

SCOTLAND –I.O.M 2014

3rd June Departed Howth for Ardglass at 08.00 hrs. in the company of " Wild Again". The wind was light 2/3 with plenty of cloud. The passage was uneventful and we arrived in Ardglass at 17.00n hrs the log reading 49 miles. Ardglass was charging now for electricity and that included the showers.

4th June we left Ardglass for Glenarm at 04.00 hrs. Again we encountered slack winds to start with. The forecast was 4/5 cloudy but no rain. At 06.00 hrs the wind and seas increased but we maintained a speed of 6 knots for a while , but by the time we got to Belfast Lough speed was down to 3/4 knots and heavy seas .We arrived Glenarm at 15.15 hrs. and the log read 49miles. We stayed two nights in Glenarm .

6th June departed for Campbeltown at 08.00 hrs . It was a sunny morning, slack wind There was very little activity on the water. We arrived in Campbeltown at 14.00. There was only one pontoon there for visitors and it was fairly full. We managed to get two of the remaining three places left. There was no visitor moorings. The log read 34 miles. We stayed two nights there and the second day it rained for most of the day.

8th June we departed for Portavadie at 10.25 hrs., our speed was 5.5 to 6.5 knots.It started off sunny with some cloud. The wind was S/SE 4/5 and with the Jenny out we increased our speed up to 7 knots. The rain and wind arrived at 12.42 Hrs and Wild Again windometer reading F7. We arrived Portavadie at 15.35 hrs. John and Sheila had their Grandsons on board and this helped no end getting tied up.We went for a two hour walk in the mountains and just got back into the marina before the rain came down in buckets. The dinner in the restaurant was very good. The wifi was very poor.To buy wifi was £3.50 an hour or £7 for the day The marina had a good drying room for clothes and electricity was £1 for two nights.. The nearest town was 7 miles away. The shop in the marina was very basic and anything you wanted needed to be got early in the morning. The marina had a 5 star rating we even had music in the showers. The log read 26 miles

10th June left for Port Bannatyne at 10.00 hrs.travelling up the West Kyle with very little ebb tide against us wind was S.SE 3 to 4 with occasional showers The scenery was spectacular We took the south passage from the West Kyle to the East Kyle to Eilean Mor with only three quarter knot tide against us. Shortly after we picked up speed again. We had 11 knots of wind, cloudy and cold .arrived at 13.30 log reading 19 miles. The marina was lovely with free Wifi





The next day was bright sunny but windy $\frac{3}{4}$. We took the bus into Rothesay. A lovely Victorian town with Promenade. There was also a Victorian toilet which Prince Charles opened a few years earlier. There was a big pavilion out front but it was closed. Looking through the windows it looked like tea rooms. That night we went to the Russian Restaurant we were told a must place to visit. The boat that gave us the recommendation are still laughing We went in for drink, the place was would give you the shivers. We were served with the best Lidl wine and left after one drink.

Thursday 12th June we departed Port Bannatyne for Ardrosan. The weather was sunny and no wind. We encountered some patches of fog. Approaching from the North we had to keep a look out for a little black flag marking a reef. The entrance was very narrow and could only be entered when the navigation light were showing three green light. The marina had free WIFI, free washing and drying of clothes which we made use of. The electricity was £2 .The log read 17 miles.

On the Friday 13th June the morning was bright, sunny and no wind. We took the train into Glasgow and spent the day there. During the day there was some heavy showers .That evening we went up to the marina bistro , it was upmarket and very noisy.

14th June at 11.25 left Ardrossan for Troon. John and Sheila were dropping off their grandchildren there to connect with a ferry for Larne. It was a lovely sunny morning with no wind. We arrived at 13.00 hrs log read 7 miles. As the three black balls were not visible at the entrance we were able to go straight in. The entrance to the marina was very narrow. We had good free Wifi.

The ferry comes twice a day and the boys left on the 15th .We prepared the boats for departing next day. We booked a table in Scotts Restaurant upmarket and the meal was very good.

Monday 16th June departed at 08.30 Troon for East Tarbert a distance of 30 miles. A bright sunny day with no wind. The trip like most of them was uneventful . Since we started this trip there was little or no wildlife to be seen We arrived in East Tarbert at 14.30 hrs. Tuesday the 17th was beautiful sunny day. We took the bus to Ardrishaig to check out the locks in the Crinan Canal. The staff on duty that day were very helpful so we decided to the the canal.

18th June departed Tarbert at 11.40 for Ardrishaig and arrived at the entrance to the canal at 14.40. The log read 11 miles. Wild Again went into the lock first and then called us in when he had tied up.

A big motor cruiser came in behind us and we were all crushed up together. It was very stressful. We entered the basin and went on to the pontoons, there was just enough room for the two of us. The motor boat just came alongside and wanted us to move as he wanted to get on the pontoon. We went of up to get the first lock open. The motor boat kept falling down on to our boats and had to be told to keep clear. We had a bit of a job getting clear of the motor boat and into the lock. We were glad to see the back of him. It was at this point we found out that there was no help available contrary to what we were told the day before. We arrived at lock no 5 lock Cairnbawn at 15.40 and stayed here overnight

Thursday 19th sunny, strong winds. We walked up to lock 13 We stayed another night in Cairnbawn. We met Mike Pollard from Isle of Man here.. There was a hotel in this harbour and so we ate there. The food selection was small and drink was expensive.



Friday 20th The locks are open at 08.30 and we are ready to go. But two other boats moved into the lock before we could blink. We were still waiting until 09.30 we moved in just in time as a large passenger boat came up behind us. There were four lock keepers on duty but we got no help from them as it was "we are only doing maintenance today". We are at this stage getting the hang of opening and closing the locks. We are still going up the locks and it is extremely difficult. The pressure of water coming in is very strong and trying to hold the boats steady is hard going.



We had our lunch at this stage and then the lock broke down. The big passenger boat then caught up with us. When the lock was fixed we were asked if we would let them go through first. We left

them go and then when it was our turn another boat arrived in behind us. They fitted in nicely and they were a nice young couple. They helped us along to lock no 13 where we stayed for the night. It was out in the middle of a bird sanctuary and nothing else.

Saturday 21st June departed no 13 lock for Crinan. It was drizzling but cleared up by 11.00 hrs. We stayed overnight in the lock.

Sunday 22nd we departed Crinan for Oban (Kerrera) at 09.20 hrs 18 mile trip. As we entered the marina we had to keep a lookout for a sunken vessel which is covered at high water. It is marked by a cardinal mark. There is a free hourly ferry from the marina to Oban. We took a walk around a part of the island The scenery was excellent. The restaurant on the island was full every night. They came from the mainland to eat there.

Monday 23rd we went across to Oban and walked the town and took in the sights. Today was a rainy day but cleared up later.



Tuesday 24th we took a bus tour to Easdale and Seil. The bus tour lasted 2.5 hrs. We arrived at a small village. It was an old miners village and it is now holiday homes. We passed Dianas mothers house.

25th June we departed 13.35 Oban for Craobh Arrived at 15.30 log read 16 miles .Getting the tides right for Craobh was important as many overfalls from rocks .

26th June was a fine sunny day so we just sat out and enjoyed it.

Friday 27th June at 05.35 hrs we departed for Port Ellen. It was a sunny day wind 20 knots speed varies from 5 to 8 knots. Arrived Port Ellen at 12.15 log read 49 miles. The marina was run by the local community very reasonable. Take 3 night and you get the fourth free. We never say no to anything that's free.

Saturday 28th we went for a long walk to Ardbeg Distillery. There was three distilleries on that road. When we got back back we got fish and chips from the bistro

Sunday 29th as there were no buses running we went for a long walk .There was a big power cut so no electricity all day on the island.

Monday 30th Went by bus to Bowmore. This is the capitol town , small place but nice. the round trip was £4.40.



1st July departed at 07.55 for Bangor. Again we had a sunny day with no wind the forecast was 3 or less we got less.. We had speeds up to 9 knots with the tide. Our original intention was to stopover in Glenarm but the forecast for the next 24 hrs was F6 and 7 so we carried on to Bangor. Got bad fog near Rathlin and then by the time we got to Larne the tide had turned and we were down to 2 knots. Arrived at 17.00 hrs log read 52 miles. Bangor was a lovely marina with free daily papers . We stayed in the marina that day as there was a lot of marching going on around the town.

The 2nd July we walked around Bangor.

3rd July we got the train to Belfast and returned by bus..

4th and 5th July we stayed in Bangor and did some shopping, some good value in clothes. We also got fuel for the next leg.

6th July at 10.25 we left for Ardglass but on the way changed our minds and headed for Peel. The weather was sunny with little wind . Went through Copeland sound with no problems and the crossing was very good .Log read 41 miles. Arrived in Peel at 17.25 hrs but had to wait until 18.00 for the bridge to lift.

7th 8th 9th and 10th in I.O.M. The weather was good and made a number of trips to Douglas. Part of the marina was silting up and staff were finding it difficult to get dredging done because of environment restrictions. Gary Davis and crew in Bluebird arrived Monday night . They had a very long passage because of bad weather. We had very strong gales on the Tuesday and Wednesday. Bluebird left on the Thursday for Ardglass.

11th July we left for Ardglass 30 miles away and arrived at 15.00 hrs. The forecast was 3/4 with showers but we had no wind and plenty sun.

13th July left for Howth wind 3/4 with showers. Arrived in Howth at 18.00 log read 50 miles. The total distance covered was 606 miles. It was a great adventure and the first time we were away for that length of time.

Wild Again

2015 Scotland Cruise

On the 3rd of June we departed Howth at 08-00hrs; we were in the company of Katrina 2 on a passage to one of my favourite marinas, Ardglass.

The seas were flat and the wind light, (the sea gods were asleep). We arrived at 17-15 and prepared for an early start the next morning. Our plan was to go to Glenarm and then across to Campbeltown, or if the weather played ball we would go to Islay.

We departed Ardglass at 04-00hrs and we were only a few miles north of South Rock when the sea gods woke up, the wind slowly crept up and gradually moved onto our bows, then it sneakily went very light as we exited from Copland Sound, "so the question arose", should we soldier on? Or head around to Bangor? Naturally we made the incorrect decision and headed for Black Head and Muck Island.

As we cleared Muck Island we were caught in a 2 knot back eddy and the wind went on the nose, there is nothing worse than doing 3 knots for 2 hours into a standing sea, however we eventually arrived safely at 15-00hrs, we had as crew 2 of our grandsons, who seemed to think that this was par for the course, happy days ahead!

It was still blowing 5/6 from the N/E the next morning, so it was decided to take a day off and enjoy the hostelry's etc.

By the way you can get a pint and a small bottle of wine in the Bridge Bar for £5-50, not bad eh! the forecast for the coming days was for strong winds in the North Passage, this brought plan A back into action, Campbeltown and then into the Clyde.

6th June, we left Glenarm at 08-00hrs for Campbeltown, the seas were flat? The forecast was for northerly 5, so you take it when you can get it, (I love it when the gods are asleep), we arrived at 14-00hrs, only to find that there was a rally on for some older clinker boats, but we still managed to squeeze in. the next day was miserable, rain and heavy wind prevailed, forcing us into the nearest hotel bar (sad isn't it) however the next day the 8th we set out with a south westerly 5/6 for Portavadie, departing at 10-30hrs.

The gusting winds set up waves on our starboard quarter which sometimes caused the boat to surf along, some gusts shot up to 33 knots and proved a great test for the auto helm, when we checked below, the grandsons were eating or playing cards, or both, nothing bothers them it would seem.

As we passed under the lee of the Isle of Aran, the wind and the seas eased off.

We had never visited Portavadie before and we were delighted to see everything settle down, but we did not take into account the katabatic winds coming down from the

mountains as we exited the lee of the island. This meant that we were approaching the entrance to a marina with a following sea and gusting winds, it was extremely difficult to make out the entrance against the background of fish farms and large engineering works, but find it we did and almost surfed in through the narrow entrance, this is where the grandchildren (Colm and Conor) proved their worth, we swung the boat 180 degrees(into the wind) in a very narrow space with just enough way on for them to get onto the pontoon.

Katrina 2 followed us in and it took all hands to secure her to the pontoon. Another larger yacht followed us in but ended up on the windward side of the pontoons and ended up bursting its fenders, it took 6 of us to force the boat away from the pontoon so that other fenders could be inserted. At this point my anemometer was showing a steady force 7.

I should also point out that the grandchildren were aged 17 and 20 and well used to sailing But this was their first cruise away and they were enjoying themselves, or so they told us!

The best way to describe Portavadie would be to call it “decadent” the marina buildings are beautiful and have fabulous showers, complete with wrap around sound systems and the best of classical music.

However, you would need to take out a bank loan if your favourite tipple is S Guinness and you were stuck there for a few days. (Almost £6 for a 500ml can) from silver Guinness cans??

The marina information in Reeds would seem to suggest it was near or part of a small village, the marina area also includes cabins and chalets (the small village) but only has one shop and its sole purpose is to sell souvenirs and clothing, you would be hard pressed to find food there!

We walked for over 2 hours and almost into the next valley but only found a coffee shop; on enquiring where we might find shops we were informed they were at least another hour's walk and so it was up and down dale back to the boat.

Denis and Olive were dining in the marina restaurant when we got back, so we joined them for a drink, I checked at the bar for draught Guinness and was informed that they indeed had draught, which I ordered, only to see the bar staff take a can out of the cooler, it turned out to be another silver can, so I asked to see it and politely informed him that he was in breach of the trade description act because he claiming that 500ml was equal to a pint.

I decided that I was no longer thirsty and returned to the boat to root around in the bilge for iron rations, (of which there was plenty).

June 10th we departed Portavadie at 10-00hrs for the Kyles of Bute and travelled up the west Kyle with a S/E 3 to 4, against a slight ebb, it was a glorious trip. The Kyles of Bute are a must see and the trip through the narrows at the top was the icing on the cake. It was threatening rain all day, but it held off long enough for us to see the sights. We continued

down the east side of the Kyles and the weather closed in and got very cold, it did not take us too long to arrive at Bannatyne marina which is in a lovely setting on the Isle of Bute.

As we approached the marina an outgoing yacht hailed us and said "don't forget to visit the Russian Bar" something in their tone made me suspicious. They should have left out (don't). See for yourself if you visit there. The only other bar is the Port Inn, tiny but very nice.

There is a regular bus service into Rothsey, of which we availed, did some shopping and had a meal there. It's quite a nice little town.

There is a marina in Rothsey, but it's not popular, it also sports a unique public toilet that was opened with great ceremony by Prince Charles a few years ago. (He was plumbing the depths no doubt). (Anything for a bit of PR.)

12th, set out at 09-45 for Ardrossan, it was a beautiful day with little wind and some light fog.

There is a long reef out to sea, more dangerous if approached from the north, with only a small flag on a post marking the outer end (it could be mistaken for a lobster pot marker) but only once!! It's better to keep out to the outer channel marks. The entrance to the harbour is quite narrow and controlled by lights, the marina is situated in an inner harbour and is quite big and the marina people were excellent. We arrived at 13-00hrs.

The marina boasts a train station; it's an ideal place to change crew. It also boasts a fabulous supermarket come hypermarket, but the town itself is very tired and dated.

WE took a trip into Glasgow on the train, it takes about an hour and then spent a few hours roaming around and doing some shopping. The city is small and not unlike Dublin and there was a noticeable police presence around and who homed in on anyone hassling shoppers and tourists, we could do with some of that in Dublin.

Time was running out for the grandkids, their holiday was coming to a close. There is a high speed ferry running out of Troon for Larne and our plan was to go to Troon, overnight there and put the kids on the ferry. It's a very short passage from Ardrossan to Troon.

We left Ardrossan at 11-35hrs and arrived in Troon at 13-00hrs, it was a lovely day and a pleasant trip down. The next morning the lads picked up the high speed ferry and were over in Larne in just over an hour, just in time to be picked up by their father.

Our plan, was to avoid if possible backtracking our routes and with this in mind we opted to head for East Loch Tarbert, with a view to head for the Crinian canal.

16th June.

We set out at 08-45hrs, the day was beautiful, the seas flat and the wind free and light, arriving in Tarbert at 14-15hrs, all very relaxing except for a niggling, though slight bussing

alarm sound, (that just could not be found). This was to continue for the rest of the trip, really annoying!

17th another beautiful day, we took a bus to the Crinian Basin at Ardrishaig and had a long chat with the staff. Everything looked great; they gave us a lot of data about all the procedures. (All seemed well.) We can only assume that they were doppelgangers,

because all was not well.

We departed East Loch Tarbert at 11-35hrs and arrived at the canal at 13-30hrs, locked in to the sea lock only to have a massive motor boat jammed in on top of us, the lock keeper was as dour as you can get and didn't seem to give a monkeys about his duty of care to his customers, we were lucky that the boats escaped damage.

We were given no assistance to get out of the basin, even though we had been assured by the staff on the previous day that this would be the case!

However we soldiered on without any major difficulty and soon got into a system for entering and exiting the locks.

We ended up staying at lock 5 and had a very welcome meal and a few beers in the Cairnbawn Hotel; we took a long walk along the canal and checked out the locks. We got some information from some of the locals, who explained the odd way some of the gates behave i.e. on one gate! The left gate, when opened would force the right gate open, very useful and very welcome indeed.

19th June

16 years retired today, where had all that time gone? We decided to celebrate. We took the day off and went looking for the White Cairn, (Cairnbawn) but we gave up after a short while and settled for the Cairnbawn Hotel. Plan A is always best!

20th June. We left lock 5 at 09-00hrs and kept going until we arrived at lock 13 at 15-00hrs, it was a long tiring day, "13" might be an unlucky number for some, but there was no way we were moving another inch today. From lock 5 to lock 13 is all downhill, but that doesn't make life any easier, the midges were setting ambushes for us all over the place, but especially in the locks.

21st June, we set out at 11-00hrs, on the final leg of the Crinian down, to lock 14 and arrived 50 minutes later, but we did not enter the lock. We found two nice berths above the lock and stayed the night there. The next lock "15" is the sea lock and no overnight berthing is allowed when exiting the canal, though I believe you can overnight there if entering the canal and the staff is off duty.

As I mentioned before about the busser alarm, there were still no alarm lights showing, but the voltage output from the alternator had gradually reduced to 12.8v, so either the regulating diodes were giving trouble or I had a bad connection on the loom.

I decided to remove the multiplug. I cut out the plug and joined the cable with connectors, but had no success, in fact I created another problem for myself, I could not stop the engine electrically and had to use the mechanical stop!

A good way to remember battery voltages is, (12.4v, I'm on the floor,) (12.5v, I'm alive,) (12.7v, I'm in heaven.)

The people at lock 15 were excellent and organised our departure for 09-35hrs for the following morning the 22nd,

They arrived at the boats at 09-30hrs, to check if we were ok and ready to go.

They operated lock 14 and also took our lines; this was in stark contrast to our treatment at the Ardrishaig sea lock. We headed for An Doras Mor and passed through at 9 knots, then on for the Sound Of Luing, which we exited doing 10.8 knots, it was a wonderful trip. The wind was light and the seas flat. We arrived in Kerrera at 13-00hrs;

This marina is directly opposite the town of Oban, which is accessible by a free Water Taxi! That operates on the half hour. We spent the rest of the day walking the island and taking in the sights. This was our turning point, so we planned to stay on Kerrera for a few days and take it easy.

23th June, we paid a visit to Oban and walked the town; there are two great supermarkets in the town and also a train station, this makes it a great place for crew changes and boat provisioning, it's also a very pleasant town to visit.

24th we went over to Oban and took a bus tour down to Easdale, it's an extraordinary trip down narrow roads and over humpback bridges and ends at abandoned, flooded slate quarries and a picturesque village, really well worth a visit.

25th June, we set out for Craobh marina with a plan to go via Cuan Sound if possible, the state of the tides in the sound dictates your actions and is best taken at slack water, (high or low) otherwise it meant a trip down the Sound Of Luing and a swing back to Craobh marina, which would add about another 30 minutes to the passage.

We rounded Easdale and the tide looked good, so we headed into Cuan Sound, two things happened, (1) it started to rain and the visibility dropped, (2) the alternator failed, not a happy combination, particularly because we could not use the radar and the sound gets very narrow with a sharp dogleg to port at its end. We ended up with the sprayhood down and

got ourselves soaked in the process. We arrived in Craobh at 13-40hrs and we immediately adjourned with Denis and Olive to the "Lord of the Isles" and enjoyed a well-earned pint or two.

26th June, had a day off, checked out the alternator, but no luck! The boat is rigged up with 3 batteries and 3 solar panels, plus a 40amp charger; this meant that we could manage to continue on until we were able to source a replacement alternator.

27th June, we departed at 05-40hrs for Port Ellen on Islay; it was a long trip down, the seas were flat for the first few hours, but got quiet lumpy when the wind got over the tide, but we made good time and arrived in Port Ellen at 12-15hrs and decided to stay for a few days and do a bit of exploring.

Unfortunately for me the main transformer on the island failed and left the island (and me) without power. All the shops and restaurants closed down, the place was like a ghost town. Luckily the power came back on at 19-00hrs on the 30th which gave me the chance to charge up the batteries. During the day we were able to take a local bus and see some of the island.

1st July we left Port Ellen for Glenarm at 08-00hrs, the seas were flat and the tide with us, but around Rathlin we sailed into thick fog, Denis kept watch on his radar and I monitored my AIS, we were now crossing the separation zones, as we moved further on we heard weather warnings for the following days and accordingly we changed our plans and headed on to Bangor. We got caught in the tides from Muck Island to Black Head and finally arrived in Bangor at 16-50hrs.

The marinas handbook had a list of local companies and I was able to get one to organise a replacement alternator, however there was a two day wait, the weather was poor, so a delay was sound and it gave us the time for a bit of maintenance and some R&R.

Late on the 4th the alternator arrived and I spent the evening and the following morning sorting everything out. All went well with the work and so we planned to head for Ardglass on the following morning.

6th July. The morning was beautiful, we departed Bangor for Ardglass at 10-15hrs and as we cleared Copland Sound the wind shifted and made Peel in the I.O.M. a better option for us, because we had planned to visit peel after Ardglass.

We arrived in Peel with a half hour to spare and got our berths sorted out before the gates opened at 18-00hrs. We were almost home at this point and it was time to take it easy and go on a few trips around the Island.

We stayed in the I.O.M. until the 11th and departed for Ardglass at 09-35hrs. The wind was s/w and the seas pleasant which made for a quick crossing; the only problem we faced was that 5 boats were all racing each other to be first into the marina," all very exciting".

(Of course we arrived first) arriving at 14-55hrs and so we got the pick of the berths.

It's hard to beat 35 horsepower! Our engine is a Beta and the problem is that it cannot be hand started; this is why it is critical to carry enough spares if you travel into isolated places, although I never thought that I would have an alternator failure. The good news is that I was able to get it repaired by Electro Maintenance, who are situated in Baldoyle industrial estate and I now have my spare, though chances are that I will never need it.

13th 09-45hrs we departed for Howth and apart from very lumpy seas in Dundrum Bay the journey down to Howth went well and we arrived back on our berth at 18-00hrs. We spent a total of 45 days aboard and covered approx., 610 nautical miles;

All in all! It turned out to be a great trip and with the best of company. (Katrina 2).

John and Sheila.

Wild Again.