

Wee boats, big history: A morning with the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club

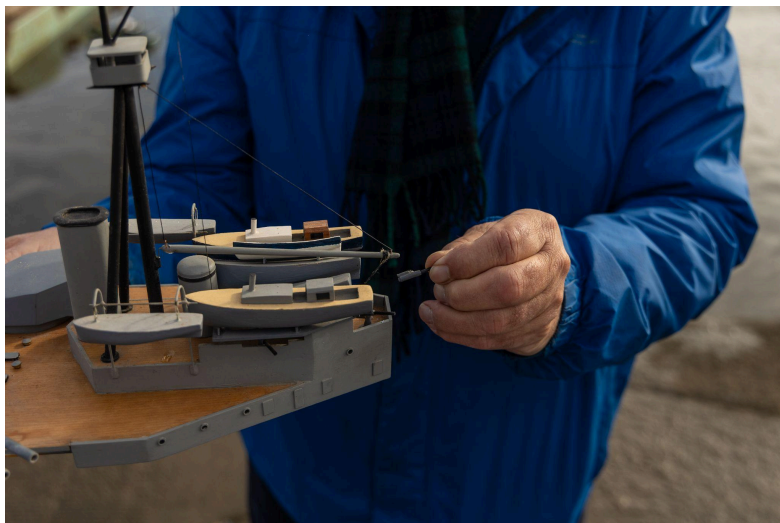
Once a week at the Cellardyke Tidal Pool in Fife, Scotland, various models of trawlers, steam drifters, battlecruisers, and the like, zoom, chug, and sail as part of the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club. I met six members of this club last October and they were generous enough to let me steer a few boats (which I promptly directed right into the stone bankment by accident) and tell me more about the history of coastal Fife. Four of the group were fishermen when fishing was a booming industry in Fife not even a generation ago. Today, fish stocks are greatly depleted, if not gone. “The likes of [trawlers] cleaned the sea,” said Jim. “The common market didn't help,” added another voice.

Each model boat has a unique story to tell about those that sailed them. For Charles, the *Nimrod III* is a model of the trawler he used to work on catching plaice and lemon sole in the North Sea. The model of the *HMS Invincible*, or rather the not-so-invincible battlecruiser sunk at Jutland in WWI, is a nod to Jim's love of history and his previous life as a schoolteacher. Colin, an engineer in his day-to-day life, repaired his model of a steam drifter, *Twinkling Star*, with the help of his wife who does the vinyl lettering for a few of the other models in the club. Colin is now building his first model boat which will be named after his grandson. In every way, the model boats are a testament to the passion, artistry, and camaraderie of the members of the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club and the rich maritime history of Fife.

Photos:



Left, Colin poses with his steam drifter model, *Twinkling Star*. Right, deck details of *Twinkling Star*.



Jim shows off one of the removable guns from his model of the *HMS Invincible* battlecruiser.



(Left) Charles and his model, *Nimrod III*, a model of the trawler he used to work on catching plaice and lemon sole in the North Sea. (Right) Charles helps to free one of the models from the rocks it had gotten stuck on.



Members of the Anstruther Model Boat Club survey their fleet.



The “fleet” of the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club includes pilot boats, trawlers, steam drifters, and a battlecruiser.



The *Tradition*, a model of a trawler, was built by Iane who is the secretary of the Scottish Fisheries Museum Model Boat Club.