



## 2009 cruising log for MACTWIST

By Deborah Hetherington

*July comes around so quickly and there we were again getting MACTWIST ready for our cruising.*

*Weather was supposed to be BBQ weather, so we booked 3 weeks off and planned for our Western Isles cruise, yippee*

13<sup>th</sup> July came and we organised ourselves to get ready for our adventures. (After spending 4 days in Dun Laoghaire we did a supermarket sweep on the Sunday night at 0530 in Newry at M&S in Newry)

We headed up to Glenarm to wait the tide for early the next morning (0400), which came early. Great morning and the tides favoured us for the route to Islay.

14<sup>th</sup> July. Highlander 1V was in Port Ellen so we telephoned ahead and said we would meet for lunch (Roy Seaton wasn't too sure we would meet that obligation, we did). We had a fantastic lunch at Ardbeg Distillery. Buses do not run that frequently so we took a taxi and got the bus back. Later that evening scallop boats were arriving by the dozen and we even managed to scrounge about 30 scallops for **free**. (Willy McConnell is a good talker). Garlic scallops cooked on board, yum yum. A true feast.



Debs waiting for the bus at Ardbeg distillery with Roy and Sharon Seaton

15<sup>th</sup> July. A day off and we all took the local bus to Bowmore village. A visit to another distillery!! (More distilleries than a whisky drinker can cope with. A beautiful place and worth a visit.

16<sup>th</sup> July. Onwards and upwards to another place and the weather was favouring us towards Croabh Haven. A good sail up and ohoh that weather was about to change.

17<sup>th</sup> July. Going nowhere that day we decided to take the bus to Oban( man in shop said  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile walk up the road to road's end – more like  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles up the road so quicken your step Jim). Spent the day in Oban stocking up on fresh supplies, and then got the bus back to Croabh Haven. We enjoyed a drink at “Lord of the Isles” that night.

18<sup>th</sup> July. Weather seemed fine so we headed up to Kerrera (we had thought of going further however the weather was not going to be good for the next few days, strong winds forecasted) so going into Kerrera was a good idea, however everybody wanted to go there. We rafted up between 2 other boats.

Next few days spent at Kerrera. Lots of boats going nowhere, due to the wind not taking us where we wanted to go. Oban is a nice place, but spending more than 3 days gets a bit boring. (Only so many times, going to Tesco's watching OYT boat getting stocked up for their cruises). It's great that the little ferry boat does not charge, you can go across as many times as possible in one day. Oban is a lovely



Jim taking in the Views at Oban

place with good places to have afternoon tea, good shops selling 'Weird Fish' clothing at a reasonable price and lovely views of Oban and surrounding areas when it is not raining.



OBAN

Coming back to the boat on Sunday afternoon we meet up with 'TIA' crew. They have just picked up Alan Harpur and the family. They are going cruising for a few days

20<sup>th</sup> July: Weather not doing what we wanted it to do so we change plans and head for the Crinan Canal. Weather was very windy. We had to wait off the entrance for about an hour before we could go into the Basin. It was raining very

hard and the wind was blowing us of the side. Tying up was difficult. We moored off the coffee shop. It rained all night, next morning the rain had stayed away until we got underway.



Crinan Canal Basin

21<sup>st</sup> July. Next morning 3 boats left the basin to head down the canal. It was still very wet for about an hour. The sun came out, and the layers of clothes started to peel off. We stopped at Cairnbaan Bridge and took a walk up the canal. We could hear familiar voices shouting for a hand. Yes it was 'TIA' crew (we thought they were ahead of us, they stopped at Ardfern), we helped them through the loch and they moored further down the canal from us (they sent us a message on the mobile to say they were having a BBQ and did we want to join them, we didn't receive the message until 2 days later!!!)

22<sup>nd</sup> July. Moving off down the canal we stopped at lochgilphead and stocked up on some supplies. We reached one lock and the lock keeper had been radioed ahead to say which boats where in sequence. However, when we tried to move ahead into the lock he told us to get back. Debs had a heated discussion with him and he agreed she was in the right (never argue with an Irish woman and he was glad he was on the other side of the lock).

We left the Crinan and headed towards Portavaddie Marina. This is a large new marina with lots of space. The new Restaurant is very impressive. Toilets and showers are fantastic. We had to wait a long time for our meal however the manager gave us a bottle of wine on the house. We met some families who had travelled through the canal with us.

23 July. Leaving Portavaddie we had a bit of sunshine. We headed round the Kyles of Bute and the weather was pleasant. That night we stopped at Rothsay. They have finished the Marina there and we stayed in the Outer area of the Marina.

About an hour after we arrived, a large wooden boat about 50ft came into the outer marina. They went aground and the skipper from the boat got off and tied ropes to the pontoon. Poor wife had to stay onboard. Everyone came to help. No shifting, they just had to wait until the tide came in. About 8 o'clock they managed to come alongside the pontoon and tie up. They went off for some food (only place for food was a Chinese). We met up with them for a drink later along with another couple who helped them.

24 July. We left Rothsay just before lunch and headed towards Holy loch. Wind was a bit strong. We arrived about 2 in the afternoon. Next morning the wind and rain was so bad we decided to stay for another day. We took the bus into Dunoon. They were having a festival, lots of children doing Scottish Dancing. Other activities were taking place. Sun came out for an hour in the afternoon.

25<sup>th</sup> July. Next morning and it was time to move on. Listening to the weather forecast we decided to head for Largs. Rain started and it was heavy by the time we arrived at Largs. (Weather was not going to be good for the next 48 hours so we settled at Largs Marina and decided to visit the chandlery and pick up some new parts for the boat).

27<sup>th</sup> July. Sun Shining, Getting ready to head off and needing fuel we headed for the Fuel pontoon. Ellen McArthur and her crew were already in the process of fuelling up. They were heading for Northern Ireland. We fuelled and left, hoping to head for Arran. Listening to the weather forecast for the next 48hrs, we made up our mind that heading straight for Carrickfergus might be a better solution. We arrived in at Carrickfergus Marina at 0310.

Next morning the weather was wet and blowing a gale. We were glad we made the decision to head for home.

*Next year we are going sailing in Greece; at least we will get good weather!!!*

