

3 Island Powerboat Rally 2013

By Ken Dougall

On June 1st The Royal Forth Yacht Club hosted a three Island “Cruise in Company” for Powerboats organised by members of RYA Powerboat Scotland committee and The Royal Forth Yacht Club. In glorious sunshine boats from Port Edgar and Granton met in the clubhouse to be welcomed by Commodore Mark Primrose. Thereafter followed a briefing prior to commencing the 28 mile route.



At 11.00 the words “Ladies and Gentlemen start your engines” were heard and the fleet of 7 powerboats headed off led by Olympian the new Rescue boat of the Royal Forth Yacht club. This is Olympian’s first year at the Royal Forth Yacht club having had the honour prior to arrival of being one of the rescue boats at the London Olympics.



The fleet's first port was that of Newhaven Harbour with its white tower light at the harbour entrance. Newhaven is a small harbour with a long history of fishing.



This harbour has seen many a fishing fleet of small skiffs ply their trade from its sanctuary. There was a certain beauty of having another fleet circle in its confines, albeit a very different fleet of course – one that could travel at 50 knots.

The wind was blowing 6 knots from west as the fleet headed out to the island of Inchkeith.



The fleet consisted of ribs and cruisers. The smallest rib was 5 metres , the biggest was 6.4 metres, and the cruiser was a Weekender 235. The ages of the drivers were as varied as the boats from 15 to 58 years old, a 15 year old girl drove the 5 metre rib, a 16 year old boy drove a 6.2 metres rib and the other boats were driven by a variety of ages.

The fleet headed off again and motored past Pallas Rock on our way into the harbour at Inchkeith.



The boats rafted up in 2 metres of water and set off to visit the lighthouse which was first “lighted” on 14th September 1804 and still shines bright today. The lighthouse keepers were withdrawn in 1986 to leave the island uninhabited.





However the island is the home of nesting seagulls that jealously guard their kingdom. Their tactics of dive bombing what they see as an invasion force is highly effective. There are many ruined buildings relating to both wars on the island and it is peppered with underground tanks filled with water, not all of them covered with gratings.





We returned to the boats after our 55 metre climb to the top ready to head out passed Seal Carr and Iron Craig rocks to head for the wreck of SS Switha.



On 31 January 1980 the 54.3 metre patrol boat SS Switha ran aground on the Herwit rock. She was built in 1948 and was dispersed by explosives sometime after 1980 yet can still be seen at most states of the tide.



We circumnavigated Inchkeith and then headed 5 miles East into the wind, which had got up to 12 knots.



The bigger boats easily cut through the chop but the smaller ones had a slower time of it. The fleet spread out but paced itself so that no one was left behind. There is a rocky spit that projects South East from Inchmickery some considerable distance so the fleet congregated some distance off at a waypoint.



Olympian led the way to the pier at Inchmickery but we did not land as it is not allowed as it is an RSPB reserve. Inchmickery although only 200 metres by 100 metres has extensive military buildings on it designed to make the island look like a battleship protecting the bridges.

It was now past lunchtime so we headed straight for the Inchcolm past the Cow and Calves Rock and Oxcars Bank. The Northern Bay of Inchcolm is accessed by going between Swallow Craig and the island.



We tied up alongside the jetty clear of the ferry terminal. We sat in the lee of a hill and ate our lunch looking onto the boats.

There was a wedding party on the island and if you look carefully in their pictures you are bound to see 24 powerboaters relaxing in the sun!

We headed out after eating and visited the North Bay to get a good look at the Abbey that stands proud on the island. The Medulsa Rocks that guard the islands Northern shores were kept well to starboard as we circumnavigated the island to reach the rarely visited West Bay. We passed seals sunbathing on the starboard deep channel mark and entered close to the island. Not all the fleet wished to enter the tight confines of the west bay but those that did saw the small stone harbour that lies within.

A visit to Aberdour was changed to Port Edgar and the bridges where an excursion ashore for ice creams was unsuccessful.



We said good bye to the Port Edgar boats here and the Royal Forth boats headed back to Granton in a choppy sea that threw up a fair amount of water. The boats craned out at 17.50 hrs and washed down in time for the 18.00 hrs finish.

It was an exciting day the very epitome of what our sport is all about. We had mixed sex's, mixed ages, mixed vessels, mixed clubs and mixed abilities all enjoying the sea and the sport we love. A highly successful Cruise in Company that was enjoyed by all.