

FAIRWIND

Summer / Autumn 2022

Forth Corinthian Yacht Club

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SEASON OF SAILING

I was asked to take on this role at the beginning of the season, which I reluctantly agreed to do, as I was concerned I was already over-committed in the things I do. However, having agreed to do it, I am quite enjoying the fact that it keeps me involved with the club, whilst my knees are being repaired.

At the beginning of the season, we held a club meeting in the Bell Block to try

and define exactly what the members wanted, in terms of club racing. It turned out that there was a high desire for more short weekend racing events, to enable family members and working members the opportunity to race more whilst still fulfilling their commitments elsewhere.

However, there was still a desire for some long races, even overnight events, for those who had the time and inclination to participate.

There was also the need to include the Joint Passage Races (JPR) we have shared with the RFYC for many years and, after much discussion with the Royal Forth, should we continue with the Edinburgh Regatta this year, after falling entries over some years now. There was also the opportunity for us to share our short races with the Royal Forth and vice versa. There was a desire to increase the number of sailors racing by offering evening coaching and a more organised

system for skippers short on crew to make contact with members wanting a crewing berth. Finally, Willie Barr's Cruising in Company weekends needed to be included in the programme.

I think we managed to achieve many of these goals and some of them have been more successful than others. Despite there being experienced racers willing to coach others in racing principles on the water, the Wednesday Coaching sessions haven't taken off. We will have to rethink how we do this next year. The long races so far have failed to attract boats for the events. Should we continue these in future or just accept that they have had their day amongst the modern

membership? As we attract younger members and the old 'un's die off, perhaps we don't have enough members able to give the time to weekend events. As I write, we still have the Bass Rock weekend to come, which was always a popular event in the past, as much for the camaraderie in the pubs of Dunbar on the Saturday night as anything.

On the more positive side, we have had some successes. The Friday White Sail and the Weekend Short Races have attracted enough participants to make



Commodore's BRIEFING



This is my last briefing as Commodore of FCYC so I will take the opportunity to thank all the Council members who have served in their elected posts over the past four years

of my tenure. The AGM of 2018 saw the standing down of almost half the incumbent Council resulting in new and fairly inexperienced but an enthusiastic body elected to Council posts. Enthusiasm won over inexperience and most are still serving on the Council to date. A big thank you to all those Council members and the unsung local heroes who looked after boats, yard and the Bell Block during the Covid months of lockdowns and travel restrictions. Due to the Corinthian spirit of 'it can be done' FCYC is still up and running and going from strength to strength. We have attracted new members, many young and others not so young, but importantly being happy to join in with sail in company trips, BBQs in the Corinthian Cove, as it has been named, as well as helping to create bigger fleets in a more varied sailing and social programme that continues to evolve with input from yourselves. I also take the opportunity to thank the volunteers who attend the mooring work parties and maintain our club boats to keep them running and afloat, all done in the spirit of our ethos of 'affordable sailing for all'.

Thank you for your support over my four years as Commodore and I wish the new Commodore and Council every success in their elected posts.

George Mackay

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NEWHAVEN COASTAL ROWERS

So far this year all of our rowing has been from Granton. The Scottish Coastal Rowing events have not yet fully recovered from the pandemic, and we have been hampered by not having someone available to tow. But we have been making the most of things locally, with our usual picnic rows to Cramond, as well as out to Inchmickery and over towards Leith. You may have seen our smaller skiff, the *Bow-Tow*, out on the water too. We've had some fiercely contested



rowings between the two boats! We are planning a club day at Portobello, making use of help from the tide each way and giving time for rows from the beach there too. We have been practising using the drogue in case of an onshore wind. And here's hoping for some more lovely early morning rows over the autumn.

Pat Lawson
Chairperson, NCRC

A CRUISING A

The late great Tommy Wilson introduced me to Orkney when we raced from Granton in the Royal Forth Yacht Club race that he resurrected in 2007. We met fog and fickle winds on



Kamma, 41ft with a nice big engine.

our trip—but we got there in time for the prize giving which he was organising!

What were my thoughts about a cruising adventure for 2022? Let's go to Shetland, then call in at Fair Isle on the way back to Orkney. That was the plan anyway.

Hmmm, said a couple of seafaring folks with whom I shared the plan. All in 16 days? I have the habit of forming a grand plan and then finally arriving at a realistic plan. Such was this venture from the Forth!

Kamma is a 41ft yacht with a nice big engine. We normally make 6.4 knots, but I passage plan on 6 knots. I like to sail, as I find using the 'donkey' just a little bit uncomfortable and certainly not at one with nature.

Four of us constituted the crew: three guys I had sailed with reliably in the past and myself. What could go wrong?

We sailed down from Port Edgar, where *Kamma* is berthed, to Granton. This allowed a shorter passage to Peterhead, which was our first port of call. It also allowed us to sail an H-boat in the RFYC race series that night! We then had our tea in the RFYC Clubhouse and, suitably refreshed, returned to *Kamma* to begin

the cribbage league which was to be feature of this cruise.

Leaving Granton fairly early, to benefit from an ebb tide, we arrived at Peterhead just before nightfall—this was late May and so there had been plenty of light on the way there. Unfortunately there was little wind so we motor-sailed most of the way. At least the navigation was simple—a straight line to Peterhead, well off shore to avoid the massive array of lobster pots. There are many around the Bell Rock—beware!

We arrived at Peterhead at low water and crept slowly to a berth. The marina has out-of-hours access to showers and all facilities if you call ahead.

Early reveille and we were off to Wick. As you cross the Moray Firth there is a large wind farm in your way. So, a slight detour!

It's around 75 nautical miles to Wick and the weather was still benign so motor sailing was the order of the day again!

Wick harbour is a very safe place with a wonderfully helpful harbourmaster team. Fuel has to be wheel-barrowed down to your boat, but we were glad to get diesel as we had motor-sailed most of the way



Skirting round the wind farm

from Port Edgar. We had an enforced stay in Wick, as the weather was very poor, but this allowed some folks to have a look at Wick while others re-fuelled.

The passage to Shetland was the next leg. We left early—again with little

ADVENTURE FOR 2022

wind we had reached our halfway point to Orkney when we lost our chart plotter monitor. This meant AIS, radar and charts were no longer available. We decided that we would aim for Kirkwall where we hoped to find someone to fix things, though we were reluctant to enter an area where poor visibility was common in May.

Making sure that we got the tide right in the stretch just before Kirkwall, the 'String', we arrived in Kirkwall in the afternoon. If we had mistimed the tide, there is an ample anchorage in Deer Sound just before the tidal gate. That same area of Orkney is famous for many things and the distillery was a destination



Skara Brae, a neolithic settlement.

for us at a later date. I still have that unwrapped bottle of 'Seaglass' gin purchased by our bold crew.

Arriving at Kirkwall marina, near the ramp down to the pontoons under the direction of the local pontoon volunteer, we gained access to good WiFi and phone signal. Facilities were near and access to Kirkwall itself was minutes away.

We had trawled the internet and found no Raymarine agent on Orkney. However, the local chap who met us on the pontoons, brought a great big smile on my face when he told me that 'Tris' would be able to help me out. He was the go-to electronics guy on the island. Dialling his number, I got a sense of this is too good to be true ... it was not good ... Tris



Ring of Brodgar, a Neolithic henge.

answered in fluent French with 'Bonjour'. He was in France, but he would be back soon. In Orkney 'soon' can mean any indefinite time. As Tris said later: 'There's mainland time and then there's Orkney time'.

That evening four of us sat round the saloon table and before the nightly cribbage challenge and discussed what we would do next. I was uncomfortable venturing forth in possible inclement weather with restricted visibility and no instruments. The forecast was for northerlies, so we all agreed to wait until the noble Tris returned to Orkney.

I was the only one on board who had placed a foot on Orkney before, so we decided to hire a car and explore the islands. The other three were delighted—there is a lot to see on Orkney. I was disappointed because the Shetland and Fair Isle trip had changed to the Orkney trip.

Tris arrived on board three days later and it took him 15 minutes to mutter the words 'We need to replace the unit'.

'How long,' I asked and he trundled out the dreaded phrase 'There's Mainland time and there is Orkney time'. This was Friday. An email came back from the retailers that the on board warranty stood (phew!!). Perhaps a unit would be posted out next Monday.

We spent the next few days using ferry, bus and hire car, to visit the many tourist attractions and wonderful scenic opportunities, some of which are shown in the accompanying photographs. If you want to know more about these places, just Google them!

We also sailed across to Shapinsay—a peaceful, but very impressive community not far from Kirkwall, but with its own identity. There were two mooring buoys there, a safe harbour, a community school, Information kiosk with electric car charging point and e-bikes for hire (free to locals). There are only 320 people on the island!

A visit to Stromness by bus allowed

us to spend time in the museum, enjoy home cooking and mingle with the end of their week-long folk festival! The village is very well appointed and one of the neatest, but quaint places I have visited! There we saw the 'Khyber Pass'—I felt my geography info a bit lacking! One of the most enjoyable moments, was attending the four performances including the headline act 'Blazing Fiddles' at The Pickaquoque centre

A trip St Margaret's Hope was like going back in time if it were not for the high speed 'Pentland' ferry operating from there. You can sail across the Pentland Firth to mainland Scotland in an hour.

Most days the northerlies were very strong, blowing from the day we arrived until the Thursday, when I ran out of hope for the replacement instrument's delivery. Simply the wrong time for a sailing adventure to Shetland.

I gathered everyone round the evening cribbage table and we all agreed that we had waited long enough. With northerlies still blowing, we would take off at a civilised hour and take the tide and the wind south. We had always carried traditional charts and were now familiar with the passage to return.

Wick was the next port of call and we then re traced our steps back to



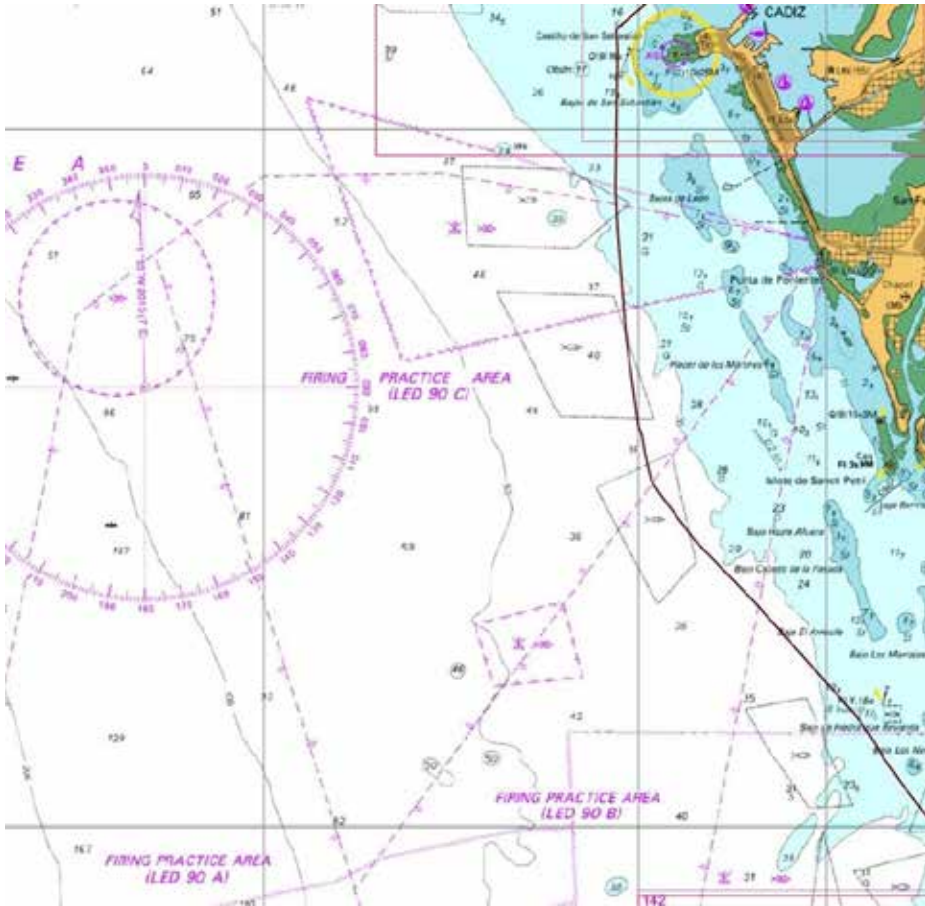
Kamma, showing the northerlies.

Peterhead. Sailing all the way, we manage to catch a lobster pot near to the Nng westerly cardinal mark keeping us out of the wind farm. Eventually we released *Kamma* from the grips of the pot and decided we would make passage to

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EXPLOSIVE IBERIA

As the Spanish target



I'd known the skipper when he was much much younger and much better looking but it was not until many years later just as we both took early retirement that life brought us together as a couple. He had a boat (two boats, actually) and I had a sense of adventure and loved the sea so we got off to a good start—several times around Cape Wrath and then the decision to go south to the Med and have adventures. One I remember well was our trip from Ayamonte to Balbare.

The plan had been to sail for Cadiz from Ayamonte—the weather looked perfect with a good breeze forecast from the south—a beam reach the skipper predicted and he set up the Hydrovane to be ready. We were up before 8am (still pitch black) and set off for the 60-mile trip.

The entrance to Ayamonte and the Guadiana River, it must be said, is not good. When we were coming in I was given very specific instructions about

where to steer for—and looking at the depth sounder I could see (at near high tide) that we only had two metres below us in some places.

It had been raining overnight and the river was flowing quite strongly down to the sea. When it got there, in the shallow water, it met the wind coming in the opposite direction. The swell was big and more like being on a bucking horse than a boat. When we finally got out through the shallows the wind was good, we were well reefed down and our speed was good too. I handed over helming to the wind vane and we steamed along—good to be powering along under sail after so many windless days down the Portuguese coast.

The wind looked as though it was coming around a bit and the skipper suggested going into Chiponia, 12 miles before Cadiz. I agreed and we berthed there for the night and then down to Cadiz where I managed a day in El Corte

Ingles. The joy—to me—of yachting is being able to sail from one department store to the next.

After a couple of days (waiting for the wind to die down) we set off for Balbare at 8.30am to do the 40-mile mile trip. It should have been a simple trip with light winds allowing motor sailing some

AN VOYAGE

Scots ensign!



of the way. We heard some loud bangs as we lost sight of Cadiz but didn't really think much about that until I was happily helming, when there was an explosion and a plume of water rose in the distance. I shouted on skipper who, I could tell, did not believe me. Anyway, he thought he should humour me, so

checked for any explosive activity in the area on the chart. It was then he found out we were travelling through a Spanish firing range.

'They won't hit us. They will know we're here,' he said. Optimistically, I thought.

There were two other boats travelling quite near us—within a circle of 2 miles or so—both transmitting AIS and going at around the same speed. He said all this just as there was a huge explosion metres from our stern—just 250 of them away! He didn't call up on the VHF, but we put on a bit more speed and we left the scene pronto—luckily we were not too far from the limit to the zone.

The banging went on for the rest of the day as we travelled south, but thankfully it was left behind and things got quieter. There were no guard boats or any indications of any firing anywhere and there were two boats near to us both showing clear AIS signals. Skipper suspected that the Spanish Armada are either rubbish shots or very good shots who were—given the Catalonian desire for independence at the time—unhappy about us flying a Scots ensign.

'Anyway, it's your fault,' he said.

'The Spaniards are not too keen on independence movements.'

I will be writing to Nicola Sturgeon urging a reciprocal attack upon Spanish fishing boats in Scots waters, I thought.

The wind got up just as we entered Balbare and later it howled and poured with rain all night. I had set out for the town but only got as far as the yacht club when the downpour started. I managed to cope with a large glass of wine (or two).

We never got the chance to speak to the other boats who had travelled through the military zone with us, but it still confuses us. There was no sound of missiles or projectiles coming our way—just an explosion and a large plume of water. It was as though the explosions were coming from under the water—but, if so, why was there such a loud noise? And why no safety boats to be seen anywhere, either visually or on AIS? A mystery indeed. Another mystery is why the skipper didn't look at the chart before we left Cadiz and notice the firing zones.

Christina Leith

FESTIVAL SERIES ATTRACTS RECORD NUMBER OF BOATS

One of the highlights of this season's racing was the Festival Series, a new joint venture organised by our neighbours the Royal Forth Yacht Club.

We were sent an invitation by RFYC and we responded with a tremendous turnout. We had 12 cruisers taking part from our club with the total cruiser entry of 19.

This was a two-evening event on 18th and 19th August tailored toward encouraging cruisers, in particular, to take part in a white sail competition. Day boats were started separately and they could use spinnakers.

On each day there was a briefing explaining the basic rules of racing and the course to be followed. Each skipper was provided with a chart of the course.

To encourage as many sailors as possible to take part, the races started at 19.00 hours with a time limit of an hour (and a possible extension of 20 minutes if any yacht finished within the time limit).

The races were around three of four markers within Wardie Bay, taken from the Corinthians white sail courses and average lap times for each yacht were calculated.

Participants were taken out to their boats on the RFYC water taxi. There was an extended start line to leave room for the large number of vessels taking part.

All in all, the event was a huge success, with 19 cruisers and six day boats participating.

The winners were *Flare* for the day boats and *Border Maid* for the cruisers

Participants were collected from their moorings by the RFYC water taxi and taken to the bar for a liquid debriefing followed by the prizegiving.

The overwhelming feedback at the debrief was that folks would come again next year and would be very interested in an additional event for next season.

THE INTERVIEW: Howard Thompson

Q When did you start sailing and at what age?

A I started sailing at the University of Bradford, when I was studying engineering, at the age of 19 or 20.

Q What got you into sailing in the first place?

A A friend of mine on the engineering course was a member of the University Sailing Club and suggested I try it. He's still a friend of mine 55 years later.

Q When and where did you start?

A The club sailed weekends on Burwain reservoir in Lancashire. Burwain Sailing Club raced Merlin Rockets, whereas British Universities sailed Fireflies. Although the Burwain club ceased sailing over the winter, the University kept going. We wore home-made wetsuits and used the club rescue boat to break up the ice, so we could race!

Q What is it that you like about sailing?

A I love the excitement which goes with sailing, whether it is in close racing or sailing on the open sea in a good blow. The sights, sounds and smells on the ocean just make you feel alive! Once you leave the mooring your world is bounded by the gunwales of the boat and the trials and tribulations of life ashore fade into insignificance.

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

A I like both, but I guess I prefer racing, especially one-class racing, where boat on boat competition focuses the crew on a single objective. However,

I have had some amazing cruising passages, where arriving at your destination is such a disappointment!

In the days before SatNav, a group of friends and myself studied Astro Nav at evening classes and, shortly after, I was invited to crew a boat from the Virgin Islands to Bermuda. So, I thought I would take all my sight reduction tables, almanac, calculation sheets, plotting charts, etc, with me, just to see if it worked! Some hand baggage on the airliner! The day before we departed Tortola, an earlier version of satellite navigation aboard, which wasn't very reliable, broke down. The skipper had relied on this system to cross the Atlantic

to Guernsey. We would drive down to Plymouth on Friday night, pick up a charter boat and set off, arriving in St Peter Port on Saturday morning. We would spend all Saturday in the harbourside pub (we never did see much of Guernsey!) and sail back overnight to Plymouth, arriving Sunday morning, in time to drive home and get ready for work on Monday! Sailing across the Western Approaches and avoiding the commercial traffic as we did so was just heaven. We often had little night vision because of the phosphorescence from the boat's wake, but the night sky was always stunning and the dawn breath-taking. Alone on deck, during your watch was simply

amazing! The smell of bacon rolls being prepared by the awakening morning watch below was simply something else!

Q What has been your most frightening sailing experience?

A On one of our planned trips to Guernsey we arrived at Plymouth to a forecast which was most discouraging. We therefore decided to sail to Newton Ferrers, a beautiful anchorage just to the east of Plymouth, with a lovely old pub, which provided us with sustenance the whole weekend.

By Sunday afternoon, the weather had, if anything, deteriorated, but the boat had to be back in Plymouth and so we had to go. There is a large rock, not dissimilar to the Haystack, called the Mewstone between Newton Ferrers and Plymouth, which you have to sail around during the short trip. As we ventured seaward to round the Mewstone the sea built up alarmingly, with huge waves, one of which caused us to broach. I was sitting on the pushpit rail holding on to the backstay as the boat heeled (stupid or what?) and eventually I found myself



previously. That left me and a massive amount of arithmetic (no computers or calculators to help in those days) to get us there. I didn't get any release from my watch duties to do all this! However, it did work and it got us there, 10 days later!

Q What has been your most enjoyable sailing experience?

A I really enjoy night sailing. When I lived in Gloucestershire, another group of friends and I would organise weekend sailing trips from Plymouth

hanging on to the, by now, horizontal backstay with my feet out of the boat! Fortunately, I was able to scramble back into the boat as it righted itself, leaving me to mull over how stupid I had been and how lucky I was not to end up in the English Channel at her worst!

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

A I have never owned my own boat; finances have always prevented it. I have always chartered boats or sailed with friends. I have to say, Brian Pennycook and Eddie North have always been incredibly good to me in including me as a regular crew member and refusing ever to take a penny from me towards the costs. I shall forever regard them as the best friends I have ever had.

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

A The English south coast and the northern coast of France. Falmouth, Fowey, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Cowes. I have also sailed the east coast of Essex (very beautiful), the west coast of Scotland (ditto) and the BVI to Bermuda—the trip where I had to navigate using sextant, almanac, sight reduction tables, etc. Hard work, but very rewarding when we got there!

Q When did you join Forth Corinthians and why?

A A friend of mine had a small boat for which he needed a home and so we both joined. He has since left and now lives in Deal, in Kent, with a newer, bigger boat!

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

A I was Harbour Secretary for a few years, some years ago—a job not suited to someone my present age! I am also Sailing Secretary this year, learning on the job, so to speak.

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

A Learn to sail in dinghies. They are far less forgiving than larger boats and so you find out what you are doing well and vice versa; skills which you can then transfer to a bigger boat. Also, take the RYA shore based and water-based courses—you can then be sure you are

doing things right and, above all, safely.

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

A I am now 75 years-old, and so my ambitions are very limited! Just to be able to keep sailing out of Granton and maybe a few more charter trips. At the moment, my knees wouldn't stand up to the motion of the boat.

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

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them worthwhile, although there is always room for more. The Edinburgh Regatta attracted a few more boats than last year and, despite some strong winds, proved a successful event even though it was run on a shoestring. One event from which we need to learn was the RFYC Festival Series, which was promoted as a joint event between the two clubs.

It was also promoted as an event especially for cruiser class boat and presumably by excluding the out-and-out racing boats, the cruiser skippers felt they could join an event where they weren't going to be intimidated by large fast boats bearing down on them at the marks. This was a very successful event, attracting a lot of boats of various racing ability, and we must see what we can learn to make future events also more attractive to the cruising fraternity. Certainly, at the prizegiving, there was a huge majority in favour of running the event again next year.

One lesson I have learned is not to rely on the nominated Race Officers checking the handbook to see when they are on duty. Apparently, in the past, it has been the Sailing Sec's job to e-mail nominated RO's before their event and get them motivated to either do the job or find a substitute RO to take over from them. I must do better on this as, apparently nobody reads the handbook!

Jim Glass has set up a WhatsApp site 'FCYC Racing and Cruising', which has

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Fidra and spend the night there. We anchored at midnight and as the tide was favourable later in the day, we played our nightly cribbage, our wits sharpened by a good malt. Off to our bunks around 02:00 hours and a long lie in the morning.

We again set sail in a brisk northerly and jibed just outside Kinghorn. Then it was back to Port Edgar and *Kamma*

A I am the treasurer of my local church, which takes up a lot of my time and am also on the Edinburgh Diocesan Building Committee, whose role is to ensure that all Anglican church buildings in the diocese are maintained to an acceptable standard. For fun, I have joined the Cairngorm Gliding Club and am learning to fly a glider. I don't have to worry about my decrepit knees and loss of my youthful strength because you strap yourself in tight and just use your ankles and a light grip on the control column. (Of course, there is a lot more to it than that!)

had some success for a first attempt. I would encourage you to make it daily viewing as it is being well used and provides a lot of useful chat between members, especially with respect to some of the issues mentioned above. Club members need to keep in touch with each other for the club to be successful for everyone, after all. In fact, so many people are now using it, I plan to talk to Jim, to see if we can somehow index it to make it easier to find what you are looking for.

Finally, Tim Squires and I have tried to make sure that race results are published on the club website as soon as possible after each event. One of the problems we have in doing this is getting the race results to me in a timely manner. If, for whatever reason, no RO turns up and so a self-start is organised, each participant needs to get their finish time to me asap, as I can't calculate the result until I have them all. Not doing this aggravates the problem of getting results onto the website, as, because we are using a rolling handicap system, I can only calculate results in a chronological order. I know the rolling handicap is a bit of a black art, but it does help to even out results to give every participant a better chance of winning. It is the same principle as the golfing handicap system, just a little more complicated!

Well, I hope this has been helpful and I wish you all good sailing for the remainder of the season, whatever you want to get out of it.

Howard Thompson

was tucked up snugly on her berth. The Orkney trip was over.

I would thoroughly recommend a visit to Orkney. Tommy Wilson had said to me prior to my leaving. If you spend time in Orkney, just hire a car and take the bus! You will see much more in a shorter time. You will love it! As fate would have it—he had hit the nail firmly on the head once again.

Kenny Allan

Glass Eye

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

My season started where I'd unluckily (ahem) come to a halt the previous autumn. Miles from home. And desperate to get back to Granton to take part in the expertly curated racing season. The clubs eager new sailing secretary, Howard Thompson, has expended much effort in putting together a humongous racing programme and crafting a fabulous system of handicaps or some such thing, which are recalculated after each race. This requires the website to be re-jigged in all sorts of clever ways. Luckily, help is on hand in the shape of the skipper of *Jeannie*, Tim Squires. Tim seems to be blessed with a brain the size of a small planet. With the website clearly in safe hands, I can begin planning the homeward trip. I mean, I've paid for the full season on a choice mooring. The Commodore's choice. Lucky 13, it seems.

I finally got the boat on the west all good to go, and two pals arrived. Into the water we were lifted by those kind people at Portavadie on 1st April. The stern gland was less than watertight. Nothing else for it but haul back out and go over to Tarbert on the ferry for a few beers. Who needs a boat anyway?

Meanwhile back at HQ, Howard was agitating to set up a system where boat owners could contact likely crew. And *vice versa*. That's Latin, y'know. This is also Latin: *Parabilis navigandum omnibus*. That's affordable sailing for all. I think we should have that on the cover of next year's handbook. A bit more classy, and may keep the riff-raff away. I may have to run it past the next Commodore, if anyone is successfully pressed to serve in that position.

I digress. We decide to set up a WhatsApp group. It bumps along awhile and then gets a head of steam. Obviously there's a problem with some members who aren't au fait (French) with smartphone technology, and then there's always one who won't have anything to do with it as its part of Facebook's evil empire (I won't 'out him' here). But my

fears are allayed and I know it's going to work when Brian Pennycook joins up. Phew.

Back west with my new stern gland fitted. On my tod this time as I don't want the embarrassment of any more public humiliations. Tarbert! Cambeltown! I go ashore at deserted Sanda Island and roam over to the south side. What an absolute privilege to stand at the highest point above the cliffs and cast your eyes over the expanses of water in all directions. An experience money just

than the Vice Commodore. Choose me! Choose me, Sir! It would have been damn near perfect if the Race Officer was in attendance but perhaps that was part of the cunning handicap system. Observations: that Willy Barr is a bit handy even single handed. Clearly a very fast boat. Those new guys on *Pole Star* seem well set up too. That is clearly a very fast boat too. I may need a new boat.

Another Race opportunity presented itself shortly thereafter. David 'West

Coast' Cox and I jumped at the chance to crew on Ken Allan's yacht, *Kamma*. Ken's boat has a handicap that I'm not sure had been factored into Howard's calculations. It has such a large draught that we'd basically to be back on the pontoon before the race had started. Still, this was no hardship as after a brief sortie out the harbour it had started raining and he served us coffee and cake in his fabulous saloon. No boat envy here. Sob.

I finally enter a race on my own boat—the inaugural Crew Helmed race as the Ladies Race has been consigned to the dustbin of sexist history. Whatever next. Not being allowed to use galley slaves? As it was, I pressed the sidekick into helming. Again, it seemed that several of the boats were very fast indeed but I was content enough to nose in just ahead of the bilge keeled stragglers over the finishing line. Eagerly I awaited the results. After all, handicaps had yet to be factored in. Last?!?! Stewth, wait till I see

that Howard.

There was another final racing opportunity in the new Festival Series. Of course, I couldn't participate as I was too busy attending arty Festival events, being properly arty. I got back in time to watch the fleet set off towards the Starbank buoy. Oh my word. That may require a spot more practice.

So, another season draws to a close. The club continues to thrive and prosper (I've accepted the post of Club Director of Communications and official spokesperson for the Commodore). God Save the King!



can't buy. Well, once you've shelled out for a yacht, that is.

I could bore on at length about the trip back east. The highs! The lows! It was all quite fabulous actually. A total of 542nm over 23 days of which 217nm were solo, including round Kintyre and Rattray Head. I mention this just in case there are any FCYC awards for, say, long-distance cruising, which may be up for grabs before Messrs Taylor and Dawson head off across the Atlantic and clean up.

It was to be July before I finally got to crew in an FCYC race, as a WhatsApp message was put out by none other