

Tom Hogg - Boatman Balloch

From Sam Gibson



Tom Hogg was a butcher then bacon curer to trade, but became a 'gillie' and boat hirer, mainly to the angling fraternity. Also did some game shooting

He established boat hiring at Drumkinnon Bay using dinghies bought from the small boat builders at Dunoon. Although not a boat builder he was proficient in boat repair. He latterly operated from a former railway wagon at the west side of the quarry which had been used to supply sand and gravel

to the Loch Sloy Hydro scheme in the 1940's. After his death, about the late 1960's/early 1970's (?) his mooring and boat storage business was continued for a short period by his son-in-law. The site of some of the yard may still be there as part belonged to Mr Glasgow of the Woodbank Hotel and I believe he refused to sell for the Lomond Shores development.

At one time he kept some boats on the loch/foreshore near Claddochside, to avoid he long row to fish on the Endrick Bank. This got him involved with (Lady?) Leith-Buchanan in a famous court case over a right-of-way and access to the loch (Leith-Buchanan v. Hogg 1931 SC204) the verdict*, still quoted today (*...if in truth the road does not reach the water's edge, but a strip, more or less wide, of the complainer's property intervenes, we are brought back to the old difficulty, and the averment discloses no relevant ground to support any private or public right to make use of the complainer's land---* Lord President(Clyde). Throughout this case he represented himself. In the judgement Lord President Clyde did add comment that Loch Lomond was a public navigable waterway.

He was commissioned by scientific instrument makers, Kelvin, Bottomley and Baird to have cabin cruiser built. This was a beautiful mahogany boat with brass fittings and a very quiet running Kelvin sleeve-valve engine and was named the Echo. He was told to tell people he was using it for fishing parties but it was actually being used on the deeper parts of the loch for experimental echo sounding. The boat had a large 'bell' and the time for the "echo" to return when struck was recorded. In 1923, the company had produced the first practical recording echo sounder. The Echo was lying much neglected in the yard at the time of his death and I believe his son-in-law burned it.

During WW2 he was asked to set up moorings for a proposed flying boat base at Drumkinnon Bay and given men and materials and men to achieve this. Mooring were laid and weekly wages sent but when eventually he could not find any more tasks to occupy the workers he asked when the planes would be coming, to be told the project had been cancelled and they had forgotten to tell him or stop the wages!

His grandson, also Tom Hogg, fishes out of Balmaha

*Scottish Law Society Discussion Paper No 113 April 2001