

Moriah Delivery 2016/2017

Long after the Summer 2016 had been and gone I took the urge to upgrade from a Flying Fifteen to something bigger, maybe a Trapper. After all I have been sailing with Peter for the last number of years on one and they are a hardy beast. A move of 7 feet in length, but miles in terms of time and expense. I had been window shopping, I had discussed it with the better half (who has a dislike of water) and also with Peter.

I had eyed a Trapper 300 in Inverkip and both myself and Peter made plans to go kick some tyres so to speak. I booked the tickets and hit the ferry terminal early November.

We arrived early into Inverkip. We were met at the sales office and buzzed through to the marina to have a look around the exterior of the boat before we met the owner. The boat was in fairly good order. It had been looked after. The owner arrived shortly after to show us the interior, fire up the engine and explain the work that had been carried out. All looked good. Just one more thing, take it for a spin. It was early November, it was cold and it was very windy. What better way to test the boat and its rigging than a skite out of the marina into the Clyde. The estuary was fairly lively, a few white horses. One reef in the main and the boat was well balanced. I was pleased enough with the boat and the way it handled. We had a two-hour window to conduct the tour and take a spin. Now the boat is not THAT big but in and out of the marina in less than 45 mins was pretty good. That left us plenty of time to lift cushions, dip oil, check chain plates etc. All looked good inside and out.

We left Inverkip and hit the ferry terminal for home. Glad to be back home again. The journey gave us time to discuss the good and bad. Not too many bad, in fact, I don't think there were any. All good, just pay the bills, fix things that break, buy new equipment and we're done... simples..

I talked it over with my wife (long suffering). "Well if that's what you want" she said... I pointed out the good times we could have, the cruising around the Swilly, Portsalon, Rathmullan, Macamish... oh the joys of it. WHAT TO DO? I spoke with the sales person who in turn spoke with the owner. Terms were discussed over the next week or so and eventually we agreed a price. 29th November 2016 contract signed and delivered. Ahhhhh, I now own a boat. Now the fun starts.

I (we) had to make plans to get Moriah to her new home. Well late in 2016 was a bit blowy or zero wind no in between. We had some very good weather towards the end of the season of 2016. December was pretty warm. No need for woolly hats for the Christmas crocs.

I spoke with Peter who said he was definitely up for the trip. We recruited Anne-Marie and Conor for the trip also. We arranged a night to sit and plan the trip. We looked at the distance to be covered. We looked at two options, inside Rathlin sound and outside depending on tide, sea conditions and weather. We looked at the crystal ball that was the weather forecast. Somehow the crystal ball got muddied for each weekend that we looked at. I booked a car and four passengers onto the ferry the weekend of 10th December and crossed the fingers. We loaded life raft, food and equipment into the car and started out.

The road trip was good. Fun was had despite the early start. We arrived into Inverkip early enough for preparations to be completed. We had the life raft strapped to the coach roof and fuel in the tanks. We were ready to go. All we needed was the weather to play ball. Well not much chance of

that. There was a sea mist rolling in. We spoke with some of the locals, one of whom had just come back into the marina, he was not too confident. We debated a go / no-go decision. While we still had some daylight left we took a decision to go out and assess the conditions. We negotiated the marina entrance and out into the Clyde. It was a cold afternoon and it was very calm. We could see maybe half a mile or so. In the Swilly this would be pretty far, in the Clyde with numerous ships it's a different story. We motored down the Clyde for about an hour. With the mist holding firm and reluctant to clear we made a call to abandon the trip on the grounds that it was unsafe to continue. We turned and headed back to the marina. We were now heading back to the marina with no transport home... I had to make a phone call to arrange to have my car come back up to Kip. But with the schedule we had getting back to Kip and making it to the ferry again was too slim. We booked a cab to take us to Ayr, about half way and have the car come back half way. Long(ish) story short we made it back to Derry in one piece. It was disappointing but safety first. We all got to see Christmas in one piece.

Soooo, start the planning again, look for another weather window etc. With Christmas looming and work commitments etc December eventually rolled into January. Another trip meeting organised and again Peter and Anne-Marie got the practice mapping skills and tidal forecast. The new date was 21st January 2017. It was detailed to the n'th degree.



This time we went on planes, trains and automobiles and added an additional feature to the trip, we now had Paul Mc Sorely too.. Well no planes but the bus instead. There was no end to the wealth of experience for the trip. Same schedule, early out of Derry to Belfast. Arrived at the ferry terminal on an old firm weekend... I think security were glad to see a few normal heads arriving.



Ferry boarded and off we set for delivery trip round 2. This time it was a very relaxed trip executed to perfection, ferry docked, bus caught then onto the train. The Inverkip stop was a few minutes walk from the marina which is excellent. We left the supplies on board and went to get fed before we set off.



We left Kip at about 8pm. It was a bitter cold evening with ice on the deck. Not a nice time to be on the water. We set off down the Clyde with Peter and Anne-Marie calling the bearing, distance and repeating pattern for the lights. All went well for 15 minutes, when, out of the darkness came the leg of the pier at the old disused power station. No lights visible on this. So close to disaster before we had even started. These are the perils of night voyages. With eyes now very much open we continued on.... It was pretty much a clear evening with the occasional shower of rain and very little moonlight. We navigated from light to light, taking bearings and looking for lights and landmarks to plot on the chart to keep ourselves very much in the middle of the road. We ran down the inside of Great Combrae and into the Firth of Clyde. We had decided to give Pladda a wide berth of maybe 3

or 4 miles. Next we had to negotiate Sanda and Paterson's rock. ETA here is 1:30am. Pretty much bang on the time. With the conditions and visibility not ideal we left the rock well to the North of us and took a bearing to the SW point of the TSZ off Torr head. The night had passed pretty peacefully with very few ships in sight bar a cable laying ship which made very slow progress and was in no danger of ramming us.

Morning had Rathlin and the sound in our sights. More hot coffee required. With the tide with us and sea conditions very good we made a call to go inside Rathlin sound. Making good progress it wasn't long before we had Ballycastle in our sights.



Calls by Anne-Marie and Peter on distance and bearings allowed us to cut some distance of the line originally planned which meant we could arrive home sooner. That was like music to the ears, very cold ears, ears which were best left inside of a hat. As the morning moved into afternoon the weather had picked up somewhat with the sun beginning to shine. It helped to lift the chill a little. Still more coffee was needed though to warm the insides.



Next thing we knew the Tuns were in our sights... That was pretty much us home. Having made very good time, the weather beginning to play ball and the tide just about on the turn we discussed the option to shoot straight for Derry or drop into Greencastle (Anne-Marie's home)? Votes cast and we made the decision to shoot up the Foyle to Derry. So close to terra-firma and yet so far!



Another few hours would have us in the marina in Derry. Homeward bound. With the navionics app to guide us through the tricky waters under the bridge, hard left to Rosses bay then a hard right to Sainsburys it was slow progress. Eventually we swung around the end of the pontoon and tied up at home. That was 120nm in 23 hours, start to finish, executed to perfection.



Gathering all our belongings we walked up the quay to one of the local hostelries where we indulged in a few beverages that would help warm the soul..

Plans were still to be made about the trip to Fahan and Moriahs final destination, but that's another story.

Highlight of the trip was a very rare appearance by the exotic and shy "Iratu Avem". I did manage to capture the rare occasion but the Ornithological society were not interested!

Many thanks to Moriahs crew who braved the ice cold conditions, Peter, Anne-Marie, Conor and Paul without whom I would have never brought her to Fahan.

Fergal.