



Captain of the *Flying Dutchman* Klaas van Twillert, pictured enjoying a stay in Stromness.

(THE ORCADIAN / CRAIG TAYLOR)

# Age of sail returns to Orkney

## Two Dutch vessels over a century old visit

By **Craig Taylor**

MEMORIES OF A bygone age of sail were evoked in Orkney recently with the visit of two Dutch sailing vessels, both of which are over 100 years old.

At one point during the visit, the *Flying Dutchman* was anchored in Scapa Flow, while the *Tecla*, a common visitor to the islands over several seasons, was at Kirkwall Pier.

The vessels also visited Stromness last week, as well as sailing in other areas around Orkney.

Both craft give guests on board a chance to experience life under sail, offering numerous trips sailing in different locations.

Captain and owner of the family run *Flying Dutchman*, Klaas van Twillert, from Kampen in Holland, explained that the vessel was making her first visit to Orkney as a charter vessel.

He added, however, that as she was built as a herring lugger 115 years ago, she may well have sailed around the

islands during her past life as a fishing vessel.

He explained that his company bought the 40m long sailing craft back in 2004 almost as a bare hull, and then carried out extensive work on board, converting her into comfortable sailing vessel to carry guests, and able to sail in international waters.

The *Flying Dutchman* has 11 two-person cabins and one four-person cabin, providing room for a total of 26 guests.

The crew have their own private quarters and guests can relax in a comfortable lounge area, where the use of mahogany creates a comfortable and atmospheric interior.

Captain van Twillert is very much a fan of sailing in Scotland and, after leaving Orkney, planned to take the vessel through the Caledonian Canal, on to Oban, to operated out of the port for the remainder of the season.

He said that guests on board the craft had very much

enjoyed their time in Orkney, visiting various locations, as well as local whisky distilleries.

He said that many of his guests come from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Since she began her new life as a passenger carrying vessel, the boat has visited over 25 countries, as far apart as St Petersburg to Bermuda, and in the first year operated throughout the Mediterranean Sea area.

Interestingly, the *Flying Dutchman* was used as a floating hotel during the London Olympics back in 2012.

Captain van Twillert is very much a fan of sailing in Scottish waters, due to a host of fantastic locations and friendly welcomes he has received, and added that all on board had very much enjoyed their time in Orkney.

Further information about the ship and the locations it is due to visit can be found on [www.scotland-sailing.com](http://www.scotland-sailing.com).

The other boats to visit,



The *Flying Dutchman* pictured in Stromness last week.

(THE ORCADIAN / CRAIG TAYLOR)

include the 38-metre-long Dutch sailing vessel *Tecla*, a common visitor to Orkney over the years, which also has an interesting history, being built in Vlaardingen, Holland, in 1915, also as a herring drifter.

She was later sold to owners in Denmark and was used as a cargo ship.

In 1985, she was brought back to the Netherlands, and reconstruction work was started to get her ready for a life as charter vessel.

The ship sailed around the world in 2012, 2013, and

2014, and has visited Orkney many times in the past, including in recent years.

The vessel also visited back in 2011 during the Tall Ships Race cruise in company leg between Orkney and Shetland.

After leaving Orkney, the boat heads to the Outer Hebrides and St Kilda, Ullapool, and onwards to Iceland.

You can see a video of the boat under sail as well as further information online at [www.facebook.com/SailingTecla](http://www.facebook.com/SailingTecla).



The *Flying Dutchman*.



The *Tecla* under sail.