

HBA Royal Canal - Week 3

13 March 2013

Last Updated 07 August 2014

•THE BIG BOATS ARE COMING•

Week 3 update and photos

Week 2 update and photos

Week 1 update and photos

Itinerary for HBA on the Royal Canal 2013

HBA on the Royal, Week 3 – Ballynacargy to McNeads Bridge

Easter Weekend 2013

It was on a freezing cold Thursday evening that a dedicated, or mad (both, I think!), group of boaters met up in Ballinacarrigy Harbour where we had left the HBA fleet the previous week. We headed off to Murtagh's pub where a lovely turf fire greeted us, followed by complimentary food, drinks, music & craic. As we felt we had to give something back to the community, Cathy and Cormac rose to the occasion and took to the mike to give us a few songs!

The Fleet started to depart from Ballinacarrigy Harbour around 9 on Friday morning, with the sun gracing us with its presence. We had a long day ahead of us with 10 locks to reach the Summit level. WI lock keepers got us up in no time and it was beginning to feel like Spring as the day wore on! On arrival to the 26th Lock at Coolnahay we had a welcome reception in the lovely Lock House, where Claire, Pat, Mena and Donna laid on much appreciated homemade soup, scones, bread and Donna's speciality, cheesecake. It was nice to meet these good people again as some of us had the pleasure to visit Coolnahay Harbour last year for the Midsummer Boat Rally, where we were entertained with a dog show (compared by an interesting Germany Lady) followed by BBQ, dancing in the rain and sloe gin. It's definitely one to put in the calendar for this year!

We awoke on Saturday to another fine day and departed to Mullingar where we were greeted by Gabriel from WI. The Heritage boats started arriving in after us. Some had picked up unwanted cargo on their props along the way, 71M a pair of trousers and 76M a plastic bag and wire. 74M developed rudder issues, De Iron Lung came to the rescue and towed them for 5 hours, arriving into Mullingar just as darkness set in. Nothing for it after a long day but to go to the local hostelry, Clark's, where complimentary food and music were again laid on (will begin to expect this of every pub I frequent from now on!) The Royal Canal Community Group came along to meet us and Pdraig entertained us with his magic tricks - I actually had money coming out of my ears!

We were staying put in Mullingar on Sunday, so it was nice to have a day of rest. The sun was gone today, but sure you couldn't expect it 3 days in a row! We spent the day socialising and catching up with friends who came to visit by road. Some of us retired to Keenan's for a few later in the evening.

We set off on Monday at 9. There were sheets of ice at the edge of the canal, no sun and freezing cold, the brief feeling of Spring gone. The wind at the top of the summit would cut you in two. It made me think of the men who worked the canals many years ago, they were tough men to face that all day, every day. We arrived at Mary Lynch's at 12, where we were greeted by the owner, with the last of the Heritage boat boys arriving around 5. 74M was the first M boat to squeeze through Kneadsbridge with newly welded rudder still intact! 4E got through it before them with some expert manoeuvres from Joe and Ben.

Looking forward to next Fri evening in Mary Lynch's!

PW (Erne-a-Living)

Royal locks have length to spare - Dabu arriving at Coolnahay

A Bonnie Easter Bonnet aboard 'The Lung'

Packed tightly in Coolnahay

The lock house at Coolnahay

Saturday morning, Coolnahay - might be a bit tough for sailors on Derg :)

Mullingar had been warned in advance!

Going tandem on the outskirts of Mullingar

Wall-to-wall in Mullingar Harbour

Chairman, Admiral and Welder ...

Fenders up! McNeads bridge is a bit of a squeeze - but no problem to these ladies

At rest after a long weekend - to the east of Mary Lynch's

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