

Bragar Cruise to Oban 2023

DAVE, LUCY, RUARI, FLORA AND BESS



Log - Day 01

PLOCKTON

Saturday 17.06.23

Packed the house into bags, packed bags into pickup, drove pickup up to pier, Ruari and Daddy took the dinghy to collect Bragar, brought her into the pontoon and we all packed the pickup contents into the boat. The sun was shining, not a breath of wind and tide on the rise, a good day to start the holidays and get organised for the off but dark clouds slowly appearing. With the race due to start at 1700 and a course to set plus setup for the first PSBSC race of the season, the Plockton Hotel Stakes, the core team were left with Bragar with wind rising and rain starting to fall and Daddy switched hats and walked to the line to do some commodoring. Less than a quarter of the way there, the heavens opened, arriving at Tullochard soaked, the hut was opened, systems tested and the hooter fired for the first time to signal the half hour warning.

As the wind dropped, a course was optimistically set and after a minor delay waiting for a couple of local boats to get organised, the race started 15 mins behind schedule and four boats headed for the Dall mark. It took a while for them to get out of the bay and after a course shortening all boats finished with the last one just 6

minutes inside the time limit. There was a great curry night put on by the hotel and with the giving of gifts complete and a couple of beers consumed daddy switched hats again and returned to the rest of the team to spend the night on the pontoon with a plan to depart the pontoon first thing tomorrow.



Log - Day 02

PLOCKTON TO MALLAIG

Sunday 18.06.23

We awoke in Plockton, called in on Dad to wish a happy fathers day and empty the dog and put to work getting ready for the off. Water tanks were topped off, diesel filled and we were steaming out of the harbour at 0930 heading for Mallaig.

The tide at Kylerhea was running south from 0800 to 1400 so no pressure to get there and we steamed under the Skye bridge with the sun still shining. We bumped into a handful of mega yachts parked on the corner at the entrance to Kylerhea and the got a couple of waves before steaming into the narrows and watching the SOG rise and rise to top up at 11.5 passing the ferry who kindly waited for us to go by.

We arrived in Mallaig to a full marina at 1415 and squeezed ourselves astern into a tight wee corner and walked up the ramp to see if we'd be allowed to stay,

taking the full team up for safety in numbers in the hope we'd not be moved out to a mooring. Thankfully the lovely marina manager took pity on us and despite boats booked to arrive we kept our berth and prepared for an adventure ashore. Fathers day teats and card were handed out first though - all forgotten in the rush to get off the pontoon first thing. Kids were then dressed and bags packed for a trip to the shops, via the loos!

Mallaig was its usual bustle with the added excitement of a car on fire in the ferry queue and a rather enthusiastic fire engine charging through the town at warp factor 10. We dodged the crowds, tied up bess and rolled into the coop for provisions. Barbecue stuff and marshmallows - the sun was still shining after all! Planning to leave early from Mallaig for Arisaig with thunderstorms inbound on Tuesday and thinking 20kts on the nose for a bit to shorten the journey on Tuesday the lesser of the two evils....

After provisions complete and team back at the boat, mummy rustled up some filled pasta and sauce and fed the team, e-mailed Arisaig for a mooring booking and checked weather and route before retiring for the night.



PLOCKTON TO MALLAIG



Log - Day 03

MALLAIG TO ARISAIG (ACTUALLY LETS JUST STAY IN MALLAIG)

Monday 19.06.23

The team woke as usual with out the need for alarms, bess taken ashore first for a quick empty with the boat team topping up water tanks etc and ready for the off. Weather a bit sporty in the bay however and after a brief chat with a neighbour along the lines of "what would you want to go out there for" we needed a bit of a re-think on the mission to Arisaig.

Having had a brief discussion on the plan, and a look again at the forecast, Arisiag was binned, the weather tomorrow looking a lot more sensible for a mission south and plan would be to wait til the thunderstorms passed over, prep for dinner underway and leave Mallaig tomorrow at 1630 for an evening sail/motor to Coll. Weather looking a touch lively in the morning and thunderstorms due from 1200 so we'd struggle to get south before they landed. So, what to do with a day to kill in Mallaig.....

Cafe second breakfast and a trip to the swimming pool ought to do the trick, so trunks packed and off into town in search of bacon rolls and decent coffee! The cafe in the middle of town hit the spot and bess welcome too, and after the team was fully fuelled we embarked on the journey up the hill to the pool, Mummy on Flora/pushchair and daddy with Ru on shoulders.

Swimming session was a hoot, Flora on great form and loving her 3-2-1 blastoffs, Ruari independently noodling his way around. Snacks consumed after and we made our way back to town for mid afternoon and watched the steam train pull out from the top of the hill. One back at the boat we broke out the iPad and watched a bit of finding nemo for some subliminal swimming improvement.

MALLAIG TO MALLAIG

As we approached dinner time Mummy was sent for a belated fathers day takeaway tea and the boat team did dishes, set the table and got ready to receive the bountiful harvest of fried delights. We ate our fill washed down with some holiday fizz and got the kids organised for bed. Once settled we got back into the passage plan for tomorrow and had a good bleather with a couple in an Achillies delivering it to Murray as the latest addition to the AOTW fleet. They had alarms set for 0200 to squeeze the best out of an early SE forecast wind and get south ahead of the thunderstorms. Another rethink on the passage plan required...

So, they were right, no T&L south of Mallaig and a 15kts SE breeze from 0300 to 1200 giving a beam reach the whole way to Ardnamurchan and beyond, an early start required but no intentions of an 0200 alarm! We'll get up at 0600 and get as far as we can.



Log - Day 04

MALLAIG TO COLL

Tuesday 20.06.23

0300 was heralded by the outboard starting up next door and our neighbours on the Achillies were off, sparking a chain of events that included a loo trip, a woken toddler, woken mummy and eventually a whole boat awake. Thankfully everyone got back to sleep and at 0600 the adults alarm went before the kids and we got the boat prepped for the off before Ruari surfaced just as we were releasing lines with Flora appearing after departure at 0700.

True to the Achillies forecast the wind off Mallaig harbour was a solid SE and with the main eventually up closely followed by the jib we were charging along on a solid fetch with Ardnamurchan in the crosshairs doing 6.5kts. The boat was barely pressed, crew happy, sun shining and looking forward to Bragar's first visit to Coll.

Lunch of egg mayo and bagels was had under way and Ruari grabbed a cockpit nap as we approached. The engine went on for the last mile or so to help us upwind slightly to make the entrance to Arinagour and the genny packed away and we cruised into the bay under main/engine to find a mooring. Thankfully the one closest to the pier was left (a bit shallow on approach but fine in the tide we had) and we were soon tied up and dropping main, once we'd recovered the boathook that fell overboard in the process!

Well earned arrival beers were had, boat tidied and team prepped for trip ashore, dinner



MALLAIG TO COLL

The dinghy was launched, outboard on and team loaded for adventures ashore at 1600, table booked for 1730 but plenty adventuring to be done beforehand. We arrived on Coll and ditched oilies etc, emptied dog, visited loos and started the slow meander towards the Coll hotel. Made a lot slower by the amount of traffic, Coll is a busy place!

We eventually made it to the hotel, and got everyone inside, found a table and ordered some drinks before doing a tour of the garden inc helipad, so exciting! Rosie and Calum soon arrived and more drinks had before moving inside. Early signs of meltdowns however starting to appear, fuelled by slightly late tea and a lot of stimulation. Dinner arrived and meltdowns intensified, thankfully some food made it into the kids before we had to run for the garden and eventually the boat, felt for Calum and Rosie, a tough shift!

Eventually we all got afloat and they could retire to the calm of their own boat after a tow out from our dinghy. We got back to Bragar and got the kids down, pretty shellshocked and in need of a nightcap.



Log - Day 05

COLL TO TOBERMORY

Wednesday 21.06.23

With the the memory of last nights carnage all too fresh, we woke in Arinagour harbour to another day of sunshine and a vow not to push kids dinner time out of schedule again for the rest of the holiday! First off Bess was run ashore with Ruari and Daddy for a brief wander only to be curtailed by some unexpected rain. We ran back to the dinghy but too late to avoid a bit of a soaking, hopefully that was the last of it.

After second breakfast the whole team were prepped for a bit of a wander, thankfully sunny skies again. Island scavenger hunt prepared in advance for a bit of entertainment for the kids and a light agenda of shop visit and general mooch around.

Arinagour didn't disappoint, all but the quad bike was ticked off the scavenger list (two were spotted the night before!) and the shop was well stocked. Some treats were found and the wander back to the

boat started. Daddy thought he'd pulled it out of the bag with a spot of a massive playpark on the horizon but on closed inspection it was still under construction and not ready for use, thankfully this was spotted before the kids and U-turn completed successfully!

We also had some chat with some folk off the Hebridean Princess which arrived that morning and with the locals who confirmed there was a wedding on the island that day, hence the busyness of the day before, Coll usually a lot more chilled, unless you talk to Katie Morag! We returned to Bragar and made ready for sea, destination Tobermory. The main went all the way up on the mooring, the right window to drop the pennant selected and then aborted when a toddler made his way onto the coachroof unexpectedly! All got a bit of a fright but thankfully no harm done and at a second attempt with both children accounted for we dropped the mooring and reached out of Arinagour at 6 kts unfurling genny as we passed under the transom of the

Hebridean Princess and we were on our way to Tobermory!



COLL TO TOBERMORY

The promised 20+ kt westerly out of Coll didn't quite live up to expectation and after sailing a knife edge dead downwind in a diminishing breeze for a couple of hours, the engine went on and the genny rolled up. Flora went below to the nest in the forepeak for a nap and Ruari made a nest out of daddy's midlayer in the cockpit and we motorsailed our way past Calliach point, picking up a bit more breeze at the top end of Mull with both kids waking up as we passed Tobermory light.

Many attempts were made to contact the harbour in Tobes to line up a berth in advance without success so we nosed into the marina optimistic of a vacant berth. Thankfully we had choice of three and after going in bow first expecting southerly breeze, the local conditions gave us a NE breeze into the cockpit, so we did a quick flip and motored back in astern for a bit of shelter for bucket baths later!

Nextdoor neighbours immediately left, don't think a night next to two toddlers and a dog tickled their fancy! That berth and then the other two free filled within the hour and we got ready for adventures ashore, fish and chips under the harbour clock as recommended by "Pip and the Puffer" by Benedict Blathwayt was locked in the plan and once mummy and daddy had been for showers, plan was completed successfully. The team returned to Bragar once fed and bucket baths had in the cockpit. Think we need a bigger bucket for Ruari....

Once the kids were down the adult team had some cockpit nightcaps and a bleather with the crew of a large wooden restored sailing drifter before turning in, Mull Aquarium on the agenda for the morning.



Log - Day 06

TOBERMORY TO PUILLADOBHRAIN

Thursday 22.06.23

We awoke to a glorious day in Tobermory and ran the dog ashore first before starting to manoeuvre the children. A cursory glance had at the garage for a 4.5kg gas bottle but given they've been cast the same fate as the dodo, optimism was limited. We returned to the aquarium in time for opening and wandered in, with half an hour to kill til the touch and feel session, time for some octopus hunting. The excitement was approaching fever pitch by the time we congregated at the pool and the kids all had a chance to pick up/squeeze/poke the assembled creatures (learning all the time - who know scallops had hundreds of eyes...) before we went in search of second breakfast.

We returned to Bragar to make preparations for the journey to Oban and after watching the big drifter fire up its engine and delicately manoeuvre its way out of its berth and the inner harbour, we made ready for sea, cast off lines and made our way out of our berth. We steamed out of Tobermory harbour in glassy calm seas with not a breath of wind and made the right turn to head SE down the sound of mull. We quickly reeled in the drifter bobbing about under sail taking photos as we passed and collected a few more on the run down to Fiunary point. Lots of ferries and fishing boats and sailing boats kept the kids amused and following such, all went for naps as we headed for Lismore light in the footsteps of Pip in the steamer "Puffin" thankfully no fog for us!

We turned south at Duart Castle but no noisy crows, and lined up the entrance to Puilladobhrain, conditions brightening up but unfortunately wind still on the nose and light. On approach we were pipped into the bay by another yacht and arrived to find another six already at anchor. After a brief spin round the bay to pick our spot, we dropped anchor between a westerly and a contessa, settled and then lifted and reset closer to the shore and started the prep for barbecue tea! Dinghy launched first, then most of Bragar's contents plus two children and a dog loaded in and we cast off in search of beach. A lovely spot with slate beach very typical of the area and its main export was found and the BBQ ring made and filled with coal and lighters.

Red wine for the adults, sausages and steaks on the barbie and mummy and Ruari went for a paddle, returning to dinner cooked and happy family. Sun shining and a great photo opportunity, but where's mummy's phone..... After about 30 mins of looking including a wade across to the island paddled to previously and no sign "I hid it under some seaweed mummy" pipes up Ruari.

TOBERMORY TO PUILLADOBHRAIN

After finding the right piece of seaweed, thankfully close to the barbeque and thereafter Lucy's phone we took some photos, tidied up, loaded the dinghy and made for Bragar in time to start the bedtime routine. Kids put to bed, more wine opened and some cockpit time for the adults to take in the sun setting.



Log - Day 07

PUILLADOBHRAIN TO OBAN

Friday 23.06.23

We lifted the anchor as soon as Bess had been taken ashore and had breakfast under way as we made our way north to Oban, fair weather but with Lucy getting kids ready for the day below, daddy had his work cut out single handed sailing and lifting the dinghy a few miles north of Puilladobhrain before entering the sound of Kerrera. We made it across the bay without too much ferry dodging and eyeballed a couple of free moorings thinking ahead to Sunday.

We arrived in the transit marina in good time and picked our berth, head to the expected weather and stern in for power and access and as we made our approach our friend from the Sadler 32 Tir nan Og appeared to take our lines fresh from a cruise to Ireland. We had a catch up, got ourselves settled and got the boom tent up straight away, topped up the now empty water tank, hooked up electrics and headed for supermarket, soft play and lunch. All three objectives were successfully achieved and we returned to braggy boat with holiday lego and spent the afternoon aboard in the dry building pickups and camper vans while we got organised for Piazza tea ashore.

Mark and Christina joined us for a drink while we had our pizza and we went our separate ways, returning to Bragar to put the kids to bed. Once settled we sat out under the boom tent with books and nightcaps, watching the Friday night fun on Oban seafront!



Log - Day 08

OBAN TO OBAN



Saturday 24.06.23

Last full day of the holiday and a lot to fit in! First off running bess ashore and getting the team breakfasted. After that it was off into town in search of coffee and engine bits (Bragar cruise wouldn't be the same without some engine drama) then lunch back at the boat - lots of supplies to work through. Weather not the best ashore but due to brighten in the afternoon.

With the sun now out after a tasty lunch we went in search of icecreamshop (flora's new favourite word), so we found the pokey hat and some seats in the town and sat and enjoyed our icecream in the sun - turning into a scorcher of a day! Next a walk to the bikeshop to check in with Mark and Christina and pick up some shoes, then it was off up to the playpark at the swimming pool for a bit of a play in the sunshine.

With kids and parents suitably tired out we wandered back through the town and back to the boat to tidy up for our dinner guest, Ruth coming over for a curry! Kids were fed pasta, Ruth appeared for a bit of pre dinner play and once kiddy beds complete and curry order phoned in, Daddy went off to collect. unfortunately the curry wasn't ready so a cold beer was consumed, well earned refreshment from the heat of the day.

Braggy boat was flipped, table, plates and wine at the ready on my return and despite a few order mixups a tasty curry enjoyed by all. Ruth made her way home and daddy and mummy turned in for an earliest night, lots to do tomorrow.

Log - Day 09

OBAN TO ACHNANDARACH

Sunday 24.06.23

The end of the holidays! A bit of a washout... bags packed, boat stripped to cruising gear and numerous soggy runs made from the boat to the pickup, Mum and dad appeared from their hotel to help with kiddy wrangling, gear shifting and dog management and with the pickup full to the gunwales the kids and dog went in and Daddy and Mummy returned to Bragar, dropped lines and steamed out of the transit marina in search of a mooring at the sailing club to leave the boat for the

week in the run up to the round mull race starting next Friday.

Unsure of where to leave her we called Duncan at the club whilst dodging the ferries to find that one mooring had a tangled pennant and was therefore unclaimed, so if we could untangle or tie to the buoy we were welcome to it! So as granny and papa moved the pickup across we went fishing for the mooring from the dinghy. Thankfully with the help of a big knife we freed the pennant and attached to Bragar, prepped the dinghy for the last run, gave the boat a quick clean and motored across to the pontoon to

shoehorn in the rest of the gear into what space left in the pickup (including the dinghy and the engine...)

With granny and papa spending another night in Oban and getting bus home, we took them for lunch and then said goodbye and started the run home to Achnandarach good holiday had by all!