

# Thira Summer Cruise 2019

**On Board Sean & Denise Doyle**



Thira leaving Malahide on a wet misty morning at the start of our three week cruise in Scotland

**Thira's Starting Log 7210 Nautical Miles**

6<sup>th</sup> of July

## Malahide to Ardglass

11:52 Engine on and leaving Malahide in drizzle and fog. A great start to our holiday. So different from last year when we sailed to Ardglass in a heatwave.

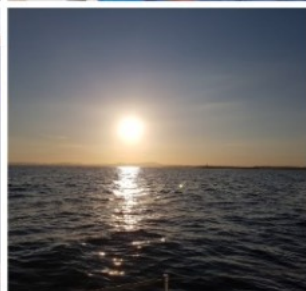
14:00 Passing Rockabill lighthouse and its beginning to clear. Position 53°63012N 06°00990W Log 11.3 Course 25° Speed 5.8.

15:20 Just having lunch we are motoring along nicely and the sun is starting to come out so Sean is applying the factor 50 (he burns ) Log 19.

16:48 Position 55°51218N 05°50485W Log 27.6 Course 22° Speed 6.5 wind has shifted to a better angle so the jib is up as well as the main, but still motor sailing as we want to get into Ardglass Log 27.6

18:26 The wind has shifted again so away with the jib. Log 37.8

20:30 We have put away the main as the wind is on the nose. We are abeam St Johns point to port making a lovely backdrop to the sun going down Log 49.8



21:32 In the Berth in Ardglass engine off. Log 53.8 Water levels very low the marina today. Marina manager is not around as he is sick so we decide to stay on board and have a nice glass of wine and our lazagne.

**Cruising Note**  
Ardglass seems to

be silting up. We arrived at low water 3 days off springs and the port side mark was aground and very much( High and Dry). We had only 0.2 under us in the 1<sup>st</sup> row of berths and we draw 1.8 so I'd say we would not have gotten in to the second trot.

## 7<sup>th</sup> of July

### Ardglass to Carrickfergus

12:36 Engine on and heading out of Ardglass after a nice breakfast and a good sleep.

13:00 We have put up the main and are motor sailing towards Strangford lough.

14:06 Position N54\*20023 W05\*27994 Log 7.10 Speed 5 kts still overcast and having some sandwiches for lunch.

15:05 Just passing South Rock Log 12.4 speed 5. kts and the sun has come out. We seem to be getting a bit of tide with us also now.

16:07 Log 18.6  
Speed 6 kts  
motor sailing  
main only in  
sunshine  
heading for  
Donaghadee  
sound.



17:44 We are  
going though  
Donaghadee  
sound with the  
tide Speed 8.4  
kts over the  
ground.



17:57 Jib out  
and engine off  
sailing at last for  
the last of the  
trip across  
Belfast Lough.

18:50 We have the engine on and the sails put away and making our way to the Marina. We will be staying two nights as they have a deal - stay two nights, get the second one free.



A rest day tomorrow and we can have a good look around Carrickfergus as we have not been here before.

19:25 Engine off Log 39.7 Engine Hours 1296. Off to the Pub for a drink and the something to eat.

## 9<sup>th</sup> of July

### Carrickfergus to Glenarm



8:10 Engine on. We had planned to depart at 8am but running a little late as we want all of the tide going north.

10:00 Approaching the Isle of Muck. Motoring once again Sean has gone off watch for a snooze. Log 10.6 speed 5.9 Speed over the ground 6.4 so getting a nice lift.

10:18 Rain and very poor visibility here again. I always seem to have fog going past Larne.

11:17 Position

N54\*57084 W05\*52343 the rain has stopped and visibility has improved Sean back off watch and coffee and cake is the order of the day.

12.04 Tied up in Glenarm. Log 23.2 Engine Hours 1299. The marina facilities have much improved since our last visit. They have a new building with toilets, showers, washing machine and a dryer.

Denise is going to go look around the walled garden while Sean does some work. We will then go for a drink before retiring back to the boat for some dinner. The marina is very busy with some long distance sailors. One boat sailed all the way up from the isle of Man today and did not motor once Feeling a bit of a fraud as all we seem to have done is motor sail but



we do only have three weeks. They have six months so I suppose you need to have time to have slow trips.

**10<sup>th</sup> of July**

## Glen Arm To Rathlin

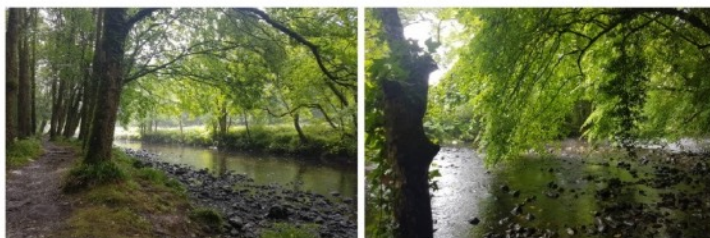
8:00 Engine on a motoring out of the marina and heading north avoiding the fish farm on the starboard side as we cross the bay

8:22 Having breakfast and once again

motor sailing in drizzle.

9:30 Position 55\*07685 W 5\*58653 Just approaching Ternaionoy point I have just seen a pod of porpoises swim past us heading south. Maybe there trying to tell us something as our friends Aiden and Oonagh Coughlan on Holly go lightly are sailing south from Greystones for three weeks sailing along the south cost and there SAILING in Sunshine and were MOTOR SAILING in Drizzle.

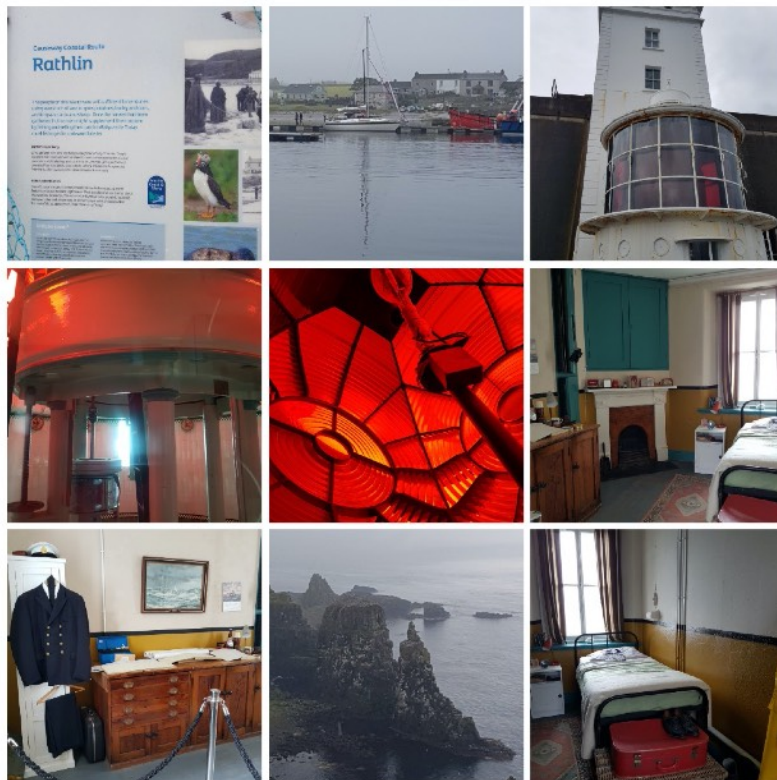
There is very little wind but with the jib out were getting 0.5 of a knot extra every little helps Log 9.78 Speed 5.6 SOG 8 kts getting a nice lift with the tide



10:00 Passing to port of Aleen Bay  
Log 14.4 Wind SW 10 kts Speed 5.9  
kts SOG 8.1 kts

11:50 Tied up on the Pootoon in Rathlin. Log 23.4 Weather beginning to clear . The pontoons have been extended since out last visit and the harbour master has a little office now.





Unfortunately the whole island has no power until 7pm tonight so we can't plug in the shore power but we have been able to book dinner in the hotel for tonight. Hopefully power will be restored or we will be having a cold dinner. I have decided to visit the upside down lighthouse and bird sanctuary to see the Puffins. I'm told the bus trip is very interesting Log 23.4 EngineHours 1303

**11<sup>th</sup> of July**

## Rathlin to Lagavulin Distillery

10:00 Engine on and leaving Rathlin after a lovely breakfast in the Manor House Hotel and a kind donation of two bags of ice for our cool box. I'm hoping to wave to my guide at the lighthouse as we pass it this morning as I was telling him I would be coming around as he showed me the actual inside of the light not just the rooms so cool and puffins as well what more could you ask for.

11:00 We are now passing the Western lighthouse on Rathlin. lots of puffins around but alas no wind. Surprise surprise we are just motoring but still making 6 kts. It was so worth it getting the sling wash done before we left Malahide.



12:00 Entering the eastern end of the separation zone north of Ratlin Log 9.55 speed 6.2 sog 6.4 kts.

13:20 Position N55\*31123 W6\*09837 Log 18.1 Speed 6.1 sog 6.1 we are now motorsailing and it looks like rain approaching from the west I think its time to get the oillys on.

14:45 We have arrived at Lagavulin it's a very narrow entrance which has the ruins of a castle on one side and a reef of rocks on the other side with baby seals and coromants perched on the rocks waiting to welcome visitors. Our plan is to anchor and then punt into the peir to go on our 16.30 distillery tour. Log 25.4

Engine Hours 1308.



**12<sup>th</sup> July**

### **Lagavulin Distillery to Scalassaig on Colosay**

8:10 Engine on and motoring out through the tight exit in poor visibility.

It is due to improve later in the day but for now its drizzle again.

9:05 Just passing the anchorage north of Ardbeg Distillery Bay. We can see three



yachts anchored and one is coming out of the anchorage to head up Islay sound like us Log 4.5



10:35 we have passed Mc Arthurs Head lighthouse and entering Islay Sound which we will be tacking up under main only .The rain has gotten heavier and visibility is now poor but ourselves and the other yacht are the only traffic in the sound log 12.9 speed 5.6 sog 7.2 so getting a nice lift with the tide like we had planned.



12:20

Leaving the sound position N 55°58'60" W 06°05'01" We can ease the main as we change course to head to Scalasaig on Colonsay. We can hold the jib now so finally sailing under full sail and the Engine is off. Log 25.6 Speed 5.9 SOG 5.5 kts.

14:00 Arrived and anchored in the harbour adjacent to the pier. It is quite a tight anchorage and we had to lift and drop the anchor again as we were not happy with the first drop. Oh the joys of an electric windlass. Log 31.4 Engine hours 1313

Sean has topped up the diesel with the two spare cans we have and we have arranged for the local shop to refreeze our ice packs over night for us . Everyone is so helpful and we visited the tiny distillery and got some very nice gin. We had a lovely meal in the hotel along with a music session in the bar afterwards.

A very large yacht came in very late and tied it on the pier very close to where we were anchored but we still had room to swing. It was a training vessel out of Oban.





The Island we beautiful and the sound of the Corncrakes was just lovely.

**13<sup>th</sup> of July**



**Colonsay  
to Iona and  
on to The  
Bull Hole  
for the  
night**



11:15 Dropped the anchor after a trip ashore which is where Sean nearly fell into

the water when getting out of the dinghy on to the slippery slip. We collect our ice packs and topped up on provisions and more Gin!!

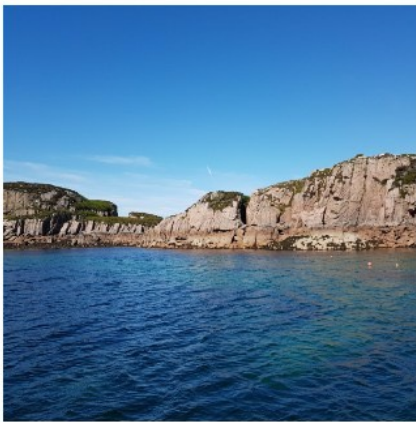
11:45 The main is up and we are motor sailing to the north end of the island and then we will be harding up and heading out to Iona.

13:37 position N56\*14605 W06\*14847 Log 12.4 Speed 5.9 Sog 5.5 there are a lot of boats heading for Iona. The weather has picked up and the skys are clear for the frist time on the trip. Hopefully we will be able to eat out in the cockpit tonight at our anchorage. We have decided to go for Bull hole instead of Tinkers Hole at the south of the entrance to Iona sound.

14:33 Log 17.5 Speed 5.4 sog 5.3 approching the south cardinal mark at the entrance of Iona sound

15:36 Checking out the anchorage off Iona for tomorrow and we are now heading over to Bull Hole which is surrounded by pink granite for the night and we will visit Iona tomorrow.

15:50 Anchored in Bull Hole Engine off. Log 23.6 Engine Hours 1318



**14<sup>th</sup> of July**

### **Bull Hole to Iona and on to Coll via Staffa**

11:20 After a nice breakfast in the sunshine!!!! were heading over to spend some time on Iona. There is a lovely peaceful feeling about this whole area. I can understand why the monks settled here.

11:40 Anchor down and punting ashore to visit the monastery.





14:00 Anchor up and motoring out of the Lona Sound towards Staffa and Lunga and then on to Coll.

15:24 Just leaving Staffa after seeing a pod of three dolphins swimming off Fingal Cave as well as some Puffins as there is a colony on Lunga. Log 8.53 Speed 5.4 sog 5.6 We are now heading for the Island of Coll where we will stay for two nights.

17:40 Arrived into Coll in beautiful sunshine and were greeted by some seal who are basking on the rocks to the starboard side of the visitor moorings which seem to be in great nick. We will be dropping the hook as the anchorage is nearer the peir and free.

Log 21.2 Enginehours 1323





**16<sup>th</sup> of July**

## **Coll to Tobermory**

After a lovely and relaxing two nights

on Coll we will sadly say goodbye. We both had one of the best back massages ever in the local community center for only £25 for one hour each. The newly renovated hotel is so welcoming to sailors they provide free showers and towels if you use their bar or restaurant which we can vouch are very good. They have even kept the pool table in the bar which Sean was very pleased with. It's true that Island time is so much different than normal time. But please not all shops, post office etc. to close at 12 noon and some places only open at weekends. We got caught out and missed the shop. However there is a gourmet shop which opens from 4-6 in the afternoon which sells bread and



milk and once again the hotel were more than happy to give us bags of ice for the cool box.

13:29 Engine on and lifting the anchor under the watchfull eye of the seal basking in the sun on the nearby rocks after a nice sleep. I always sleep better at anchor.

14:37 We have just past the place where the special yellow mark should be but its not there so I can only asume its been lifted for repairs.

17:00 We have arrived in Tobermory after passing the cruse liner Columbus at the entrance. There is also a large Tall ship in port. Its quite full but we have found a spot we need to be in the marina as we need to use the shore power get diesel and water and do some laundry.

Tomorrow is to be quite bad weather so we will stay two nights and then press on with the homeward part of our trip.

Log 17.8 Engine hours 1346. Sean has topped up the water in the forward tank and we are leaving the aft one empty as its only the two of us on board so no need to carry the extra weight. They have no diesel so we will hopesully top up in Oban.

The weather today is great so we are having a good look around. If we were staying two nights we could have attended the highlands games but alass we will need to leave the day before it starts.



## 18<sup>th</sup> of July

### Tobermory to Oban

7:50 Leaving the berth and heading out of the harbour. Yesterday was just rain and wind but today has improved, but still rain. Not too heavy. We have the early start to get the tide.

9:30 Motor sailing down the sound. Sean is having a snooze after breakfoat and I'm on watch. Drizzel again.

11:25 I had gone for a snooze after Sean but





am now back on watch as well. We are passing Ladys Rock and coming out of the sound though the rip tides to cross the channel and into Oban harbour which has quite a lot of traffic in and out of a narrow entrance.

11:14 Managed to get a ferry toot as we were taking down the main before entering the harbour. There are three places to stay in Oban but we were told the one on the island is lovely and has a free ferry over to the town so that the one we were heading for.

12:00 Arrived Oban Marina to get the diesel first before continuing on to our berth. There is a shortage of diesel, so they are only selling to berthholders but since we were staying the night we will qualify so that one thing sorted Log 24.4 Filled tank with 45lt

I took the ferry over to Oban to look around as I had not been here before. Sean has so stayed on board and did some work. Our plan is to eat in the restaurant on the island tonight and I'm going to visit the farm shop that works on an honesty system to get some eggs and jam.

A good thing to note is if you need any chandlery. If it's ordered before 4pm from Ardfert it will be delivered to Oban marina by 6pm!



## 19<sup>th</sup> of July

### Oban to Craobh

8:45 Leaving Oban under Engine as we have decided as it's so busy with ferries and other traffic we will wait to put up the sails until we're out of Kerrera Sound rather than tacking all the way down.

9:30 the Main is up and we are passing Saeirear Dubha Light and here comes the rain again.

10:30 On this passage we will have two difficult bits of navigation through two narrow sounds with lots of tide and obstructions. We are approaching the first one now which is Easdale sound which is a short cut but very narrow with 6 knots of tide going through it.





11:06 we got through Easdale without a hitch and we have just come through Cuan Sound which was much more challenging as we had to keep the boat in the narrow channel which has a 90 degree turn in it and some many strong whirl pools. I would not like to get the tide wrong going through but it is a beautiful passage.

12:00 Moored up on Craobh marina and going to have a nap and then we will have

showers and dinner in the pub attached to the marina. The pub also had a small shop that they will open up for you whenever they are open so we can get our milk and bread later. A site I have not seen before in Scotland - there is a young man in a kilt fishing off the end of the pier, very strange. Log 17.2 Engine 1334.

Craobh marina has a very good chandlery as well as good showers and laundry there is only the pub on site if you don't want to walk miles to the nearest town. That said the pub/restaurant was very good and had a take out service as well as sit in. It has a pool table and music.

## 20<sup>th</sup> of July

### Craobh marina to Port Ellan

There is some bad weather coming in for the next week so we have made the decision to head to Port Ellan and stay there until the weather passes. Then to make another dash in between fronts back to Ireland instead of staying here and exploring Milford bay. We will just have to come back next year. There are so many places to visit you would never be bored.

6:00 Sean has gone up for his shower and I preparing the boat for departure and getting breakfast ready, which we will have before leaving,

7:30 Leaving the berth and motoring out into loch Shuna

7:47 Passing Carrvreckan to starbord course 201\*  
Speed 6.2 sog 7.1

8:05 I just spotted some porpus on the portside abeam of the light on Réisaan t-sruite.

8:35 Position N 56° 04001  
W 04°42466 Log 10.8  
speed 6.3 sog 7.6  
motorsailing with jib only  
heading for Port Ellan.



10:00 just north of Creg house Log 23.2 we had considered staying in Craig House tonight but the weather is due early tomorrow and Seans afraid we might not get a berth in Port Ellan. The last time he was there it filled up very quickly they got the last berth so we are carrying on.



11:39 Position N 55° 41862  
W 05° 58122 Log 34.9

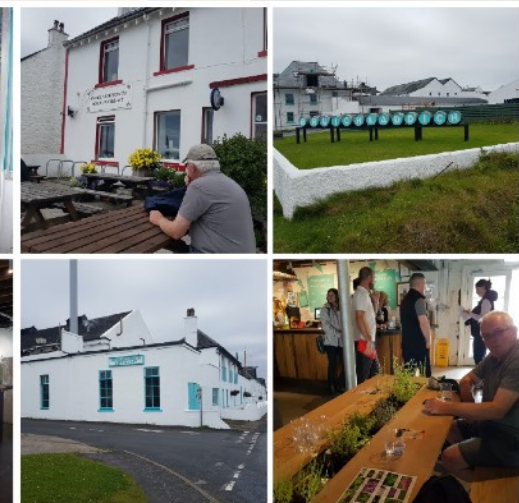
14.14 Berthed in Port Ellan had to circle around for about 15 mins as they moved boats around the

marina so a boat in front of us that was been towed could be berthed before we could berth. We needed have worried about berths as they have extended the marina and there are now two fingers of berths instead of one. They also have a new harbour office with





laundry and new showers and loos. We will be staying a couple of nights so we intend to sort out boat stuff first and then later on visit some more distilleries. We also want to visit Islya wines however first a snooze and then we will head up to the co-op for ice as you can't have warm beer on this sunny day. Log 48.7  
Engine hours 1341



We had a great stay on Islya and meet some lovely people. On one of the nights there was a sing song on the deck of the boats. Great fun and we had some lovely drinks with a couple, Ethna and Richard from Lough Ranza on the Isla of Aran.

They left a day before us hoping to go round the Mull but had to abanded that idea and went to Rathlin instead. They said it was very windy and high seas so im glad we waited the extra day for the sea to settle after the Gale. They sent us a lovely email afterwards see below.

*"Had a lovely night with you and Sean - great craic! We sailed in quite stormy conditions to Rathlin today and had a great sociable time in the pub. Keep in touch and remember - the wine is always on the chill in Lochranza xx"*

## 24<sup>th</sup> of July

### Port Ellen to Bangor

8:40 Leaving Port Ellen after a lovey stay. Islay is a lovely island to visit and the general store is a must to visit. I have never seen such a confused store but they do sell gas which was great. We ate in the hotel and also the restaurant near the pub and both were very nice. The local shop has an ATM in it as the post office cannot give cash back on Irish cards.





The wind is on the nose surprise surprise. The sea is still quite lumpy so we have put up the main to steady the boat .

10:18 Position N55\*31514 W 06\*08410 Log 7.24 speed 5.1 sog 5.2 course 167\*

11:35 log 13.9 we are just approaching the traffic separation zone north of Rathlin



11:58 the wind has strengthened up to force 5 so we have decided to put a reef in the main and that has made the boat much more comfortable. We can always shake it out later.

12:55 We have had some soup and sandwiches for lunch which we couldn't of enjoyed as much without the reef in the main, so much more civilised. As we Pass Mc Donnell Race heading for Tornamorey Point the Log is 21.5 speed 5.1 sog 7.1 and the sea state is moderate.



14:58 Passing Red Bay and we still have tide under us, the weather is to blow up

over the next few days and I would rather press on to Bangor now even if means coming in late than being stuck in Glenarm for the next few days. Log 36.8 speed 5.7 sog 7.2

16:26 We are now passing the Maidens visibility is good for traffic in and out of Larne. We have been monitoring ships on AIS and we were quite surprised at the P & O Ferry coming out of the port had no AIS on, so a good look out is still essential. The tide has now turned so we will punching it for the rest of the trip to Belfast. Log 46.1 speed 5.1 sog 4.2

18:42 The wind has dropped so the reef has been shaken out and were heading towards Bangor. Our positions is a beam of the Gobbons Log 56.6 speed 5 sog 4.2.

20:30 Arrived at Bangors fuel berth. We are filling up for the lads trip back to Malahide as I will be leaving the boat on Saturday. The crossing of Belfast Lough was fun as there was a large cruise liner stopped straight on the nose and had no AIS on either. We were trying to work out were they anchored or moving but it was so hard to work out so the decision was to alter course and go astern of them. It did add 15 mis to the trip which is a lot when you're tired and just want to get in and have a drink and something to eat. Log 64 Engine Hours 1353.

Since we will be in port for the next two days before I leave and Padraig and Colm arrive for the next part of the trip were going to try and clean and treat the toe rail teak and rubbing

streak on the port side as we can not get at it in our berth in Malahide. The diesel has been filled with 40lt going into the tank and 20 lt into the can. The water has also been topped up and washing of clothes is tomorrows job. I have booked a massage for us for tomorrow and we can both relax and read, such bliss .

Total Trip log for Denise is 411 Nm and 21 days on board.

## 27<sup>th</sup> of July

Denise leaves and drives Pdraigs car back to Dublin after the thee lads did their shopping for there trip in Asda. Lots of drink and ice in the trollys. They plan to eat out tonight and head off tomorrow. The crew for the next part of the trip will be Sean, Pdraig and Colm  
Starting ships Log 7621

## 28<sup>th</sup> of July

### Bangor to Strangford Lough

11:30 Departing bangor Marina on the start of out short cruise home to Malahide with a NW wind F3-4.

12:30 Passing thought Donaghadee Sound the jib is out with the wind behind us.

14:00 Passing Skullmartin rock  
Position 53°32.6 N  
006° 26.4 W wind 10kts 330° course 165°.

16:00 Engine off to slow down for the tide to enter Strangford some fishing may be done soon!!!

The fishing finished and two fish caught.



17:30 Arrived Portaferry Marina Log 31.8 NM Engine hours 1358 and now a drink before we have dinner on board. I think we will be having a fish starter.

## 29<sup>th</sup> of July

### Portaferry to Strangford to Peel

11:30 We decide to head into Strangford lough proper to have a look while waiting for the tide to turn to head out with.

12:10 We hoist the main even though there is little wind. May need it to steady us as we exit the mouth of Strangford. Can get very lumpy at times.

12:30 We hit a max of 10.8 kts over the ground with boat speed of 5.4kts as we exit the lough.



13:00 West of Strangford entrance now. Wind 100' 11kts. Speed 5.8 kts. Distance to Peel 27nm.

14:30 Speed 5.1 kts Distance to Peel 18nm. Wind 9kts. Time for some lunch. Fair sailing.



17:30 Arrived Peel. Pdraig tries some more fishing as we wait for the sill to drop so we can enter the marina. About 7 boats are waiting to go in. We call the

harbour master to book a berth.

20:00 Tied up in marina and we head up for some dinner and a few beers.

We end up having to stay put in Peel as the wind continues to blow westerly F5-6 for the next 2 days. We enjoy the break with some sight seeing and some nice dinners. We had a good evening with a bit of a pool tournament between us.



**1<sup>st</sup> August**

## **Peel to Malahide**

10:10 About 8 boats are keen to head out this morning after being stuck here for the last few days. Wind only 5kts today NNW. Any hopes for a nice sail have vanished. Engine stays on! We lose sight of most of the boats as everyone heads off in different directions. Sea state still a bit lumpy after the last few days wind.

11:00 Wind 10kts NNW  
Log 14 nm. We take turns having a quick snooze below.

14:00 Wind 4kts Speed 5.9 kts with the help of the engine. Distance to Malahide 44nm.

16:00 Position 53°58.4N 005°13.4W Wind 4kts and still motor sailing. At least it's a nice sunny day.

17:00 Weather stays the same but the sea is getting flatter the nearer we get to Malahide. Distance remaining 27Nm.

21:30 Arrive in Malahide safe and sound after an uneventful crossing.

Engine 1372 hrs Log 71.2 nm.



**Ships log 7764nm**

**Total trip log 554 Nautical Miles.**