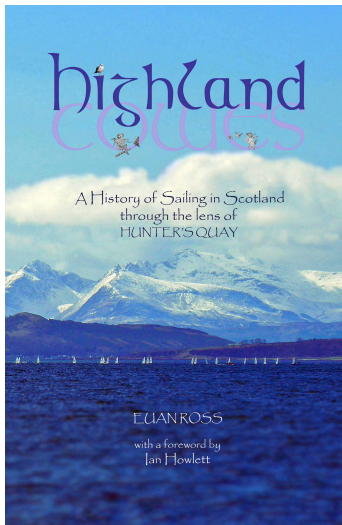


Highland Cowes

A History of Sailing in Scotland through the lens of Hunter's Quay

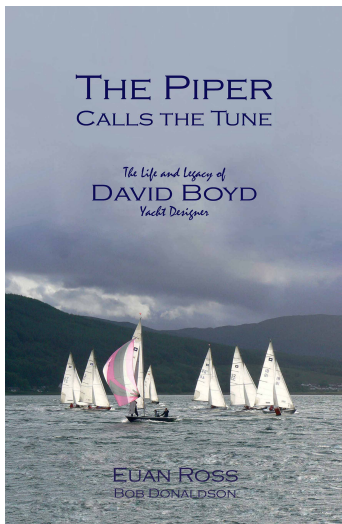
by Euan Ross



Sailing is arguably the most diverse and multifaceted of all leisure pursuits, thus it is also perhaps the sport most richly endowed with specialist literature. Consequently, countless well-researched histories of yachting have been published since Victorian times. However, unaccountably, not one has focussed on Scotland. While individual Scottish designers have been lauded, even lionised, in lush biographies, the wider story of sailing in Scotland has been marginalised.

To render a complex task more manageable, *Highland Cowes* views the Scottish scene 'through the lens' of Hunter's Quay – the heart of sailing in Scotland during the 'golden age of yachting'. Chapters are thematic and topic time-frames overlap and sometimes run in parallel; thus, we find the same

extraordinary characters cropping up in different contexts. While there is a global perspective, the narrative seeks to identify gaps in the pantheon and to slot in lesser-known, but no less worthy, figures. The result is an 'interstitial' history, which recognises the futility of parroting good, and in some instances, exceptional material that has already been published. Consequently, the stellar talents of Watson, Fife, Mylne, McGruer and Boyd are recognised primarily through the wider context of excellence they represent.



The author's previous book, *The Piper Calls the Tune* (2016), recalling the life and legacy of Scottish yacht designer, David Boyd, also includes context-setting chapters which flesh out neglected aspects of the Clyde's yachting heritage. When the Boyd biography is taken together with the new book, *Highland Cowes*, a substantial part of the story of sailing in Scotland is now in the public domain. We hope this will encourage others to explore, challenge, and elaborate the Clyde's wonderful yachting heritage. It is an immensely rewarding field of study.

The following extract, from Ian Howlett's Foreword, gives something of the flavour of the new book. "*Highland Cowes* is a 'magnum opus' in all senses of the phrase, both in scope and content, describing the history of this extraordinary and beautiful area that was

for so long the richest centre of all, for the design, building and racing of yachts. Euan Ross has a special talent for covering much ground in fine detail whilst rooting out the most entertaining stories. It is, of course, the latter that make history interesting. Euan's approach and the resulting text is in marked contrast to what might be termed the 'dumbed down' museum techniques of today. He combines accuracy, along with the entertainment of many good stories, and like a good malt there is a complexity and depth to be appreciated."

Highland Cowes is a 6" x 9" paperback, 800pp, £15.98 inc. p&p from Amazon.

The Piper Calls the Tune is a 6" x 9" paperback, 500pp, £14.99 inc. p&p from Amazon.

Both books are also available (p&p extra) from **McLaren Books**, a specialist maritime bookshop in Helensburgh: 22, John Street, Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire G84 8BA. Telephone: 01436-676453.

E-mail: info@mclarenbooks.com. Website: <http://mclarenbooks.com>