

FAIRWIND

Spring / Summer 2021

Forth Corinthian Yacht Club

PERFECT CONDITIONS FOR THIRD COVID LIFT-IN

This year's lift in was the third in a series of lifts carried out under Covid restrictions. One consequence of which was that it was scheduled for later in the year than usual—the beginning of June instead of mid-April.

An important reason for the delay was the need to service our moorings, a task usually done gradually over the winter now had to be compressed into the couple of months following the slow easing of restrictions from April onward. We also wanted to make sure that members had plenty of time to do the maintenance needed to get their vessel ship-shape after a couple of years on the hard so as to support as many boats as possible to finally get into the water.

Mind you, the big payoff of a June lift in was the perfect conditions—a beautiful, calm sunny day—and the Covid restrictions having eased enough to make it all feel a bit more like a normal Corinthian event, albeit with Sue and Tam keeping an eye on us all in their capacity as Covid officers.

In the end it was a busy lift-in with around 30 boats being put into the water, one being taken out, five masts and a couple of miscellaneous lifts on top of that, all of which went safely and most smoothly too. As usual, we were indebted to the Bernard Hunter crane driver and banksman for their hard work

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Commodore's BRIEFING



Hello Corinthians. Most of us are now back on the water and looking for some sort of normality again.

Although we have lost a few weeks there is plenty time to enjoy our club with its special brand of camaraderie and friendliness.

To quote a past Commodore 'we are where we are' so let's make the most of it and enjoy the events that have been programmed. A lot of preparation by the Social and Sailing secretaries goes unnoticed but it does make it worthwhile when they see members taking part and enjoying the events they have planned.

We have just held our first event, 'The Commodores Regatta', with 16 boats taking part in the 'race' with the day being made even more enjoyable with an excellent BBQ and get-together in the yard. This reinforces that we have a healthy active membership and bodes well for the future.

Please take care on and off the water this summer and be especially mindful of others.

George Mackay
FCYC Commodore



NEWHAVEN COASTAL ROWERS

Finally, we have managed to get back in the water! Throughout the pandemic we have been guided by Sport Scotland through the Scottish Coastal Rowing Association. But after many months of looking longingly at the water—particularly on the calm, sunny mornings—we managed to get the Wee Michael into use again. And a great deal of use it has had. In the weeks since the restrictions were lifted we have had numerous rows, both in the Wee Michael and in our new self-built Picnic class boat, the Bow-Tow, as well as a few come-and-try-it sessions introducing beginners to coastal rowing. If you would like to come and try please contact us at Newhavencoastalrowers@gmail.com

Over the months of lockdown we have built up a very long list of folk waiting to try a row with us, and it is going to take us some while to work through them, as of course our current members will also be wanting to book rows. We will need to do some serious fund-raising in the coming months as we have had lots of out-goings and not much income. Watch this space. In any normal year we would be planning to attend several regattas and other rowing events, however the only definite plan we have in the diary so far is to attend Ullapool rowing regatta in July. Hopefully we will get a fine weekend for rowing, camping, and catching up with our many friends from the wider rowing community.

Pat Lawson, Chairperson, NCRC

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and professionalism during the course of the day.

As well as skippers and crew, thanks are also due to all those who took on specific roles to help out, including Graham, Lachie, Andy G, Andy B, Tam, Sue, Dougal, Jason, Costa, John A, Paul and Stephen (apologies if I've missed anyone). Special thanks are due to Linda Pennycook for providing vitally important catering in a Covid safe way. It's really gratifying to see so many Corinthian boats afloat this year after last year's troubles. I want to wish everyone a fantastic sailing season for 2021 and look forward to seeing you all out on the water.

**Mark Hartwood
Harbour Secretary**

THREE CORINTHIAN

Morag Edwards finishes her

From Ormos Laki on mountainous, forested Lesvos we headed to Kos, the best fossil hunting island with the most swanky of marinas. Now we were officially in the Dodecanese. The sky above Kos was black and thunder rumbled. The upside of parking up in such a well-heeled and still-full marina was that when the spectacular lightning began, I knew ours were not nearly the tallest masts.

We had the best night of the whole journey sitting on board our yacht in the darkness of the marina, all other boats empty, ours filled with local food and singing—hours of singing—and some top-calibre quayside dancing. It was our Gaelic music night, with Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Welsh. We were only missing Cornish and Breton crew to have had the full house.

We were still singing as we left the marina the next hot sunny morning, in French now, which brought the crews on deck from the French, Swiss and Jersey yachts, with much waving and blowing of kisses, and even actual smiling and waving from the port police. Now that was a first (and a last).

Detoured again by the need to sail all the way, *Sirius* finally approached Simi at sunset. In that light it looked otherworldly, the barren rock of island opening up to reveal a vertical collection of pastel dolls houses surrounding us on three high sides of ancient fortifications. The harbour staff were grouchy. We knew to expect tricky anchoring; the natural harbour has a natural seabed so getting an anchor to hold is not to be taken for granted. It took us three attempts, but I counted that as three lessons on parking astern. *Mirta* was moored on the far side of the little bay so the shortest route to them would have been to swim over. We chose another night of slightly more subdued eating on deck and slightly quieter music, still Scottish and Irish, which magically summoned Irish people out of the darkness. They'd heard the music from their hotel and wanted to know who was causing it.



The next morning was my big chance to up anchor, take her off the mooring and steer her out of the magic kingdom and back to sea. The flying fish did their best to distract me. The sun was scorching.

The route to Rhodes had an undercurrent of sadness. I didn't want to hear them talk about flights and home. For a start home is where the boat is. I'd already lost one beloved crew member, and was worried about her recovery, and now I discovered that Rhodes had a set date for arrival because the rest of the crews were leaving and new ones arriving! I was horrified! How could they leave? My wonderful new sister was leaving!

Paul reassured me that I'd be fine; the skippers and *Sirius*'s first mate

NS IN A VOLCANO er trip round the Aegean



Three Corinthians actually in a volcano! Ian Dawson, Morag Edwards and Paul Taylor.

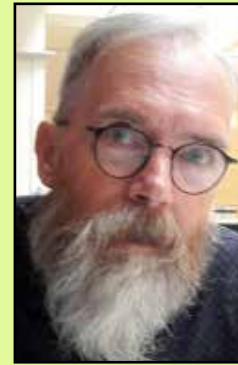
were all still in place and rapidly approaching were a fine group of Scottish and Irish sailors, including another Corinthian, our very own Dr Dawson. And an English person, but he was very experienced and quite perky. And how lucky was Sirius that for the third time in a row, the occupant of the forward port cabin turned out to be a keen sailor with a wicked sense of humour and a fine singing voice.

There was talk of winter storms and the need for offshore oilies, thermals, perhaps returning up the western side of the Aegean and seeing those islands, perhaps not. We set off, still singing, heading back to Simi. The sight of those cliff houses was as spectacular and unbelievable as the first time. Again the harbour staff were

grumpy, this time raised to shouty and angry, and again we were sent to opposite sides of the harbour. We relaxed on the boat for a bit. Watching others trying to get an anchor to catch, over and over and over again is surprisingly entertaining, especially when it's a professional crew in a massive catamaran.

We sailed a relatively short day's passage to Nisiros, a volcanic island. At that point we didn't know it was under observation for imminent eruption. The skippers used the dinghies for the first time, to scrub the black marks of Chios off our respective hulls while we did laundry. We swam around in comfortably warm water until the harbour police noticed and removed us. There was talk of a trip up

Editorial



The better weather is finally here. It's been a long winter, one made even longer by being stuck indoors for so much of

the time, trying not to spread the dreaded Covid 19. Isn't it great, though, to see the boats back in the water, bobbing about at their moorings in the harbour and sailing around the Forth Estuary. Long may it last! I'm fortunate enough to live right opposite Granton Harbour and have a prime view of everything that's going on there. I don't know about you, but if I had a boat in the water at the moment (which I don't) I'd be making the most of the good weather while it lasts!

If you've already read Mark Hartswood's article on the front page of this issue, you'll know that lift-in went with its usual Corinthian efficiency. Around 30 boats were lifted in. Remember the spring of last year: there was talk of whether we would even had a lift-in and in the end I think only seven boats made it back into the water. Fortunately, it now looks as if we've got Covid on retreat and a great summer's sailing has already begun.

Some of you will have noticed a new arrival in the harbour: the 'Iron Age' logboat. For the past few years volunteers at Granton Hub have been working with the School of Ancient Crafts to carve a boat out of a single tree trunk. Like everyone else they have been hampered by the Covid outbreak, but on Sunday 20th June the boat was finally launched and is now sitting on a mooring by the south slip. It looks like a fantastic piece of work and the makers are to be congratulated! May all who paddle it have a great time doing so.

John Hunter, Editor

into the volcano early the next morning in a hire car, delaying departure until lunchtime, so I went to bed when they all headed for a restaurant. This leg of the trip was different already. Time for swimming and time for exploring, and not by foot either, which meant I could go too. We only got lost a few times in the car.

After recovering from our epic volcanic experience, sinuses full of sulphur, pockets filled with rock samples, and the odd burnt foot from bubbles and steam, we headed for Lipsi in the afternoon. This was a change of plan and some hasty chart plotting in order to hook up with a known yacht of friends of some of the others and meet to eat at their favourite restaurant inside a hill maze. It was a surprisingly long sail west from Pythagoras in the north of Samos to reach the remote village of Ksavilli on the far side of the island. Determined to sail all the way there, we had to head a long way out to take aim at the harbour. Not a single boat was in the harbour other than *Mirta*, crew on quay waiting to take our ropes. We spotted Joy, one of the yachts that had kept us company for a few islands, now lifted out for winter. She was immediately recognisable because her German crew, gone home until spring, had a balcony constructed from scaffolding on the back of their yacht so they could sit back in style on their boat sofa.

Then I was informed that there was a bad storm approaching, that we weren't going to wait it out here, and that we were going to do an overnight run before it got any worse to stop it holding us back a few days we couldn't risk losing. I think that was the reason; I was too busy not liking the sound of the plan.

We departed at 1am, past a frigate unloading the first rescued foil-blanket-wrapped adults and children of the storm. Helicopter searchlights and coastguard searchlights passed us. Yachts had been stolen by smugglers.

In the pitch blackness *Mirta's* lights were UFOs, no boat visible. We motored straight into the waves. It felt like being thrown onto concrete. We battled through the waves for eight hours. I thought the boat would break. Just after 9am we reached Chios.

The storm continued. Much as the boat banging against the quayside in Chios was not restful, I didn't mind it. But we departed, the torture was brief, and suddenly we were in flat water, gazing upon a tiny sheltered paradise of elegant pastel houses, palm trees,



Morag on the helm.

colonial yacht club and miniature swimming beach. At this point I decided to stay here on Oinouounos. It wouldn't get better than this, and it could get a lot worse. I could happily live out a winter here.

The next day we sailed north, the contrary wind changed so now favouring those sailing south. We returned to Lesbos but to Sigri this time. From there it was back to Mirina on Limnos for a sunshine swim and snorkel after chores.

We reached Liminaria in South Thassos early, leaving plenty of time to explore the abandoned hilltop mansion and cliffsides of tasty prickly pears then a meal together at the only restaurant still open, and we ate everything they had.

A grey choppy day dawned for our return to Keramoti. Sadly, Irish Paul

had to leave for his connection, so Sirius was down to three crew and one of them was me. We painstakingly motored through miles of near-invisible lobster pots along the west coast of Thassos, then dodged ferries at the estuary entrance to Keramoti. We'd reached our final destination.

What do sailors do with shoreleave? Take a ferry back out to go visit the island they've just come from, of course. We left the skippers to do their paperwork and caught the ferry to north Thassos. I drove the ferry, which was fun.

Our trip around the Aegean was not a holiday. It was an epic and insane expedition. Every aspect was the opposite of what I'd expected, but I wouldn't have missed it for

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THE INTERVIEW: Joe Ramsay

Q When did you start sailing?

A I started sailing in 1982 aged 32 or thereabouts.

Q What got you into sailing in the first place?

A I bought a small clinker-built open boat at Bo'ness then sailed it down to Granton and joined FCYC. Then I moored it down at Dunbar for fishing, before I bought Eddie North and Brian Pennycook's yacht *Balintore*, a 23 foot Snapdragon in 1984. I started sailing that

Q Do you prefer cruising or racing (and why)?

A I prefer cruising to racing as most weekends quite a lot of Corinthians would sail away for the weekend all over the Forth

Q What has been your most enjoyable sailing experience?

A When we used to sail the Bass Rock Race, the club used to hire two coaches and have a dance at the Victoria Ballroom at the old army barracks in Dunbar.

it?

A It was my 23 foot fishing boat which had a diesel engine from a building site dumper truck. When you put it into reverse it just kept on going but I got used to it and was able to calculate when to put in reverse.

Q What other boats have you owned?

A I've owned a 23 foot clinker built boat and a 28 foot clinker boat. When I put the revs up in the latter you could see the seawater pouring in the boat. It



at Granton.

Q What is it that you like about sailing?

A I used to have a very stressful job supervising scaffolders. When I finished work most days I would go down to Granton and sail to Burntisland and back, all the stress of the day just disappeared, then home for tea.

Q What has been your most frightening sailing experience?

A When I first sailed *Balintore* a gust of wind blew the boat nearly flat. One minute I was sitting down looking at the horizon; next minute I was standing up looking down at the sea. I thought my sailing days were over.

Q What was the first boat you owned and what did you like / dislike about

was a good way to keep the revs down and go at a slower pace. The other boats I have owned have been *Balintore* a 23 foot Snapdragon and *Early Bird* a 26 foot Westerly Centaur.

Q What was your favourite boat?

A *Early Bird* will be my favourite as all the work is nearly finished.

Q Why did you choose to buy *Early Bird*?

A The price. I bought it from an insurance company for quite a good price after it partially sunk sitting on its mooring buoy chain.

Q Apart from the Firth of Forth, where else do you sail / have you sailed?

A The Faroes, Orkney (Kirkwall, Sanday), the Fair Isle, Shetland (Unst then Mukle Fluga, the most northerly part of Britain).

Q When did you join Forth Corinthians and why?

A I live just five minutes from Granton and the Royal Forth is too expensive

Q Have you held positions on the Council of Corinthians and if so what?

A I've been on the council under the following comodores: Bob Sandison, Neville Fenwick, Stuart Boyd, Brian Pennycook, Linda Pennycook, Graham Russell, George Milne and possibly others.

Q What important piece(s) of advice would you give to newcomers to sailing?

A Always wear a life jacket. It's not a thing that most Corinthians do but it's like wearing a seat belt in a car. You will get used to it and it could save your life.

Q What would you like to do in future, sailing wise?

A Not sure. I think my body is telling me to slow down. I need a new knee. I've already had one. I also need a new back but I don't think the NHS replace backs yet!

Q What do you do when you're not sailing?

A I do a lot of shortwave listening. I like making home-made antennas. I'm getting into tracking satellite weather stations, NOAA and Inmarsat.

'YOU'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOAT!'

Tam Nicol poses beside his freshly repainted boat, *Jaws*. Let's hope he's not tempting fate!



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the world. The experience of being part of a family, belonging to a wonderful, infuriating, 24-hours-a-day dysfunctional sea family is worth a pirate's treasure trove.

Then my sea family went home. It

turned out that everyone else had a return ticket and couldn't be tempted to stay longer. There were no other boats for me to hitch onto, apart from Russian trawlers. When North Greece says end of sailing season it means it.

I stayed on. The sea was still relatively warm and sunburn was no longer a risk. I found suitable job

opportunities: an altarpiece painting renovation on Thassos and the position of child camp support worker on Samos. But I needed more sailing first, just a bit more boat time first before I started work. Dry land didn't feel like home.

So I moved to Gibraltar, enrolled in a school, and sailed to Africa.



SEA CADETS

To say this has been a very different year for us, like so many others, is an understatement. Prior to the lockdown in 2020 we were busy preparing for our Royal Naval Parade, basically an inspection by the Northern Area Captain of our unit to ensure that we were doing everything that we needed to be doing. Once lockdown was imposed, it soon became clear that we would not be returning to parading or boating for some time.

Events over the year were gradually cancelled rather than postponed. We were planning to take 12 cadets away on the *TS Jack Petchey* in July. A couple of cadets missed out on foreign exchanges—one to Canada for six weeks, this being his last chance before he turned 18.

A temporary return to training for some units was short lived with the second lockdown coming into force and it was during this stage that Trinity started the ball rolling with our paperwork, primarily to return to face to face training and then further paperwork for boating. This was all submitted and given approval so that we could return as soon as our District was in 'Lime' status.

Our first aim was to get back on to the water, this began when we got our Versa Dock into place on the pontoon, the RIB was launched soon after along with five of our single handers for a day on the water to blow the cobwebs off. Two of the cadets had never sailed before but they soon picked up some basic skills and 3 sessions later are gaining confidence.

The lift-in saw our Champ displacement boat back on its mooring and the following day we had all three of our power boats assisting the cadets who were out on the water that Sunday.

The unit returned to parading and face to face training on Tuesday 15th June. We've lost some cadets but we've also gained some new cadets and staff—we always need staff! We won't know the full effect of what the pandemic has had on Trinity for a couple of months but hopefully, cadets will want to do as much as they can given that they have missed so much in the past year and we can look forward to competitions once again in 2022.

Staff and cadets at Trinity wish you all well.

Andy Wharton, Officer in Charge, Trinity Sea Cadets



Glass Eye

An irreverent look at his own—and the club's—activities by Corinthian stalwart Jim Glass.

Having enjoyed an all-too-short summer since the 2020 lift-in, I made the decision to stay in the water over the winter. The pontoon, although pricey, means that I will avoid that most terrifying of maritime activities: the unstepping and stepping of the mast.

Having just about got to grips with mastering this on my old 23 foot boat over the course of ten years, I find that my new boat came with a mast which looked like aluminium but must in fact be solid teak. Six people struggle to carry it across the yard and as for raising it on the old piece of ironmongery amusingly and inaccurately called the hoist, well, stand well clear is my advice. Surely one of those slipway travel hoists like they have at Port Edgar can't be that expensive? I may raise it at the AGM just to get things warmed up.

Once rafted up alongside the pontoon, I was delighted to find myself next to that club legend, *Misty Blue*, owned by Eddie North and Brian Pennycook. There are however downsides, I quickly realise as I look at their neatly arrayed mooring lines, each one marked for length, and compare them with my poor effort. And they have those things that prevent the lines going taut and banging.

Clearly I would need those too and set off to Port Edgar to look at their selection. Apparently they're called mooring compensators—made of 'EPDM-Rubber' that absorbs the shocks of the mooring lines. The shock that can't be absorbed so easily however is the price. A bendy piece of rubber with two holes which could easily double as a chew toy for your dog comes in at an eye watering £34. For one! Maybe I should have lifted out after all.

So, for the first time ever, now that I can take part in the famed New Years Day social sails, everything social is closed down! Even looney dooking is verboten. We do go out anyway under

beautiful blue skies, for a bit of socially distanced social sailing with *Tyche* and *Zephyr*. Or 'essential exercise' as we call it.

The sidekick wraps herself in blankets and nestles under the sprayhood while I attend to keeping the sails trimmed, taking photos of the other boats and attempting to make it all look effortless in the videos being taken of us. In this I totally fail. As I tart a picture of the boat on social media afterwards, I receive a helpful comment: 'BTW, I reckon you

locker over the winter. Surely it can't be that difficult? Firstly however it needed sheets and a tack line. Improbably long sheets. I won't mention the price. Now all I needed was a day of light winds and a hapless accomplice.

Luckily one of those, a modern studies teacher, bides in the flats overlooking the pontoons and agrees to the exercise. As novices, we wisely decide to fly it with only one sheet to avoid getting into a bauchle. A cable off the harbour mouth (for the uninitiated, a unit

of distance utterly impossible to judge) we unsheathe it from its sock and out it bellows. And along we fly, yelping happily. How quickly and easily you can go somewhere that it takes ages to get back from. Over the subsequent few weeks, I try it a few times, and even do a gybe or two. Now I can put it away and forget all about it again.

Having done everything I hoped to over the winter, even doing things like finally cleaning the sprayhood windows (Renovo—ten quid for a Tipp-Ex bottle size, don't get me started) I started thinking about taking the boat to the West Coast. Of Scotland, not California. When I say started thinking, let's be clear, I've been thinking about it all the time. No, I mean actually thinking about doing something about it. I've been using the Windy App as part of my planning but I think there must be a problem with it. Day after day the wind seems to stream from the north-east. I'm sure as a schoolboy I learnt that the

prevailing winds were from the south west. Perhaps I'm looking at it upside down.

One thing I'll be sure to be back for is a social sail to honour those three greats that passed away last year. Jack, Ernie and Robin in their different ways personified everything that is great about the Corinthians. They were friendly and companionable and genuinely helpful. And more than a bit roguish with it. But that's for another day - and let's hope it might just happen this summer.



need your Genoa cars slightly further forward, the slot is opening up as you go aloft and a bit more tension in the leech will keep it closed'. I smile through my gritted teeth and thank my acquaintance for the helpful advice. Happy New Year, indeed.

One item on the inventory of the boat I bought was a cruising chute. Jimmie Hill and I had attempted to fly his up the Hebrides without success many years ago but I was determined to get to grips with this thing lurking in the