



This newsletter has been designed to enable you to get an idea of what kind of experience you will have should you join us on one of our cruises.

Sat 3 Sep | Sunshiney day September is a funny old month. When it's good, it's very, very good and when it's bad, it's horrid! While we were preparing Hjalmar Bjorge in Oban today it just got hotter and hotter. The forecast looks pretty good for another St Kilda trip this week but who knows...

Sun 4 Sep | Hitch hikers! Hjalmar Bjorge left Tobermory very early this morning with two extra passengers aboard. A swallow and a wren made themselves at home, cadging a lift to the Sound of Barra where they flew off, heading towards Eriskay by the looks of things. Bird brained? It sounds like a clever way to conserve energy to me! The weather is great around the Outer Hebrides, if a little hazy in the heat, and the passengers are all looking out for bottle-nosed dolphins which are frequently seen around the Sound. The vessel is expected to arrive at St Kilda mid-afternoon.

Wed 7 Sep | Sunfish spotted Guests aboard Hjalmar Bjorge saw an ocean sunfish (mola mola) at St Kilda today. The ocean sunfish is the world's largest bony fish recorded up to two tons - and certainly one of the strangest looking - and usually inhabits tropical waters. The weather wasn't great at St Kilda, with a very windy night last night, so the boat headed back to the Outer Hebrides where they encountered some white-beaked dolphins en route.

Photo: Chris Gomersall



Thu 8 Sep | Dozens o' dolphins Well at least two dozen! As Hjalmar Bjorge came round Ardnamurchan into the Sound of Mull around 24 common dolphins were seen. About half bow-rode the vessel for some distance; one individual achieved this whilst upside down the entire time!!! It was a spectacular sight enjoyed by everyone onboard. Except John. Who was in the shower... Rotten timing John, better luck next time!

Sat 10 Sep | Northern lights Seen in Tobermory late at night, our first sighting of the Northern Lights this autumn/winter. Last seen in January this year. Whilst our sightings in Scotland aren't as breathtaking as the light shows you see in Norway or Iceland for example, they are still thrilling nonetheless.

Sun 11 Sep | 100 dolphins!!! Hjalmar Bjorge left Tobermory at 4.30am this morning to reach St Kilda before the forecasted gale appears. Crossing Hawes Bank on the way to the Sound of Barra everyone was rewarded with the sight of about 100 common dolphin here, there and everywhere! Amazing.

Mon 12 Sep | Birds and beasts Chalice finished a four night cruise today having completed a circumnavigation of Mull. Destinations included Lochaline, the Cairns of Coll, Gunna Sound, Gometra, Staffa, the Ross of Mull, Corryvreckan whirlpool, the Treshnish Isles and Loch Spelve. A basking shark off Tiree was the cetacean highlight and 50 species of bird were seen including golden and sea eagles. The beasties included wild goats, an

adder, an otter and rather a lot of of midges on Jura! Jura's "Pig Bay" also provided a wonderful sunset.

Fri 16 Sep | 'art attack Chris took artist Bruce Pearson to St Kilda earlier this year. Whilst there Bruce was inspired by the sight of Stac Lee swirling with seabirds and burst into action with a pretty big canvas atop Chalice (right, top). Chris duly attempted to hold the boat as still as possible which actually meant it got bumped about in the swell with the onlookers feeling greener by the minute. Grimacing and cursing Bruce quickly knocked up a charcoal and wash image aided and abetted by the rain! As he wrestled it down from the top deck he commented, "Don't worry too much if this one blows overboard. I'm not convinced about it..." (right, below). Back home Bruce realised that he had promised to submit work to a London gallery for an exhibition by the Society of Wildlife Artists. Still not sure about the Stac Lee canvas he cunningly disguised it in an expensive frame and took it along, with some other paintings, to the gallery for the exhibition of 500+ works. Imagine his surprise upon receiving a phone call to say that the Stac Lee canvas had been chosen from all the entries for a top award! Photos: Chris Jackson



Sat 17 Sep | Bye-bye summer According to our cruising programme summer is drawing to a close. The boats are at sea on their last scheduled cruises this year. Not that we stop working. Hjalmar Bjorge has diving weekends booked until Christmas and Elizabeth G is taking divers out until mid November when Rob will be starting his big conversion of the vessel. It's official! He is going ahead with the superstructure extension and various other works. We don't expect to be reporting so much news outwith the main cruising season but do check back regularly because if anything of interest occurs we'll let you know on these pages. Thank you to everyone who has sailed with us this year, especially those who chose to double donations to our favourite charities - Oban Mountain Rescue Team and Argyll Animal Aid. We'll be handing cheques over next month and will let you know the grand totals then.

Wed 21 Sep | Cracking ceilidh Hjalmar Bjorge guests were treated to a surprise impromptu ceilidh after coming across the occupant of the bothy at Tarbet, Loch Nevis. After telling stories of the ghosts in the local chapel and showing photos of two ghosts (!!) he entertained everyone by playing the accordion. A fascinating and memorable afternoon was had by all.

Fri 23 Sep | A gale tale Let's face it...the weather this week was appalling. Gale forecasts the whole week, predictions that actually turned out to be accurate, meant this week long trip aboard Hjalmar Bjorge was destined to become the only one this year that didn't get out to St Kilda. Everyone took the trouble to assure us they had had a marvellous week but we are obviously disappointed when weather restricts our plans. More so because it doesn't happen that often.

Clive, who travelled with wife Ada aboard Hjalmar Bjorge this wild, windy week, felt inspired by the notice on the inside of the toilet door to put pen to paper. Considering the weather this truly was "poetry in motion" and considering the inspiration...well, that seems quite fitting too!!! Go Clive...

About the toilets on Hjalmar Bjorge; I've only good to say,
With friendly trickle, splurge and surge; They flush your cares away.

Deck hand, steward, housekeeper too; Kirsty does them all,
And steers the tender carefully; To every harbour wall.

A series of delicious meals; Emerge from Mark's domain,
And then we see him on the deck; To wash the anchor chain.

And skipper Mark's a busy man; Who keeps it all together,
Arranges routes and ports of call; but can't arrange the weather!

St Kilda's fifty miles offshore; And very far from here,
But we're quite keen to visit it; And try again next year.

Michael, Vicky, Andrea, Ian; Mike, Audrey, Ada, Clive,
Have found to travel happily; As good as to arrive.

For anyone who is really confused the cook, as well as the skipper, was called Mark. And in case you're wondering about Clive's inspiration...the toilet notices are very tame just listing what should and should not go into a marine toilet!