to be out there, for hazards abound around Looe. As well as rocks, shoals and currents, there is an Island, just a spit away.

Unable to row upstream against the strong ebb flow, I sought the floating '5 mph' sign I had passed the previous evening. Knowing it to be approximately one hundred yards off the river-mouth, I searched for it in the darkness. A row of amber lights fronted West Looe, casting dancing ribbon reflections across the water. After rowing against the strong tide for several minutes, I noticed breaks in the ribbons, pinpointing my emergency mooring. With great relief I passed the bow line round the signpost, then wound a couple of turns about the mast to make casting off a simple matter.

For making an early start, the speed limit sign location was most suitable, but in other respects left a lot to be desired. As I settled down to sleep once more, a mechanical digger-man (not a robot) started his extremely early shift rearranging Looe beach. Low tide, in the early hours, was obviously the most convenient time for beach grooming, but I could have woken unaided to hear the shipping forecast without the caterpillar-tracked monster's clanking. A fresh and extremely chilly offshore breeze completed a night 'not' to remember. Despite being sleeping bagged and woolly-hatted, I was very cold. Hot air rises, which is a shame, for it caused cool air to flow down the valley, seeking out sea-level sleepers.

'Westerly, becoming southerly, three or four, occasional rain, good, becoming moderate to poor'. The forecast had a familiar ring, but as Polperro was less than four miles away and I expected a favourable beam wind for the first two miles, I left immediately. Slipping away from the signpost, I set full sail and was soon speeding over the relatively flat sea, heading for the misty channel between the mainland and the Island. The power created by the two small sails amazed me. Unfortunately, before I could settle down to enjoy the performance, the wind died. The 'cold rush' out of the Looe River was obviously a local affair, so it was back to rowing. In uncanny stillness I headed west.

On a syrupy sea, duplicate rows of evenly spaced concentric circles



Mevagissey

Oil on canvas 5 x 4' 2006

'... fragmented facets – material for lively paintings. The same is true of the 'Sunny-side' of Mevagissey.'