

Euan Ross 1952-2021

Euan Ross, a keen member of the Association of Yachting Historians, was born and brought up in the historic Highland village of Kilmun in Argyll. His father was a well-known engineer in Scotland and, among other notable construction projects, was a prominent figure on the first Forth Road Bridge project. His mother was a popular local nurse who, as well as helping all those round about her, was also able to give all her love and care to Euan and his brother and sister.

Living on the shores of the River Clyde, Euan soon acquired his father's sailing talent and became an excellent dinghy sailor at the local Holy Loch Sailing Club, winning many trophies in his own self-built Merlin Rocket dinghies. Indeed, it was during these early years of his life that Euan developed his interest in classic yachts since at that time most small craft in Scotland were built in wood by local master builders in yards such as Morris & Lorimer's and Robertson's (who built the America's Cup challengers *Sceptre* and *Sovereign*), both of which were easily visible from his bedroom window, with McGruers, the other main builder at the time, just round the corner in the Gareloch. These were in addition to a plethora of small family boat builders dotted round the coast producing smaller but equally intriguing yachts and dinghies.

Educated at Dunoon Grammar School, Euan became Head Boy in 1970 before leaving home to receive his further education at Aberdeen University. Following his graduation with a BSc he took up a career in Town and Country Planning and then embarked on a sustained sojourn abroad where he worked on major international development projects in countries as diverse as Albania, Australia, Brunei, Indonesia and China.

Euan still, however, managed to maintain an involvement in all types of sailing and became a champion sailboarder, as well as crewing as tactician on many well-known racing boats in the China Sea Race and even the Whitbread Round the World Race. It was on one of these jaunts that he met Alison Spice who was to become his life partner and, having spent many years living and working together in Jakarta, they returned on his retirement to set up home in Alresford, Hampshire, where Euan developed his fascination with classic and historical sailing boats. He retained links with his native Kilmun, however, and bought a locally built one-design day racer of the Piper class, designed by the legendary David Boyd, and with the Class approaching its 50th anniversary Euan was persuaded to write a biography of the Pipers to mark the occasion. The Class Association were hoping to receive a small pamphlet outlining the history of the Class with a list of boats but were astonished when Euan came up with a 508-page tome describing the Class and its antecedents, and including a biography of its designer.

This book, entitled *The Piper Calls the Tune*, was widely reviewed for its lavish historical content laced with Euan's personal memories and reminiscences, and resulted in him becoming involved with *Classic Boat's* then editor, Rob Peake, who enlisted Euan to write further articles on David Boyd and his yachts. This gave him the opportunity to meet other likeminded marine experts such as Ian Howlett and the late, great Theo Rye, who further inspired his research.

After a brief dalliance writing a book about his other sporting passion, cycling, called *Wheelsagley*, Euan began constructing his ultimate masterpiece *Highland Cowes*, an 800-page history of Scottish yachting which was published in 2020 and which has attracted

plaudits from throughout the yachting press for its range, detail and yet personal and amusing anecdotes of a subject so dear to his heart [*for details of the book see under **Members' News***].

At the time of his death Euan was researching information for a further book on the America's Cup which, had he had the time, would doubtless have received the same recognition as his earlier works.

Euan leaves behind a devoted partner, Alison, daughter Kate, son Samuel, brother Norman and sister Anne, along with a host of dear friends and admirers whom he met around the world and with whom he has left many happy memories.