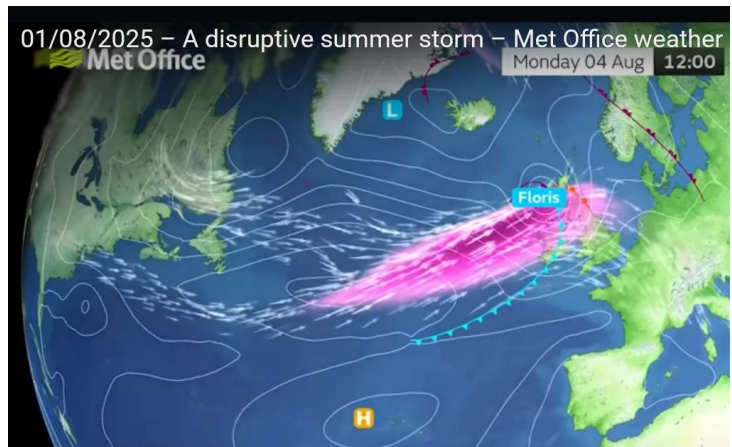


Newsletter date 7th August 2025

Storm Floris

It is unusual to have two newsletters one after the other but we are living in unusual times. When would members expect to experience such a violent storm at the start of August? Although the Met office issued ample warning, a lot of people were caught out with the ferocious winds that came on Monday 4th of August.

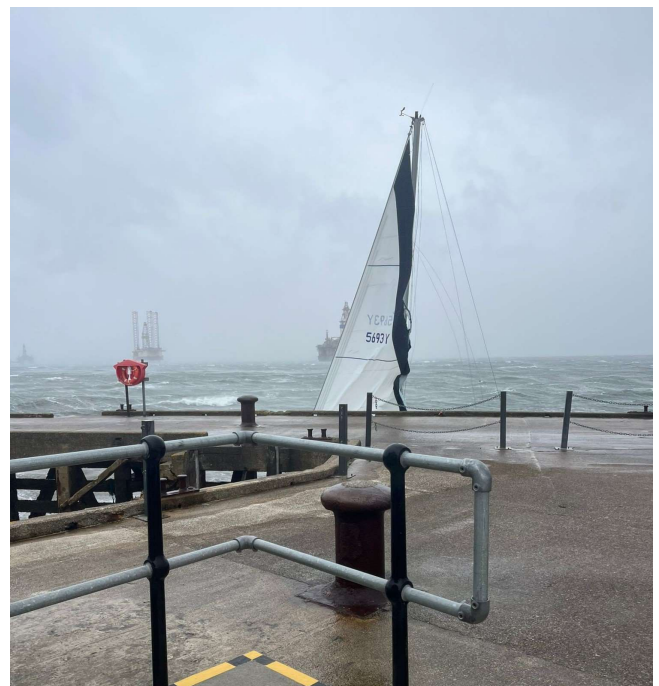
Train services, ferry services and flights were all suspended across the UK and the news headlines in the evening were of chaos all over the UK.



Judy and I drove into Inverness to check on Sulaire and to make sure all the mooring lines were in order and the furling gear had an extra strap. Our boat was fine but the other Club boats were not so lucky. Lazybones and Randan had been pushed over to such an angle that the stanchion on Lazybones was trapped under the rubbing strake of Randan. I tried to free it with the help of Graeme Findlay but it was an impossible task and eventually the stanchion gave way under the strain. We did however manage to shorten their warps and springs and reposition the fenders to prevent damage from rubbing on pontoon. Another boat further down the Pontoon, Starlight, had its foresail unfurled and fortunately two younger and fitter boat owners came to the rescue and re-furled the sail to prevent further damage.

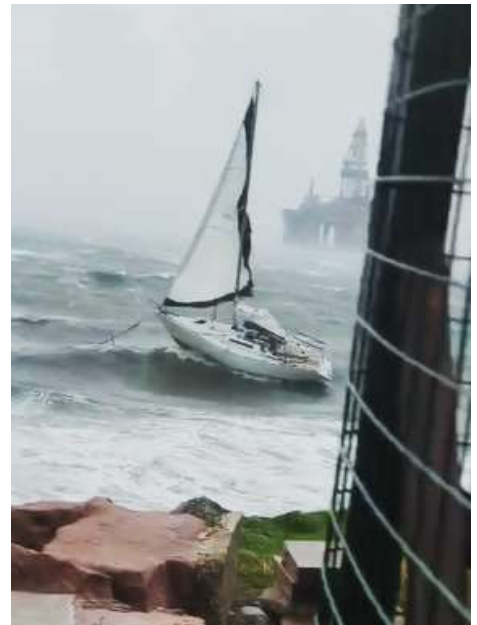


After a spot of lunch and a rest we made our way home to Cromarty not realising that more drama was awaiting us. As we were driving home there were WhatsApp messages ringing continuously, one from Diarmid, "Just recorded a gust of 74kts (F12 Hurricane) at CSC weather station" The Met office had forecast F9 and F10 but this is F12! On arrival at Cromarty it was apparent that both Bee Bee and Asterias had their foresails blown out and were now dragging their moorings, blocks and all!



Bee Bee's block appears to have taken hold again on the seabed and has remained in that position for a while, so that is less of a worry, however Asterias is battering off the end of the pier and is still moving with its full foresail catching the wind providing enough power to continue dragging the mooring. We all feel so helpless but to try and get aboard in these conditions would be lunacy!

We construed to watch, helplessly as the boat moved nearer to the shore after clearing the end of the pier, eventually coming to a halt when it clattered onto the stony beach below the club compound

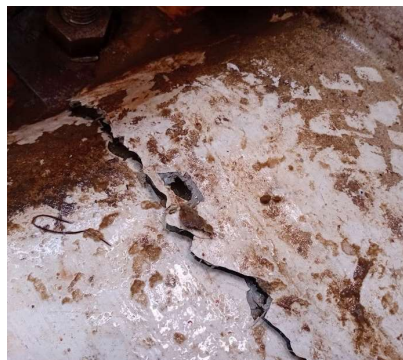


Even now with the boat ashore and the prevailing weather, we were unable to do anything about the situation. Tomorrow, although the winds are to continue we may be able to get on board when the tide is out, do an inspection and remove some of the gear from inside the boat and take down the sails. We agreed to meet up next day and do what we could to help poor Graeme, who like me has no survey for the boat and insures it third party only.

Tuesday 5th Aug Low Water 1600, we were able to get to the boat in the early afternoon and began removing sails, Solar panel and other gear from inside the boat



I also got the chance to photograph some of the damage Asterias has sustained in the incident. The rudder stock is bent but that will be a relatively simple fix, however damage to the keel may be a bit more problematic. Graeme says he has a contact who was involved in the building of Colvic boats, this is a Colvic UFO 31, he is confident they can repair the damage



Most of the damage is to the keel, it has come away from the hull as you can see and there are cracked areas inside around the keel bolts. The mast of this boat is keel stepped so we won't know much more until closer examination once the boat is on dry land, which hopefully will be by the weekend

In the evening, Graeme sent out a WhatsApp message " I'd like to record my sincere thanks and gratitude to members Robert Hogg, Ross Couper, Diarmid Hogan, George Sylvester and Witek Maslyk for their assistance and support this afternoon. Also non members Mo Elliot, Ryan McMannus and John Gordon.

The plan is to attempt a refloat tomorrow PM if the weather is as forecast. We'll excavate a channel into the beach with help from John Gordon at Rose Farm and Douglas Munro of Munro civil engineering (also a helm on the Kessock life boat). We'll then attempt to tow it off with the ferry around HW 2200hrs. It'll go straight into the harbour against the wall And I'll aim to have it lifted into the compound as soon as I can secure a suitable crane.

I'm sincerely grateful and humbled by the response from the club and the sea facing Community of Cromarty."

Wednesday 6th Aug

In the early afternoon we met up to start the dig. If the area between the boat and the sea can be dug down to the level of LW (which is around 1700 today) we can easily tow the boat off at or around HW 2300, hopefully before that! The two diggers arrived around 1400 and began work immediately and full marks to both machine operators, Dougie and Stuart, for completing the task by LW. All we need to do now is wait for the water to come back in



Although the plan had been to try and tow it off at 2200, I went down at 2100 and everyone else was already there! They began the operation right away with Graeme and Dougie in the rib to tow it off the beach. At first it looked as though we would have to wait until nearer 2200 but they persevered and she eventually came free and was in alongside the harbour wall by 2130. Well done to everyone involved



Job done, all Graeme has to do now is arrange for a crane to lift it into the compound , he can then start working on the boat.
I am sure all the members of the club will join me in wishing him every success in the daunting task ahead.

George Selvester Editor

