



TellTale

Summer 2015



Commodore's Report

What a disappointing summer it has been so far as the weather is concerned but thankfully it has not deterred the good turnout of boats on a Thursday night. Everyone who attends really enjoys the fun of being able to enhance their skills and the sailing has steadily improved throughout the year.

Scintilla and Fumerol are away at West Highland Week and we wish them well in their races. The numbers sailing on a Monday night have been greatly reduced with many of the keel boats away cruising. Wednesdays have stayed relatively busy with an average of 6 – 8 boats sailing. The Regatta is looming and you will see some changes to the racing taking place.



During the junior sailing course we had a visit from Rhoda Grant MSP asking about our club, sailing, training and boating in general. She was very supportive of the sport.

I am always open to being approached about new ideas you have to try and get more people on the water.

After the Regatta the next event on the calendar is the Challenger weekend and your help would be greatly appreciated. This is followed by the Souter's Lass Buffet Cruise. Please contact Stephanie as soon as possible.

Fantastic Photography

LYC seems to have been blessed with several really good photographers; in particular I'd like to thank Martin Faulkner, Domnhull and Debbie aka Little Plum for letting me use their photographs. Perhaps we should be thinking of getting together a LYC photography competition/calendar????

Recent events

It's been a busy summer at LYC. The Regatta format was changed this year to a series of smaller events throughout the summer. So far we have had the Sail-Run race and the Canoe-sail night, both of which were successful despite poor weather! As well as the Dinghy Series racing on Wednesday evenings we have had the Black Rock and Loch Eil events. There is still time to get your boat wet and make sure Hamish doesn't win all the trophies, with the Regatta dinghy and Keelboat races on August 22nd & 23rd.

Sail Caledonia

LYC hosted the Sail Caledonia launch and first race again this year, with boats from the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, France, Italy meeting up to sail the Great Glen. It is a long and slightly chaotic day but there were lots of LYC members on hand to help with organising, launching and feeding the participants.



It was a great opportunity to look over a wide range of boats, speak to fellow sailors from different countries and watch the near-carnage at the start line of the race! All boats survived and eventually headed to the canal to continue their journey. Many thanks to the hard-working volunteers without whom this event couldn't happen.



Powerboat courses— get involved!

Safety boat crew are essential to maintaining our race and training events. LYC ran a powerboat course in July and there are still one or places left on the Safety Boat course to be held later in summer. This course is for people with a RYA level 2 and a reasonable amount of boat experience— get in touch with Hamish if you're interested. Or you can just come and help out on Weds or Thurs evenings.



Training Days- Diary of a Training Officer by Martin Faulkner

Fifteen in Fifteen - so far

Nine on the junior course, three on the Level Two and another three on Powerboat 2 makes fifteen people trained so far this year. With a Safety Boat course still to come.

We started off with a dedicated trio on the spread out Level Two (adult course). Yvonne, Debbie and Tim soon showed that they had their wits about them. While Yvonne has gone off for the summer



holidays to somewhere drier, Debbie and Tim have continued to sail and challenge themselves, wanting to go further in the RYA syllabus. Excellent!

Well done to Josh, other Josh, Josie, Ryan, Rianne, Freya, Ruairidh, Alasdair and



Owen on the junior course. This year nobody started the course being scared of being eaten by sharks, which always a bonus. Some obvious racers on the course this year. A marvellous trip down to Stronchreggan on picnic Sunday. We were joined by several of the families and a Laser sailing visitor with his son from Edinburgh. Still trying to get my head round that it was dry, but without too much sun.

Another visitor on the first day was Rhoda Grant (Minister for Leisure at the Scottish Parliament), who was very impressed by the enthusiasm of the sailors. As we all were. The thing that cheered me the most from the course this year was the number of the parents that got involved, either on shore or on the water, and then have continued to sail on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

Not finally, just this weekend Derrick Warner led a Powerboat Two course with Christine Clepham, Ruari Edmond and John Wilson passing. Some good feedback on Derrick's style of instruction too. So recent there are no photographs!

An enormous thank you to everybody who made the courses go smoothly this year, especially Hamish, Andy, Derrick, Joe, Caitlin, Gregor and Richard.

Finally, there aren't many Thursday evenings left, but the sailing is still good. Remember your membership means you can sail for free on Thursday with safety boat cover. Arrive early to make sure you get a boat!

Canoe-sail evening

The canoe-sail evening aims to make links between the sailing and canoe clubs, and to allow members of each to try each others boats, have fun and have a barbeque! The event has run for several years now and has been extremely popular. This year the event was planned for late June but despite the fact it was only 4 days after midsummer day most people arrived clad in waterproofs and hats!



The damp weather didn't seem to put anyone off and it was great to see so many people on the water! Richard had the barbeque ready for folk coming off the water which was a great way to warm up and refuel!

Many thanks to the Canoe Club and everyone who helped out on the evening.

Black Rock Race

The Black Rock race has earned itself a reputation as being a bit of a Beast.... it seems to coincide with strong winds and last year only one of the five boats which took part actually completed the course! This year the weather was slightly less wild but it was still a little daunting looking at the white horses and listening to the racket of the flapping jibs as we rigged the boats. Only three boats took part: both the RS400's and relative newcomers Joe and Ben Lennon in the Laser Fun. Plus of course two safety boats, which may have seemed excessive for three dinghies but we were grateful for them!



Conditions were a little rough early on



With a good South-westerly blowing it still took over an hour later before Black Rock came into view. Once we were round the rock we got the gennaker up and we were flying homeward, the nose of the boat out the water and smiles all round! Ben and Joe, with no spinnaker, were still making excellent progress up the loch, having judged the tide brilliantly. With everyone back on dry land it was announced Joe and Ben were the worthy winners, great to see some new faces winning trophies!

One peak challenge

In the last few years the one peak challenge- a collaboration between Lochaber Athletics Club and LYC- has been cursed by low or no wind. In fact one local runner referred to it as the paddle-run race and seemed to think the most important criteria for a good boat was the number of paddles rather than the sailing experience of the crew. This year was an exception:



with the tailend of Hurricane Kamil blowing through the forecast was for strong winds. In the interests of keeping runners dry (and keen to come back next year) the sail aspect was cancelled and runners were ferried over Loch Linnhe in the safety boats.

Despite the wind and rain a keen set of 9 runners turned up, warmed up and boarded the RIB's. The race started and finished on the other side of the loch and involves a 467m ascent over 3km, if you take the shortest route. Gary MacDonald managed all this in 29mins 22 secs. First lady was Marie Meldrum who on return to the yacht club proceeded



to do a few laps around the club to make up her 2 miles a day routine. Then the most important part of the evening.... the BBQ, which happily lived up to its excellent reputation. Massive thanks to Jon Gay for all his hard work organising the event and Tim Simms for providing not only fantastic food but also his monster barbeque and canopy. Also thanks to the club members who manned the inflatable ferries!

Upcoming events

2015 Regatta – 22/23 August

This year's regatta will take place over a weekend, and will incorporate some changes which we hope will encourage both novices and old hands to join in.

Saturday- 3 keelboat races, 2 dinghy races, 1 novice/expert combined crew race.

Sunday- 2 keelboat races, 1 dinghy race, 1 novice/expert combined crew race.

Food will be available on Saturday: lunch- soup & sandwich, £2.50. Early evening BBQ buffet- £8

Evening sail in Souters Lass – 6th September

Following the success of last year's cruise we are organising another evening cruise and buffet on Souters Lass, tickets £20 from Steph.

LYC AGM – 27th October

Please come along and share your views about your sailing club. Starts at 7:30, cake and coffee provided.

Member's stories

Round Mull Race

Two boats from LYC took part in the round Mull race again this year, Scintilla helmed by Marion Austin won the first leg from Oban to Tobermory, and held second place in the other two legs. Fumarole, helmed by Hamish Loudon, was fifth to Tobermory but unfortunately broke the gooseneck in gusts of 30 knots on the second leg and had to retire.



Mast side down by T.P.C Turvey (aka Kenny Clark)

My first taste of dinghy sailing was both exciting and exhilarating, leaving me with a hunger for more. Little did I realize what treats there were awaiting me in the days to come! Having missed the first weekend of the adult sailing course, I felt somewhat on my back foot as we met for day three. This was the day for the practising capsizes and recovery, and we duly went through the theory and practise on dry land. Then it was off to deliberately capsize the Wayfarer. We all survived the experience...and returned the following day for more coaching.

I was to sail with Paul in his Osprey, who unbeknownst to me was intimately acquainted with the art of capsize. This was my first proper capsize, all my own work, and no fault of Paul's. One minute everything was going swimmingly, (pun intended) the next, we were Mast Side Down. That was it! I was hooked! Subsequent sails in the Laser Fun, RS Vision and the Albacore ended M.S.D.

and while I can't claim all the glory, this is one sailing skill I was destined to master. As anyone taking part in dinghy racing will attest, staying Mast Side Up helps tremendously towards that elusive first victory. So I will endeavor to curb my natural tendency for M.S.D. and strive for M.S.U.

Member's stories

Ronan honeymoon— Susannah & Russell Leaper

We got married on a blustery day in April, sufficiently wild for us to abandon our plans to arrive at the ceremony under sail. So it was something of a relief that the weather looked to be rather kinder for our honeymoon in June, sailing our 1969 Dufour Arpège.

There are some places that just need the perfect combination of weather conditions to come together and make an expedition possible. (North) Rona, is certainly one of those, with an exposed passage wherever you're coming from (most likely somewhere around Cape Wrath, or else the Butt of Lewis). Once you arrive, there's not even much in the way of shelter or anchorage to greet you. It has a similar lure to St Kilda, but without the home comforts of potential shelter and good holding. Whilst Rona has long been on our dream offshore island tick-list, it hadn't really been a honeymoon plan. However, Russell's sister and brother-in-law had borrowed our boat, and our designated changeover place was Kinlochbervie. Ideal for a quick dash out to Rona? After a settled spell of light easterlies a small approaching depression didn't seem ideal. But a careful look at the wind models suggested a good SE breeze to sail out, a calm period in the middle of the low while we were there, and then a good southwester to blow us home. And, crucially and wonderfully, the lack of the usual Atlantic swell. Our 10hp single cylinder Volvo engine is both trusty and true, but it's not the strong, silent type. Long hours of motoring do not fill us with enthusiasm, so some kind wind was very welcome.

It was nearing midsummer, and at 59° N, nightfall was not something of concern to us. So as soon as we had swapped the car for the boat we were off. With rather more wind than expected we had a fast broad reach, sailing through the couple of hours when the light just got a little smudgy, and back into daylight again having scarcely noticed it. It wasn't long before the grey outline of Rona appeared and, with the wind still in the SE we carried on past the usual landing spot on the east coast and around to on the NW side, our stomachs in our mouths with a mixture of tiredness and excitement.

We anchored well tucked in to the rocky inlet surrounded by sturdy cliffs and tempting sea caves. The normal form for this side of Rona would have been a relentless swell, making everything miserable and impossible. But it was flat. We rowed ashore with ease, scrambled up the rocks to explore the island, and then pootered in and out of the sea caves as if on a jaunt on the Serpentine.

Rona once supported several families, but was abandoned in 1844. It is now home to large colonies of sea-birds and in the autumn, large numbers of grey seals come ashore at the flat north end of the island to breed. There were not so many seals around when we visited in the summer, but a few were hunkered down deep in the backs of the sea caves and were not impressed the arrival of the humans in the rubber boat.

Rona is also known for the remains of a chapel, believed to be one of the earliest unaltered Christian buildings in the UK. Roaming around the island in the still, hazy, early morning, all alone at the end of the earth felt like both the strangest and most natural thing in the world. It's a special place to be, and just that little bit better for how chuffed you are to have made it.

The promised SW wind didn't really materialise but it was a lovely sunny evening for our trip back to Kinlochbervie. The calm seas gave us good conditions for spotting whales and dolphins. A curious young minke whale stayed with us for some time, and we also had the company of groups of white-beaked dolphins. Less well-known than bottlenose or common dolphins, and seldom seen close to shore, they are nevertheless one of the UK's most appealing dolphin species; indeed UK waters are home to a large proportion of the global population. It's always a treat to see them, their robust shape and attractive black-and-white markings are somehow reminiscent of underwater swimming pandas.

Rona was only the start of our honeymoon, however. We managed to hang onto the 'go-anywhere' weather, and made our way back down to our home mooring at Lochailort by island hopping down via Handa, Priest Island, and the Shiants, followed by an exploration of the Sound of Harris out to Pabbay and Shillay.

