



# TELLTALE MAY 2017

If you have any tales to tell, photos to share or equipment to advertise in subsequent issues of Telltale please get in touch, it would be greatly appreciated.

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## *A Wanderer's Song*

A winds in the heart of me, a fires in my heels,  
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;  
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limit of the land,  
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

Oh I'll be going, leaving the noise of the street,  
To where a lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet;  
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches ride,  
Oh I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.

And first I'll hear the sea-wind, the mewing of the gulls,  
The clucking sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls,  
The songs at the capstan at the hooker warping out,  
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or thereabout.

Oh I am sick of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick,  
For windy green, unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick;  
And I'll be going, going, form the roaring of the wheels,  
For a wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heel's.

**John Masefield**

## **~DATES FOR YOUR DIARY~**

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May - First Soling Points Race**

**Weekends 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> May - Adult Dinghy Course**

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May - Sail Caledonia traditional boats muster to sail north via the Caledonian Canal**

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May - Black Rock Race**

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May – Hill Race**

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**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June - Oban to Glencoe Passage Race**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June - Glencoe Regatta**

**Weekend 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> June – Junior Dinghy Course**

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**7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> July - O.S.C Round Mull Race**

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**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August – Souters Lass Cruise**

**Weekend 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> August – LYC Regatta**

Reminder: Membership subscriptions and boat storage fees were due by 1<sup>st</sup> March.

## ~RECENT EVENTS~

### Fitting Out Supper



Photo courtesy of Domhnull Montgomery

The fitting out supper was a great success, with around 40 members enjoying an evening of fine wine, good food and excellent company. Tom Maclean entertained us with stories of his many adventures, any of which would have made a great talk on its own. He started with his solo crossing of the Atlantic in a rowing boat, which he decided to tackle despite having little rowing experience! Next was his claiming of the tiny “island” of Rockall, including a heart-stopping video of him literally leaping onto the rock in huge swells and getting washed off, only to make a second, successful attempt followed by a stay of 33 days in a tiny makeshift hut. Looking for his next adventure he sailed across the Atlantic in the smallest boat ever, and when this record was beaten by a smaller craft he cut two feet off his original boat and reclaimed the title! He finished up with crossing the Atlantic in a bottle, and finally, wanting more luxury, built himself a whale-shaped boat with a four-poster bed. He was an excellent speaker and well done to Ruardhi for persuading him to come and share his adventures with us! Many thanks to everyone who made the evening possible, in particular Domhnull and Abigail for ensuring the slideshow went smoothly, the catering team for great food and Hamish for ensuring glasses didn't run dry! It was great to see so many new members being made welcome.

**Lucy Ballantyne**

## Frostbite Photos



Photos courtesy of Domhnall Montgomery

## Where's Schönbrunn?

One bright spring April morning began with a phone call to Lochaber Yacht Club from the Stornoway coastguard requesting possible assistance with identifying a yacht which had become grounded just off shore, a little way south of the LYC clubhouse. The yacht had been reported to the local police and coastguard as cruising 'haphazardly', under motor power, in the upper reaches of Loch Linnhe for some time previously, sending distress flares skywards with apparent abandon. The coastguard was assured that, from the description, it 'wouldn't be one of ours!' but that someone would go and investigate and report back.

Sure enough, a small crowd of police and coastguard personnel were gathered on the shore watching the, by now, firmly grounded and increasingly listing yacht which, sadly, was very much 'one of ours' – Schönbrunn ..... but not so the yacht's occupant whose identity was unknown to anyone observing. It was then noted that the Oban lifeboat had also been summoned to assist! To this increasing crowd, which by now had also arrived several inquisitive members of the public, was added the skipper and crew of the town ferry whose tender, they reported, had been cut free of its mooring and 'borrowed' by said yacht occupant.

While everyone was waiting for the 'rescue' by the Oban lifeboat the police were conversing from the shore with the errant helmsman who, it became evident, seemed oblivious to the spectacle of which he played the starring role! Some time later the lifeboat hove into view, and by the time their smaller inflatable craft was launched, the tide had receded, so much that the occupant of the yacht clambered off and waded, knee deep, to the shore to be met and accompanied by HM police to provide his explanation.

Meanwhile the yacht's owner had arrived to view the sorry scene. The lifeboat crew further assisted with an internal inspection of the yacht and then the owner made plans for securing the yacht to prevent further damage before liaising with fellow yachties to plan for the re-launch on that evening's high tide.

Thus a crew of 6, along with the LYC Pioneer, and the very welcome 'tugging power' of the town ferry, muster that evening in typical Lochaber weather, to plan and execute a welcome salvage of Schönbrunn, restoring her once more to her rightful mooring- an eventful day brought happily to a close. Well – a major disaster averted – but rarely has there been such 'wild west' levels of piracy reported on the shores of Loch Linnhe! Long may the restoration of peace and quiet be enjoyed!



**Stephanie James**

## Slipway Repairs



As the tide ebbed, the much welcomed slipway repairs got underway. The suspect parts of the slipway were sliced up by Paul and Harry wielding the large cutting machine. The metal patch covering a broken part of the slipway was then dragged away by the secretarial Range Rover.

Next step, the hire of a large jack hammer to break out the sliced parts of slipway ready for the concrete fill. With glorious weather preparations continued ensuing that all was ready for the following weekend where a large team of helpers gathered to fill in the holes.

I am sure we will all look forward to the smooth launch and recovery of boats this season.

### WANTED for Thursday Club Nights – Safety boat Drivers and Helpers

The success of sailing activity on the Club Nights really depends on the availability of:-

- An Instructor/Organiser
- Safety boat driver and crew
- Helpers to assist newcomers, - to find sailing gear, rig, launch and recover boats

**PLEASE** if you think you might be able to help with any of the above tasks contact the Commodore; Hamish Loudon

hamloud@hamloud.plus.com or text 07879 651851

Volunteers may enjoy fair winds for the season and, perhaps, maybe, room at the windward mark??

## ~The Barra Bucket List 2016 ~

Well here we go again! The gentlemen of Dons Sottise are getting less to look forward to and much of life afloat, indeed. As life is mortal, thoughts turn to the big bucket before it's too late. Where too, indeed?

The muse suggests "Two otters on Traigh Mhor" as his bucket and spade.

What, you may say does this cryptic clue mean?

Well, A De Havilland Twin Otter plane landing on Traigh Mhor beach; the erstwhile tidal runway at Barra International Airport.

So, the plan is afoot!

Departure is delayed while one crew member has another bucket list topic to complete. He was attending Reginald Kenneth Dwight and his rendition of Rocket Man from 1972.

Mr E. John, for it is he, was appearing in Edinburgh. So, the assembly plan is Shuna on Sunday.

We set off from Luskentyre with the trailer heavily packed with victual. What's that noise from the back, dear? Oh, nothing dear, it must be the wind in the rigging. No, you *must* pull in, dear! Harrumph, the Onich church car park is coming up! Oh dear, why are the ladies always correct?

The off-side trailer wheel bearing of the trailer is about to leave its mooring into the oncoming traffic at the Onich Hotel. Gulp, empty the trailer, sort it later!

Iain is waiting at Letter Shuna and thought he would provision the red wines as usual. Thinking about Brexit, he had worried Spanish Red would not be available again and reserved the extra reserve. However, he had forgotten the customs clearance required from Winnie his wife at Letter Shuna International when he opened the boot!

Iain's excuse under customs challenge? "But we are heading for Barra and there is a hosepipe ban on Uist – so I will have to turn wine into water".

We glided into Tobermory late and took a chance on the remaining pontoon hammerhead. Needless to say, early next morning we had a knock on the window from the harbour master as the hammerhead was reserved for the Ocean Yoof Trust and their 50-footer. Clearly, 4 baby boomers in a yot with a bucket list had to bow to the authority of yoof, and slipped our mooring early to avert a demographic time bomb.

Tobermory is often the place to greet likeminded friends. So indeed, the Chair of our Royal College was heading south from Armadale to Islay and we talk of Gale warnings in the NHS.

We sail round Arnamurchan point in a brisk wind against the tide with a genoa and making 6-7 knots through the water. We gain Rhum on the starboard bow and enter the sound of Canna with Sanday to port. We leave the Sgheir a Phuirrt rock buoy to port and pick up the leading lines for Canna harbour.

**Canna** - Changed days indeed in Canna! No more kelp on anchor *brucie* and several drops to gain a hold. A mooring at last in Canna Harbour. I have been coming to Canna since diving in 1972 and civilization has finally arrived with moorings. Indeed, my eyes were the first human eyes to see parts of that kelpie bottom in 1972!

A curry on the mooring and we start turning that wine into water. Breakfast is even more civilized on Canna with bacon rolls ordered in advance on channel 8, now that's what I call VHF – Very Health Food.

Even better, in Canna Café we meet Anna Munro and her husband who is the chef. Originally from Corpach and Lochaber High School, her father was the minister for Kilmallie Church. They have run Canna Café for 3 seasons and Anna does graphic design work over a high speed broad band link from Canna when she is not serving 5-star bacon butties to yotties. Now that's what I call progress and remote island development in action. Moorings, beaches, broadband, puffins, rabbit stew and Anna from Corpach with breakfast - Canna has it all these days!

We then consider the weather for the Sea of the Hebrides, slip the mooring and round up to port out of the entrance under the famous Canna Compass Hill and its magnetic anomalies. Fortunately, GPS has solved that little twiddle on the compass rose. We leave the lee of Canna with a strong South Westerly and “sea sate rough” as you hear from the met office. We just have a reefed genoa but make 6-7 knots with the wind on the port beam.



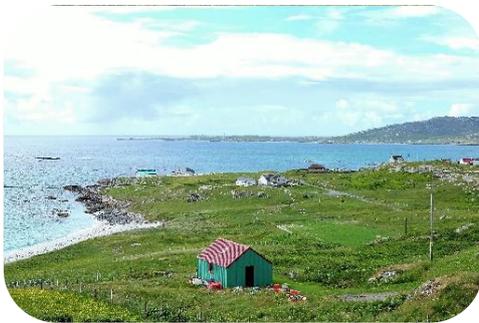
**South Uist Loch Boisdale** - We arrive at Loch Boisdale new harbour. A spectacular construction created by blowing up an island and depositing the bits to make a breakwater causeway with pontoons and a proper jetty for fishing boats. We had radioed ahead and the cheerful young man taking our lines says “where are you from boys?” Fort William! That's where my family come from! The harbour master is Coll MacDonald. His grandfather was Dr Duncan MacDonald, Fort William. He had risen within the merchant navy to the specialized world of oilfield diving support vessels. However, he had made a conscious decision to return to the South Uist, where his wife is from, to run a croft, fish and run the harbour. So, yet more evidence that there is a generational shift of talented young people making positive decisions to live on Scottish Islands as a lifestyle choice.

So, remember Loch Boisdale harbour as the new key landing stage for cruising the Outer Hebrides. You can enter in all weathers; the channel is lit, excellent pontoons and all shore facilities. Maybe don't tell too many other boats though!

On Wednesday, it was a short hop from South Uist to Aricasaid Mhor on Eriskay. It is a beautiful natural harbour with a narrow entrance and some rocks to dodge for interest. There are 2 moorings and a fishing pontoon for the dinghy.

**Isle of Eriskay** - Eriskay is a Hebridean classic gem. We walk up the hill from Arisaid Mhor past Eriskay ponies and bushes in cottage gardens full of swarming starlings. A rocky green landscape with crofts in the centre with white shell sand beaches and views over the Sound of Eriskay to Barra, yonder, is stunning. The green machair with purple orchids in bloom – I am running out of adjectives, but you get the idea!

The religious iconography of the Southern Hebrides is a contrast to the protestant North and very much part of the atmosphere in a fishing community.



Eriskay is famous for the Whisky Galore shipwreck, book and film. So, we head for the Am Politician pub and view the prized bottles behind the bar and have an excellent scallop and Stornoway black pudding.



Eriskay to Barra is a Southerly trip under main and genoa. The navigation is interesting as we try to pick off distant headlands and rocky lumps, but actually the CalMac cardinals are a lot easier and more reliable! Goodness knows how the Vikings did it on their pillage package tours.

**James Douglas**

**In the next issue of Telltale we follow the gentlemen of Dons Sottise to Barra, Canna and Sanday.**