

England/Northumberland Seacamper Tour 2013

August 13th: With the Seacamper 810 securely fastened to its trailer I start at 1400hrs towards Ijmuiden/Amsterdam. A trip of roughly 750 highway-kilometres. At 2100 hrs I choose to take a break in Osnabrück for the night.

August 14th: After a calm ride I arrive at the ferry pier in Ijmuiden at 1400hrs. A long boarding procedure later, it's Anchors away and we are bound for Newcastle, where I arrive next morning at 0900.

August 15th: After unloading from the ferry, I have to first get used to driving in the left side of the road, but finally succeed to find the "Royal Quays Marina" at the River Tyne - and part of the crew for the cruise! We are welcomed at the harbour office by a very kind and helpful team and are shown the way to the travelift.



After being lifted to the water, we find our way to the advised dock. The "Royal Quays Marina" is equipped with all sorts of facilities: Electricity, water, waste disposal, clean and friendly showers and WC-building, fuel-service and a lock that is operated 24/24 hrs.



In order to check that everything is working, we start for a small trip up river, to the city-centre of Newcastle and back to "Royal Quays" during the afternoon.



August 16th: We have completed our stock of sea charts at the local chandlers and the cook has taken care of the provisions for the following days.

At 1600 we leave "Royal Quays" and set to sea with a south-westerly 5 bft.. Our goal is Amble, about 20 NM to the north of Tyne Mouth.

At around 1800 we enter the River Coquet and the harbour of Amble. More or less exactly at low tide. But it's neap and according to the tide gauge we have 1 meter of water above the cill, and that is plenty for our Seacamper. So within minutes we find ourselves moored at the pontoon, and whilst two of the crew make a short inspection of the town, the cook and I prepare dinner.



August 17th:

We leave Amble the next day around 1200hrs. The weather could have been better: Wind 6 bft. from the South with a light easterly component, 6/8 cloud rushing across the sky and a brief shower now and then.

That means there will be some rolling seas coming up along the coast from the south, but apart from this inconvenience, we are bound for a fast ride to Holy Island (Lindisfarne) 20 NM further up north. I hope the natural harbour west of the island will be calm enough to allow a stay over night. As we reach Dunstanburgh Castle some 10 NM to the north, we find ourselves out in the open. The wind has increased a bit to 6 -7 bft and the seas have grown to around 1,5 m. As long as we are going along with them, we can cruise at 14 - 15 kts.

We follow the "Inner Sound" inside the "Farne Islands" and as the coastline is bending to the North-West, we soon find some lee from the southerly seas.

Holy Island is only another 4 NM up ahead.



Just outside Holy Island, the first place the Vikings landed in AD 793

The wind is now a steady 7 bft. and it is hard to see the marking buoys at the entrance against the occasional sunlight.

Finally inside in the bay directly south of Holy Island, we are greeted by a big seal that pops it's head out of the water just 10 meters from the boat.

It is 3 hrs. before low water and the flats West of the island have not yet fallen dry.

That gives the wind the opportunity to whip up a short, but steep and aggressive sea that makes any thought of anchoring impossible. Since the weather forecast has no ameliorations in sight, we reluctantly decide to leave for the more sheltered harbour in Berwick, another 10 NM further up the coast. We are accompanied by strong winds and a few heavy rain Squalls that diminish the visibility to almost zero. But there are almost no seas here in lee of the north-east coast and the rest of the crew enjoy a short nap before the landing.



Safely moored in the small, but calm harbour of Berwick.



The "Berwick old Bridge"(1620) over the River Tweed at low tide.

Berwick is a charming town with a turbulent history, situated more or less directly on the frontier between England and Scotland. It has good fishing grounds, and thus we

set off the next morning to try our luck with the fishing rod together with good friends who have come up from Newcastle. Half an hour after we lowered the hooks into the water for the first time, we found ourselves with 13 shining Mackerels - enough food for the rest of the day!



Feeding the seagulls the left-overs.

After a delicious Mackerel-late-lunch in good company, we left Berwick, and our guests, heading south for Newcastle.



"Berwick goodbye!"

A 50 NM journey in fresh (6 bft.), westerly winds and an almost clear sky with a few scattered clouds in the early evening light.

Again, we passed Holy Island, Farne Islands and enjoyed the "Scenic Tour" along the historic Northumberland coast with one castle or castle-ruin after the other: Bamburgh Castle, Dunstanburgh, Warkworth - to name a few.



Bamburgh Castle to starboard. Cruising at 15 kts.



Dunstanburgh ruin.

After having passed Dunstanburgh, we were tempted by the beautiful evening to take a closer look at the tiny anchorage/harbour at Craster. It was one hour before LW,

but there was still some water left inside the piers. An idyllic place where we could have spent a night if we'd had the time.



Craster

Soon out of the harbour again, we went down the coast with 15 kts.



Time for a pipe of tobacco, enjoying the fine weather and the beautiful coastline.

- keeping close to the shore in order to minimise the swell. Past Coquet Island



The crew relaxes during the crossing.

- and Blyth, finally reaching Whitley Bay just north of the entrance of the Tyne River and Newcastle at 2030 hrs.

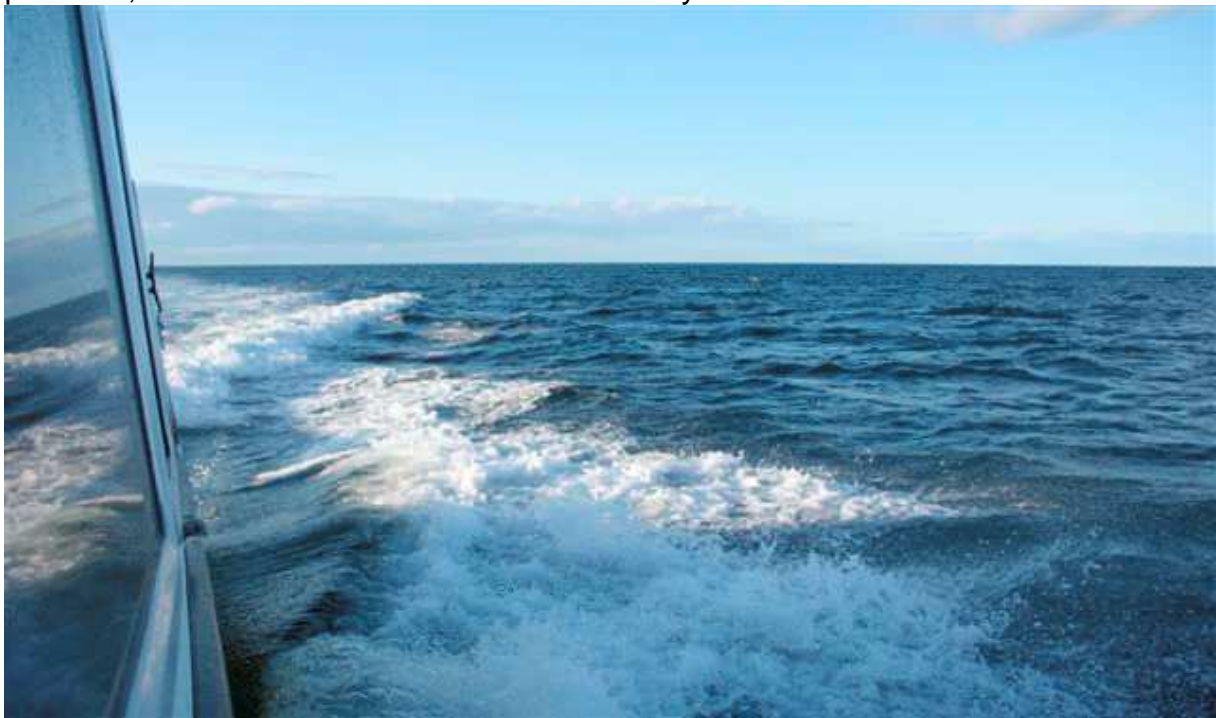


The helmsman and the low evening sun.

August 19th:

We leave the "Royal Quays Marina" early in the afternoon, this time heading south along the coast. We pass Lizard Point, and about halfway to Hartlepool, we stop over for a delicious lunch in the outer basin of the Seaham Harbour. Some children are bathing from the beach - It looks pretty cold, but we are warm and well, seated around the large dining table where considerable quantities of fresh Tuna and cold Riesling are being served.

Later in the afternoon, the voyage continues towards the south. We keep very close to the coast line to get the most of the beautiful landscape. The wind is westerly and the sea is completely calm here, 500 m from land. When I glance over my shoulder to port side, the North Sea seems calm and friendly.



Early evening over the North Sea.

As we approach Hartlepool Bay from the north, a busy fisherman welcomes us from his small vessel.



Just north of Hartlepool. The hills at Whitby, further to the south-east, are visible in the distance.

After being locked into the harbour basin at Hartlepool, for a split of a second we feel transferred back to ancient times of the marine history. The silhouette of the proud frigate "Trincomalee" still is an impressive appearance!

The Trincomalee was built in India in 1818 and served the Royal Navy until 1897. Since 2002 the ship lies in Hartlepool. She is beautifully restored and serves as a maritime museum.





The "Trincomalee"

We moored at one of the pontoons in the marina, and had a fine dinner in one of the charming restaurants and the quay-side. The Hartlepool Marina has all facilities: Electricity, water, showers etc.



Our "MPV" in Hartlepool. The Seacamper 810 served us well during the hole journey.

The day after, we went back to Newcastle and the "Royal Quays Marina". An excursion to Hadrian's Wall on August 21st marked the end of our Northumberland adventure. Hadrian's Wall was established by the Romans between AD 122 -128 as a defence against the Scottish and Irish tribes.



The Hadrian wall. Almost 2000 years old!

The Seacamper 810 was lifted out of the water at "Royal Quays" and gently placed on it's trailer. After wrapping the boat up and lashing all loose ends down, the "train" was ready for the ferry-trip back to Ijmuiden /Amsterdam and on to Berlin. A fine and interesting cruise it was! Some 200 NM all in all, and many beautiful impressions of people and country. A big "thank you" to ship and crew!

