Short and Sweet in Tobermory

Memories of time spent with Seaward Squadron members

In Loch Feochan: Indigo awaits its next adventure

When not away cruising, my Seaward 29 *Indigo* has been moored this Summer in Loch Feochan, a few miles south of Oban. The Scottish Seaward Squadron secretary Derek Wilson also keeps his Seaward 29 *Savannah* there and lives in his lovely "Garden Cottage" on the banks of the Loch.Since we first met in the Crinan Canal last year, prior to the rally in Portavadie, we have often cruised in company, amid the stunning scenery of the West coast of Scotland. So it was this year – I planned to explore the waters around Skye and Derek agreed to come with me.

My crew for the first few days was a long-time friend Dick Skipworth, who used to lend me his racing trimaran *Severalles Challenge* to compete in the Scottish Islands Race and Three Peaks Yacht Race with a female crew.

Delivering Severalles Challenge to Loch Feochan in 2004

Dick had introduced me to Ardoran Marine in Loch Feochan, where he moored *Severalles* between races in Scotland, and I persuaded him that for old times' sake he should visit the yard and its current owner Colin, while joining me for a cruise. Dick has reached the venerable age of 88 and hence he requested his grandson Rob to drive him to Scotland and accompany him on *Indigo* as chief deck hand. Rob agreed.

Friday 22nd August 2025

Dick and Rob arrived in Ardoran mid-morning, introductions were made with Colin and Derek (plus of course his dogs Neve and Meddlar), Indigo was victualled, luggage was stowed and we were ready to leave – first stop Tobermory. Pete and Heather Judd in *Louise B* (another Seaward 29) had arranged to meet us there for a "Seaward muster".

Derek was very organised and we saw him leave about half an hour before us. The tide was flooding strongly against us as we exited the loch through the winding channel – an anathema to owners of sailing boats with small engines – but as Derek explained, a foul tide gives you more steerage to overcome the the tidal eddies setting over shoals. Once in deeper water, we accelerated after *Savannah* and sailed past the south of Kerrera and across the Firth of Lorne to Duart Castle, sited on a high crag at the end of a peninsula jutting into the Sound of Mull.

Duart Castle, Sound of Mull Credit: Gunther Tschuch

We motored more slowly (~9 kts) up the Sound of Mull, with lots of reminiscing about the harbour of Salen, first stop to drop off runners in the Scottish Islands Race (for sailors and runners). We could identify Ben More - the target for those poor runners - towering in the distance.

Continuing northwest along the Sound and rounding the top of Calve Island, we entered Tobermory Harbour and spotted *Savannah* with *Louise B* moored in our usual spot on the southern finger pontoons of the marina. We tied up next to them at 6.15 pm.

Our first port of call: Tobermory

Three Seaward 29s in Tobermory - L to R: Indigo, Louise B, Savannah

Everyone was invited on board *Indigo* for the customary pre-prandial drinks, although the event was a bit rushed because Pete Judd had kindly booked a table for dinner at Macgochans for 7.30 pm.

Pre-dinner drinks on Indigo - L to R: Derek, Medlar, Dick, Heather, Steph, Rob

The restaurant turned out delicious seafood (Dick and I had seafood linguini) and the meal was as convivial as it had been the previous time the three boats had been together in Tobermory, which was during the Seaward Squadron rally in June.

Seaward Muster Dinner in Macgochans: L to R: Derek, Pete and Heather, Rob and Dick

Saturday 23rd August 2025

It was a sunny morning. Dick's grandson Rob and I went for a lovely walk to Aros Park, along the coast southeast from the marina. *Louise B* left fairly early for their home port of Craobh, *Savannah* left early afternoon for Coll and we followed in *Indigo* at 16.30.

Rob on the Aros Park Trail

Louise B leaves Tobermory

The plan thereafter was to sail up to Mallaig, then take the Sound of Sleat and the Inner Sound, as far north as Gairloch, returning to Loch Feochan two weeks later. Those two weeks were action-packed for both boats, but that's a story for another time.

During this voyage, we had crew changes at Mallaig, Portree and Kyle of Loch Alsh, selected because of their good public transport connections. When we were heading south, Derek's crew (and good friend) Adrian caught a bus home from Kyle, while Liz (who accompanied me to the Portavadie rally last year) and Ken (who helped me deliver *Indigo* from Falmouth to Scotland in April) had joined me on Indigo. It seemed a good solution to share these two crew, so they took it in turns to go with Derek on *Savannah.*

Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Indigo and Savannah in Mallaig

On the leg from Mallaig to Tobermory, where we had arranged to meet Paul and Janet Caldwell in *Gullfoss* (Seaward 35), Ken was with Derek and Liz was with me. As we cruised serenely past Eigg and Muck, Ken and Derek were treated to a "pas de deux" by two whales with a chorus of dolphins – sadly Liz and I missed them. Approaching Ardnamurchan Point, we could see all four Small Isles (Eigg, Muck, Rum and Canna) on the horizon behind us. The sea state increased a bit before we rounded Ardnamurchan but was calm again in the Sound of Mull.

Gullfoss (left) dwarfs Indigo and Savannah in Tobermory

I called the Tobermory Harbour Master, who said that there were lots of free pontoons to choose from, so I berthed *Indigo* port side to with empty finger pontoons either side for our fellow Seawards. *Savannah* arrived first and went starboard side to on our pontoon, so the dogs could happily jump in and out of either boat. Then *Gullfoss* arrived from Loch Spelve, where they had spent the previous night at anchor. Walnut and coffee cake was on offer on *Indigo*, for which Paul eagerly clambered on board, followed shortly by Janet.

Liz and I waited in anticipation to meet Derek's brother Martin, who was scheduled to arrive from Oban by ferry and bus. Although he is Derek's twin, Martin turned out to be quite different from Derek (he is very musical and plays the church organ) and he is also a different shape – where Derek is skin and bones, Martin is "well-rounded". But they have similar facial features and both are great fun.

Pre-dinner drinks on Gullfoss – L to R: Ken, Steph, Liz, Martin, Janet, Derek

Paul and Janet generously hosted pre-prandial drinks on *Gullfoss*, introducing Ken and Martin to the traditional Seaward Squadron social activities. Paul showed us round his lovely boat – we particularly admired the so-called "crazy golf", his name for the holes scattered throughout the decks for supporting posts of table tops, familiar to all Seaward owners but less numerous in smaller Seaward models.

Having finished our drinks, we set off to Macgochans for supper and enjoyed very nice food at a reasonable price, a meal shared in good company.

Supper in Macgochans - L to R: Derek, Janet, Ken, Steph, Martin, Liz, Paul

Thursday 4th September 2025

It was the last day of *Indigo's* cruise, so Liz and I started to clean the boat, but were interrupted when Ken jumped ship to *Savannah*, which departed for Oban to deposit Ken with his bags (and phone and glasses, which Liz had found lying around on *Indigo*!) on the Sailing Club jetty. Derek and Martin then continued on home to Loch Feochan.

Around midday *Gullfoss* left for Loch Sunart, aiming to spend the night at anchor towards the top of the loch. We said our farewells, with hopes to meet again before the end of October, possibly in Tobermory, for the Mull Car Rally on 10-12th October. Then we set off in *Indigo* for Loch Feochan, where it is currently moored until I return to Scotland in early October.

We have had a good year for Seaward Squadron rallies and musters, which are always very enjoyable events. I have made so many good friends through the Seaward Squadron and it is a joy to meet up occasionally, as in the examples above.

I would encourage all Squadron members to take part in these events, and to consider arranging an informal muster in your area. I think you would be surprised as to how popular they can become.

Best wishes, Steph Merry