
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	13 January 2022
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Report No:	CM/LS/001/22
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	Naming of Boat Ramp Immediately West of Gourock Pier Head – Request by Councillor Crowther		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of a request received from Councillor Crowther in the following terms:
- 1.2 “For committee to give due consideration to this request for the hitherto un-named boat ramp immediately to the west of Gourock Pierhead to be named “Ritchie’s Slipway” in memory of the late Robert Arthur Ritchie, the last proprietor of Ritchie Brothers Ferry Masters who operated the Gourock to Kilcreggan passenger ferry service from Gourock Pierhead and for services that the Ritchie family contributed to the UK and allied forces shipping arriving at the ‘Clyde Anchorage Emergency Port’ and that this be indicated by the inclusion of a small suitably inscribed informative plaque.”
- 1.3 Further background information relating to this request can be found in Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council considers the request by Councillor Crowther.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services

RITCHIE'S SLIPWAY

INTRODUCTION:

I have spoken to the family of the late Robert Arthur Ritchie who sadly passed away on 18th July 2021 with a view to naming the slipway and erection of a small informative plaque between Gourrock Pierhead and the north-east end of the car-park at Lower Kempock Street as clearly shown on the picture below...



Source: <https://www.hirsts.co.uk/our-projects/public-realm-streetscape/gourock-waterfront-inverclyde>

The family have indicated that they are supportive of such a proposal should it be submitted to Inverclyde Council, for their due consideration.

So why choose this slipway in preference to the slipway at the former McLean's boatyard at Cove Road which Robert leased from Inverclyde Council?

Robert, as you will be aware, was the last of the Ritchie Brothers, Ferry Masters, who operated the popular small passenger ferry service between Gourrock and Kilcreggan and whilst initially the ferry service ran from the Fyfe Place Slip which was rented from Gourrock Burgh Council, latterly the ferries departed from shore adjacent to the Clyde Pilots Station at Gourrock Pierhead, and furthermore he was also the owner of the nearby small boat shed at Kempock Point which he eventually vacated in 1979 to move to the former McLean's Yard at Cove Road and the land at Kempock Point subsequently acquired by Inverclyde Council.

It would be remiss of me not to add that Ritchie Brothers rendered valuable services to the UK and allied forces shipping arriving at the "Clyde Anchorage Emergency Port" and note that while locally

we have a monument in the form of the Cross of Lorraine at the Lyle Hill to commemorate the Free French Naval Forces plus a large plaque which was salvaged from the former Ravenscraig Hospital which was the Royal Canadian Navy shore establishment HMCS Niobe yet we have little to remember the massive contributions of local families during WW2 and this motion, in a small way, helps to address this issue.

The slipway in question, marked as "Ramp for Small Boats/Canoes & Formalised Beach Access" on Hirst Landscape Architects Drawing. No. 1194-52/B, lies between where the Gourock to Kilcreggan ferry service operated and the Ritchie Brothers small boat shed where the vessels were maintained. It may also be worth noting that the 45ft. motor launch, the "Lady Jane" (Ritchie), was built by the Ritchie Brothers in this small boat shed.

This motion for the slipway to be formally named plus an information plaque to be installed also fulfils historical and tourism strategies pursued by Inverclyde Council and, in addition to this, it is also worthwhile noting that an HM Coastguard Station was previously sited at Kempock Point and could enhance the current walking route by encapsulating Inverclyde's rich maritime history.

In terms of numbers of pedestrians and cyclists the slipway lies between Gourock Pier plus Railway Station and walkway to Kempock Street, Gourock's main shopping area and is served by several bus routes, none of which are available at Cove Road. The slipway is also effectively the finishing point of Core Path 1D and starting point of Core Path 1E and is also on National Cycle Route 75.

The main question is, does this slipway have an adopted name?

A simple yes/no should hopefully answer this question and a search of various sources involved in the Gourock Waterfront development fail to locate any such adopted name...

Inverclyde Council:

<https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=M79F76IM00300&activeTab=summary>

"Planning Application No. 2/0212/IC | Public realm and traffic improvement works comprising: The construction of new areas of public open space, pedestrian links and small boat launch facility; alterations, extensions and improvements to existing car parks at Kempock Street and Pierhead / Railway Station together with associated engineering and reclamation works; The formation of a new single carriageway road to the north of Kempock Street with associated new and altered road junctions and layout|Kempock Street/Shore Street Gourock"

There are 50 documents associated with abovenoted Planning Application and there is no reference to any naming ceremony of the slipway or even a drawing which quotes a suggested name for the slipway.

Agenda Item 3b) "*Kempock Street/Shore Street, Gourock and Land east of Shore Street (behind the Health Centre), Shore Street, Gourock*" at the Planning Board meeting of 06 March 2013 - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1573> - the reference to the slipway is as follows..

"A small boat launch facility at Pierhead, with provision for the offloading of small boats/canoes from vehicles".

There is no reference to any name for the slipway.

Riverside Inverclyde:

https://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk/search/show/search_view.aspx?ID=DEC195797

No reference to name of slipway identified.

Fairhurst:

<http://www.fairhurst.co.uk/fairhurst-news/gourock-pierhead-redevelopment/>

No reference to name of slipway identified.

Hirst Landscape Architects:

<https://www.hirsts.co.uk/our-projects/public-realm-streetscape/gourock-waterfront-inverclyde>

The slipway in question is marked as “Ramp for Small Boats/Canoes & Formalised Beach Access” on Hirst Landscape Architects Drawing. No. 1194-52/B.

Based on the abovenoted and to the best of my knowledge, the slipway at Kempock Point, Gourock has no official name.

I have prepared these informative notes in support of my motion.

Cllr. John Crowther