

Fifie Friday is something which was organised a few years ago by Gail from Wormit Rowing Club and a few of her friends and associates. On the last Friday of every month clubs take it in turn to host a social rowing event where rowers visit another club, row in their boats, chat, make friends and have coffee and cake – and lots of other food! Below is the report of a recent event at St Andrews.

Fifie Friday comes to St Andrews – A Day of Rowing, Rain and Remarkable Cake

It was an early start for the St Andrews Coastal Rowing Club as we prepared to welcome fellow coastal rowers from **Wormit, Dundee, North Queensferry and Elie** for a day of social rowing, good company and, naturally, an impressive amount of food.

The weather initially appeared determined to make things interesting. Grey skies and heavy rain showers greeted us at the start of the day, leaving everyone wondering whether this was to be a rowing event or an exercise in waterproof clothing. Fortunately, things improved as the day went on, eventually settling into a dry, cloudy and pleasantly warm day.

There was a bit of a swell on the sea to begin with, and surfers could be spotted close to the shore, clearly enjoying conditions that the rowers regarded with considerably less enthusiasm. Thankfully, the sea gradually calmed down — much to the delight of the rowers and, presumably, the disappointment of the surfers.

Boats, Bridges and Bravery

Our launch and recovery crew — **John, Joe, Tim, Ron, Annabel, Fiona, Tracy and Dominic** — worked hard to make sure our two boats, **Sandbay and Bluebay**, were prepped, ready and looking seaworthy much to the relief of some of the people who were about to get into them.

Meanwhile, **Susan, Fiona and Anna** welcomed our visiting rowers, showed them around the Sailing Club and organised everyone into crews ready for their turn on the water. This involved the usual complicated process of matching people, boats and rowing experience while trying to ensure that nobody accidentally ended up in the wrong crew.

Andrew spent time chatting with our visitors and sharing some interesting information about coastal rowing in general and St Andrews Coastal Rowing Club in particular. This was particularly useful for anyone who had not yet realised that coastal rowing involves a surprising amount of skill, teamwork and pretending that you are completely comfortable with the weather.

Our experienced band of coxes Janet, Julia, Rosie, Fabienne and John had wisely dressed for every possible weather condition and did a fantastic job taking groups of rowers out

onto the water. They successfully navigated the harbour, including the infamous low bridge — **managing to return with all rowers still in possession of their heads** including Gail from Wormit who was most definitely worried about being beheaded.

As the day progressed, each outing ventured a little further across the bay at East Sands. The crews were guided by our Rowing Coordinator **Sharon** and her assistant **Lindsey**, who provided advice and guidance to the coxes and helped ensure that everyone avoided each other in the rather compact harbour and stayed safely clear of the fishing boats.

All in all, the coxes did an excellent job. There were no collisions, no beheadings and, as far as we know, no rowers accidentally abandoned at sea — so by coastal rowing standards, it was a resounding success.

And Then There Was Food...

Of course, no St Andrews social event would be complete without the catering, and our club rowers once again demonstrated that their talents extend well beyond pulling oars through water.

Visitors were treated to an extraordinary selection of homemade food, including **three varieties of soup, sausage rolls, quiche, goats' cheese tarts, cheese scones, muffins** and a wonderful array of other sweet and savoury treats.

And then there was **Dougie's legendary coffee cake**, beautifully decorated with chocolate buttons. It was, quite frankly, almost too attractive to eat. Almost.

Recipes were enthusiastically swapped between rowers during the day, so there is every possibility that this event will have consequences in kitchens across Fife for weeks to come as people attempt to recreate the various culinary triumphs.

The Catering Crew – Heroes in Aprons

Keeping everyone supplied with food and drink were **Dougie and Paul**, who were appropriately and impressively clad in aprons -looking as though they had either worked in catering for years or had just worked out that by wearing an apron you don't get asked to do any additional tasks by Sarah. They did a sterling job heating food, making endless teas and coffees and ensuring that nobody had to contemplate rowing or going home on an empty stomach.

Meanwhile, **Laura** worked tirelessly in the kitchen, washing dishes and keeping everything tidy. This was no small achievement given the speed at which plates, cups and serving dishes appeared to reproduce.

And finally, there was **Muriel**, who not only helped with the general proceedings but also took away all the bags of rubbish. Every event needs someone willing to perform the glamorous jobs, and Muriel deserves considerable thanks for ensuring that our rubbish did not become a permanent feature of the Sailing Club.

A Great Day All Round

Despite the rather damp beginning, the day turned out to be a great success. Our visiting clubs brought plenty of enthusiasm and good humour, our coxes safely navigated the boats around the harbour and bay, and our volunteers ensured that everyone was welcomed, fed and looked after.

There was rowing, there was cake, there were recipes exchanged, and — most importantly — there were no casualties involving the low bridge.

A huge **thank you to everyone who volunteered, coxed, rowed, cooked, served, washed, tidied, launched, recovered, advised, navigated or simply turned up and helped make the day such a success.**

It was a brilliant example of what coastal rowing is all about: getting people out on the water, meeting other clubs, sharing experiences and enjoying a good day together.

And if anyone happened to leave with a new recipe for coffee cake, sausage rolls or goats' cheese tarts, then clearly the day had achieved everything it set out to do.