

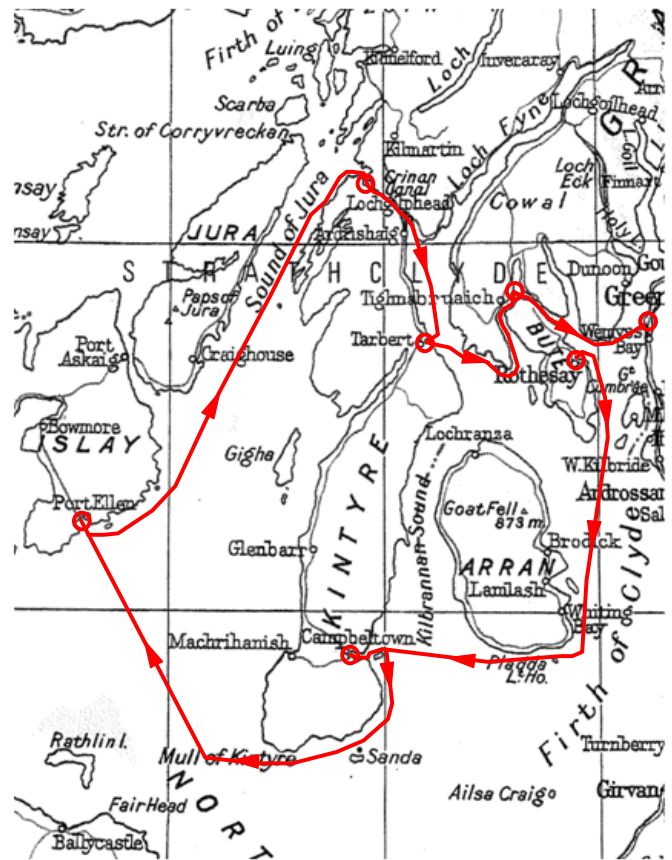
## Shrimper Second Week in Scotland

*'Never again!'* said Gillie – and I agree it was 'one bridge too far'.

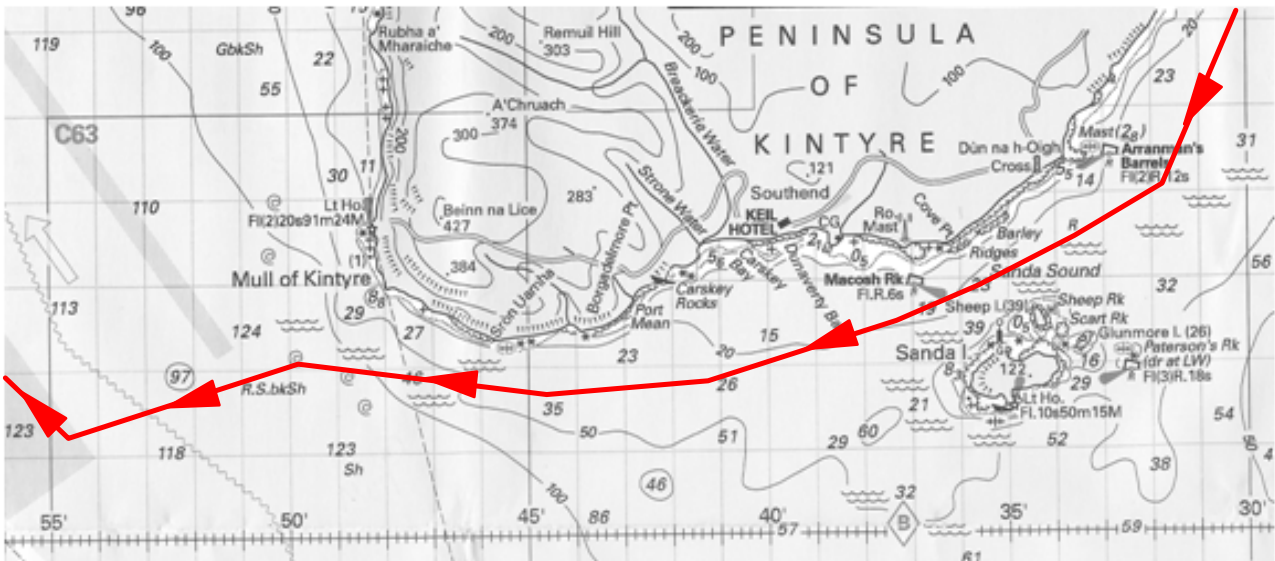
The plan was to leave Rothesay, the centre for the first week, and to reach the entrance to the Crinan Canal three days later. This included sailing around the south end of the Mull of Kintyre and calling in at Port Ellen on the south side of the Isle of Islay. The weather had to be just right, otherwise we would return around Kilbrannan Sound.

**Saturday, 19 June:** We had a pleasant motor-sail broad reach south past the Cumbrae islands and down the east side of Arran past Holy Island. The views of Goat Fell and the other mountains in the clear sunlight were most impressive. We cut inside Pladda Island and headed west for Campeltown with a good view of Ailsa Craig, a conical island (extinct volcano) rising up to 1000ft. We arrived at Campeltown 3.30pm having set off at 6.45am and had covered 45 miles.

**Sunday, 20 June:** The shipping forecast at 5.20am gave us the ideal conditions for tackling the Mull and we set off at 6.45am to pass the south side of the peninsula at around 9am to get the right tidal flow. The Pilot suggested that we should pass to the south of Sanda Island but I considered that with neap tides and light winds it would be safe to pass close to the mainland. This turned out to be so and we motor-sailed through the outfalls inside the island without too much trouble. Gillie assumed that this meant that the worst was over. However we had a rude shock when we reached the south west corner of the Mull. A north west wind greeted us which rapidly rose in strength to over force five (gusting over six). We quickly reefed down and reduced the jib to about half. Then we noticed, about a quarter of a mile ahead, a line of white water! We had reached the tide rips and eddies at the corner of the Mull.



## Shrimper Second Week in Scotland



Pretty well every wave came over us and within seconds we were completely drenched. The only compensation was that with the tidal current we were travelling at 9 knots over the ground.

We had to cross the Traffic Zone close by to get to the Separation Zone. It fitted in with our course as I was hoping/expecting the wind to back by 10.30am and kept on starboard tack as long as possible. We had a clear view of the Irish coast and Rathlin Island ahead. Soon after 10am we tacked and were relieved that the wind had backed sufficiently so that we could make Port Ellen on the south side of Islay in one tack. It was another hour before we sailed clear of the white water, but even so the sea was very troubled with waves coming from at least two directions. It was a great relief to reach Port Ellen and we were amazed what good time we had made. It had taken us just over eight hours to cover 50 miles giving an average of nearly  $6\frac{1}{2}$  knots. The water had carried us 14 miles in that time.



Although it was a Sunday we found a Co-Op open and apart from stocking up with the necessities we bought three Islay Malts!

## Shrimper Second Week in Scotland

**Monday, 21 June:** After a good night's sleep we woke to a grey day with very light winds. This meant more motor-sailing up the Jura Sound. It was to be a long doddle! I had hoped that we would have the current with us for most of the journey, but for the last ten miles we hit a strong opposing current and we sailed close to the shore (within 10/20 feet) to keep clear of the worst. By late afternoon the clouds were beginning to clear and Gillie was at last beginning to enjoy the trip. We saw several puffins.



We arrived at Crinan at 5pm and were lucky to find the sea lock open and ready for us to move in. The sides of the lock seemed very high and we both missed throwing the lines to the lock keeper. Eventually with some words of advice to reduce the length of line we were throwing we managed to get them to him. We were let in to the inner yacht basin. We had travelled 46 miles.



We had a wonderful view of the islands during an evening walk along the canal. Looking back to the Crinan Hotel we could see beyond to the north end of Jura, the Gulf of Corryvreckan and Scarba Island. A little further on we met Peter and Derek of Peewit (125). They had moored at the last lock and were returning back along the canal the following day. We agreed to join them for the return trip. After a celebratory drink of an Islay Malt on board Bumble Chugger they returned back to their boat.



## Shrimper Second Week in Scotland

**Tuesday, 22 June:** The first lock opened just before 9am and we were first through to link up with Peewit and Clover Four (819), Ian and Wendy Walker, who were also making the return journey. The weather was hot and sunny, perfect for a pleasant motor through the beautiful countryside. We passed Scalawag and Camilla moored to the bank, on their way to Oban, and about half way through we encountered two Royal Naval Patrol Vessels coming the other way. We lowered our colours as they passed with a blast from our foghorns and this was reciprocated by them lowering their White Ensigns!

The only other event of note occurred at the Sea Lock at the other end. We were held up as the lock was emptied to let in a Wayfarer dinghy with two girls aboard. They turned out to be Francis Gifford and crew who had set sail from our home club at Waldringfield on the River Deben on a voyage around the UK. They had set off on 15 May and having sailed up the west side of England and Wales had just reached the Crinan Canal.



We arrived in the Lower Loch Fynn at 5pm and set sail for Tarbert. The wind was fickle and we soon had to resort to motors to get there in time for a meal out.

**Wednesday, 23 June:** Tarbert is a pleasant place with a very interesting crown steeple on the local church. After some shopping and a look around the town we all set sail for Caladh harbour which we had visited during the first week. Dolphins appeared briefly around us. We arrived mid-afternoon and just as we anchored it started to rain – the first for the whole Fortnight!



**Thursday, 24 June:** We were up early the next day for the final sail to Kip Marina arriving at 9.30am. We slipped out and were away by midday on our long motor home to Woodbridge. It had been glorious holiday!

**Robin Whittle** - *Bumble Chugger* (124)