

Saorsa II — 2010 Cruise

Part 001

2010-01-30 15:04 EST (20:04 Z)

On board this afternoon. Even out on the hard within a dim and dank building, she is mine and here for me. Untidy and strewn with the paraphernalia of a yacht out of commission, She is beautiful still.

My feet are perched on the boom which occupies the port side of the saloon and intrudes on the galley. Cold here, only 14° C, but a welcoming warmth burns inside..

Today, I tidied up the installation of the new chart plotter and the AIS transponder. The latter still must be connected to its antennae, both BPS and VHF. This will happen when the antenna mast is installed. Hopefully, both will be useful and contribute to the safety of my sweet Mistress.

Much remains to be done, but enough for today. She will be here for me tomorrow, the next day, and beyond. So long as I remain faithful to Her, She will be constant and unwavering. So long as I care for and believe in Her, She will be my close friend and stalwart companion.

This coming year, we will be tested as never before. The anticipation is delicious.

2010-05-16 17:45 EDT (21:45Z)

Oh my, where to begin? The past eight weeks have been quite something. Big changes in my life. This looks to be a year of change.

It's been a while since I put pencil to paper. Odd really, the past little bit I haven't felt at all like writing. Now that the cruise has started, the urge is returning slowly.

We are on a beam reach in gentle SW winds steering 135°T and a few miles NW of Scotch Bonnet light. Sailing earlier today was idyllic. We left Cobourg about 09:00 and soon a lovely onshore breeze filled in; we were moving along very nicely under all plain sail bound for Brighton and the Murray Canal.

We had the opportunity to prove the new AIS transponder is working when we crossed paths with the *James Norris*. She was headed for the cement plant at Ogden Point. The AIS system indicated a collision course. We hove to for a bit then passed astern of him. During our R/T exchange, the watch keeper said we were showing up clearly on his AIS display.

We proceeded on our way and arrived at Brighton Bridge to find it firmly closed. Retracing our path, we left Brighton Bay and headed for the outside route around Prince Edward County. We'll sail another 65 miles before we get to Kingston.

Yesterday, we left Whitby for Cobourg. A decent sail but cold with and overcast sky. After trying to read a bit while underway, I began to feel queasy. I wasn't sick, but close. Feeling stayed with me for the rest of the day.

We docked at Cobourg in Brendan's slip and had an animated chat with the marina staff about slip rental fees and so forth.

2010-05-19 14:20 EDT (18:20Z)

I've been a little remiss in journal entries. For some reason, just haven't felt the urge for an outpouring of my thoughts. Perhaps I haven't had any.

We left Cobourg without incident and headed for what we thought would be a simple inside passage via the Bay of Quinte to Kingston. On arriving at Brighton Bridge, we discovered it to be firmly shut and unmanned. As it happens, we were a week early. The canal and bridges would not be open until May 21.

We turned around and headed out of Brighton Bay. With all plain sail set, Myra went below to rest and I took the first watch. I was treated to an idyllic evening sail in gentle NW breezes. Sadly, the wind faded as we rounded Scotch Bonnet light, so I furled sails and started the engine.

As we approached Presqu'ile Point, Myra came on watch. After exchange of duties, I went below and slept fitfully.

Shortly before mid-night, I dressed and went on deck to stand my watch. I was greeted by a clear cold night and a confusing array of lights to the NE. The farm of wind turbines on Wolfe Island presents a multitude of aircraft obstruction lights which mask the lights of the navigational aids. A significant hazard to mariners has been created.

Standing watch from mid-night to 04:00, i.e., the Middle Watch, was cold and tiring. About 02:30, a little more than half way through my watch, I was very cold and tired. Air temperature about 7°C, a bit of wind, tricky pilotage through rocks and shoals, mind clouded with fatigue.

Myra came on watch and I was able to get about a half hour below before we arrived in Kingston. All hands on deck for entering harbour. I took the wheel and we found our way into Portsmouth Olympic Harbour in Kingston about an hour before dawn.

Finding a vacant slip and docking my wee ship in the dark was a bit difficult, but we managed fine.

As soon as she was secure, both Myra and I fell into our berths and slept soundly for five hours.

2010-05-20 17:45 EDT (21:45 Z)

We're here at Brockville Yacht Club enjoying a very relaxed stay. The club is full of friendly helpful folk with a very high proportion of serious sailors amongst them. One boat from the club, also a Niagara 35, has circumnavigated the globe with the assistance of several club members.

A few of the members have taken their boats south, some have done the same trip which I am just starting. As odd as it may seem, this now feels like the beginning of the cruise.

Tomorrow, we're up early and head downstream to our first lock on the St. Lawrence. Even now, I feel my Mistress grow restless after a couple of days at a dock. She wants to be on her way.

2010-05-21 16:40 EDT (20:40 Z)

Today, we made our passage from Brockville to Morrisburg. In transit, we passed through the first of the Seaway locks we will encounter.

The Iroquois lock is something of a non-event. Because the lock serves only as a control point for river flow, the drop is very small. On our transit, it was about six inches.

Nonetheless, it was a good warm up for Myra who had never had an opportunity to transit a lock. The next few will be more significant with drops in the order of forty feet.

The weather has been fine, although not at all useful for sailing. The forecast continues to say "Wind light" for the next few days. The engine is getting a work out.

On the good side, it has been mostly sunny. Although temperatures on land are comfortably warm, we find that out on the water we are still quite chilly. We're wearing multiple layers. My warm floater coat has been very useful.

Last night, at Brockville Yacht Club, they had some type of start of season event. It was very well attended and we were made to feel very welcome. The club has a preponderance of serious sailors. It was quite pleasant to be in their company.

We continue to find the AIS useful. Although freighter traffic has been light, the AIS gives us ample advance warning of their presence as well as range, bearing, course, distance, etc.

Just now, we're docked at Chrysler Marina a little east of Morrisburg and close by Upper Canada Village. Tomorrow, we'll take a run over to the village and see the sights.

Our plan is to depart Sunday morning and transit the two U.S. locks of the Seaway.