

AQUILA
2021
SUMMER CRUISE



Aquila being lifted in for 2021 season

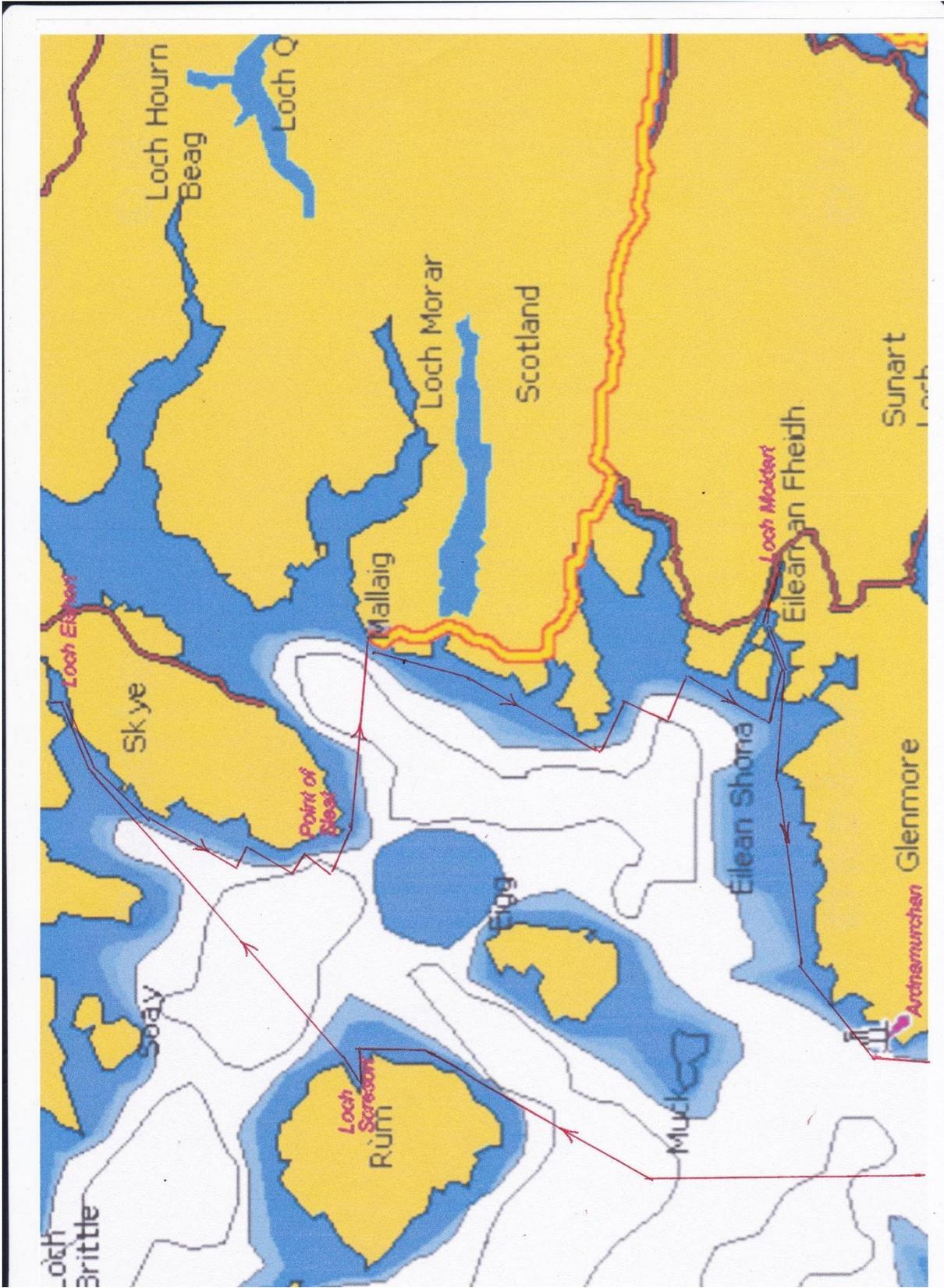
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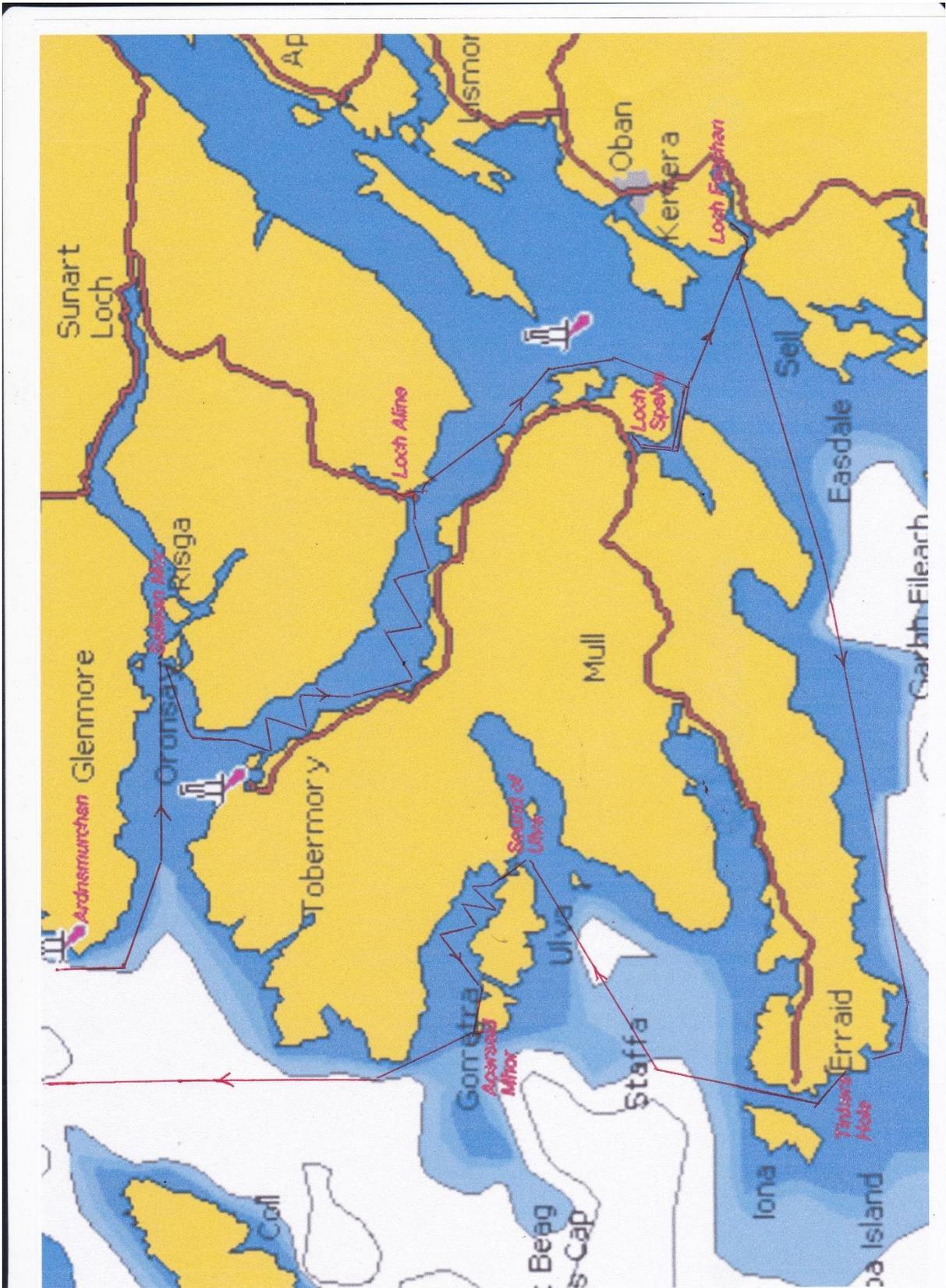
Day	Date	From	To
1 Tuesday	31 st August	North Berwick	Loch Feochan (Ardoran Marine Ltd)
2 Wednesday	1 st September	Loch Feochan	Tinker's Hole (SW corner of Mull)
3 Thursday	2 nd September	Tinker's Hole	Acairseid Mhor (Gometra)
4 Friday	3 rd September	Acairseid Mhor	Loch Scresort (Rum)
5 Saturday	4 th September	Loch Scresort	Loch Eishort (SE of Skye)
6 Sunday	5 th September	Loch Eishort	Mallaig
7 Monday	6 th September	Mallaig	Loch Moidart
8 Tuesday	7 th September	Loch Moidart	Sailean Mor (Oronsay, Loch Sunnart)
9 Wednesday	8 th September	Sailean Mor	Loch Aline (Sound of Mull)
10 Thursday	9 th September	Loch Aline	Loch Spelve
11 Friday	10 th September	Loch Spelve	Loch Feochan (Ardoran Marine Ltd)
12 Saturday	11 th September	Loch Feochan	East Lothian (Begbie)

ROUTE

Northern Section shown page 4

Southern Section shown page 5







Ardoran Marine Slipway



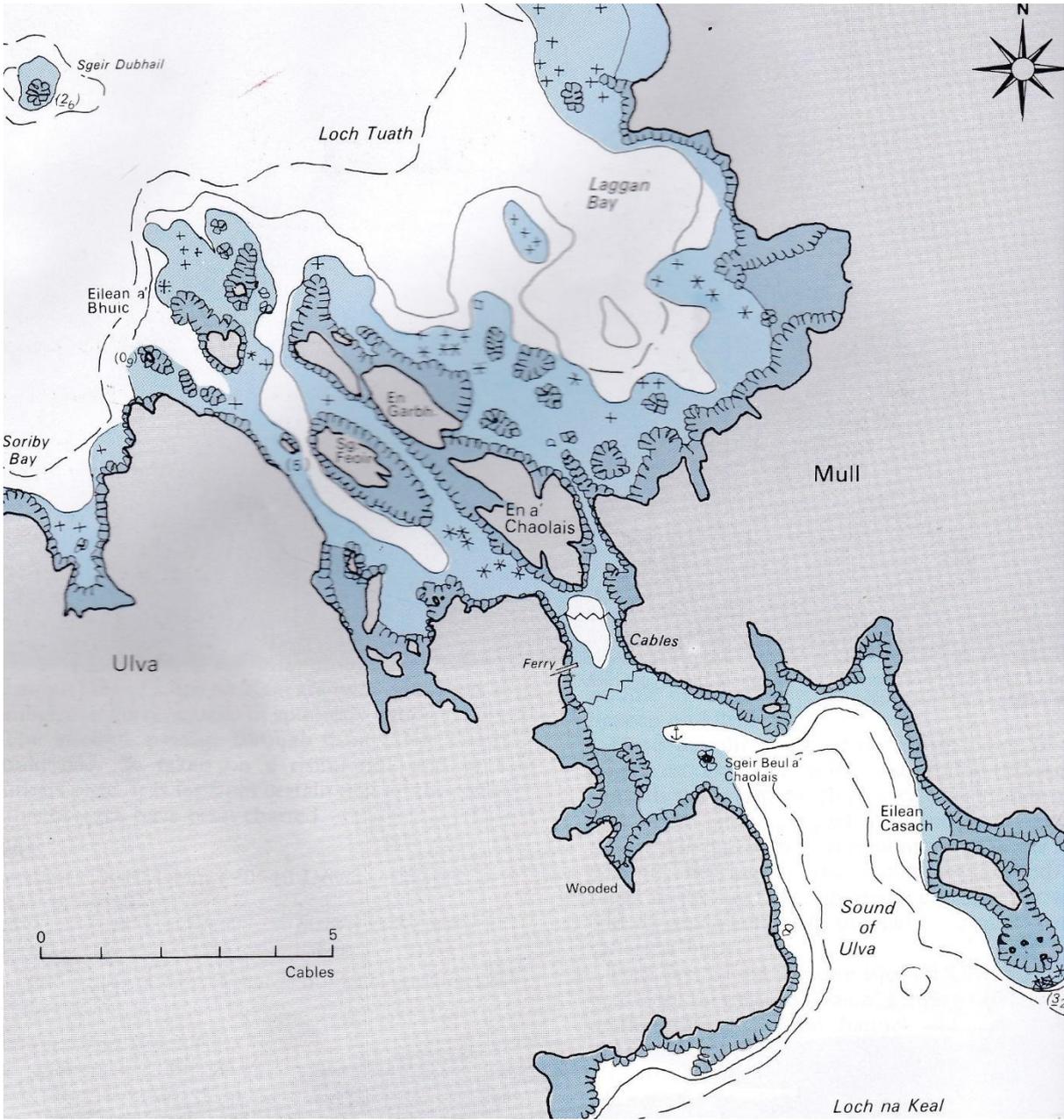
Loch Feochan

Forecast	Distance Run	
		<p>Day 1 North Berwick to Loch Feochan (Tuesday 31st Aug)</p> <p>08.00 on a bright still Tuesday morning I arrived at North Berwick to collect the boat from the esplanade. After a final check of tyre pressures there was an inauspicious start as I failed to couple up correctly and the trailer came off the hitch as I moved off. Luckily no damage was done to the electrics, but I had to dig the hydraulic jack out of all the gear packed in the car to jack the drawbar up enough to get the jockey wheel working. Connected correctly eventually I was late reaching Longniddry to collect Alastair MacIntyre. Leaving Longniddry by 08.45 we made good time in light traffic round the city bypass and onto the M9 to Stirling and beyond. With easy parking at the "Green Wellie" in Tyndrum it was the obvious stopping point for an early lunch at 11.30. Access to Awe Service Station at Taynuilt is also easy so we stopped there to refuel. It was then on through the congested narrow centre of Oban to the turn off to Ardmore Marine Ltd at Loch Feochan. Once on the extremely narrow single-track road there were no further signs confirming we were on the correct road, and we started having serious doubts that we had taken the correct road. However, a pickup coming the other way confirmed that we were on the right road. Ardmore were quite relaxed about payment being left until we returned so by 15.30, after raising the mast, we reversed down the slipway. Releasing the boat and trailer from the hitch we couldn't control it as it rolled quickly at an angle across the slip and the trailer dropped over a step, which we had not seen at one side of the slip. Quickly motoring the boat to the adjoining pontoon, we were able to pull the trailer out on the end of a rope. It then took a further 3 hours to transfer all the gear from the car to the boat and park the car and trailer.</p>



Chef at work

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>E/SE 3/4 or less Pos 5 later Slight Fair Good</p>	<p><i>Sail</i> 4¹/₂ hrs</p> <p><i>Motor Sail</i> 1¹/₄ hrs</p> <p><i>Engine Only</i> 3¹/₄ hrs</p> <p>34 nm</p>	<p>Day 2 Loch Feochan to Tinker's Hole (Wednesday 1st Sept)</p> <p>Exit and entrance from/to Loch Feochan is extremely tricky, and the yard advised us that the ebb in the loch lasts for 8hours so LW in the loch and the start of the flood is some 2hours after LW Oban. Also, as it was a neap tide, we would be quite safe exiting up to 2 hours after the 07.53 LW Oban. We accordingly cast off at 09.00 in a flat calm. By the time we exited the loch by 09.30 there was about 1kn of flood tide against us. On a glorious sunny day, the wind gradually built and by 10.20 we had the main and spinnaker up in 5kn of wind and the engine off. About the same time, we had our first sighting of a pod of small dolphins a little way off. We dropped the sails at 12.00 and started motoring as the wind died then shifted through 180°. By 13.20 there was enough wind to stop the motor, hoist sails and start tacking along the coast. By 16.00 it was right on the nose, so we started motor sailing with the jib down until 16.30, when with the wind increasing to 17kn, we dropped the main and just motored. By 17.00 the angles improved and with a reefed main back up, we were motor sailing again. With several moored yachts visible in various bays on the Ross of Mull we were worried that Tinker's Hole must be busy, but feeling our way into the anchorage at 17.45 we found it completely empty. It took 2 attempts before we were satisfied that the anchor was secure in our selected spot in 5m depth with about 0.5m rise expected. Later that evening a 35-40ft yacht came in and moored at the opposite end of the anchorage. Very calm, peaceful, and sheltered we settled into our traditional evening routine of refreshments while preparing dinner, followed by clearing up and a nightcap before bed as we swung gently around our anchor all night.</p>



Passage through the Sound of Ulva

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>S/SE 2-3 going N/NE 2-4 later Smooth/Slight Fair Mod/Good</p>	<p><i>Sail</i> 3 hrs</p> <p><i>Motor Sail</i> 1 hr</p> <p><i>Engine only</i> 3¹/₄ hrs</p> <p>22 nm</p>	<p>Day 3 Tinker's Hole to Acherseid Mhor (Thursday 2nd Sept)</p> <p>As we prepared to leave at 09.30 the crew of the other boat rowed ashore to explore. In the lovely sunny conditions with a flat calm sea, we were able to see the sandy bottom 0.8m below us as we threaded our way out to the north of Erraid and into the Sound of Iona. With little wind and a gentle swell, we followed another yacht along the Iona shore until it moored near to the ferry slip. With the ferry approaching we reduced speed until it had crossed ahead of us. Clearing the Sound, we set a course towards Staffa and in 4-6kn of light following breeze we stopped the engine and hoisted the sails. By 11.50, about halfway to Staffa, as we turned 90° to starboard to head down into Loch Na Keal and the Sound of Ulva, we spotted a pod of dolphins jumping completely out of the water about ¼ mile away back towards Iona. Later the wind died completely, and with the engine back on and sails down, we motored for a further ½ an hour to reach the Sound of Ulva which we entered at 13.30. Taking our time to observe activity at the new pontoons on the Mull shore and at the boathouse café on Ulva, we then had a quandary at the exit from the narrows. The Pilot said there was a pink spherical buoy marking the south side of the rocks off En a Chaolais but we found a white buoy with a pole which we kept to starboard of us. Later, a fisherman on a boat moored in the pool shouted that we had taken it on the wrong side which would suggest that the white buoy now marks the north edge of the reefs along the Ulva shore! In all it took us an hour to clear the Sound into Loch Tuath. The wind having shifted to the north, it was blowing straight down Loch Tuath at 10-12kn and with the sails up and engine off, we started beating up the loch. This lasted for about an hour until the wind died to 1-3kn and we dropped the sails at 15.50 and motored the rest of the way to Acherseid Mhor. Once again we had the anchorage to ourselves, and selecting a patch of sand between the weed, we dropped the anchor in 3.5m of water at 16.30.</p>



Cheekily entitled an entrant for the next Sewing Bee by the cameraman

Is actually the Skipper repairing his lifejacket

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>N/NE 3 increasing 3-5 later Slight/Moderate Showers Mod/Poor later</p>	<p><i>Sail</i> 5 hrs</p> <p><i>Motor sail</i> 2 hrs</p> <p><i>Engine only</i> 2¹/₄ hrs</p> <p>33 nm</p>	<p>Day 4 Acherseid Mhor to Rhum (Friday 3rd Sept) After another peaceful night in the flat calm of the anchorage we woke to a dull overcast morning and failed to get the 07.10 morning forecast. Just before we lifted the anchor at 08.50, a fast rib from the nearby fish farm came in and disappeared up to the head of the anchorage. Soon after leaving, we raised the mainsail in a futile attempt to motor sail. By 09.40 however we had set a course of 350°, had the jib up and were making 2¹/₂ -3kn in an 8kn breeze with the engine off. We then watched the Coll ferry pass well ahead of us heading for the Sound of Mull. We kept to the same course throughout the day in the cold, dull but dry conditions. Our original destination was to have been Muck but given the wind direction and strength, confirmed by the 10.10 forecast which we managed to receive, we decided it was more sensible to continue on our present course which was taking us directly to Rhum. Being forced too far north, by 15.00 we had to drop the jib, harden up and motor sail for the southern point of Rhum. With our angle to the wind decreasing further, we eventually dropped the main at 16.00 and simply motored. Rounding the southern point of Rhum and approaching Loch Scresort, we could see the Rhum ferry crossing to Mallaig. At the southern entrance to the loch, we disturbed a sea eagle which took off from the shore however we were too close inshore and had to turn away to go north of the cardinal buoy marking the reefs off this point. Approaching the beach, we saw that there was a row of mooring buoys, and we were soon secured to one. Payment could be done over the internet which saved us from having to inflate the dinghy to go ashore. 3 other yachts came in later that evening. The pilot book did warn that Scresort was subject to swell in easterly winds and at some stage during the night we were disturbed by Aquila confirming this and starting to roll heavily in what was a very slight swell!</p>



Alastair MacIntyre on helm, Rhum in background



Looking across to Loch Scavaig & the hills of Skye on way to Loch Eishort

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p data-bbox="193 293 416 517">E/SE 2-4 occas 5 Later Smooth-Slight Showers Good</p> <p data-bbox="193 595 416 891">+24 S/SE 4/5 v S/SW 4-6 Slight – Mod Showers-Rain Good-Moderate</p>	<p data-bbox="416 786 635 853"><i>Sail</i> 3 hrs</p> <p data-bbox="416 976 635 1043"><i>Motor sail</i> 0 hrs</p> <p data-bbox="416 1200 635 1267"><i>Engine only</i> 1 hr</p> <p data-bbox="416 1491 635 1525">18 nm</p>	<p data-bbox="651 237 1222 271">Day 5 Rhum to Loch Eishort (Saturday 4th Sept)</p> <p data-bbox="651 282 1366 1559">The plan for today was to head for Soay but on studying the +24 forecast we realised that the following day from Soay to Mallaig would be against a force 5/6 headwind for most of the day. We revised our plans once again and decided to head today for Loch Eishort with the following day from there to Mallaig being both sheltered in the lee of Sleat Peninsula and having a better angle on the forecast wind. As we breakfasted, the Mallaig to Rhum ferry came in and 2 of the other yachts sailed. At 08.50 in some 6kn of wind we sailed off the mooring, but by 09.00 had turned head to wind and put the first reef in as the wind increased to 18kn. As we cleared the Loch the ferry came out past us and once clear turned across our track as it headed for Canna. We then settled down for a cold lumpy reach with poor visibility in 18-21kn of wind. At one point a pod of dolphins joined us and played around our bow for 5-10 minutes. Thankfully by 11.40 we were entering Loch Eishort and could drop the sails to motor in past the various rocks identified by the pilot book and shown on the chart plotter, the tightest point having a $\frac{1}{4}$ cable gap. Towards the head of the loch, we realised that the anchorage shown in the pilot was not at the head of the loch but was in a subsidiary branch off to port. We duly turned into this bay where some local boats were moored and there were 3 vacant mooring buoys. The first inshore one we selected had no pickup or line attached so we tried one slightly further out and moored to it by 12.40. Its pickup line was so encrusted with shells and barnacles that we fed our own line through it to avoid having to bring it onboard. Although presumably still blowing strongly outside, it was sheltered and peaceful in the anchorage. There was little activity onshore and nobody came out on the water the whole time we were there. The afternoon was spent catching up with writing the log and tidying the boat.</p>



Village at Loch Eishort mooring



Skye from Loch Eishort mooring

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>S/SE 4-6 v SW 3/5 Occ drizzle, showers then rain Mod to rough Poor</p>	<p><i>Sail</i> 0 hrs</p> <p><i>Motor sail</i> 4½ hrs</p> <p><i>Engine only</i> 1 hr</p> <p>19 nm</p>	<p>Day 6 Loch Eishort to Mallaig (Sunday 5th Sept)</p> <p>We had the first shower of the day as we breakfasted. Later, as we slipped the mooring at 08.30, it had cleared up and the sea was like glass with the merest of breezes. However soon after slipping, the engine suddenly lost power and we had to rapidly hoisted the jib to control the boat whilst we investigated. The fuel line had got trapped by the locker lid and the engine had sucked a vacuum into the line sealing the ball valves at each end. We had to disconnect and bash the ends to unstick the ball valves and release the vacuum. With this sorted we dropped the jib and motored out, retracing yesterday's track on the chart plotter through the rocks. By 09.30 we were clear of the rocks and with a trace of a breeze hoisted the main and motor sailed as the breeze failed to develop. When the wind did start to freshen by 10.00 it was cold and by 10.30 it was blowing at 14-20kn, and the seas were increasing rapidly. Although in the lee of the land, we were pleased that we still had a reef in the mainsail from yesterday, as we continued motor sailing as hard on the wind as we could in the expectation of even stronger conditions to come. We only tacked in towards the peninsula once before eventually tacking for the Sleat Headland at 11.50 which was abeam by 12.20. Once round and able to set a course for Mallaig the wind and seas moderated slightly. As we phoned ahead to reserve a berth at Mallaig we crossed paths with an old traditional wooden sailing boat laboriously beating its way south. When we arrived at the harbour there were 3 red lights showing so we had to wait until they went out and we were able to follow a local tour boat in and moor to a berth on the north pontoon. With power available we charged the boat battery, the handheld VHF, phones, and our phone battery packs. We also made full use of the showers and booked dinner at a local restaurant. After our meal ashore we had a surprisingly quiet night in this busy harbour.</p>



Pontoons at Mallaig (Aquila is outermost boat on the north pontoon)



Castle Tiorum in Loch Moidart

Forecast	Distance Run	
S v SW 3-5 Slight-Mod Rain then Drizzle Fog patches	<p data-bbox="424 696 627 775"><i>Sail</i> 3½ hrs</p> <p data-bbox="424 965 627 1043"><i>Motor sail</i> 1 hr</p> <p data-bbox="424 1189 627 1267"><i>Engine only</i> 1¾ hrs</p> <p data-bbox="424 1491 627 1525">31nm</p>	<p data-bbox="643 237 1374 271">Day 7 Mallaig to Loch Moidart (Monday 6th Sept)</p> <p data-bbox="643 282 1374 1592"> It was dull and overcast when we went ashore after breakfast and Alastair went to the Co-op for a few items of perishable stores. Although it was the usual glassy calm when we slipped our moorings and left at 08.40, we had hopefully raised the main by 09.10. It was 10.15 however before the wind increased to 6kn allowing us to switch the engine off, raise the jib and start sailing. Again, as usual, the wind kept filling until we were making 4-4.7kn in 12-15kn of wind but having to beat into it, well west of our proper course. At 10.15 we passed the entrance to Arisaig as a small ferry came out looking as if it was headed to Eigg. It was 11.15 before we could tack inshore into Arisaig Bay until, to avoid Eilan an Snidhe, we tacked back onto our original heading. We continued on this heading until 12.25 when we tacked inshore for Moidart. An hour later we tacked again to follow the Moidart coastline, still making 4kn in 13kn of wind. Sooner than expected the chart plotter confirmed that we were off the southern entrance to Loch Moidart and we dropped the sails and started motoring in towards the complicated entrance. I then unfortunately pressed something on the plotter and the screen went dark and almost unreadable in the bright light. After circling for a while trying to resurrect it, we settled for me on the helm using the pilot book and Alastair in the companionway standing in the shade shouting any course correction up to me. Once through the entrance, the higher reaches of the loch were easy and after passing a group of kayakers we anchored behind Riska Island and beside Castle Tiorum at 15.15. Hopefully not on top of the 2 electrical cables shown in the pilot book! Another yacht which had followed us in anchored near the jetty opposite Riska Island which was a popular spot for herons. There were several tourists poking about Castle Tiorum and its island all afternoon until the rapidly advancing tide cut the castle off from the mainland. </p>



Ardnamurchan Lighthouse ahead



Blue Damsel ahead of Aquila

Forecast	Distance Run	
SE $\frac{3}{4}$ occ 5 in S Showers Mod to slight Mod, fog patch	<p data-bbox="424 815 496 887"><i>Sail</i> $\frac{3}{4}$ hr</p> <p data-bbox="424 1081 555 1153"><i>Motor sail</i> $4\frac{1}{4}$ hrs</p> <p data-bbox="424 1308 571 1379"><i>Engine only</i> $1\frac{1}{4}$ hrs</p> <p data-bbox="424 1648 507 1680">24 nm</p>	<p data-bbox="643 237 1238 309">Day 8 Loch Moidart to Sailean Mor, Isle Oronsay (Tuesday 7th Sept)</p> <p data-bbox="643 315 1369 1704"> With a heron fishing on Riska and the chart plotter restored to normal, we tentatively lifted the anchor at 08.30 with no sign of it having been near the electric cables. The yacht anchored by the jetty had already left but as we retraced our track, as recorded on the chart plotter, we passed close to and exchanged greetings with a converted fishing boat anchored there. We were out of the Loch by 09.20 as the cloud cover was clearing and some blue sky was starting to show. There was very little wind until by 10.15 we had 9-10kn and were able to get the sails up put the motor off and set a course of 250°. This only lasted for $\frac{1}{2}$ hr before dying to 2kn and we dropped the jib and motor sailed towards Ardnamurchan Lighthouse which came abeam at 12.20. As we tacked round the point into the Sound of Mull, we tried to sail again with the jib up and engine off in a light breeze. This time it only lasted for $\frac{1}{4}$hr before the wind dropped to 2kn and it was jib down and engine on again. We motor sailed then motored for the rest of the day. There were several other boats entering or leaving the Sound, some trying to sail but most were motoring or commercial. Approaching Kilchoan soon after the Tobermoray ferry had left, one of the many Staffa trip boats came past us, dropped off passengers at Kilchoan and then continued across the Sound towards Tobermoray. Approaching our destination, a large yacht was slowly catching us, so we increased speed in case she was headed for the same anchorage. Turning into Sailean Mor we initially thought she was continuing, but after anchoring at 15.30 we saw that she had circled, dropped her sail and was coming in. Checking where our anchor was, they crept past but restricted by depth had to anchor very close to us. Blue Damsel was a 45ft Sun Odessy and after we were all settled, they invited us over for a drink at 18.00 and sent their dinghy to collect us. We had a pleasant hour talking to the skipper and the 2 couples with him before heading back to prepare our evening meal. (PS There is an article in "Yachts & Yachting" about Blue Damsel & its skipper David Holmes) </p>



Loch Aline with in the background the sand quarry in middle and new pontoons to the right



Alastair McIntyre relaxing in Loch Aline



One of other yachts and Glen Etive moored in Spelve

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>E/NE 3-5 and N 2-4 in the N Showers thundery Smooth- Slight Mod-good</p>		<p>Day 10 Loch Aline to Loch Spelve (Thursday 9th Sept) Leaving at 08.15 in the usual early morning glassy calm, we had to circle near the entrance as we waited for the Mull ferry to dock. Out in the Sound there was the faintest of breezes and a few ripples on the water as we motored to pass to the west of Glas Eileanan. As it came abeam, we could see white tops further ahead and then 14kn of wind and rain, rapidly increasing to 27kn, hit us. With such a wind against a strong tide the sea rapidly built to short steep breaking waves threatening to bring the engine out of the water on each wave. Luckily this only lasted for 20-30 minutes before easing to 16-18kn with a slightly easier sea. About this time the Oban to Craignure ferry passed inshore of us enroute to Craignure, and a yacht under sail which had come down behind us passed to seaward. By the time we were off Duart Castle the rain had petered out and we had a longer rolling swell rather than the earlier short breaking waves.</p> <p>All down the coast from Duart to the entrance to Loch Spelve there were signs of a tidal race. We turned into the entrance to Loch Spelve at 11.30 with some 5-8kn of wind and signs of a strong spring ebb tide coming out of the loch. The further in we got the stronger this current became and twice we increased speed until we were at maximum engine revs and making barely any forward progress! A fishing boat, waited on us clearing the channel before it could make its way out. We headed round into the eastern arm of the loch past all the mussel beds and eventually by 12.50 found an anchorage in 5.1m in the secluded NE corner. After lunch we spent a quiet day planning our exit from Spelve and critical entrance to Feochan in the following days spring tide. From mid-afternoon till early evening a steady stream of yachts entered the loch and 2 elected to anchor near us. The final entrant was the small luxury cruise boat Glen Etive which anchored nearby.</p>



Preparing the final meal

Forecast	Distance Run	
<p>W 3or less going W/NW 3-5 Showers Slight Fog patches</p>	<p><i>Sail</i> 0 hrs</p> <p><i>Motor Sail</i> 0 hrs</p> <p><i>Engine only</i> 2¹/₄ hrs</p> <p>10¹/₂ nm</p>	<p>Day 11 Loch Spelve to Loch Feochan (Friday 10th Sept) It was damp and foggy as we set off at 07.45 to catch the tidal gate at Loch Feochan. As we motored past Glen Etive we were surprised to see activity that early on her rear deck. Following our plotter track we were soon out of Spelve at slack water and as we cleared the channel the Glen Etive came out behind us and set a course for the southern end of Kerrera. With little or no wind, poor visibility, and a tidal gate to meet we motored on 120° for Feochan. A small cargo vessel was heading north towards Loch Linnhe, but we crossed well ahead of her. Sighting Dubh Sgeir we altered course slightly to pass north of it and given that it was only marked by a star on our chart we were surprised at the size of it. Entering Loch Feochan by 09.30, only 1hr after HW Oban, we encountered little if any current but were troubled by the amount of weed which caught on the propellor. By 10.00 we were moored to the pontoon tight behind a Westerly Storm and soon after another 35ft Westerly came in tight behind us. The boat in front had just been purchased and was being prepared for a delivery passage to the South Coast. The one behind us and one on the other side of the pontoon were in to offload for the end of the season and the one opposite was the yacht which had sailed past us in yesterday's squall. Going ashore we moved the car down nearer to the pontoon and checked that none of the trailer wheels had seized while we were away. It then took around 4 hours to offload as much gear as possible into the car and erect the mast gantries in preparation for tomorrow's towing. We had hoped the boat astern of us would move back out onto its mooring so we could have dropped the mast that evening but unfortunately, they didn't.</p>



Yachts on moorings at Ardoran Marine Loch Feochan

Forecast	Distance Run	
	<p data-bbox="432 237 619 268">Totals for trip</p> <p data-bbox="432 331 480 362"><i>Sail</i></p> <p data-bbox="432 371 536 403">23¹/₂ hrs</p> <p data-bbox="432 479 560 510"><i>Motor Sail</i></p> <p data-bbox="432 519 504 551">14 hrs</p> <p data-bbox="432 627 571 658"><i>Engine only</i></p> <p data-bbox="432 667 504 698">21 hrs</p> <p data-bbox="432 748 555 779">227¹/₂ nm</p>	<p data-bbox="651 237 1366 309">Day 12 Loch Feochan to Begbie East Lothian (Saturday 11th Sept)</p> <p data-bbox="651 318 1366 1249">We woke at 07.00 as usual and dressed for going in the water later when we would put the boat on the trailer. We carefully positioned the trailer in the water at 09.00 just before predicted HW. Unfortunately, we either put it slightly too far in this time, or the tide rose a bit further, as when we brought the boat in, it was floating above the rear rollers. With a slight onshore breeze blowing this made it difficult to control. When a lady ashore offered to help, we passed her long line so she could exert some control to the stern. Eventually we realised that our problem was with the starboard daggerboard catching on one of the rollers and once that was dealt with the boat floated on and was tied down. With a rope from the drawbar to the car the boat and trailer were easily pulled up the slipway and out of the water. As by then we were very cold and wet, Alastair and I went for hot showers and dry clothing before starting the process of dropping the mast. Again, we received offers of help and with somebody on the winch handle and the 2 of us on deck steadying the mast it was soon down and lashed in place for transit. It was then time to pay our dues and, on our way out, stop to wash the salt from the trailer wheels. On our way by 12.00 and after a short lunch stop at the Green Wellie in Tyndrum we were back at Begbie by 16.30 where after taking the mast off we reversed the boat and trailer into the shed for the winter.</p>

