

## Have a Flying Fifteen - Can Travel - 2015 Regattas and Holidays - Part 1 by John Hassen

After two trips to Europe and six regattas in 2014 my UK based Flying Fifteen, AUS 3845 "Glass Half Full" had been left in a barn near Rugby in the middle of England since October 2014 with only a few free range chooks to keep her company. It was going to be interesting to see what sort of condition she was in when I collected her on 1 July 2015.

In keeping with my track record of planning my overseas trips to a finite degree, only to see things go pair shaped, this trip was no exception with my flight leaving Perth two hours late, meaning I missed my connecting flight to London from Singapore and arrived in London some six hours later than planned after a flight via Zurich. Everything I had planned to do on that first full day was shot to pieces as instead of starting at my travelling at 8.00am it was 2.00pm before I picked up the rented Ford Transit van and drove for two hours to pick up the boat. It was the hottest July day on record in the UK and the van had no air conditioning.

I collected the boat and other than a bit of chook poo on the cover and mast (no less than that deposited by the SoPYC sea gulls) it looked to be in good nick and everything in the plastic boxes inside the boat had remained dry. I dropped the boat off at Pinnell and Bax in Northampton to have the shrouds replaced, a new jib halyard and the mast checked. After such a long and hot day a few beers with the farmer who I rent the barn storage from were required. We were joined at a local pub by Alan Bax for several well deserved cleansers before I crashed for the night.

The next day I collected the boat from P&B and drove to Windermere where on arrival I met up with my old friend Bruce Barnard from Canada who had agreed to crew for me on this trip. Bruce is originally from Australia and used to crew for me on my S80 yacht in Perth about 15 years ago. He has been living in Canada with his wife for the last 12 years and has not sailed for at least that long and never raced dinghies or Flying Fifteens. I was confident he would pick things up quickly and this proved to be the case.

The next day we met up with Steve Goacher from Goacher Sails, collected a set of new sails and then rigged the boat. Steve gave the boat a good going over and checked the set up before heading out for a short sail with me in very light conditions. I certainly appreciated his input and advice. It is obvious why he is a three times World Champion and why I just make up the numbers and organise things!



**Steve Goacher, Bruce Barnard and John Hassen**

After Steve returned to work Bruce and I went out for our first shake down sail together. After packing up the boat we then adjourned for a very enjoyable Friday evening at Royal Windermere Yacht Club. Fortunately the flat we had rented was within a short walking or should I say staggering or stumbling distance from the Club.

The next day we raced in a fleet of nine Flying Fifteens and managed a fourth over the line. On the Sunday we participated in a couple of Flying Fifteen races where we had mixed results in testing and shifting conditions. Whilst the results were not important it was obvious Bruce was getting used to sailing again and I was happy with how we were progressing.



**Royal Windermere Yacht Club**

After packing up the boat after racing on Sunday we adjourned to the Royal Windermere Yacht Club yet again for a few more emergency beers and to thank BIFFA Secretary and RWYC member Keith Jamison for organising our nominations to the races, gate key, land pen and temporary memberships. We had a great time socialising with members of the Club over three days and also appreciated the hospitality bestowed upon us during our visit by Steve and Shelagh Goacher.

On Monday we drove through Kirkstone Pass and then along the edge of Ulswater Lake where I had sailed in 2014. After Ulswater we headed for the motorway and then drove to Scotland. We dropped the boat off at the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club which is about 40 minutes from Glasgow.



**On the road to Scotland**

We then checked into our flat overlooking the Clyde where we spent a pleasant five days being tourists and watching the two tides each day come and go. We did a lot of touring around

On the Friday we shifted the boat to where the boats were being stored and where there was a ramp for launching. We then rigged the boat and thought about going for a sail but after organising more supplies we went and met some true locals at a pub in Helensburgh. After a bit of a sprint swim through and references to "its your shout whisperer and don't be an Aussie wimp and order a half" we got a taxi home.

On the Saturday we shifted from the flat to a cottage right on the Clyde and afterwards went out for a sail. We ended up being the first launch and retrieval of a Flying Fifteen yacht for the RNCYC team who did a great job over the course of the regatta getting over thirty boats in and out each day on a single ramp. After unrigging and changing we completed the registration formalities, adjourned to the RNCYC bar for the first time and then attended the welcome function.

In Scotland they have effectively a zero drink driving regime and as such we were pleasantly surprised to know there was a bus service that stopped outside our cottage and the yacht club. We availed ourselves of the bus service to attend and get back from all social events and this ensured we contributed more than our fair share to the bar takings over the course of the regatta



**Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club**

The regatta proper got underway on the Sunday and the Race Committee managed to get three races in. It was a high quality fleet with racing in difficult conditions with two tides over the day and shifty winds. We were happy to end the first day in 19th position out of 36 starters which included an 11th in one race. Scotland in summer is just marvellous with the temperature on that first day reaching 11C on the course, cloudy with cold winds and rain chucked in for good measure. It is not that miserable in Perth in the middle of Winter! I was just warm enough with my beanie, balaclava, thermals and dry suit. Bruce had borrowed my full length steamer suit and would have froze without it.



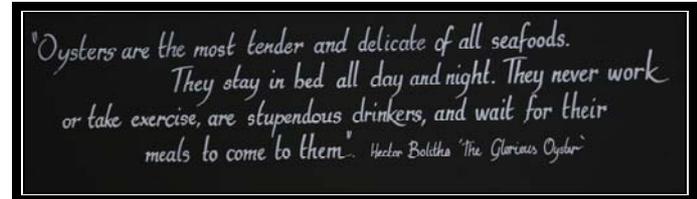
**All rugged up on the Clyde and leaning out as well  
Photograph courtesy of Neill Ross Photography**

The next day the AP went up at 8.30am and there was no wind forecast for the whole day. We had a BBQ in the cold and rain to look forward to that evening after a planned afternoon visit by the Club Patron HRH Princess Ann to present the trophies for day one.

As it turned out Princess Ann had to cancel her visit at the last minute. I have it on good authority she was bitterly disappointed she did not get to meet Bruce and me!

With the prospect of no racing or prospect of having a pint with Princess Ann we headed off to the East side of Loch Lomond for some more touring, walking and an excellent lunch at the Oak Tree pub in Balmana.

On the Tuesday the Race Committee managed to get three races in and we had results of 14, 21 and 14 which after six races left us 17th overall with one drop. That evening a fantastic seafood dinner was provided by Loch Fyne Oysters. The food was organised and served by Loch Fyne Oysters owner David Attwood and his son Fergus. They were also competitors at the regatta and were next to us in the boat park and made us most welcome. It was certainly a meal to remember. As an aside we visited their restaurant one day on our travels before the event and could not help but take a photograph of the following sign which says it all



On the Wednesday morning the final two races were held and whilst we had a disappointing day on the water we ended up 20th overall in the regatta. I was nevertheless happy with the way the boat was going and the fact Bruce and I had such a good time both on and off the water.

At the front end of the fleet Richard Lovering and Matt Alvarado won their first UK Nationals by one point from Steve Goacher and Tim Harper. They were closely followed by Charles Aphorp and Alan Green in third place just ahead of David McKee and Andy Weatherspoon. Congratulations to all these great sailors who I look forward to seeing again in France.

At the conclusion of presentations I had the opportunity to present RNCYC Commodore Charles Darley with a South of Perth Yacht Club burgee and to thank him and Rear Commodore Neill Ross, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, for organising a great event both on and off the water.



**John Hassen and RNCYC Commodore Charles Darley**

After such an enjoyable time Bruce and I are threatening to have another holiday with some sailing chucked in somewhere else in the UK or Europe in the next year or two.