

ECW16: Great Commodore's week's sailing

ast Coast Week 16 (ECW16) was held on the Tay in early July this year. Although turnout was down all that participated had a hard but great week's racing.

FCYC yacht SmiJ came in 3rd overall Division 1. Congratulations to Auberge of Port Edgar who won Division 2 edging Brief Encounter of Dalgety Bay into second place. Alastair Dickson and crew of Auberge were well deserved overall Winners of ECW16! An extremely warm welcome was extended to all competitors by the Royal Tay Yacht Club and as usual their hospitality was second to none.

Let us try to come up to their standard when ECW17 comes to Granton next year!



Edinburgh Gin Regatta took place weekend 16-17th July in very windy conditions. FCYC was well represented by Zero Proof, SmiJ and Misty Blue with a lot of close racing. Misty Blue prevailed in wild conditions to be clear overall winner of Division 3 and was awarded the Britannia Trophy for best yacht overall. Congratulations to Brian and Eddie! Thanks also to Howard Thompson, John Anderson and John Mclaren who represented FCYC on the Organising Committee who put in a lot of work to build another fun and successful event.

Finally, a big thank you to Paul Lough and Midnight Caller who have now earned the title of best hospitality boat on the Forth!







It is hard to believe we are now already halfway through the season, but so far so good. The weather has been relatively kind this year and we have managed to see most of our programmed events through to date. Let us hope it continues that way to the end of the season.

I have recently circulated Commodore's Notes to members summarising our season so far which are also available on our website so I won't repeat them

Briefly, however since I published my July Notes. Brian and Eddie have survived a lumpy passage across the Bay of Biscay and left lain Gray on Aros More to enjoy the summer in sunny Spain. Our ex-Commodore, Paul Taylor and Ian Dawson are on passage from Hawaii to Seattle. Martin and Pam have just returned from a trip to the West on Silver Lining.

Your Commodore and the crew of SmiJ have been on holiday on the Tay, dolphin spotting and looking for Oor Wullie! Many more stories to be told about these adventures later.

Meantime enjoy this edition of Fairwind!

Frank Martin, Commodore

NEWHAVEN COASTAL ROWERS

It has been a fine season so far for the Newhaven Coastal Rowing Club (NCRC). Many rows have been posted and very few called off, normally due to poor weather and sea state. Ports of call have included Cramond (for coffee and ice cream), Inchmickery and Inchcolm. A planned trip to Aberdour only got as far as Inchcolm due to heavy seas and tidal constraints.

Club membership is growing fast, with a total (at time of writing) of twenty new members having joined this year. Members of Forth Corinthians who are not already members of NCRC are more than welcome to have a go at rowing, and are invited to come for a couple of trial rows (only £2 per row) before deciding whether or not to join. It's a good way of getting out on the water on windless days or out of season when your boat is stuck up in the yard.

The Forth Midsummer Challenge was a great success again this year, and the club would like to thank all of those who worked tirelessly and uncomplainingly to organise and run the event, particularly the indefatigable Shannon Tofts, who has also written an article about it, pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *Fairwind*.

TRINITY SEA CADETS

Although the Unit has been active since last Fairwind many activities took place away from Granton. Among a number of successes the Trinity Mixed Juniors team in the two person yole event won at the Northern Area regatta at Greenock and will travel to the Excel Centre in London for the National Regattas in September. We will be entering a team in the Area Boathandling Regatta in August.

The planned summer camp had to be cancelled due to problems at the Weymouth facility. However, we have taken advantage of other opportunities and ten cadets attended training at Derwenthaugh Newcastle, gaining powerboat and sliding-seat rowing qualifications.

Although we have sailed less at Granton than we intended due to both the weather and a lack of sufficient instructors, sailing has taken place at Port Edgar and elsewhere. Laura Wharton was presented with her leadership medal by Captain Phil Russell, Captain of the Sea Cadets and Director of Operations. The Unit also celebrated 160 years of the Sea Cadets with a beach barbecue at Port Laing. Unit members are looking forward to their week on the TS Jack Petchey as they cruise the south coast.

Finally, one of our cadets has been invited by the army to attend a piping course in Inverness.

SOUTHWARDS



s many Corinthians will know Aros More has ventured far more East, North and West in recent years and has had many a wet and windy day interspersed with very occasional sunshine. Last year in particular was very cold and wet on the West Coast which led to the decision to go in search of the sun.

A rough plan was hatched to head off on Sunday 15th May directly from Eyemouth where I had over wintered. The date duly arrived and Eddie Myatt and my ex-colleague and friend Colin



Iain GrayAros More

headed off with the intention of an overnight to Whitby. Conditions were flat calm and it became a diesel burning night. Arriving early for the Whitby Bridge—and the crew fresh as daisies—we pressed on for another night to make the most of the easy conditions. We got into Lowestoft around lunchtime on the Tuesday.

A good berth in the Royal Norfolk YC Marina and fine dining at Wetherspoons had the batteries fully charged again. Next day we visited a few museums and had a particularly good visit round an old sidewinder trawler where the engineer started the old five-cylinder engine for us. It sounded fantastic, full power of 500hp at 300rpm.

We planned to head off in the evening for an overnight to Dover and did so in settled weather. The route across the Thames estuary proved uncomplicated and not nearly as busy as the Humber had been. Here's a toast to chart plotters and AIS!

With fair tides we rocketed down past Ramsgate, Margate and into the very well-managed Dover Harbour. Regrettably no blue skies over Dover that day! Eddie had to get home so made for the railway station and back up the road. Thanks Eddie you did a great job! Colin and I explored a bit and stocked up on shopping etc. I'm trying to be positive about Dover but in truth it was disappointing with an air of maybe having been good fifty years ago. It was, though, a good harbour with nice helpful staff.

The plan was to cross to the French side before heading west so despite a good twenty knots of westerly wind we left to catch the end of the east-going spring tide, ensuring we finished with a fair tide to take us the final ten miles west to Boulogne. It's a bit intimidating to cross the channel as it certainly is busy. We were fortunate and managed to sail straight over without any alterations and never very close to any ships.

It was good to get 'foreign' and we enjoyed some fine weather in Boulogne. Always conscious of the need to head west we had a period of east winds so set off for a fifty-mile trip to Dieppe which was very easy with a following wind and mostly fair tide. Tides in northern France are huge with springs giving a ten metre range. The marina gangways are a real workout at low tide!

We stayed overnight in Dieppe, next day taking in the best the town has to offer. With continuing easterlies it was again best to take advantage of them and

... for a change!





head west to Cherbourg over a hundred miles away.

We had to leave to time arrival with fair tide at Cape Barfleur which can have eight knots of tide. This meant leaving at 8pm and ensured we did the last ten miles at over ten knots over ground.

We visited some excellent war museums before making the easy hop to the Channel Islands. A night in quiet Alderney then down to Guernsey and we locked into St Peter Port marina. Colin had now been aboard for two weeks and had proved to be a great help—and also good in the galley!

Eddie North and Brian Penicuik arrived for the trip south so after a tour round the island we headed toward the end of the

Channel about a hundred miles away. This was another windless night but quite pleasant and we arrived at Aber Wrac'h, a nice wee town about ten miles from the Sound of Ouessant. We did country walks, grande beers and tasty meals before heading off for a fair tide to take us 'roond the corner'! We were duly flushed from the channel and into North Biscay in jig time and picked up a mooring before dark.

The next and last tidal gate was the Raz de Sein.

We managed a lunch stop at the Ile de Sein to await the tide. Very bonny isles they were too. Then, having scooted through the Raz, we were now in proper Biscay and waited for the heatwave! In fairness we had our share of warm weather as we made day sails to Adierne, Isles de Glenan, Lorient, Morhiban, Ile de Hoat, Ile de Yeu, Ile de Re and finally La Rochelle in the 5000 berth marina. We enjoyed a variety of visits, culture, adventures which left a very positive image of France with me.

After three nights in dock waiting for the perfect forecast we had to leave for sunny Spain, a trip of 180 miles to Bilbao. We left early in the morning to ensure arriving in daylight and only one night at sea. There was no wind for a long way then Eddie got us up saying he thought we needed a reef. He was bang on, so we put two in and continued motor sailing with mizzen and two reefs.

I promised the crew San Miguels in Spain that night so on we went. We had wind up to 38 knots forward of the beam with a nasty sea which made life very uncomfortable. With 25 miles to go, the rocker cover gasket was leaking oil into the bilge. We sailed on while a piece of epoxy putty sealed the hole. We made landfall in Bermeo about twenty miles east of Bilboa and we did indeed drink beer that night. Another toast to reliable engines and autopilots! We went along to Bilbao next day where we tied up in a lovely yacht club and enjoyed the city tour and some very hot weather before Eddie and Brian left for home.

Thanks to both of them. They were—as usual—reliable troopers who only need a regular supply of beer to keep smiling! I flew home for my son's stag night and returned to sail another hundred miles west with some of my ex-workmates. We



WIDSUMMER

The 18th June 2016 saw the third running of the Forth Midsummer Challenge at the home of Forth Corinthian Yacht Club, Granton Harbour.

The event began four years ago when I was new to the Forth Corinthian Yacht Club. As well as being one of the builders of the Newhaven Coastal Rowers skiff, *The Wee Michael*, I own a Drascombe Lugger, *Ratty*. Having a foot in both camps I felt there was good scope to hold an event encompassing both clubs in a spirit of fun and simple competition.

I spent some time mulling the idea over and then enrolled a couple of members from both clubs to talk over the concept and come up with some structure and a race name. It took a while to mix up the ideas and come to a format that was achievable as the rowers' first regatta.

There is already a very busy and



Shannon Tofts *Ratty*

extensive list of skiff regattas run around the country and we, as a six-year-old club, had yet to run one. Most are straight sprint races with a mix of crew ages and sexes.

There was a slow moving desire to change this standard format and our race was to be a first. Our local teams from South Queensferry to Dunbar and skiffs from St Andrews, Wormit and Anstruther came out to support us and continue to do so. It is perhaps worth pointing out that there is a very strong skiff community: we are boat nine of well over 100 St Ayles skiffs around the world. Skiff clubs support and socialise together and there is a strong network of friends and happy rivalry amongst them all.

The concept of teaming up a yacht, skiff and runner is still one of a kind. It brings the two clubs together in a mix of good natured sailing and rowing. First the yachts take a skiff club's runner from Granton Harbour to Newhaven Harbour, from where the runner then runs back to their waiting skiff at Granton. The skiff rows a set course, drops the runner back at Granton whereupon he or she runs back to their waiting yacht at Newhaven for a final sailing leg back to Granton. There is then one more rowing leg, the





CHALLENGE







runner being the 'baton' in what is in effect an epic relay race.

Sounds exhausting? Originally the race was a set of legs sailing and rowing between Granton and Newhaven Harbours directly. Our first race started with a modest four skiffs but even the ensuing excitement of four yachts and four skiffs manoeuvring around Newhaven Harbour with oars very close to a lot of expensive GRP gave this umpire a few moments of excitement I did not need again.

While the sight of the yachts having their own little 'race' in the two knots harbour entrance zone was fun to watch—who needs race instructions anyway?—I chose to look the other way and let them have their gentleman's race. The following year we changed to a rowing course around the buovs. Participation jumped to nine skiffs and yachts. This proved a lot easier to organise. We also introduced a final rolling start for the skiffs' last leg; this gave the skiffs a chance to make up ground as the yacht handicaps slowly unfolded. It worked a treat as a skiff running sixth in the first leg went on to come second overall. This new format also gave spectators something to see from the quayside.

This year we had nine skiffs and yachts again. This could have been eleven skiffs had we had a few more people to man yachts and fill places in skiffs.

The day started in the grey cloudy light of mid-summer. My fingers were firmly crossed as the first leg began. Not only had the annual issue of finding a rescue RIB at the very last minute been solved but I just wanted everyone to have fun sailing, rowing and running.

But when the race starts it has a mind of its own. All the meetings, lists, shopping, yard prep, bunting placement and baking had been done by a hardy group of helpers but nothing can stop this race when in motion. Finally the sun came out, yachties seemed to be revelling in the good wind, the handicap seemed to be working, even *Eastie Beastie* was making ground!

On the quayside music filled the air courtesy of some friends from Trinity Academy and the catering team were in full production with great burgers,

NLB: An understated







ost of us take aids to navigation for granted—they are charted, they are generally in position and functional, and we occasionally hear radio warnings regarding temporary failures. Even more occasionally, we may see one of the vessels which service buoys and lighthouses.

This understated success story is the result of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, which defines a hierarchy of general and local lighthouse authorities to maintain all aids to navigation in the UK. Local aids are provided by a myriad of harbour authorities, marina operators, utility companies, aquaculture operators and other bodies; however these are all under the supervision of the relevant General Lighthouse Authority to ensure appropriate marking to international standards.

The General Lighthouse Authority for Scottish and Manx waters is the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB), based in Edinburgh but with its marine operating base in Oban. In addition to the statutory role of supervision of other authorities, NLB also directly provides the more

significant aids to navigation outside port limits, including famous lighthouses such as Bell Rock, Muckle Flugga, Flannan Isles, Skerryvore and Dubh Artach.

Within the Forth, NLB has gradually handed responsibility for aids to navigation (AtoN) to Forth Ports, including buoyage and the lights at Inchcolm, Oxcars, Inchkeith, Fidra and Elie Ness. The lights at Fife Ness, Isle of May and Bass Rock remain with NLB; in recent years Fife Ness has been reengineered with an LED light, and Isle of May has just been converted from diesel-

success story



electric to solar-electric power supplies.

NLB was established in 1786, with a remit to construct lights at Kinnaird Head, North Ronaldsay, Eilean Glas and Mull of Kintyre. In the intervening years the role of the Board has evolved to cope with changing shipping patterns and technology. Today, the direct provision role covers more than 200 lights, together with 167 buoys, 29 racon stations, 23 unlit beacons, 49 AIS AtoN stations (including three virtual) and four Differential GPS stations. NLB has discontinued all its fog signals, although a few are still provided by ports, and all oil and gas platforms are fitted with them.

The majority of the fixed aids are monitored on a continuous basis from the Board's Edinburgh headquarters, and all are maintained by technical teams located in Edinburgh, Oban, Kirkwall, Scalloway and Inverness. The floating aids are inspected on an annual basis by the Board's vessels *Pharos* and *Pole Star*, and are refurbished at the buoy workshop in Oban.

Pharos was built in 2000 at Fergusons in Port Glasgow. She is classed as a Medium Aids to Navigation Tender, and concentrates primarily on buoy work for NLB, for local authorities under contract, and for Trinity House and the Commissioners of Irish Lights as part of a ship-sharing agreement between the three General Lighthouse Authorities.

Pole Star was completed in 2007 by

Remontowa in Gdansk. At 3569 tonnes, she is the largest vessel to ever serve with NLB. As well as buoywork she is fitted with a helicopter deck to facilitate the storing of lighthouses with diesel fuel and water, and to transfer materials and personnel for lighthouse construction and refurbishment projects.

Both vessels are designed in the modern style, with a forward bridge and a large working deck aft. Both are driven by diesel-electric propulsion systems



Peter Douglas *Indulgence*

and can be manoeuvred precisely by Dynamic Positioning systems, which significantly improves their capability and work rate.

The Board's statutory roles of supervision and management of all Aids to Navigation in their area of jurisdiction are fulfilled by a combination of regular seaward inspection, including all offshore oil and gas installations, and by auditing local lighthouse authorities against the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act and the Port Marine Safety Code. The Board is keenly aware of the hazards surrounding fish farms, and has an ongoing programme of inspection and education of aquaculture operators with regard to marking and lighting issues. The Board is also consulted by the Scottish Government with regard to all applications for developments in Scottish waters, as a statutory consultee in the Marine Licence process.

NLB welcomes feedback from all users regarding the provision of aids to navigation in their waters. The Board consults frequently on matters of national and local significance, and enjoys a good working relationship with RYA Scotland. NLB reviews its provision of aids to navigation continuously, and also undertakes a formal review of all aids to navigation on a five-annual basis. The last such review was published in 2015, and is available on our website www.nlb. org.uk. Any contributions to the review process are welcomed and should be addressed to navigation@nlb.org.uk in the first instance.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Looking through early editions of what was to become *Fairwind*, it is interesting to note that the problems that sometimes cause controversy now are exactly the same problems which were causing controversy forty years ago.

Fairwind was first published in May 1974 and in that edition there were several complaints. 'Congestion is already starting to appear in the yard,' we read. 'Would members please bear in mind that if dinghies etc are stowed tidily more can be accommodated ...' Or: 'Despite previous notes on this subject members are still not checking their mooring gear nor adjusting same at high water.' La plus ça change la plus c'est la même chose, as the French say.

There was also concern about members being dissatisfied but keeping their complaints among themselves. 'There has been a practice of members muttering complaints around the clubhouse,' we read, but 'it is only by lodging a complaint that a remedy can be effected and it is hoped that if a complaint is not worth lodging it is not worth griping about.'

On a positive note, though, there was plenty going on to keep club members amused when not sailing. 'On the last Friday of the month music is provided to enable us to hold the "Monthly Hop" and 'Each Saturday and Sunday night the Social Committee organise a raffle ... prizes will be varied to include such items as Radios, Lighters, Coffee Tables etc.' Heavens above!

Increased turn-out for sailing events



Eddie Myatt, 'Evening Star'

ell Corinthians, we appear to be having a better season this year than last—all bar one of our events have been successfully staged. The weather has been kind on race days. Member turn-out on planned events is increased from last season and we have had a number of very enjoyable social sailing days from cruises in company to our Midsummer Challenge, which in particular was a roaring success.

Many of our members, myself included, have had some sailing out of the Forth Estuary. Iain Gray has taken *Aros More* to warmer climes for the summer at least. Iain will be producing some reports of his trip so I will not steal his thunder here but hopefully he will tell a few tales at one of our social events later in the year. For a full report on his trip so far see pages 2 and 3 of this issue

Frank Martin took *SmiJ* up to Dundee for the racing in the Tay during East Coast Week. A bit like the Stig on television's Top Gear, he can show a turn of speed and some say that he took some prizes.

Once again Pam Strachan and Martin Palmer went west with Silver Lining.



This year they made it through the canal without medical assistance and having read some of their Facebook entries appear to have had a very enjoyable few weeks up and down the west coast—though I have it on good authority that Pam did abandon ship on one occasion, taking a room in a hotel in Kyle of Lochalsh. Perhaps she will explain in due course?

At time of writing, I believe that two of our members are sailing the Pacific from Tahiti to the west coast of the USA. I wish Paul Taylor and Ian Dawson a safe crossing and look forward to hearing of their exploits. I think it might be safe to say they take the prize for the most adventurous sail of the season.

Now for those of you who have had a bit less time out on the water for whatever reason, I hope that the remainder of the season will see you more successful in getting out there. We have a couple of cruises in company still to come. Willy Barr warrants some thanks for the success of the previous cruises. He has worked some magic and had a good turnout while providing a shepherding service.

To all of you who have contributed to the race programme, taking part, acting as officials, and just being there for others, many thanks. I hope to see you all out on the water.

Southwards ... for a change, continued

had a mix of weather with light winds and a lumpy swell all week. Susan arrived on 6th July and we spent a couple of days in Gijon where we hired a car to explore the Picos de Europa, a fantastic mountain range I hadn't even known existed. We're now heading slowly west to La Coruna taking in Celtic festivals at Ortiguera and flying home early August.

There were a few challenges along the way—the big tides of France and the big swells of northern Spain, for example—but by following Ian Helliwell's common practice of the prudent seaman, we are still in one piece. Thanks to everyone who came along for their enthusiasm and company.

Forth Midsummer Challenge, continued

sausage rolls, home-made soups and vegan chili by the pot load was going down brilliantly.

The spectators also had fun, with a good view of the action, banter and vocal support given to every team. I am proud of the atmosphere created, smiles all round and friends together having fun in boats.

The rowers race hard and rowing at full race speed over the course we set is truly exhausting, but they never give up even when a hundred metres behind. That determination with a smile is infectious.

The after-race party in the yard was fantastic, everyone mixing together in the summer sun, bunting flying, food being munched and bottles opened.

The strong crew from Anstruther won in the end, with Newhaven second courtesy of hard rowing, a brilliant performance by our runner Jude and a great sail by Willy Barr in *Malin*.

The feedback has been the same over the three years, with comments such as 'great event run with real friendliness', 'warm and friendly atmosphere', 'shows what good co-operation between clubs can provide', 'so helpful and friendly'.

My thanks go to all those who helped in whatever way they did. Every contribution goes a big way in making the event the success that it is.

STOP PRESS

Though we are still only half-way through the sailing season a date for lift-out has already been set: 22nd October or, if the weather gets in the way, 29th October. Put the date in your diary. As usual refreshments in the form of tea, coffee, bacon rolls etc will be provided in the Bell Block. Members are reminded that hard hats must be worn at all times while the crane is in the yard.