

Above the Surface... Beneath the Waves

WAFI Trip Report – Cumbrae May 2011

Day 1 - Sunday 15/05/2011

A Motley crew assembled at Largs Marina: 3 x 'would be' Day Skippers, Mandy, Andy and David; 1 'would be' Competent Crew, Christine, plus Paul along for the ride; but already holding his Yacht Master for Motor Cruising – all to be tutored by the infamous skipper extraordinaire, Alasdair McConachie all from the RYA Training Centre Above the Surface.

Vessel for the week was Santa Fey, a 2 year old Jenneau 36i. After being shown around the yacht we were issued with oilskins and life jackets and given Alasdair's '3 F' safety briefing (Fire, Flood and Falling off!).

Weather was wet and windy and the light starting to fade so motored across to the island of Cumbrae to pick up provisions for the week ahead. Andy at the helm, on our 3rd attempt (due more to wind than incompetence) we made a successful berthing alongside the jetty.



Day 2 - Monday 16/05/2011

Experience gained in handling the boat (a flappy sail is an unhappy sail, pull it in and make it grin!). Anchored for lunch (dropping 4 x expected depth of course) in the pretty Toward Point Bay. Scenery was superb with mist hanging off the hills.

After ferry dodging around Cloch Point we berthed for the night in Holy Loch Marina. Due to the local hostelry being inconveniently closed on a Monday we all caught the bus to Dunoon where we had an excellent curry and Alasdair exchanged much banter with the very witty owner.



Day 3 – Tuesday 17/05/2011

Plenty of tacking experience as we headed for Kilcatten Bay. Paul found it an interesting experience making tea in the galley at an angle of 45 degrees! The sailing was pleasant with a moderate breeze and sailing close hauled. Alasdair was feeling relaxed and perhaps a little bored as he entertained us all by singing 'Gybe Talking' and dancing around the deck!

The afternoon saw us heading to Loch Ridden; mist descended and we had a brief period of sailing in restricted visibility.

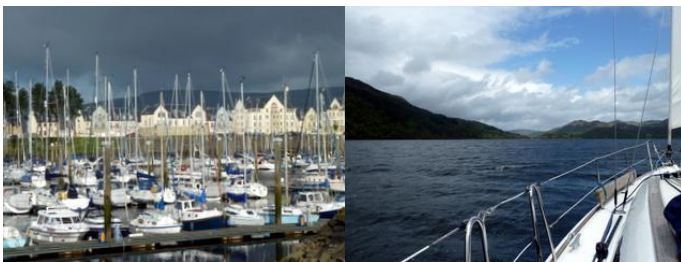
Evening meal was taken on the boat Cottage Pie and vegetable concoctions; Alasdair doesn't like sponge.



Day 4 - Wednesday 18/05/2011

Spent the morning playing 'hook the duck' aka learning how to moor onto a mooring buoy. Weather deteriorated rapidly with gale force winds forecast for the afternoon. Another lunchtime anchoring up in 'Blindmans Bay' was aborted and we ran for cover around the other side of the Kyles of Bute. After much consideration by our skipper as to the foolhardiness of taking the motley crew into such a sea state, we had an exciting sail (small jib only of course) very ably helmed by Andy and Alasdair into Kip Marina.

Having spent 2 days in totally variable but mostly wet and windy conditions, the marina facilities (hot showers, bar and restaurant) were very welcome.



Day 5 – Thursday 19/05/2011

Weather had calmed overnight allowing the Day Skippers the unnerving experience of learning how to safely bring the yacht into berth: portside, starboard side and in reverse. The boat, crew and skipper all remained intact!

The afternoon found us on a dead run allowing us to goose wing (boom fixed to starboard for safety) much of our way up the Kyles of Bute towards Colintrave.

We successfully (of course) picked up a mooring buoy in the picturesque bay for the night. That evening our skipper extraordinaire valiantly paddled us all over to the shore with the one oar that we had managed to find!! The food at the hotel was superb; Alasdair's sense of humour very much to the fore and our final evening was hugely enjoyable.



Day 6 – Friday 20/05/2011

The intention was to learn how to moor onto a mooring buoy under sail (according to Alisdair it allows for a fabulous piece of showing off, once mastered) and to carry out some MOB practice, after motoring under sail into Rothesay Harbour. We headed towards Cumbrae with 2 reefs in our mainsail and the wind unexpectedly increased to a force 7. Andy very ably helmed the yacht and once safely in the lee of the headland we were able to drop the sail and motor on round to Cumbrae where we unloaded our left over provisions and refuelled.

After motoring back over to Largs Marina it was time for boat cleaning and the issuing of certificates.

We were delighted to pass our Day Skipper Practical and Chris her Comp Crew. The week had been instructive (including an extension to our vocabulary of the words 'sweet' and 'cool, cool') and enjoyable. We had all taken turns at the helm and trimming the sails. The day skippers had planned passages and all on board had taken it in turns to be 'galley wench'. The scenery was beautiful, porpoises had been sighted and we were sad the week was over.



A seafaring joke to end on:

An old sea captain was sitting on a bench near the wharf when a young man walked up and sat down. The young man had spiked hair and each spike was a different colour.... green, red, orange, blue, and yellow. After a while the young man noticed that the captain was staring at him.

"What's the matter old timer, never done anything wild in your life?"

The old captain replied, "Got drunk once and married a parrot. I was just wondering if you were my son!"

Trip report and pictures by

Mandy Buckley

Day Skipper

Do you want to join us?

Next trip runs 4th – 9th September 2011

Day Skipper, Competent Crew

or just come along for the experience

contact us on 01706 818670 or visit

<http://www.beneaththewaves.co.uk>