

Armagnac
Inverness to Limekilns
July 2011

Catherine Bullions



Moored at Dunardry Locks, Crinan Canal

16th July, Inverness Marina to Dochgarroch

This morning after leaving the marina we set off up the Moray Firth where we saw a dolphin, before entering Clachnaharry Sea lock. After we were through the works lock we headed to the Muirtown flight, where we had to moor whilst waiting for the swing bridge and the locking to finish. We had a minor problem going in because the lock keeper took the bowline first but then the stern swung out so we were sitting sideways in it, thus meaning we had to go out and come back in once more. Once the water level had reached the top of the lock Mum and Dad got off to pull the boat through, leaving me to steer. After just missing the wall after a set of sluice gates we made it safely up the flight, at this point there was thunder and lightning. We dawdled along to Tomnahurich swing-bridge and shortly after found ourselves rather close to the edge, but after that there were no problems (apart from the rain). After passing Dochgarroch lock we moored almost immediately, and as I sit here I look at the window and see the rain gliding down the glass like a boat on calm water.

17th July, Dochgarroch to Fort Augustus

It was an early start this morning. Up at 7:35, but it was definitely worth it. Unfortunately a bit before leaving it started to rain, although that soon cleared up. Upon entering Loch Ness we put up the headsail and motor sailed through the picturesque landscape and passed Uckit (Urquhart) Castle, I asked Dad what it was called and I thought he said "Uckit!" so it stuck. Eventually we arrived at Fort Augustus at 13:30 but didn't get up the locks until 16:20 so we were hanging around for ages, oh and the lock was so full that I panicked and started to cry, but after that I was fine. It took about an hour to get to the top then we nabbed a spot on a really high jetty so the deck was actually lower than the top bit, ah well, we're here now, and its beautiful. This is an idyllic place to be!



Loch Ness



Fort Augustus

18th July, Fort Augustus to Gairloch

I hate getting up early...or at least any time before 9am. After leaving the high jetty, we set off towards Loch Oich, and shortly after leaving we came to our first lock of the day, after we were through I went into the cabin to sort out my bunk, do my teeth and brush my hair, but almost immediately after I'd finished we came to Culloch lock, and it was our last locking up until we were in the Crinan (I think). Then we passed Culloch Swing Bridge and we were in Loch Oich, it's a really short loch! After that we passed yet another swing bridge through a beautiful little bit of canal and into Laggan locks. Once we got in to Loch Lochy we put up the jenny and turned off the engine and about halfway down we put up the mainsail and whoosh, off we went. When we got near the end of the loch we put down the mainsail and carried on. Eventually the Jenny was rolled up and we motored into Gairloch, where we moored on a finger (he he) and are stayed there for the night.



Loch Lochy



Loch Lochy

19th July, Gairloch to Banavie

Today we passed one lock and two bridges. Leaving around 8:15 we immediately got into the lock, then past the first bridge and it was plain sailing (motoring) from then on! Just about a mile after the first bridge there was Moy Swing Bridge and then after roughly four more miles we had arrived. We stayed at the top of Neptune's staircase, apparently it's safer but I've no idea. Anyway! When we were moored Dad and I went into Fort William to go shopping and get some other bits and pieces. Once we were back I went fishing and I caught a rainbow trout...greedy little thing (the spinner was half it's size!). Catching a fish was NOT repeat NOT part of the plan! A little later a Caley cruiser came along which was too big for the space but he was going in no matter what. The guy went a little too far forward and then straight back into our deck level nav lights pushing them backwards. Although I hasten to add that both boats and all people were fine.



Me with Jaws

20th July, Banavie to Oban

Getting up early isn't fun, but sleeping is, and I've done a lot of it today. After going into Neptune's staircase I had a chocolate biscuit because I was starving and whilst we were in the last lock we were rafted up to a very nice Norwegian family's Halberg-Rassay 49 and they towed us all the way to the sea lock. Then when we were out we had our breakfast and I fell asleep for a couple of hours. When I woke up the Jenny was out and I got to put it away. Then I went up to the bow and read my book for a bit. When we got near Oban we slowed to let the Mull ferry get into Oban bay ahead before we followed it in and went into the marina on Kerrera. We got the little marina ferry over to Oban where I got three new books (Gallagher girls 3+4 and Morganville vampires book 3)! Then we had dinner at a nice Italian restaurant and got the ferry back to the marina. This is a very pretty place!



Being towed to the sea lock



Me on the helm



Mum on the Helm



The North entrance to Oban Bay



Bloodhound



Me and Dad on Kerrera

21st July, Oban to Dunardry Locks

OH! MY! GOSH! I was officially knackered. I had been doing the locks. After leaving Oban we went through the Sound of Kerrera, then headed between Insh island and Seil before passing west of Easedale and down through the Sound of Luing. We then went through the Dorus Mor to Crinan and into the canal. I saw more dolphins. In the north part of the Sound of Luing, justb after passing Fladda, we were doing **9.7 knots over the ground!** We were only doing 4.1 knots through the water, that's 5.6 knots of tide! We would have been going backwards if the tide was running the other way. We also passed channels that could take you to the Gulf of Corryvreckan and Little Corryvreckan. The sea lock in the Crinan Canal was very bouncy and Dad got a bit wet while he was doing the bow rope.



Sound of Kerrera



Reading

22nd July, Dunardry locks to Ardrishaig basin

Well that first lock was tiring! The sluices were very stiff, but then I sat on my bum for a while. At lock four I closed a gate and then got lock three ready, caught the ropes, closed the gates opened the sluices, and got lock two ready...but we had engine trouble, a wire had broken. It did take a while and a few phone calls to George but Dad got it fixed. Unfortunately while we were fixing the engine someone had emptied lock two so I had to close the sluices,



open the others, and then cast off before catching a line and closing a gate. Did the sluices and the gates. We kept a hold of the ropes as we brought the boat out into Ardrishaig basin and tied up. After getting moored we helped with two boats going up in lock two and then with another boat just out of lock two that was going into the sea lock. It was a nice looking Jeanneau (I know because I read it). Once the Jeanneau had gone a catamaran from Dalgety Bay came through the sea lock into the basin. We ended up going out for a pub tea and chatting to the crew from the catamaran who had also gone to the pub.

23rd July, Ardrishaig to Portavadie

Ah. Lazy day, love it! I slept until 9:30, then slowly came round until I eventually got dressed. After breakfast we waited until we were ready then got out of the sea lock into Loch Fyne (time). It was a rather lazy sail with only the jenny up, but when we got here...well lets just say out of 210 berths only about 50 of them were filled. When we went up for dinner, you will never have had such a nice waiter. After dinner Mum and Dad had a Gaelic coffee and I had nothing, but then Nuno (the waiter) brought up a hot chocolate for me, and two more coffees, not for me though, he was so friendly and helpful.



Loch Fyne



Portavadie Marina

24th July Portavadie to Kip Marina

It was a very painful day today starting when I hit my hand of the wooden bit above the window, now something has to be really sore to make me cry considering how many times I've fallen, gone over, twisted or cut something and burnt myself but this did. Then I got the spinnaker pole onto the Jenny and after a while we got the spinnaker up, this one fits, and I hit my head of the pole so I closed my eyes to prevent me from hurting anything else. After playing on my ipod we got the spinnaker down and I went straight to sleep, when I woke up my left arm was dead and I couldn't make my fist into a ball or straighten it out properly! After a while we arrived at Kip, we had both sails up and heeled well over and I wasn't complaining, when we were in the marina I got to row about!! Only 5 days left! ☹ Dad said this was definitely the best day's sailing on the whole trip after the spinnaker run we were on a close reach all the way to Kip and he was pleased because we got up to 6.3 knots through the water on the log at one point.



Inchnarnock Sound



Heading for Kip

25th July, Kip Marina to Holy Loch Marina

It was a short day today, only a couple of hours max. There was no wind so we just motored, but some twit of a ferry driver was heading straight towards us so we turned and he turned towards us! After a while we arrived and I recorded my song, then we had lunch and went into Dunoon. We got 99s and wandered around the shops, I was going to get Tamara a mug that said “A day with out laughter is a day wasted” but I was silly and didn’t get it! I regret that now, but it would have taken a lot of bubble wrap! (She lives in Colorado)



Kip at Holy Loch
(he gets confused sometimes)



20:00

26th July, Holy Loch Marina to Bowling



I feel like I’ve done nothing at all today. Mum and Dad were up at 5am to get us to Bowling for around 9:30 but I wasn’t up until about 8am. We got into the lock (where the gate was broken so it was a big rush of water to close them) and waited to go up. When we were up Dad and I got the sails down and then Dad got the mast ready to come down, when the crane lifted the mast up the top fell backwards and nearly ended up in the water but I had averted my eyes and was reading my book. When the mast was secured, Mum and I went to find a shop to get some bread and chocolate. We then came back and had lunch and I finished the book I was reading, have I mentioned that I have finished the 2 Gallagher girls books I bought, the new book is the schools and I’m determined to finish it before we go back, Oh and these twits about my age were jumping off the abandoned railway-bridge into the water. Around 15:00 we went into the next lock. It wasn’t such a rush this time but it was still quite fast. We got up and moored but the fenders were on the wrong side so Dad reversed in and missed the first time (the boat doesn’t enjoy going backwards) but a man caught our

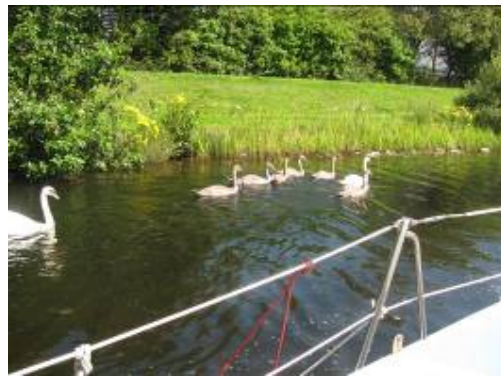
stern line and helped us get in. After a while we went for a walk to get ice-lollies and when we got back I started to read again. That's all I've done today...or at least all I can remember.

27th July, Bowling to The Stables

AAH- SO MANY LOCKS! We set off in the morning around about 9:00 and at the first bridge the silly billy of a narrow boat helmsman was side ways across the canal, after the bridges there were a lot of locks. We had a short break by a market across from the huge Asda in Cumbernauld. I bought presents for some of my friends, then got back and had chips before we set off again. In one of the locks the old dude on the narrow boat let go of the stern line when the lock was only half full. After that there were no problems in the locks. We stopped for lunch before lock twenty-seven, and Dad got a plastic bag out of the water intake. After lunch we set off up even more locks at Maryhill. Once we reached The Stables Nan and Phil were there and we had tea with them. It was very nice to see them.



Cumbernauld



Swans in the Canal

28th July, The Stables to Grangemouth



That Narrow boat was with us until Falkirk and held us up half an hour! He was only getting ten more minutes when he turned up. There were a lot of locks today and it rained. The Falkirk flight was long but quick because there were two teams of lock keepers. We didn't really stop anywhere for lunch and it felt like a much quicker journey.

29th July, Grangemouth to Limekilns

We left the sea lock at 12:00 and went into the river Carron keeping a very close eye on the depth. After we were out we motored down to Limekilns. When we passed Culross I thought it was Charlestown. Finally we got back and Russell took Dad back to the house to get the car whilst Mum and I got the boat tied up. Then we went home.



Thanks

Dad asked me to thank a couple of people who helped getting Armagnac to Inverness for the start of our holiday.

George Scrivener for helping out with the trip to Inverness.

Thanks to John Murphy, and the crew of Erin, who went out of their way to help when the prop shaft coupling broke. It would have been a long slow trip to Peterhead without their help. Thanks for the mince and tatties as well.