

Thira Summer Cruise 2018

On Board – Sean and Denise Doyle, Adam Doyle and Finn O'Neill

Friday 6th of July

We all meet up at 8pm at the marina in Malahide to load up the boat with the last of the provisions. We let Finn have quick boat briefing before we headed off to MYC for a pre dinner drink.

We ordered some food and headed back to the boat to eat and have an early night as we had to be up at 06:30 hrs. to catch the tide.

Saturday 7th of July - Malahide to Ardglass

We were all up and ready early and we were motoring out the estuary by 7am. The sun was up and it look like it was going to be a scorcher of a day but not much wind and surprise - surprise it was going to be a beat Northward up the Irish Sea.

We had an uneventful passage motor sailing with sunshine all the way. It could have been the Med we were sailing in, as the water was turquoise blue.

Navigation practice was undertaken on the way with both Finn and Adam taking fixes, plotting positions and using all the features of the new chart plotter. Some tries at the art of finding and identifying marks and taking bearings with the hand held compass was also practiced.

Adam and Sean were on one watch and Finn and Denise on the other. Between glorious sunshine and snoozes the time passed quickly and we arrived in Ardglass at 16:40.

We have a few cool beers on board and a very nice fish supper from the local chipper beside the marina.



Tobago arrived while we were eating but they were heading up to the golf club for a meal they had booked and discovered that the Captain's Dinner was taking place on the same evening. Very fancy!

After eating on board we had a short trip up to the newly reopened Commercial Bar for a nightcap before settling down for the night.

Log 53.9 NM



Sunday 8th of July - Ardglass to Bangor

Early start again this morning with us motoring out of the Ardglass at 6.55am. Tobago was also getting ready to leave. The weather today was again very hot and at one stage we had to put towels on the cockpit cushions as they were burning us they were so hot!



We saw a seal or two as we passed Stanford Lough entrance and headed for Dunagadee Sound.

The sea is like a mirror and we are motoring sailing again as very little wind but we are making good time and will be in Dunagadee Sound before the tide turns. The sound was a good place to practice identifying marks and Finn did a great job. We continued around to Bangor Marina where we stopped at the fuel berth to top up and Adam did a

great job berthing and maneuvering in a very tight spot with two other boats there for refueling at the same time.

12.45 We were tied up in our berth and having smoked salmon and brown bread for lunch. It was so hot we had to take out the umbrella to get some shade. The marina was very busy as the Bangor Regatta was just finishing up and the town was quite busy.

Finn and Adam went exploring and purchased their train ticket home for tomorrow as sadly they will be leaving us. Meanwhile we had a rest and showers and later went out for some pub grub and a beer.

Log 35.3 NM



Delivery Trip Over - Summer Cruise Starting now - Sean and Denise on Board

Monday the 9th of July - Bangor to Loch Ryan



Adam and Finn left early for the train and we went up the town for breakfast. We went to get some of the homemade pie from the nice deli for dinner that evening. The plan is to head across the Irish Sea to Portpatrick and then make our way up the Clyde towards the Isle of Arran. Planning to then go onward up to Holy Loch. Tobago is heading to Glenarm as they are going outside the Mull of Kintyre.

By 10.40 we were motoring out of Bangor. It is

a very different day today. Wind and drizzle greeted us so full oilies were required for the first hour or two. By the time we were leaving Belfast lough it was clear that Portpatrick would not be a suitable safe port with the wind direction being more Westerly than North West as forecast. We adjusted course northward and headed to Loch Ryan to use Stranraer Marina. We decided to sail with jib only so we would





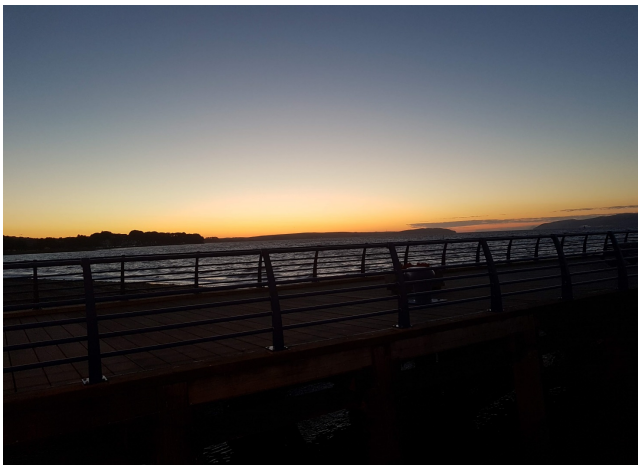
not be overpowered as there were now only two of us on board and boat speed was 6.7k so clipping along nicely but the wind is building all the time.

14.25 Having lunch and making good time.

We should be in Loch Ryan by 17.00

We arrived into Loch Ryan to be greeted by a very large car ferry exiting the Loch. We kept well out of the shipping lane. All was fine and

we picked up the channel marks into the Marina beside the old ferry terminal. Just as we were about to furl the jib and prepare for berthing the wind picked up and started gusting force 6 – sods law.



17:45 We eventually tied up in the marina, which was far more exposed than we had anticipated. To say we had a rocky night would be an understatement. Even to walk on the pontoons was hard going. The swell from the Loch was so bad overnight that the port side fair lead came partially out of the deck and that was with three shorelines on the bow to spread the load. We dined on board with chicken and ham pie and salad. We went up the town to escape the bouncing marina and to explore the town.

Log 39.3 NM



Tuesday 10th of July - Loch Ryan to Girvan

08:10 Engine on and leaving the berth early again. We were glad to leave the Marina after an uncomfortable night. We had to make good time to get into Girvan before half tide, as there is a shifting sandbar at the entrance.

We motored with the mainsail helping us along. With alisa crig to our port we made good time and were approaching Girvan by 12 noon which was 3.5 hours before low water



not to come in any time after 2 hours after HW!!!!

He informed us that half the lifeboat call outs were for getting people off the bar.

The town has a nice feel to it so we have decided to stay two nights and get a few bits and pieces done while were here.

Log 23.2 NM



12:30hrs. Tied up in a lovely little marina but we only had 0.8M under us coming in over the bar so I would not like to come in any later.

The harbormaster said he normally tells people



Thursday 12th of July - Girvan to Lamlash on the Isle of Arran

09:00 Another early start to pick our way out over the bar on a rising tide this time. We had planned to go to Loch Ranza, but with a northerly forecast for tomorrow we have postponed that and are now heading for Lamlash.

09:45 We have the main set and our motor on. We hope to be in Lamlash Bay by 13.00. I have decided I'm going to take a bus trip around the island and book a tour of the Isle of Arran distillery for tomorrow.



We had an uneventful motor sail over to Lamlash and arrived at 13.00 as planned. There are lots of visitor moorings but we dropped the hook to make use of the windlass fitted last year. Glorious sunshine and a very pretty village greeted us with a very good selection of shops and pubs and a good Co-op.

The coffee shop and ice cream shop at the top of the pier do showers, which are very handy, and we plan to have dinner tonight in the Drift Inn.

Log 20 NM

Friday 13th July - Lamlash to Loch Ranza on the Isle of Arran

The weather has changed again to mist and drizzle. We are punting in to the co-op which opens at 8am to get some ice and food.

09:25 Engine on and anchor back on board. We start to motor out the North Chanel between Holy Island and Arran and started north past Broderick to Loch Ranza.

11:40 We are near the top of Arran and we can see this lone cottage with no road to it and a few hikers walking both over the mountain and around the Costal route. They must be using the cottage so it must be a hikers hut. A beautiful setting for a walk.

13:00 We entered Loch Ranza and the mist has cleared to reveal a stunning loch with 15 visitor mooring with clean pick up boys and a pontoon for the dingy.

13:10 All settled on the mooring and we are having some lunch before heading in to our Arran distillery tour.



Log17 NM

We had a great tour and purchased a very nice 10-year-old whiskey. As the distillery was about a



20 min walk from the boat and the sun had come back out we hopped on the bus which had just arrived and got a free lift to the Loch Ranza hotel. We sat outside and had a few drinks before retiring to the boat for dinner and to sample our new purchase.







Saturday 14th July Loch Ranza to Largs Marina

We have to go to Largs to get gas as nowhere so far stock it. We had a late breakfast and a nice lie in.

12:45 We started the engine and dropped the mooring.

13:00 We unfurled the jib and once again we are motor sailing towards the end of the Island of Bute.

The wind has picked up before we go though the Cumbrae Islands. We are clipping along nicely at 6kn under jib only. Its nice to have no engine on for a while



15:20 We are thought the Islands and heading up to larges we can see the new wind turbines being installed just south of larges



16:00 Engine off again as we're in the berth assigned to us by the marina. We head up to get the gas and have a coffee in the coffee shop.

The marina is very well run with great showers and services. There's a great chandlery here. We got a new fender for the Crinan Canal next week. The Yacht Club serves food as well as Scots bar and restaurant.



Log 18.5 NM



Sunday 14th July - Largs Yacht Haven to Holy Loch

We wake to rain and misty fog with very poor visibility so we decided we would go have some breakfast and wait for the afternoon to see if it cleared.

13:25 The visibility has improved enough to head up to Holy Loch Sean is hoping to get to see some of the world cup final so its out of the berth and round to fuel up before heading out into the channel.

14:20 We are motor sailing up the Firth of Clyde channel in misty rain keeping a sharp look out for ferrets and ships.

16.23 Berthed in Holy Loch Marina in misty rain but the loch still looks nice.

After paying for our berth we headed up to the Holy Loch Inn to watch the soccer final. This pub was very friendly and even served free chicken drumsticks during the game. The pub was very dog friendly with two dogs behind the bar and several others with customers.

We chatted to one skipper of a yacht called El Obeid. He and his four friends had sailed up from Largs Marina as well. We headed back to the boat with our takeaway and shopping.

Log 14.4 NM



Monday 16th July - Holy Loch to Lochgoilhead

We had a lie in this morning but woke to the sound of bagpipes playing and a constant wash from boats passing. When we got on deck to see what was happening we discovered that a 600-person passenger cruise liner had anchored in the loch. The passengers were being ferried in with the liner's lifeboats to go on their day trips. With each landing of a boat the bagpipes were played.



After our showers and a very nice coffee and scone in the coffee shop we went for a little walk and back for a snooze before heading off to Loch Goil. We were planning to stay tonight at the castle or go on to Lochgoilhead.



14:30 The engine was started and we were motoring out of the loch. We had to pass the restricted area in Loch Long where they make the submarine missiles.

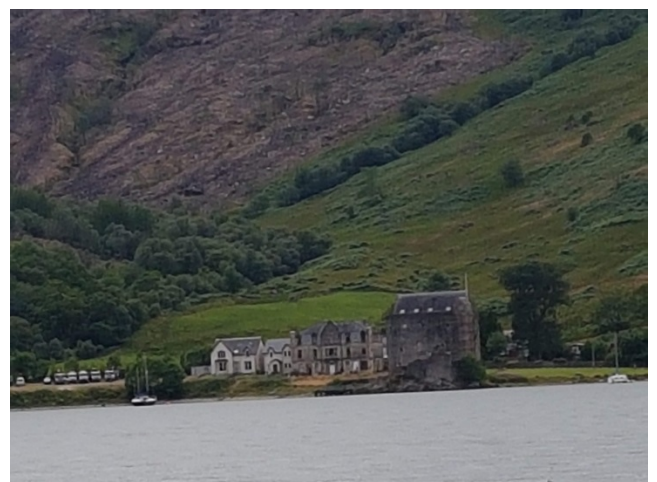


16:00 Passing the restricted area which has a police boat on watch all the time



to make sure it is enforced.

16:11 Entering Loch Goil and having some coffee with whisky cake.





17:00 Passed the castle and decided to head on to Lochgoilhead. We can see a submarine ahead which looks like it is getting new crew as quite a number of them are standing on deck having a smoke as another vessel pulls away which had been rafted to them.

17:15 On a visitor mooring at Lochgoilhead. We may stay two nights, as it is very pretty and peaceful here. We will be going ashore shortly to check out the Gail Inn.

Log 13.5 NM

Tuesday 17th of July – Lochgoilhead to Port Bannatyne

This morning we were woken by a large number of Cub Scouts partaking in water activities for the Scottish Scout Jamboree which was being held in Lochgoilhead over the next two weeks with cubs taking part the first week and scouts the second week. We decided not stay two nights as it had become far too noisy.



12:20 Engine on and we were leaving what had been such a quiet spot the night before. Motoring down the loch past where the sub had been anchored yesterday but has now gone.

13:50 Passing the restricted area in Loch Long.
We can see the submarine anchored just at the entrance of loch long and the paddleboat the Waverley has just crossed us on its way over to Greenock, it's such a beautiful boat.

15:00 a police rib approached us and asked to move well out of the channel as the submarine was going to be traveling down the loch



shortly. It was an interesting sight to be motoring parallel to a submarine, which is being escorted, by two police vessels and a sweeper rib to clear its path of any other vessels.

15:57 Passing toward point where we will then turning starboard towards Bute and head up to Kames Bay to anchor at Port Bannatyne if we can, or if not happy anchoring, we will use the marina.

17:00 Anchored just outside the marina after scoping out a landing pier in the town. It will dry so we are heading in straight away so we can have dinner in the Port Inn and back out before the dinghy is left high and dry on the short pier.

Log 23.4 NM







Wednesday 18th of July - Port Bannatyne To Tighnabruaich



10:15 A lovely rest was had this morning before we stuck on the engine and motored out in beautiful sunshine, but no wind again. The water was like a mirror. We are hoping to have lunch in either Colintrave or the anchorage An Calach.



11:55 As we had got the tide thought the Bute Islands we decided to carry on to An Calach, just at the top of the Kyles of Bute, and the entrance of Loch Riddan and have lunch there.

14:20 Headed off to Tighnabruaich after a lovely lunch and rest. Listening to all sorts of wild life from herons, seals and loads of birds. I have no idea what was living on Eileen Dubh but it reminded me of Jurassic Park!





15:09 Having picked up the Tighnabruaich Hotel visitor mooring, we headed ashore to get provisions and a coffee. The village has put out a floating pontoon for dinghies, which makes life very easy. The Botanica Bistro was not open tonight for dinner as they were catering for a wedding so we had coffee and a scone there. We settled on having dinner in the recently reconditioned Royal Hotel, which was very nice. It had been taken over three months before and the food was fab and the crack was mighty in the Shinty bar.



On our way back to the boat we popped in to the Tighnabruaich Hotel as we were using their mooring and we meet up with some of the staff on their night off from the Portavady Marina which delayed us a bit so we returned to the boat much later than planned.

Log 9 NM



Thursday 19th of July - Tighnabruaich to Portavadie Marina

11:10 Heading down the West Kyles of Bute and as we were up late last night and only have a short trip today its motoring all the way. Once again we had glorious sunshine, but no wind.

11:35 Just rolled out the jib to catch the bit of wind which has appeared. I just saw a few porpoises but Sean missed them.



12:35 We're having lunch of scrambled eggs with ham, mushrooms, onions and cheese and Ballymaloe relish.

We are now heading for Sgat Mor Position 55° 50' 388N 005° 17' 085W.



13:18 All tied up in the very posh marina of Portavadie. We have washing to do and this marina has a drying room, which will be very handy. They also have a spa and leisure center with outside infinity pool, two out-door

Jacuzzi's and a glass fronted sauna, which looks down on the Mull of Kintyre. We have two full body massages booked at 4pm so plenty of time to make use of the facilities.

Log 11.4 NM





Friday 20th July. - Postavadie Marina to East Loch Tartbert

12:00 Engine on and once again motoring in misty rain and its a lot cooler today. My fleece had too be dug out of the bottom of my bag not much sailing today either.

13:00 Arrived at East Loch Tartbert to get lunch and the shopping. We decided to stay the night as the Traditional Boat Festival is on. We are surrounded by beautiful old, but much loved wooden boats which both of us really love after having a wooden boat ourselves for many years. This has to our shortest day sailing so far, not even a mark on the chart!

Log 3.3 NM







Saturday 21st of July - East Loch Tartbet to Crinan Canal Entrance



05:45 Engine on and motoring to the seacocks at Ardrishaig. An early start was necessary as last night, while out for a very nice meal in the starfish restaurant, a message came in on Facebook from the Clyde Cruising Club that the Crinan had issued a new list of restrictions. I had phoned Friday morning and was told they will not let yachts in over 2m draft but we draw 1.7 so that was grand. Also

they would only be opening the sea locks 2 hours either side of LW. However this new restriction stated no boats over 1.8 draft could enter the canal and the sea lock opening would only be one hour either side of HW which was 07.40 TODAY!

The canal staff don't start work until 8.30 so that leaves a 10 minute window to get into the lock. We decided to get up there early. They had also restricted it to a minimum of two boats in a lock,

so unless there was another boat there to go in with it would be round the Mull of Kintyre for the last of our trip.

07:40 Arrived at Ardrishaig there are two boats here already but we quickly found out one won't get in as they draw over 2m.

09:30 We are in the canal basin and through the sea lock now. Our assistant

Tom has arrived but there is a bit of hassle as the boat that has waited since yesterday does not



want to let the third boat into the lock. He has refused to move forward so we have moved up into the lock but don't want to travel with this boat as they show little experience controlling their boat in the lock. After much talking it was agreed we would transverse the canal with Isla Roae, the old wooden boat and the other large boat would go ahead of us, which we were much happier about.



17:19 Tied up above the basin at Crinan after a lovely day in the canal with well-controlled lock transits. Both boats were using running blocks for the lines back to the winches to control the boats. Thanks to Tom our assistant, Simon, Alison and there two children,

Annabelle and Duncan and their friend Fred. They were all on their 3rd generation wooded boat, which has been cared for with great love and attention. We do love wooded boats after owning and renovating Isha many years ago.

Lowest Depth in canal under us at draft of 1.7 m was 0.2 m.

Log 15.3 NM





Sunday 22nd of July - Crinan to Ardfarn Yacht Haven

13:30 We are waiting to get out of the sea lock but the guy in the big boat has been told he must come in behind ourselves and Isla Rose but he is making a pigs ear of it. We've all made a mess of things one time or another.... but really 😊

14:00 Eventually out of the lock and after saying our good byes to our lock mates we are sailing up towards Ardfarn marina.



15:00 Sailing under jib only for now up the Craignish Loch at one point while entering the loch we were passing a gap towards the famous Corryveckan. The tide was pushing us sideways by 40 degrees.

1:00 Arrived at Ardfarn Marina. We went up to register in the office, which is also a chandlery. It's probably the best chandlery I have ever been in. I even managed to get deck shoes and a few bits and pieces. The marina has an ICE MACHINE and Freezer, which meant we could refreeze our ice packs. We had dinner in the Galley of Lorne Inn, which was very nice.

Log 6.5 NM

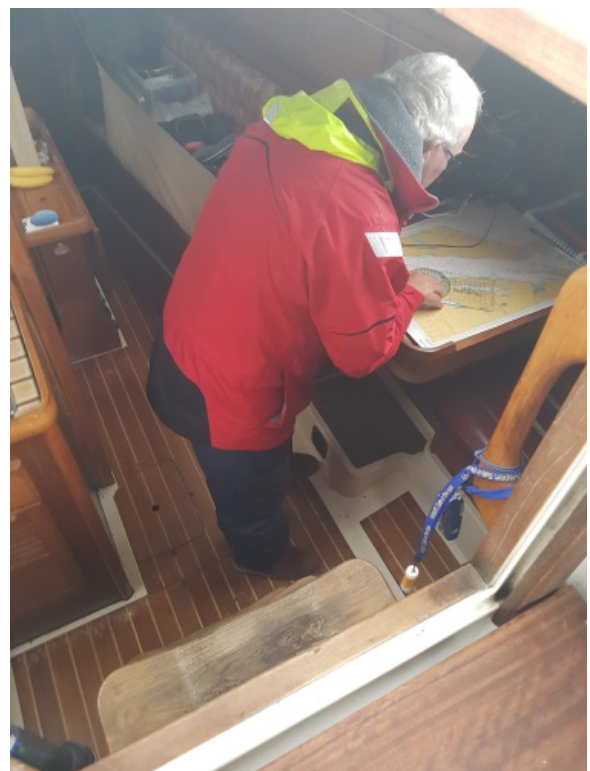






Monday 23rd of July - Ardfern to Craighouse on Jura

We went to the Ardfern village stores this morning to restock and I have to say it is the smallest, but best stocked shop I have ever been in. They even had Kerrygold butter! We also had a brunch in the Crafty Kitchen before visiting the chandlery again with the list we had made the night before. The guy in the chandlery was so helpful and was even able to locate and remove for us a secondhand furling halyard swivel to replace the one that we damaged before the trip. The lads had done a temp fix on it so we could travel. All that the chandlery owner wanted was a donation of £20 to the RNLI box, which we were happy to do. After filling two bags of booty we left before our card was maxed out and headed back to the boat.





with our now frozen ice packs to head for Craighouse.

13:40 Now motoring out of the marina and heading down the Loch.

14:45 Passing the Crinan and there are loads of jellyfish around. We are sailing through shoals of them. The visibility is very poor and it is a misty rainy fog, which soaks you. We had to take out our full waterproofs for only the second time this whole trip.

15:25 Position 56°02'45N 005°39'85W. Log 9.9
Course 212° speed 4NM mist clearing a little so visibility is improving.

16:35 Soup of mist and rain are back we could see the VIC 32 smoke as it motored down towards Gigha before the visibility went. It was the last Puffer left in working order, which is based in the Crinan basin.

17:56 Picked up visitor mooring at Craighouse on the Isle of Jura and were welcomed into the harbour by a seal. We are too late for the distillery and shop but will check it out tomorrow. We are off in ashore for a drink and some food. Tasted the local gin called Lussa, which was very nice.

Log 25.9 NM





Tuesday 24th July. - Craighouse on Jura To Ardminish Bay on Gigha

9:00 We went ashore this morning to get some provisions and look at the distillery.

11:30 The engine is on and we are heading out of Craighouse.

11:55 Sailing at last! Heading for the north of Gigha Sound Position 55° 49' 424 N. 005° 54' 595W



13:00 The boat is sailing nicely and we are having sausage sandwiches.

13:30 Put away the sails and motoring as we enter Gigha channel with a fish farm to starboard.

15:00 Anchored in Ardminish Bay we are hoping to get Adam some local handmade fudge and we have dinner booked for 6pm in the Boathouse restaurant.

Log 15.2 NM



We had a lovely meal in the Boathouse. Fab food and we even got some of their sticky toffee pudding to takeaway for Adam. We also secured some local fudge and shortbread from an honesty stall outside the maker's house on the way to Ardminish Gardens.





Friday 25th July – Gigha To Portrush Northern Ireland

We are hoping to get to Portrush before the bad Southerly weather sets in for the next few days, so its an early start for this long crossing.

06:30 Engine on and the anchors stowed.

06:45 We are nearly out of the sound and have both the main and jib up and doing 7 Kts so a very good start to the day.

07:45 Sailing nicely and having our breakfast. Position 55°34'730N
005°52'287W



09:30 The wind is playing nice and we are reaching towards the top of the separation zone North of Ratlin Island. Speed 6.6 Kts. Log 17.7 Course 246°

11:00 Speed has dropped to 4.5 Kts so the engine is on and motor sailing with mainsail only.

13:30 Having crossed the separation zone and Ratlin we're heading in close to get a good look at the Giants Causeway from a very different angle. Looks great pity about all the people on it.

14:30 Tied up on a very nice pontoon in Portrush after coming through the sound and into the harbour, where they are doing work rebuilding the pier.

Log 45 NM (new gas bottle started)

We will be staying two night to ride out the bad weather before bring the boat to Derry for the end of our trip and hand over to the Sommers family for their sailing holiday.







27th July - Portrush to Derry City

12:30 Engine on and moving back to the fuel berth to fill up.

13:15 Leaving Portrush just as a squall hits as the tail end of the bad weather. Jib out to settle the boat in the swell and engine on.

14:38 Approaching the entrance of Lough Foyle. The channel is well marked, but quite narrow.

15:48 Getting some assistance from the tide now passing Greencastle. It looks like they are putting in a pontoon in there as well.



17:22 Starting to go up the river now.

18:33 Tied up at Foyle Marina after a interesting berteage – first attempt nearly got messy - we had to change all the lines and fenders from our preferred side to berth into the tide.

Log 29.9 NM

The council runs the marina and there is no water available and electricity is by card, which can be got at the council offices, which of course is closed until Monday. We are going to

try getting a card off a permanent berth holder. All fun and games but Derry look nice and we are looking at the peace bridge so that's nice.

Tomorrow we will walk the walls of Derry.

Total Cruse Log 420.6 NM

Total Engine Hours 74









