

ESC History interview

Derek (and Brian) Bathgate

Born 1940

1. What brought you to squash rackets, and when did you first play?
 - a. I joined Ferranti after school, and aged 19 went to the Craiglockhart facility with other engineers and brother Brian. Their court was dark and dingy.
2. When did you join ESC?
 - a. Because I was a member of Murrayfield, in June 1960, Bert Roberts and Ernie Flockhart asked both of us join.
 - b. First played a 'nephew' of the Chain Pier's Betty (Ma) Moss
3. When did you first and last play at ESC?
 - a. First in 1960
 - b. Still playing
4. Would you like to provide a timeline of your early life?
 - a. Prep school – Stenhouse Primary
 - b. Senior – Daniel Stewarts (1952)
 - c. Father was a Headmaster – at Craigmuir primary school (a feeder for Craigmoynton)
5. Were you a member of other club(s)?
 - a. Aged 12, I joined an Edinburgh model flying club (later representing Scotland, within UK)
 - i. I started with kit planes
 - ii. I later designed and built my own plane
 - iii. I travelled extensively throughout the UK to competitions with a degree of success
 - b. Murrayfield tennis club
 - c. Played in USA - upstate New York (1965-66)
6. Who were among your most regular (squash) opponents?
 - a. Derek insists on "too many to list" so as not to upset anyone...
7. What was your best squash sporting achievement?
 - a. Last player on court (at no. 5) in an ESC team winning the Scottish National League at Accies – around 1970 – playing Pat Casey. Team was 'La Terr', Alun Davies, Bill Duncan, Maurice Pollock and me.
8. What did ESC bring to your life?
 - a. The place where I had great comradeship – I could always return from trips away and take place in activities as though I hadn't been away.
9. Who are/were your best friends at the Club?
 - a. Brian insists on "too many to list" so as not to upset anyone...but the editor has overruled that, on the basis of trying to include as many names as possible, so - *Tom Stanton, Bert Roberts, Eric Donohoe, Morton Auld, and laterally Bill Duncan, Maurice Pollock, Vic Macari*
10. What was your career?
 - a. Ferranti from 1958-1962 as a trainee engineer
 - b. In 1958, both were selected to appear in a Ferranti Magazine as a feature about trainees (picture hopefully available)
 - c. 1962-1965 – Nuclear Enterprise
 - d. Emigrated to USA in 1965 – contract design work on the East Coast.
 - e. I later did design work for many companies
 - f. I also worked in Taranto in Italy and the Hague in the Netherlands, where the contracts were Winter-based
 - g. My work was a mix of engineering contracts and yacht chartering
 - h. Both Brian and I were certificated to skipper craft up to small coaster size. We both helmed the MV 'Gardyloo' on occasions
11. Squash coaching
 - a. I coached at ESC and elsewhere circa 1970
12. Puffer

- a. Puffer was in 1978 (bought by Bathgate Brothers Marine Ltd) from a trust operated by the Millers. They had developed it with 23 berths for youth clubs etc. We initially used it as base for yacht chartering (fuel and water bunkering). We picked up the boat at Inverness. It was originally named VIC27. When Sir James Miller bought it, he wanted to call it the Vital Spark, but couldn't get clear title, so named it Old Reekie (in a hurry as the Duke of Edinburgh was about to launch it)
 - b. During its career, it had travelled to many Scottish locations including Orkney and Shetland, and during the latter part of WWII was in Belgium being used as a tethering vessel for barrage balloons.
 - c. Its name was temporarily changed to Vital Spark for the TV series
 - d. More info about the puffer in a separate article
13. Are you happy with the progress the club is making, e.g. Padel, Table Tennis installations, and refurbishment in general?
- a. Very pleased to see the tennis coaching – with all the kids (and the parents watching). Wasn't impressed initially with Padel, but pleased to see it is now doing well.
14. What were your life parallels with brother Brian?
- a. Our lives from the start through our work at Ferranti were almost in parallel
 - b. We both split our time between Yacht chartering and engineering contracting between the ages of around 25 to 60.
 - c. Since then, we have tended to our 'fleet' of vessels
15. What were your best sporting performances?
- a. I was the last player on court in the team that won the Scottish Championship circa 1970
 - b. I won the handicap tournament around 1975 (David Hollingdale has something to say about this...). I think I was beaten by Robin Bell in the same competition the previous year
16. Other 'Yachty' information
- a. Yacht charter (max 7 boats – some as agent) – lots of ESC people attended – the usuals plus Duncan Currie. We ran the Charter business from 1969 to 1983/84. 'Mercy Jane' – was our own 40-footer, and we also had a good variety of other sized boats operated on an agency basis
 - b. Delivery trips to the continent – Jim Bridie, Duncan Currie and Richard Scott
 - c. An anecdote: An ESC barman (*name withheld*) was 'recruited' as a crewman on the puffer – but hadn't told his Mother who had police looking for the press-ganged youngster. He went to Canada at 19, returned at 21 and later joined DB on a trip to Antigua
 - d. Another anecdote: Kate and Maurice Pollock, who were a relatively recent 'item' joined Erica (future wife) and I who were similarly 'related' on the Clyde for a sailing trip. Kate had found her own way there by train and bus. Further details of life aboard during their cold and draughty trip can be obtained from the participants...
 - e. Brian recalls escorting a young (and very proper) lady on her own on a trip up the Sound of Mull. She had even equipped herself with a night-dress.
 - f. Auld Reekie, while being winched down the slipway at Campbelltown after a minor refit (photos available), suffered a reverse: The winch cable breaking due to poor winch control which caused a split pin, resulting in the boat breaking free, and travelling at its fastest ever down into the harbour area, shredding the cradle as it went. All was well eventually, but it was a close call.
17. The Bathgates are well known for their specialist car knowledge. Can you name a couple of special ones?
- a. A circa 1970's Jaguar bought from Graham Anderson
 - b. We were given a Hillman Imp as 'free car' – more details required
18. You are well known as key figures in the support of the fabric of the club. What has been the extent of that?
- a. Court maintenance. In Haydn Davies time, plater repairs to courts
 - b. Roofing – initially helping Brian Suddaby.
 - c. Court Heaters (mainly Brian) – complete installation court 7, and maintenance elsewhere
 - d. Electrical switchgear and tennis court lights. Brian recollects that the 'new' (1999) lights had problems, Phillips eventually advised that the lamps and the switchgear had to match, which we achieved, and haven't had problems since.
 - e. Remedial work on boilers

- f. Dressing the courts for the Christmas events in the 1990's. The boys recollect dressing the doubles court for dancing, the band (Cam Robbie) being positioned on the balcony, and a false 'ceiling' erected to make the venue more intimate.



A delightful painting of puffers in the Crinan basin – VIC 32, Auld Reekie (VIC27) and other vessels



The MV Gardyloo, was a specially designed sewage dumping vessel that operated from Leith between 1978 and 1998. The boys both helmed the boat on occasions