



Dad! Dad! Wake up!! Are you going to the race briefing, it's about to start Michelle called.

Arrgh. I was dreaming!

Anyway if it is too windy to go sailing one day at Bembridge, come on to my boat and I will tell you another story or we can discuss this one in further detail, but remember to bring a pillow in case you fall asleep!

Many thanks to the crew of

"Flip the Swych"

All at Sea - Sea Wych 36 (part one)

By Vic and Betty O'Dell

In memorium

We had only intended to buy a sailing dinghy, as an extension to our camping activities, but when sailing a hired dinghy in Christchurch Harbour, my wife found it was always her feet the family trod on.

Later in Scotland we tried a Silhouette, but even as a day boat it lacked some conveniences. Then one day when we despaired of finding a boat to suit, we saw an advertisement for 'Sea Wych' and as Grendon Underwood was not far from Luton, we drove over on the Saturday morning that Stan Morris was collecting his set of mouldings and that same afternoon we went down to Hatch End to see the finished product at Major Wheeler's. The next day we placed our order. The name of 'my' boat was to be short and easily



understood. Betty is a Scot and thought the name should be the Gaelic of 'Sea Wych', her mother consulted a friend who has the Gaelic who gave us the name 'Ban-Druith Na Mara', but I am always expecting another Gaelic expert to come along one day and tell us we had named our pride and joy 'Hag of the Bog' or something similar.

We took delivery in June and by working every available moment, sometimes into the small hours, we managed to have her in a sailing condition by the last week in July, about half way through my holiday, and decided to rush down to Poole for a few days sailing. John Sadler thought we should finish off complete before launching but the call of the sea won, although his disapproving frown seemed to haunt us every time we went about and a crash from the cabin announced that something else had descended into the sink or onto the floor.

The weather was fine and we thoroughly enjoyed the sailing. We were able to leave our temporary moorings under sail, only using the outboard for picking up the buoy again. One day sailing in Poole we had to wait until the evening for the flood, so it was quite late before we reached our moorings and made snug. We were ravenous by this time and set about preparing a large meal only to run out of cooking fuel when it was partly cooked. Fearing that the restaurants would be closing shortly we dashed off without changing.

What the smartly late night diners thought of us I don't know, but the waitress didn't turn a hair when she came to take our order and found me unobtrusively putting on a pair of socks.



We recovered the 'Sea Wych' at Lake Road on Sunday morning using the anchor chain to tow the trailer clear of the water, reversing the car so that I could see what was happening. After turning the car and coupling up I decided, as the foreshore was very crowded with cars, boats and trailers, to drive along the road a little before stowing and lashing down, but had only moved a few yards when I was aware that Victor was pointing and shouting. I braked hard to find that had just stopped short of cutting off the local telephones with the mast. It also had the fortunate result of sliding the boat forward to its correct position on the trailer. Back at home we fitted shelves and a water pump, and on Friday the 25th August we set off north on the M1 and then the M6, stopping the night at a services area using the boat as a caravan,

We resumed our journey early next morning hoping to launch at Largs on the Clyde late that afternoon, but a burst trailer tyre delayed us too long for that. I had a spare wheel but the jack couldn't lift the trailer high enough and I could find nothing to block it up with. A patrol car stopped to help but their jack was the wrong type and we decided against their suggestion that we take the boat off the trailer, but they did get a breakdown truck to us - the AA couldn't come for at least two hours - and the wheel was changed in a few minutes with the aid of a trolley jack.

We arrived at Largs about dusk, only pausing at Wemyss Bay to put out daughter, Elizabeth, on the ferry to Rothesay to explain the delay to Betty's mother, who has her home there. We launched the next morning from the old sea-plane slipway which is



excellent for the purpose. Sightseers watch from the promenade and don't get in the way, and cars are not allowed to park there. By prior arrangement we left the trailer at Largs boatyard; Betty was taking the car to Rothesay by ferry leaving me to sail over with our sons, James and Victor. The trip across the Clyde was uneventful, but the wind dropped about half way and we had to motor into the harbor, where we tied up to the pier alongside yachts and trawlers.

Next morning we took on supplies including black puddings (we are particularly fond of the Scottish variety, but never eat those sold by English butchers), square sausage and several varieties of scones. Then James, Victor and I set off on our first cruise.

Crossing Kames bay the wind freshened and we made good progress through east Kyle with a following wind, meeting several yachts close hauled. The ferry crossing the narrows at Colintrave caused no problems and we took the channel to the north of the Burnt Isles, as it appeared to be easier. To the north opens the picturesque Loch Riddon, ahead the beautiful natural harbor Caladh, but our course was south west through West Kyle now close hauled, with the wind on the port bow, rounding Rubha Ban (White Point), brought Tighnabruaich into view. This pretty village with a pier is a popular calling place for the pleasure steamers of the Clyde, a number of yachts moor here and there is a sailing school.

The wind backed and freshened, so we took in a reef, as were to cross Inchmarnoch water, well known for its treacherous weather.

In fact the wind dropped and we were left becalmed. I

cooked a meal, and lost our forks overboard as I passed it out to James on the cabin top. We were almost motionless but a small piece of paper thrown overboard was left astern eventually.

We were still some distance from Loch Ranza when the sun was topping the mountains of Kintyre, as I decided to start the outboard and make for Skipness, a small bay exposed to the south. It was dark when we rounded the buoy and headed into the bay. We anchored in four fathoms and made coffee before turning in. A fresh wind got up from the east and the headland didn't afford much protection and I had a restless night, checking frequently that we weren't dragging anchor. Victor got up once to tighten a rigging screw which was rattling in the chin plate and keeping him awake. I was glad when morning came. James, when he awoke, remarked, 'She doesn't ride very well at anchor', and seemed surprised when I replied a little brusquely, 'What do you expect; it's blowing a gale out there'. If the wind had swung more southerly we would have been on a lee shore, so I was anxious to be away, but we made breakfast first. I was inclined to head for Loch Ranza, the nearest safe anchorage, while James wanted to go to East Loch Tarbert, our planned destination for that day, but as we had to tack towards Loch Ranza to clear Skipness Point, I decided to wait and see how the yacht behaved out in the Kilbrannon Sound.

The mainsail was hoisted, reefed well down and the anchor raised. I was pleased to find that she handled well. The waves were steep off the point, and there was quite a lot of white water. We were sailing up over

the waves and plunging into the trough but very little came onto the deck and only rarely did we get a splash of spray in the cockpit. No other vessel had been sighted but now one small coaster appeared from the west hugging the Arran shore.

The sea was not quite so rough in the sound so we came about to head for East Loch Tarbert but failed to clear the point, so we had to make another tack. This time we took no chances and the second leg of the tack took us right into Loch Fyne. A yacht now appeared crossing Inchmarnoch water under full sail. The wind having moderated, we set our jib and foolishly took off our life jackets. We then unrolled the reefs from the mainsail and found the clew lashing slack. We had luffed up for this, and I started to secure the lashing when the wind filled the sail swinging the boom out, which caused me to overbalance and take a dive into the sea. Fortunately we had no way and I was able to hold onto the mainsheet until the boys were able to help me aboard. This was not as difficult as I expected in spite of the heavy clothing I was wearing under my sailing suit. Not wishing to get the cabin wet, I took off most of my clothes in the cockpit and put them in a large plastic bag, where they remained until we returned to Rothesay, by which time my knife, which I had forgotten to take out of my pocket, was quite rusty.

Victor had lashed the clew while I was changing, and we enjoyed an uneventful sail close to the Kintyre shore to East Loch Tarbert. Following the direction of the pilot book, we stowed the sails and used the motor to negotiate the difficult entrance. Inside it was flat



calm. We anchored in the north bay just clear of two rocks. It was just after 2.00 pm, and we hoped to lunch at one of the restaurants, but all were closed by the time we had rowed ashore, so we retuned and cooked a meal. After eating, I stretched out on a bunk with a cup of cooling tea nearby. It was 7.00pm when I awoke and the tea was still there. I had intended to walk to West Loch Tarbert, but after my long afternoon nap, I'd lost the inclination so we took a stroll round the harbor and a couple of pints in one of the bars.

Next morning was warm and sunny with just a ripple of water at the harbor entrance. Two yachts that left with us motored north, most likely for the Crinnan and the Western Isles. We lay becalmed for a while until a light breeze lifted the sails to take us to the eastern shore, from where we were to make a long tack down to the mouth of the loch.

From the Kintyre shore our next tack took us close to Scat Mor with its prominent lighthouse and along the coast of Kilfinan to Ardlamont Point. As on the previous day we were sometimes quite close to the shore, but the chart showed no outlying hazards and a trawler was at work with her trawls out. The rocks near the point have a large, noisy population. A dolphin's fin and round back appeared just a few yards away. We did consider going south of Bute, but the pilot book warned of the race of Garroch Head and there are alternative anchorages on the north coast so we headed into the West Kyle once more with a good following wind and hot sun on our backs. A sunbather stretched out on the foredeck of a yacht sailing down the Kyle lifted his head to call, 'This is the life', to



which I replied, 'It's what we came for'.

A steamer was leaving Tighnabruaich pier and we had to watch for small pleasure craft. This time we took the channel south of the Burnt Isles past the anchorages of Wreck Bay and Wood Farm Bay. The wind turned cooler and we put on warmer clothing, but it held until we rounded Ardbeg Point when we lowered the sails and motored across Rothesay Bay and moored again to Rothesay pier.

This calm lasted all through Thursday so no sailing was possible. Friday we had to return to Largs for our return home. I was sailing with James as Victor and Elizabeth had elected to take the ferry with Betty and the car. I should have checked the steamer timetable for as we left the harbor the steamer cast off from the pier but it caused no difficulties beyond the roll from its wash. We raised the sails and steered close in to the old stone pier and Craigmor where Betty took several photographs but I'm afraid in the colour slides we look half a mile off. Out in the Clyde the wind dropped so after a while we started the outboard and set a compass course for Largs, this was the first time we had used the compass, Largs and the Ayrshire coast were obscured by fog but it was possible to make out Cowal and Toward Point lighthouse, we could hear its fog horn and later Cumbras was heard. We were keeping a lookout for the buoys marking the deep channels where the large commercial vessels have right of way. Detailed information of these is given in the Clyde Port Authority booklet. Our outboard ran dry half way across one of these, fortunately there was only one freighter in the vicinity. The tank was refilled



from a can and we continued.

Largs emerged from the fog. Elizabeth was waiting at the slip, Betty and Victor collecting the trailer. We anchored off the end of the slip and lowered the mast. Stowing away what gear we could, when the car and trailer returned, we had a while to wait for the tide, so we sat on the trailer eating ice cream. The recovery went smoothly and we stuffed ourselves with hot dogs from a stall on the promenade before taking to the road, which was just as well, as the layby at Langbank where I intended to stop was closed for roadworks, so we had to continue through Glasgow and south of the M8 before we could stop for a meal. We stayed the night there and arrived home in Luton early Saturday evening.

Was it worth such a long trail for just a week? We think so, although we could have stayed longer if we hadn't used our holiday building the Sea Wych. The Clyde is an excellent cruising ground, almost land locked. Negligible tides except for a few places, deep water inshore and superb scenery.

We remember Vic and Betty O'Dell with great fondness, God bless them.

Transcribed by Rick Bowen 6/03/2017



Membership News

Could members please advise me when paying their annual subscription who the first named member is in the LoM if the cheque is in a different name.

The bank is refusing cheques where payee appears as SWOA therefore would members make out their cheques to: 'Sea Wych Owners Association'. The bank says it is to reduce fraud.

Membership currently stands at 107; of us, 67 are SeaWych owners.

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members

Gingell	248 Avery Hill Rd	
	SeaWych	
Harold	Eltham	SW?
02088503678	London	TBA
	SE9 2JL	Thames
East Coast		
Bree	537 Nacton Road	SeaWych
Doz	Ipswich	SW?
Kate Ling	IP3 9QT	Reckless
01473 805537		Pin Mill
07905029298		East
Coast		
doz.bree1973@hotmail.co.uk		