



Fisherrow Yacht Club, 97 New Street, Musselburgh. EH21 6DG
www.fisherrowyachtclub.com

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Fisherrow Yacht Club's Diamond Jubilee Book - Official Launch and Signing

Fisherrow Yacht Club (FYC), located near to the harbour in Fisherrow, Musselburgh, celebrated its sixtieth birthday during 2017. A special commemorative book titled "*Fisherrow Yacht Club, Sailors' Tales from the First 60 Years*" was planned with the initial intention being to launch the book at the Jubilee Civic Reception, held in the Musselburgh Town Hall in June 2017. However, as the word of the jubilee celebration spread, and more and more former members came to celebrate with the Club, the stories and anecdotes grew. The length of time it took to complete the writing and editing also grew. At the start of this year, 2018, the book was finally published. On Friday 23rd March the official book signing reception will be held in the FYC club premises at 7.30 pm.

As the title suggests, the contents are very much sailors' tales from the last 60 years, but the book recognizes the importance of the Fisherrow harbour as the lynch pin for the Club. Although it can be assumed that the Romans landed boats in the River Esk bay, the actual first official records of the existence of a harbour date back to 1592. The opening chapter accounts for Fisherrow's strategic importance in historic battle plans, its connections to thriving trade with Europe, and the demise of merchant trading replaced by the fishing industry until recent years, when most of the boats moored in the harbour are now leisure craft.

Each chapter is set in chronological order and centres on the explorers and champions of the Club however, it is more than a dry historical account of the Club as there are several hair-raising tales of wrecked boats and rescued sailors. Some skippers have undertaken challenging ocean crossings in small yachts. Supreme of these adventures has to be the account of the self-built yacht, *Odyssey*, which circum-navigated the world from New Zealand with half-way destination, Fisherrow, the birthplace of the builder skipper, Sandy Livingstone. During the return voyage to New Zealand crew and boat were caught up in a rebellion in Panama.

The book is not all about yacht sailing as the Club has spawned European dinghy racing champions too. In the late 1970's there was a very fast class of dinghy called the Fireball. Two Fisherrow teenagers, Stuart Angus and David Bain, sailed several boats of this class honing their skills to become European Fireball Class Champions in 1979. They competed in the world competition for the class in 1980 and came 4th. Those two were "Great Balls of Fire" as their chapter title suggests.

In 1997 a North Sea race to Norway was skippered by Stuart McDonald and two crew members all three of whom had a disability. The Norwegian press printed an article about



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the team titled: "Three Sailors, Three Hands and Only Three Feet". The crew won 3rd place, but more importantly they raised £9,000 for amputees in developing countries.

All these yarns and many more included in this book *Fisherrow Yacht Club, Sailors' Tales From the First Sixty Years*, tell of who and why Fisherrow Yacht Club is the very successful club it is today.

Copies of the book, £12.50, can be ordered through

Fisherrow Yacht Club <https://fisherrowyachtclub.com>



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About the author



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Over and above being author of the book, Dr Ian Thompson also coordinated the special activities for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Ian was nominated for the Royal Yachting Association, Scotland Volunteer of the Year in recognition of the amount of work he did for the club during this special year. Ian is a sailor and yacht owner who started his sailing career in his native South Africa.

Ian also championed disabled access to the harbour, as his wife's deteriorating health limited her ability to climb down onto the boat. His yacht is regularly donated for club use to take out members, new and old, and he is regularly seen around the Club with his tools making improvements.



"My wife and I have been sailing mates for 60 years having first sailed together in South Africa in 1957 and we have sailed out of Fisherrow since 1977. The club has been a great source of help and advice to self-taught sailors like us, a place of convivial friendships and much fun through participation in its activities. Giving something back is the least we could do." noted Ian on receiving the nomination.