

GWS  
Nov  
2003

## Dornoch & Embo Lifeboat - Sept 1886 - Oct 1904

In 1886 the R.N.L.I. decided to open a lifeboat station on the shore of the Dornoch Firth.

The lifeboat "DAISIE", 34 feet long, 10 oared, of the self-righting type, and costing £297 was provided by an anonymous donor. It was transported by rail to the Mound and thereafter towed on its carriage by eight powerful horses via Dornoch to its launching position about a half mile north of Embo.

On the 29th September 1886, in the presence of a large gathering of people from Dornoch, Embo & the surrounding district, Miss Sutherland of Skibo formally named the lifeboat.

In 1887 a boathouse & a 140 foot wooden slipway was constructed at a cost of £638-6-1d

Although launched on three occasions to vessels in distress, its only effective service was on the 20th January 1890 was to the "Come On", an open fishing boat with a crew of six men from Gardenstown which was stranded on a sandbank at the entrance to Littleferry. Two lifeboatmen were placed on board & she was refloated & taken to safety. The rescue was carried out in darkness with snow showers, a heavy swell & a southwest gale.

In October 1904, the lifeboat was withdrawn from service and the station was closed. The Daisy was sold by the R.N.L.I. in 1905.

Opened 29<sup>th</sup> Sept 1886

Closed July 1904

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The new life boat for the Dornoch Firth  
The Launching Ceremony

The splendid new lifeboat which has been provided by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for service on the Dornoch Firth was successfully launched on Wednesday, the 30<sup>th</sup> ult., from the beach about half a mile distant from Dornoch. Thirty-eight men belonging to Dornoch and Embo have been enrolled to act as crews. <sup>They</sup> They all volunteered for the work, a fact which testified to the great interest manifested in the ~~mag~~ management of the boat. On Wednesday ten men were selected by lot to form the crew at the launch. They consisted entirely of fishermen from the village of Embo. Strong, hardy looking fellows they were, and as they appeared in the boat, attired in their lifeboat costume, with cork jackets and cork preservers, their appearance indicated that when called upon to perform active service in the open sea, they would not fail to render a satisfactory account of themselves. Their names are:- Donald Mackay & "EBAN" coxswain; Alexander Main, lookout; Kenneth Mackay "MAIN"; John Ross; John Ross "ELDER"; Thomas Fraser; William Fraser; Alex Mackay "ROY"; John Mackay "ROY"; Kenneth Ross. Captain Beddoes, R.N. as representing the Royal National Lifeboat Institution was present throughout the day and superintended the launch. The new boat is to be stationed at a point adjacent to the village of Embo. It is named the "DAISIE".

In Dornoch the arrival of the lifeboat evoked much interest and several of the buildings were decorated with flags in honour of the occasion. At the west end of the Burgh a triumphal arch was erected which bore the suitable & appropriate inscription "Welcome Daisie". Flags floated on the castle, the Cathedral, Bailie Neill's residence and from the building occupied by Mr W. S. Fraser, merchant while a flag was also unfurled at the 'Poles' and at the

launching point. The effect was pleasing & attractive. The boat was conveyed from the "Mound" railway station by eight powerful horses, which were kindly granted for the work by Provost Fraser, Dornoch; Mr Barclay, Skelbo; Mr Mackintosh, Proncy; and Mr Gordon, Embo. Some difficulty was experienced in removing the boat from the railway waggons but many willing hands came forward, including a number of fishermen from Embo and succeeded in successfully placing it upon the carriage. Among those who assisted in the work were Mr J. B. Kydd, forester to the Duke of Sutherland; Mr Symon, station agent; and Capt Mackintosh of the Dornoch Rifle Volunteers. At the "Poles" the boat was prettily decorated with flowers by Mr Kydd. The members of the local committee and a large number of the general public assembled at the triumphal arch at the west end of Dornoch, and on the arrival of the boat a hearty cheer of welcome was raised. The members of the crew consisted of twelve men, including the coxswain, Mr Donald Mackay "EBRN" and the look-out man. It was originally intended that the launch should take place from the beach at Embo, but this site had to be abandoned.

The procession, headed by two pipers, wended its way to the new launching station and was followed by a large number of people. There were present at the ceremony Mr Sutherland of Skibo, chairman; Bailie Neill, hon secretary, Dornoch; Rev Mr Taylor, Free Church, Dornoch; Mr Lewis Hynes, S.S.C.; Mr John Mackintosh, Proncy; Mr John Leslie, solicitor; Mr David Peters, solicitor; Mr R. Morrison, hotel keeper; Mr W. S. Fraser, merchant; Mr Alex Mackenzie, Skelbo; Mr J. B. Kydd, the Poles; Mr William Sutherland, merchant; and Mr Roderick Maclean, chief constable, members of committee; Bailie Ross, Dornoch; Rev Donald Grant, Parish Church, Dornoch; Mrs Sutherland, Skibo; Mr Barron & party, Dornoch; Mr Donald

Maclean, Rhwes; Mr Box, factor, Tongue; Mr Barclay, Skello; Mr Fraser, from India; Mr & Mrs Donald Taylor, Dornoch; Mrs Taylor F.C. Maule, Dornoch, Dr Gordon, Embo; the Misses Mackintosh, Clashmore; Mr & Mrs Mackenzie, Tain; Miss Pryde, Edinburgh; Mr Mackenzie, Bonar; Rev Mr Taylor from England etc

Prior to the launch Mr Sutherland of Skibo called upon the Rev Neil to offer prayer, after which Captain Beddoes RN as the representative of the RNLI, handed over the lifeboat to the local committee.

Bailie Neill returned, on behalf of the inhabitants of the district, their heartiest thanks to Capt Beddoes for this noble gift from the RNLI. He asked them to ~~join~~ join in according a hearty vote of thanks to the Institution for sending us this noble boat. They did not know the name of the donor, but the excellent gift showed that the donor was a humane and generous person and to that person they returned their heartiest thanks.

The ceremony of christening the lifeboat was then performed by Mrs Sutherland of Skibo. Amid warm cheering the crowd thereafter pulled the boat into the sea, while the crew at the same time stood by their oars. The boat glided splendidly into the water & in a choppy sea the crew towed her round the new station at Embo. Here a number of the fishes<sup>men</sup>~~men~~, along with their wives & children, awaited to receive the boat; which glided through the waves in excellent style. The boat was dragged on to the beach, where it will remain until the completion of the new building to be erected for its accommodation.

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In October 1904 , the lifeboat was withdrawn from service and the station was closed. The Daisie was sold by the R.N.L.I. in 1905.

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## The Launching Ceremony for the New Lifeboat

The splendid new lifeboat which has been provided by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for service on the Dornoch Firth was successfully launched on Wednesday , the 30th ult, from the beach about half a mile distant from Dornoch. Thirty-eight men belonging to Dornoch and Embo have been enrolled to act as crews. They all volunteered for the work, a fact which testifies to the great interest manifested in the management of the boat. On Wednesday, ten men were selected by lot to form the crew at the launch. Strong, hardy looking fellows they were, and as they appeared in the boat, attired in their lifeboat clothing, with cork jackets and cork preservers, their appearance indicated that when called upon to perform active service on the open sea, they could not fail to render a satisfactory account of themselves. Their names are:- Donald Mackay, 'EBAN' coxswain ; Alexander Main, lookout ; Kenneth Mackay, 'MAIN'; John Ross ; John Ross, 'ELDER' ; Thomas Fraser ; William Fraser ;



Alex Mackay, 'ROY' ; John Mackay, 'ROY' ; and Kenneth Ross. Captain Beddoes, RN, as representing the R.N.L.I. was present throughout the day and supervised the launch. The new boat is to named the 'Daisie' and stationed at a point adjacent to the village of Embo.

In Dornoch the arrival of the lifeboat evoked much interest, and several of the buildings were decorated with flags in honour of the occasion. At the west end of the burgh, a triumphal arch was erected which bore the suitable and appropriate inscription "Welcome Daisie". Flags floated on the Castle, the Cathedral, Bailie Neill's residence and from the building occupied by Mr W S Fraser - merchant, while a flag was also unfurled at the 'Poles' and at the launching point. The effect was also pleasing and attractive. The boat was conveyed from the Mound railway station by eight powerful horses, which were kindly granted for the work by Provost Fraser - Dornoch ; Mr Barclay - Skelbo ; Mr Mackintosh - Proncy ; and Mr Gordon - Embo. Some difficulty was experienced in removing the boat from the railway waggons, but many willing hands came forward, including a number of fishermen from Embo, and succeeded in successfully placing it upon the carriage. Among those who assisted in the work were Mr J B Kydd - forester to the Duke of Sutherland ; Mr Symon - station agent ; and Captain Macintosh of the Dornoch Rifle Volunteers. At the 'Poles' the boat was decorated with flowers by Mr Kydd. The members of the local committee and a large number of the general public assembled at the triumphal arch at the west-end of Dornoch, and on the arrival of the boat a hearty cheer of welcome was raised. The members of the crew consisted of twelve men, including the coxswain, Mr Donald Mackay 'EBAN' and the lookout man. It was originally intended that the launch should take place from the beach at Embo, but this site had to be changed.

The procession, headed by two pipers, wended its way to the new launching station and was followed by a large number of people. There were present at the ceremony :- Mr Sutherland of Skibo - chairman ; Bailie Neill - hon secretary - Dornoch ; Rev Mr Taylor - Free Church - Dornoch ; Mr Lewis Hoyes - SSC ; Mr John Mackintosh - Proncy ; Mr John Leslie - solicitor ; Mr David Peters ; Mr A Morrison - hotel-keeper ; Mr W S Fraser - merchant ; Mr Alex Mackenzie - Skelbo ; Mr J B Kydd - the Poles ; Mr William Sutherland - merchant ; Mr Roderick Maclean - chief constable ; members of committee ; Bailie Ross - Dornoch ; Rev Donald Grant - Parish Church, Dornoch ; Miss Sutherland - Skibo ; Mr Barrow & party - Dornoch ; Mr Donald MacLean - FACTOR S.E. Rhives ; Mr Box - factor - Tongue ; Mr Barclay - Skelbo ; Mr Fraser - from India ; Mr and Mrs Donald Taylor - Dornoch ; Mrs Taylor - FC Manse, Dornoch ; Dr Gordon - Embo ; the Misses Mackintosh - Clashmore ; Mr and Mrs Mackenzie Tain ; Mrs Pryde - Edinburgh ; Mr Mackenzie - Bonar ; Rev Mr Taylor from England etc.

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noble boat. They did not know the name of the donor, but the excellent gift showed that the donor was a humane and generous person and to that person they returned their heartiest thanks.

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James:-

This was typewritten from a handwritten couple of fullsize pages which George Sutherland (Watery) unearthed in Lybster.

Reference your finding of the fishing tragedy (the NOE'S) and the Inver disaster:- we think they may have instigated the first steps towards the eventual siting of a lifeboat at Embo.

My cousin Donald Ross came across today with the launch record plaque for 1902 and a lovely framed certificate his grandfather received on retrieval after many years as the lifeboat Cox. He also knows that they used to have the boats inscribed well, but could not find it today. Now that would be the "icing on the cake". What else is lying around gathering dust - and rotting away!

Ray