



Royal Patron HRH The Princess Royal

# All Aboard!!

March 2010

## THE WOODEN SPOON—A NEW BOAT IS PLANNED



***Exciting news for one and all—we are preparing for the launch of a new boat thanks to the Wooden Spoon Charity!!***

***For those of you who do not know, Wooden Spoon is the children's charity of the rugby world. It has been in existence for 25 years and is there to give disadvantaged children in Britain and Ireland a chance to achieve their full potential in life. Their projects have included things such as sensory rooms, interactive gardens and playgrounds for special needs children. Seagull Trust Cruises have now been given a grant of £50,000 to spend on a boat specifically designed as a floating classroom.***

The new boat will help Seagull Trust Cruises continue to fulfil the wishes of its founder the Rev. Mackay who wanted to involve all disabled and disadvantaged groups including young people. In recent years the numbers of youth groups have fallen away and this floating classroom aims to help address this issue. The central concept is to have a floating classroom during term time (modelled on a successful project in West London which has been running on the Grand Union Canal since about 2002). The boat will be named The Wooden Spoon Seagull in honour of the Charity. The goal is to have the project up and running by March 2011.

The Wooden Spoon Seagull will be moored at Edinburgh Quay where a new toilet block is currently being built by British Waterways. Edinburgh Quay provides two excellent public car parks with one of these being directly beside the water and it is also in easy reach of public transport, with several restaurants and public-seating areas nearby—all in all it will make the new boat highly accessible.

It is envisaged that a new branch will be formed, and initial discussions with a potential Chairman & committee have begun. It is expected that volunteers will carry out all other positions within this branch.

A boat will be commissioned from A L Gordon and the initial build programme could provide apprentices with training opportunities and encourage their future involvement with Seagull Trust Cruises and lowland canals of Scotland—more youth involvement!

An ideal boat would be licensed to carry up to 36 people plus crew and would be equipped with an audio-visual presentation suite (laptop, 42" plasma screen, DVD player, sound system etc), full accessibility for people in wheelchairs, and catering facilities. The boat design will include as many eco-friendly features as possible e.g. solar power, wind power, bio diesel etc

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***Christmas a distant memory? To the many people who enjoyed one of Seagull Trust's Santa Cruises across the branches it was a memory well worth savouring—well done to Santa and 'all the little helpers'***



## GROWLY AND FRIENDS JUMP FOR CHARITY



27<sup>th</sup> September saw brave bears gather at the Falkirk Wheel. Growly Bear had asked his friends and family to take part in a sponsored teddy bear jump from the Falkirk Wheel. On the day 25 intrepid and fearless bears registered for the jump. The bears brought their families with them so there was a good mix of bears and people. The bears involved were delighted to help raise money for Seagull Trust Cruises and their beary exploits helped raise over £2000. Well done Teds!! The money will be used to extend the boathouse and reception centre at Bantaskine and to create an education centre.

The winning bear was Blue Ted from Milngavie, we were unable to get a

quote from Blue Ted on his win, he was so emotional to speak to us, and he had brought his family the Hunts with him.

To ensure those non-bears attending did not feel left out Growly had arranged for some other entertainment. There were local musicians, face painting, boat rides, various games and stalls and belly dancing. Growly felt he and the other bears would have been really good at the belly dancing – due to the size of their tums – but sadly they were not able to take part as they were a bit short on the leg front. As you can see from the photographs the Teds had a helping hand to get over the rail ( those short legs again).

The runner up was Bradley Bear from Camelon. Bradley Bear also brought his family with him, the Findlays!



***Such was the success that this will now be an annual event***

### Obituary—Stanley Ross Smith written by Ronnie Rusack

Sadly on 13 February one of our longstanding and faithful volunteers Stanley Ross Smith passed away at the age of 90. Stanley was a man who couldn't keep away from water. His interests started in canals when it was rumoured that the powers that be had their sights on the canals and were going to turn them into highways. This instigated the formation of SIWA (Scottish Inland Waterways Association) and Stanley was a founder member. His interest with the Trust started in 1977 when he offered to bring the first St John Crusader half way across England to save the transport cost which was eventually launched at Ratho in 1978.

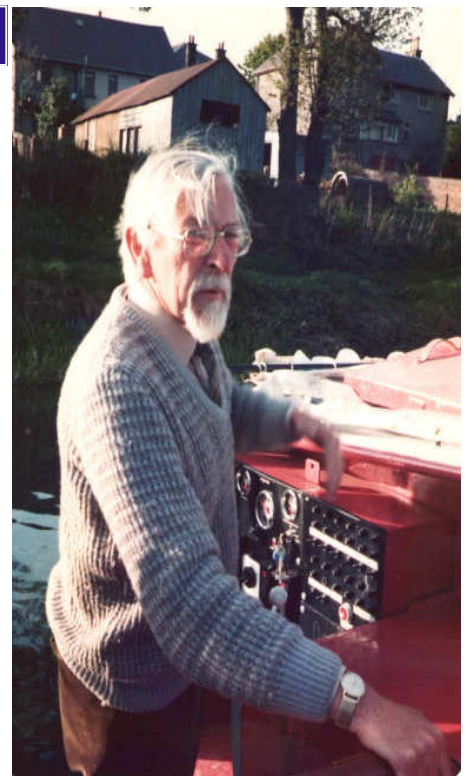
Stanley was an architect to whom the Trust is indebted, it was easy for us to give him the ideas from our heads and Stanley turned the ideas into reality. He was involved in the building of all Seagull boats and the boathouse and dry-dock at Kirkintilloch, and with his son's assistance built the Falkirk boathouse and the reception centre and dry-dock at Ratho.

Along with his wife June they spent many years as skippers on the Friday crew at Ratho and also served as a Trustee and Vice Chairman.

Stanley was very fond of the Edinburgh section of canal and with his love of boating he purchased the Thomas Telford (now at Clifton) and had it transported for one summer to Harrison Park to bring attention to the locals of the existence of the canal in Edinburgh. He was also a great supporter of the Millennium Link project and after all these years of campaigning was fascinated how quickly the Lowland Canals suddenly came alive again.

The only reason he retired from the Trust was to move near his family on Fair Isle and in latter years to Shetland where he kept abreast of the Trust activities by email on a regular basis.

Stanley lived life to the full and as June said "he died peacefully after a wonderful life and was simply tired out".



## HIGHLAND SEAGULL

The Highland Seagull was originally built in 1975 for Jacobite Cruises. As it was based near to the Abbey at Fort Augustus it was originally called the Abbey Princess. For a number of years it was used for leisure cruises on Loch Ness. During that time however it was found that its design and size did not suit some of the conditions that could be encountered on Loch Ness, especially when it was windy. The Highland Branch of the Seagull Trust was established in 1987 and bought the Abbey Princess in partnership with Inverness District Council. It was transferred to Caley Marina in Inverness, which, thanks to the Marina's Jim Hogan and his family, has been its home ever since.

With the original design of the boat, the wheel house was mid-ships. Prior to its conversion it was taken to the McDermott Oil Rig Yard at Ardersier where it was shot blasted and painted. The first photograph shown was taken after it was under-coated and its original chain & anchor, which can be seen, is still on board today. All the conversion work and final painting was carried out by Caley Marina.



Then on a very wet day in July 1989 the boat was renamed the Highland Seagull by the Earl & Countess of Inverness at the Twin Jetties near to Tomnahurich Bridge on the Caledonian Canal.

In 2000 part of the hull of the boat was replaced and a new engine and generator were installed. After 20 years, however, regulatory requirements have greatly increased, and other equipment is beginning to show signs of wear and tear. It was therefore decided to try to raise funds to build a new boat to the standards of today and which will give service for another thirty years.



The Highland Branch has maintained strong links with numerous local bodies ever since its inception. Caley Marina has been of great help in assessing the current condition and future of the Highland Seagull. The Inverness Common Good fund was approached for funding, and has pledged a significant sum towards the overall costs of the replacement vessel. An application was also submitted to the Highland Cross, which is perhaps the best known charity fundraising event in the North of Scotland. Each year some 240 teams of 3 take part in an annual biathlon from the west coast at Kintail to the east coast at Beauly, by foot and by bicycle, each team pledging to raise a minimum sum for subsequent distribution to the Cross's chosen recipient charities for the year.

The Highland Branch participated in the rigorous selection process, and was successful in being chosen as one of the major beneficiary organisations for 2010. Branch volunteers will be required to help with the organisation of the event on the day. This year it will take place on the 19th June 2010, and the funds raised will be gathered and distributed after that. This works in with having the necessary plans and tender documents etc. drawn up and ready to have a start build date in autumn 2010 and the new vessel ready for service at the start of the 2011 season.

The Branch is extremely fortunate to enjoy such a depth of community recognition and support across the Highlands, and it looks forward to being able to complete the project for the new boat with further support to add to the tremendous local contributions which it is receiving.



## Photographic Competition 2009

*And the winner is.....*

***Malcolm Allen***



### **Sailing home, the last cruise of 2009.**

We received over 50 entries for this years photo competition and a huge thanks to the many people who entered. Pictures covered boats, views, canal history, crew members and passengers—as well as the off funny shot; but the winner was Malcolm for a stunning view from onboard. You can see his winning entry on the cover of this years Annual Report in a few weeks time. Please do keep sending us your images they are useful for the web, newsletters and the wider promotion of Seagull Trust Cruises

**Volunteers always needed** – we are always looking for more volunteers to help us to extend our work and to help the disabled and disadvantaged in our communities; if you can help please contact us . ***For more information please go to [www.seagulltrust.org.uk](http://www.seagulltrust.org.uk)*** - every hour you can give can make a real difference.

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