

# Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club

## A Local History



Model yacht enthusiasts at Cellardyke 1933

Men have gone to sea since time immemorial to harvest the 'silver darlings' and other types of fish for our tables.

The time spent ashore was not wasted, in that the fishermen continued to pursue their interest in fishing and boats by making sailing models of their working craft. It must be remembered that times were hard and there was not much money to spare. The hobby began by making boat hulls from blocks of wood, hewn by hand and thereafter refined into sleek hulled vessels. Lead for ballast was scavanged from the foreshore and when the boats were complete the men and boys came together to sail them in rivers oand on the foreshore.

In the Fife area the boat design was based mailt on the Fifie design, Examples of which may be seen within the Scottish Fishereis Museum.

In 1932 an open air swimming pool was built at the east end of Cellardyke which gave the hobby of boat building and sailing a great boost. A club was formed known as 'The East Fife Model Sailing Club' which attracted many local members. At one time there were more than 140 members.

After much building and refining of hull shape and sail rig the first big race was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1933, when two cups were sailed for, the Wilson and the Sheriff Cup. Later a further cup, the Mitchell cup was also donated, showing the interest and support shown by local business persons







Shortly after a pool was also built at St Monans, three miles west of Anstruther, which gave rise to rivalry and competition between the two towns.

These clubs eventually joined the Scottish Federation of Model Boat Clubs which gave scope for races with clubs in Dundee and Perth. The local East Neuk clubs gave a good account of themselves with the Fifies. However, as usual, there were developments in hull and sail design. The Dundee clubs went for the larger 6 metre yachts which left the Fife clubs trailing.

After the war the men and boys in Cellardyke and St Monans began building and sailing the larger 6 metre boats and soon began giving a good account of themselves in the interclub races.

At that time there was however a decline in the interest for this type of hobby with other more interesting toys and hobbies to attract men and boys. Sadly the club was disbanded in 1959 with the cups being handed over to the local swimming club. Two of the cups are retained within Cellardyke Town Hall with the third back in the hands of the family who originally donated it.

In 2008 the Board of the Scottish Fisheries Museum floated the idea of forming a Model Boat Club, and after a few exploratory meetings to gauge if there was any interest the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat club was formed.

Since 2008 the club has grown in strength to 26 active members

The new club still own and operate many of the former models that once graced the Cellardyke Pool in 1932. However things have moved on in both style of construction and propulsion types.

The Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club meets every Sunday morning within Craigtoun Country Park, by St Andrews to sail their craft.

New members are always welcome or just come along to Chat to find out what we are about. Between our members we have a wealth of knowledge regarding building and sailing all types of model boats.

Further Details from [www.scotfishmuseum.org](http://www.scotfishmuseum.org)

