

Hi shipmates,

Blog 9 has been typed and edited by Anna Perkins and Jane Turner on behalf of two former army colonels, Mike and Tim! It all started up the River Tay at Tayport, where a fab supper party occurred in the Bell Rock Tavern. A sad farewell was said to Laura and George (Mike's ace transat babes) but a huge welcome to Jane, Anna and Tim for the start of leg nine from Dundee to Newcastle. Big thanks to all those who paid for supper!

We safely stowed our kit on board, including a very damp DPM bikini produced by Jane from a previous holiday. This item has now been turning up intermittently throughout the trip, still damp and never been worn! Sunday morning was spent with a fascinating trip to R.R.S (Royal Research Ship) Discovery, which has been extremely well restored together with an excellent museum alongside. Well worth a visit if you are in the area. Our little voyage seems quite humble compared with what those early explorers endured and achieved. Our little 19ft boat with little room for 4 however doesn't compare to her ...ft with a wardroom for 18 officers.

Up early the next morning, and away down stream at 8.5 knots (thank you Mr River Tay!) over the land. The big salmon must have been running, as at least 30 dolphins were spotted by the crew, in feeding mode. Other delightful creatures that popped up to say hello were several common seals and a host of sea birds – in fact, so many that Tim bought the good ship a lovely bird book (becoming twitchers all round). A lovely Breeze sprang up and soon Theo's Future was scudding across the bay with St Andrews Golf Course abeam, with Jane, tiller extension in hand, sitting her out like there was no tomorrow. Unfortunately no toe straps or trapezes provided! Like all nice breezes it was replaced by nothing just as Jane kindly handed over to Anna and disappeared below for a sleep as the rain came in! Anna took us safely round Abbs Head, and we were soon amongst hundreds of lobster pots which were skilfully navigated around. Tim's go on the helm and, oh look, the sails came out (to Anna's chagrin), and he brought us into port. Whilst planning our route for the next day, we unfortunately discovered we were missing a chart. Local yachtsman Rob, like a knight in shining armour, came to our aid lending us several laminated charts for the journey, to be returned as soon as possible. This was especially kind after his previously bad experience lending charts in Tenerife. A more entertaining story of his, from Tenerife, was based in a bar where a gentleman had been bragging about his 40ft yacht. When Rob was asked the length of his own yacht he replied 58ft, further questioning revealed two boats and brought the reply "well 26ft is in Tenerife and 36ft is back in Scotland"!

Unlike the sensible military bikini seen previously, Jane appeared for her run in a bright pink top and a very mini skirt, Anna was sensibly dressed in rugby kit. After a long and strenuous run along the costal path, the girls returned to find the boys slowly sipping a glass of wine. Amazing Fish and Chips were preceded by expensive Scottish showers (£2 each), Tim and Mike quickly volunteering to share whilst Jane braved the 2nd boys' shower, typical once again only one girl shower. Mike successfully broke his shower trying to get it to more than a dribble, while Jane and Anna had to borrow shampoo from the boys as they had forgotten theirs.

Having checked time and tides the night before, a visit to Granton (Edinburgh) was not practical, therefore the unanimous crew decision was to cross the Firth of Forth and head for Eyemouth at the unsociable hour of 0530hrs. Much birdlife identified on the way thanks to Tim's great personal knowledge, while we scabbled around in the book. The wonderful news of this passage was that we had the opportunity for 5

hours without the engine, with a brisk sou'westerly and calm seas. So Anna and Jane finally had time to get the hang of Mike's sea shanty (Fairwell Spanish Ladies) while Tim came closer to jumping overboard because of it. Coming into Eyemouth the wind died and swung to the north, giving us the perfect chance to hoist the genneker. We were racing along mastering some beautiful gybes when a sudden backing of the sails resulted in a broken spinnaker pole (nobody's fault!), which put an end to it all. With Jane at the helm and Tim navigating, we arrived safely in harbour to find the world's fattest seals feeding from the local fishing boats. The harbour master on his bicycle came to greet us and inform us of their lovely clean (FREE) showers. Eyemouth was a brilliant combination of bustling fishing harbour and local tourist site. Mike and his human vices (Anna and Jane) fixed the pole, while Tim took the scenic route to the local garage to collect fuel and returned claiming his arms were 2" longer.

After a discussion with our neighbouring boat, we had to reorganise our timings to leave for Holy Island (luckily later rather than earlier). Another good day of sailing took us almost all the way there, having to double reef at times, who would have thought?! Passage was safely negotiated with the aid of two sets of transits, arriving at a picturesque anchorage, watched by the local seal population. We picked up a mooring just in time, as a large squall passed through. Having arrived at low tide, we had assessed the sea bed, ready to sail up and anchor just off the beach. After a quick shore recce, we returned fed and watered, ready for our girly night-in of film, popcorn and marshmallows. Mike's choice of Point Blank was not the typical girly film, but much enjoyed by all aboard. The adventure was heightened as we slowly went aground, and the boat came to rest heeling to one side. Anna and Tim were left uncomfortable and rather low in the boat while Mike and Jane enjoyed the good view over their heads. This made sleeping arrangements rather interesting with Tim creating a blockade to keep him in bed and the girls lay widthways across the bed. Mike, however, was left in a comfortable and safe position to have an uninterrupted nights sleep, the jammy dodger!

Finally afloat again we moved the boat to a mooring and went for a trip to the castle. A little side trip to the ruins of an Abbey and the local shop whittled away the time until it opened. Meanwhile, Mike couldn't resist linking up with a 'high and dry' round the world yachtsman who turned out to be a Dutchman named Harm, paintbrush in hand lovingly restoring his Dutch steel 40ft boat. Even nicer, Harm came to the quay for a proper sailors farewell as we left this charming place. The castle sat majestically overlooking the island, and you can see what an imposing feature it must have been to invaders! Anna and Jane discovered the children's game of 'Spot the Cello', and all three were suitably impressed on how well it had been renovated, preserved and organised. Tim stayed outside so he could enjoy the castle with his wife, having vowed to introduce her to this beautiful island in the future. We returned to find we had miscalculated the mooring depth and were once again high and dry. This resulted in a pub lunch and some games of gin rummy.

When the tide finally came in, we rowed out to the boat and set out on what became the last section of our adventure.

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS.... A favour had to be returned. Simon Tuck (formerly 9/12th Lancers) had done a magnificent fundraising job in the Albert Pub in Port St Mary, Isle of Man raising over £130. However, £40 of this was on condition that skipper Mike did a moonie, so in good royal marine tradition this cheeky photograph comes with love and thanks from Holy Island to all who donated on the Isle of Man.



With the wind on our nose we unfortunately were unable to sail. Our trip via the Farne Islands was rethought due to tide and an incoming low pressure, which led us to the decision to push on to complete the 40 miles to Tynemouth in one go. The seas became rough as we encountered wind against tide and the port-a-potty went out of bounds! Lucky old bailer got to stand in, and there were some interesting trips below deck for the girls. As darkness engulfed us, the girls began their lesson in night navigation and helming, and we reached the river Tyne all in one piece. At 0100hrs we reached the Royal Quays Marina and had the excitement of the loch before reaching our final destination, tired and ready for a drink. Anna and Jane found the whole experience so ... that they finished the Baileys swiftly and boldly before retiring to Bedfordshire!

The next morning, in the calm before the storm, the boat was cleaned and porridge eaten. As the rain set in, we said a sad fair well to Tim, who had to leave due to risks of flooding back home.

Fair winds one and all, Skipper Mike and crew from a very soggy tent awning on board Theo's Future.

Only matched by the fantastically warm welcome from the Royal Quays Marina staff:

Matt – Manager

Brian – Senior Berthing Master

John – Berthing Master

Steve – Berthing Master

Dave – Boatyard Foreman

P.S. **STOP STOP PRESS...** the most famous animal in Antarctic history is without doubt Mrs Chippy, a ginger cat who accompanied Shackleton's expedition with her master Chippy McNish, whom many would regard as the saviour of the expedition by turning the James Caird (ships longboat) into a vessel capable of the journey from Elephant Island to South Georgia, one of the most remarkable journeys in a small boat ever accomplished. I can only say how delighted I was to receive Miss Chippy as a present from Anna and Jane, complete with shaggy whiskers to match Mike's present hair style, to be the Theo's Future ship's cat (to keep those rats at bay!).

Fair Winds

Mike