

FAIRWIND

Autumn / Winter 2021/22

Forth Corinthian Yacht Club

MAKE SURE YOU'RE SECURELY MOORED!

Storm Arwen took its toll on two of the boats moored in the harbour this winter, the Granton log boat and a two-masted wooden yacht that had recently arrived and was in transit to Charlestown.

The iron age log boat replica was carved from a log of Douglas fir donated by the Forestry Commission by a team of dozens of volunteers based in the garden of the Granton Hub. It was the result of a programme of experimental archaeology led by Corinthian Romain Viguier, and was based on the Loch Arthur log boat kept at the National Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street. The plan was to prove that the Forth could be crossed on this kind of boat.

It was launched to great excitement last summer and moored to a Corinthian buoy near the south slip. Unfortunately,

when Storm Arwen blew up it came free and was washed up on the harbour beach, with a large chunk broken out of one side. At time of writing it is languishing at the top of the public slipway.

A similar fate befell the 40-foot wooden yacht *Runagate*, which was temporarily rafted up against the dredger in the West Harbour. Formerly owned by author Nevil Shute, it was on its way from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Charlestown when Storm Arwen hit, blowing it into the corner of the harbour, from where it was rescued by an obliging band of Corinthians, who tied it to the south wall. The owner then moved it closer to a set of ladders but it has now taken on water and is sitting, canted over at forty-five degrees, on the bottom. Let's hope it can still be rescued.



Commodore's BRIEFING



Hello Corinthians, the AGM in October brought some changes to our Council. Eddie Myatt stood down as Vice Commodore and Sailing Secretary, Libby Gunn

steps aside as Treasurer but remains on the council in the Finance team, Niall Sinclair stood down as Pontoon Manager but remains a council member with Peter Sherlock also leaving the Council after many years of sterling service.

The remainder of the Council stay in post for another year with Peter Douglas elected as Vice Commodore, Howard Thomson Sailing Secretary, Colin Dunnett as Treasurer and Dougal Burnett as Pontoon Manager. Howard the newly elected sailing secretary will be busy in the coming weeks putting together the Sailing Calendar for 2022 and welcomes any input and suggestions from the membership as to what we would prefer with respect to racing and sailing activities.

Procedures and regulations were also worked on during the winter months to keep the club up to date with the ever changing and challenging world we live in. Please look at the 'Club Matters' section on the web pages for information, changes and developments. We have a new post, Safety Officer, being undertaken by Tom Lochrie with regulations and procedures being

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NEWHAVEN COASTAL ROWERS

After a very long wait, rowing re-started in the middle of May. It was a joy to be back on the water. Places on rows were booked up quickly, and it was good to see our fellow crew members. We had hoped to attend Ullapool regatta but like most rowing events over the summer, it was postponed until 2022.

One event which did go ahead was Rowaround Scotland. This was completed virtually in 2020 to celebrate 10 years of Scottish Coastal rowing. And in 2021 we were part of the real event, collecting the baton from South Queensferry CRC and passing it on at Portobello. Fortunately conditions on both of these days were very calm, and we managed to pass the baton from one skiff to another at sea. We were treated to a tune on the chanter as the baton was being handed over by Donal from South Queensferry, and we had arranged for a sea shanty to be sung on the pontoon as a welcome to them at Granton.

We had built up a huge waiting list of folk wishing to come and try coastal rowing, and so when circumstances allowed we had several sessions for prospective new members. We still have people on a waiting list, but have decided we need to close the list for now. But we would make an exception for anyone who is a prospective rowing skipper, so all you sailors out there, have a think about it!

We have had two very successful club days at Newhaven, rowing over and back and giving lots of our members some shorter rows and the chance to do some outdoor socialising. The first of these days was to celebrate *Wee Michael's* 11th birthday (the 10th being during a lockdown). We also had a fundraising quiz which was a great success and helped to pay for a much-needed road trailer service.

We are ever hopeful of putting that trailer into good use this year at some further-afield events. Fingers crossed!

Pat Lawson
Chairperson, NCR

REMINISCENCE

Daniel Prince tells of his first season s

In the summer of 2020 I decided to buy a sailing boat. We were in mid pandemic and it had eventually dawned on me that the family was never going to agree a move to the Drôme in France. Moreover, what with the restrictions of Covid and net zero, we had better get used to enjoying what was on our doorstep. A sailing boat would mean we could explore locally and maybe one day go further afield. We could keep it at Granton and it would be just 15 minutes away by bicycle. All this was amplified by watching the various YouTubers with their itinerant lifestyles cruising around the world and living their best lives.

So later that summer we came across a small yacht for sale at Port Edgar, 23 feet and a bilge keel. It should be good for the Forth and I wouldn't be biting off too much in one go. In retrospect that was a good decision, the fantasy of owning a classic Camper Nicholson 32 would need to wait and in the meantime *Sandpiper*, for that was her name, would help me re-learn all those lessons from doing my Day Skipper back in the day when I'd lived in Liverpool. The price was fine and at 23 feet she shouldn't cost too much to keep and maintain, especially if I joined the Corinthians who had a strong philosophy of making sailing affordable and helping each other.

Joining the Corinthians was another good decision. A bunch of people who are willing to help each other out regularly and I willingly joined the work parties on the seemingly endless task of scraping down and repainting *Dumbo*, the work boat, helping check moorings prior to lift in, assisting with stepping masts and the lift-in itself in June last year. It's all been a big learning experience and when a friend on the West Coast bought a boat this year it was surprising to be able to offer sensible advice which had come from the experiences of working with fellow Corinthians over the last year.

Of course, it wasn't all plain sailing as I was soon to learn. Our first sail in *Sandpiper* was back from Port Edgar to Granton in strong winds so we quickly learnt the value of knowing which ropes did what. I could never start the engine, once trying over 100 pulls before giving up, I hadn't known that I could open the throttle without engaging gear. I didn't realise



that if the topping lift let the boom drop too far then the mainsail could never be fully raised. All these mysteries and more challenged my knowledge and ability to figure out problems. Sometimes someone else was able to show me and sometimes it just came down to a lot of figuring things out.

Keeping *Sandpiper* in the harbour over winter was also a learning experience. Initially she was out on a mooring, but I realised it would be much easier to be on the pontoon for maintenance and access. I hadn't appreciated that the easterly storms would affect the harbour so much. The fenders that came with *Sandpiper* were comprehensively destroyed in a week of high easterlies as I fretfully checked on *Sandpiper* every day. Walking along the pontoon in the dark in stormy

S OF A ROOKIE

Sailing Sandpiper in the Forth Estuary



weather to check the mooring lines is not an experience I'd wish to repeat soon. However we got through it with help from fellow Corinthians and some brand new fenders which have more life in them than the old brittle ones.

As summer came we managed to get out on *Sandpiper* more and more. Afternoons going across to the Fife side and getting used to crossing that scary shipping lane have helped us get to grips with *Sandpiper* and learn how she sails (answer: quite bouncy but can turn on a sixpence). Our best trip was an overnight to anchor outside Leith Harbour at Inchkeith. Waking up and going outside we were greeted by puffins and seals. Having a cup of tea in the morning, watching the seals haul themselves up on the rocks in the morning sunshine as the tide dropped

was bliss. Who knew there was so much nature to see so near the city? And the sense of achievement of safely getting into the anchorage and out again the following morning and then a cracking sail home with a following wind, and my daughter Gaia at the helm.

Of course there has been misadventure. My biggest learning experience made me realise the importance of really sound navigation and pilotage. Rounding the southern tip of Inchkeith one Sunday we grounded on the rocks, we weren't quite where we should have been and the subsequent 15 minutes before the tide lifted us and we were able to reverse off was intense. Gaia, quick witted as ever immediately dropped the sails and started

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drawn up by the safety committee headed by Peter Douglas.

The new streamlined procedure introduced for pontoon payments last season deploying BACS transfer direct to EML worked well and will be kept for the season 2022. Please note that pontoon fees will be increased this season having been kept the same for several seasons with the shortfall in income for ongoing refurbishment and maintenance having been covered by subsidies from the clubs.

I also remind members of yard regulations that we have been a bit lax in enforcing recently. For example, power leads should be disconnected when boat owners are not in attendance to reduce the risk of fire should the equipment develop faults and overheat.

I wish you all well and hope you stay healthy during these difficult times.

George Mackay
FCYC Commodore

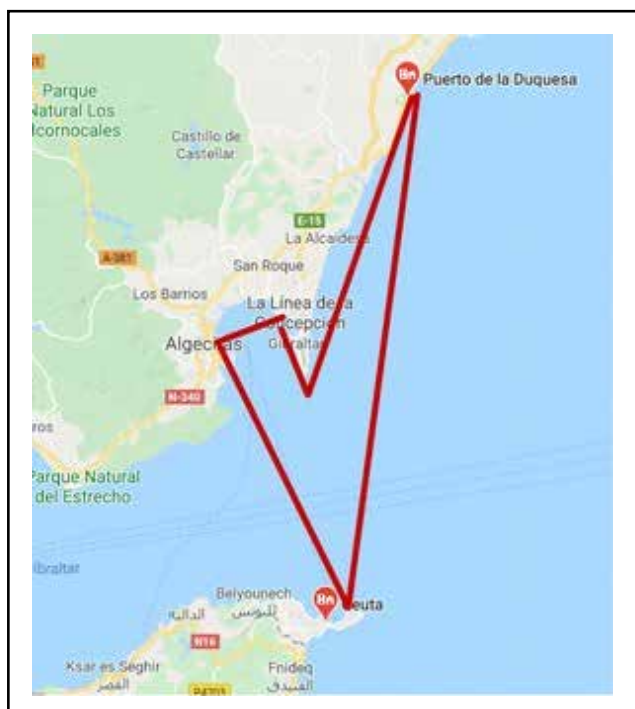
INTRODUCING...



My name is Brynjar Olafsson, I work in a distillery in Edinburgh as a process engineer. After a 14 years hiatus from sailing at the end of last year, I decided to join the Corinthians after purchasing *Tilly Mint*. I am originally from Iceland but have lived in Scotland for most of my life. As a teenager I used race dinghies out of Eyemouth and Reykjavik. I also crewed on the OYT boat the *Alba Venturer* to both Ireland and over the Atlantic to Iceland. Over the next year my aims are simply to find my feet again and get a bit of confidence back. Outside of sailing, my main interests are in following the rugby (both Edinburgh and Scotland), photography and hillwalking.

COMPETENT CREW: A

Christina Ford thought she was the bees knee



Our itinerary: over to Africa and back to Europe.



Cadiz was lovely.

We left Donaghadee with the Dehler 37cws *Potemkin* after an initial year together (based in Lochinver) as a couple and made our way south. For the first year it was to A Coruna in north-west Spain, then down to Almerimar on the Costa del Sol, and then last year to Rome. This year's trip is, of course, in abeyance but we intend to eventually head for the Bosphorus.

By the time we got to the Mediterranean I was feeling like a pretty successful sailor—never having been on a sailing boat in my life till the Skipper and I took up as a couple. He suggested that a sailing course might be good for me. I thought, too, that it could provide a winter break in the sun and some light relief—certainly the Skipper was incapable of teaching me anything given his long career as an academic (not like my school pupils, entranced by my pedagogic brilliance). We decided on Gibraltar for my 'Competent Crew' course. I would show the RYA just how much of a competent crew I was even before I took their course.

We flew to Malaga and the Skipper drove me to Gibraltar. He hoped, I think,

to just dump me at the Spanish side of the border and then drive off, but I was having none of that—with my sense of direction I could have got lost in the half mile there! So we went together to the marina where my sailing school was based, arriving on the Sunday evening to spend a week on a Jeanneau 36. Skipper then left. He seemed very keen to be off.

There were to be three of us and our tutor.

Anna, English, early 30s, a lawyer, was an experienced sailor and was doing the Day Skipper course. Johnnie, Welsh, in the security business in the Middle East, late 50s and former Marine, was experienced in sailing dinghies. And, me, Scottish, late 50s, retired English teacher and three years of sailing with the Skipper. Fourth on board was our tutor Rodney, a cocky Cockney, early 40s, former fireman who had only taken up sailing three and a half years previously. He left us to get to know each other that evening.

We three tutees settled in over a glass of wine. Anna seemed a really nice, unassuming girl, tall and attractive in a quiet way. She and I got on well during

the course. The Skipper told me later that she was probably made from steel—she was a young commercial lawyer just going into a large practice where life would be cutthroat.

On Monday we had a 9am start. Rodney told us what the course involved and in the afternoon we managed a sail round outside the marina—there was quite a wind—practising some manoeuvres, one of which involved reversing a longish distance to a huge concrete block and putting the engine into forward at the very last minute to brake us. Great fun and we didn't hit the block. Sails, ropes, sheets, winches etc were discussed with a view to being able to remember everything for the following day's class.

We finished at 5pm but not before some skyward happenings. A British Airways plane had problems landing on the runway and took off again without touching down. It roared low above us, wings tipping frantically from side to side. It scared us but must have scared the passengers more. A video of it made the evening news around the world, but no mention of a sailing school being

STEEP LEARNING CURVE

es until she did her Competent Crew course



We flew a 'Scottish Ensign'.



Tired but qualified.

potential casualties from tons of plane falling on us!

Life on board as a vegetarian was a wee bit awkward as I have a different meal from everyone else. The school had supplied some sandwiches, but to be honest, my tastes are a bit more refined than tinned food and snacks. Anna had become a vegan six weeks previously and I, of course, had been vegetarian for about 30 years. Both Rodney ('I couldn't do without meat') and Johnnie ('I eat meat every day') were not particularly impressed with vegetarianism. Though I got through the week it did seem, on a couple of occasions that I wasn't getting enough food.

The next day, Tuesday was another 9am start and Rodney moved on board. We three each had our own cabin and Rodney slept in the saloon. The morning was spent on tacking and gybing and the afternoon on man overboard, sails, putting up mainsail, releasing genoa, bringing mainsail down, flaking mainsail, winches, jammers, ropes. The day finished at 7pm and we spent the night in the marina on the Spanish side at Alcaidesa—where we had moored the

Dehler when we first arrived at Gibraltar. The plan for the next day was to set off to Ceuta, a sail of about three hours. Ceuta is on the North African coast—a little bit of Spain which the Moroccans want back and the Spanish won't give back. Much like Gibraltar in fact.

After two days of pretty hectic work—sails up, sails down, sails up, sails down—my early confidence that this would be a doddle had wilted. There just seemed to be so much on a boat that I didn't know about and up to this point hadn't really cared about. It grieves me to say it, but I was learning how little I know about sailing and how much my Skipper does. I felt a bit disheartened! Not only that, but I thought a course fail was on the cards. Could I live with that failure? Me, a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists failing a 'Competent Crew' course? It seemed very likely indeed.

Wednesday we were up and about doing our daily morning prep of the yacht: sail cover, helm cover, engine checked, etc, and the yacht fully prepared for sailing. I had no idea about this side of sailing! My early days of sailing were me

lying in the bunk while the Skipper got the hot water ready for my shower.

We left in the afternoon after more instruction and playing about outside the marina and arrived in Ceuta early evening after a sail with lots of lumpy swell. Rodney ensured that we did the evening de-prep (is that a word?) and tidied up, mainsail put away, covered, helm, instrument panels etc put to sleep. It takes ages to do this and once again, I had no idea the Skipper had to do it. I was usually down in the cabin preparing a lovely veggie meal for myself.

It had become very hard work. All the things I had to remember were not being remembered and Rodney expected to have to tell us once and then let us get on with it.

Ceuta is very Spanish and a lovely town with shops! Anna and I managed to do a clothes shop in Zara in Ceuta but she told me that she only clothes shops every three months or so. Horror! What is the point of having a mega salary if you don't have the chance to get out and spend it? She said that she envied the spare time of her friends who became school teachers, but was too

embarrassed to tell them how much she earns.

Though lovely, Ceuta shares a border with Morocco. Rodney told us not to go near 'the fence'. So we didn't—shopping was all I wanted to do.

It was 'Today Africa, tomorrow Europe' as we planned to get back to Spain at Duquesa on Thursday—or at least Rodney and Anna did the planning as Johnnie and I were left to our own devices. This was becoming very difficult. I was tired, undernourished and getting very annoyed with Rodney. I was still convinced he was going to fail me.

Friday, the final day of the course, we had a 4.30 am start for Gibraltar and so would be night sailing.

We left at 5am with me at the helm—my perfect location on a boat (the Skipper always said I was talented, a compliment he found hard to squeeze out). I saw the sun rise while at the wheel. Magical. Rodney was obviously impressed with my skills—and about time something I did impressed him! He visibly relaxed for the first time in days. And, to show his confidence in me, he asked if I was happy staying at the helm for longer than my shift. Yes! We had fair weather and arrived back in Gibraltar around 10am. We then spent the morning on anchor practice. As Competent Crew tutees, Johnnie and I were in charge of releasing and bringing in the anchor. In the afternoon, I carried out a man overboard exercise successfully after the third try, so lessons learned on heave-to into wind to stop yacht, tacking and sailing downwind to man overboard.

We went back into Gibraltar Marina at 3.30pm for debriefing and, thankfully, I passed my Competent Crew course and was awarded a certificate to prove it.

What a steep learning curve. I don't think I have ever done anything harder than that week.

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the engine, keeping us from getting driven further on to the rocks while the tide did its job. Chastened and humbled we motored back to Granton that afternoon with renewed respect for *Sandpiper* and a determination not to let that happen again. It had been a day of calm weather, the tide had been rising, things could have been very different.

So now it is coming towards the end of the sailing season, we have a list of jobs, a toilet to fix, a log that doesn't work, a few cleats and ropes to replace and the headlinings really need to be stuck properly to the ceiling of the cabin. Maybe next season we won't be such rookies and we'll circumnavigate the Bass Rock.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION PRIZEWINNER



This dramatic picture of Peter Sherlock sailing *Sea Otter* in the choppy waters of the Forth Estuary won first prize in last year's photographic competition. The photograph was taken by Tom Louth

PRIZEGIVING 2021

Some of the prizewinners from last year's sailing season receiving their trophies from Commodore George Mackay. Also, Ian Dawson holding aloft a trophy he *didn't* win!



Glass Eye

Another irreverent look at his own—and the club’s—activities by Corinthian Jim Glass.

One of the first pieces of wisdom I gained from Jack Haldane was that you never stop learning when you’re sailing. Which can be translated as meaning that you never stop suffering mishaps. He may have told me this after I split my head on the boom which earned me that year’s FCYC wooden spoon (2011, and the only trophy I’ve ever won). I only did that once and that made me add an addendum to Jack’s thought. That is, you have to accept that you will make mistakes, but you ought to have zero tolerance of making them twice.

What I didn’t realise when I formulated that wisdom was that you don’t need to repeat them; there are endless new ones just lying in wait.

Having decided to escape the plague (and FCYC work parties) by spending the summer on the West Coast, I was aware the possibility of mishaps was somewhat greater than usual. But the first leg through the night northwards went amazingly well. We made it to Peterhead and tied up, and I happily exchanged high fives with the first mate, Iain Gray. I switched off the engine—all the electrics instantly went dead. That’s odd. After 20 hours non-stop motoring you’d expect well charged batteries. A new learning: old batteries never fully charge so your alternator keeps flooding them with current until they boil dry. Who knew? Not one I wish to repeat.

Of course, better than learning from your own mistakes is learning from other people’s. Arriving at the sea lock at Inverness, we tied up behind *Whiskey Jack*, a trimaran with three crew. The owner, anxious to prevent his new boat being scuffed against the wall, tied a small fender to his outrigger. Obviously he had to push it away from the stonework to get it into position. But then the gap grew larger ... and larger...and yes, in slow motion, into the canal he plopped while we watched. And his crew watched. And the lockkeeper watched. Well, the lockkeeper

said he hadn’t seen such a thing in his 20 years so I think he was entitled to gawp.

I knew all about reefing early, but I must admit to underestimating just how much stronger wind gusts could be than those estimated by the met office app. Katabatic winds, right? In the early summer I had two reefs in pretty much permanently. But tides, blimey, that was something else altogether. Being blown north up the sound of Jura on a very fresh breeze heading to Craobh, I was hit from the rear quarter with a gust



ferocious enough to spin me head to wind. And instantly I started travelling back to Crinan at over 8.5 knots. And the boat struggled to get back on course at all. If there’s a learning here, it’s that maybe I’m better suited to sailing in Linlithgow Loch, where I learned.

One of things that worried me more than wind and tide was the engine. In a car you pull over to the side of the road. On a boat... well, if you need the engine, you need it. I recall we motored into Lochaline on a falling tide. Only 3 knots against us,

but with twin keels (and a skeg) to push through the water, I needed to open the throttle wide. And doing so, the revs fell away sharply and the boat started going astern. Which wasn’t great with another boat coming in behind us. Into neutral, the revs revived. Eventually, we made it to the pontoons, and with Ian Dawson’s assistance (OK he did it all, though I did give diesel guru Brian Pennycook a call) we got to the bottom of it. A dirty fuel filter. Elementary really and so very stupid.

Talking of Ian Dawson, he was one of many Corinthians on the West Coast this summer and I managed to meet up with them all. David Cox, Pam and Martin, and Paul Taylor (OK, in his Land Rover, not his boat) and one of the newest, Bob Fleck re-joined and flying the Corinthian burgee for us at Ardfern. Bob gave me one great piece of wisdom. Get a Rocna anchor. You will sleep soundly, he said. I thought of him as my CQR skittered along the bottom as I was anchored on the north side of Muck in a strengthening blow at 4am. Perhaps at the next AGM I should suggest that FCYC buy one for people to borrow if they’re heading west.

And talking of Ian Dawson, he also accomplished something I could only marvel at. Having picked up a line in his prop off Eigg (something that can happen even in Granton Harbour, I’m told) he sailed into Mallaig, right onto one of their pontoons. The Denis Wight trophy for engineless sailing to you, Ian.

I did manage back to Granton from time to time and had the honour of crewing for the Commodore in the Commodore’s Regatta. We were actually doing very well until we came to round the East Gunnet. ‘To port or starboard?’ barked the skip. ‘Either,’ I said. Round we went—taking it to starboard. Soon it became very apparent that everyone else was taking it to port. Fearing a third successive disqualification, we went back and did likewise. Luckily the Commodore saw the funny side of it later. Much later. OK, I made that bit up.