



Telltale January 2018

Commodores Corner

It was good to see some members welcoming the New Year afloat, albeit without too much wind. Even better to observe some sailing activity on the water this winter with at least two dinghies active.

For the rest of us, only ten weeks until the first dinghy race of the season. Still time to do all those jobs to bring your boat up to full racing spec! Keelboaters have at least another four weeks of preparation by which time the berthing pontoon will be back in place at the NE end of the west end car park. Our first event will be the Fitting out Supper

on Saturday 31st March when the new handbooks and tide tables will be handed out to all the paid up members.

Before then the race marks will have to be laid. Please watch the weekly Thursday Club notices for the annual appeal for help with painting and laying the marks.

Club Nights start on 26th April, a good time to introduce any new potential members to sailing.

Let us hope for more sunshine than last year!

Wishing you *Fair Winds* for the season

Hamish

Past events.

The last race of the season was the pursuit race, held on 1st October. Six boats took part, but due to the blustery conditions, the race was abandoned shortly after the start gun was sounded. Both safety boats were occupied with recovering crew/dinghies, which left no cover for the rest of the fleet. Pictured is one of the dinghies being towed ashore.



A few hardy souls ventured forth on New Year's Day, to take part in the first sail of the 2018 season. Pictured below in the kayak is Carole Fallows.



A goodly number of the Thursday Club members gathered at the Crannog restaurant on Thursday 21st December, and enjoyed an excellent meal.



Santa welcomes the Thursday Club !



Honest Santa, I've been really good !

Merry
Christmas



The festive mood continued on Friday 15th December, when club members met to enjoy some mince pies and mulled wine. The clubhouse had been suitably decorated some days before



The last keelboat muster of the season took place in September, when six boats gathered at the head of Loch Choire. Calum Stobie had set sail in his Hunter 19 (Alliante 2) hoping to join up with the fleet, but due to the poor conditions, made the wise decision to seek shelter at Linnhe Marine. Things began to look up when he met Jim Douglas and crew, who were similarly shorebound due to an engine problem on "Dons Sottise". It transpired that Jim's crew intended to drive to the Boathouse Restaurant, in time to join the rest of the fleet for an evening meal, so Calum was able to tag along !



The assembled company at the Boathouse restaurant. At the end of the evening, the sailors faced the challenging task of motoring their tenders, in the dark, against wind and tide, to reach the boats moored off.

The prize-giving dinner was held on November 24th, in Fort William's newest restaurant, the "Geographer". 26 members attended, and all enjoyed a good meal. The prize-winners were as follows :



Marian Austin collects the Ancient Mariners Trophy

Dinghies

Frostbite Shield Michael Campbell & Lucy Smith Laser 2000
First Dinghy Series Commodores Cup Jon Gay & Paul Biggin Laser 5000
Second Series Merlin Trophy Jon & Paul
Third Series KK Cameron Trophy Keith Falconer & Ian Fleming Albacore
Black Rock Bell Jon & Paul
Loch Eil Commodores Trophy Hamish Loudon & Kenny Clark Wayfarer

Keelboat & Solings

Brass Monkey *Scintilla* Marian Austin & Crew
Omega Trophy *Solaris* Hamish, Brendan, Lucy & Keiran
Lochaber Wheel *Maverix* Stephanie James, Kenny Clark & Harry Jeffrey
Scapa Trophy *Just Gonnio* Keith Falconer Liz Loudon
Corran Red *Fumarole* Hamish, Harry Jeffrey & Kenny Clark

The Challengers Series was held on the weekend of 9th-10th September, when 5 boats took part.

In early Spring this year, a company called "D-Tech" will be producing an advertising brochure for the club. This is not a replacement for the handbook, but instead is for public distribution. 1500 copies will be produced, containing information about the club and the Lochaber area. This service is completely free to the club, as it will be funded by local advertisers which "D-Tech" will bring on board.

Future Events.

The re-convened AGM will be held at the clubhouse at 19:30 on Tuesday February 6th. Please try to attend, as a quorum (25% of the total membership) must be present in order to ratify any decisions taken.

Fitting Out Supper

The fitting out supper will take place on 31st March at the clubhouse. The speaker will be Seb Coulthart, who will talk about the “James Caird”, which many of you will have seen moored off the yacht club last summer.



The “James Caird”, shown above, is an exact replica of the famous James Caird, the boat in which Ernest Shackleton made the extraordinary trip from the ice of Elephant Island to South Georgia in order to save his crew.

The picture was taken during the recent filming for a documentary of the Shackleton story. The film crew were based onboard Ian Dewars catamaran and the filming was done in adverse weather to the south of Corran.

Other Dates for your diary:

LYC Regatta Saturday 25th August

1st Race of Season Sunday 1st April (Frostbite Trophy)

The "Thursday Club" - A brief history

When asked, how did it start? the average Thursday Club regular has to delve into the memory bank, right back to the dim and distant past.

After the great Storm of early January 2005 there was considerable carnage to sort out in the dinghy park, see photie. Several club stalwarts assembled for the task and restored good order. Afterwards in the safety of the alehouse, come the second pint the gathering decided that a regular muster of a few members could achieve a great deal. It so happened that the only day when all those present could meet, was a Thursday. So it was resolved that all would gather at the clubhouse for coffee at 1000 the following Thursday, 27th January 2005. Since then a varied gathering has mustered almost every Thursday to carry the many and varied maintenance tasks

around the club. In the early days it was a case of bring your own sandwiches, no soup, cheese, wine or Pud! Gradually the cuisine improved until lunchtime became quite a civilised affair, although

it still had to be earned ! One day the group were scraping and painting the race marks in the old Pulp Mill, thanks to an arrangement by Jim Shearer. It was cold and the team decamped, with sandwiches,

to the home of Beryl Austin for hot soup. Here they found ladies enjoying a glass of wine before lunch. It would have been rude and churlish to have refused the offered glass! We then resolved to introduce

wine on a regular basis. Thank you Beryl!! Even after the old clubhouse burned down the team continued to meet and a lunchtime shelter hut was provided by Roddy Campbell, see photie.

There have often been times when it was difficult to associate the weekly tasks with the "joys of sailing" But occasionally there was time for relaxation, see photie.

So, if you have some time to spare on a Thursday forenoon do come and join the team, there is no qualification required for membership! You may even find your name mentioned in dispatches in the weekly report.

Scribe



Our Hut



The Storm



Relaxing



The Pud



Excavation

Dons Sottise Summer Cruise 2016

In the middle of this winter weather, it is good to be reminded of sunnier days, and the final chapter of Jim Douglas' summer cruise does just that. The following is an account of the travels of Dons Sottise from Canna to Loch Moirdart and then to the Sound of Mull.

Loch Moidart and Castle Tioram

On Monday, we sailed from Canna to Loch Moidart after considering our options on the charts. 7 knots on close haul in the water between Rhum and Skye – wonderful!

The entrance to Loch Moidart heading for Castle Tiorham up the channel is up there on the list of the most magnificent rock dodges in the whole of the UK. Nothing beats it in my view. We are just so familiar with the location locally that we don't appreciate it! It does however have to be executed with precision and team work. We have done it before, but we still had Mike on binoculars, Colin on paper charts, Alan on the electronic charts and myself on the helm in case King Raoull and his perch claimed his revenge in Viking tradition.

We anchored in the pool at Castle Tiorham which is always a challenge of depth, tide, swinging room. Just enough time to cook the meal, clean the heads and welcome Christine aboard with our friend and Hamish our dog. We collect the guests in the new Honwave dinghy and the captain's wife murmurs her approval of the aluminium floor and captive oars, phew!

We have a stunning meal in the cockpit away from midges, looking at Castle Tiorham and listening to the sound scape of nature.



The visitors are returned to shore and we wind down in the cockpit when, horrors of horrors, Old T Bone, who rammed us while berthing in Lochboisdale, arrives. He was searching for a spot to anchor with a dropping tide and minimal space in the pool. Our anchor and the underwater cables to Shuna narrowed his options. Was he even aware of the underwater electric cable or our anchor chain on the seabed? He was "advised" to respectfully consider the fishing boat mooring yonder and put on a light!

The next morning T bone was away before us and we weigh anchor in a fresh breeze before retracing our path between rocks in the zig zag channel. We were half expecting to see T bone stranded on the mud flats out with the channel!

After leaving Loch Moidart we ended up head to wind and no chance of getting around Ardnamurchan with the tide times and distances, so used the motor. Bo Faskadale can buoy and rock are left to port with a decision for either Colonosay or Tobermory once Ardnamurchan light was abeam.

The decision became Tobermory with the chance of a sail down the sound of Mull with the following wind. Much talk of accidental gybes and stoppers systems (again, this is a recurring topic!). A plan is afoot and on entering Tobermory Seafare chandlery we find the required snap shackles, bungee and rings for the definitive system.

Spaghetti Bolognese by Michael is excellent on the Tobermory pontoons.

A multinational fleet arrive from Northern Ireland, Sweden and England in the marina. Sea Cadets throw buckets of water at each other and have a battle with water hoses. Fortunately, none end up in the drink and will remember the fun.

We hatch plans A, B and C for tomorrow with optimistic forecasts.

The gybe preventer system, "after Pete Wells", with Busby and Briffa modifications is implemented with an old halyard, bungee lines on the boom to bungee with rings and snap shackles. If you are confused at this point, so was I, but it works!

We had planned to start early with ablutions at 8, but had not accounted for West Coast Time in Tobermory International. We need rolls and milk from the Coopy but 2 more snap shackles from Seafare which does not fire up in peak season until 9:30. Diesel from Mckays in Tobers also takes another hour of GMT+BST +WCT = "noon".

The forecast settled enough for landing on Treshnish to chase the puffins and then onward to Bunessan. What we got was rain, poor visibility and swell 5.6 nm from the Dutchmans cap. The pilot book predictions are dire in a swell, so we turned back! Indeed, the irony was that we had left Tobers with the Flying Dutchman Brigantine tied up on the main pier and we failed to gain a Dutchmans cap – yes, you can all groan at that one!

Plan B was now in operation which meant giving Miss Kubota (our affectionate name for our new Beta 35 which is a marinized digger diesel) a rest. We had a following wind off Coll under main and genoa with a rollicking wind into the Sound of Mull again after declining the Dutchmans cap. Time comes for the leading line for the entrance to Loch Sunart having dealt with the young bulls (stirk rocks) loose in the spray to starboard and McLean's nose to port. There is nowhere useful to go when we tack under full sail – so Miss Kubota to the rescue and furl the white flappy things.

Alas, ping, on the main reefing drum as the rope parts company with a grub screw! Sails flapping requires a bit of elastic to regain control and a line from the pilot book to steer. We enter Loch Drumbuie with aplomb and composure remembering the cunning rock to starboard in the entrance channel.



Loch Drumbuie Sunart

We make passage to the first bay and dropped the anchor in 10 metres trying to avoid others. To cut a long story short we decided to lift and reposition in the next bay along. The post-match analysis of the anchor drop over prawn curry came up with PTSD – was this my medical friends worrying about anchor flashbacks? Was this the modern NHS overanalysing the “human factors” in near miss analysis, searching for perfection in chaos? Well, PTSD means Plan, Target, Survey, and Decision to drop!

We summoned Miss Whiplash to the furling rope end and engaged the grub screw again to furl the main.

We raise the anchor in the morning and make sure the furling system works. It was now better in operation than when it parted company!

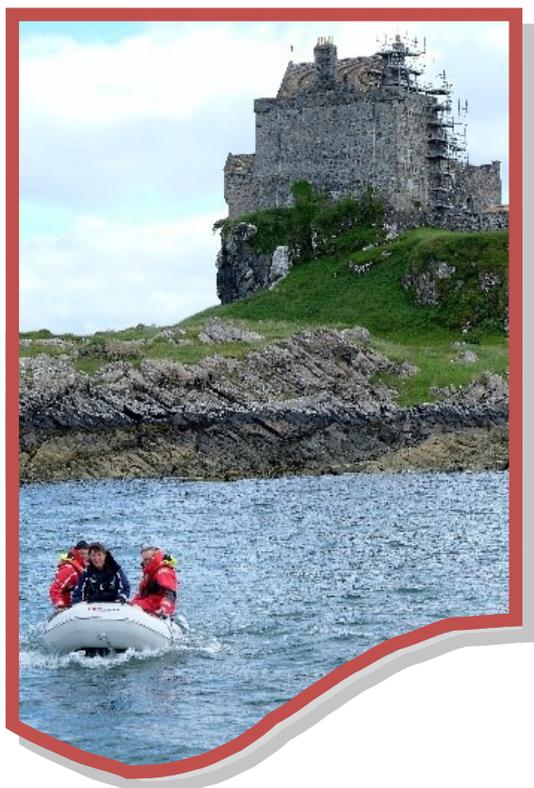
On reaching the Sound of Mull, we started further sea trials of the Wells gybe preventer and refined the process with Lean methodology (that’s a joke about “Top NHS managers” thinking the answer lies in Japanese car plants!) by our consulting engineers Briffa and Busby.

The original plan was for Duart Castle Mull but the depth meter started becoming a bit flaky off Fiunary rocks- those of you with a nervous disposition need not worry at this point, as there is a helpful green can buoy for the Lord of the Isles.

We met a yacht blissfully ignorant of port / starboard conventions and which just held his course. A serious mobile hazard to navigation, indeed. In the Sound of Mull this is a bit like driving a 3-wheeler up a motor way in the wrong direction!

Duart bay without a depth meter seemed silly so plan B came into operation and Loch Aline. Careful planning against the tide at the entrance was required without the depth meter, so Miss Kubota was summoned with battery one. The depth meter reverted to a reliable signal – phew! So, the diagnosis became battery two needing replaced and the depth meter was exonerated.

We secure at Loch Aline harbour, feast on frittata and adjourn



The next morning, we leave Loch Aline and head to Duart Castle on Mull. As we are “Castle collecting” on this trip – that’s Ardtornish Castle, 11th century seat of Clan Donald, on the port bow, Sound of Mull.

We enter Duart bay under motor with a reliable depth signal and practice our new anchoring PTSD standard operating procedure. I remain on anchor watch while the crew gain the clan McLean Duart Castle stronghold.

Meantime “Loose Cannon” appears in the bay under sail and provides a photo opportunity with the telephoto lens. She looks like another Moody and on return home I find she is owned by the Moody owners new Scottish club captain! So, I could send the pictures under sail to our lady class captain.

We then head back to Letter Shuna with 295 miles on the log and bag Castle Stalker on the way through the channel. So, that’s Stalker Appin, Kisimul Barra and Tioram Moidart on their own islands, Duart and Ardtornish on the Sound of Mull – not bad for a “wee trip on the West Coast”!

James Douglas Dons Sottise Moody 35 LYC 25 3 17

