

TRIP TO SCOTLAND SUMMER 2025, BY MAX BOYD... (13 YEARS)



FIRST CAME THE COLOUR AND COMMOTION OF THE KILLEAGH REGATTA IN OUR RS ELITE 'STING'. A BLUR OF BOATS, LAUGHTER, AND THAT UNMISTAKABLE BUZZ THAT ONLY A REGATTA CAN BRING. LINE WAS PACKED, KICKERS WERE BENT ON, AND SPIRITS WERE HIGH. IT WAS THE PERFECT BEGINNING TO AN AWESOME TRIP. IT WAS ANOTHER RACE BACK TO QUOILE TO FINISH THE FINAL PROVISIONING AND GETTING 'EVENSTAR' READY.

THE VERY NEXT MORNING, LONG BEFORE MOST OF THE WORLD HAD STIRRED, WE SLIPPED QUIETLY AWAY FROM THE PONTOON AT QUOILE YACHT CLUB AT 6:00AM, DETERMINED TO CATCH THE TIDE BANG ON. THE LOUGH WAS GLASSY AND STILL, THE KIND OF DAWN THAT FEELS LIKE A SECRET. AS WE CLEARED THE BAR MOUTH, WE SET OUR COURSE FOR GLENARM. EVENSTAR OUR ELAN 40 MOTORING NORTH AT 7 KNOTS.

AT FIRST THERE WASN'T ENOUGH WIND TO JUSTIFY CANVAS, SO WE MOTORED. BUT AS WE CAME UP ALONG THE ANTRIM COAST, THE BREEZE FILLED IN AND WE HOISTED SAIL. THE ENGINE FELL SILENT AND WE WERE REWARDED WITH ONE OF THOSE PERFECT PASSAGES; BALANCED, STEADY, EFFORTLESS. A ONE SIDED CLOSE REACH AT AROUND 7.5 KNOTS LEFT BELFAST LOUGH QUICKLY BEHIND.

WE FINISHED IN GLENARM THE WAY ALL GOOD SAILS FINISH, IN A PUB - DAD SAID.

FROM THERE, THE NEXT DAY WE HEADED FOR GIGHA, ESCORTED BY A PAIR OF DELIGHTED DOLPHINS WHO DANCED AT THE BOW AS IF WE WERE THE HIGHLIGHT OF THEIR DAY. SAILING



AND THEN MOTORING TODAY. ONCE MOORED, I PLUNGED INTO THE CRYSTAL-CLEAR WATER, WARM AND COMPLETELY WORTH THE SAIL.

WE THEN HAD AN OUTSTANDING SAIL UP THE SOUND OF JURA TOWARDS ARDFERN. REACHING AT TIMES AT OVER 9 KNOTS AND EVEN MUM WAS HELMING. WHEN OUR INTENDED ANCHORAGE AT GOAT ISLAND IN LOCH CRAIGNISH PROVED UNSUITABLE DUE TO A WESTERLY WIND FUNNELLING THROUGH THE CHANNEL, WE TUCKED INTO THE ARDFERN LAGOON JUST SOUTH OF ARDFERN YACHT HAVEN. INSTEAD; PEACEFUL, SHELTERED, AND BEAUTIFUL... BUT RAINING AND WE NEEDED THE BOOM TENT. THE NEXT DAY WE MOTORED INTO ARDFERN, MET UP WITH FRIENDS, AND THEN TRAVELLED IN CONVOY TO CRAOBH HAVEN FOR WEST HIGHLAND WEEK.



WEST HIGHLAND WEEK WAS CHAOS IN THE BEST WAY. WE RACED HARD, DECORATED THE BOAT WITH A PINK FLAMINGO AND BUNTING, AND FULLY EMBRACED THE MADNESS.



AFTER SOME HEAVY RAIN WE COMPLETED THE PASSAGE RACE TO OBAN. THEN STORM FLORIS WAS UPON US AND WE TUCKED IN TIGHT AT KERRERA MARINA.

REGARDLESS OF THE LOST RACING THE BEACH PARTY DESCENDED INTO GLORIOUS DISORDER, I WAS CARRIED AROUND IN A LIFE RAFT SINGING "I'M GONNA BE (500 MILES)", WAVING A BLOWUP BANANA LIKE A CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHY. IT WRAPPED UP AROUND 3:00AM, AS ALL LEGENDARY NIGHTS DO - APPARENTLY.

DESPITE A FEW ROUGH FACES THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE RACING WAS SOLID AND WE HELD OUR OWN. EVENTUALLY WE REACHED TOBERMORY SECOND, WHERE DINNER AT CAFE FISH WAS SO GOOD WE WENT BACK TWO NIGHTS LATER, HAPPILY SKIPPING

THE FINAL PASSAGE RACE AS THE WEATHER WAS FOUL. TOBERMORY HAD COMPLETELY WON US OVER AND I EVEN CAUGHT MACKEREL OFF THE BREAK WATER WHICH WE BARBECUED.

AND THEN WE TRIED TO LEAVE.

IT WAS RAINING AND BLOWING HARD FROM THE SOUTH.

OF COURSE IT WAS RAINING AND ON THE NOSE.

IT HADN'T RAINED LIKE THAT WHEN WE ARRIVED.

IT HADN'T RAINED WHILE WE WANDERED THE HARBOUR OR SAT CONTENT AFTER DINNER. BUT THE MOMENT WE CAST OFF THE LINES, THE SKY

OPENED WITH THE KIND OF STEADY, SOAKING HEBRIDEAN RAIN THAT DOESN'T FALL, IT SETTLES IN.

BY THE TIME WE CLEARED THE HARBOUR, EVERYTHING WAS WET. NOT DRAMATICALLY STORMY, JUST RELENTLESSLY WET. A FINE, PERSISTENT DRIZZLE THAT SEEPED INTO CUFFS, COLLARS AND MOODS. THE COLOURFUL HOUSES OF TOBERMORY FADED BEHIND A GREY CURTAIN, AS IF THE TOWN ITSELF WAS DISSOLVING RATHER THAN LETTING US GO.

AND THEN THE WIND ARRIVED FROM THE SOUTH.

WHAT HAD BEEN CALM INSIDE THE BAY TURNED SHARP AND INSISTENT ONCE WE WERE EXPOSED. THE RAIN THICKENED, THE BREEZE HARDENED INTO SOMETHING FAR LESS FRIENDLY. THE SWELL BUILT IN CONFUSED LUMPS AT THE POINT OF LISMORE, SPRAY MIXING WITH RAIN UNTIL THERE WAS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN SEA AND SKY. IT GENUINELY FELT LIKE TOBERMORY HAD DECIDED THAT IF WE INSISTED ON LEAVING, WE WOULD NOT DO SO COMFORTABLY.



OILSKINS WERE HAULED TIGHT. HOODS WENT UP. CONVERSATION BECAME PRACTICAL AND BRIEF. EVERY WAVE SEEMED TO SLAP THE HULL WITH A DAMP REPRIMAND: *YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED.* ANYWAY IN TO THE FIRTH OF LORNE WE WENT

FOR HOURS IT RAINED, NOT DRAMATICALLY, NOT VIOLENTLY, JUST CONSISTENTLY AN UNBROKEN GREY ACCOMPANIMENT TO A LUMPY SEA AND A STUBBORN HEADWIND. IT WAS PUNISHMENT BY PERSISTENCE.



WE DECIDED TO STOP IN OBAN AND VISIT SOME FRIENDS FOR DINNER. BETTER THAN BASHING INTO THE WEATHER – DAD SAID.

NEXT STOP WAS PULLADODHRAIN FOR LUNCH THE NEXT DAY WITH THE WEATHER CLEARING. THIS ENABLES US TO ROUND EASDALE AND THROUGH THE SOUND OF LUIING TO ANCHOR FOR THE SECOND TIME IN A HOLE BESIDE CARSAIG BAY. BEAUTIFULLY STILL EVENING.

NEXT MORNING SEES US CRUISING DOWN THE SOUND OF JURA. EVENTUALLY, AS THE MILES TICKED BY, THE WEATHER EASED JUST ENOUGH TO LET US KNOW WE'D ENDURED IT. WE PRESSED ON SOUTH, SALT-

STREAKED AND THOROUGHLY DAMP, STOPPING AT GIGHA AGAIN, BECAUSE AFTER A DEPARTURE LIKE THAT, YOU DON'T SAIL PAST SOMEWHERE WELCOMING. WE ANCHORED AT THE NORTH END OF THE ISLAND FOR LUNCH AND CHECK OUT SOME MASSIVE JELLYFISH – ENOUGH TO STOP THE SWIMMING.

AFTER A NIGHT IN ARDMINISH BAY WE TACKLED THE MULL AGAIN THIS TIME OPTING TO ANCHOR AT CHAPEL BAY AT THE COPELANDS. A FIRST FOR US AND IT MADE FOR A GOOD EXIT SOUTH TO STRANGFORD THE NEXT DAY. WE GOT THE SPINNAKER UP FOR THE HOME LEG.



AND SO BEGAN THE LONG
PASSAGE BACK TO QUOILE:
TIRED, SLIGHTLY HUMBLED,
AND FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT
TOBERMORY HAD TRIED ITS
ABSOLUTE BEST TO KEEP US.

21 NIGHTS AWAY, 5 FAMILY IN
THE CREW, CIRCA 600 MILES.

MB.