

Gairloch Boat Club

Vice President's Report 2013-2014

The sailing year has been one of mixed fortunes.

Early in the year the Junior Sailing programme, run by Ewan McLellan, was a great success, and was also blessed with good weather. The young sailors and their parents seemed to find the event very enjoyable, and we hope, if repeated again in 2014, that we will see many returning, and perhaps some new faces as well. Hopefully we will see some of the juniors joining in other club events during the coming year.

Club sailing, generally, suffered from too many Sundays being plagued with poor weather, either wet and windy, or sunny but no wind. This undoubtedly goes part of the way to explaining the very low attendances for much of the year. However, there also seemed to be insufficient numbers of people willing to get out on the water.

Our open events were also affected by the weather. The Big Boat Race had to be postponed from the Saturday to the Sunday, in the face of very strong winds on the Saturday. Rather bizarrely, the race on Sunday was sailed in very light winds, with the later finishers struggling to get to the line. The strong wind forecast had also prevented some of our usual visitors from Stornoway and Loch Ewe making it to the event, so numbers were well down on last year.

The Challenge dinghy weekend was also troubled by the weather, with sailing cancelled for the Sunday due to the forecast, of very strong winds, which turned out to be correct. However, it was just possible to sail four races on Saturday, within the restrictions of unfavourable tides for the event. We were well supported by our usual visitors from Loch Carron, Loch Morlich and Invergordon, but my biggest disappointment was the very poor turnout of local boats. Only two Gairloch boats entered for the fast handicap class.

On the social front, Jane Rowe and her many helpers from the club organized excellent evenings, coinciding with our open events, and finally, at short notice, arranging the Christmas Dinner at the Golf Club clubhouse. This was a new venue, which seemed to work very well.

Financially, the Club has had a challenging year, with major expenditure required on rescue boats, with both of our elderly RIBs becoming unserviceable. It is a great credit to Martin's careful monitoring of our finances, and also the generosity of many club members, which allowed us to refurbish one of the RIBs, without which we would not have been able to maintain full safety facilities. Only the smaller Whaley, purchased at the start of the year, was available for rescue duties throughout the year.

Jane Rowe, after many years service as Secretary to the Club, has announced that she will not continue in the post in 2014, and a replacement is required. She intends to continue to assist with organizing the social side of events. The club owes a great debt of gratitude to Jane for her tireless work in recent years.

I have decided not to continue in the role of Vice President for another year, as I find increasingly that I am sailing much less often than used to be the case, and find it difficult to maintain the involvement with the Club, which I feel is necessary. It is important, therefore, that someone who is more actively involved with sailing, and also more closely linked with the local community in Gairloch, should take over from me, if the Club is to see an increase in activity and membership.

I hope the Club prospers in 2014 and can move forward with enthusiasm and unity, which is necessary in and small club.

Best wishes and many thanks to all who have helped with the Club throughout the past year.

Hugh Macintyre