

Quantum **Network**–Newsletter Summer 2015

Welcome to the summer edition of the Quantum Network Newsletter. In this edition we have:

- **Quantum Sailing update:** Feedback from our first Scottish cruise – same again next year?
- **A tale of two canal:** This year we've sailed the Kiel and Crinan canals – two very different experiences.

Quantum Sailing Update - Scotland

It's been a busy season so far and one of the highlights has been our first, recently completed, Scottish cruise. We had a full crew of regular sailors from the Quantum Network, sailing a Bavaria 35 from Largs on the Clyde. We were fortunate to enjoy some excellent weather, which helped us to appreciate the stunning scenery of this wonderful cruising area.



We managed to pack plenty into the week long cruise. The first couple of days were spent exploring the Clyde estuary. We sailed to Aran, around Holy island, the Kyles of Bute and the Burnt Islands, and we even covered a bit of Loch Fyne before entering the Crinan canal at Ardrishaig (more about that below).

Moving on to the Inner Hebrides, we motored down the Sound of Jura on a sunny, flat calm day. Initially we stopped at Jura, anchoring at Craighouse. This sparsely populated island is dominated by its distillery, which just happens to be located at the end of the dingy landing stage!

Next we visited Islay, another location famous for its whiskies. Boasting 8 distilleries, this is definitely a place for the malt lovers. With 3 distilleries within walking distance of the yacht at Port Ellen, everyone enjoyed a tour to find out about how the Islay whiskies get their peaty / smokey flavour.



The Mull of Kintyre has a fearsome reputation for rough seas; nevertheless we enjoyed a fabulous sail round the peninsular and back into the Clyde. With fair winds, plenty of sunshine and smooth seas, you couldn't ask for more.

Over the week we had a fantastic time. As well as being blessed with the weather, we were hardly bothered by the midges at all, so it's definitely a cruise to consider again next year. Although, amongst this year's crew, there was a feeling that it would be really hard to repeat, let alone top, this year's experience.

If you are interested in a Scottish cruise or sailing in any other location, do get in touch. If there is enough interest from the Network, then we will organise it! Email info@quantumsailing.co.uk.

A tale of two canals

If you follow our facebook page, you will be aware that we have been sailing in a variety of different locations already this year - around the UK, all along the northern European coast and across the Mediterranean. Our travels have included a couple of interesting canals:

The Kiel Canal – Earlier in year we delivered a brand new Hanse 455 from the factory in Griefswald, Germany to Gibraltar. The quickest route for this means passing through the Kiel Canal. This stretches from Kiel on the east of the Jutland peninsular, to Brünstüttel on the Elbe estuary, which flows into the North Sea. The canal route saves over 250 nautical miles and avoids some notoriously stormy sea areas.

Built in the late 19th century, the Kiel canal was originally constructed so that the German Naval fleet could get from the North Sea to the Baltic, without going round Denmark. The canal, which is 99km long, took 9,000 labourers 8 years to build. It was widened between 1907 and 1914, in order to cope with Dreadnought sized battleships.



It is now open to commercial shipping and pleasure yachts and lays claim to be the busiest artificial waterway in the world, with over 30,000 ships transiting it per year. The first thing that you notice about the Kiel Canal is the sheer scale of it. With two sets of massive sea locks at either end, you can easily find yourself sharing a lock with vessels over 200m long, still with space to spare.

When we exited the canal, we were in the huge lock with only one other small boat and it really did make our 45' yacht seem tiny (even though they have a system where they can just use half of the lock).

You can pass through the waterway in a day. With no locks on the canal itself, it does make for a relaxing sail, well 'motor', as you aren't actually allowed to sail. It has some interesting features, such as the hanging bridge at Rendsburg. Here vehicles are transported across the canal on a piece of road suspended under the bridge which moves from side to side. Needless to say, yachts have to give way to the moving road.



When travelling through the countryside, you do need to keep your wits about you, as you may well come face to face with a 230m long and 30m wide cargo ship. You could even end up alongside two, as they pass by going in opposite directions. Rather than feeling squashed, this does make you realise just how big the canal really is.

Despite the raft of instructions for yachts and feeling dwarfed by the size of some of the other craft at times, navigating the canal is a pleasant experience. It is one that I would happily repeat rather than taking the long, and often rough, detour round the north of Denmark.

The Crinan Canal – On the other end of the scale is the Crinan Canal, which we travelled along during our recent Scottish cruise. This waterway was opened in 1801 and is only 9 miles long. It connects Crinan on the Sound of Jura to Ardrishaig on Loch Gilp (which opens onto Loch Fyne). This links the Clyde estuary with the inner Hebrides, avoiding the need to go round the Mull of Kintyre, another infamous headland.



The scale of this canal is such that you do feel how narrow it is, every time you pass a small yacht going in the opposite direction. With 15 locks and 6 bridges, this canal, like the Kiel Canal, takes the best part of a day to travel, but it is a day well spent. We were fortunate that our day on the Crinan canal was a warm and sunny. Whilst this might be unusual weather for the area, the location and scenery are absolutely stunning and would be a treat in any weather.

Although all of the literature says that you should expect to operate the locks yourself, we found all of them manned by friendly, helpful staff. The downside of the Crinan canal is the cost. At £170 to transit in a 35' yacht, that works out more than 4 times the cost of the Kiel canal. Or, as a price per mile, it works out more than 25 times as expensive! Having said that, I would still include it on my lists of treats not to be missed whilst sailing the Clyde and Inner Hebrides. It makes a lovely circular route, with the ruggedness of the Mull of Kintyre at one extreme contrasting with and the scenic beauty of the Crinan canal at the other.



Whilst both canals were enjoyable to sail along, and both were very impressive in their own way, I know which one I would rather do again.