

The Scottish Rally 2010

Our Scottish rally has traditionally been held at Kippford on the Solway Firth which over the years has proved popular with members. However, in recent times the number of boats attending this rally has diminished and consequently we have struggled to provide meaningful sailing for members over the rally weekend.

At one time we used to have five or six junk rigged boats at this rally two of which were over 30'. Now we have only one boat over 30' one of 18' and one of 28' which sails out of Kirkcudbright. For a couple of years a local owner of a catamaran very kindly took our members out when there were insufficient junk rigged boats to get everyone afloat.

As a result, last winter, we decided to look at other options and possible venues and after some visits to potential sites and clubs it was decided to hold a new rally based at Caernarfon on the Menai Straits in North Wales where some local and nearby members said they would be willing to bring their boats.

This meant that there was going to be no Scottish rally at Kippford in 2010. However, as there was another rally for boats in and around the Clyde and based at Holy Loch near Dunoon which was organized locally and run by Malcolm Higgs, a suggestion was put forward that this could become the new JRA Scottish rally with help from the committee in sending out invitations. It was known that there are about a dozen junk rigged boats in the Clyde Estuary of varying sizes.

In previous years Malcolm has contacted the owners of boats in the area personally and agreed a suitable date for the rally. As this new Scottish rally was to go into the JRA rally programme a date had to be set much earlier in the year so it could be published in the January issue of the newsletter. The date of the Scottish rally was set for 10th and 11th July so as to give a balanced rally programme throughout the summer.

Alan and Gloria were planning to take *Badger* to the Norwegian rally at the beginning of August and as they would be going through the Caledonian canal said they would attend the new Scottish rally on route. Our Secretary Robin Blain was also planning to attend.

In due course invitations were sent out to those members living in the northern part of the country. I made arrangements with the local hostelry for dinner on the Saturday evening, with the Holy Loch Sailing Club for use of their premises and with the Holy Loch Marina for berthing facilities. I also arranged for swinging moorings if required and for publicity on local radio with the impending visit of the JRA secretary and *Badger*.

In the event the response to the invitations proved very disappointing and no-one other than those local boats known about decided to attend. An even greater blow was dealt by the weather which prevented *Badger* making an appearance and even prevented her reaching Norway. Robin was prevented from attending by ill health. Two or three members did make telephone contact but only to say that there had been an error on the printed rally dates.

On Saturday morning, Ian Morton with *Orca*, who had made a tremendous effort to get from his home base at Girvan, met up with me in *Bumper* both of which are 23' Virgo Voyagers, at the sailing club, together with Andrew McIntyre and his wife who stopped to spend the day with us whilst travelling from the Isle of Bute to their home near Oban. David Golding, another member, who is in the process of purchasing a Hunter Liberty from Robin Blain also came along as he wanted to see how his future boat would operate. We managed some hours sailing in Holy Loch where we were able to demonstrate most aspects of sailing with a junk rig. Afterwards, although few in number, we enjoyed a meal together at The Holy Loch Inn.



Holy Loch is a beautiful deep water cruising area with spectacular scenery as this photograph of the hills over Lamlash Island and the Holy Loch lighthouse show.



On Sunday it looked windy, it was windy. The trees were bending over, there were white tops on the water, and the wind was howling through the rigging, taking the tops off the wavelets. We made a decision that there was to be no sailing that day. A wise decision, although a disappointing one for Dave Golding, and for the representative of Dunoon Radio who came to see us. We spent the day partly in the clubhouse and partly in the boats, drinking tea and chatting.



On Saturday I had received a telephone call from Craig Simpson to say he would like to call and see us on the Sunday with his 26' Vertue *Caber*.

He duly arrived, although rather late in the day despite having set off very early and enduring a very slow and rough passage from Rosneath.

I have to ask, is there a future for a Scottish rally? Was the place wrong, was it the date, was it lack of publicity, did you not realise that this year the time and place for the Scottish rally had changed, OR is there just no interest in holding a rally

in Scotland? Some feedback would be welcome.

On a brighter note, the boats attending this rally sailed off for a few days in company as usual, and although the sunshine was not unending, at least there was some good sailing to be had.





This square rigged sail training ship called *Tenacious* is a regular visitor on the Clyde.

Malcolm Higgs & Peter Manning