

A Brief History

The Royal Forth yacht Club was founded on the 16th of May 1868 as 'Granton Yacht Club' by a group of 26 local gentlemen who were interested in the encouragement of active boating among the people of Edinburgh and the annual subscription was 6 shillings. Mr George Stevenson of Granton was the first President and Mr Robert Darling of Trinity the first Secretary.

The name was changed to 'Forth Yacht Club' on the 4th of April 1872 and then in 1883, through the good offices of Lord Rosebery, her Majesty Queen Victoria was 'graciously pleased to command' that henceforth the Club would be known as the 'Royal Forth Yacht Club'. Lord Rosebery unfurled the first flag of the Royal Forth in 1883 and there was a celebratory serving of cake and wine and a display of fireworks.

During its early years the Club had no headquarters and held its meetings in various hotels, in particular the Wardie Hotel and the Waterloo and Prince of Wales hotels. In 1881 the desire for a home of its own resulted in the purchase of 1 Boswall Road Edinburgh (Eildon Lodge) at a cost of £1875, 'furnished by a bond of £1500 plus a loan of £400 and repaid by £50 debentures over many years'. The Clubhouse was extended in 1890 at a cost of £510. The Club remained here till the opening of the new Clubhouse in 1984 on the Middle Pier.

Granton Yacht Club was not the first club in the area, in 1835 a group of local gentlemen had formed the 'Eastern Yacht Club' based on the harbour at Granton which was then being built by the Duke of Buccleuch. In 1836, the Duke prevailed upon King William IV to grant the royal accolade and the club became the 'Royal Eastern Yacht Club'. Its main practical purpose was to hold an annual regatta on the Forth. The Royal Eastern developed as a gentleman's club eventually with a club room on Princes Street and the only active sailing activity was the annual regatta. It fell on hard times in the late 19th C and sold its assets on Princes Street and became a club in name only until the last three members and its remaining assets were absorbed by the Royal Forth Yacht Club in 1969.

A third club, the 'Almond yacht Club' came into being in Granton in 1897 and existed alongside the Royal Forth Yacht Club for many years. It was a club of active sailors

and many matches were held between the two clubs, there was also close collaboration as sailing developed from a few large sailing yachts weighing many tons to larger numbers of smaller racing class yachts. The interests of the two clubs converged and in 1957 the members of Almond Yacht Club amalgamated with Royal Forth. Some of the trophies still presented today reflect their history.

The Forth Corinthian yacht Club was formed in Granton in 1880, sharing the harbour with the other three clubs of the day and remains based at Granton.

The Royal Forth has to date operated out of Granton Harbour, now under the ownership of Forth Ports Authority. The West harbour was partially infilled in the 1970s and further recent infilling reduced the size of the deeper west harbour which has remained undeveloped for some time. Both the west and shallower east harbour have swinging moorings.

Just as the larger yachts of the Almond Yacht Club gave way to smaller racing classes the pace of life changes and there is now a mix of racing and cruising yachts based at Granton. In the early eighties there were a number of one design classes: Skua, Yoeman, Soling, Etchells, Dragon, IOD, fast and slow handicap, now there are: H-boats, 707s and there remain a few Dragons and the handicap yachts.

Although events such as the Dragon Gold and Edinburgh Cups have not been raced on the Forth since the mid-eighties in recent years the attraction of the City of Edinburgh and the excellent open racing water have resulted in the prestigious S&S AGM being held at the Club, the RS Elite Nationals and in 2014 the 707 Nationals. Since 1968 a fleet of German yachts has raced across on a biannual basis, this event has remained popular with increasingly large yachts making the crossing. The founder of the race, Dr Meinhard Kohfahl was made an honorary member in 1987. We are fortunate in having HRH Prince Philip (whose name appears as a winner on club trophies) as an honorary member and HRH the Princess Royal who is also our Patron.

The Club continues to change and evolve and the ownership of Boswall Bittern for maintenance dredging may lead to exciting new developments.

Acknowledgement: Bill Titterington Past Hon. Sec.

Past Commodores of the Royal Forth Yacht Club

- 1868 George Stevenson
- 1872 Rear Admiral James Paterson Bower
- 1875 Captain James Arthur Forbes R.N.
- 1879 John Morison
- 1881 Thomas Craigie Glover
- 1883 Sir Donald Currie G.C.M.G.
- 1910 Archibald Philip Primrose, Earl of Rosebery K.G.K.T.
- 1929 John Ferguson
- 1937 Alexander James Ferguson
- 1947 John Alexander MacQueen
- 1957 The Hon. Lord Cameron D.S.C.
- 1969 Hugh Arnott
- 1972 James Leask
- 1975 Kenneth I Gumley
- 1977 Roger O S Miller
- 1979 Marshall L Napier
- 1981 Hamish Mackenzie
- 1983 Harry Holmes
- 1885 Neil A Ross
- 1987 R Alexander Flett
- 1989 Davis S C Boyd
- 1991 William G T Rudd
- 1993 Michael H G Pollett
- 1995 Catherine H Sedgworth
- 1997 Stuart M Crombie
- 1999 W David D Darling
- 2001 Ian W Paterson
- 2003 George C Brown
- 2006 James A G Lowe
- 2009 Fiona M Brown