

SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF MODEL BOAT CLUBS

Federation history – 1982 - 2008.

I was one of the two people who started the Federation of Scottish Model Boat Clubs, as it was known originally, I would like to set down in writing why and how the Scottish Federation of Model Boat Clubs came into being as I hope to dispel any misunderstandings that anyone might have.

The forming of what is now the Federation came about in a conversation I had with the late Jimmy Paxton in 1982 at the side of Inverleith Pond. Both of us had been to a MPBA meeting the previous year and were to say the least a bit disillusioned on it's out come. The talk at the meeting was totally centred around multi-racing, which was waning rapidly at that time and was not being noticed. Nothing else was considered. The MPBA at the time was a larger organisation and full of different factions and many committees. It was never intended that the Federation should oust or compete with the MPBA or any other boating group. At that time Jim was Chairman of GSSMS and I was Secretary of the Edinburgh club and we felt that the Scottish clubs might benefit from a smaller organisation that was run by the clubs for the clubs. By this time Jim had put out feelers to other clubs as to their leanings and it was then decided to go ahead with his idea. Jim contacted the clubs he had spoken to and if I remember correctly they were Dundee, Model Steamers, and East Kilbride. These clubs attended the first of a series of meetings in early 1983 from which a committee was formed. The Steamers club pulled out at the second meeting as their constitution did not allow anything other than Clyde Steamers into their club

Now if I recall correctly the first committee consisted of:

President	George Peat	EMBC
Chairman	Jim Paxton	GSSMS
Secretary	Gerald Levine	Clyde Steamers
Treasurer	Neil Riddle	GSSMS

Ian Greig EMBC replaced Gerald Levine after second meeting.

And at this time I am sure that the Rosyth and Perth clubs joined us.

During these meetings the Federation constitution was worked out and still stands today with little modification. It was kept simple as the Federation was set up initially to be a 'post box'; between clubs where clubs could input their dates etc and the Federation would distribute these. Not included in the wording of the constitution are some unwritten rules. One is, that **the clubs rule the Federation**, and that the committee is preferably made up of club office bearers **from each side of the country**, i.e. two from the east and two from the west, hence four. (In my opinion I now think we should add these clauses to the constitution while living memory allows).

In the following year at the AGM the ever thorny subject of insurance reared it head as the litigation culture spread to this country, the member Clubs requested that the Federation committee seek the required cover for the Clubs similar to other modelling clubs. This was duly done.

At a few meetings in 1984 and at the request of the member Clubs the Federation committee was asked to hold an annual regatta and representatives from each Club worked out a set of easy to use competition rules based on Gordon Dow's EMBC rule book which is also still in use today

with a few alterations to suit the Federation. A small but significant change occurred in 1984. The Federation changed its' identity from The Federation of Scottish Model Boat Clubs to what it is at present. The former could have given the impression that the Federation was restricted to Scottish clubs only and that was certainly not the case. By this time the Clubs in the Federation had increased to between eight and ten.

The Federation continued to grow and by the late 90s the member clubs totalled 25-30 and two of them from south of the border taking advantage of the competitive insurance terms. Also about this time the Federation started an individual membership, i.e. a person who does not belong to a club could join the Federation.

The committee stayed, as it was in 1984 for many years with only the post of treasurer changing once or twice. In the early 90's George Peat left the Edinburgh Club and therefore the Federation. The post of President was left vacant for a few years then filled by Jim Paxton. Ian Greig became Chairman and if remembering correctly Jim Houghton took on the roles of secretary and treasurer. After the untimely death of Jim Paxton, Ian Greig was voted into the president's post at the next AGM and Hugh Gavin took over as Chairman. When Hugh stepped down as chairman and George Gourlay took over the post. In 2004 the post of secretary was filled by Liz Gourlay with Jim Houghton staying as treasurer. Ian Greig retired from the role of President in 2005 and the post filled by Nigel Coates of the EMBC.

The Federation continued to grow with member clubs totalling 25-30 and two of them from south of the border taking advantage of the competitive insurance. The Federation is also open to individual members i.e. those who do not belong to a club.

The first Federation Regatta was held at Queens Park and hosted by GSSMS. Regattas over the next few years were held at Callendar Park in Falkirk, one in Barshaws Park, Paisley, (as part of a models and hobbies show), and another was held in Drumpelieir Park Airdrie. It was then decided that the regatta would be held in the west and east on alternate years. Since then two regattas have been held up north in Mcduff.

The future of the Federation.

- 1 The clubs at present are relying too much on the Federation committee to move or motivate them when in fact this should be a joint effort. One of the unwritten rules applies here, **the clubs rule the Federation**. The clubs should be driving the Federation it but they are lying back hoping and letting the Federation committee do it all.
- 2 The clubs and the Federation committee should be actively looking for any avenue that could be of benefit to the members.
- 3 The following could or should be added to the constitution:
 - a. It would be preferable that Federation committee members should be committee members of a model boat club within the Federation.
 - b. That the Federation committee will have four members, two of which are from clubs on the east of Scotland and two from the west.

- c. That the clubs run or rule the Federation and that the Federation committee should be given certain powers. (to be determined)
- d. Consider structuring the committee in a mix from persons that are in full time employment and non-working. This would alleviate hold ups in the functioning of the Federation if a person in full employment is unable to give his/her full attention for a short period of time due to work commitments or holidays, i.e. a non-working person 'fills in' for that period. Hence the need for a four person committee.

4 Regattas.

The big question! Do we need to have an annual Regatta? I think we do but possibly in a different format.

At the time the Federation was set up the interest in all the competitions was much different to what it is now. Thirty plus for the steering course, ten or more in exact scale, twenty five in stand off scale, to about ten, three and six. I have watched this trend over the past twenty-five years. If people's interests change the Federation has to change too. How we do it is open to debate and the debate needs to be sooner than later. We cannot afford to drop competitions and not replace them with some other interest to attract the individual to a regatta. There are many solutions;

- a. have a best boat of the show.
- b. no entry to fill in just the fact the boat is there.
- c. lots of free sailing and just socialising.
- d. Different types of competitions, tug towing for one, demonstrations.

This has to come from club members via their club committees to the Federation Forum and then on to the AGM agenda.

I hope the above is of interest and I would like to see some new ideas put forward by the clubs or individual members and keep 'a good ship sailing'. There has been a great deal of hard work put in over the years by a lot of people and a lot still being put in. Remember you only get out what you put in!

Ian Greig.