



# The Seagull

The Journal of the Cramond Boat Club

September 2016

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## The View from the Commodore's Window

As the season approaches its end we can look back at another very mixed year. As ever, the weather was highly variable – sometimes glorious and on other occasions dire. But most of us were all able to enjoy some good sailing at some point. In our case, with our son Eddie visiting from Australia with all his family, we had a superb sail over to Inchcolm on a hot sunny day in July. It could have been Sydney!

Unfortunately we lost the dinghy regatta to a weekend of storms. We had been forced to schedule this event for a time when a lot of people were on holiday – so it turned out to be attracting very little interest anyway. We shall try for better timing next year.

The Family Fun Day also failed to attract many families or much fun – but, again, it was a rather miserable day weather-wise. With all these events, the Committee would welcome suggestions and ideas as to how we might better match the preferences of members.

On the positive side, it has been good to see the very active dinghy sailing – with a fully subscribed training programme. The purchase of the new Picos has gone down well and is significantly enhancing what we can offer to attract youngsters into our sport.

Work has been proceeding on Clubhouse maintenance with a very active group of retired members devoting significant time to weekly work parties under the leadership of Davie Mackay, our House Convenor. There has been a lot of excellent progress.

One sad piece of news has been the passing of former Commodore Benge Dawson. Only last year he featured in the Seagull, having been at the Club for his grandson's wedding. A number of members have already circulated notes reflecting on his huge contribution to the Club, his wonderful humour, and gentlemanly approach to everything he did. More can be read later in this issue. He is much missed.

Forthcoming events, at the time of writing, include: the closing cruise across to Aberdour, Crane-out (on 1 October), and Prize Giving. I look forward to seeing many of you on these and other occasions.

Wishing everyone well,

*Andy Walker*

## Diary Dates

**Wed 21st Sept 7.30pm**  
E.G.M.

**Sat 1st October**  
Crane Out

**Sat 12th November 7pm**  
Annual Prizegiving

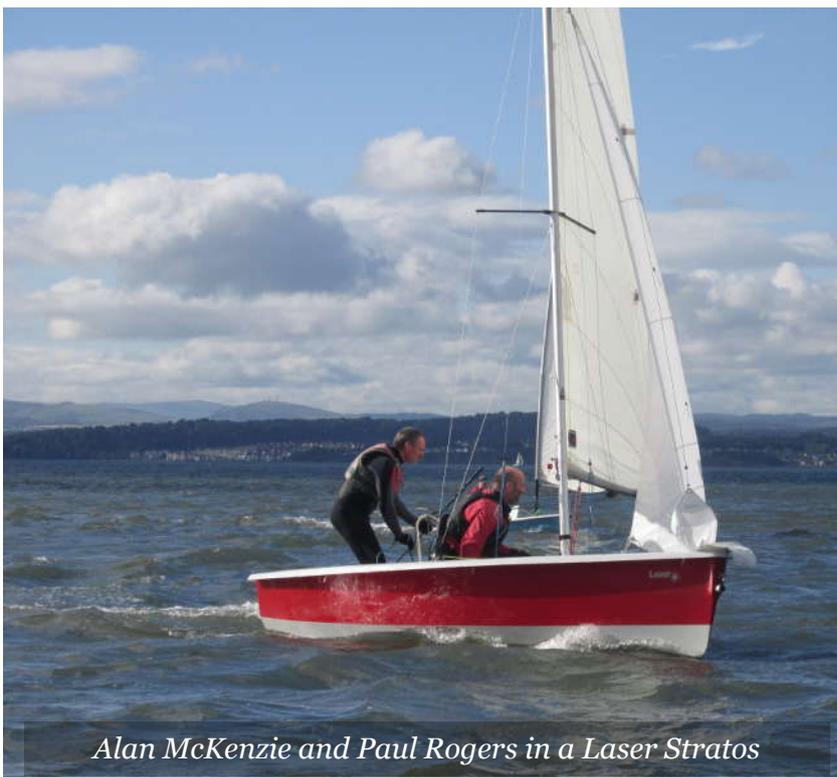
**Sun 27th November 2pm**  
Annual General Meeting



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Since the last Seagull, there has been an improvement in completion of races, with the weekend series proving popular.



*Alan McKenzie and Paul Rogers in a Laser Stratos*

In the DWA series, 4 races were scheduled. For DWA1, the crews, race officer and rescue boat set out promptly and managed to fit in two races, which was fortunate as DWA4 had to be cancelled later in the season, so the intended 4 races in the series was still achieved.

The DWB series has been exceptional, with 2 races being completed each day, which means that discards are brought into play. So far there have been 15 entrants, not all of whom have managed every race. The

results have been close, particularly with the Cadets some of whose results are very close, meaning there is still all to play for in DWB4 on 18th September.

Sadly, the Pursuit races didn't have sufficient entrants for the PA series and PB1 clashed with DWB2 and a Cadet session. However, *Exisle* and *Dabchick 2* competed it – the result will be given at the Prize-giving.

The Ladies Race was due to be held on 26th June but with winds reaching 27 kts, it had to be cancelled.

## New Members

Welcome to our new members:

Full  
Matthew Watson

Student  
Katherine Aird

Weather again was the enemy when we tried to hold the Club Dinghy Regatta. With winds averaging 23 kts and gusting to 32 kts, prudence dictated that we had to abort the event.

Fortunately, we were able to predict the weather as the various forecasts all identified the developing storm and we were able to advise everyone in advance of the cancellation.

The Regatta was also intended to include a National 12 Traveller event. So the Nat 12 folk got together and used our DWB3 event as a replacement. Their final placings were:  
1st – Ed Willett  
2nd – Angus Beyts  
3rd – Andrew Harris.



*Start line Stramash:  
4 Cadets in a close start to  
DWB2*

We are looking forward to the climax of the DWB series and the Frostbite races still to start.

*Drew Pratt*

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## Racing Cruiser Style

Over the year there has been a steady decline in racing generally but particularly in the cruiser class. This has happened in most clubs and is not confined to Cramond. We had only one race in the usually popular Pursuit Series, no takers for the Long Distance Series and no Evening Point races.

The reasons why are probably worth an article on their own but sufficient to say that after a very disappointing season, the weekend of 2nd/3rd September produced the best races of the year – not the fastest, but they were certainly sailed in the most trying conditions.

The last race in the Weekend Series, W6, was held on Saturday 2nd. Four boats took part – *Talisker*, *Dabchick 2*, *Melita* and *Exisle* sailing singled-handed. The winds were very light from the south-west and a short course out to Channel 14 and back was decided upon. After an uneventful start, *Dabchick 2*, whose strong point is off the wind, edged ahead followed closely by *Exisle* and the rest of the fleet.

As the wind died from astern the two front boats drew ahead although *Dabchick 2* squandered her lead by trying to goose-wing her jib. Mother Nature then played a dirty trick on the two front boats by blowing stronger from astern and bringing *Talisker* and *Melita* back within range. But Mother Nature is a contrary creature, so she allowed *Dabchick* and *Exisle* to round the mark and start their beat to the next mark while deserting the other two boats for another hour, after which they eventually gave up and rightly retired.

In the meantime she (M. N.) threw the occasional cats-paws of air to the remaining boats allowing *Exisle* to draw ahead and get first chance of the ebbing tide. *Dabchick 2* battled on trying to gain enough southward to allow the tide to take her to the finish line. At this point M. N. decided *Dabchick 2* had suffered enough and sent a rollicking gust which allowed her to cross the line doing 6kts. However along with the gust, she also sent a deluge of rain and sleet, which somewhat dampened their relief at finishing.

On Sunday *Kentra* joined the fleet for the last race in the Middle Distance Series. The forecast looked as if an east wind would materialise so a short course was set out to Channel 16 and back. After a decent start the boats spread out but as the wind dropped to a flat calm, the fleet bunched up for a long wait for the ENE wind to arrive.

*Exisle* and *Kentra* were the first to take advantage of it while the rest of the boats followed although dropping further behind. As the wind speed increased and settled, *Exisle* finished first closely followed by *Kentra*, a worthy second. *Talisker* beat *Dabchick 2* to the turning mark D and there was nothing *Dabchick 2* could do to catch her on the last leg. *Melita*, handicapped by sailing single-handed, brought up the rear.

It's a truism that a monkey can sail in a wind, but it's the calms that take the skill (unless of course you didn't win, in which case it's luck.)

*Ian Hellewell*

## Prizegiving

The annual prizegiving ceremony, that celebration of club sailing achievements, is on Saturday 12th Nov at 7pm.

For the last 3 years, this event has been compered by the Old Codger himself, Ian Hellewell.

But he has decided (and who would disagree) that the time has come to step aside, and let someone younger (perhaps in their 70s) take over.

So if any member fancies a shot at hosting an awards ceremony, please contact the sailing committee.



## Damage to Equipment or Boats

All the dinghies, work boats, safety boats and other equipment are maintained by club members in their own time. A huge amount of time and money is spent to ensure that the boats and other equipment are in good working order and ready for use by our members.

Could I please ask that all members please respect this and look after and take care of the boats and equipment when in use. After use, please ensure that there is no damage to the equipment and then clean it if required and return it to its correct place in the club.

We appreciate that accidents do happen and that things break. If any damage is caused, please log this in the respective Damage Book, but please also notify one of the persons below by email.

- Dinghies: Campbell Calder [Campbell\\_calder@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Campbell_calder@yahoo.co.uk)
- Work Boat: Hamish Sutherland [hamishsutherland@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:hamishsutherland@blueyonder.co.uk)
- Safety Boats: Dougie Pringle [dpringle@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:dpringle@blueyonder.co.uk)

If in doubt, please just drop me an email or phone me on 07752 068 052

*Campbell Calder*

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## RYA Inspection

In order to be an official RYA Sailing School, the club requires an annual inspection by the RYA for Recognised Training Centre (RTC) status. This took place in August. The inspector, Adam Rankin was shown round the clubhouse by Training Officer Lawrie Elliot and Senior Instructor Drew Pratt.

He examined the club manuals, training records, instructor certificates, first aid certificates, PVG scheme checks, equipment checklists and all supporting documentation, including the system for signing in and out all trainees going on the water.

He then moved on to the club training boats and rescue craft, and was happy to confirm that the fleet covered all the requirements for the youth and adult courses including the five advanced modules and powerboating.

The Inspection was deliberately arranged to coincide with active training, so he could observe the Sea Monkeys on the water.

Adam identified just 2 minor items for corrective action: a sticker to be attached to the steering console of each rescue boat giving the instructions for requesting assistance on the VHF in the event of the Instructor falling overboard; and a meeting to be held for all persons involved in the training so that the completely revised Training Manuals, Policies and Procedures are communicated to them and a record kept confirming that action.

The club's RTC status was confirmed, and Adam stated that his overall view that the organisation and documentation was far better than most of the training sites he has visited.

My thanks go to all those involved in providing and arranging the training, especially Lawrie Elliot, Alan McKenzie and Paul Rogers who lead most of the training sessions, along with all the other instructors and helpers from the CBC and Cramond Scouts. Also grateful thanks to the CBC committee for supporting the training section including financial aid.

*Drew Pratt*



## Training Update



2016 has been a very good year for training at the Cramond Boat Club.

More than 30 people have taken part in various training courses this year and our season isn't over yet. After Crane Out, we will be running a Level 1 & 2 powerboat course and also a safety boat course which will mean at least another 8 people undergoing training, bringing this season's total to over 40. In fact it may be possible to take 1 or 2 more – please contact Lawrie Elliott, our Training Officer, for details.

This effort could not have been achieved without a huge amount of support and grateful thanks are due to Lawrie, Darren, Alan, Paul, Campbell, John, Andrew, Sorn, and James. Thanks are also due to Euan Drysdale and the rescue boat crews who ensured that the training sessions went ahead, and not forgetting Dougie Pringle for his continuous efforts in keeping the rescue fleet operational.

As reported elsewhere in this issue, Emma Wilkinson and Sorcha McIntyre attended a Dinghy Sailing Instructor Course for a week and both passed at the first attempt. We are delighted for them both and, as a consequence, they have been able to help with our training courses. We all congratulate them and wish them well for the future and look forward to their participation in our training sessions.

The Sea Monkeys continue to be very popular and there is now a waiting list. However, as they progress through the various stages and onto Cadets, spaces will be available next season so please stay in contact with the Training Officer. We can take more Cadets but are still limited by the number of available craft. The Sailing Committee is looking into potential outside sources and are grateful to the Cramond Scouts for their partnership in the training by way of instructors, trainees and equipment without which the club's young membership would not be so strong.

*Drew Pratt*

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On Saturday 4th June, four Scouts and two Explorer Scouts from the 82nd Craigmmond (Cramond) Scout Group travelled to Castle Semple Visitor Centre at Loch Winnoch for the Scottish final of the 2016 Honda RYA Youth RIB Challenge.

Our six finalists had been whittled down from a strong field of 32 candidates in a selection process which started back in the cold days of February. Before the final, they all had a full day's training at the Longcraig Scout Centre (thanks to Malcolm Leckie) where they learned to improve their skill and technique. The benefits of this training were shown by huge improvements in times (up to 45 seconds faster) from last year's event.



The venue at Loch Winnoch gave a fantastic spectating opportunity where parents and competitors could watch all the action as it unfolded. After a briefing, start numbers were drawn from a hat and by 10am the competition was underway. Each competitor had time to get familiar with the boat followed by 2 timed runs on the challenge course.

In the older age group (13-16) Fergus was first out of the blocks with a solid first run of 1 minute 25 seconds. On the second run he stormed round the first half of the course in 28 seconds but at the Stop Buoy it all started to go wrong. However, with a time in the bag Fergus ultimately achieved 3rd place overall in his age group and a place on the podium.



Next up was Andrew Finn with a tremendous time of 1:31. Unfortunately, like his Fergus, his next run didn't go smoothly so we won't know until next year how much faster he can really go. Nathan was the last competitor in this age group. This was his first time at the championships but he managed a very respectable time of 1:44 against very experienced competition.

In the 8 to 12 age group, Matthew completed two skilful runs, setting a fastest time of 1:42. Then came Jack, a previous competitor at this level who had set a terrific time in his qualifying round at Longcraig. Again he didn't let us down, with two solid runs and a best time of 1:36, achieving 3rd place overall in his age group.

Our final competitor was Alfie who achieved a best time of 2:01, which probably did not reflect his overall skill due to a combination of minor errors. Nevertheless we anticipate great things for next year.

The final result was an excellent two 3rd places for Fergus and Jack representing Cramond Boat Club.



Great fun was had by all the competitors and spectators, and it was great to be able to root for six competitors. Many thanks to all who put in time and effort to make this happen and we look forward to possibly even greater success next year.

*John Kenworthy*



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The Sea Monkeys are now a well-established and successful feature of the CBC. Aimed at junior members from age 8 upwards, the aim of this group has always been to provide fun on the water, while learning sailing skills in an informal and safe environment.

It all started back in 2008 when a dozen juniors from Cramond

took part in a "Zippers" sailing course for beginners at Port Edgar. This was followed up with further sessions at Cramond run by CBC instructors, and the 'Cramond Sea Monkeys' was born.



*Sorcha and Emma sailing together in 2008*

Two of the original monkeys were Emma Wilkinson and Sorcha MacIntyre. In fact, they were the ones who came up with the 'Sea Monkeys' name. Eight years on, Emma and Sorcha (now aged 17 and 18) took themselves off to Galloway Sailing centre in July this year for an RYA Dinghy Sailing Instructors training course. We are pleased to report that both passed, are now fully qualified instructors, and have been helping to run Sea Monkeys and Cadets sessions since.



*Sorcha and Emma at the Dalgetty Bay regatta in 2010*

Success stories like this don't happen by accident, and it's good to take the opportunity to say a big thanks to all those who have supported junior training (and Emma and Sorcha in particular) over the years, without which this would not have been possible. In the early days there were Callum Calder, Stuart Pringle, Nick Lines, Andrew Lines, Trevor Mackay, Kay MacBurney and Robert Wilkinson; and more recently, Drew Pratt and Lawrie Elliot provided extra practice and tips in advance of the Instructor Course and Assessment.

Congratulations to Sorcha and Emma, and we look forward to seeing today's generation of Sea Monkeys, trained by these two, going on to great things in the future.



*Emma in her own Laser in 2015*



*Sorcha in her own Laser in 2015*

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**Part 1 – The Forth and Clyde Canal**

This year I finally committed myself to spending as much of the summer as possible on the West Coast. Rather than give you a boring log, I will try to concentrate on advice for those who like me want to get to the West in their own boat, using the canals which were built for that purpose.

First, the cost. For my 7.5m boat, the transit fee for the Forth and Clyde Canal was £279 return, and for the Crinan £164, total £443. You don't have to pay up front for the return passage, which is cheaper than one way, just present your receipt on return. For comparison, the Caledonian Canal is the same as the Forth and Clyde.

We headed out on 17th May, with an overnight stop at Limekilns. We had left the mast down, it being so early in the season. The mast crane at Carron is in the sea lock, which sounds awful but in practice would only be a problem if it were very busy, which is unlikely. Do let them know you are coming at least a day before. We called 2 hours before and were not popular.

The Kelpies basin has toilets and showers and daytime burger bars but the nearest shops are miles away. From there the next day will probably get you to the Falkirk Wheel where again the local shops are hard to find. Make sure you have maps on your phone.

There are places to stop in Camelon with pubs and shops but the canal staff will not want you stopping for long as there are a lot of locks to get through.

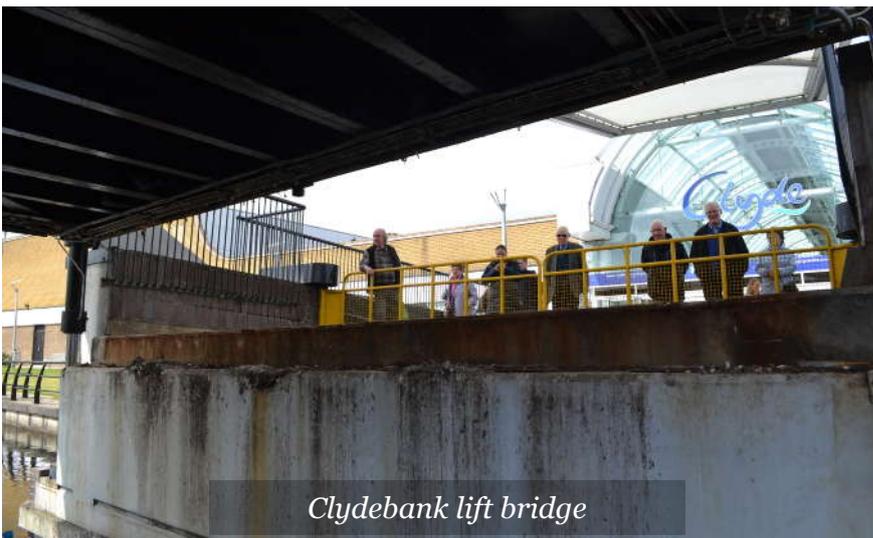


*Seahorse, Kelpies, get it?*

On the F&C, unlike the Crinan, you pass your warps to the staff and they take them round open hooks and back to you. You then cast off yourself. Simple, but don't do it single handed.

After another 4 well spaced locks you will be on the summit. Things will quieten down and the best overnight stop is Southbank Marina, Kirkintilloch, but there is a bridge just before it which you will need to arrange to be opened. You always need to arrange your schedule with the staff the day before, and keep to it; but the staff and volunteers are very friendly and helpful.

Kirkintilloch has all you need for provisions or eating out. It also has the best toilets and showers on the canal; it is worth persevering both to find them and fiddling with the toilet key to get in!



*Clydebank lift bridge*

If you need a crew change, which we did, both Kirkintilloch and Auchinstarry have bus links to the main railway line.

You could go on to the Glasgow branch which leaves a shorter trip next day, but I don't know what it's like.

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Now comes the big one. The west end of the canal from Maryhill lock 21 to Bowling lock 38 is only open from Friday to Monday in both directions. This takes some planning if you are dependant on holidays and your crew works weekends! You will want to do it in one day as the area does not have the best reputation, but we found it ok in daytime.

You will have a brief lunch stop at Clydebank which gives the unique experience of sailing through a shopping mall. Good fish and chips, and shops obviously.



*Bowling*

When you see the Erskine Bridge overhead you are nearly at Bowling. If you need provisions the shop at Old Kilpatrick near lock 37 is the last; there are none in Bowling. Here you can put your mast up; the man from the canal will operate the crane, but you need to provide your own strop.

Despite being beside the railway line, hardly any trains stop at Bowling. There is a bus, but we made our crew changes further on, at Holy Loch or Rothesay.

So once the mast is up, and you have checked everything is attached etc, you can wait for the tide (if you have an engine like ours) and head out into the Clyde. Don't believe anyone who says there is very little traffic on the River Clyde these days. The channel is quite frighteningly narrow when a freighter is bearing down on you. You can slip outside the buoys a bit, but not at the Lang Dyke, an interesting piece of industrial heritage.



*The Lang Dyke, River Clyde*

Oh, remember to check in with the Estuary Control. But if he tells you "there is no other traffic, treat it with caution.

As for weed, we came back in early August and they have definitely been trying – there is some shiny new gear around and signs that is being used. On four or five occasions we picked up some floating weed which had been cut and

had avoided collection, but fortunately this came off with a quick shot of reverse gear.

*Next time: A brush with Ra Polis, and the Crinan Canal for me.*

*Alvin Barber*

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## Dad's Army

Following an initiative seen at the Royal Tay Yacht Club, some of the retired gentlemen of the club decided to start a Monday Maintenance squad, where those club members who are no longer tied to a 9-to-5 work schedule might get together at the clubhouse for coffee, a blether, coffee, home-made cakes, coffee, pies, coffee and some useful work around the premises. In a very short period, this has turned into an outstanding success.

The jobs tackled by the team so far include:

- Roof terrace: Overhanging trees at the back of the clubhouse cut back, terrace deck and furniture pressure-washed, rust removed from balustrade then painted, cracks on roof terrace painted with Isoflex rubber.
- Green strip: Weeds and undergrowth cut back.
- Kitchen: Doors and surfaces washed and prepared, doors gloss painted, walls and ceiling painted (3 coats), cracked tiles replaced, tiles re-grouted.
- Hall: Door sanded and painted, new shades and LED bulbs in ceiling lights, wall lights replaced.
- Entrance hall and stairway: Walls painted, bottom pole of stairway taken off, sanded and varnished.
- Bar: Drainage pipe in bar and cellar re-routed.
- Exterior: Front door step edge painted yellow, smoker's station installed at back door, exterior window soffits and barge boards painted by a professional painter for 'elf'n'safety reasons.
- Gents' showers: This was the biggest task as the showers were effectively out of action due to water leakage and dampness. The work involved replacing leaking drainage pipes and removing sand blockage, drying out with dehumidifiers, rebuilding the shower plinth incorporating vents, and finishing with non-slip covering.

In addition, there has been a major clear out of junk and rubbish to the recycling centre.

The hard-working stalwarts who have achieved all this work include: Eddie King, Dave Jamieson, Maurice Williams, Doris Hunter, Hamish Sutherland, Jeff McLeod, Andy Walker, Dougie Pringle, Alvin Barber, John Dick, and above all our House Convenor Davie Mackay, who has co-ordinated the work and managed this motley crew (herding cats springs to mind.) Apologies to anyone whose name is missing.

But there is still more to do, and Davie has a never-ending list of jobs. So don't leave it all to the usual suspects. You don't have to be retired to join in - they will be delighted to see any member who can spare time on a Monday to help out.

And next time you're in the clubhouse, take a moment to smell the new paint and appreciate all the effort that has gone in to keeping the place up to scratch.



## Benge Dawson

We were all saddened to hear that a Life member and past Commodore of the Club died on 2nd September.

Alastair Dawson, better known to everyone as Benge, had been a member of the Cramond Boat Club since the 1950s. He said he knew that this was the right club for him when he saw a group of enthusiastic young members launching a boat one summer evening just after he joined. "We're off to Aberdour for chips," they said, "Do you want to come?"

He served on the club committee and was Commodore from 1972 to 1975. At his first committee meeting as Commodore, he suggested that the club should negotiate with the council to swap our premises with the toilet block at the foot of Glebe Road, on the basis that it had a better view of our sailing waters!



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He had been a Naval officer in the war and served at HMS Claverhouse as well. So he often presented a formal bearing and could sometimes look serious, but he had a pawky sense of humour and had an amazing fund of jokes and stories for any occasion.

Benge and his wife Katrina lived in a house overlooking the harbour at Cramond (now occupied by our present Commodore Andy Walker), and had four children who were all involved in club activities at various times. He worked as an engineer at Ferranti and put his engineering skills to great use for the club. In his basement he had a very well equipped and legendary workshop where he seemed to be able to manufacture almost anything on demand.

Long after retiring from committee duties, Benge was actively involved in club events and was always on hand to help out with work parties or lend some sage advice, whether asked for or not. Many a time a group of members would be discussing some problem which required an unusual technical solution, and Benge would slip away then return later with a precision-built gadget he had adapted or made in his workshop. Invariably it worked!



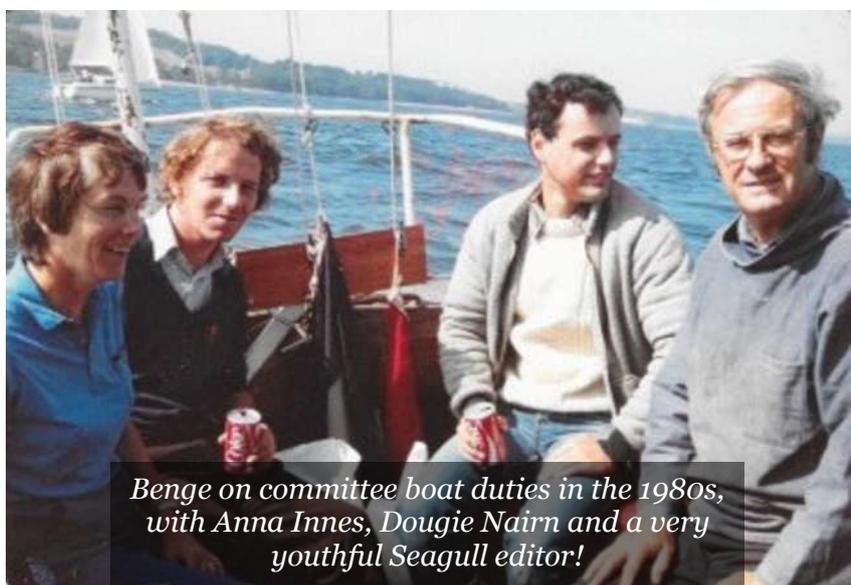
*Benge sailing Lucinda*

Right up to 2005 Benge and Katrina could be seen sailing their little Hurley *Lucinda* (or *Pan* before that) around the Forth.

He possessed a small but very loud cannon, beautifully mounted on a mahogany base, and for many years performed the gunnery duties at Cramond Regattas, starting races from the deck of the committee boat with ear-shattering cannon blasts. In addition to providing

unambiguous race starts, there were often side-effects, such as deafening the race committee, firing the wadding rod into the sail of the nearest boat, and on one famous occasion, setting fire to his trousers.

He was a first-class raconteur, with a marvellous turn of phrase and an imaginative vocabulary (he once described a blue-and-white striped buoy as "a corpulent Edinburgh Academical"). Whenever he put the tips of his fingers together and started, "I remember when ..." or "Did you hear about ...", you knew you were in for a treat – a well-told story, a terrible pun or a piece of useful advice.



*Benge on committee boat duties in the 1980s, with Anna Innes, Dougie Nairn and a very youthful Seagull editor!*

Eight years ago, Benge and Katrina moved to a purpose-built 'granny flat', partly designed by Benge himself, on the side of his son's house in Ullapool. Before moving, he held a 'Grand Displenishment Sale' (no simple garage sale for Benge) to dispose of the contents of his famous workshop. Many club members got excellent bargains on unusual artefacts.

Benge was one of those club figures who seemed to have been around for ever, and was known by everyone, old and young. He was always keen to help new members and give wise words of advice.

We missed Benge when he and Katrina moved to Ullapool, but I know many of us have great memories of a lovely, kind and gentle man.

In fact, it occurs to me that it might be quite fun to collect together our reminiscences of Benge. If you feel like contributing, please send your favourite Benge anecdotes, stories or jokes to the editor at [seagull@cramondboatclub.org.uk](mailto:seagull@cramondboatclub.org.uk) and perhaps we can share our tales in a later edition.

*Alastair Millar & Dave Innes*

## Acknowledgements

Except where stated, all photos are by club members and reproduced with their permission.

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