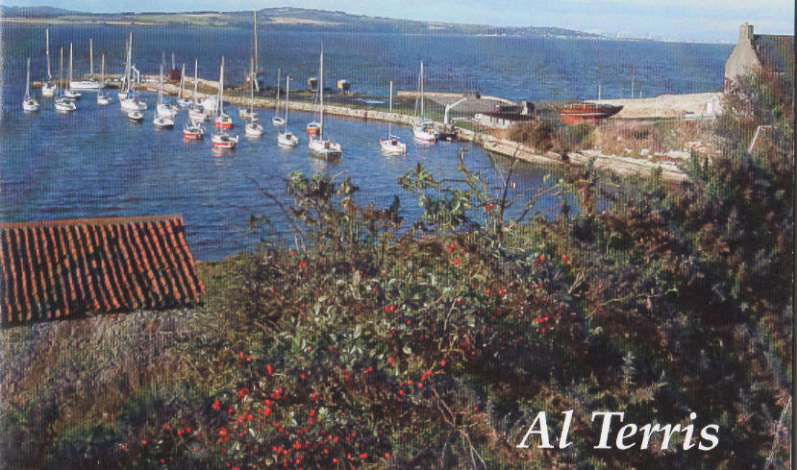


THE FORTH CRUISING CLUB AND I



Al Terris

50TH POST WAR ANNIVERSARY
AT CAPERNAUM
1998



In marquee, Past Commodores

L - R: Sean Cunningham, Bryce Gemmell, Joe Swankie, Al Terris, Brian Merrett, George Bell, Lord and Lady Elgin (guests), Ian Girvan and Donald Simmonds.

THE FORTH CRUISING CLUB AND I

Dedication

I think it is fair to say that for any club or organisation to be formed and run successfully it must have a keen hardworking 'hardcore' of like minded people.

In this the F.C.C. has been more than fortunate. As most clubs experience, if the 'hardcore' work diligently then it will find that the right people come along at the right time with their various talents to cover the ongoing changing requirements of the club. In this again the F.C.C. has been most successful.

I have been privileged to have been part of the 'hardcore' for most of my 53 sailing years at time of writing, either on or off committee. I have worked with and befriended so many wonderful and unforgettable people in my lifetime from boyhood to senior citizen.

If the F.C.C. is referred to as a female then she has had many lovers in her time and I must confess to having been completely besotted with her all my life.

Even yet, in my older age, as I come around the corner at the top of the hill leading down to Capernaum, I never fail to get that twinge of anticipation I've had since I was a boy.

I therefore dedicate what I write to all the wonderful, capable people, mentioned and unmentioned, who have given of their time, talents and money to the F.C.C.

My prayer is that future generations will realise their contribution and use their inspiration to carry the club forward to continued success.

This is perhaps not just a post 1939 - 1945 war record of the Forth Cruising Club, but every bit as much a love story, the club being a very large part of my life in Limekilns and my family's involvement in sailing.

My story really starts before the club was re-started in 1948. My father bought the 30ft motor boat 'Integrity' in the winter of 1945; it's owner Mr Johnston, a club member having died during the war.

As a family we started sailing from 1946 onwards, myself being the grand old age of 13, my brother Ian at 16 and my younger sister Margaret. We were total novices to sailing and were very much influenced by village characters and families such as the Houstons and Lightfoots.

Duncan Houston had life rental of the boatyard at Capernaum pier from the Earl of Elgin. Everything sailing-wise or to do with boats at Capernaum was done through 'Old Dunc' as he was called. On reflection he was 5 years younger than I am at time of writing, he being 61 years old in 1946.

Old Dunc owned the large corrugated iron shed within the yard, including all the equipment required to launch and bring up all the boats, mostly motor boats at that time. He was a joiner to trade and had built lifeboats at the yard before it was decimated by fire in the thirties. He then worked with the 'Metal Industries' ship-breaking company for the latter part of his working life and was to be found in his shed every night and week-end.

As a youngster I would be along to the yard as soon as I was home from school and finished my tea. The shed was lit in the dark nights by carbide lamps which spluttered and hissed away giving quite an intense light. Eventually the light would die down and would have to be rejuvenated by shaking the lamp, the mixture of carbide and water giving off the gas. Old Dunc had a nasty habit of unscrewing the lid off the lamp when the flame became weak from want of water and depositing a hefty spit into the container. The atmosphere in the shed with all the mixtures of tar, red lead, grease, oil, paraffin, cut wood, not to mention Old Dunc's pipe, which seldom left his mouth, along with the flickering light, was intoxicating to a boy just wanting to know about boats. Dunc was busy with boat repairs and also converting an ex-lifeboat into his motor boat 'Memnon'. His sons David, a marine engineer,

and Smith, a seaman, were also much involved then and resulted in a lifelong friendship. It was a fascinating time in my life.

One has to place all this in context of a different era. Limekilns was very much a village then and pastimes were very different to the era I now write in. In the days when there was only the radio for entertainment and little transport available, the sea was still an important part of village life for the younger lads of the villages and many of my school age friends went to sea for a career.

I am trying to re-create the scenario as it was at Capernaum just after that dreadful war. I should also add that there was a large open fronted shed at the pier situated approximately where the club's present garden entry is. This was the 'Old Men's Shed' and on most afternoons the village 'Oldies' and 'Worthies' would meet and put the world to right, usually with a great deal of hilarity, other times almost coming to blows.

The clubhouse of the F.C.C. had been a wheelhouse on the paddle steamer 'The Willie Muir' owned by GNER and used to ply between Burntisland and Granton. It was sold to Metal Industries in March 1937 for £1,050 and broken up at Charlestown that year.

The club bought the upper wheelhouse and brought it along with difficulty to Capernaum in May that year. Being framed with 2" by 3/8" iron angle at very short spacings, lead lined and panelled inside and out in teak, it was to put it mildly 'substantial'. Its condition after seven years of neglect was obviously not good with all the windows broken, doors ajar with locks and all the interior fittings missing. It was situated just beyond the start of the concrete ramp going down to the basement.

We come now to the pier itself, which was in a very sorry state. There was really just a shell with very large holes in the centre and the end of the pier from where the present crane is was a heap of rubble tapering down to about four feet from ground level.

The Club itself had automatically closed with the start of the war in 1939 with everyone fully committed to the war effort. I believe the Capernaum area during the war was not a safe place to be due to the testing of guns from the dockyard in this direction.

The Secretary of the club was Norman Bonnar, a very go ahead young man whose

family ran a superb ironmongers in Dunfermline. He was killed early in the war as a spitfire test pilot. He left behind a completed hydrofoil which he had designed and built, a fascinating machine which hung from the ceiling of the Fife Motor Company's garage in Halbeath Road, Dunfermline for many years.

The many others lost during that time are recorded in the minutes. However, I certainly remember the survivors, mostly older men. The most notable among them being Dr Wallace, the local G.P., Major Threlfall who stayed in the 'Knowe' in Red Row, Mr Billings, Tom Fergusson, Mr Lightfoot with his sons David and Jack and the aforementioned Houstons.

It is here that I should say I now blame myself along with the rest of my age group for not finding out more about the pre-war history of the club whilst these people were alive, and recorded it. I suppose we fell into the common fault of the young to be so involved with the present and the future that we don't find the past to be relevant until it catches up with us. The oldest existing minutes book of the club in existence starts in 1935 and an accounts book from 1932. It is obvious that other minute and account books existed before the war and I strongly suspect that the late Mr Bonnar, then secretary, had them at home when he was killed.

There is an account book for the Regatta committee from 1912 onwards. I must remind you that this was called the 'Dunfermline, Limekilns and Charlestown Regatta Committee' and was a separate body with its own funds and committee, although in practice was run by the same people as the F.C.C. I believe this came to be in order to raise funds from the business community in Dunfermline. The regatta was always held at Limekilns Pier because of the space available and closer to transport, both rail and bus.

I do know Major Threlfall, a keen sailor, came to Limekilns in 1904, and was involved with the building of the Forth Bridge. He soon started to get sailing organised in the area, so it is perhaps safe to assume that he formed the F.C.C. soon after, in some shape or form.

The younger element at this time consisted entirely of local boys, prominent among those being David Edwards and John Knox. David Edwards was a disciple of Old Dunc and went to sea after leaving school to become a ship's master. John Knox and his boat the 'Thistle' were well known; the Thistle, a 16' clinker built double ender sailed remarkably well. Bill Carty and Bill Rae were also showing

more than a passing interest in the sport.

As I stated earlier, my family started sailing in 1946 in Integrity, our first cruise being to Leven, and spending most of the week in Methil dock, a great adventure to us then. We then went through the Forth and Clyde canal to the west coast; our 'skipper' being Old Dunc, along with Dave Houston as engineer. This was a trip we were to do annually for the next seven years until we delivered our larger Integrity to the west on a one way trip.

The canal itself was an incredible trip with 29 locks and 32 bridges to negotiate along with many other hazards, including keeping clear of puffers who took up a lot of room. The lock and bridge keepers were great characters and we got to know many of them very well. By having our own 'Pinch Bars' as they were called, to open the sluices, we could eventually go through in a day, starting at 6.00 a.m. and working non stop until 9.00 p.m. It was known to take a week for some boats without the 'know-how'.

Once through the canal we had no knowledge of navigation, no charts or instruments except an old compass in a box. Complete with a road map we managed to cruise from Ayr in the south west to Tobermory in the north over a few years and return to Limekilns whole and hearty. Who says there isn't a special 'Sea God' who looks after such people? We must also be among the few people left who have done the round trip from east to west and returned by using the three canals, the Caledonian, the Crinan and Forth and Clyde canals.

During this time David Lightfoot had relaunched his boat 'Ruinneag', a star class yacht; an incredible machine in those days. I must say here that I have never since met anyone quite like David. He had joined the Merchant Navy at the age of 16 sailing with the Ben Line and was invalided out in 1941 riddled with T.B., the curse of those days. Surgery then for T.B. was severe and Dave was left in poor physical condition. He took up a hobby of jewellery which became his main occupation whilst confined so much in bed.

His father, Mr Lightfoot had a plumbers business in Dunfermline and his brother Jack worked with the then 'Fife Electric Power Company'. As a family there was nothing they couldn't make or do with their hands, and it had to be absolutely perfect or it was scrapped and the job re-done. I would have been proud to say I had made some of the things they rejected as not being good enough. They had built

the 'Ruinneag' (Gaelic for Little Star) before the war and also the club dinghy, a national twelve built to a then radical design by Uffa Fox, the Uffa King being the designated type. Both were well ahead of their time and beautifully built.

Dave, requiring ballast one day asked me out for a sail on Ruinneag in a fresh breeze. Imagine your first sail at 14 years old in a star class yacht - I was hooked for life!



Author, age 15 on 'Integrity' in Clyde.



Father, Mother, Ian and Margaret, 1949.



'Integrity' in Forth and Clyde Canal.



'Integrity' tied alongside Hitler's Pinnace at Crinan Canal.

Chapter 2

1945 - 1950

Re-creation of the Club

I hope I have managed to re-create the scene at that time from my own point of view and so to the re-creation of the club.

The first obvious major requirement was the repair of the pier. As is recorded in the minutes, my father, a most energetic man, hired two Irish labourers for three weeks. Along with many of the young lads of the village, Mr Billings, my brother Ian and myself, restored the main part of the pier. We then tackled the end of the pier separately. Mr Billings, who took over as secretary, later described and recorded it as a "mammoth job". It should be noted that Pa Billings as he was called, was then 76 years old and his wife also laboured along with us. He had been both secretary and Treasurer before the war.

The local coalman Willie Black, a great friend of my father's, was generous as always with the cement required and was very helpful to us especially regarding the use of his lorry.

We have now come to the point where all the aforementioned people and others were in a mind to restart the club, and an informal gathering was held on a sunny afternoon on the grass where the present basement is. It was decided to hold a meeting on the 13th August 1948.

This duly took place, being ten years since the last meeting. It must have been an emotional occasion for the former members, but we younger ones were just thrilled with anticipation of what lay ahead.

The committee was appointed -

President	-	Major Threlfall
Secretary	-	Mr Billings
Commodore	-	Alex Terris (Senior)
Treasurer	-	John Fernie (of more later)
Rear Commodore	-	John Knox
Vice Commodore	-	G Christie

Work immediately started on the clubhouse; the glass replaced in the windows by Mr Billings - who else! Dave Lightfoot started renovating the fabric of the building, dry scraping the teak back to its former glory - a laborious job done with sharpened files bent over at the end and kept sharp with a hand grinder. Those of us who worked with him learned many crafts. The outside was then coated with raw linseed oil. The inside was varnished, the table was replaced, made by Dave, the floor painted and a paraffin lamp installed (being the one hanging in the present clubhouse by the kitchen door). Dave found it in a junk shop, cleaned it up and made the hanger it sits in. It was to be our light for all the meetings etc., we had for many years until we installed electricity for the second clubhouse.

The first post war dinner dance was held in the Queens Hall that winter, being organised by the Entertainments Committee of Ian Terris, John Gardiner - Ian's friend from Dunfermline, Betty Lightfoot and John Fernie. Betty and John being sister and brother. John Fernie revelled in organising and taking part in social events, a tireless worker for the club functions for many years. He also used to do commentating at the regattas using a mobile P.A. system, this being the done thing at that time. The dance itself was quite an affair. The committee, with great enthusiasm, tried to do four functions in one night. The evening started with a whist drive in the main hall and a beetle drive in the smaller hall. When this finished, the hall was quickly set out for a full dinner. After dinner speeches to cover ten years took a fair time, then the hall was cleared again for dancing, this having an interval not much later for a full buffet, then more dancing. I think people used to be made of sterner stuff in those days.

The club also ran a 'smoker' as they were called then, early in 1949, held in the Elgin Hotel. This was purely for men and consisted of a meal and a chance to socialise with our fellow club members. I remember Willie Simpson, who owned the 'Mary Rose' in Charlestown, playing the piano to Tom Ferguson singing verses of 'Oh dear what can the matter be'; that I'd never heard before or since and I've never repeated. It was with great sadness that Tom died only a few weeks later, one of the old stalwarts of the club.

1949 was a momentous year for the F.C.C. and for myself. My father bought us our first sailing dinghy, an 11'6" gunter rigged open clinker built by local craftsman and sailor Tom Watson, one of the finest boatbuilders ever known in the area. I was

also sailing in the club dinghy 'Jean' with Bill Carty and Bill Rae at that time.

Club racing, such as it was, started. My mother used to drive the car to the end of the pier, starting and finishing the race using the car horn. The starting line was between the car and the dolphin pole. For racing marks we used the many admiralty transport buoys off the village at that time. I think it should be mentioned that there was no rescue facilities and precious few life jackets available then, only ex. RAF mae wests, if possible.

John Fernie persuaded Old Dunc to let him erect a 6' x 4' shed opposite the existing garden entry to the clubhouse. He converted this into the 'Bayview Cabin' selling lemonade, crisps, teas etc. At weekends Limekilns got its fair share of visitors and John, who was also a musician, would sit along with a friend and play their accordions until a crowd gathered, then he would put his one down and serve food and drink from the cabin. He always opened up on race nights and we were always thankful for a mug of hot oxo and a packet of crisps when we came ashore.

The regatta committee was also formed early that year, a formal announcement having to be made in the Dunfermline Press. As I mentioned previously, this was really just a formality as nobody usually ever came from the town, with one exception as I will tell.

The early regatta meetings which were chaired by my father were quite difficult ones. There was so much to do to try to emulate the pre-war regattas which were quite spectacular affairs. The only people left with pre-war experience were Dr Wallace and Major Threlfall, both elderly but both still full of enthusiasm and vigour. Our biggest problem was lack of funds and lack of equipment. Whilst discussing this one evening in the clubhouse, a gentleman who had been sitting quietly at a few meetings suddenly stood up and said "Can I help you?" He then introduced himself, being Captain Farquhar, from the Dockyard and staying in the village. From then on we were transformed; he was a natural organiser and could literally obtain anything marinewise we required. Through him we got the use of two large pontoons, ropes and anchors. Through the navy he provided the committee boat and all the necessary equipment for running the races. He also organised a strong naval presence at the regatta with races for whalers, cutters and 14' R.N.S.A. naval dinghies.

To raise funds for the many prizes we required was an arduous task, but was taken

on with great vigour. Jumble sales were held. However, the main amount was raised the hard way by simply asking for money. To go to the door of a stranger's house and ask for money for something the person hasn't a clue about is a daunting task, and I think my nose would be a different shape today if it hadn't had a few doors slammed into it. However, more people were sympathetic. I teamed up with John Fernie and we often came back with lots of home made jam, marmalade, farm eggs and home baking, but little money. Betty Lightfoot was our star, she collected by far the most money and collectively we made enough along with the proceeds of a Spring dance.

The regatta was held in August 1949. The preparation was quite incredible. The programmes had been sent out previously to all the other clubs and the entry forms received in plenty time. These were all dealt with by Dr Wallace and Major Threlfall, who retired to the Knowe with a few bottles of whisky and worked out the handicaps in some ancient manner known only to themselves.

We had the pontoons set out in the pier for the swimming races and a diving platform had been built on the outside one for diving displays by the Carnegie swimming baths. The greasy pole was fixed up over the water to be covered with soft soap on the day, a small flag fixed at the end to be brought back by the swimmer. A dancing platform had been made for a display by a Dunfermline dance studio. Provision was made for the town brass band to play. Washtubs and ducks were obtained for the duck hunt, the ducks being let loose and the participants trying to catch them in a washtub with a shovel as a paddle. There was also the platform at the end of the pier to erect, from which John Fernie gave his commenting and kept the shore side activities organised speaking via a loudspeaker van hired from a local firm McKissocks.

Then there was the pipe smoking competition; the quickest to smoke a pipe of 'thick black' tobacco was the winner, as was the first person to eat a huge raw onion in the onion eating competition. To complete the events we had the 'old men's race', over 65's had to run to the end of the prom and back to the pier to win a bottle of whisky. Ice cream vans also were available on the day. All the refreshments and changing areas were held in the King's Cellars which were really most unsuitable at that time.

The bus company had been informed to run a continuous service all day as

hundreds of people came from Dunfermline and surrounding area. We only managed all this by having a group of dedicated hard working capable people and if I may say so ably led by my father who didn't know the meaning of "It can't be done".

Regarding the pontoons, the first time we got them we were informed a tug would bring them up from the yard to opposite Limekilns where they would be handed over; the tug not being allowed to leave the channel. The appointed time was H.W. at 06.00 hrs and I volunteered to collect them. I hadn't the remotest idea what pontoons were or looked like, but there I was in the middle of the river in our 9' rowing dinghy on a very misty midweek morning. I don't know who got the bigger surprise, the tug boat skipper or me when he appeared out of the murk towing two massive catamarans.

After a short consultation he agreed to tie them up to a mooring buoy and we towed them in at night with three motor boats. Boy - did I have a story to tell on the school bus that morning!

However, I leave the tit-bit to the last. The committee were aware of there always being a fairground at the regatta and booked a company called McCardle, who agreed to attend and did so on the Thursday, setting up on the ground at the head of the pier. We had to quickly arrange for a standpipe to be erected there. It was seemingly our responsibility to do this as we were the hirers. Unknown to us the show company Cadona had always done the regatta pre-war and automatically had first call on a site if they had been the previous tenants, as decreed by the Showman's Guild at that time I believe. Along they came on the Friday and all hell broke loose. The result was that McCardle had to vacate the site and allow Cadona on.

Not to be outdone, McCardle moved along to the area next to the war memorial and set up there. Another company called 'Taylors Shows' also got involved. To say that Limekilns became Blackpool overnight would be no exaggeration; there were shows everywhere, right from the end of the pier along the prom to Charlestown Brae.

The regatta Saturday turned out a fine day with a perfect breeze and all went very well. Large crowds came and went and the race officials seemed pleased with their results; perhaps the large amount of therapeutic liquid which went aboard

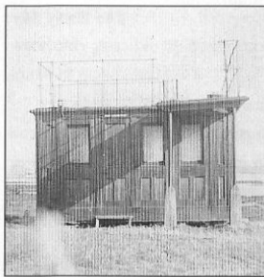
previously had something to do with it.

One of the last events of the day was always the whaler rowing race between the navy and a crew of villagers. The villagers were always roused out of the 'Ship' just before the race and great hilarity ensued, despite the rowing being somewhat erratic, the locals always managed to win - brute strength (and alcohol) beating naval training!

Now that the organisation and infrastructure was in place, the following years ran very much to plan and the regatta as a spectator sport gradually waned until eventually the sailing club took over the running of the regatta formally and moved it to Capernaum in 1961. By that time the shows were not doing very well and were not keen to come back anyway. By that time the format had changed drastically. The R.S.P.C.A., to put it mildly, did not approve of the duck hunt and that never took place again. Other events were gradually whittled away to comply with various sports groups' legislation and requirements. We were wrapped over the knuckles for giving cash prizes to amateur organisations, swimming distances had to be exact, changing facilities better etc. We even had bother with the old man's race, the worthy locals did all sorts of devious things to their fellow competitors and resulted in many an argument, and on one occasion almost came to blows.

Dr Wallace went onto a dodgem car in the fairground about 19.00 hrs and came off two and a half hours later, a habit he continued for as many years as the shows were there.

My father bought a 51' 6" admiralty M.F.V. which was lying at Port Edgar along with many others, the fishing fraternity getting first choice of boats. She was seemingly an odd size regarding licensing and was put up for public sale. Unfortunately, my father never had a sail in her, as he was tragically killed as a passenger in a horrific car crash involving a bus in November that year. There exists a very moving tribute to him written by Mr Billings in the Minute book of the club at the March Meeting 1950. At that meeting Ian Terris was elected Commodore in his father's place. Also at that meeting the desirability of a larger clubhouse was first mentioned.



First Clubhouse, ex Willie Muir wheelhouse.



Early Club days at pier.



'Pa' Billings' boat 'Mona' out with village youths aboard (myself standing).



Dunc. Houston on 'Integrity'.



Dunc. Houston's shed at Capernaum.

The Early 50's

The early 50's in the club were years of consolidation. Membership was not large but the loyal hardcore worked so well. We had been joined by John Walker, a local blacksmith, who became our Secretary when our amazing Mr Billings retired in 1951 aged 82.

We had also started to extend our car parking area slightly. It has to be remembered that the pier came right down to the clubhouse corner at that time and there was only room for two or three cars. As time went by we gradually filled in the corner bit by bit until of course we formed the existing car park many years later.

I was rear commodore at this time and busy with moorings and pier maintenance which has always been ongoing. We were greatly helped by Dunc Wilson from Charlestown, being active in the club and making a stone lifter, a photograph of which exists in the clubhouse. This consisted of a pipe frame bolted together and a jib which overhung the pier allowing us to lift the many stones lying there with a block and tackle attached to the jib.

The first club class was the 11'6" 'Fuddy' clinker built dinghy of which we had three. Bill Rae built one, apprenticed by myself, George Bell - he made one along with our aforementioned Tom Watson. Good little starter boats they turned out to be.

In 1951 Bill Rae married the design of Uffa Fox's 'Hellcat' to a Van-de-Stat design and came up with 'Skua' at 21'6". She was a double chine deep keel boat, built of marine ply with a dagger board type lifting rudder and reverse sheet transom. With our usual partnership of Bill the craftsman and myself the labourer we built and launched her in 1953. She was a delight to sail, so much so that a certain Jack Robertson from Granton scaled down her dimensions to 15'6" and the 'Skua' class became quite successful in the Forth.

As a family, we had converted the M.F.V. into a cruising boat also called 'Integrity' and still sailed the west coast via the Forth and Clyde canal.

In November 1954 I had to do my two years National Service in the army and only managed home for the regattas each year. Getting home from Yorkshire, where I

was based in the Army, for special sailing functions was not easy and most of them were only possible by being on compassionate leave, my granny having died eight times in two years!

The sailing side of things had mixed fortunes in the early 50's. We had a real hotchpotch of boats and the need for class racing was obvious. There had been much discussion among the clubs on this subject, but everyone had different views on what should be chosen. However, Cramond had formed a good fleet of hornet dinghies. The 16' hornet was at that time a fast hard chine boat using a sliding seat for the crew. It was also an easily built boat. In a fair breeze it was an exciting boat to sail and we soon had a fair fleet. I sailed on one for the first time, home on army leave, at the regatta in 1955 with Bill Carty and we managed to come in second.

Some of the winter meetings were held in Macari's Café which was situated opposite the Bruce Arms Hotel, the club house being rather cold and draughty at times.

In 1955 John Fernie took over as secretary from being Treasurer and Mr Gray, who had started his own joinery business, took over my mantle as rear-commodore. Unfortunately, we lost the valuable services of Bill Carty, due to the dockyard moving him South.

In the mid 50's the growing need for larger premises loomed more and more in the club's agenda, always dismissed because of cost. There were no lottery funds or grants available then. At the General Meeting in 1955, Mrs Terris Senior offered to stand guarantor to the sum of £200 for the club to procure new headquarters. This offer was accepted by the club and a special committee was formed to secure new headquarters.

In 1955 Dr Wallace retired from active membership of the club and was made an honorary life member for his incredible service to it. Sadly, Mr Billings died in November of that year, a remarkable man whom I shall never forget.

The ranks of the club had been swelled gradually over these years with the inclusion of people such as Charlie Brown, a joiner from Charlestown, Jack Castell, workmate of Jack Lightfoot, who was to play a significant part in the building of the new clubhouse, and another colleague of theirs Jim Sim. All these people along with their skills and enthusiasm added greatly to the club's expansion and well being. May I pay tribute here to all the members' wives who did so much work on

the social and fundraising activities.

My mother and sister Margaret Tait, (then Miss Terris), along with Betty and Jean Lightfoot, Mary Johnston, were among the forerunners and many more to come. The club owes them a great debt but I know they enjoyed it as much as their menfolk did.

Around this time Bob Johnston joined the club having moved into the village, a powerhouse of a man who would tackle anything and was a great servant to the club and became Commodore.

In 1956 we represented the club at Clyde Week. This was the first time dinghies had been introduced to this event; wasn't really their scene you know!

It was held at Rothesay and I managed to get a week's army leave to join the party at Limekilns. Bill Rae had built a double trestle on top of Willie Black's lorry for two Hornets and we towed the other one on the trailer. Once there the hornet crowd had taken over a small hotel - I think the owner fled when he saw his beautiful garden covered in sails (cotton at that time) and various undergarments drying on the bushes.

The courses set for us were incredibly long, going away up the Kyles of Bute. We left in the morning and got home in the evening. The first days we returned sunburnt, parched and starving. We learned quickly to take provisions with us. Another problem was the fact that many boats had female crews. Girls tended to be better crews on hornets because of the sliding seat. With their more streamlined internal plumbing arrangement they were able to get from one side to the other more easily.

With 30 hornets sitting becalmed for hours in the middle of the Kyles some of the toilet arrangements were varied and interesting. The horneteers were a close knit group and we had great fun finishing with a grand ball on the Friday night. I do remember my brother Ian accompanied by sister Margaret being announced loudly as "Ian Terris and his daughter Margaret". Ian was not amused.

In 1957 efforts to resolve the clubs expansion were still being pursued, with suggested plans to extend the present hut and an alternative proposal to move over to the foreshore where the existing scout hall is now. In this year the Sea Scouts, of which I was involved as rover leader, were affiliated to the club on a trial basis. Jack Lightfoot became Commodore, Ian Terris retired having done a lengthy term of



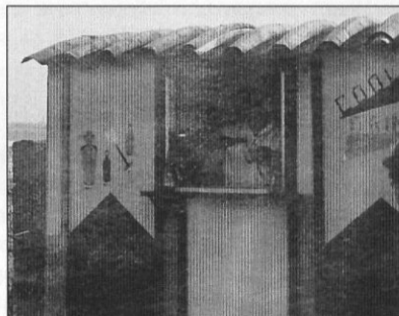
How the boats were launched before mobile cranes - hard work!



Club boats at Capernaum - 1950's.



John Fernie as we love to remember him.



John Fernie's marvellous 'Bayview Cabin' at Capernaum Pier (I can still taste the hot 'Oxo' yet).

office with great efficiency and vigour.

In 1958 Major Threlfall intimated his wish to stand down as Honorary President as his health was deteriorating and he was unable to attend meetings. Dr Wallace agreed to take over the position. Sadly, in 1958 we suffered the grievous loss of Dave Lightfoot and a very moving tribute exists in the minute book. One would have had to know Dave to appreciate the talent and the spirit the man had despite his frail figure that illness and surgery had left him with. He made his magnificent Hornet Trophy just before he died and mostly made whilst confined to bed. He got the silver by melting down coins and various silver articles before forming the lovely trophy it is today. I know that he did without sleep for many nights to finish it. He also made the box it sits in - another beautiful object in its own right. He had also started to build a hard chine solid planked 30' yacht of his own design in his garden. The design incorporated a well in the deep keel where the engine would sit. It was massively built and he completed the hall, deck, keel and superstructure before he died. It was an amazing lesson of what can be achieved by skill and determination, despite affliction. All the other jewellery etc he left behind were of incredibly high quality; his charm bracelet to his wife Betty has to be seen to be believed.

I was also devastated that same year with the very sudden death of my wife Charlotte, to whom I had only been married for eight months. This happened in June and I was deeply touched by the club cancelling all racing for a week, despite the tide and weather being most favourable, as a sign of respect.

The New Clubhouse

Strangely enough, one of the club's greatest projects, the building of the second clubhouse has not been well recorded in the minute book, so I will try to put it to rights, as I was deeply involved. I suppose this came about because everyone was so busy with the sheer amount of work to be done; we were still quite a small group of people. Also at this time Tom Gilmour and daughter Pat became involved with the club and he was to prove to be a great help in all aspects of the club, especially socially and as Treasurer.

If my memory is correct, in the winter of 56, Bob Johnston who worked in the Dockyard, discovered that a site in the yard was to be cleared of the wooden offices situated there and that they were up for grabs to any organisation wishing them. Time was short and they were to be dismantled and removed by the taker. Whilst a lot of discussion had gone into the various ideas regarding a new clubhouse nothing had really come to fruition. It was quickly decided to take up this option and so one Saturday morning a squad of us, along with Willie Black's lorry, descended on the yard. The shed was sectionable but had been up for a while. After a full day's work we had most of it dismantled and completed the job the following week. We stored the sections at the bottom of the hill where they sat for over two years before getting permission to build it from the Earl of Elgin. Eventually, this was obtained only on the condition that it would be replaced with a stone or brick building in the future.

When we had decided on the site and started to level it, it was decided that if we dug deeper into the hill we could make ourselves a basement area. This was all done by pick and shovel, the stone and earth removed helping to extend the car park a little further. The next requirement was bricks. Many evenings and weekends were spent going out with the lorry to gather second hand bricks, no unused and obviously derelict place was ignored. The bricks were then deposited over to the foreshore next to the garages, where we would sit for hours cleaning off each brick, then taking them over to the site.

Someone loaned us a cement mixer and building commenced. None of us had laid a brick before, but with help from Bob Donaldson, a brickie in the village, we became reasonably competent. Willie Black donated a lot of the cement and when we were up to the required height we laid the concrete floor using beach sand along with chips. This was done roughly as we intended to give it a finished surface. To this day it has never been done.

Enter a man called 'Willie Tallis', a joiner from the village who just happened to work in the electricity board along with our commodore and Jack Castell. Willie is a superb joiner and a larger than life character with a great sense of humour. He quickly assumed the clerk of works situation and the erection of the building, once started, took place quickly. The sections having been lying so long required repair as we went along. We had also extended the original hut by about eight feet. All this work kept our band of joiners, which included Bill Rae, Jimmy Longley, Chic

Brown and the rest of us amateur ones, very busy all trying to keep up with Willie. Willie was often heard to remark "they tell me Rome wisnae built in a day - but then I wisnae on that job"! The roof eventually went on and was made watertight. It might be prudent not to divulge where a lot of material we required came from, but it's fair to say "If it's not too hot, it's not too heavy". Jack Lightfoot and Jack Castell were able to procure a lot of un-needed equipment through the electricity board; things just seemed to appear when required.

Inside we formed a passageway leading into the main hall whilst the kitchen and toilet were to the north end of the building; the kitchen having a large serving hatch into the main hall. Also at that end was a large cupboard for storing office equipment, files etc. The extension at the south end was all window and fitted by Jimmy Longley, who also made a lovely Driftwood Trophy out of a piece of driftwood he found on the beach. Underneath the window ran a bench seat with cupboard space underneath. Our electrical squad soon wired the place and arrangement was made for mains supply to come down from Brucehaven Road, the water pipe being craftily laid in the same trench when no-one was looking! I think we were first in Britain with an alkathene mains water pipe as it wasn't quite legal at that time. It must have been a coincidence that a Limekilns gentleman was the official water 'connector-upper' for the area. We had to build a septic tank situated just past the original clubhouse, which by the way was used for storing all our building materials and tools during the building. We just made it for minimum height for the septic tank, as we hit bedrock which we covered with a skin of cement instead of the 6" concrete base it was supposed to have. Running the drain pipes from the clubhouse to the septic tank was quite a task, as our first attempt failed dismally when inspected by the 'Sanitary Department', as it was called then. The second time he caught us trying to sabotage his tester and wasn't too pleased. At the third attempt we got the all clear.

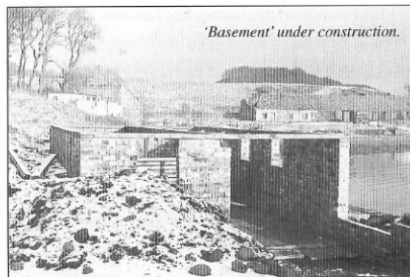
The decoration of the clubhouse was greatly helped by a new member John Lumsden, who was a painter and crewed for Jack Castell on his shearwater catamaran.

The new clubhouse was officially opened on the 14th May 1960 and the club entered what I would say it's most successful decade in it's history. At this time Mr John Angles joined the club, having just moved back to the village. John had strong

connections with sailing, but was content not to sail himself. He was to prove a marvellous asset to the club as Vice Commodore and also as Commodore. He organised and ran all the races and regattas for many years very efficiently.

Bill Carty also re-appeared courtesy of H.M. Dockyard, complete with Janet, his wife. Unfortunately, he was doomed to do yet another spell in the south before returning for good. Bill's efficient work for the club was constant over all the years I cover.

1959 saw further consolidation of the club and so ended the 50's.



'Basement' under construction.



Showing both clubhouses.



Picture shows restricted access around clubhouse area, existing at that time.



*Official opening
L - R:
Dr. Wallace
Rev. W. MacDonald
Jack Lightfoot
Ian Terris
Lord Bruce*



Advertising Regatta at Dunfermline Civic Week Parade on Willie Black's lorry. Unknowingly we had brought down all the telephone wires on the way up from Limekilns - 1949.



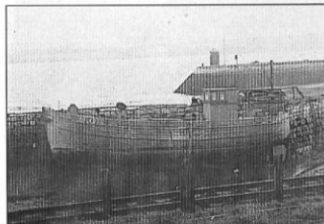
At Red Row, ready to leave to take part in the above procession. L - R: Margaret Terris, Kathryn Black, Ian Terris, John Gardiner, Al Terris and John Fernie, lorry driven by Willie Black.



First club class dingy, 11'6" Fuddy class.



The 'Jean'. First club sailing dingy, built by the Lightfoot's before the war, 12' National class.



MFV when bought, ex-Admiralty before conversion at Charlestown Harbour.



MFV Integrity after conversion.



My boatbuilding apprenticeship complete, two clinker dinghies I built for my own use.



Chapter 4

The 1960's

The 60's

The club simply buzzed with activity in the 60's. A starting box was erected at the end of the pier and the first crane installed there also. A slipway made from concrete railway sleepers laid, and of course pier maintenance continued as usual. During the winter a social evening was held every Thursday with great success. The club Burn's Suppers became a legend. The dinner dance and prizegiving became an annual event, always a marvellous night.

All these years the regatta scene on the Forth was busy and superb. All the clubs had one from Bo'ness to North Berwick, until the Forth Yacht Clubs Association (F.Y.C.A.) was formed. It was always a lot of work finding out when each one intended to hold theirs. It was almost mandatory to attend all the regattas; twelve I can count now, and great lifelong friendships and rapport developed over the years and the regatta dances were great fun. Our own regatta dances were unbelievable, we were always oversubscribed on the night in the Queen's Hall, Charlestown, which was packed to the door.

The Friday evening before each regatta was a hive of activity. We only had one road trailer in the early days. This was a large wooden contraption built on top of an old car chassis. As soon as everyone was available after work and after a hasty tea, we would load one boat on and deliver it to the regatta site, unload it leaving someone to rig it and return to Limekilns for the next one, it having been prepared by base squad. This continued all evening until the last boat which was secured on the trailer to go down in the morning. This could last 'till midnight on the further venues and of course had to be done in reverse after the regatta.

In my own situation I still had a night's work to do before racing the next day!

The club racing scene became better with each passing season. Having someone like John Angles committed to the racing organisation was a godsend. We still had a lot of different classes of boats, including graduates, hornets, shearwater catamarans, wineglass, osprey and one off's. Bill Watson in his Osprey 'Ecilop' (police backwards) was doing well in the handicap stakes.

We also had three Flying Fifteens in the club, which we lifted in and out with the crane and stored in the trailers at the pier end. I sailed with my brother Ian in his one 'Fairy Snow' and raced very successfully against the large fleet based at Burntisland.

Charlie Stark, a pre-war member and shipmaster from Limekilns also raced his flying fifteen 'Fly Fifer' very successfully. At the end of his career he was skipper of the dredger in the Forth and would anchor off the pier, come ashore by tender to race and then return to his duties after the race.

All the time I raced at the club I had a progression of wonderful crews; my sister Margaret, Evelyn Swankie, Ian Bowes-Lyon, John Gilmour, Robert Pitblado and Willie Auchterlounie being the longer serving slaves. They were all capable crews and each one was superb company. The confines of a sailing dinghy develops a rapport between helm and crew that I think is unique in sporting activities.

Each one went their separate ways. Margaret married, Evelyn did so too and went to stay in France. Ian Bowes-Lyon - how about that for name dropping, even royalty queued up to crew for me! - a smashing lad, he joined the RAF and left the village. John Gilmour, fitness fanatic and local heartthrob, left for Canada. Robert Pitblado - now there's a story. Robert was an apprentice butcher in the local shop. He was a fit and fearless crew with a great personality. After a race in very heavy weather at North Berwick we were back in and changed ready to go home when we were asked if we could give a hand to rescue an abandoned albacore east of Bass Rock. Out we went in the rescue launch and once alongside the albacore, it was obvious that someone would have to go into the water to tie a line on to it. I immediately shoved Robert overboard before we thought about it too much. Once we got back in with the albacore safely attended to and I managed to prize Robert's fingers from my throat, he admitted that he had enjoyed the experience very much. So much so that he took up diving, became top diver for the company, then took it over and appeared on T.V. He always attributed his success to that day at North Berwick.

Willie Auchterlounie and I sailed and raced for many years in the albacore, although we were hopeless in quiet weather we more than made up for it in heavy weather. We are great friends and we had marvellous experiences in our sailing adventures. I have to thank him for ensuring I did nothing foolish when my cancer

problems returned with incredible pain on a delivery trip with 'Markate' from Wales.

Our Club founder Major Threlfall died in 1961; we owe so much to this marvellous man.

I re-married in 1961 and soon had Katherine (Kate) working hard along with the rest of the social team. All the wives did a great job. I also became Commodore in 1962 having been Rear-Commodore for most of my time until then. Brother Ian came in as Secretary.

Norrie Penman and George Bell joined around now along with George's sons, David and Gordon, who were to become first class racers and eventually Scottish Albacore champions.

I must mention the opening and closing cruises at this time. Every available boat used to descend on Blackness and a great day ensued. There was no club there then and everyone took a picnic to be enjoyed, usually on the beach. Once the picnic was over it was a grand exodus to the field and the club football match took place. The fun and fellowship were superb, although I suspect from a football club's view we would all have been given a free transfer.

Between 1962-63 we had quite an influx of 'young ones' including Ian Girvan, Phil Whetton, Joe Swankie, Paul Derby, John Harris, Hugh McIntosh, Alister Campbell, Robert Pitblado and Willie Auchterlounie. Along with their girlfriends they made life rather hectic at first, but soon settled down to become superb members.

Another new member, Mr Potten, a research scientist with the admiralty, moved to the village. A keen hillwalker - he soon became Group Scout Leader of the seascouts. He was a natural organiser and soon became involved with the club and sailing. He became the first cruising convener in 1966 and produced the first cruising fixture diary, which was highly successful and has remained so since.

That year saw the arrival of Bill Kendrick, who was to become Vice Commodore and Commodore. With his family he became a keen participant on the racing scene. As can be seen, the club was inundated with keen, competent and like-minded members. so much so that we brought in the two years in office rule to give everyone a chance to be in office. We were all enjoying ourselves immensely and the social evenings were averaging 23 people.

I vacated the position of Commodore in October 1966 to John Angles and I moved to Rescue Officer. This tied in with buying our first actual rescue boat. This was an inflatable with a 40 HP Johnston outboard and it served well until replaced with 'Clockwork Orange' in 1973.

Another pleasing event which happened in 1966 was the setting up of a sinking fund which Jack Castell and I had been strongly in favour of for a long time, but could never get general support for. This was to turn out to be very successful and of great financial help in the future.

In 1968 Bill Carty became Commodore and in 1969 the Forth Yacht Club's Association (F.Y.C.A.) was formed. Sadly, Jack Lightfoot, who had done so much for the club, died. Ian Terris took over as President of the club after doing a marvellous job as secretary.

On the social side of the club I was also involved quite a lot on the musical side of things. I formed a small band within the club in the early 60's with Jim Sim on piano, Dave Simpson on drums and myself on accordion. We practiced in the clubhouse, having a piano there at that time, and played at various club activities and dances. How we must have made the people suffer! I was without doubt the world's worst accordionist; Jimmy Shand never lost a wink of sleep worrying about me stealing his crown! I was once told that if I had played on the Titanic, everyone would have jumped overboard long before she hit the iceberg. I reverted back to my original instrument of piano and organ - called keyboards nowadays, joining more gifted musicians than myself to form a successful band 'Chances R' and continued to play at quite a few club events.

Some people have always had a swipe at my dubious musical talents and one time we played at a large function in Inverness. Someone suggested that if 'Nessie' knew I was to play up there she would have locked out of the Sea Lock and into the Firth for the night.

At time of writing I am still playing, mostly at residential and daycare homes for the elderly, where I am often encouraged to sing; boy, if you think my playing is bad you want to hear me sing! On average, each performance results in four cardiac arrests and two suicides.



Some 'backbone' members, 1940's - 1960's. L - R: Jack Castell, Jack Lightfoot, John Angles, Jim Sim, John Lumsden and Tom Gilmour.



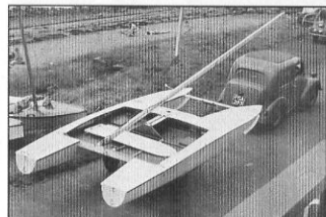
Bill Carty's 'Graduate' almost completed.



George Bell building his 27' 'Eventide' ('Four Bells').



FCC taking part in first Sports and Recreation display in Dunfermline Glen.



I had the use of this 'Sheerwater' cat for a year, built locally by a club member.



Opening cruise to Blackness in the 1960's, also showing condition of Blackness pier at that time.



Opening cruise football match at international level following beach picnic.



Opening cruise picnic on Blackness beach.



Bill Carty and Myself (on a 48 hour pass from the army) with second place trophy for the 'Hornet' race - 1955 regatta.



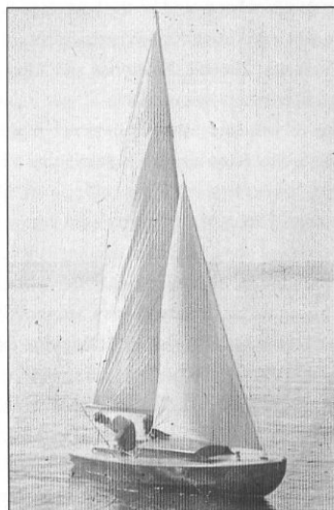
The 'Patsy', Tom and Trichia Gilmour's boat. Originally a 'Scow' type boat. Jimmy Longley rebuilt her, extending the bow forward from the mast position, and fitting a massive metal centreplate.



Second club class 16' 'Hornet' with sliding seat for the crew.



Some people do their courting in the car or at the cinema. I took Kate out in the 'Gnoo'. At least she couldn't escape!



The 'Skua' just after launching, built by Bill Ray and Myself.

The 70's

The 1970's started with me being Commodore again, George Bell Rear Commodore Clubhouse and Norrie Penman Rear Commodore Piers and Mooring. This was an excellent arrangement as both men were first class joiner builders with Norrie having his own company.

The Secretary was John Brown, a retired dentist from the Lothians, who just happened to come here to stay. A fine man who took to sailing very late in life and, along with his sons, loved every minute of it and threw himself into every aspect of club life. His health was not good and he died in 1972; a short but fulfilling life with us.

Much discussion had been held about the club racing scene; it was obvious we had to decide what would be the best class to go for, but of course, like everything else in life everybody has different ideas. However, we drew up a short list, being Graduate, Fireball, Enterprise and Albacore. I was determined to get the matter resolved one way or another. I was impressed with the suitability of the Albacore, which was increasing in numbers rapidly at Cramond. A certain Dave Innes, crewed by Anna his wife, was winning all the regattas. I had some great tussles with him but never won. I was sailing a 16' Mercury dinghy at the time which I sold to a certain John Murphy who used it as a springboard to much greater things, soon becoming one of the most accomplished, dedicated and respected yachtsmen in the Forth and far beyond.

I bought 'Simba' an old Fairy Marine Albacore 341, which had been most lovingly restored by a Mr 'Lyon' in Edinburgh. He had just finished the boat when he was posted abroad, work related. He had tears in his eyes when he handed over 'Simba' to me and so did I when I parted with her. She was a superb boat in her day and I was very successful with her. I dominated the club racing with her, forcing others to buy albacores, and the fleet flourished over the years. Eventually, we had 24 in the club with often 16 boats out every time the tide was available.

In 1972 we had 43 races which took place out of a scheduled 60. Portable sections

were fitted in the basement separating it into a changing area for ladies and gents. Semi-privacy at last!

That year Ron Everett took up the position of training officer for the club doing a superb job. Ron was also responsible for designing the first mooring system much as it is today. He also built a trimaran from scratch and had just completed it when he sadly died as a result of cancer. An extremely nice and capable man.

In the Winter of 1972 a fund raising committee was formed to help buy a rescue boat. It consisted of Gordon McKissock, Ian Girvan, Phil Whetton and myself along with our wives. Our main project was a mammoth cheese and wine along with a tombola to be held in the Queens Hall, Charlestown. We received the most incredible support for this project from an enormous amount of people. Our houses simply bulged with gifts before the event. Ian Girvan's idea of a large central table on the night just groaned with superb displays of cheese and food. The stage was piled high with tombola prizes and the evening was a huge success, both financially and socially. Through this and with the aid of a small grant we bought 'Clockwork Orange' in 1973.

Bob Johnston was Commodore followed by George Bell in 1974. I took over as President.

The crane out by mobile crane (such as it was) was taken over by the club; everyone doing their own thing up until then.

Dr Wallace died in 1974. The club lost it's last great link with the past, but what a legacy he and Major Threlfall left. Dr Wallace also designed the club burgee, still as it is today. We also sadly lost John Walker to cancer, a fine quiet man who gave a lot to the club in his time.

George Bell became Commodore and the first talk about forming a new dinghy park and a larger clubhouse took place.

Other notable people who appeared in the 60s and 70s included Frank Tait, Jim Tucker, Anthony Bryant, Don Simmonds, George Gargett and son Peter, Robin Grant, Dave Christie, Willie Hannah, Mike and Eva Brockie, The Merrett Family, Andrew and Ann Sim, Doug Brown, John Sutcliffe, Alistair Burnside, George Adams, Jim Wager, Norman Shier, Gilmour Cummings, Buck Blake, Ian Louden-Cox, Bill Kirkpatrick, Pat Breewood, Neil McGowan, Dave Torrance, local Doctor George Hendry and Dave Maycock who was a first substitute canoeist for the

British Olympic team. I apologise to those I've missed from that time. There were so many wonderful people who contributed to the club in their own way. Many of these people interchanged committee positions every two years giving us a really experienced hardcore and all club members worked well together.

In 1972 George Bell proposed a new trophy race for the fastest trip from Capernaum to North Berwick and back. Verificators to be obtained for start and finish times and at North Berwick. I did the race in the first two years with 'Simba', an unforgettable sail only stopping for a signature at North Berwick. Ian Girvan and I shared the honours the first time in rather nasty conditions in 15 hours. I managed to whittle it down to 12 1/2 hours in the 2nd year with a plane both ways. My crew was Willie Auchterlounie and we both aged five years.

I took over from brother Ian as President and the club just continued to purr along.

In 1974 we got permission from the Earl of Elgin to start what was to be the club's biggest building project - the new car park or dinghy park then. This was supervised by three very capable men, Phil Whetton, George Bell and Norrie Penman. At the time 'Dollytown' in Rosyth was being knocked down. These were bungalow sized houses built hurriedly to house Dockyard workers. Being brick with poured concrete roofs they were ideal infill for the car park and the many deliveries filled up the area reasonably quickly. The massive job on our part was to form the wall around. The line was marked out along with the height level and so we started from the club end every weekend for three years. We formed the wall using all the large pieces of brick wall and huge concrete roof sections, moving them into position by hand. The work parties varied from 12 to 30, the ladies providing refreshments. We soon learned to backfill as we went otherwise the tide could move even the largest pieces during the week. All went well until we reached the corner where the slipway is. No matter what we did, the tide demolished it and we would have to start all over again. A tractor shovel was procured and we eventually succeeded in stabilising it. We were obliged to have a stone finish to the wall and it was decided to use wire 'Gabions', a relatively new idea. Firstly, the sand was taken down to bedrock and a concrete base put in level with the top. The gabions came flat pack and it was quite a job in itself to build them up, there being 3 sections in each one along with a lid.

One squad would do this whilst another sorted out the stones to give to the builders

inside the gabions. This was an enormous amount of work, which we all enjoyed and when one looks at it now, I think we did a good job. The concrete ramp was formed and a very busy Saturday was spent using load after load of readymix concrete filling it in and tamping it down. The builders of the new houses at the east end of the village offered us some huge boulders to form a barrier between the pier and the slipway which solved a problem about what to do with it. The surface was levelled using club connections and that was that. Everyone involved took a bow.

We never did get round to building the wall round the edge, however this was done for us when the area was used to make the present settlement tank. The contractors on that job were amazed and impressed that we had formed it all by hand. I suppose they say the same thing about the Pyramids!

In all this time normal club life continued, all aspects of cruising, racing and the social side of the club being very successful and enjoyable thanks to all involved.

The cruiser contingent had continued to get stronger and the club cruises always well supported creating a great bond amongst those taking part. I always did both, racing and cruising and enjoyed them thoroughly, getting the best of both worlds. In 1971 I had bought 'Witchcraft', a 22' motor sailer and enjoyed joining in the club cruises with Kate and daughters Sally, Christine and Valerie. We have many happy memories of those family trips during the 70's.

In 1974 the mirror, laser and albacore were made the three official classes of the club. I can't quite remember when the travellers trophy circuit first started, but I do remember the discussions amongst the clubs and, as albacore class captain was asked to go to a meeting at Cramond Clubhouse regarding this. We were wrongly informed and when Willie Auchterlounie and myself went, very casually dressed, we found everyone else well dressed and the evening was a social one hosted by Canadian Club the sponsors of the trophy. A magnificent buffet was on hand and glasses of Canadian club were not allowed to be remotely empty.

We were well looked after by a large squad of extremely attractive young ladies dressed in tartan mini-skirts - the fashion at that time. Being inclined towards the dangers Robert Burns warns us at the end of 'Tam O Shanter', I had a most enjoyable evening. Like Tam O Shanter I still had to get home; thank goodness it was before drink driving was in force. Willie and I still argue about which bridge we came back over, but I think he exaggerates when he says my driving up and

down the cantilevers was brilliant.

How I've suffered on the Club's behalf!

In 1975 the club Burn's Night, always a great evening, moved venue to the Kings Cellars for the first time organised by Jim Tucker. This was an enormous success and was to be held there for many years. The food and entertainment was nearly always supplied by the club members to a very high standard. The amount of effort put in was quite incredible and thoroughly appreciated.

Also in this year the club bought two new Wayfarer dinghies assisted with a grant from Fife County Council, ably dealt with by Gilmour Cummings, then secretary.

These were intended for tuition classes and were reasonably successful for a few years before becoming neglected and ill-used. They were eventually sold off. In former years we had tried a 14' RNSA dinghy followed by an ex-naval whaler. It has to be said that we never had much success with owning club boats.

In the 1975-76 winter the club was invited to take part with other clubs in a quiz night, the first one being at Aberdour. These evenings were great fun and continued periodically over many years.

In 1976 through Alex Binnie and George Gargett the club was able to hold a skittles night in Caledonia Naval Base. The bowling alley was the original style using very large wooden bowls with no finger grips. At the skittles end there was no protection for the team at that end, ensuring an exciting evening. This also continued for many years twice in a winter and finally moving to the Officers Club in Rosyth.

In April 1977 was the first mention of the possibility of a new clubhouse through Brian Merrett, secretary, who became Commodore at the same time as ratification of go ahead for new clubhouse where present one is. This took place at a special meeting on October 6th of that year to let all members aware of the position and seek their support. The house as it was then was in a semi-derelect condition and was offered to us by the Earl of Elgin.

It was obvious that it would be a major job to gut the entire house so the offer to do the conversion by Norrie Penman's company was quickly accepted. Work commenced early in 1978 and progressed at an incredible speed. The building work was completed by the beginning of April to a very high standard, and the club owes a great debt to Norrie for doing such a marvellous job so quickly and at a minimum

of cost. The club members had only the decoration and small fitting out to do during April and the clubhouse was officially opened on May 6th.

The wrought iron grill at the bar was made and fitted by club member Roy Rennie, he being in charge of handicrafts at Lynebank Hospital. All this work of course required a very active fund raising scene taken on by Don Simmonds, who along with his slaves did an excellent job. Another project was having an interest free loan by members to the club and was successful in raising funds sufficient for the needs of the time.

On the sailing scene the club successfully ran an open event for lasers and albacores in September.

In 1979 another big job by club members started in the building of the wall on the South side of the dinghy park. The existing wall only ran about one third of the way along from the east end and what was there was in poor condition. This took two years and was completed in 1981. This job was helped considerably by a large delivery of generously donated stone from club member Martin Bald. George Bell and Norrie Penman once again foremen but by now we were all chiefs and few indians. I sometimes think we should have been called the Forth Building and Cruising Club.

The opening of the new clubhouse along with the inclusion of a bar changed the character of the club as we knew it. The village and family atmosphere which had prevailed till then disappeared with the demolition of the old clubhouse shortly afterwards, and so after thirty years the club entered a new era.



The boat Dave Lightfoot and his brother Jack built before they died, bought and launched by Jimmy Meldrum.



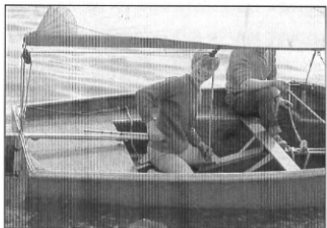
'Albacores' at Limekilns.



A typical club weekend cruise in the 60's and 70's at Inchcolm.



Willie Auchterlonie and Myself racing Albacore 'Salvantine'



A young Robert Pitblado helming the Mercury 'Misty'



Bill Rae and Dunc Wilson after race on Hornet 'Pavane' which was built by Bill.

Chapter 6

The 1980's

The 80's

1980 saw us applying for a grant to Dunfermline District Sports Council to allow us to buy a fast rescue boat and eventually we bought the dory and outboard we have at time of writing, the outboard being replaced in 1997.

Donald Simmonds did an excellent job in tiling the gent's shower area in the clubhouse. He was also active along with Willie Rae in running training classes for the club and was able to issue Certificates at the finish of each course. This continued for many years.

In 1981 the Club ran the Scottish Albacore championships.

I stood down as President in 1982 and I think both the committee and I breathed a sigh of relief as we were at odds over the future direction of the club. Anthony Bryant took over as President and I was content to be non-executive member for a considerable time, although I did bite my tongue at general meetings.

In the winter work was started on stabilising the wall along the bottom of the garden, Phil Whetton reducing the height somewhat, this was completed the following winter of 83.

In 1983 the club hosted the Scottish Albacore championships once more very successfully.

In the first half of the eighties the social side of the club continued, running fewer, but successful events, such as wine and cheese parties, bonfire night, burns night, film nights and regatta dance. Difficulty in obtaining a social convener was a major problem and the club owed a great deal to those who filled the breach.

Work parties had also declined and in 1985 Donald Simmonds as Commodore sent out a directive to members to consider their contribution to the club both financially and physically. However, in 1986 we put a new roof on the basement and a new engine in clockwork orange. Despite the committee working diligently the dinghy racing went into rapid decline and by 1990 had disappeared.

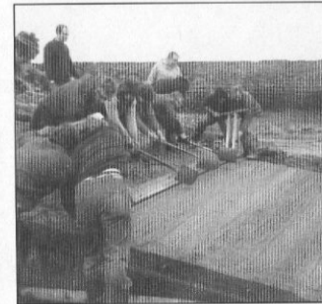
Many reasons could be given for this. One of those being the success of the travellers trophy circuit. This took away the 'cream' of the club members attending

club racing and regattas. In this we were not alone and all clubs in the Forth suffered much the same situation. It was very disappointing to those of us who had worked so hard to build it up to what it was, but I suppose nothing in life stays static for long.

The cruiser numbers increased every year though not supporting club events very well. Bar nights were on Wednesday and Friday nights but never really took off for the club as a whole. I think it is fair to say that the provision of a bar in the clubhouse did not work in the club's favour as a sailing club, and was not helped with the demise of racing nights.

In 1989 discussions commenced with the Club regarding the proposed settlement tanks to be built on the car park on the pier. Originally these were to be sited in the dinghy park at the front of the Garden, and in fact many sites were pondered upon for years. From then on until completed in November 1991, the club committee handled the situation extremely well and the club secretaries involved during this time (Bill Kendrick and Dot Anderson) must take a lot of credit for their very capable work.

BUILDING THE EXISTING CAR PARK AT CAPERNAUM. ALL WORK DONE BY CLUB MEMBERS



THE NEW, RESTORED CLUBHOUSE



Official opening of the present clubhouse in 1978 by Earl of Elgin and Commodore Brian Merrett.



Club members look on during opening ceremony.



Top left: Who says Kate doesn't enjoy sailing?

Left: Family holidays on 'Witchcraft'.

Above: Bringing the Grandchildren, Jasmin and Jodi up in the faith.

Below: "Freedom"-sailing 'Allouete' to Cowes.



The 90's

We ceased trading as a licensed premises as from 1st January 1991. During this time the club was obviously very restricted as to its activities, but survived as best it could. The Albacore Championship had to be abandoned in 1991.

Joe Swankie as Commodore in 1990 stated at the October General Meeting that no-one should be fooled by the busy atmosphere on Crane Out Day as it gave a false impression of the club well being. The fact was it was very difficult to make up a committee, work parties and social functions were not well supported. Sad days indeed. In 1992 the Burns Supper had to be cancelled for lack of support. An application to hold an albacore travellers meeting also had to be turned down and the committee were able only to do urgent fabric repairs as they arose. Much work was done regarding gas appliances in the club bringing them up to required standard, Derrick Crossley being in charge.

During these years I had looked on rather impotently, not really believing the decline of the club as I knew it. I only attended General Meetings and helped on a few work parties.

I was diagnosed as having a serious cancer problem in 1979 and for many years was subjected to many operations and treatments. I therefore felt I could not offer my services to the committee due to never knowing the next development of my medical problems and subsequently my availability. I was fortunate in being able to keep sailing every year, including long distance cruising in John Murphy's various larger boats. Each year doing many hundreds of miles all round Britain, Ireland, France, Inner and Outer Hebrides and Scandinavia, nearly always with the same crew of John Murphy, Derek Bramall, Keith Martin, Ian Girvan and myself. I could only do this thanks to John and Derek Bramall being prepared to see to my medical requirements during the trips. To the medically inclined, changing dressings twice a day on an empyema drain situation, especially in rougher days in the North Sea, was not for the weak hearted, the only anaesthetic available was amber coloured liquid, but quite effective. Derek Bramall, an extremely capable man full of character and humour was one of my sailing companions for very many

years. He had a unique talent of forming a close bond with all he met and I was privileged to be one of them. He tragically died of a heart attack in November 1998 and to me sailing will never be quite the same again.

In the early 90's I was conscious of the approach of the club's 50th post-war anniversary looming in 1998 and was determined to do something about it. There were good people on committee and around just needing practical support and encouragement. Getting Ian Girvan and Phil Whetton back on committee was a major contribution to Sean Cunningham's successful commodoreship and the pulse of the club started to beat again. I came on in 1994 as Cruising Convener, delighted to push from the back. Ian took over as Commodore in 1995, Sean moving to Rear Commodore Clubhouse.

Much work required to be done and a programme of improvements set out, greatly assisted by George Bell, also brought back from retirement. He drew up a rather long list of work requiring urgent attention and we started right away.

We were very fortunate in getting a new member, Joe Johnston. I had worked with Joe years before and I knew him to be an excellent plumber. I immediately informed Sean who was Rear Commodore Clubhouse and the long talked about requirement for central heating was soon resolved. Joe doing the work free and providing the material for little cost. Put two irishmen together and the job gets done quickly. We were also fortunate in the fact that we had a good 'retired' workforce who were available during weekdays.

The entire building was made good and totally re-decorated. A new office established, new shower in ladies toilet, loft floored, new cooker in kitchen, new wall lighting in lounge, new curtains, memorabilia photos and programmes set up in hall. Work on the outside walls was carried out and the basement totally refurbished.

Another major job was to run a heavy cable down to the basement from the clubhouse, serving an outside power point at the bottom of the garden on the way. Water was also led to both places. This was a lot of work and excellently tackled. The lamppost was fitted slightly later.

Ian and Phil produced two superb new cranes for next to no cost to the club. The one at the end of the pier was soon replaced with one of them and the one at the basement done in 1998, the anchorage for which was quite a massive job and done

along with new stone walls leading down to the basement.

The 'old' squad of George Bell, Dunc Wilson, Bill Carty and myself were caught out by the concrete arriving in one massive load when we were expecting a half load. Readimix sets off very quickly and we had no time to send out for reinforcements. One could say we didn't need rocks to sleep that night!

On the social side the Burn's night was restarted, being held in the clubhouse and was very successful, with Dot Anderson, John Dougal, Helen Crossley and Bill Carty doing stalwart work as well as many others. Ian started a Commodore's Party Night, very posh; and was also successful and enjoyable. Prizegiving evenings were also well attended. Various excuses to hold a barbecue including the regatta were most enjoyable and also profitable, thanks to all the chefs and cooks taking part. We did by the way buy a gas barbecue used with varied degrees of success.

I also spent many winter nights reviewing and sorting out old club records after finding them poorly stored in the loft, many dirty and damp.

Sean had also given us rather a nice garden complete with flowers.

The culmination of all this work took place with the celebration of our 50th Anniversary on 23 August 1998.

The format was bantered about for quite some time, but was finally settled for the only one that was going to work; namely having a marquee in the garden with a buffet, drinks, speeches and general socialising. Having a sailpast was a splendid idea and was superbly organised and run by Jeff Jones, another great club man. The day itself simply teemed with rain which in its own way helped to make it a very special and successful event by keeping everyone in the marquee after the sailpast.

The Earl of Elgin was present, as was many ex-members who had contributed so much in the past, although I must say that I think more of whom I recommended should have been invited. The speeches were excellent and all in all the day was worthy of the occasion.

I felt my mission had been accomplished and I bowed out of committee in October 1998 and the club also found its first Lady Commodore in Helen Crossley. Ian Girvan became President in March 1999 after surviving a severe stroke in September 1998. His recovery has been quite remarkable and he was able to sail his boat round to the West Coast and back in the Summer of 1999.

The club is running along very nicely with capable people at the helm. I have to

admit that things can never be quite the same as our heyday. We did not have Port Edgar on our doorstep before, with its deep water facility and very many other facilities which we can't offer. It is difficult to forecast any change in our club other than the status we have at present - but who knows!

The Year 2000 seemed a nice round figure to finish my outpourings. I wish the club well and so long as I draw breath the Old Lady just needs to wink and I'll be there.



Members work parties at pier - late 1990's.



Phil Whetton, Sean Cunningham and John White planting a lamp post.



Last of the Summer Wine! - George Bell, Al Terris, Bill Carty and Dunc Wilson waiting for 'small' load of concrete.



Ian Girvan supervising Bill Carty hard at work pointing the wall.



Installing new crane on site.



Ian Girvan and I visiting St. Kilda on 'Allouete' - May 1993.



John Murphy, Ian Girvan and Derek Bramall in village bay on St. Kilda with 'Allouete' in the background.



Present Joint Secretaries Maureen and Kenneth Bellini, who were also joint editors of this book.



*Helping out at the regatta - 1998
(I do believe Ian and I are getting older).*



Not all hard work. Entertaining German welcoming party on our visit to Wilmshaven - Dunfermline's twin town.

Thanks

My most sincere thanks to Kenneth and Maureen Bellini for their encouragement and expertise without which I doubt if I would ever have put pen to paper.

Also to my wonderful wife Kate, for putting up with me and my lifestyle for thirty nine years. I think it has had as much drama as 'The Thirty Nine Steps'! She has had to share me with the club and sailing all our married life, but never complained; well not a lot. Thanks Kate.

The Wedding

I thought whilst I'm at it I would tell the tale about our main summer's cruise for the year 1984 on John Murphy's yacht.

We had decided to visit as many of the Friesian Isles as possible, starting off at the most Northern one, Sylt. This had all been arranged when I discovered my niece Ruth Terris was to get married half way through the trip. No way was I going to miss my sailing and yet I couldn't ignore my niece's wedding. With a lot of calculating, we (crew) decided that if we were to get to Wilhelmshaven the day before, I could get a flight home from Bremen to Edinburgh for the wedding and return the next day. With Wilhelmshaven being our twin town, we had connections through my brother in law Frank and sister Margaret, as they often entertained them here and visited them there through Frank's job in the council.

A return flight was booked and one of their friends was to pick me up at 6.00 a.m.

and drive me to Bremen Airport for my flight at 7.00 a.m. with no luggage. I was leaving my car at Edinburgh and would arrive in plenty time for the wedding at 2.00 p.m.

What was it that Rabbie Burns said about the best laid schemes of mice and men?

Our last port of call before heading for Wilhelmshaven was the island of Heligoland - quite a place. The wind fell light just when we didn't want it to. Under engine and sail we took much longer than we anticipated, also missing the tide which was quite strong against us. It was dark by the time we entered the Firth and Wilhelmshaven was much further up than we thought, having no chart for that area, which resembles the Forth with their Dockyard about the same distance upstream.

We tied up at a pier past the yard just before midnight. I jumped ashore and took to my heels until I came across a phonebox. I dialled the number Margaret had given me and a sleepy voice said "yes?" I replied that I didn't know him or he me, but mentioned my sister. - "Oh, you are Alex"! "where are you Alex?" Of course, I hadn't a clue where I was but on the other side of the road I could see a hotel with the motif of a greyhound on it. "Go into the hotel Alex and I will be there shortly".

This I did and was eyed very suspiciously by the night porter and receptionist. I'm sure they thought I was a terrorist intent on blowing up their hotel, I only hoped that my car would come before the police. Sure enough, a car drew up, full of people and after introductions, along to the boat where they were obviously intent on having a welcoming party, which we sure did.

It had been a long hard sailing day and by 2.30 a.m. I retired to my bunk, being assured by my driver he would pick me up at 6.00 a.m. I couldn't for the life of me see this happening; he was having a ball with our whisky!

Derek Bramall woke me up at 5.45 a.m. offering me a bowl of rice crispies liberally doused with whisky, the party was still going well. "Do you good" he said in his inimitable style. Off we went to Bremen by car having had a great send off from all aboard and I thought "Great, I've done it". The driver didn't have to come for me, he had never left!

I said thanks and temporary farewell to my driver on arriving at Bremen Airport and entered the airport reception area. I was immediately struck by how quiet it was; I was virtually the only person within sight. Up to reception desk I went and handed over my tickets and passport, which were promptly returned to me. I pushed

them back to the girl saying "I'm on the 07.30 a.m. flight to Edinburgh". "I'm afraid you're not", she said handing my documents back. "All flights are cancelled today due to an air traffic controllers strike over France, perhaps for 24 hours".

I couldn't believe it. I started chatting away to the girl, telling her about the trip and getting this far, just to lose out. In the course of conversation she said there would only be one flight passing through from Berlin, it had left before the strike was official and was allowed to complete its journey, but it was full. After it left for London the airport would shut down for the day.

That was when sex reared its ugly head. I chatted this lassie up no end and had her purring with all sorts of compliments. I told her about my having German blood in my veins through having a German great grandfather. So much so that when war broke out in 1939 between our countries I decided not to take up arms for either side. I suppose the fact I was only six years old may have helped my decision.

The boat was obviously mine and the crew, whilst quite efficient would have to be replaced soon and perhaps she might consider a position aboard?

I then asked her if she could check the Berlin flight again. This she did at great length and discovered there was one seat on the plane going to London Heathrow. This was overheard by a reasonably large queue which had formed behind me. All hell broke out, everyone clamouring for it very forceably. There were big businessmen, politicians, bankers etc., who were adamant their need for the seat was the most urgent due to all sorts of world saving meetings in London that day. One gentleman especially, an American was going bananas about not getting it.

They hadn't a chance! By this time, this girl, I can't remember her name, and I were practically engaged. Not only did I get the seat but she fixed up a connecting shuttle arriving at Edinburgh at 12.30 p.m. Also the return flights via the same way. I assumed I would have to pay for this and reclaim afterwards but she did all the paper work on my behalf and that was that.

Due to the air strike, she was finished for the day. I thanked her profusely and since her sense of humour was very much akin to mine, with great mirth she jokingly suggested we might even consummate the friendship before I left. I had to inform her that was why a clock was fitted to the leaning tower of Pisa - there is no use having the 'inclination' if you haven't got the time.

Ruth will never know what I had to do to get to her wedding.

I had pleasant company on the flight to London but would really rather have got a bit of sleep. On arrival I had only about 20 minutes to catch the shuttle by going from one side of the airport to the other. I ran flat out the whole way, knocking over luggage and anyone in the way. I didn't make many friends on my semi-marathon, but I made it - just.

By this time, the family, having heard about the European air strike and not hearing from me, had given me up for good regarding my attendance at the wedding. They were, to put it mildly, surprised when I drew up in the car at 1.00 p.m. After quick greetings and a quick shower, I hadn't washed in days, I changed into my suit and we were at Limekilns church for the wedding before 2.00 p.m.

After a most enjoyable wedding, which of course went on to after midnight, I had to be up for the first shuttle to London at 6.00 a.m.

All went well until I arrived back at Bremen at midday. I was crossing the airport forecourt heading for a train to take me back to Wilhelmshaven when I was accosted by a very stern looking policeman shouting German at me and demanding my passport. I thought about making a run for it when he grabbed me roughly by the arm and dragged me round to a passageway, where the crew of the boat were creasing themselves with laughter, having put a friend of theirs up to it. "You should have seen your face" was my consolation. "Come on Al, we are booked on a bus tour of Bremen". I had only had about four hours sleep in three days and I didn't see a lot of Bremen. Then back to the boat for a farewell party, after which Derek took great pleasure in informing me I was on first watch with him to take the boat back to sea, and we left just after midnight, boy it's tough at the top!

DUNFERMLINE, LIMEKILNS AND CHARLESTOWN

Annual Regatta

Under the distinguished patronage of
Rear Admiral Sir JOHN F. E. GREEN, K.C.M.G., C.B.

WILL TAKE PLACE (WEATHER PERMITTING) AT

LIMEKILNS

— ON —

SATURDAY, 8th July 1922.

Commencing at 1.30 p.m. prompt.

Commodore — Dr R. C. WALLACE, M.D.

Dunfermline Town Band will be in attendance.

Special Attraction :

Members of the Carnegie Swimming Club
(with permission of the S.A.S.A. and F. and C.C.A.S.A.)

will give a Display of Swimming, Diving, Life Saving,
and a Comic Sketch during the afternoon.

DUNCAN McLAREN,
Hon. Secy. and Treas.

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CHARLESTOWN

Annual Regatta

Under Distinguished Patronage

WILL TAKE PLACE (Weather Permitting) AT

LIMEKILNS

.. ON ..

SATURDAY, 11th JULY 1914

Commencing at 2.30 p.m. prompt

Commodore—
Dr R. C. WALLACE, Limekilns

COMMITTEE—

Mr H. S. THRELFALL (Chairman)	Captain MOSS
Dr WALLACE	R. PATTERSON
J. BARNET	J. RITCHIE
D. BLACK	W. H. SALMOND
J. BLENCH	A. SIMPSON
W. ELDRIDGE	A. H. STEEL
A. JACK	A. STENHOUSE
J. W. McLAREN	

DUNCAN McLAREN, LIMEKILNS,
Hon. Secy. and Treas.

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Programme of Events.

1. (2.30 p.m.) Sailing Race. Handicap. Confined. Entry-money, 2/. 1st Prize, Challenge Cup and 50/-; 2nd, 25/-; 3rd, 15/-. (Entries must be in the hands of the Secretary by noon of Thursday, 9th July). The cup to become the property of any competitor whose boat wins it three times.
2. (2.40 p.m.) Boys' Four-Oared Pleasure Boat Race. Confined. (Boys must be under 16 years of age). Entry-money, 1/. 1st Prize, 20/-; 2nd, 10/.
3. (3.0 p.m.) Lady and Gentleman's Race. Two Oars. Special Prizes.
4. (3.15 p.m.) Four-Oared Jolly Boat Race. (Not exceeding 18 feet). Open. Entry-money, 3/. 1st Prize, 60/-; 2nd, 30/-; 3rd, 15/.
5. (3.30 p.m.) Ladies' Race. Two Oars. Special Prizes.
6. (3.40 p.m.) Yacht Race. Alpha Class. Entry-money, 2/. 1st Prize, 40/-; 2nd, 20/-; 3rd, 10/.
7. (3.50 p.m.) Four-Oared Pleasure Boat Race. Confined. Entry-money, 2/. 1st Prize, 40/-; 2nd, 20/.

8. (4.0 p.m.) Yacht Race. Handicap. Open. Entry-money, 2/6. (Entries must be in the hands of the Secretary by noon of Thursday, 9th July; stating name, rig, L.O.A., L.W.L., and colours of flag). 1st Prize, 60/-; 2nd, 30/-; 3rd, 15/.
9. (4.10 p.m.) Motor Boat Race. Open. Entry-money, 2/. (Entries must be in the hands of the Secretary by noon of Thursday, 9th July, stating length and horse power).
10. (4.15 p.m.) Two-Oared Jolly Boat Race. Open. Entry-money, 1/. 1st Prize, 30/-; 2nd, 15/-; 3rd, 7/6.
11. (4.30 p.m.) Old Men's Race. Four Oars. (Over 50 years of age). Confined. Entry-money, 1/. 1st Prize, 20/-; 2nd, 10/.
12. (4.45 p.m.) Swimming Race. Entry-money, 6d. Two Special Prizes.
13. (5.0 p.m.) Greasy Pole. Horizontal Pole from Pier over water. Three Special Prizes. (No successful competitor will receive more than one prize).
14. (5.20 p.m.) Two-Oared Pleasure Boat Race. Entry-money, 1/. 1st Prize, 20/-; 2nd, 10/.
15. (5.30 p.m.) Sculling Race. Entry-money, 6d. 1st Prize, 10/-; 2nd, 5/.
16. (5.40 p.m.) Double Scull Race (one man). Confined. Entry-money, 6d. 1st Prize, 10/-; 2nd, 5/.

Prizes will be presented by Mrs R. C. Wallace, Limekilns, at the close of the Regatta.

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The crew of 'Allouete'

*L - R: Derek Bramall, John Murphy (owner), Myself, Ian Girvan and Keith Martin.
Sailed many thousands of miles together over a long number of years.*

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