

What is this about?

The Scottish Fisheries Museum is giving its backing to an initiative to re-introduce inter-community rowing around the Scottish Coast.

Until the 1950s there were many coastal rowing and sailing regattas using local craft.

The sport has been restarted in recent years in Shetland where there are over twenty boats racing. Coastal rowing classes in England and Wales are also seeing a huge resurgence in interest.

The aim of the Scottish Coastal Rowing Project is to provide a relatively inexpensive entry to the sport by using a design which can be built by the communities who will be rowing the boats, rather than buying completed boats from professional boat builders.

An ideal class of boat for the project is being designed by internationally renowned small boat designer Iain Oughtred. The design is based on the traditional Fair Isle Skiff. It will be known as the *St Ayles Skiff*, St Ayles being the name of the building in which the Scottish Fisheries Museum is housed.

St Ayles Skiffs will be built using the Clinker Ply method, which combines traditional and modern methods of construction. The estimated completion cost of one of these boats will be around £3000, using a kit of pre-cut plywood parts and Scottish grown timber.

The St Ayles Skiff will take four rowers with one oar each, and a Coxswain to steer the boat and exhort the crew to greater effort when racing!

The skiffs are being designed with the option to add a sail in the future, which will add to the skill and seamanship required to race the boats.

Who is it for? - *Anyone!*

We hope to see all kinds of groups coming together to build and race these boats, whether it is the combined efforts of a village, community group, a school, or perhaps a rugby or football club wanting to use the racing to maintain fitness and teamwork through the summer months.

It's for you! We are sure that if you look for others in your community who would like to build a boat with you, you will find them!

How to fund it?

First of all by fund-raising in the community. Sponsorship from local businesses will help, and there may also be grants available from Councils and from other sources. The Information Pack lists some of these sources and their contact details.

Why Rowing?

Coastal Rowing is a sport enjoyed from teenagers to pensioners, and is one of the best forms of exercise, using nearly all of the muscles in the human body.

It is probably the most team-intensive sport around, as a physically weaker crew with excellent timing will beat a strong crew who cannot row together.

We are anticipating that when the regattas start, there will be different age groups so that the competition is kept fair and varied.

In Shetland, Yoal racing has become a major sporting event, with communities racing against each other on a regular basis. In England's South West, Cornish Pilot Gig Races attract scores of boats and hundreds of spectators.

We hope that St Ayles Skiff races will provide a real community focus.

What about building the boat?

Similar kits to the St Ayles Skiff have been built by many people with little or no boat building experience around the world.

Some basic woodworking skills are required, along with patience. For the most part, the types of tools usually found in an averagely equipped home workshop will be all that is necessary. A local joinery shop will be able to fill in the gaps when necessary.

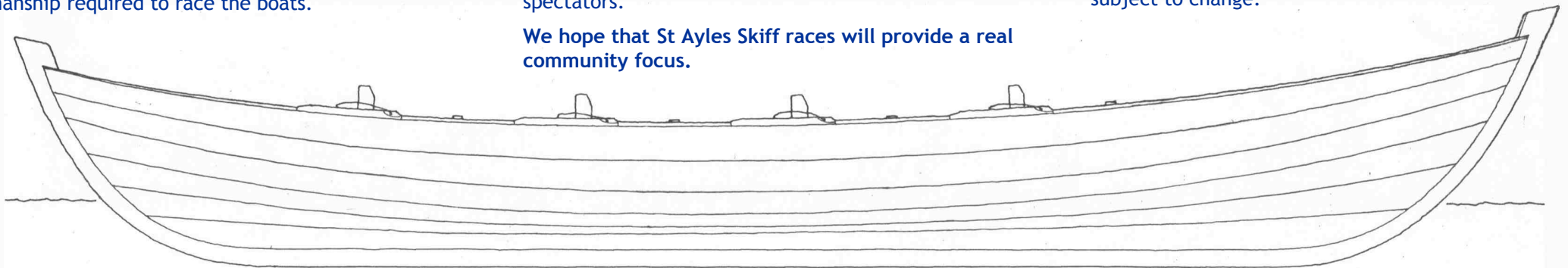
The kit manufacturers will be providing an on-line tutorial on their website as a St Ayles Skiff is built at the Scottish Fisheries Museum over the winter 2009-10.

The Information Pack has a simple guide to how a very similar boat is built.

There will be nothing to stop anyone contracting professionals to build the skiffs, but the aim is that a boat built by its owners will engender more community pride than getting someone else to do the job - apart from the cost more than doubling!

The kits will be available from the beginning of September 2009.

Drawings are the first draft of the design, and will be subject to change.



What is the organisation?

The Project is being run by a Steering Group including the Museum. Their brief is to take the Project through to a time in the Spring of 2010 when there are sufficient boats close to completion to be able to set up a properly constituted Association to manage and further develop the sport.

Until then, the Steering Group will:

- liaise with other Organisations who have an interest
- draft the rules of racing
- set dates for a racing calendar for 2010
- Gather information for individual clubs on insurance, and other statutory requirements.

The Steering Group will also provide a member to visit groups with a strong interest in building a boat to help where possible.

Once the Association is formed, the Steering Group will hand over all information, and will be dissolved.

Further Information

More information can be found at:

www.scotfishmuseum.org/staylesskiff.htm

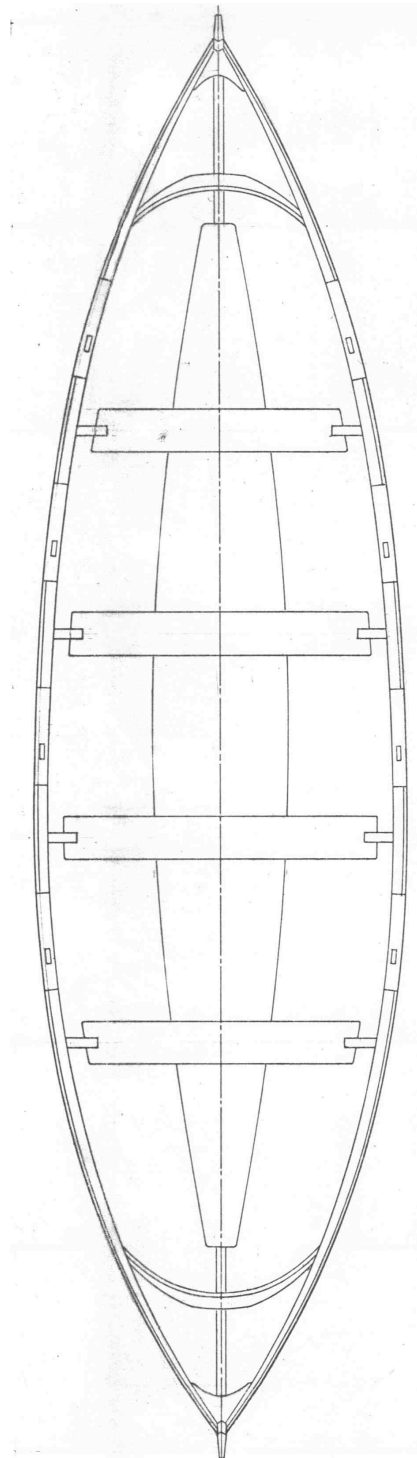
There are two downloadable documents:

Prospectus - this details the benefits of the project, and how it is hoped that it will develop in the future.

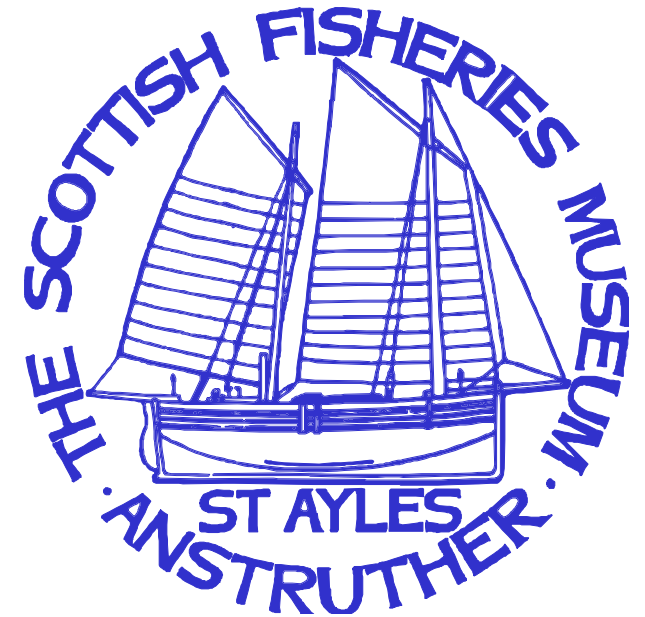
Information Pack - this gives more technical information, showing how the boat is built, a listing of potential Funding Sources, and a detailed future path for the Project.

If you are unable to download this information, please send a Stamped Addressed A4 envelope to:

Scottish Coastal Rowing Project
Scottish Fisheries Museum
St Ayles,
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Scottish Coastal Rowing Project



Encouraging Boat Building and Rowing Racing in Scottish Coastal Communities