

## 12<sup>th</sup> Portobello (RHS) reminiscences

Jim Dallas

If I remember correctly, I took over from Rob and Walter whilst we were still at Regent Road. We then moved to the old Scout Hall that was on Northfield Road on the corner with Northfield Avenue, now demolished and redeveloped with flats. We were there for two to three years and then joined the land Scouts in the primary school. I think Gordon was still SL and we ran in tandem for about a year, possibly more. When Gordon retired and became GSL I took over the Troop as SL until the run from Balerno to Northfield Broadway and back and family and business commitments became too much.

As a Scout I was part of a small party of Sea Scouts that went to a Jamborette in Denmark. The 1st Absalom Troop from Copenhagen hosted us. We trekked to the campsite and camped with the Danes and a troop from Germany there may have been one other. We then returned to our host families in Copenhagen. The group was Brian Thompson, Brian, I think, Tulloch, Ian Oag and myself. I am sure I have a page from the Evening News showing the group with Rob and John Small.

The camp Rob mentioned at Duntanlich was where 12<sup>th</sup> Knight was launched. She was quite heavy as I recall, and I do not remember if she went to any other camps. She was moored at Fisherrow most of the time. I do remember having to be retrieved from the mouth of the Esk after I could not get back into Fisherrow because of the wind. After 12<sup>th</sup> Knight we acquired a roll deck Graduate dinghy, then Manly, and I built a Mirror dinghy, Winnie the Pooh which were sailed from Fisherrow, (seen on the



left under construction by Turnbull and Murray, and on the right at its 1975 launch with myself, and Bryce-Cameron-Irving-Lunn-Dodds). At one camp at Borenich on the North side of Loch Tummel one, possibly two of the three Rennie boys John and/or Simon were sailing Manly when they were overflown by the RAF who used the dam at the bottom of the loch as a "target" the turbulence caused them to



nearly capsize. Not content with one run the RAF returned even lower and covered the sails in unburnt fuel. Eventually no one in the Troop wanted to sail and the Mirror was badly damaged when a windsurfer was picked up in the wind and driven through her bow whilst in the dinghy park. I bought both the boats from the Troop.



Manly was a dinghy that was owned by the father of a friend of John Dinnie, who used to crew it when either the son or the father were not available for races at Fisherrow. The graduate became too small for them to sail and they bought a Flying Fifteen, a keel boat. There were a few of these at Fisherrow. They then sold Manly to the troop, this was before Winnie was built. We kept the name as it is unlucky to change a boat's name, she was, I believe named after the Sydney beach. Jim Radin a chairman of the parents committee also had a Fifteen but probably in the late 70's early 80's which I crewed on once. The boats were kept at the old Scout hut in Sleigh Drive, this was Edinburgh's boat store before Longcraig was built. I was secretary and treasurer of the Water Activities Committee, so was able to use the store. Winnie was built there.

When Longcraig was completed the committee had no further use for Sleigh Drive so we lost our storage facility. Longcraig had no spare space and we had no space at Northfield. Storage became a problem so that is why the boats ended up with me. Both eventually fell to bits with rot as using covers does not keep the moisture out as a building does.

When I was leader, camps, as I recall, tended to flit between Earlstoun Loch and Borenich on Loch Tummel, but we did however camp at Morenish on Loch Tay, Loch of the Lowes at Dunkeld, Boturich on Loch Lomond and near St Fillans on Loch Earn. The photo on the left shows an episode at the 1973 Earlstoun camp, and carries the caption "just five loaves and one further fish required". There was a National Sea Scout camp at Dunstaffnage which may be the camp Rob referred to as Connel Ferry. I remember what I think was a weekend National Sea Scout camp on Loch Goil, probably the opening of the Lochgoilhead Scout Sailing centre. We travelled from either

Gourock or Dunoon in a Captains Barge, the return trip was in a gale and very bumpy. I also recall PL's weekends at Drummonds Hall at Lauder. My later camps were all undertaken with my family, some in nappies, staying in our caravan either on site or close by.

Apart from the boats we had another form of transport the Sherpa minibus and I remember changing the engine in her and driving on the road from Moniave to St John's Town of Dalry and having to stop to let those with motion sickness out, despite driving at a sedate pace.

I will hunt for any paperwork I have. I was not then much of a photographer then, so I do not have many photos. Sorry there are no dates but if there is paperwork I may be able to expand. My oldest friends were all from my 12<sup>th</sup> days and although one has died, Robin Caton (Beetle) I am still in touch with the other two, one in Edinburgh, Alan Walkingshaw, and one just outside Sydney, Stuart McNair.

*@Jim Dallas 20<sup>th</sup> February 2022/21<sup>st</sup> November 2022*