

Follow us into the world with Vita Vera

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Jun 12, 2024

Help, only 5 days to departure!

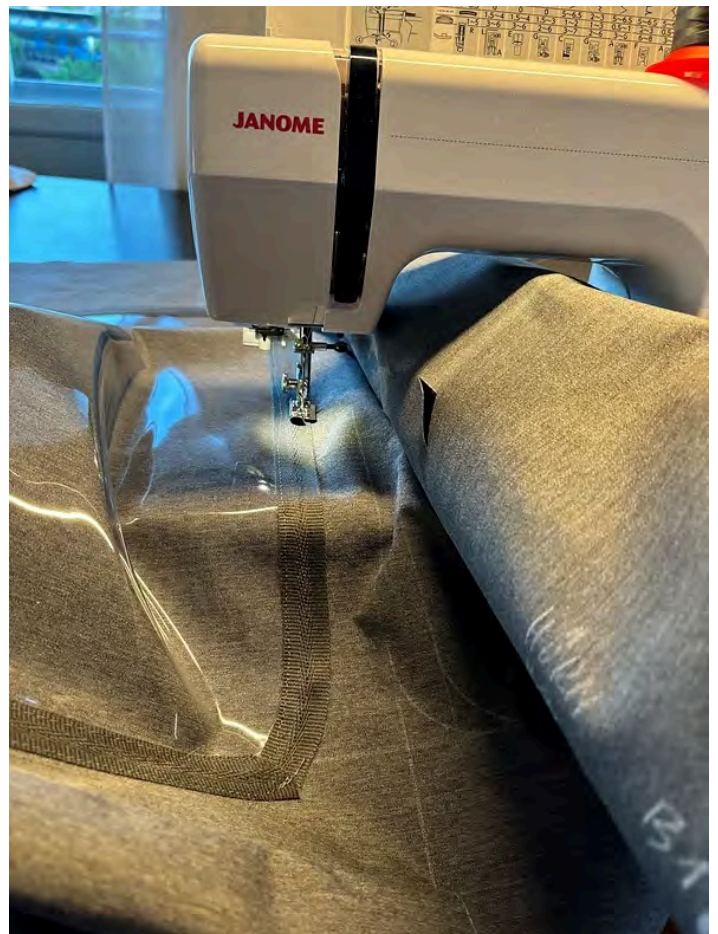
★★★★★ No ratings yet

It has been totally quiet from us and the reason is that we have had a crazy amount to fixing prior to departure. Thanks to all the help from Roger we seem to be able to make it on time. We won't be done with everything when we leave Gustavsberg on Saturday, so we will continue our work along the way. The essentials will be don though. Today Ulf and Roger were doing frustrating cable work with the cable pipes for electricity to the instruments. The pipes are apparently glued together from e the inside, and patches of glue make it very difficult to pull the cables through. But it finally worked out.

Moved to Gustavsberg Now we are in Gustavsberg's guest house, thanks to Ita for arranging a spot for us! Departure is at 3 pm on Saturday. Ulf is newly retired, but I will work for another six months and a few more weeks from the boat before I go on summer vacation.

The spray hoods

I have been working hard on the two spray hoods and am now almost done. I am so happy with my new Janome Easy Jeans sewing machine, it can handle almost anything. I did make a lot of mistakes sewing as this is quite new to me, a lot redoing and getting it right. But tomorrow I will be finished. Next time I do something similar it will take half the time 🤖



Unkering I have now bought all the dry goods, cleaning supplies, new bedding and filled our medical bag with everything necessary. Remain clothes, housewares, fresh products and drinks. Thursday/Friday we will rent a trailer and move into Vita Vera with all the mattresses, blankets and pillows ... after cleaning her spotlessly of course.



New final destination part 1 We have booked winter storage in Ireland, New Ross Marina. Cheapest option, good reviews and perfect communications to Dublin for the return journey back to Sweden on August 25. Which is when we need to get back to attend the wedding of Ulf's daughter Andrea and David.

The biggest stress Vita Vera is now leaving Sweden for good and everything we want to have onboard for the future must come along now as we will not want to carry a lot of stuff on the flight back next spring.

We would love to take our friends on board

Let us know if you would like to join us part of the way!

We are so looking forward to this!

Hugs 😊



Jun 16, 2024

We actually left almost on time!

★★★★★ No ratings yet

I can't remember when I was this tired. Not just me of course, we've both been working late nights in order to get ready. We have so been looking to get going and not having deadlines anymore. Whatever is not done by the time we leave will be taken care of as it comes.

We had so much luggage! What you see in the picture is perhaps a tenth of everything. It was just a matter of stuffing everything into the boat and, organize it along the way.. At least we ig manage to arrange our beds, the gully (kitchen) and the lounge (sofa/dining table) decently so that we could have a cozy dinner and a good night's sleep.



We were so haapy to have all of you waving us off! Thank you all! ❤️❤️❤️!

And as a wonderful surprice my brother Stefan turned up from Kristinehamn together with Ludde, Jonas and Hanna. Here are some of our loved ones who were there. Some had already left by the time the picture was taken.



Roger and Anette came with us for a bit. Lovely to have company from the beginning! We made our way to Napoleonviken and anchored there for the night. We had a wonderful nights sleep and felt pretty much refreshed In the morning. We slept in a bit, had a late breakfast and set the mainsail. Wonderful to have several helpers! At 6pm we passed Smådalarö and decided to go in there for the night and drop off Roger and Anette. Our crew was put on the bus and we got cleaned up in the lovely sauna at Smådalar jetty.



By the way, here you can see my spray hoods which I have struggled so much with. They turned out OK, considering I've never done anything like this before 😊

Tomorrow we'll leave early towards Harstena. Midsummer will be spent at Torrö with Calle and Sussi and it will be so much fun!



Jun 24, 2024



Shit happens, midsummer, repairs and beautiful weather

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ No ratings yet

We dropped Roger and Anette off at Smådalarö last Sunday. Monday morning we slept in and headed towards Harstena, approx. 76 nautical miles from there. The weather was lovely and we had a nice sail until a bit after Landsort. In the picture, we have just left Landsort and the Stockholm Archipelago behind us.



Then the fog came rolling in. Not quite according to the weather forecast. We haven't managed to get our new radar and AIS up and running yet so it was scary and the wind was shifting all over the place. Then we got fed up and decided to take down the sails and go by engine, but the main sail didn't want to come down. It was stuck! But we made it to Harstena and when we had anchored at about three in the morning I hoisted Ulf up the mast so he could bring down the main. Nice workout in the middle of the night 🤪. It worked out fine and we dropped into bed and fell asleep like little pigs.

In the late morning we set out for wonderful and picturesque Harstena, but to our disappointment it was completely deserted. Nothing was open.



So we left Harstena a few hours later and headed towards Torrö, where we celebrated Midsummer.

Here you see Calle's and Sussi's house, which is absolutely stunningly beautiful in a bay in the Tjust archipelago.





Thursday was spent smoking salmon and hanging out on the pier with accordion music and summer songs.



Midsummer eve we had traditional lunch on the pier, midsummer dance in the village and barbecue in the evening.



We had a wonderful midsummer weekend with our friends at Torrö who are always so generous and welcoming ❤️

On Sunday we set off for Hasselö. But it didn't go quite as we had planned as Vita Vera's batteries were completely discharged and the engine would not start. The passage to Hasselö is full of rocks, so we didn't want to rely solely on the sails. We borrowed a battery charger from Calle and were on our way a number of hours later. And not only that. Our new plotter quit, it just wouldn't start. Luckily I had my subscription to Skippo so we could navigate with the mobile phone.

Then we arrived in Hasselö and hung out with Ulf's friend Erik and his family. Another wonderful idyllic gem!



We anchored in the bay outside Hasselö for the night and continued the next day to Västervik to buy boat stuff at Erlandsson's brygga (just under an hour's walk from the centre of Västervik), do boat work and stock up on food for our further journey. The weather is so wonderful now! Here you see wee Uf in Västervik



Jun 30, 2024



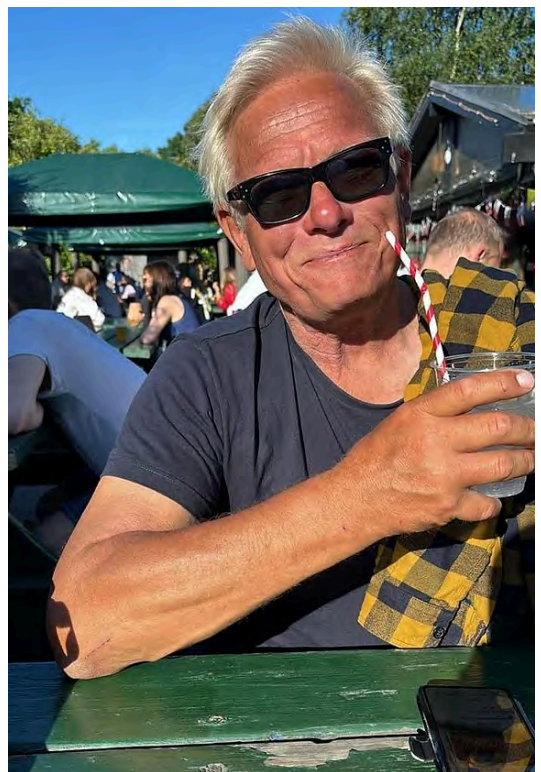
Educative passage from Västervik to Copenhagen

★★★★★ No ratings yet

Wednesday morning we left Västervik for Copenhagen, roughly 230 nautical miles which is about 425 km. The trip took us about 2 and a half days. It was a relatively smooth trip, but it became oh so clear how important it is to have properly planned watches. Not only at night but also during the day. For example, like being duty for three hours every time you sail overnight and really take advantage of sleeping when you are "off". Not only at night but also during the day. Two days with only a few hours of sleep at night here and there is just too hard to bear and makes you stupid We knew that, of course, but it became very clear now. Very educational!



So we arrived at Tuborg Marina outside Copenhagen at 4pm on Friday. The couch, a movie of which we saw maybe 5 minutes of and then the sweetest sleep!



On Saturday, Vita Vera's captain was woken up and treated with bubbles and a birthday present (hammock). Then we made Copenhagen, some of it at least. The birthday lunch was in Nyhavn at a very nice place, Restaurant Carl Nilesen. Smørrebrød at a high level. Here, the birthday child gets a "Lille", a danish snaps.

After that, a visit to the infamous Christiania for a Gin & tonic. It has been cleaned up now, so no more drug dealing on Pusher Street.



Jul 6, 2024



Shitty weather and technical issues

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ No ratings yet

Well, we came to Råå from Copenhagen on Monday and here we are still here.



It has been incredibly stormy and rainy so we simply didn't feel safe going on. We have used this time to work on our projekt list. This is how you often see Ulf these days. Here he fixes light for the forepeak, our bedroom 😊



Something that is extremely annoying is that our brand new B&G plotter (for navigation, where you see the seacharts) has stopped working. It worked for a week, then it failed to start. stone dead The plotter is also the screen where you see radar and AIS, so we don't want to be without that. In Sweden, it's OK to navigate with the Skippo app, but we must have a working plotter with radar when we cross the North Sea. The most annoying thing is that you think you have done something wrong and spend a lot of energy trying to make something work that was doomed from the beginning. Now it has been confirmed that it is the plotter that is not working and that there is nothing we can do about it ourselves. So we are going to contact Nautica, the Swedish representative for B&G, on Monday to hopefully get a new plotter.

Råå is a very nice town, well maintained and very picturesque. Last Wednesday we had dinner with Ulf's childhood friend Manfred and his Yvonne and had a super nice evening. Thanks for the fantastic hospitality Manne and Yvonne! ❤️



If SMHI's (the Swedish weather forecast institute) forecast is correct, we can continue towards Gottskär outside Onsala/Gothenburg tomorrow morning. It is 87 nautical miles there, but the wind is blowing in the right direction so we should be there by late evening. Will then anchor at Daphne's and Ronny's bay in Draget/Gottskär.

So far, the schedule for our onward journey is still OK. Of course it depends on how we get on with the new plotter. So those of you who we are going to meet will be informed about this as soon as we know how it is going.



Jul 24, 2024



Towards Stavanger and across the North Sea

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ No ratings yet

Towards Stavanger

Matilda, Ulf and I left Kristiansand on July 15 and headed for Stavanger to start our passage across the North Sea. It took a day longer than planned. We made two anchorages on the way, one outside Flekkefjord and one a little further north. The one at Flekkefjord was super nice, completely protected in a very beautiful bay.

Thursday 18 July we arrived in Stavanger and on Friday Roger joined us for the passage across the North Sea and further. We explored the town and took the opportunity to visit the Oil Museum. For those of you who haven't seen the Norwegian series *Lykkelandet* on SVT a while ago, do so if you can. Very good historical drama series!



Stavanger, a lovely city



The three of us happy and full of anticipation

Over the North Sea

Saturday promised 25 degrees and sunny weather as well as moderate winds in the right direction across the North Sea. this will be a piece of cake, we thought. Huh! The sea became very rough after just an hour or so, to the extent that only Ulf could steer in the beginning. To top it off, we haven't got the autopilot to work yet, so we had to hand steer the whole way, 219 nautical miles. Of course, we had worked out a watch schedule, but seasickness and our lack of ability to take over the wheel for longer periods of time put a lot of pressure on Ulf, with the consequence that he didn't get much sleep. In the end we just had to make it, it went OK but the waves being between three and four meters made it very difficult to steer and we (all but Ulf) couldn't last long. The first 35 hours we had good speed, though, 9-10 knots and on two occasions even 14 knots! Then the wind dropped and at the same time the engine chose to stop.. We then had wind of possibly 3 m/s in the nose and without an engine the last 50 nautical miles took forever. In total the passage took 50 hours.

Towed by Lerwicks sea pilot

As we could not use the engine we needed towing assistance into Lerwick harbour, where we arrived at 2.30pm. We were so well taken care of and everything went super smoothly. The pilot boat had just helped a large cargo ship out of the canal and was able to directly take care of us.



Tired, cold but happy

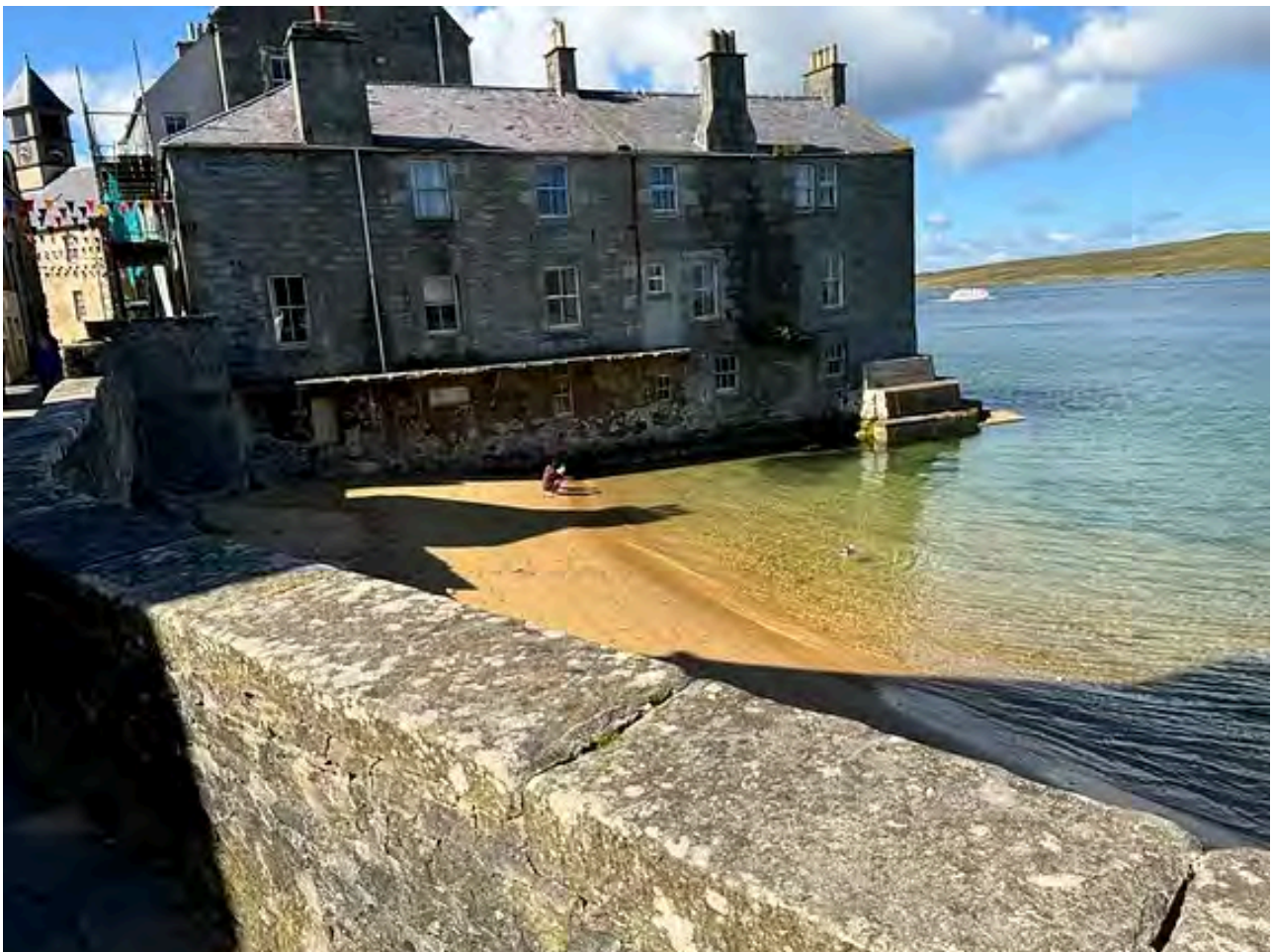
The feeling of finally arriving at port and looking forward to a nice hot meal ...and the disappointment when you realize that on Mondays almost no restaurants are open and if they are open you should have made a reservation (not really our focus during the crossing 😊). But we finally got a seat at the C'est la vie restaurant and had the the most wonderful meal you can imagine. Both because we were so hungry and because the food was truly fantastic. And then, going to bed, knowing you could actually sleep all night and more, was just heaven! Even though everything was damp. Sheets, blankets, pillows. Who cares we slept like babies anyway. The feeling of having completed the challenge and now being able to eat and rest was worth everything. In addition to that, we have been rewarded with wonderfully nice, sunny days here in Shetland!

Engine repair and sightseeing

As Lerwick is also an industrial port there is good help to be had. Today we have an engine guy on the boat who sorted out our diesel problems which should now hopefully be resolved. Today we rented a car and went sightseeing. Shetland is so beautiful! See here



This is the view when we came into port



Lerwick city





Dramatic scenery, lovely excursion by car





Plenty of family around 🤗



This is how clear the water was inside the town (the town has 7,000 inhabitants)

Fish & chips at Frankie's

We ate lovely fish & chips at Frankie's. We could see why it is so popular - gigantic portions of delicious fish.





Aug 24, 2024



Stage 1 completed, 15 June - 22 August 2024: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ No ratings yet

Sorry about not getting the blog post done! I can only blame it on extremely poor internet connections during on our way and on the fact that i have been busy sailing and socializing 😊. We have now completed stage 1 and have docked at Carlingford Marina just on the EU side of the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, it's better that way, should we be delayed with the rest of the journey. Because if we stay more than 15 months in the UK we would have to pay VAT for our boat.



A beautiful sunset during a magical journey from Oban to Port Ellen

What do we think of our adventure so far?

It has been a fantastic experience. Maybe always so comfortable: it has been cold, rainy and windy. The number of nice summer days would not even fill the fingers on one hand. We really long for

sunny weather now!



Last passage, heading for Carlingford. Cold, and rainy.. I'm wearing long underwear, fleece 1, fleece 2 and a jacket. and I am so cold..

Nevertheless it has been great to experience to visit these exotic places which I probably would never have been to otherwise: Shetland, Orkney Islands, Fair Isle, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland. Seeing the landscapes change the further south we got, meeting fantastic people along the way, both locals and other travelers, was awesome.

It has also been both exciting and educational to be in these sometimes uncomfortable, sometimes scary (for me at least) situations when the winds blow too much and in the wrong direction, the rain pours down and things break down. Then just have to accept the situation, solve the problem and move on. Once you have done that, you will feel stronger and more confident 😊
This fall I'm going to do an Ocean sailing course. It consists of 20 sessions with everything from medical care on board, life raft training, handling tides to meteorology and boat mechanics. This will prepare me well for the next stage - towards the Med.

What has happened since the last blog post?

We completed the Caledonian Canal. It was nice, but not as fantastic as we thought. Göta Kanal is actually nicer, although this may be due to the fact that we had fantastic weather on Göta Kanal and that it rained cats and dogs while we did the Caledonian Canal. I did hear from other sailors that Crinan Canal is nicer. So check this out if you have canal plans in Scotland.

I was under the impression that there would be plenty of nice and lively pubs in Shetland, Orkney and Scotland. This was not the case in the places we visited. We found nice pubs quite rare and getting a table at a restaurant could be difficult without having booked in advance.

The last blog post ended at Fort Augustus on the canal, this happened next

- **Laggan locks** - not much to say about this. Closed pub and closed cafe.
- **Banavie**, Neptune staircases with 9 locks in a row. Quite impressive, many tourists. We almost felt like celebrities 😊

Janne handles the lines in a lock

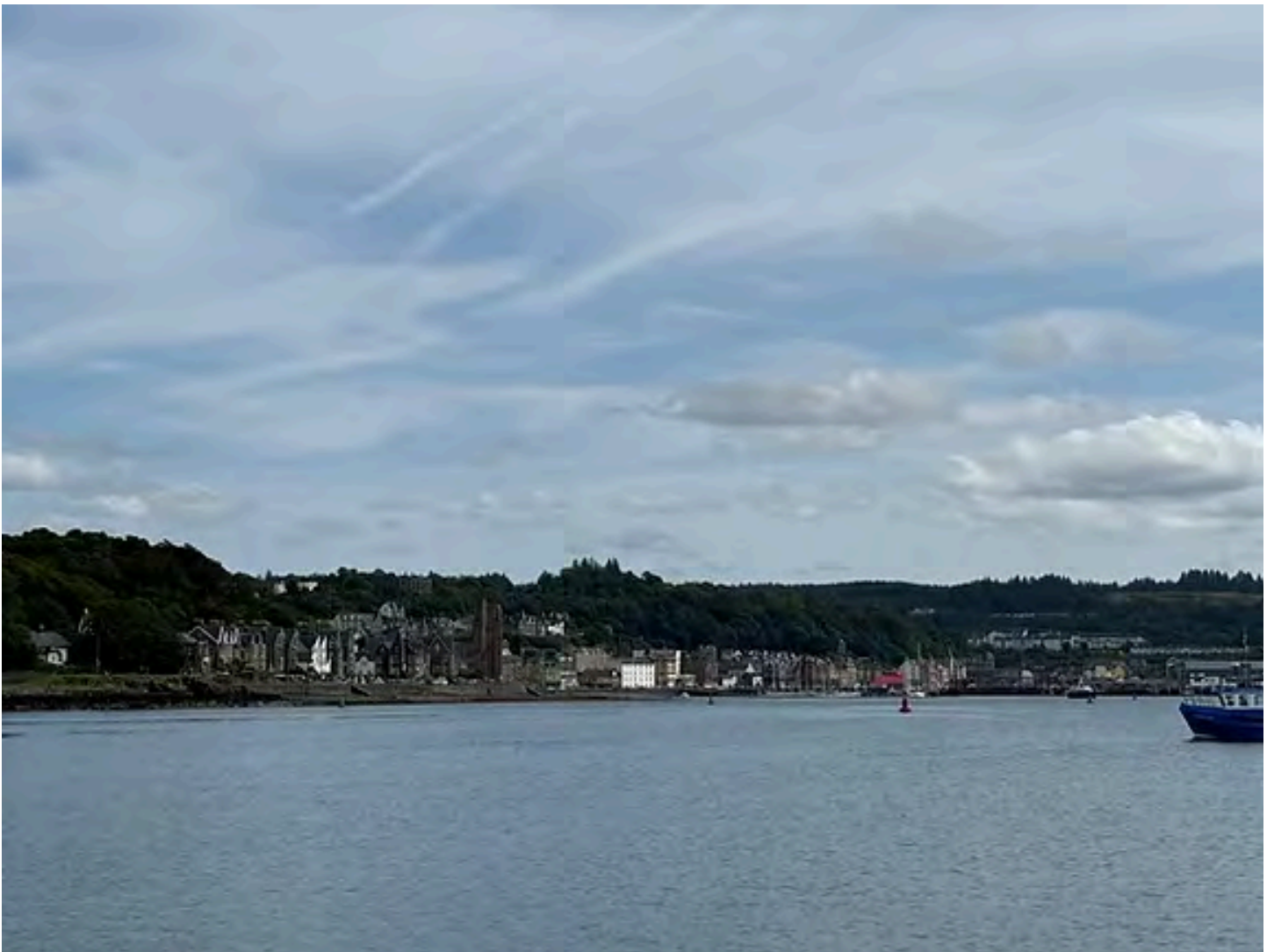


Corpach From here we went by bus to Fort William and by train to **Malaig**. Fort William was like any other town really. But the fishing village Malaig was very picturesque! We had an absolutely fantastic seafood meal. Ulf and I shared a seafood platter containing lobster, crab with claws as big as iPhones, sole, squid, sole, scallops. Absolutely magic!



And yet this is not all

- Malaig also has a Harry Potter shop, there is a witch who gives detailed instructions on what applies when using e.g. wands and what can happen if you misuse them.
- After the canal, we went to **Oban**, a nice Scottish town with, among other things, several whiskey distilleries nearby. However, we didn't buy any whiskey, the exchange rate means that the same bottle can be bought significantly cheaper at Systembolaget. Sad.



Heading towards Oban

- Then towards **Port Ellen** - an very nice little town. From here we took the bus to Bowmore and visited their distillery did som whisky tasting. So good!



My brother Janne on the beach in Port Ellen

Ballycastle - very nice littel marina, pretty little town. Here we dropped off our friend and crew member Roger and my brother Janne with son Oscar. From Ballycastle we did a boat excursion (tourist boat) and an excursion with Janne's family to the Giants' Causeway. See the picture below with the strange rock formations.



Giants' Causeway. See the strange rock formations.

Bangor - a suburb to f Belfast. The town was a bit of a disappointment, a rather worn down and dreary suburb, but with a large and nice marina.

In Bangor, my brother Janne and his family rented a house and we had two days together. Great fun, because they live in Canada and we don't see each other very often normally.



My brother's family and Ulf. From left: Sara, my nephew Raoul's girlfriend, Ulf, my nephew Raoul, my brother's wife Ruth, my good brother Janne, Raoul's and Oscar's cousin, my nephew Oscar.

We also took the opportunity to visit **Belfast**, which was just under half an hour train journey from Bangor. We went to the Titanic museum, very interesting and definitely worth seeing. Then we did a guided bus tour. Unfortunately, we experienced Belfast as quite run down.

Carlingford - the end of stage 1. The weather made it hard for us to make it to our planned last destination, so we changed from New Ross to Carlington Marina. This way we had to do 160 nautical miles less. We arrived at the marina on the 22nd at 9pm at low tide, which meant that we didn't get in, because we have too much of a draught. 3 meters before the entrance to the marina, we got stuck in the mud. But since the tide difference is almost 4 meters, we had a bit of ot soup and tried again successfully half an hour later. 😊

Yesterday we took a walk to the village of Carlingford, a wonderfully picturesque little village. Finally we found all those nice pubs we've been looking for all along!



Pretty village of Carlingford. Finally I have found what I have been looking for along the way.

This was our stage 1, an awesome experience. Many thanks to those of you who came along on our adventure and made it unforgettable! ❤️