

Rowing the Caledonian Canal with the Questing Queensferry Quines



**The Great Kelpie Hunt
July 9th to 14th 2017**

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Acknowledgements

We have so many people to thank for enabling this adventure to happen. First, thanks to Queensferry rowing club for agreeing that we could take the Ferry Maid on this amazing trip. The support of Donna, the club captain, and others on the committee was very much appreciated.

Thanks for all the useful advice from Ranald Mackie to our Skipper Flan sharing his extensive knowledge of the Caledonian Canal, same for John Howell how also directed Flan in her fact finding for the passage plan.

Anne P for driving us all for the recce, we would not have had such a successful trip without it. All the shore support who made it so easy for the rowers to enjoy themselves and then get dry clean clothes at the end of the day.

All the staff at the Caledonian canal who made our trip effortless, they were always welcoming and full of good advice.

All the other boaties on the canal but special mention to the skipper of Candy and the captain from Rosemarkie - Rafting up with them was fabulous. And the two guys at Aviemore who helped us with the trailer on the way home.

And lastly Flan, who did all the running about, the passage plan and smoothed the way so we could all share in this adventure- Thanks Flan it was a blast!

Preparation

As a group, we had discussed canal rowing over the winter of 2016-17 and finally agreed in May 2017 to tackle the Caledonian canal. We knew St Andrews coastal rowing club had done some of the canal in relay with safety boat support. But we wanted to row the whole canal from Corpach to Inverness as a crew with only shore support. The obvious time to do it for several logistical reasons was the middle week of July 9-14th 2017. We decided to travel west to east to maximize the prevailing wind particularly on Loch Ness.

T-30 days the organizing meeting

The nucleus of the group (Anne F aka Flan, Anne P, Liz, Jan and Barbara) called a meeting to arrange the trip and assign tasks with timescales for completion prior to the trip. We had agreement in principle from Donna the club captain that we could take the skiff Ferry maid after the Ullapool regatta. Our work plan included:

- Decide route with stops and distance per day- Passage plan
 - Flan was tasked this this see Appendix 1
- Risk assessment
 - Accompanied the passage plan
- Logistics for towing the boat and storage of trailer
 - Anne P was our tower; Liz was to sort out storage and locations
- Accommodation- We were NOT camping (midges/midges/midges)- thanks to wise Barbara!
 - All accommodation was booked that evening
- Crew-4 of us were rowing the whole distance but we needed to fill one spot
 - We had 3 rowers filling the last spot- Mel for day 0, 1 and 5, Rachel D for days 2 and 3 and Isla from Broughty Ferry for day 4.
- Rules and bylaws of the canal
 - The Skippers guide to the canal was an invaluable source of information and contact details for the whole route web link: <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/wp-content/.../caledonian-skippers-guide-rev.pdf>
- Coordination of shore support
 - We had 3 groups of shore support Jan and Maria for days 0-2, Paddy for days 3-4 and Maria and Andrew for day 5. Their generosity of time meant that we didn't need to transport everything in the boat, our personal kit could go by car.
- List of essentials for the boat
 - See passage plan
- List of essential kit for all participants
 - Waterproofs, thermals, waterbottle, mug for hot drink, midgie repellent, energy snack, gloves, dry change
- IT- set up What's App group for participants and twitter group (QQQ) to report our journey
- Tasks were given to all to be completed before our reconnaissance trip 7 days prior to the adventure.

Reconnaissance trip T-7 days

The 5 (Flan, Jan, Barbara, Anne P and Liz) headed off to Corpach on Sunday 2nd July with a list of objectives as follows:

1. Check out launching slip options at Corpach- 3 options a locked slip at the timber mill, a locked slip at the boat yard and if all else failed Lochaber yacht club across the bay at Fort William.
2. Check out mooring at Corpach- excellent pontoon just outside the sea lock gates.
3. Check out bacon rolls at Corpach- yum!
4. Introduce ourselves to the canal people and book the boat in for its passage
5. Eat lunch- yum yum!
6. Find our accommodation for each night so we knew it existed and how to find it
7. Find the mooring at Drumnadrochit- this was a real worry.
8. Find the Caley marina in inverness and check out the slip for skiff recovery

We had a very successful trip with all objectives at Corpach achieved, the canal people were extremely helpful with advice and options for our passage and they booked us into the diary for Monday the 10th at 8am. We also found all our accommodation and most importantly the intrepid flan risked life and limb to find our mooring point at Drumnadrochit. The only objective not met was the Caley marina, we ran out of time and headed home feeling that we were ready to go! Liz was tasked to contact Caley marina in the Monday to discuss our options re slip for recovery and storage of our trailer for the week. Brian Mackenzie at Caley marina was fantastic offering us secure space for both the trailer and the Land rover for 5 days plus help when we arrived on the Friday to recover the skiff and load her up on the trailer.

Day 0 Ullapool to Corpach- 0.5 nautical miles (nm)

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Mel

Shore support; Maria and Jan

After a busy day's racing at Ullapool we stopped for chips and ginger to allow the other traffic from both the ferry and the regatta to clear before hitching the maid to the land rover and heading off sedately to Corpach. It was an extremely uneventful and steady 3-hour drive arriving in Corpach timber yard where we could launch our skiff at 10:30 pm. We were met by Flan, Jan, Mel and Maria plus ravening hordes of midges, they were fierce!

We had to retrieve the key from the nearby sawmill which was open 24/7, in order to open the slip gate and allow us to launch the Maid into Loch Linnhe. Jan and Liz retrieved the key while the others unloaded the boat from the land rover and got her ready to launch. Once the gate was opened the 6 of us pushed the boat and trailer halfway down the steep/narrow concrete slip then took the skiff off the trailer and women handled her into the water. All this was done while being eaten alive by absolutely fierce midges. We placed a head torch on the bow of the boat with another one on the head of the cox organized the oars and fenders for mooring. We were ready to go.



It was a still, clear night with flat calm water and excellent visibility as we rowed the few hundred meters to the start of the canal, at last we were in the water in a truly beautiful setting at midnight leaving the voracious midges behind for an ethereal row in the moonlight. Once the maid was secured on the mooring outside the sealock and emptied, we headed back to the lumber yard to retrieve the trailer and return the key to the sawmill. The trailer and land rover could be left at the Corpach basin carpark for as long as we wanted as part of our license fee for canal passage.

We then retired at 1am to the Snow goose hostel in Corpach, just behind the basin, for a much-needed sleep- 6 to a room bunk beds, sheer luxury.

Day 1 Corpach to Gairloch 6 nm

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Mel

Shore support; Maria and Jan

We woke at 6 am to the most perfect west highland morning, bright sunshine and no wind (midges!!). The loch was like a mirror and from the garden of the hostel we could see the maid waiting for our real adventure to start.



We need to get cracking because there is a time limit to when the sealock gates will open dependent on low tide. In addition, we had a very tight schedule with a lot of locks to pass through and a trailer to get to Inverness. We headed out to the skiff at 7am (canal opens @ 8) to get her set up for our first day. Seats, rudder, drinking water, change of clothes, grab bag, maps and food box were all loaded up. To our surprise, the canal office opened early at 7:30am and the master was expecting us, and wanted to put us through the lock as soon as possible. We paid our license fee (6.5 meters of boat for £130; Appendix 3) a bargain. We were also presented with two keys which gave us access to toilets and showers all along the canal.

We were told since we were ready, and obviously competent that we could go through the sealock early and on our own. We had been previously informed by the canal staff that we would all have to exit the skiff and “walk” her through on ropes. However, once they saw us row the maid into the lock and moored the boat onto the side of the canal they changed their mind and said we could row her in, all stay in the boat for the passage through each lock, and out. Our first passage through a lock was uneventful with the maid behaving impeccably as the water rose under her. This was our first lesson in manoeuvring in locks- bring her in under oars and then ship oars, fenders out, and take her in to the starboard side of the lock using the rudder and short paddles coming to rest next to the lock ladder positioned between position 3 and 2 in the boat.



Crew members then ascended the ladder and the two, 15-meter tow ropes were thrown up and secured through the cleat at the lock edge. As the water rises, the ropes are kept taut, to keep the boat next to the lock wall and under control. This was a pattern we would repeat multiple times over the next 5 days.



Once out of the sealock into Corpach basin we retrieved the ropes and handlers and rowed across the basin to the next set of three locks. This time we would be accompanied by a couple of yachts. This would be our first experience of “rafting up” in the locks. We were incredibly lucky to meet a family travelling in the sail boat “Candy” who were delighted to allow us to raft up to them. We hung back as Candy motored into the lock then paddled in fenders out and rafted up to the Yachts port side. We then rose in the lock as a unit. Once the first lock was opened Candy motored out with us still attached into the next lock for the same process to occur.



Once through the second lock at Corpach Candy cast us off and motored off. We had an approximately 1 nautical mile to row before reaching Neptune's staircase, a rise of 8 consecutive ascending locks that would get us up to the level for the longer row to Gairloch. The morning was beautiful; the canal was calm with wide bends so we decided to give ourselves a stretch and raced the yachts to Neptune's. We quickly overtook the yachts, it felt great to be rowing in the canal.



We reached the Banavie swing bridge before Neptune's ahead of schedule at 9:30 am ready to ascend the staircase



We knew we would be in the maid for a good 2-3 hours once we entered the staircase. This was our chance to get organized with our shore support and eat breakfast! Our friends in Candy had now arrived at the bottom of the staircase and were once again happy to allow us to raft up with them. We would remain attached to Candy for the whole trip up the staircase. Shore support, Jan and Maria, supplied us with fresh coffee and bacon rolls plus our custom-made drinks holders which we attached to the gunnels of the maid. These would prove to be one of the best innovations of the trip, made by flax, a design adapted from one we saw in the Dutch boats on our trip to Woudrechtem.





Fantastic cup holder made by the Flan. Perfect for water bottles mobile phones, snacks, sunglasses, seeing glasses (given our age essential!).

Once we exited the top of the staircase it was time to stop, take stock of our kit (we needed a boat hook and a tarpaulin) and move the trailer and Land rover to Inverness. While Flan, Mel, Barbara and Maria stayed at Banavie. Jan, Anne P and Liz set off for Inverness, Caley marina, in convoy. We had arranged to leave the trailer at Caley marina for the 5 days. The first day had the shortest rowing distance so it was the obvious day to move the trailer to our final destination. We had not managed to recce the Caley marina on our visit the week before, so this trip was an unknown quantity. Little did we know that the entrance to the Caley marina was a very tight hairpin bend with an old stone wall in the middle of the bend that led onto a single-track road. Not an easy maneuver for a trailer and land rover. After a couple of attempts, we decided to unhitch the trailer and push it along the 500 meters to the marina. Brian at Caley marina met us on our arrival and could not have been more helpful he had a secure spot for our trailer which was locked and safe plus a parking space for the Land rover. They also had a fantastic chandler's where we purchased our boat hook and tarpaulin at a knock down price. The three of us

headed back to Banavie with our goodies, 2 hours later we were back at the top of Neptune's staircase ready to row to Gairloch, 5 miles along the canal. It had been a beautiful day but as we headed off for our final row of the day the rain started, that wet rain that only the west highlands of Scotland can provide. We waterproofed up and got on with it.



It was an amazing setting; parts of the row were like moving through a temperate rainforest with trees right down to the banks of the canal enclosing the boat in green. We would have enjoyed it more if we had not been so tired and wet.



We arrived drookit at Gairloch lock and moored the skiff on the canoe trail pontoons at the west side of the Lock. We would go through into Loch Lochy in the morning. Our shore support thankfully picked us up along with all our sodden gear and deposited us at the bed and breakfast in Spean Bridge, where Rachel met us ready to row on day 2. We were extremely lucky as the hostess offered to dry all our gear for the next day so we changed into dry clothes and headed out in search of food.

Day 2 Gairloch to Laggan 10 nm

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Rachel

Shore support; Jan and Paddy

The Tuesday morning dawned grey and blustery. We were treated to a full cooked breakfast then headed off early at 7:30am to get the maid ready for day 2. She required considerable drying out before loading her for the day. It's amazing how much water two small camping towels can soak up from a wet boat, it's also amazing how scarce the Flan can be when work is required! Once again the lock keeper arrived early and was expecting us and while we got the boat ready he opened the lock. 4 of us (Anne P, Rachel, Barbara and Liz), Flan still missing!!! Took her into the lock on oar then paddle power. This time the lock keeper threw ropes down to us so we didn't need to exit the boat at all.



Once through at 9am we moored up to the pontoons immediately outside the lock to pick up our wayward skipper. Today was our first open water row on the canal with Loch Lochy making up 8.5 n miles of the rowing. Unusually the wind was from the east so we hugged the south shore of the Loch. Squally showers threatened mid-morning so we geared up and kept hugging the south shore making steady progress.



A 15-minute stop at invergloy for a wee comfort break then on a further 4nm to the Corriegour Lodge Hotel for a very civilized mid-day coffee and cake. Goodness only knows what the hotel staff thought when 5 women of various sizes and ages complete with life jackets, wellies and soggy outfits arrived in the wood panelled lounge of the hotel, however they were extremely welcoming and gave us a good hour break to dry out, heat up, sugar up and freshen up! This would be our last stop of the day before the locks at Laggan.



We had two locks to pass through before entering Loch Oich where we would moor for the night. As we entered our last mile before the locks at 14:30 Flan radioed the lock keeper asking for passage information. We could see a couple of motor cruisers and a yacht also heading for the locks so hopefully

our wait would be minimal. We were in luck! The locks were opening to let craft out going west along the canal and there was no queue to go east so we were loaded in with assorted other craft and rafted up to a motor cruiser skippered by a very helpful man from Rosemarkie who had helped to build skiffs on the Black Isle. We had an uneventful transit through the two locks and were released from the cruiser after being motored out of the lock. The weather had also cleared and it was a beautiful afternoon.



We only had a small stretch of canal to row then under the Laggan swing bridge and into Loch Oich mooring up at the pontoons next to the Great Glen water park where we would meet our new shore support, Paddy, Flan's sister. We also managed to find a few pints of lager numerous packets of crisps while we waited for our lift to the Great Glen hostel at South Laggan. No restaurant tonight, we had to self-cater, excellent pasta by Barbara with a few wee glasses of wine by the co-op before turning in to our questing quines dorm.



Day 3 Loch Oich to Fort Augustus 7.5 nm

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Rachel

Shore support; Paddy

Wednesday morning was an absolute corker, beautifully still, calm morning. We were due to row over the summit of the canal today on Loch Oich at 32.31 meters (106 feet) then start our decent to loch Ness. Our first lock was not until Cullochay after Loch Oich a good 4 nm away. Even though we had no early lock deadline we were all aware that we needed to get down the staircase at Fort Augustus that afternoon so once again we got to the maid early before 8 to get her ready for that day's row. No rain this time but she still needed a heavy dew removed before we could kit her out for the day, travel towels once again to the rescue and surprise surprise once again no Flan to help!! This kitting out boat malarkey was obviously not for skippers!!



Loch Oich is a ribbon like, very shallow loch with a distinct shipping channel marked by port and starboard buoys. While the draft of the skiff would allow us to row where other craft using the canal cannot we decided to stick to the channel as directed by the skipper's guide. This meant that we were in close proximity to other craft giving the cox a bit more work than previous days. That morning row was truly magical (Barbara!!) in bright sunshine, surrounded by dense forest with the occasional wrecked boat and ruined castle.



With 3 hours of rowing we arrived at Cullochy lock. After our usual practice of starboard side mooring in the lock, we were getting good at this, we descended our first lock going east. Once we exited the lock we decided to have a brew up and a lunch stop at the pontoons on the east side of the lock.



A fortuitous chat with the lock keeper informed us that the staircase was badly backed up at Fort Augustus due to two large pleasure craft which had come up the locks that morning. This meant there was a long delay to get down into Loch Ness. We headed off to Kytra Lock discussing our options for Fort Augustus. We passed through Kytra lock and gained gold stars, literally, from the Lock keeper, Linda, for all wearing life jackets!!! And rowed on to learn our fate at FA.



Linda the bestower of Gold stars!



Flan at last doing some work-



We passed two large pleasure craft used for adventure holidays and could see why they had caused delays at Fort Augustus (FA) since they needed a lock each. The row to FA was through rolling highland country with sheep and cattle pastures in hot, bright sunshine. When we arrived it was heaving with no spare mooring. We managed to creep around the back of one of the pontoons out of the main traffic, moor the skiff, start a brew up while Flan and Liz went to speak to the canal staff concerning our descent into Loch Ness.



Fort Augustus was the busiest stop we had made and the staircase into Loch Ness was thronging with tourists. There were 4 canal keepers working full out to get craft up and down the staircase as quickly as they could. It was clear that there was a certain amount of chaos, it was also clear that the lock keepers had been on all morning with no break. Once we introduced ourselves and explained what kind of craft we had we were told that there was a queue and they didn't know when we would get down that day. We offered them a cup of tea or coffee as we could see they were exhausted. Once tea and coffee plus chocolate biscuits were provided we were told we would be going down in the next batch! Hurrah!! For the first time the lock keepers didn't want us to stay in the boat while we went down the staircase. We were asked to raft up to a motor cruiser and to our delight it was the guy from Rosemarkie who we had rafted up to on the previous day at Laggan- So no worries we all knew what to do and he also gave us a seat in his cruiser while we went down the staircase. The two boats rafted together were walked down the staircase through locks by the cruiser's skipper and Liz (since she can't sit still!). The rest of the crew enjoyed the sun from a luxury padded seat at the back of the cruiser. During our descent, we met up with Isla who would take Rachel's place for the next day's rowing on Loch Ness.



Once you exit the last lock on the staircase there is a swing bridge to negotiate. All the other craft had to wait till the bridge opens however we had more than sufficient head room to pass underneath. We negotiated with the lock keeper who finally agreed that we could leave the lock first and row under the bridge. We took to the maid and with Anne P in cox position calling the commands and paddled out to the middle of the lock, then on her command swung round in our seats, placed our oars in their thole pins and to a round of applause by the crowds rowed under the bridge in perfect unison. This was a fantastic end to a near perfect day of rowing.



We moored up at the pontoons at the east side of FA, Paddy had arrived to transport our gear to Morag's hostel and after cleaning up we went in search of food and drink.

Day 4 Fort Augustus to Drumnadrochit- 11.5 nm

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Isla

Shore support; Paddy, Maria

We said goodbye to Rachel and Paddy that morning and Isla joined us for the first part of the Loch Ness row. Once again the usual suspects made the boat ready and the usual suspect was missing! We were very relieved that the easterly wind that had been evident at the beginning of the week had gone, Loch Ness was like a mirror as we rowed out of Fort Augustus at 08:30 on a balmy Thursday morning.



We were kept entertained by Isla who had a story for every hamlet and ruin on the loch as we proceeded up the north bank in an easterly direction at a good rate passing a group of Duke of Edinburgh kayakers from Troon academy??

This was the first day that we had no locks to traverse so time was not pressing and we could just enjoy each other's company and the sights along Loch Ness. The rowing was easy as a slight westerly breeze had started gently pushing us along to our destination. After a couple of hours, we scouted out a likely spot to stop for a brew up. We spotted a spit of land created by a burn coming into the loch that already had a sheltered fire pit for Anne's invaluable stove. We landed the maid and secured her on the shingle spit with the anchor and fenders (no tide to worry about and the wind was being kind).



However, as we brewed up and snacked the westerly wind began to pick up with white horses appearing further out on the loch. We decided to get back on the water before conditions got any more challenging for launching off the spit. Once again Anne P took the coxing position and Flan was in bow to push us off with Liz in stroke to forcefully back us out off the beach. We fully discussed our maneuver and then carried it out perfectly, we even managed to not leave Flan behind.

This was a whole different row now much more like what we are used to with coastal rowing we had a brisk westerly wind which was pushing us along and a good wave frequency which we could easily surf on if we shortened our stroke- Just as well Liz was in stroke since short is what she does!! Consequently, we arrived at Urquhart castle and swung into Urquhart bay heading for our mooring at Drumnadrochit well ahead of time at 13:00. We rowed down the west side of Urquhart bay to our mooring, a rather ramshackle wooden pontoon used by kayakers. The draft was only 1-2 feet onto soft sand so we shipped oars and exited the boat to tow her into the beach.



By 14:00 we were ready to undertake the 2-3 mile walk into Drumnadrochit to the hostel with all our boat gear. All our other gear had been previously left at the hostel by the fantastic Paddy. We met up with Mel and Maria for dinner that night as Mel would be rejoining us for the last day row.

Day 5 Drumnadrochit to Caley Marina 15 nm

Rowers; Flan, Anne P, Liz, Barbara and Mel

Shore support; Maria and Andrew

Our last day dawned clear and sunny with a slight westerly breeze- perfect conditions. Maria loaded her car with all the boat gear, a couple of rowers and drove out to the skiff. The rest of us walked back to the skiff to unload the car and make her ready for the day. Once again the Flan managed to arrive last and missed all the work! We had planned for Maria to take pictures from Urquhart castle ramparts so we waited until 9 am to launch off the pontoon and walk her around the westerly end of the bay until we had sufficient draft to row.



We rowed up to the castle for our photoshoot including elevating two of our oars in salute! We then headed off into the east for our last day together. This would be the longest row of the trip but after 4 days already in the skiff we were ready to go. We had the last third of loch Ness to cover then Loch Dochfour where we took a detour around the wrecked wooden canal boats in the loch. We only had

one lock to go through today, our last, at Dochgarroch. We moored up at the pontoons west of the Lock and met up with Maria, Andrew and Ian to have lunch in the sun. We then entered the lock rafting up to a cruiser for the last time of our trip. Much dancing and celebration was had as we waited to exit the lock and row to the Caley Marina.



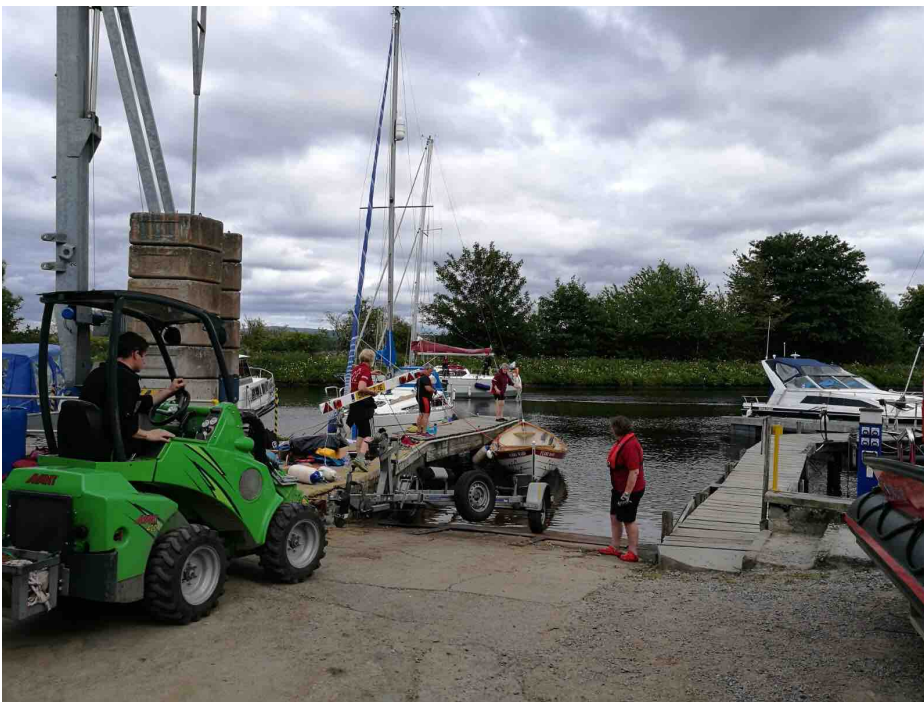
Our last obstacle was the Tomnahurich swing bridge situated in the countryside just outside Inverness. We had passed under all the swing bridges on the canal with little adventure up to now and we radioed the operator to explain that we were a St Ayles skiff and would just row under the bridge. This was nearly our one big mistake as unbeknown to us the clearance under this particular bridge was very tight. We had to duck down and run the bridge nearly losing our heads and an oar. We exited somewhat shaken but unharmed with all oars and crew whole and accounted for. We only had a mile to go to the Caley marina and our trip's end.



We arrived to a welcome committee, fizzy wine and a multitude of helpers to get the boat ashore and onto the trailer.



The people at Caley marina were wonderful, helping empty and lift the boat out of the water and onto the trailer, they had even dried Liz's wet trainers that she had left under the land rover!



We all set off home to Queensferry where the maid was put to bed having carried us in style for the last 5 days.

The end of the beginning.....

Conclusions are always difficult for this kind of log because this isn't the end it is only the beginning of a long journey that we will all have with skiff travels. We are already planning our next adventure!

As you can see if you read the personal reflections this was a hugely positive experience for all of us in many ways.

It was clear from our interaction with both boaties and others as we travelled along the canal that skiffs and Scottish coastal rowing has reached all corners of our country. Most people had heard of skiffs, if never seen one, and many knew people involved with the skiff community. It was also obvious that it skiff rowing was perceived as a good thing to do and we were asked by many individuals for advice on how to get involved with their local club. As well as personal achievement, it was great to feel that we could put something back into the skiff community by spreading the word and being good ambassadors for our sport.

Finally, we would like to recommend that others make their own adventures (Barbara) there is a huge skiffie world out there!

Luxury seats for the decent into Loch Ness on day 4



Appendix I Passage plan

14.06.2017 Anne Flannery

Passage Plan Caledonian Canal Expedition – Corpach to Inverness

West to East 50 nautical miles

Planning journey over 4 days but extra 2 days available if required. If weather with us the whole route is straight forward if following the canal, NE from Corpach to Inverness staying close to north shore (see map below).

Weather

The biggest single factor that may affect the journey. Prevailing winds are SW which would aid our passage. At times the wind direction changes to easterly which may prevent us from being able to proceed. The north shore would, with the prevailing SW, be the more sheltered.

We will be carrying IMRAY charts, inland waterways of Scotland, and Scottish canals skipper guide for Caledonian canal, Great Glen canoe trail and OS maps 41, 26, 36

There are no major constraints on departure/ arrival times; delays are expected at locks and swing bridges.

Risks identified include unloading and loading boat and trailer on slipways.

Sudden weather changes, particularly in Loch Lochy and Loch Ness, both of which are classified as open water, with potentially 3m swells in Loch Ness.

Crew ill health and exposure based problems to both hot and cold weather. Protective clothing will be carried on board as will food and water rations to last the day and emergency.

Crew safety briefing daily along with daily local weather checks/ forecasts including wind direction and speed.

Coastguard based Inverness, Fort Augustus and Fort William with inshore RNLI at Drumnadrochit.

Equipment being taken

- non-racing anchor
- handheld VHF radio using Ch. 74 for approach to sea loch at Corpach and ch16 for routine passage along the canal length
- 2 x 15 metre extra ropes for manoeuvring through locks
- usual bow and stern lines for mooring
- fenders for locks – 2 medium and 3 large and bow fender
- tarp for under fenders to protect hull for scratches during lock passage
- anchor and chain
- life jackets for all crew and one spare
- full set of clenshaw oars and 1 spare
- 4 paddles
- spare pegs (thole pins) + elastic bands + wax
- emergency flares
- bailers x 2
- sponges
- bilge pump
- first aid kit
- compass

- fog horn
 - jack for trailer
 - extra bungies
 - grab bag
 - bottle carriers
 - copy of boat insurance
 - adapter bar with cable
 - all crew have mobiles and remote chargers
-
- boat hook (added later)
 - tarpaulin (added later)
-

Crew

Anne F
 Anne P
 Liz
 Barbara
 Mel / Rachel/ Isla

Shore support

Jan
 Maria
 Paddy
 Andrew

VHF licence holders

Anne F, Anne P, Barbara, Mel

British Canoeing- navigation and tidal planning course

All crew members are experienced rowers and a couple are experienced coastal kayakers.

The skiff will be transported to Corpach from Ullapool and launched from Corpach and recovered from the Caley marina.

Planned schedule; See map below

Day 1 The journey will begin through the Corpach sea lock and continue up through Neptune's staircase at Banavie. The skiff will either be walked through locks on long ropes or lashed to a yacht per Scottish Canal guidance.

We intend to row onwards to Gairloch on the first day mooring overnight east of Gairloch lock and swing bridge – approximately 6-7 nm. We are intending to use fenders and tarp to protect the boat through the locks and 2 x ropes of 15 metres each to allow clearance and the maximum depth of the lock chambers.

Day 2 (and 3) split this section. Gairloch to Fort Augustus 18 miles (5-6 hours)

The prevailing wind tends to be SW so we will be going along the north shore. There are several pontoons on the south shore going along Loch Lochy past Invergloy Point leading to Laggan Locks and swing bridge.

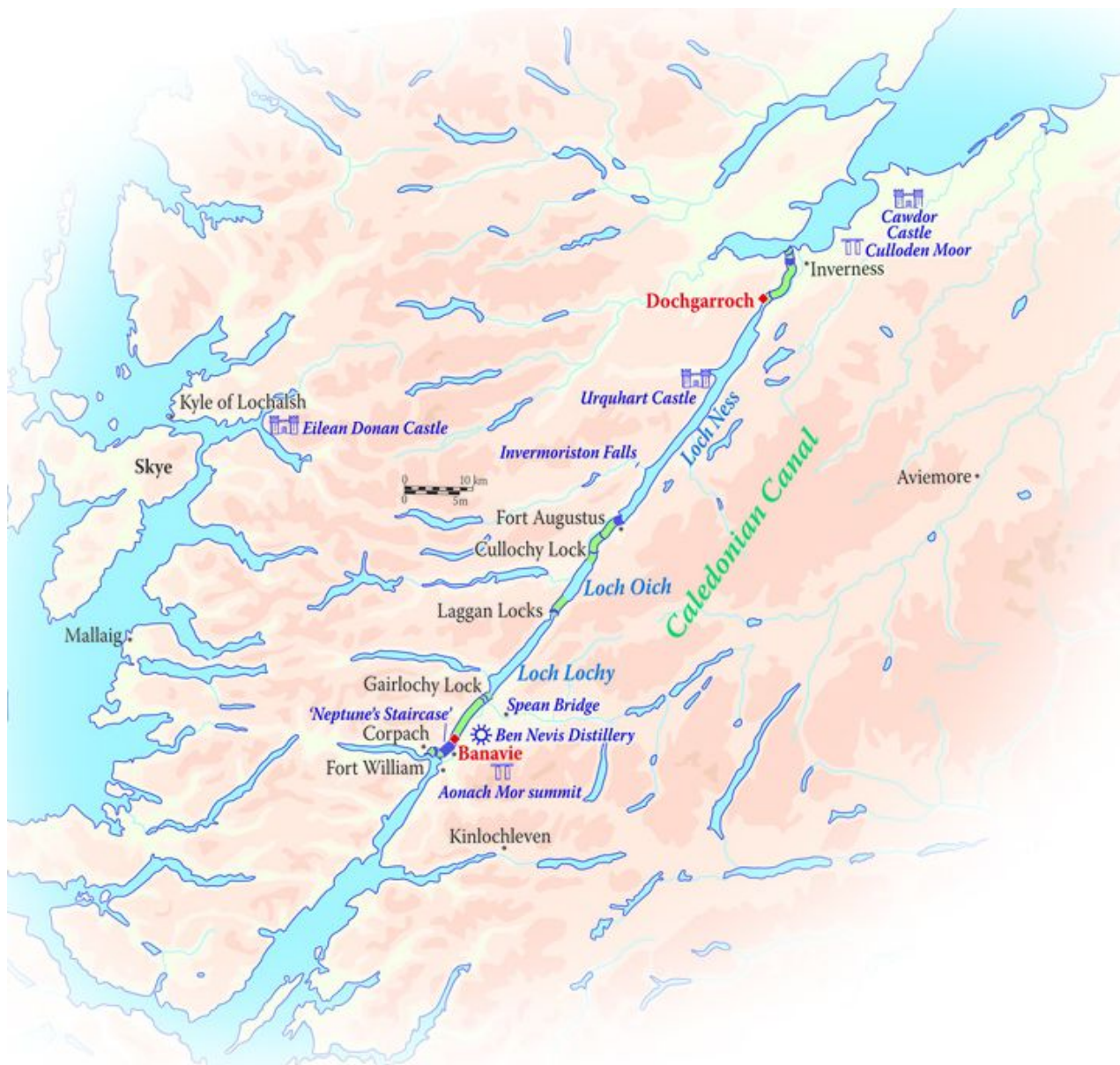
Once through in to Loch Oich this is a short section with buoys marking the way to Aberchalder and the swing bridge there. There is also an exit route during this stretch.
The approach to Fort Augustus has two locks prior to Fort Augustus itself with numerous pontoons available. Mooring overnight at Fort Augustus.

Day 3/4 Fort Augustus to Drumnadrochit 12nm (3.5 to 4.5 hours)

We continue along the north shore of Loch Ness. There is an exit at Foyers on the south side of Loch Ness if required, then round into Drumnadrochit harbour!!!! Note chance of northerly wind funnelling down Glen

Day 4/5 Drumnadrochit to Inverness 15nm (3.5-4.5 hrs + locks)

Again, keeping mainly to the north shoreline there are exit points to both shores. Loch Dochfour navigation buoys mark the passage through the loch proceeding to Dochgarroch onto Inverness. exit from the canal system will be at Caley Marina prior to the Muirton locks.
What are the exit points? Wind funnelling effect –where??



Appendix II Personal reflections of both crew and shore support

Anne F (Flan) the skipper- rowed all days

Hi & low lights'

Low: dreich rain on afternoon of day one as I was worried that the sunshine of the morning was all a con and the rain would follow us all the way for the week.

Low: the incident with the last bridge, we had become complacent, not good.

High: the departure from the last lock gate at FA we worked as one turning from paddles to loading oars and hitting the timing immediately, also the spontaneous applause was just the icing.

High: the way we all pulled together as a crew getting off the shingle spit at Loch Ness, again showing how we had all gelled together as a crew.

High: sighting the 'beastie' under Castle Urquhart, even if I was the only one to see it. It was there.

Anne P rowed all days and the tower

So, I reflected and initially nothing had anything to do with rowing.

'Isla, you brought fruit!' when Isla arrived for her shift.

Brewing up on a tiny stove on the canal side.

Coffee break in a swanky hotel, dripping over their carpets but met with smiles.

'Rachel, what other food did you bring?'

Bacon rolls as we rose through Neptune's staircase.

Anyone would think it was about our stomachs...

But those little moments of culinary delight punctuated a 'magical' trip (that one's for you, Barbara). Stand out moments were readying the boat in the early morning when everything else was still and quiet.

Leaving the lock into Fort Augustus in perfect synchronicity to applause from onlookers, then leaving Fort Augustus onto the perfect mirror of Loch Ness. Most of all it was just about the time spent rowing, the simplicity of day after day, developing a rhythm and routine, the peace and privilege of traveling through amazing country in the skiff.

'It's ruined me for regattas' was a comment at the end and it certainly felt that way at the time. I'd do it all again in a heartbeat.

Barbara rowed all days

My highs and lows

It was pretty much ALL highs!

Rowing every day for a week, especially along bits where there were no roads - out in nature, no motor but our own muscles, surrounded by beauty.

Team spirit, camaraderie, call it what you will - for a curmudgeon like me this was an absolute highlight.

You guys, you're the best!! (Sob.)

Meeting and co-operating with all those lovely sailors and lock-keepers along the way, Scotland at its absolute shining best.

Afternoon tea at that hotel, a bit of luxury to make us feel special!

The only low I can think of is that one day it rained and we arrived at the hotel soaking wet. But even that was soon overcome by a tumble drier and hot food.

Isla rowed day 4

No lows for the CC row although there might have been had I been there all week!! Sore bum blisters.



One bit I really liked although I wasn't personally involved was you guys rowing out under the road bridge at Ft Augustus. Paddling first then switching to rowing like professionals.

If the watching hoards hadn't starting clapping I would have.

Loved the whole experience.

Thanks

Jan (shore support days 0-2)

Highs include: day out doing the reconnaissance run and not having to drive

Being part of an ambitious project and soaking up some of the positive enthusiasm of the rowers

Watching the first night row under the stars on calm black water

Bacon roll and coffee in sunshine on first morning

Photos of boat on Loch Ness

Lows – Midge attack

Typical poor quality Scottish accommodation

Leaving after the first few days

Liz rowed all days

The people, I can't say it enough it was such a pleasure to row and spend time with this group of people. I can't think of a single poor personal interaction with anyone on the trip it was simple joy from start to finish.

Ok so the boat was pretty special too, the idea that all we had to do was get up and row all day, the sheer fun of rowing the skiff the way they were designed to be as passage boats and not racers was a revelation.

I suppose Scotland was affy bonnie too, the sun helped but we were even smiling in the rain - drookit at Gairloch!

Biggest highs - applause at Fort Augustus, launching off the spit into Loch Ness in challenging conditions. Sleeping in an on suite shed! Being able to share fender knots and laughing for days on end.

Maria (shore Support days 0-1, 4 and 5)

Highs:

1. Excluded from rowing due to incapacity I was still able to be involved in the adventure as shore support, feeling very much part of the team.

2. I visited parts of glorious Scotland I would otherwise not have seen and from angles not attempted I.e. the launching slip at Corpach in the dark with the crew rowing away into the night...The view from Urquhart Castle Tower with "my boat" on the water, performing a perfect oar salute to the delight of equally excited visitors next to me...how proud was I!!!

The boatyard at Inverness where the Maid was gracefully landed onto the slip identified by shore support, who had kept the Prosecco cool in the Inver water...

3. The kindness of the canal staff and fellow canal users...including the homeopathic doctor I had not seen for at least 15 years and who kindly proceeded to "piggy back" the Maid" onto his yacht (Candy) through a series of locks...

4. The superb help from the yard staff in getting the Maid from the water with their dinky tractor, and loaded onto the trailer in Inverness, when all were tired...

Lows:

1. Mobile network cover sometimes poor which could make communication with the skiff sometimes unreliable.
2. It felt sometimes a bit like a treasure hunt...I was grateful for the navigation system in the car, but could have done with a more detailed map.
3. Difficult to predict estimated time of arrival on shore and hence to make reservations for dinner...would be handy to have a list of eateries and tel numbers to book a.s.a.p.

Mel rowed day 0-1 and day 5

The methodical preparation of the trip avoided wasted time and potential hazards.

There was great camaraderie with other boat users at the locks. Throughout the trip the interaction with other canal users and the general public was very positive, we were often applauded and Ferry Maid will have featured in many people's holiday snaps.

Our invaluable onshore support synchronised extremely well with the rowers, especially when we arrived drenched and whisked us away to our next accommodation and welcome hot showers.

The group were very accommodating allowing me to participate on 2 single days making me feel part of the team.

Rachel D rowed days 2 and 3

I think highlights for me were having some proper food and a cup of coffee. Oops, no, I mean.....
That lovely little bar at Laggan locks. Oops, no, I mean
Watching someone eat muesli with water. Oops, no, I mean
2 days solid of your company. Oops, no, I mean.....

Has to be emerging out of Fort Augustus, paddle to oar switch, perfectly timed and co-ordinated by Anne P to applause and sunshine.

The sight of the maid in the early morning sunshine at Laggan, and setting her up for the day.

Hard to pick the highlights really, just a wonderful sense of purpose and team, travelling peacefully and calmly through the beautiful country. learning about the locks and the canals and the interest and variety of the people we met. I have had loads of great adventures this summer but this one is definitely up there with the best of them. My only regret is I couldn't do the whole thing.

Appendix 3 canal licence

Scottish
Canals

www.scottishcanals.co.uk

SS 0016283

Short Term Licence
Please keep this part as a receipt

Licence Type

Please tick

☒ Transit
☐ 30 Days
☐ Overnight Haven
☐ 16 Day Explorer

☐ Discounted Return
☐ 2 Weeks
☐ Return Lic/Ext Lic No.....
☐ 30 Day Explorer

☐ SC Key Issued
☐ Lowland
☐ Additional Days

Owner details (please complete)

First name

ELIZABETH

Last name

FURRIE

Landline no.

01382 609693

Mobile no.

07866 450112

Nationality

BRITISH

E-mail address

e.furrie@whs.net

Home address

183 GUANUS RD

Postcode

DD2 2EW

Date of birth (if under 18)

Payment Details

Please ensure that all relevant information is completed in full

Total Fee (in £)

130 = 65

Net Fee

VAT

Discount %

Charity Ref.

Method of payment (please tick)

☐ Cash
☐ Cheque
☐ Mastercard Debit
☐ Maestro Int.
☒ Visa debit
☐ Visa credit
☐ Maestro
☐ Mastercard Credit

Declaration (customer must sign)

I declare that the information above is true.
I agree to the conditions printed on the reverse

Signature

Date

10.07.17

VAT Registration number: 125 5146 34

Blue copy to customer

Green copy to Waterway Office

White copy to be retained in book

Scottish
Canals

www.scottishcanals.co.uk

SS 0016283

Short Term Licence
Please display this part on your boat

Licence Details

Please tick as applicable:

☐ Commercial
☐ Portable
☐ Powered
☒ Trailable
☐ Yacht

Length of licence

 months

105

 days

Start date

10.07.17

Expiry date

19.10.17

Boat details

Name

SKIFF FERRYMAID

Length

6.5m

Draft

0.5m

Air draft

Waterway of purchase:

Crinan

☐ Caledonian

☒ Lowlands

☐

Where do you normally moor your boat?

SOUTH QUEENSFERRY

Insurance

Insurance company name:

YES

Policy number:

Expiry date:

NOTES

BSC Check Completed

☐

Scottish
Canals

www.scottishcanals.co.uk

Short Term Licence Conditions

Insurance

If your boat is powered it needs insurance that covers at least third party liabilities up to one million pounds.

Boat Safety

Your boat should comply with the Boat Safety Scheme standards. We have the right to refuse access onto our Waterways for any boat that we think may present a safety risk to other waterway users. In purchasing a licence, you agree to allow our staff to carry out a safety check at any time.

If you plan to spend more than 30 consecutive days on our Waterways, it must have a certificate to show compliance with the Boat Safety Scheme Standards or a declaration of conformity with the EU's Recreational Craft Directive.

Personal Safety

Please ensure that there is always sufficient competent crew to minimise risks to your own and other people's safety. Ask for a copy of our Skipper's Guide and check for special local information about the waterway(s) you plan to use.

General Licence Conditions

1 You must ensure that when the Boat is under way there is always an adequate and competent crew in attendance. A copy of our Skipper's Guide should be kept on board the Boat and drawn to the attention of all crew members and passengers.

2 You must display the licence so that it is easily visible by our staff on the bank or at locks.

3 The licence is not refundable and not transferable between craft.

4 The licence does not permit use of the boat for carrying goods, or as a tug or other workboat or for any business purpose without our permission.

5 The licence does not allow you to moor except for short periods ancillary to cruising. You must have somewhere to keep the boat when it is not being used for cruising.

6 You agree to comply with navigation rules, relevant Acts, Byelaws and regulations, and to follow any of our lawful directions, spoken or written (including signs).

7 You agree to be responsible for any damage or difficulty caused by you or the boat because of anything you have carelessly done or not done.

8 Once the licence has ended, unless you re-licence the boat you must remove it from our waters. If you do not, we have powers to remove it ourselves and to charge you for the costs we incur in doing this.

9 Waterways are occasionally closed for repairs or due to emergencies. We will not rebate licence fees in respect of such closures.

10 The licence does not allow you to tow the boat by animal or vehicle. You need our written permission to do this.

Scottish
Canals

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11 Navigation Rules

(i) Your boat licence does not give you any priority of passage on any waterway. You must follow the directions of local staff who may decide which boats have priority.

(ii) You must stay within the speed limit of 4mph on the canals and not create a breaking wash which damages the banks.

(iii) You are responsible for assessing whether it is safe to use the waterway in flood or strong stream conditions. Our waterway office will provide information.

(iv) You must share locks up to their capacity. There is no right to the exclusive use of a lock.

(v) You must not:

- use any electricity generator, including the Boat's engine, at any Scottish Canals mooring, after 8pm and before 7am, including signed visitor moorings, where this may cause nuisance to your neighbours on land or water. We do not intend this condition to stop you moving your boat from the mooring.
- run the Boat's engine in gear when it is moored as this can damage the waterways walls and cause a nuisance to other people. You may only use the Boat's engine to recharge batteries when the Boat is under way.
- do anything at any mooring which will cause damage or nuisance to any other person or their property
- discharge anything into the waterway from the Boat except unpolluted surface water that drains naturally or water from sinks or showers on board the boat.
- take a vehicle on to our towpaths or land or park on them unless we have already given our permission.

(vi) There is no general restriction on the use of locks by portable and unpowered craft. However, in the interest of safety and to conserve water specific local restrictions may apply. We encourage users to carry these craft around locks if possible. If it is not possible, we recommend using ropes to pass the boat through the lock. It is preferable that there is nobody on board the boat while it is in the lock. Local SC instructions must always be followed.

(vii) Unpowered craft may not navigate tunnels in Scotland. Please check locally for advice.

Forth & Clyde House
Canal House
Applecross Street
Glasgow
G4 9SP
T 0141 332 6936

Crinan Canal
Pier Square
Ardishaig
Argyll
PA30 8DZ
T 01546 603 210

Caledonian Canal
Seaport Marina
Muirtown Wharf
Inverness
IV3 5LE
T 01463 725 500

Appendix 4 18.07.17 QQQ Kelpie hunt expenses (compiled by EF)

Rowers	Contribution Total= 1.0	Licence £130	Petrol £155	Parking £40	Tee- shirts	Accommodation £587.50	Incidentals £71.42	total	difference
Flan	0.2	26	31	8	9.50	122.80	14.28	211.58	44.96 owe
P	0.2	26	31	8	9.50	122.80	14.28	211.58	56.42 owed
Liz	0.2	26	31	8	9.50	122.80	14.28	211.58	253.92 owed
Barbara	0.2	26	31	8	9.50	122.80	14.28	211.58	201.58 owe
Mel	0.08	10.40	12.40	3.20	9.50	NA	5.71	41.21	41.21 owe
Rachel	0.08	10.40	12.40	3.20	9.50	56.00	5.71	97.21	47.21 owe
Isla	0.04	5.20	6.20	1.60	9.50	47.00	2.86	72.36	72.36 owe

Participants	Shared outlay	total
Flan	Anoch mor £210, Scotmid £11.42 (-£54.80 for Jans accommidation)	166.62
P	Great glen hostal £100, drumnadrochit £110, Petrol £58	268.00
Liz	Snowgoose £99, License £130, Morags £120, Parking £40, Towels £10, Teeshirts £66.50	465.50
Barbara	Milk and Snacks £10	10
Mel	None	0
Rachel	Groceries	50
Isla	None	0

Cost breakdowns for accommodation, petrol and incidentals						
Accommodation (+ towels where applicable)			Petrol		Incidentals	
Night	Cost per person	Who was there	Who	Cost	Who	Cost
1 snowgoose	19.80	P, Liz, Flan, Jan, Barbara	Paddy	53.38	Flan	11.42
2 anoch mor	35.00	Rachel, P, Liz, Flan, Jan, Barbara	Jan	43.51	Barbara	10.00
3 great glen	21.00	Rachel, P, Liz, Flan, Barbara	P	58.00	Rachel	50.00
4 morags	25.00	Isla, P, Liz, Flan, Barbara				
5 loch ness	22.00	Isla, P, Liz, Flan, Barbara	Total	£155	Total	£71.42