

Largs Sailing Club - 1936-2016

80th anniversary - "memories and history afternoon"

Largs Sailing Club was founded in 1936, so is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, and has just hosted a "memories and history afternoon", with well over 40 older members, former members, and descendants of former members gathering in the clubhouse to look over old documents and photographs - and bring in their own memories and memorabilia.



The Club now has the names of the ten founding members - William Barclay, Joe Duffield, George Duff, Simpson Duff, Jimmy Logan, Frank Kipling, Allan McAlpine, Rab McNaught, Captain Hugh Morris, and George Thomson - and a fascinating document that states:

The reason for the local apprentices (15-19) starting the Largs Sailing Club was because Royal Largs Yacht Club had conditions of entry that an applicant had to be 21, a master in his trade, and subject to the "black ball" acceptance as a member.

Times have changed!!

The Club originally sailed from their own jetty at Mackerston, as Cairnie's Quay, built by Dr John Cairnie in the early 1800's, and latterly owned by the Clark family, was reserved for the use of the Royal Largs Yacht Club. (Dr Cairnie, famous for setting out the rules of ice curling, settled in Largs in the early 1800's, and built his mansion house Curling Hall, where the flats are now.) Largs SC moved to Cairnie's Quay when the Logan family, who owned the adjacent Marine Hotel, bought Curling Hall in c. 1957, and Jimmy Logan gave the Club the use of the jetty.

The Club has had a number of premises and clubhouses over the years. Initial meetings were in the basement of Barra House, which later became the Marine Hotel. In 1952, courtesy of Jimmy Logan, the Club moved to the loft of the Curling Hall stables/garage, then in c. 1965, moved to the first purpose built clubhouse in 11 John Street, converted from what had been the stables of the Elderslie Hotel. Subsequently, the Club moved to Largs Yacht Haven in 1999.

Many fascinating memories came out during the afternoon. Lorna Marshall, daughter of founder member George Duff, a banker, and who was the Club's first treasurer, was delighted to see the original cash book in her father's copperplate handwriting. She also added that the Club's first Commodore (1938-47), Frank Kipling, was a relative of Rudyard Kipling, author and poet, and as a



talented artist, had designed the Club's burgee, with the distinctive Viking galley.



Another descendant who came along was Tricia Blackburn, daughter of Joe and Sheila Duffield, who had a builder's business in Cochrane Place East. Tricia is pictured above, on the right, with Margaret Rich, daughter of George Rich (right centre), past commodore, and (standing) John Currie, also a past commodore, and son of the Club's oldest surviving member Duncan Currie, who joined in 1937.



Also sharing memories were John Douglas, and previous Commodores Ken McClelland and Dave Lawson.

Over the years, many types of boats have been sailed by Club members, but maybe the most distinctive from some decades ago were the Loch Long day keelboats, many of which were built by Willie Boag in his boatyard in Allenpark Street, where the library is

now. Apparently Willie insisted on receiving firm orders for 12 boats before he would commit to their construction!



The photograph above shows Loch Longs starting a race off Cairnie's Quay, and probably dates from the 1950's, as it shows the Elderslie Hotel (now the Priory), but no Castlebay flats, which were built in 1961.



The Club has not only hosted many National and International events over the years, but its own sailors have had their fair share of success, including Campbell Davidson, Junior Topper World Champion in 2002, and Mark Andrews, Junior Finn World Champion in 2006. The Enterprise team racing squad were dominant around 1970, winning the Scottish team racing championship. Above are (back row) Bill Lonie, Ron Spinks, and John Pim; (middle row) John Currie, Jimmy Fisher, Bob Rutherford, Sarah Goldie, and Robbie Main; (front row) Alan Currie and Stuart Ferguson. Club successes continue - currently, we have Iain McLaughlan as Scottish Laser Champion, and Natalie McWilliams as Scottish Windsurfing Champion. Dan Smith, who learned to sail as Largs SC as a cadet, also skippered Derry-Londonderry-Doire to a very close second place overall in the Clipper Round the World race.

The Club has had a busy summer, with the Optimist National Championships in July, with 270 competitors from 12 countries. Winter is approaching, so sailing activities are reducing, but the social activities are increasing. The Club is always looking for new members, and if you are interested, pop into the clubhouse, see their website, www.largssc.co.uk, or contact secretary@largssc.co.uk.