

## Leda – Trip to WALES– May 2014

*(This trip undertaken by Seamus O'Carroll in Leda was mainly to test the new engine fitted over the winter, prior to a longer ICC cruise later in the summer. In addition to Seamus, Peter Clarke and Conor Lindsay were on board.)*

Leda departed HYC Marina 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 07.50 am and headed east, under engine, in bright but overcast conditions. The sun appeared at midday and with the help of a breeze we got the main filling, doing 6kts.

We were off the Caernarvon Bar at 19.30 and headed in between the Middle Sands and the South Sands, following the buoyed channel. Passing the Mussel Bank and Abermenai Pt to port, we eventually spotted Caernarvon Castle basking in a golden setting sun, at 20.30pm.



Just after starboard buoy C9 we turned in to the Victoria Dock Marina, allowing for a brisk cross-tide. It is open +/- 3hrs high water via a tidal gate. We tied up at 20.45 and called in to see the marina manager. 62miles on the clock. Pork and rice for dinner.



That evening we headed up to the Royal Welsh Yacht Club Clubhouse for a beer.

The next morning (Tuesday) we headed off at 07.00 in rain through The Swellies and passed under the two world famous bridges; the Britannia Bridge - built by Robert Stephenson, and at 08.30am the Menai Suspension Bridge - built by Thomas Telford.

We had done the Swellies several times before so as long as the helm was alert, there were no difficulties.



The day was a bit grey but the passage in a narrow channel past Port Dinorwic, Bangor and Beaumaris was interesting, with occasional piers and houses dotted along the banks.



Eventually we reached the NW entrance and motored out past the Perch Rock and Puffin Is at 10.00am and headed east.



We arrived at Conwy Marina at 11.30, getting in over the sill and tying up at our berth.



We were hungry but since there was no food available in *The Mulberry* we headed off towards Conwy town, along a nice coastal path walk, with lots of wildlife.



We resisted the temptation to visit *the Smallest House in Great Britain* and had a cone instead. Lots of sitting down and watching the world go by.



We tried to get in to the North Wales Cruising Club but it was closed so we sauntered through town, skirting the castle and looking for an ATM, which we did not find. None of the machines or the banks in the town would accept a Euro card!

The next day (Wednesday) thought it time to find a bank and decided to bus and train into Llandudno.



It turned out to be the classic Victorian resort, complete with endless hotels, B&Bs, a promenade, a long pier complete with pavilion, candy floss and amusements.

We had a pint of Robinsons Brazilian Blond Ale and later afternoon cream teas in a local hotel, where e-mails from home were read.

Llandudno Pier was built in 1876 and is well known for its Victorian and Edwardian elegance. Constructed of wrought iron lattice girders resting on cast iron columns, and finished with a traditional wooden decking. The Pier's total length is 2295ft, of which the main Pier is 1234ft, stretching majestically into the Irish Sea. It nestles under the Great Orme Head and tramway.

Thursday saw us back in Conwy for a visit to the Castle. Admission was £5.10 for a Senior.



Built for Edward I, by Master James of St George, the castle is amongst the finest surviving medieval fortifications in Britain. In a word, exceptional. You can't fault it, from the grandeur of its high towers and curtain walls to its excellent state of preservation. An estimated £15,000 was spent building the castle, the largest sum Edward spent in such a short time on any of his Welsh castles between 1277 and 1307. Money well spent.



Two barbicans (fortified gateways), eight massive towers and a great bow-shaped hall all sit within its distinctive elongated shape, due in part to the narrow rocky outcrop on which the castle stands. You won't find Edward's concentric 'walls within walls' here. They weren't needed. The rock base was enough security in itself.

Some say it is the most magnificent of Edward I's Welsh fortresses. To get the full picture, we headed for the battlements. Breathtaking views across mountains and sea.



It has an outer ward containing a great hall, chambers and kitchen, and a more secluded inner ward with private chambers and a royal chapel, it is very easy to imagine how Conwy functioned when the royal entourage were in town.

From the north end of the castle you have a good view of the three bridges over the Conwy River. The railway bridge is of wrought iron tubular construction and was built by Robert Stephenson



The Conwy railway bridge runs parallel to an elegant suspension bridge built by Thomas Telford, which is now in the care of the National Trust, and is open to pedestrians only.

Friday was departure day: we were happy to be heading home and satisfied with the performance of the ne engine. Before we left we looked at some fancy cars being exhibited at the Marina.

Seamus took delivery of a new bimini cover, which he thought would be handy in West Cork, where we were going in July. Departure from Conwy was at 10.40.



Our trip home was uneventful; out past Orme Head and old quarries. Dinner en route was beef in Guinness. At 16.10 we got the main up, with a 3kt wind from 350. We saw the usual array of ferries and other ships and arrived back in Howth YC at 22.00.

Home Sweet Home. Total miles travelled = 164.

