

Friends of Loch Tummel Sailing Club Newsletter

Issue 2 June 2010



Bob, Jean and their classic 15

Party invite – see last page – do you know of someone who was a keen member of the club but for whatever reason is no longer sailing? The editors are arranging a party for Friends of Loch Tummel Sailing Club – please pass on to them the invite attached.....

Former Commodore Ian McLaren reflects on planes, trains, and a Head start into sailing..

In 1973 we were the proud, if inexperienced owners of a Mirror dinghy. At that time we lived in Broughty Ferry so nothing was more obvious than to apply for membership of Royal Tay Yacht Club. Having somehow passed the interview stage, our application was approved and we commenced our brief, if unspectacular attempts to master the basics as well as the tide! Came the Easter Holiday Weekend and the thought that camping and sailing somewhere else might be fun, we sought the advice from Colin's dad, Hugh

Scott. Without hesitation Hugh recommended Tummel Sailing Club and camping at Ardgualich.

Camp was established on the Friday evening and next forenoon we headed for LTSC. There we encountered the commodore, the late David Gifford, who was pumping water from his wooden Wayfarer, "Venus". David was very welcoming and invited us to return, joining the club's Wine & Cheese Party that evening. We were unable to go but we enthusiastically accepted an invitation to return next day, and so we did. Immediately we met and were befriended by the Calder family who had just preceded us as new

members. Soon after we were approached by the one and only John Northcott, who promptly asked "what do you know". The honest

answer must have been given because John immediately took control of the situation and lessons commenced. John was a good teacher and we soon thought that the rudiments had been mastered. Alas that cannot have been the case because Bob Dalziel took great glee in later years to remind us about sailing our Mirror in circles! No reflection on John's teaching but rather upon our competence!

The wonderful welcome and willing assistance given made a huge impact and we were hooked on Tummel from day one. How could it have been otherwise! The welcome and willingness to help new members is the hallmark of our club and long may that remain.

In the passage of time our Mirror was replaced, first by a wooden Wayfarer then a "plastic" version, followed by a Kestrel then a Scorpion which remains our favourite dinghy. For sheer beauty and great sailing, a succession of Flying Fifteens has commanded our affection. As our family progressed through the commendable learning route of crewing for others, it became apparent that helming was next on the agenda. Going full circle, it was agreed that a Mirror should be purchased and a suitable boat was identified at Royal Tay. The price was agreed and payment made. That was the easy bit! Collection was the problem because the launching trolley was in a state of collapse ...salt water disease!. That precluded pushing it along the walkway to Douglas Terrace and the only alternative was to lift it over the level crossing! All normal observations and precautions were taken and the lift proceeded smoothly, at least until the second gate was reached, where there was a muscle power

hiatus and a train coming!!! There it was, Mirror on top of the gate, half on the rail side and the family struggling. As head of the family I acted decisively and got to the other side of the gate and instructed, push! They did, the Mirror moved quickly which resulted in me being smacked in the head, back on the safe side, before the train, the dinghy was lowered and immediately christened "Headstart"!

By the time that "Headstart" was on the go a caravan had been installed at Mains of Kynachan and occasionally the Mirror would be sailed up to "our field" and back next morning. One beautiful warm and almost windless Sunday morning I was ghosting back to the club with "Peat" our dog when, an out of context sound was detected. I lifted the heeled dinghy's jib and to my consternation, there was an aeroplane heading straight for me at mast height! At the last moment the plane climbed and continued on towards Tummel Bridge where it buzzed the caravan site, returned for another go at me then headed for Port An Eilean, loops were looped! Not satisfied with that, the pilot made for the club's pier, cutting the engine for a silent approach then, when disaster seemed unavoidable the engine cut in and the plane cleared (just) the trees at the back of the dinghy park. I know that it was futile to swear at an aeroplane but I confess that I used my full expletive vocabulary. By the time I came ashore I was calm but, Bob Ferguson, who knew a "thing or two" about aeroplanes, had phoned the police. A breeze had filled in and the morning race was underway. Pauline and I were doing "no bad" in our Kestrel when we were approached by a rescue boat sent to inform us that we should return to the shore, where the Police were waiting to take a statement. Nothing more was heard until the pilot, a graduating French student from Scone was prosecuted for putting John McLaren in

“fear and alarm”. An amazingly accurate charge considering that the Fiscal was never closer than forty miles from the incident!

The pilot was reprimanded, properly so, but he sure could fly a plane.



Chill Tummel style.....



Iain Mason, get well soon from the editors and all at the club.

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Jim Hartshorne joins the club and.....

Can he fix it? Yes he can.....

I was introduced to the club in 1971 by the then secretary and majo-domo John Northcott (Scout Master, Operatic Society member and as a side line – Customs Officer).

At that time I didn't own a boat and cash was a bit tight. There appeared a certain Allan Thomson who told me of a GP14 lying near Blair Atholl so off we went and in a gaily decorated barn found Eliza Jane, somewhat in need of T.L.C. but basically sound. She had been built by her owner, a club member, from the original magazine drawings and been sailed in Fascally before Tummel was formed.

What of the facilities then? Well there was the basic core clubhouse, a 'race box', or more correctly the radio cabin off a 15cwt WW2 truck, a new jetty built of telegraph poles and the start of the big slip.

In the clubhouse there was a large mural showing various characters who appeared to be influenced by magic mushrooms – I wondered what I had let myself in for – it had apparently been the back drop for a party. Later I found that the artist had a strong tendency to walking around in the buff...

Racing was quite gentlemanly, we weren't very successful as the GP was rather heavy – the competition – well it sounds familiar – Barron, McLaren, Ferguson, Laing etc. The results were familiar too..

Eliza Jane was proving too slow for my son Ian so a trapeze boat was needed so we got a Mirror 14 or Marauder, a plywood stick and glue boat that had far too much buoyancy built in and when we capsized, which was not unusual, wanted to turn turtle, that is until the mast got stuck in the mud, burgees became consumables!

The inevitable happened, the boys grew up and girls and motor bikes became more attractive so no crew. So one Sunday – it was an island race – Allan and I teamed up – if I remember correctly he was out on the wire all the way from the Island. That's how it began, the idea was that we would sail in each other's boats week about. His was a large Shark Cat which could go remarkably quickly, our directional stability at times was not that good though. There was an expanding Flying Fifteen fleet then so we decided to join this and bought 693 the first of four 15's over the years.

We had our moments with them, on one occasion in light weather we went aground, very gently, but firmly up the Loch by the wall. Alan volunteered to jump overboard and push us off – in doing so he just about disappeared – we were on a tree stump.

Initially the majority of the FF were kept on moorings but the need, or convenience, of day sailing became apparent, but the launching and recovery facilities were inadequate, so in a slightly hap hazard way we developed the FF slip and jetty as we know them today. This started by yours truly borrowing a large chain saw and with Alistair Rae cutting down, and up, a large tree that was in the way. Then material appeared from various sources and the

jetties and slips were built, or more correctly created by a series of quite large work parties, very much a DIY self help job. The only regular piece of equipment we had was an old (ex WD) dump truck that was almost impossible to start, but when it was going shook, rocked, rolled and smoked round the site giving the driver vibro massage.

Other things were happening too, membership was growing and the club house was extended under Iain McLaren's watchful eye – we obtained some ground and later, due to the lack of storage the big shed was built mainly by Jack McLean and David Laing.

In the 1970's there was a fuel crisis and up to then we held two regatta's each year, a summer and then an Autumn one. The summer one was declining and the Autumn booming. The result was Tummel Week. The Autumn regatta was getting in the region of 100 + boats and we had to borrow safety boats. The classes which sailed then – there were no Tupperware boats as such – were N12's, Enterprises, FF's, some wooden mirrors, Albacores, Fireballs, Kestrel, Lark and handicap. At one point we had between 60 – 70 Mirrors.

Coming up to date we now have vastly improved facilities, extensive land and a strong training base – all good, but the thing I remembered most was, and is, the self help DIY nature of the club with just about every one mucking in to help each other.



A typical Sunday scene, David Laing and Jack MacLean, the original shed builders putting it to the use they intended

Friends of Loch Tummel Sailing Club

Afternoon party invitation to Friends and former members of the club

12.00 noon on

Saturday 4th of September

A chance to meet old shipmates, share tales and catch up on

the club activities

Coffee and cakes

RSVP to:

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