Cruising Secretary Report 2026

Gordon Baird, Cruising Secretary

Little cruising activity to report this year. Gordon Baird sees a South Coast-based successor as the right direction for the role.

At a glance

- **Scotland** remains one of the finest cruising grounds, though busier than in the 1970s and 80s.
- **The Oban multihull rally** could not be repeated this year for personal reasons.
- **The "signpost" role** for cruisers seeking support, advice and local contacts saw little uptake.
- **Successor:** a South Coast member may be interested in taking on the post.

Report

Sadly, for various reasons there is little to report. I took the role on as I believe that Scotland is one of the finest cruising grounds on the planet, always stunningly beautiful with new and long-established marina berthing that allows a wide range of possibilities regardless of weather. Not to mention an extraordinary explosion of cetacean activity. Having been spoilt in the 1970s and 80s when we could spend whole days without seeing another sail, anchor in awesome remote anchorages, nowadays exponentially increased leisure traffic, marinas providing safe boltholes, moorings, and fish farms have altered the dynamics. This year our own short cruise highlighted that, although by South Coast standards it remains relatively unspoilt, the generous (80%) Scottish Government Road Equivalent Tariffs ferry subsidies have changed a subsistence economy of the 70s to a tourist industry. Lying to a mooring with 3 or 4 other yachts on an island with a population of 220 while dining ashore on local halibut with Sancerre and a sea-view that includes a passing sea eagle or a mainland restaurant that has grandstand views of an osprey fishing is now the highlight, not solitude.

MOCRA offering me the post, and my acceptance was a bold experiment. Even by Scottish sailing standards, Loch Ryan is a remote location, 40 miles from Troon, Kintyre, Arran or Belfast. We continue to have multihull racing on a small scale, but mainly the Scottish Islands Peaks Race, which is more an express cruise. Developing even Scottish contacts has been a challenge but repeating the successful multihull rally in Oban had to be on hold for personal reasons.

I agreed to carry on for another year, based on being a “signpost” for cruisers looking for support, advice and local contacts (via our MOCRA national networks) but there has been little uptake. At our last meeting there appears to be a possibility that someone in the South Coast might be interested in the post and I think that would be the right direction of travel. It has been a great privilege to serve with the other volunteers and I hope that the wider membership appreciates all the hard work and the philosophy of inclusiveness that is the hallmark of our association.

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