

Dear Richard,

I have just spent a most enjoyable week with my wife, Vanessa, and an aunt (82 years young) on Elma Lee. It was the first time that we have been able to sail the boat and try out the Freewing rig. I was a little apprehensive about being able to manage such a large and heavy displacement boat with such a light crew. However, we were able to have a most enjoyable sail on Loch Ness, beating towards Fort Augustus and running-gosh what a trip, back towards Inverness, the winds were investing up to force 5 or 6.

The rig performed as well as we had been advised and made handling the boat a joy. I don't think that we would have been able to cope with the prevailing weather conditions as easily on a conventionally rigged vessel, and I think that the instructions from the top, ie Vanessa, would have been two motor!!

The rig really came into its own whilst we were running back towards Inverness when, due to the failure of a piece of deck hardware, we were forced into dropping all sails during one of the strongest squalls that day. Usually this operation would be impossible while running and would mean turning the boat into the wind with all the drama associated with that manoeuvre with full sale set! However, by just releasing the main sheet the wind rotated the mast and boom to leave the rig head to wind while the boat was still running down wind! Furling the jib and then dropping the main was accomplished easily and when completed, the mast and boom were rotated by hand to stow position - marvellous. The rig gives confidence in sailing the boat light handed in conditions that would normally call for an experienced heavyweight crew, which means the we will be able to enjoy many happy hours cruising. Thank you!

Kind regards,

Mike O'Toole