

# Forth Bridges Festival – Queensferry Regatta

A Wonderful weekend in glorious sunshine



*Report and photos by Donal Ferrie of Queensferry Rowing Club*

On Saturday September 6<sup>th</sup> Queensferry Rowing Club in Partnership with North Queensferry Rowing Club held our annual Regatta between the majestic sight of the Forth Bridges. This year was special as it coincided with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Forth Road Bridge. After the bad weather of last year where we had to cancel some of the races due to high winds, we were hoping that this year would be kind to us. And so it was as the sun shone and the wind was virtually nonexistent.

Crews started arriving the previous evening with Royal West of Greenock making the trip across and Portobello rowing up from their Edinburgh base. The day started early as we got everything ready from 0700. The rest of the crews arrived early on and all boats were tied up at the pontoons. The course was from the South tower of the Forth Road Bridge down towards Queensferry Harbour around two finger buoys and back up to the finishing line at the bridge.

The racing started at 1000 with the Mixed Novice, a race that Queensferry were hoping to do well in. The races were being run over two waves as there wasn't enough room on the start line for all 11 boats. Pittenweem proved that they are an ever improving club by taking the title in a time of nine minutes 33 seconds. North Queensferry were second two seconds behind with Portobello in third in 9:38. Queensferry came in fifth in a time of 10:57

The next race up was the Women's 40+ with a strong field. The race was won easily by Crail in a time of 9:07 a full 15 seconds ahead of North Berwick with Anstruther surprisingly coming third in a time of 9:37. North Queensferry were fourth in 10:07 with their counterparts from the South a disappointing 10<sup>th</sup> of eleven boats.

In between races there were refreshments on hand in Queensferry's Club House with members from both North and South doing their respective clubs proud. There was also a tombola organized by Queensferry Churches Care in the Community.

The next race up was the Men's 40+ and this proved an interesting and exciting race, especially for the second wave. The second wave contained Queensferry, Pittenweem, Newburgh, Royal West, Portobello and Eskmuthe. The racing was very close coming down to the first finger buoy with Queensferry and Newburgh fighting it out for the first turn. Newburgh cut right across Queensferry and then on turning the buoy, instead of turning 90 degrees they turned 180 thereby t-boning Queensferry who had to take evasive action to avoid collision. Having got back on course all teams headed for the second buoy with Newburgh pulling ahead and taking the victory. However the umpires deemed that Newburgh had been guilty of dangerous rowing and were disqualified. The race itself was won by Crail in a time of 8:20 with North Berwick and Anstruther taking second and third. North Queensferry finished fourth with Queensferry in 6<sup>th</sup>. It could be argued that those in the second wave didn't have a racing chance due to the actions of Newburgh as none of the boats finished under nine minutes.

The last race before the Lunch break was the Mixed Open. The crew from Queensferry was hoping for big things. We had to make a last minute change as Rachel had unfortunately broken her wrist the previous day in an innocuous incident with a wet

floor. Queensferry were in the second wave and performed admirably as they came in second behind Crail in a time of 9:27, unfortunately it was a full 20 seconds behind them. We did beat North Berwick by two seconds. The race was won by Newburgh in a time of 8:41. Portobello and Anstruther came in second and third. Queensferry finished fifth which was not the result we were looking for.

During the break for lunch the prize giving took place for the morning races. The prize giving was performed by Russell from our sponsors Bosun's Locker.

The racing continued after lunch with the Women's Open. Queensferry again were in the second wave. They came third in their wave in a time of 10:41 behind Crail and Newburgh. This was not enough to get in to the top three overall as Anstruther as expected won the race in a time of 9:22. They were only five seconds ahead of Crail who finished second with Newburgh in third on 9:51

The Men's Open was a race in which Queensferry thought they might do very well in and so it proved. With a crew who had been training as part of the North v South team all summer they were fit and raring to go. The start was a bit confused as no one heard the umpire saying attention skiffs before the hooter went. We got off to a great start though all the same and were in front from the beginning. This was a lead that would never be surrendered. We rounded the first buoy and were a distance ahead of the crews behind us. As we got to the second and rounded that too we were still a fair distance ahead. However as we headed up the home straight Anstruther were gaining on us all the time and it took a supreme effort to dig deep and hold them off. The line couldn't come soon enough as we beat Anstruther and won our heat in a time of 8:44, three seconds ahead of Anstruther. We came joint second overall with Newburgh, eleven seconds behind North Berwick.

The final race of the day was the Pick n Mix when names were

drawn for rowers to row in different boats from usual but the Cox from each boat would be from the club the boat belonged to. The start was interesting as trying to get them all on the line was proving somewhat difficult. Eventually they all left with only three in the first wave as Troon had withdrawn from the Regatta the previous day. Crail and Eskmuthe didn't put a boat forward for this race. For the first time in seven races the winners came from the second wave. St Andrews boat was the fastest in the fleet finishing in a time of 9:18 ahead of North Berwick and Royal West.

With the racing finished for the day a number retired to the nearest hostelry to toast a successful and well run Regatta.

### **Flotilla on the Forth**



On Sunday we continued with the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Forth Road Bridge with the Flotilla on the Forth. This involved upwards of 160 boats of all shapes and sizes venturing up past Rosyth and the sight of the new aircraft carrier. Compared to the previous day it was heaving going as there was a bit of a swell as we rowed against the wind. It was fun though as we mingled with the larger vessels and I think a well done should go to the coxes as they maneuvered us through the fleet without incident. After what seemed like an age we finally got to the turning point and we headed North before heading back East. As we had the wind behind us we were having trouble not overtaking the lead boat which was HMS Archer. As we headed back to row under the bridge the sun made an appearance and it got quite warm. It was a marvelous sight as all the Skiffs that were involved, these included both Queensferry Skiffs, Both North Queensferry Skiffs, Three Anstruther Skiffs as well as skiffs from Portobello, Greenock and St Andrews were ahead the head of the Flotilla going under

the bridge.

Pharos, a lighthouse vessel had moved up to the front on the Port side and was making good ground so was first under the bridge followed by HMS Archer and then all the Skiffs. Who needs motor or wind power when you have human power. The Flotilla kept going around a safety boat just to the West of the Forth Bridge and then we headed to the harbour wall at Queensferry to let the crowds there see the boats up close. By this stage the crew were all very tired as we had been rowing for nearly two and a half hours nonstop. Special mention must go to Rachel Holburn who despite breaking her wrist in Friday and was scheduled to row on Sunday managed to sit in the bow and enjoy the ride of some lumpy water. Her stookie was well wrapped up so there was no danger of getting it wet. We all headed back to Port Edgar after a very enjoyable but tiring day.