

## Cruising Log

**Jasper – SY379/ Santa Maria 3 – CY38**

**The Last of the Hunters returns home**

**Bob/ Alan Colquhoun**

Jasper was built in Nobles of Girvan Ayrshire in 1968 to order for the community of Scalpay/ south Harris in the outer Isles. She joined and was part of a fleet of 12 boats that the community, each boat had a crew of 6 and was therefore an important key in the employment of locals. At this time Scalpay was an isolated island off the south east side of Harris, it is now served by a fabulous new bridge but the Island feel is still there and it now has a fabulous pontoon set for visiting boats.

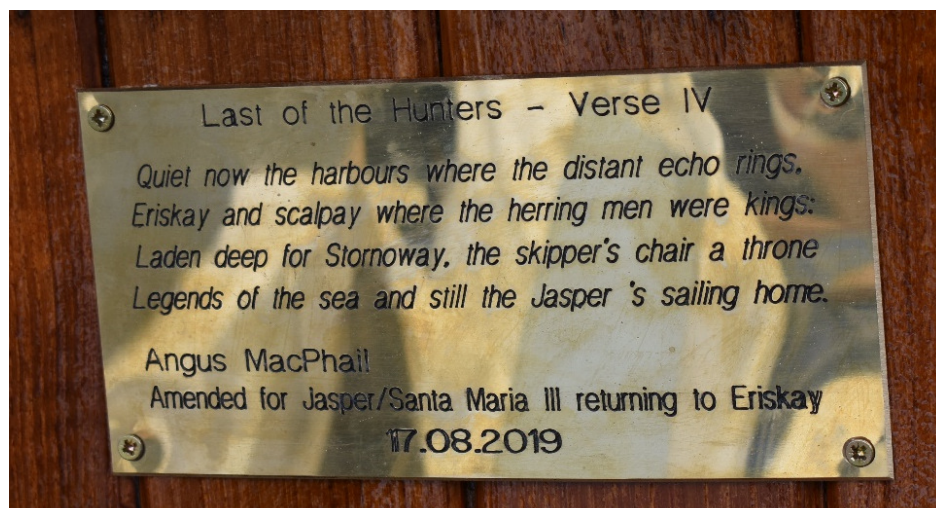
The goal of this cruise/ journey that I was part of was to return Jasper (as she was in Scalpay) back to both Scalpay and to Eriskay (where she was Santa Maria 3) following a long 5 year program of restoration.

Over 5 years ago when Alan and I had Christina2 we came across at auction in Glasgow, Jasper, she was in a sorry state, with woodwork issues, leaking decks, the engine was seized on Number 2 liner, this is a 24 litre straight 8 Gardner 8L3B pushing a 48inch propeller through a 5 inch shaft from a 3:1 reduction box. We bid on her having investigated the work required but chickened out on the threat of multiple divorces, eventual costs, time and where do you keep a 60ft x 20ft x 8ft 52 tonne fishing boat?

She was bought, towed to Bute, but the new owner after 8 months came to the same conclusion Alan and I did that this was huge and expensive to do and as such she ended up as an item on E bay.

Queue – Donald MacKinnon, sitting at home one night in Glasgow goes onto e bay looking for something else and up pops Jasper, to Donald this was amazing, his family had bought her in 1971 from Scalpay as a 3 year old varnished super ringer and fished with her as Santa Maria 3 for nearly 30 years and here she was in front of him to own at the click of a button. After much deliberation and a few drams that night CLICK, Santa Maria 3 was his again, oh what have I done??

During the next 5 years, much blood sweat, tears and money something really special came out of this, Santa Maria 3 sits proud in Lochboisdale Marina, close to her home as a monument to the days gone by, the men who fished such boats in the glory days of the herring boats, the Last of the Hunters has come home.



The band Skippinish changed one of their songs for the boats return to her home.

This is a log of her journey back home over July and August 2019. The end of a 5-year journey

## Start

Jasper has not been out of Glasgow for over year and she is due to embark on her return home to the Islands in August, Donald her owner is offshore and cannot manage but asks Alan and I to take her to the 2019 Tarbert Classics in July for a shakedown trip, oh the pain of having to do that was hard to absorb, but we stuck at it

## Friday 19<sup>TH</sup> July 2019

Arrived by car at Clyde Marina – Clydebank, Crew – Alan, Hugh, Brian and self (Bob Colquhoun)

We took our own RIB this trip for back up and some fun, the fun began launching it in Glasgow, there is a ramp at the Riverside museum which turned out to be a bonus, followed by a 20 minute blast downriver to the marina, great fun

Prepared the boat, took all the non-required work materials off, check fuels and oils, started engine around 15.30

16.00 – Left Glasgow on a falling tide, revs 800, smoke from engine room, gaskets and paint drying out

17.30 – Off Gourock – weather iffy, wet, slight breeze, all well in the engine room, revs 800

19.00 – Toward point on Starboard beam, wet and misty

21.00 – Ardlamont point on Starboard beam, drier now after a non descript trip through the Kyles, cloud at sea level, great, getting dark due to cloud

21.40 – Skate Island off Starboard beam

22.00 – Arrived in Tarbert – Revs 900 for traditional Ringer arrival, what 3 knot speed limit was that?

22.30 – Arrivals tent, cider beer etc, fire on in front end and beds ready☺

## Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July



Dozens of visitors to Jasper, she is looking a picture on the pontoons, and a blast up Loch Fyne in the RIB was enjoyed by the crew, fabulous day around Tarbert.

Dinner aboard that night and then to the social tent for a few, back to the boat ¼ mile away where the volume of the music was about right, deck sit out with friends solving all the worlds problems and some more with the occasional dram, a great day with no rain.

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July**

Began with the traditional classic boats crews breakfast in the Tarbert Hotel, fantastic start to the day

We had friends from Aberdeen staying in Tighnabruaich that week and they were joining us on the sail back round to the Kyles, so they arrived on the 10.30 ferry from Portavadie and walked round to the Marina, so all our crew were ready following breakfast

12.00 – the routine is that the classic boats do a sailpast of the north pier around midday as we did, in addition to our guests Donald (the owner) had 2 relatives join us at Tarbert also bearing the gift to be had later on of a full Venison roast meal, one of the guys is a stalker on the Duke of Argylls estate in Inveraray and it would have been inpolite not to have accepted that.

We dropped off our visitors in the Kyles after a great sail down and round Ardlamont, a much better trip through the Kyles than that out on Friday.

We arrived back in Glasgow in the rain around 19.00, tidied the boat up and took the RIB back to the Riverside museum for recovery to the trailer having had a fabulously prepared venison meal passing Dumbarton Castle, awesome, Jasper is ready to go home to the outer Isles



Into **August** and the long-awaited sail to the Outer Isles, Jasper is ready

### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August**

A couple of weeks after Tarbert and some additional steelwork in horrendous rainy weather by Donald and his cousin Neil MacKinnon, the addition of 3 tonnes of stones as ballast and filled fuel tanks we all arrived at the boat in Glasgow.

Crew

Donald MacKinnon – Ex Ring net fisherman

Neil MacKinnon – Ex Ring net fisherman

Bob Colquhoun

Bunks allocated and 1<sup>st</sup> night aboard, there was so much to be done that the Chinese meal was not finished until midnight, so not many hours sleep were had before we rose to leave on the trip

Prepare Donald's RIB for towing before bed - crashed

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August**

05.20 – Engine on – just getting light

06.00 – Left Clyde boatyard

06.31 – Erskine bridge

06.55 – Dumbarton rock – the place of many journey starts for Alan and I in the past

07.25 – Port Glasgow light

07.52 – Clyde Port control tower – been past this thousands of time in my lifetime, a welcoming sight



08.27 – Cloch Light on port beam

09.10 – Midway Toward point and Skelmorlie – taking course round bottom side of Bute

10.10 – Rubh an Eun – SW tip of Bute – Looking at tides, distances and the weather decided to chose the Kilbrannan sound

11.35 – Loch Ranza off port beam – 7.75 – 8.0 Knots

12.20 – still in the lee of Arran so with our issue with the output shaft seal decided to check oil levels and temperatures, dropped inshore and sat in calm water before the Mull

12.45 - Carradale on Starboard beam

15.10 – Southend/ Sheep Island – before the Mull

16.10 - Mull of Kintyre – interesting seas very confused, wind against tides, 8 – 9 ft seas from all angles but fabulous run up towards Gigha once past the Mull, relived some of the pictures in Fiona's Malkin's fabulous book about Shemaron in the 60s and 70s



18.55 – South end of Gigha, heavy tides

20.48 – Goat rock – Jura east coast off Port quarter

23.40 – Reisa ant – Struth, Corryvreckan to Port, Doris Mor to Starboard

00.40 – Easdale to Starboard Quarter

02.20 – Moored up to new pontoons in Oban



02.25 – engine off

02.35 – Delivery of fresh scallops from Donald's cousin from Castlebay Barra

03.00 – Bed , shattered 😊

### Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> August

Woke to an unusual boat movement, the wind had swung a full 180 Degrees overnight and was out of the North West, 5 – 6 so hitting the stern of Jasper hard and unfortunately sunk the RIB which we had tied between the pontoon and Jaspers stern, great, at least we got to try the heavy duty 240 volt emergency pumps, worked a treat.

We spent a few hours wandering about Oban, many people down to see Jasper on the north pier, fishermen, relatives on Donald and Neil and yachtsmen amazed at Jaspers varnished hull.

So after some coffee a light snack and some checks, engine on to head to Mallaig

13.05 – Engine on



13.10 – Left Oban

13.45 – Lismore Light off Starboard beam

Quite a lot of ferry and yacht activity in the Sound off Mull, fabulous day but windy, directly down the sound, great for pictures

14.30 – Lochaline west pier off the Starboard beam

Fantastic mid sound breakfast done in relays, Donald and Neil then me, huge feast, cheers Donald



15.08 – Fuinary rocks

15.55 – Off Tobermory bay, engine out of gear, met up with Dawn Treader, famous 40ft varnished front control trawler, she features in many of the band Skippinish videos, owner is Alastair McLean (not the writer), know by everyone as Steptoe. We exchanged bottles and prawns and then we headed on our way to Mallaig



16.15 – Left Tobermory

17.40 – Ardnamurchan light to Starboard beam

Out of the blue a high speed boat caught us up almost without us seeing her, it was a previous owner of Jasper who had been told she was here, he shot off and borrowed a friends boat and chased us to see her and have a chat underway – fantastic 😊

18.30 – Eigg off the Port beam

Great evening to be sailing, what a fantastic area

19.16 – Arisaig beaches off the Starboard beam



20.10 – Arrive Mallaig , wet night

20.20 – Engine off

Up into Mallaig to find food and sample the local hostelries that Donald and Neil used to frequent as Ring net skippers many moons ago, a fine night followed by a well earned sleep, a comfy night in the bunk with the peat burner on in the front end, great, died.

### Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August

Late rise, well about 09.00, windy day but dry to start with.

Went ashore to the fishery mission café for breakfast, fabulous in all respects but we will need it.

A lot of interest in the boat from locals and fishermen so much chatting took place

However the 3 tonnes of stones on deck need transferred to the hold and stored to reposition her ballast with not having a winch aboard, so that was fun, 3 hours heavy work for the 3 of us, funnily enough not many visitors at that time

Sun came out in the afternoon but with it came increasing winds which would make the trip over the Minch to Eriskay entertaining if they didn't drop

The BBC radio presenter arrived, surprise, she is also one of Donald and Neil's cousins, ha-ha, I have started introducing myself as the only Non MacKinnon aboard 😊

Various interviews took place including with me for a future BBC transmission, I was the only non-Gaelic speaker

The local marine engineers arrived and checked the Gardner over with a fair degree of old days discussion, we ended up doing an oil change at 10pm and dinner was a bit late this time

Bed after a heavy day, fire on, wind up and heavy rain now pounding on the deck, heard about 2 seconds of it before I crashed

### Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August

Another day in Mallaig, lots to do, tidy up, tyres to be done correctly and many visitors to entertain

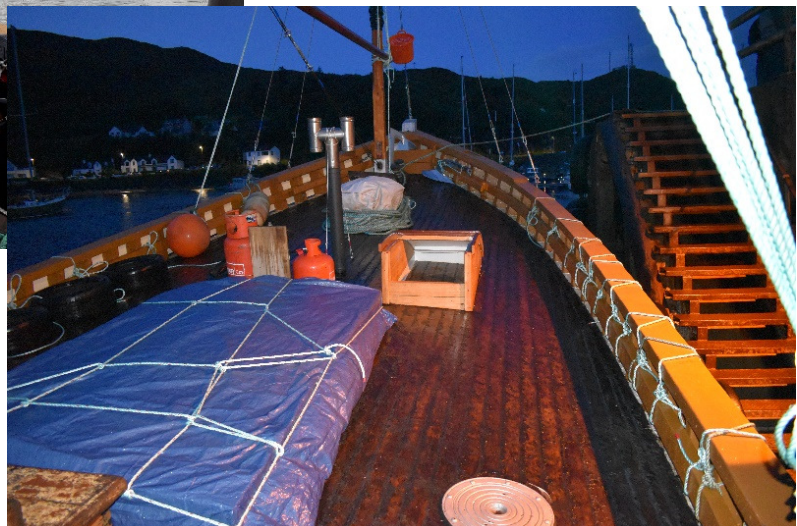
However, breakfast 1<sup>st</sup>, back to the mission for round 2, again met many on route, wind and rain prominent, to the point that the outer isles ferry is off, great as we had crew arriving on it, not.

#### Highlights of the day

1. Tyres restrung and hung as per Neils instructions, very particular but great outcome
2. Top up generator fuel tanks at garage
3. Fishing for prawns basket raised on front mast forestay
4. Nameplates changed from Jasper to Santa Maria 3 (1<sup>st</sup> port of call Eriskay where she was Santa Maria 3) – many happy faces in Mallaig following this
5. Had an otter visit the RIB for a scratch session, got some great video😊
6. Alan Morrison from Mallaig found a ships bell the same as the boats original and gave it to Donald for the boat
7. The crew had to get haircuts before leaving Mallaig, tradition apparently
8. Various other detailing took place in a pretty full on day
9. 2 other relations of Donald and Neil's from the Islands joined us late afternoon for the final preparation and slept aboard for our planned early start

Before the end of the day, in the 10 dry minutes around 8pm Angus McPhail of the band Skipinnish arrived to have a chat and pipe the boat away from Mallaig to the tune “returning to Eriskay”, fantastic, good audience on the pier for this, a great feeling.

Finally “Santa Maria 3” was ready even if the forecast was still poor for the Sunday, next stop the outer Isles



## Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August

Dark rise, rain off but still windy in Mallaig ☹️

05.05 – Start engine – Angela arrived from her hotel

Prepared and stored all ropes and loose items on deck, RIB made safe for the tow

05.35 – Leave Mallaig, bouncy even at the entrance – 6 persons aboard

Very rough trip out towards Eigg, this is a 60ft boat and we are seeing some green water over the bow which is about 12ft from the water, some roles are killing the fuel feed to the 240 Volt generator

07.50 Rum off Port beam, in the lee things much happier

Between Rum and Canna we see the wreck of the Spanish trawler that has been on Rum for a few years, a wild and remote place, rough again.

09.00 – Canna off Port beam

Decided to check all major items before crossing the Minch so sat in under the North cliffs of Canna and checked engine, gearbox and generators, what a fantastic place

09.10 – Left Canna cliffs – speed 8 Knots



Much rougher once out past the headland of Canna and into the Minch, wind slowly bearing round to the west and seas more on the bow than the port quarter

12.50 – Arrived to the south of Eriskay harbour entrance

With the weather we had not been able to dress the boat and put up flags and bunting for our grand arrival, so we sat close in out of the wind in pretty calm water to set her up

13.35 – began our arrival through the narrow entrance to the harbour, this was totally amazing, most of the Island had turned out to welcome the Last of the Hunters home, people and pipers lined the headland and we had our own piper aboard to join in, there were a few tears shed in the MacKinnon family through this period of the trip, very moving and a fitting welcome to an amazing boat

13.55 – Engine off in Eriskay harbour, the hunter is home

The day continued with many visitors and the priest came down and blessed the boat



The Island had put on a spread in the village hall for the boat coming back and we went along to that driven by Donald's Dad. This event included a history of fishing exhibition and it was as if the whole population was there.

That night we slept in Donald's house on Eriskay, had a

fabulous meal with Donald's parents in the village and visited the Am Politician Pub which conveniently is only 500 yards from Donald's house, shame☺

What an amazing Island this is, great colours, beaches and the rock structures are stunning



### Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August

Big breakfast at Donald's Mum and Dad's house this morning, this was to set us up for a fabulous sail the length of the Minch from Eriskay to Scalpay, Santa Maria 3 sitting in Eriskay would need to be redressed for her visit to Scalpay, her Jasper nameplates and numbers changed over, we are getting good at this

Later away today, tidied Donald's house and only took 1 night's gear back to the boat

Donald's Dad picked us up and ran us up the harbour, he then watched as Santa Maria 3 left the bay, something that in the past he had done many times before

13.40 – Started engine after some levels checked

14.01 – Left Eriskay harbour but left the RIB on the pontoons this trip, running free, exited the harbour only 15ft off the rocks on the Starboard beam, what an amazing place

14.22 – Rudha na Hortaig off the Starboard beam, just to the south of this rock/ island are the rocks that the SS Politician foundered on back in 1941. The rocks she actually hit are just visible breaking at low tide in a swell but there are no markers on them still, there are many rocks around here like this, need to be on your guard and pay attention to the charts and plotters, or be with Donald and Neil, these guys know this place like the back of their hand, amazing stuff.



18.20 – Sound of Harris on Port beam, the scale of the waters up here are amazing, we are actually closer to Skye going in a straight line from Eriskay to Scalpay than we are the Uists, big areas of water.



20.55 - Sat off Scalpay Isle at idle changing over the name boards and numbers in the rain in a gently swell, pretty horrible night.

Picture taken by a Scalpay resident of us coming in in the rain☹. Me in red jacket beside the wheelhouse

21.00 – Entered Scalpay harbour, again all by memory from Neil, Quote “25 years since I’ve been in here” haha

21.15 – Tied up and engine off

21.10 – The pontoons are overrun with people of all ages from 90 – 9 months, amazing sight on such a poor night

The lady who launched her in 1968 was there, the original owner’s wife as he had sadly passed away before Jasper managed back, the last remaining original crew member was there. So many people associated to this boat and Scalpay’s other 15 ring netters from the 60’s☺ Very emotional night

The last of the Hunters is home again, the 3 Ladies that knew this boat so well in the late 60’s and early 70’s



The whole fishing community from all those years ago with ~~Donald~~ and Neil proud men and rightly so.

This momentous night was rounded off in two ways, firstly a typical west highland invitation to the original owners wife’s house for tea and cakes “you’ll be coming up for some tea then”. And yes we did, though I must confess mine ended up looking incredibly like a dram☺

The second way it was momentous was that Donald threw some serious peat on the fire and the front end was like a sauna on our return at 1am, however we all crashed well for the night, what a day.

## Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August

We woke to a flat calm morning in Scalpay harbour, perfect reflections and sun, wonderful. Again we had people down, people that had kept kids off school to come and see Jasper, she has that draw. So many good stories and chats were had, it was indeed a memorable morning. But the time came when we had to leave and head south to Jasper/ Santa Maria 3's new berth in Lochboisdale Marina



15.15 – Engine on – Santa Maria 3 has a fabulous 24 litre straight 8 Gardner 8L3B, on the trip she ran around 800/ 850 Revs, drank 3.2 gallons per hour running

15.25 – Left Scalpay via the north channel under the new Scalpay bridge which was not there when Jasper fished out of here. There were many people standing on the bridge and some great pictures taken as the Last of the Hunters powered out the north channel, fantastic stuff.



15.35 – Passed under the new Scalpay bridge

15.45 – Scalpay light off Starboard beam, turned south for Lochboisdale – 8.8 knots and a fine day in the Minch



16.31 – Course 218 Degrees, 8.8 knots

Nice lift on the bow and great run right down Minch, encountered the MV Hebrides en route to Uig from Lochboisdale

Another fabulous meal was conjured up down below with an amazing steak pie from Angela MacKinnon from the BBC team, the 3 of us were forced to finish the whole thing, was for 6 haha 😊

Had notification that another of Donald's cousins who had not been at Eriskay on Sunday was meeting us at Lochboisdale so that meant that we had to change the name boards and numbers again, this



time in the near dark 2 miles out into the Minch with a 6ft sea on the bow, some salt water was sampled doing this, however we didn't lose the electric driver over the side, now ready to enter her final port of the trip and her new home

22.15 – Entered Lochboisdale Marina and reversed Santa Maria 3 into her new berth

#### THE LAST OF THE HUNTERS IS FINALLY HOME

Many thanks to everyone involved and in particular Donald and Neil MacKinnon



