

Chanonry Cruising

Over a year ago some of the dinghy and small cruiser sailors talked of doing some cruising, rather than just racing round the marks. Having tried Munloch Bay last year, with mixed results, we finally managed our first cruises of this year.

Arlturlie 13th June 2009

The original plan was to set off at around 11am, and be at Arlturlie Bay for lunch, then Kilmuir, and call in to Munloch Bay. Of course on the morning there was no wind, so after a delay Wisp, Tiare, myself in BooFoo, and Gavin in his heron dinghy finally set off around 12. We arrived, with a nice gentle breeze, at Arlturlie, in glorious sunshine, where we had lunch. We then set off for home, via Munloch, where the wind gods did their usual thing. As we approached Munloch the wind steadily freshened until we had white horses and a probable 5-6 blowing. Wisp decided to continue to Fortrose, Gavin and I went into Munloch to change jibs and reef our mainsail. Tiare stayed at Arlturlie to continue their card game. After leaving for Chanonry, and beating all the way back, we arrived back safe and well for a well deserved cup of tea.

Cromarty 20th June 2009

Our second venture of the season was arranged by Caireen, as a cruise in company trip. The destination this time was Cromarty. We set off around 12, with Tiare, Boo Foo and Shanty as the fleet this time. The wind was westerly, light, but with squalls, and once again the sun was shining. As we rounded Chanonry Point, and thought of raising the spinnaker, the wind changed from astern to abeam. So, no spinnaker! As we left the point Tiare and Shanty had some dolphins for company. We had to make do with grey seals. Arriving at the Souters the tide was still ebbing, so the cruisers had to stand off and wait a bit. BooFoo, being a dinghy, was able to cut close inshore, miss the tide, and arrive at Cromarty a wee bit ahead. By this time the wind was now blowing on shore, so dropping the main, we coasted on to the beach at Cromarty. The sun was glorious and you could easily have thought you were in some of the hotter parts of Europe. Shanty and Tiare finally arrived and took up a mooring. After about an hour, it was time to head back. Tim, in Shanty, decided to stay whilst Tiare and Boo Foo headed back. As we headed out to the Souters, we were greeted to the sight of around six cruisers battling their way towards Cromarty, as part of the Moray Firth Cruisers race. Wind on the way back was light, and yes you guessed it, it had changed to the west again, so beating back towards Chanonry again. It seems to be our favourite point of sailing!

No special equipment is needed for cruising, with the emphasis on getting from A to B safely and comfortably. The ability to reduce sail, either by changing to a smaller sail, or by reefing, has found to be helpful!! A small anchor might also be useful, although I have not actually used mine yet.

Future cruises will be posted on the Yahoo group e-mail. I personally would like to do Eathie, and Nairn has also been suggested. If you have any other suggestions let us know.

Ian Cameron