

Christmas Cheer!

It has been some time since our last Newsletter, however we are now pleased to report major progress on several projects which the Board are sure will help restore confidence in the future of the Harbour. Although there is still a long way to go there will be plenty of opportunities and coupled with Harbourfront regeneration plans by HIE and various agencies, there is an exciting future ahead. See also the latest updates on our website.

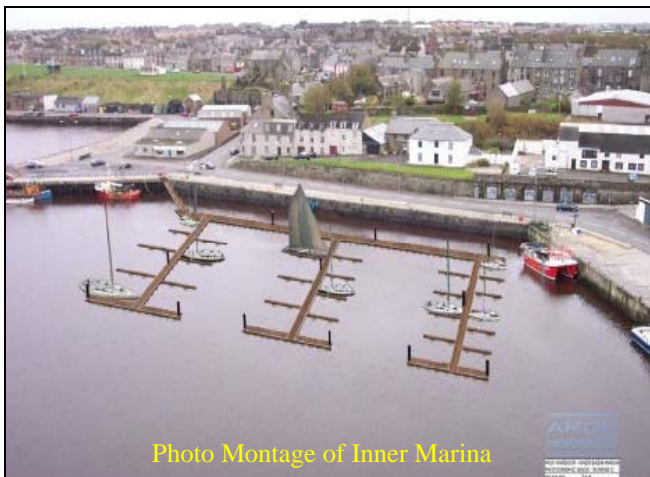
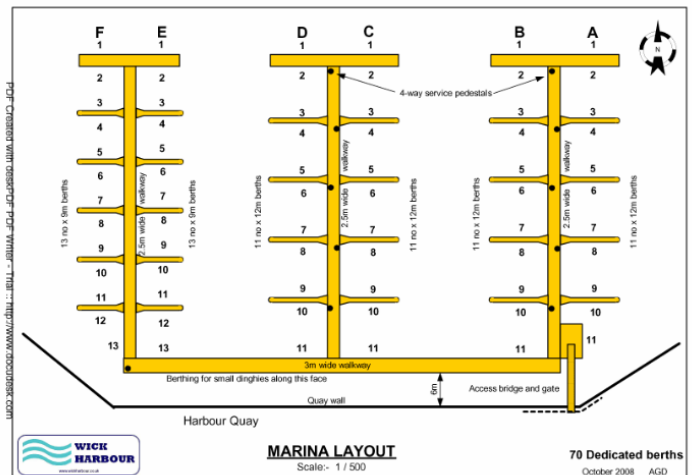


Photo Montage of Inner Marina



Inner Marina

At last! – Thanks to the NDA / HIE (50% grant), and the Crown Estate (50% repayment loan), we have finally secured funding for this long awaited £0.576m development, and the contract for installation of 70 berths in the Inner Harbour is being awarded to Varis Engineering of Forres, who provided the high quality pontoons for the Outer Marina two years ago. 50 berths will be fully serviced and 20 will be unserviced, all as illustrated above. We anticipate construction starting in January '09 and lasting about three months.

Proposed 'Terms and Conditions of Use', berthing arrangements, and application forms for berths are currently being prepared, and will be issued early next year. Fees for fully serviced marina berths are, as you would expect, more costly than traditional quayside berths, however we are sure that once leisure vessels currently berthed alongside the quay see the benefits and convenience of 'walk-on' single berths, with lighting, water, power and wi-fi, plus security from CCTV and gated access, our marina will be busy with both locals and visitors alike.

Our next task will be to invest in new shoreside facilities to augment the marina pontoons and complete the transformation of the Inner Harbour leisure facility, to ensure Wick will be seen as a quality all round stopover or permanent mooring.

To demonstrate the growing popularity of Moray Firth leisure boating, October saw the opening of the new Inverness Marina with 147 berths, and the Hopeman Marina with 40 berths. These all complement the existing marinas in Peterhead, Lossie, Whitehills, Banff, Stromness and Kirkwall. Wick now provides another welcome link in the chain.

Outer Marina

Installed last year in time for the Moray Firth Flotilla visit, 2008 has again proved to be a great success for both local users and visitors. We had 161 visiting yachts, from UK, Europe, Scandinavia, and the Faroes with crew members spending 466 'yacht days' in Wick. A survey recently in Orkney showed that visiting crew spent, on average, £45 per head while ashore. This has all been excellent news for the Harbour, local businesses, and visitor attractions, and will grow year on year. These pontoons however, will be now be incorporated in the new Inner Marina, where they will be more effective with year round usage.

Homecoming Harbourfest – 26, 27, 28th June 2009

Last July saw a very successful Lifeboat Day and Yacht Regatta, with twenty visiting yachts from around the Moray Firth, which raised appreciable monies for the RNLI and sent all the racers home happy, so thanks to everyone involved.

Arrangements are already well under way to organise the next Wick Lifeboat Day to coincide with a 'Homecoming Harbourfest' in June '09, to celebrate our part in Scotland's 'Year of the Homecoming'. This will build on the success of the 2007 Harbourfest, with added attractions such as our new Marina in place, a 'one-off' resurrection of the old 'Herring Queen' ceremony, and various visiting vessels, etc. Various functions and entertainments are being planned and any suggestions are welcome.

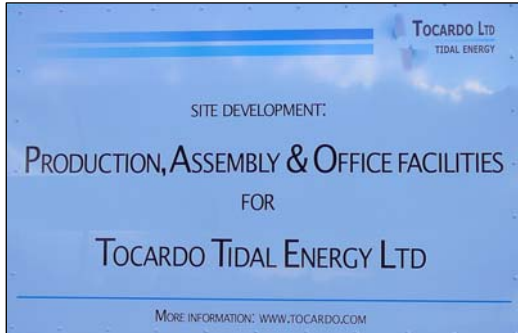
River Harbour - Fishing Facilities

Dredging the Approach Channel to remove the sandbar to provide a minimum depth of 5 metres, and restore twenty four hour access, has now been completed. (The 'Groat' recently reported the same thing was happening fifty years ago this summer!) Under the same programme, Currie Bros from Orkney have replaced the North Cardinal Mark in the Bay ('the Flaggie'). A large panel of concrete surfacing on the North Quay has also been completed by GMR Henderson, and the east floodlighting tower which was in poor condition has been removed by Simpson Contractors. Other minor items such as replacement of handrails on the South Quay, etc, will be carried out soon. These improvements are all a major boost to our facilities and to attracting larger fishing and commercial vessels.



Tocado

Tocado Tidal Energy Ltd, a local subsidiary of a major Dutch company, Tocardo BV, have taken a lease on our yard at the old Scalesburn Dry Dock, for the manufacture of tidal energy generators for the Pentland Firth. Subject to receiving a Seabed Lease in the Firth and Planning Consent for the dry dock area they are expected to start construction of Fabrication Facilities in 2009, with a view to being in production later in the year. This is great news for the Harbour and the local workforce and businesses. Have a look at their proposals on www.tocado.com Others are also showing interest and we are working hard to convince them of the benefits of setting up in Wick.



New Business

Caithness Seacoast fast RIB trips have operated very successfully from the harbour this summer. William Munro, with his new vessel 'Geo Explorer', has run over 100 trips visiting the beautiful coastal scenery and seabird colonies, to great acclaim from locals and visitors alike.

We fully support this exciting venture and wish him continuing success.

Check out his website www.caithness-seacoast.co.uk



Cargoes

- ❖ Timber exports to Finland should continue next Spring.
- ❖ Three wind turbines for Bilbster Windfarm were imported late last year and another three are expected soon for Achairn, Stirkoke.
- ❖ Recent cargoes have been coal and road salt, and barley is being stockpiled for export soon. Tanker movements have been temporarily suspended due to maintenance work on Simpsons Tank Farm, and will resume shortly.
- ❖ Offshore support vessels visited in association with the last pipeline launch from Subsea 7, with recent visits from survey vessels, large and small, stranger scallopers and supercrabbers, being very welcome additions.

Update on Red Diesel

Latest bad news on this from HMRC (driven by the EC), is that from 1st November last, leisure vessel owners will have to pay the full 'road' price for red diesel. Commercial vessels and registered fishing vessels will continue to pay the discounted price as at present. The onus will be on the leisure owner to tell the vendor of their status, and to keep receipts for all fuel purchases to prove, if requested by an inspector, that they have paid the full price. Vendors are not required to vet diesel purchases. Check out details on www.rya.org.uk/KnowledgeBase/legal/reddiesel

New Board Members

Under the Members rotational arrangements John Sutherland was reappointed to the Board late last year. At the same time Graeme Smith did not seek reappointment, and after advertisement and interviews, David Steven was appointed in his place. David's business experience and contacts will prove an asset in our drive to regenerate the Harbour. Thanks to Graeme for all his efforts and contributions to the Board. Last month Willie Watt and Hugh Simpson were reappointed to the Board, again after advertisement, and interviewing applicants. Thanks to all who expressed their interest.

Message from the Board

After three years of serious effort we feel we can now see light at the end of the tunnel. This year's projects constitute an investment of around £1m, and this input should be reflected in an increase in revenue to allow us to secure the future of the Harbour. Unfortunately our scallop boats are dwindling in number for various reasons, but other shellfish landings remain stable. Hence our focus on the leisure market, and given the demand for berths in Orkney, on the Moray coast, and on the new Inverness marina, we expect ours to be booked up fairly quickly. Berths on the recent new marinas in Banff and Hopeman were fully booked in three months!

Finally, we are sad to see the closure of the retail side of the long established business of John S Duncan, who, like ourselves, have suffered from the demise of the inshore fishing fleet. They have been an integral part of the scene for many years and played a leading role in the past prosperity and development of the harbour. Their Wick office is being maintained however for fishing agency business.