

## Arctic Tern Circumnavigation of Ireland 2009

Arctic Tern ( Malo 40 128 ) with it's crew of Freddie & Hilary Moran, and Bramble the cocker spaniel, circumnavigated Ireland in June/July 2009. This was the second season with the new boat. After having sailed from Poole to Largs via the Scilly's, Baltimore/Kinsale, and up the East Coast of Ireland in 2008 we decided we wanted to do something a bit more ambitious in 2009. It had always been a dream to sail around Ireland in our previous boats, but with our new Malo there was no excuse for not doing. We did it easily in 6 weeks even with a few gales, and stopping off for extended time in Crosshaven and Howth. Bramble takes it all in his stride having already sailed about 11,000 in his 9 years and does all his "business" up on the foredeck - so days on end sailing and at anchor without going ashore are not a problem.

We decide to go anti-clockwise going down the West Coast first, starting off from Largs in Scotland, both our home port and where we live. This decision had nothing to do with tides or wind direction predictions, even though timing the tides correctly is very important along the North and East Coasts of Ireland. Our reasoning for this was that the trip down the West Coast was the most unpredictable part of the cruise, so once we got to Dingle we then would know how much time we would have to cruise SW Ireland - the nicest part - and could relax and enjoy it. And that's exactly the way it worked out, even after 3 days sheltering from gales in Arranmore, Donegal. It did go through our mind at that stage that we may not have made it much further, like friends before, but the weather recovered and the next 2 weeks were superb except for light winds. We did no night sailing on this cruise, just extended days, some particularly long on the final legs back to Largs starting or ending in the dark to get the tides. We did 30% of the cruise miles in four sequential legs from Crosshaven to Largs, a planned decision as we had already visited this coast in 2008.

Overall we had pretty good weather, the first 4 weeks being particularly warm and sunny. The winds were from favourable direction most of the time, but also a bit light, needing to motor sail a lot to cover the distance. This had its pro's ( kept all the electronics up and running, even though complimented by a Honda 1KW generator for the computers, dyson, etc ) and con's ( slight noise and the need for fuel before Dingle ). We had 6 days of gales stopping us for 4 nights in Arranmore ( went through two mooring ropes before replacing with chain), the rest being the odd day elsewhere which was no problem. We did experience 5 days of fog on the North and West Coasts which was pretty unusual for the time of year and used the AIS and radar seriously at times in very poor visibility. We are real AIS converts and would not be without it after experiencing it for 2 years. Unfortunately our Raymarine E120 / AIS250 cannot yet "see" and display the AIS enabled buoys - Raymarine are working on a fix. We also had two serious lightning storms when at sea off the North Coast, how we did not get hit with fork lightning I do not know, was most frightening and worrying that our electronics would be wiped out.

So was it all worth it and did it work out to plan - absolutely. As you will see from the log below the anti-clockwise cruise went from pretty remote places and anchorages, to more civilised places with moorings, and finally getting to marina pontoons with all the laid on facilities - fuel, water, electricity, and garbage bins. Ireland is very strict on rubbish collection points, so much so that there were no places to get rid of our rubbish until we got to Dingle. We had accumulated 10 bin bags full of rubbish before Dingle, one great reason for justifying buying a Malo 40 Classic with the big stern locker. Besides having the Navonics charts on the E120 we also had the 8 Imray charts covering the cruise, the two Irish Cruising Club sailing directions, and the new Wiley Southern Ireland cruising companion - all were excellent and made for relaxed and straight forward navigation. It was pretty simple to plan ahead and know what you were going to encounter. This was helped by the Met Eireann forecasts being frequent and very accurate, also the coastguards a lot less formal and more helpful than the UK ones. Vodafone 3G reception was pretty good everywhere, but particularly in Kerry, for the internet.

And the highlights of the cruise: Sheephaven and its superb sandy beaches and dunes for walking - we had a super time here walking, even though Bramble needed carried in a haversack as was pretty sick. He had broken 3 legs in the last 18 months, one on the boat in Bangor last summer and had to be sailed back to Largs in great pain. He had also just been diagnosed with cancer before leaving and we thought he was about to pass away, but by Dingle he was bouncing around again and has not looked back ever since.

Inishbofin Island and just everything about it, so remote, lovely sheltered sandy harbour, good eating, walks, its people, and the very cheap green diesel. It was the real find of the holiday and the one place we must go back to, even by car / ferry. Inishmore (Aran) was also something very different, particularly Dun aonghus on the edge of the

sheer cliffs. Dingle was civilisation again after coming down the West Coast, nice for a day to stock up, and eat out. Then you are spoilt for choice: Valencia, Glengarriff, Crookhaven, Fastnet Rock, Baltimore, Glandore. We missed Kinsale as there was a SW gale forecasted and the marinas had only rafting on the hammerheads which we know is not good.

The RCYC at Crosshaven is well sheltered and not to be missed with its friendly club, bar and food, and good travel connections. On the way up the East Coast HYC and the marina at Howth are equally welcoming. And the final highlight for me was going round all the headlands I had learned from school days, and used by Met Eireann in their forecasts - Fair Head, Malin Head, Bloody Foreland, Erris Head, Slyne Head, Great Blaskets, Mizen Head, Cape Clear / Fastnet, Old Head of Kinsale, Carnsore Point, etc, and we saw most of them. So 988 nautical miles under our keel and a very satisfied crew of Hilary, Freddie and Bramble, made so much easier by being on a Malo 40. We always knew we were buying a super yacht, but its really a superb yacht.

And for 2010, we plan to head back up the West Coast of Scotland to our "old" cruising grounds after a two year break. Also we will most likely join the Classic Malts Cruise since we enjoyed it so much back in 2004, and its time to do again. Maybe we will even see more Malo' from Sweden join us in 2010.

Places Visited	N. Miles	A/M/P*	Comment
Largs			Departed Friday June 12 2009
Campbeltown	38	A	Pontoons not recommended - noise and wash.
<b>North Coast of Ireland</b>			
Sanda / Rathlin	37	A	Lunch stop at Sanda waiting for the tide to turn at Rathlin
Portrush	19	A	Terrifying lightening, but good fish suppers.
Sheep Haven	52	A	Wonderful sandy beaches and walks at Downings
<b>West Coast of Ireland</b>			
Arranmore	31	M	Sheltered from W gales - got ashore after 3 days
Teelin	36	A	Did not go ashore - did not look exciting
Broadhaven	54	A	Did not go ashore - looked even less exciting.
Inishbofin	55	A	The "find" and gem of our holiday - also ate first fresh fish.
Kilronan (Aran Islands)	44	M	Dun aonghus was really worth seeing - bought first fresh fish
Smerwick	64	A	Rode out a SW gale here for a day - did not go ashore.
<b>South West of Ireland</b>			
Dingle	24	P	Marina, fuel, fresh fish, and unloaded 10 bags of rubbish!
Valencia	15	M	Starting to take it easy - shortest sail so far in a day.
Sneem River	36	A	Now in the real SW cruising area - like the Kyles of Bute.
Bere Island	38	M	First horrible sail - thick fog, rain, and S wind.
Glengarriff	14	M	The gardens are superb. Picked friends up here
Lawrence Cove	14	P	Rode out a SW gale here for a day - nice place to do.
Crookhaven	25	M	Best sail of the holiday so far around Mizen Head.
Baltimore	16	A	Fastnet Rock and Clear Island South Harbour on the way.
Glandore	18	M	Always a favourite - also here in 2008.
<b>South Coast of Ireland</b>			
Crosshaven	44	P	Friends departed. Friendly marina, great shelter for SW gale.
Kilmore Quay	71	P	Nice village, though tricky entrance. Rode out another gale here.
<b>East Coast of Ireland</b>			
Howth	86	P	04.30 departure to get tides. Longest leg of the holiday - 15 hours.
Ardglass	55	P	Good stopping point going to the Clyde - 10th time in there.
Lamlash	82	A	Arrived in the dark at 23.00, but we know it well.
Largs	16		Home again on Friday July 24 2009 after 988 nautical miles.

\*) Anchoring/Mooring/Pontoon (Marina)

Text & Photo: Freddie Moran, owner of Malö 40 Arctic tern