



# BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

## Summer Newsletter 2001

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Last year's BDA AGM raised a couple of very interesting matters. Firstly, professionalism. For several years there has been an undercurrent of debate as to whether professional sailors should be allowed to sail in BDA regattas. Over the last few years, both ISAF and the RYA have been developing codes to define what is in fact a professional sailor. This enabled the BDA to table the new code at the AGM. After a lengthy and interesting debate, the meeting voted almost unanimously against adopting the code.

The consequence of this is that the class in the UK will remain open to everyone, regardless of status. I would also point out that the same issue was discussed at the owners meeting at the Gold Cup in Warnemunde last year and the idea of banning professionals received no support there either. At long last we have a well-defined situation – Dragon sailors want to race against the best sailors in the world, regardless of status. In my opinion this is the best possible situation and I personally hope the issue is buried for many years.

Secondly, weight limits. Eighteen months ago, the IDA introduced a maximum weight limit for the three-man crew of 285 kilos for all of their regattas. The BDA voted against imposing a weight limit for our regattas. At our last AGM we were asked to reconsider this point and we agreed to make it an agenda item for January 2002. My feeling is that the class may well be fairly evenly split on this matter, so I would ask for as much discussion as possible over the next six months. This will, I hope, ensure we make the better decision. One other technical point that I would like to mention is the decision by the IDA last October to increase the number of measured stations on the hull by two. This proposal was put to the IDA by, among others, the BDA and we are very pleased that this will further reinforce the one-design nature of our class.

However, the main objectives of the BDA are to encourage the growth of the class and to build good racing fleets. We were disappointed at the entries for our BDA regattas last year, partly caused by the new event at Douarnenez that clashed with and severely disrupted our South Coast championship. We decided this year to avoid the clash and chose dates and venues that are complementary to the major European regattas.

We have enjoyed great success with 24 entries for the East Coasts at Lowestoft, 35 entries for the South Coasts at Falmouth and 42 entries for the Edinburgh Cup, also at Falmouth. The Edinburgh Cup enjoyed international support with five boats from Ireland and one boat each from Northern Ireland and the USA. Our final events this year are the Classic Nationals at Burnham at the end of August and the Northerns, which are being hosted on the Clyde by the Royal

Northern and Clyde Yacht Club from the 14th to 16th September. I would particularly ask members to support the Northerns. Our Scottish Dragon sailors regularly travel large distances to our Southern based regattas without complaining – we should reciprocate just once in a while. Quite apart from this, the Clyde is a beautiful place to sail.

While our regattas are proving successful and some of our fleets are growing apace, we still have some fleets that are struggling to survive. These include Falmouth, Torbay, Cultra (Belfast) and the Clyde. If we are to retain our status as the pre-eminent keel boat class, we must ensure that the Dragon thrives throughout the UK. To address these matters, James Mehew is leading a small team who are looking at ways to promote the class, both short term and long term. James would welcome any constructive input and hopes to be in a position to make specific proposals to the next BDA meeting, which is being held in October.

Many of you will already know that at the IDA AGM last year the Gold Cup was awarded to the UK in 2004. It has been decided that Falmouth will be the venue (Torbay having hosted the last three major IDA events held in this country). Well before 2004, the new National Maritime Museum, which is being built in Falmouth, will be completed. This is a £21 million project, being supported by both Lottery and EEC money. It will house the Greenwich collection of small boats including *Bluebottle*, the Dragon that was owned by HRH Prince Philip. This museum will act as a wonderful venue for the Gold Cup, with its marina, its wide terrace, bars, cafes etc that will readily house up to 120 boats and 360 sailors. We should all look forward to this event with great anticipation.

The BDA committee has just been expanded by one new member, Katie Cole, who has agreed to act as the young person's representative. As most members of the committee cannot be described as young, this will add a good balance and ensure, in particular, that crews' interests are properly heard. Katie already has a wealth of experience of sailing in Dragon regattas, Dragon building and maintenance and drinking in yacht club bars after racing! I am sure she really has the pulse of what the class needs and I thank her for agreeing to act.

I became your chairman in January this year and James Mehew agreed to become deputy chairman. Richard Jordan and Richard Green became secretary and treasure respectively during the preceding year. I am most fortunate to have such a new and able team and I thank them for their support. Mike Hayles preceded me as chairman and did an excellent job, leaving the Association in good order both organisationally and financially – thanks very much Mike for all your contributions during your two-year tenure.

Robert Campbell

## My Two Cents... from the Honorary Secretary

THIS HAS BEEN a strange season for me so far. I purchased *Chaotic* from Eric Williams in the spring, but have not managed to sail her on the Solent. I did get to the East Coast Championship at the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk YC in May, but that unfortunately has been it.

I have, however, had the privilege of receiving reports from the Dragon regattas all around Europe, most of which are contained in this newsletter. The circumference of our circuit appears to be continuing to grow and while I find this exciting, I am a little concerned for numbers at some of our home fleets.

One Dragon race I had the good fortune to witness earlier this year was a 56-mile match race around the Isle of Wight. I had chartered a Sonar for the day with some friends and, having pretty much a similar speed, followed the Dragon fleet around. Mike Issais (*Fanfare*) and the young Mr Tracey (*Perspicacity*) had, by the Needles, pulled away a little from the following Dragon pack. The distance was sufficient to enable them to match race each other from the Needles, luffing at regular intervals toward the rock ledges on the south side of the Island.

The boats were never separated by more than 20 seconds for the whole of this time. Mr Issais defended well and managed to hold off the attacks of Mr Tracey until the turning mark at Bembridge Ledge buoy. On the reach from here to the Fort, Mr Tracey was able to pass to windward while Mr Issais was trying to reload a new spinnaker (after tearing his on the drop).

However, Mr Issais has done more Round the Island races than Mr Tracey has had early nights. As soon as *Perspicacity* hit the Ryde sands, the wily Mr Issais bore away and sailed through at two boat lengths to leeward. He managed to hold on and win the race by a small distance. What a fun race!

Anyway, enough ramblings, I shall let you get on and enjoy the reports of the Dragon events so far this year. Don't forget Cowes Week runs from August 4th to 11th and it is widely expected that we will exceed last year's entry of 32. This is now becoming a very popular event and I can guarantee you will enjoy yourself. I hope to see you all very soon.

Richard Jordan

## Douarnenez 2001

VERY FEW of those who went to Douarnenez in 2000 failed to return in 2001. When they came back they brought their friends, and among them were the good and the great, and the royal. Russell Coutts, Hans Fogh, two Danish princes and more hot shot helmsmen and crews than you could easily count – one estimate was that between 30 and 40 boats sported an Olympic or World Champion on board.

This event was conceived by its prime mover, Louis Urvois, as a prestige event and it was. It was also extremely well organised both on and off the water, and the sailing conditions are superb, in a bay big enough to have a full course without any proximity to land and with tides that do not appear significant. Ninety three boats sailed in the main event: the organisers had put a limit of 100 but a few dropped out late. Not many found the fleet seriously depleted.

First held last year, and kick-started by the provision of a brand-new Dragon as a raffle prize, this event has excellent support from the local authorities and this year was part of a three cornered event including windsurfers and a form of working rowing boat. We had virtually no contact with the other sections, although some of us will remember for a long time the sight of the windsurfers coping with conditions that would certainly have kept the Dragons in harbour but which in fact occurred on the lay day.

The Dragon sailing consisted of two series. The first, for the Coupe de Bretagne, attracted 70 boats and should have been one race on the Saturday, two on Sunday and two on Monday, but the fleet was recalled from the first start on Sunday and then racing was cancelled with a dying breeze. The other three races were sailed in excellent conditions, producing Fred Imhoff as the overall winner, followed by Wolfgang Rappel with Martin Payne third. However, Fred Imhoff's win resulted from an average points award for a race from which he retired while at a position far lower than the average points would have indicated, and there were many who felt that the rules, although followed to the letter, might not have produced a very fair result. The imported hot-shots were noticeable by their absence from the top positions.

The main event was the Petit Navire Championship, a six-race series with no discards. All races were sailed in a

variety of conditions from light on the Thursday morning to a good 5-6 on Friday afternoon. Rory Bowman stamped his authority with a win in the first race, followed by a 27th which was his worst result. Then fourth, third, fifth and 15th were enough to take the series with a 5.3 point margin over Yann Kersale from France who was second. Erich Hirt from Germany was third. It was a spectacular win by a truly amateur crew over many who clearly were not. Rory, and his crew of Chris Pank and Jeremy Jordan deserve the warmest congratulations. It was also a win they worked hard for – not every start was perfect and the ability to work up through that size and standard of fleet was particularly impressive. A feature of this event that was never far from the competitors' minds was the new Dragon to be given away in a raffle at the final prize giving. The boat itself was sailed during the week by Russell Coutts who came 21st and confessed to being impressed by the standard of sailing in the Dragon fleet(!). He had a serious advantage as well – we were all giving him a wide margin rather than risk damaging his boat in case we won it! In fact the boat was won by Hans Fogh, the Olympic medalist from Canada sailing a borrowed boat arranged by his friend Paul Hoj-Jensen who finished an impressive fifth overall. It would be nice to think that this will encourage him to spend more time in the class but whether this will happen remains to be seen.

### Forthcoming Events

August 4th-11th Cowes Week – Contact Bill Daniels  
Aug 25th – Sep 1st Burnham Week (incorp Classic Nationals) – Contact Rob Campbell  
September 14th-16th Northerns (RNCYC) – Contact Danny Sinclair

### 2002 Calendar

East Coasts – Burnham at Easter  
South Coasts – Cowes May 24th-25th  
Edinburgh Cup – Cowes June 1st-7th  
Northerns/Classic – Windermere (date in Sept tbc)

## East Coast Championship 2001

IN CONTRAST TO the previous year when the weather was appalling and only one race was sailed, 23 boats enjoyed some excellent conditions at Lowestoft over the late May Bank Holiday. For the first two days there was a moderate breeze, sufficiently west of south to be coming off the shore, with a predictable if testing shiftness. Rob Campbell got it right in *Quicksilver* to win the first race, with Patrick Gifford in *Pongo* taking the second, helped by a tack which seemed to make it sufficiently inshore to cheat the tide. Future courses were set further offshore!

Day two saw much of the same, with Patrick Gifford taking the morning race and Rory Bowman in *Yeah Baby* taking the second. For the Monday the wind went round towards the

north and had more weight, and Rory Bowman again came home in the lead. However it was Martin Payne sailing with Ivan Bradbury in *Elusive* who took the championship counting a scoreline of 2,3,3,8. *Yeah Baby* was second, two points adrift, with *Pongo* third.

Several boats stayed on for the club's June Regatta two weeks later, and there was some extremely tight racing among the ten boats that came to the line for the four-race series, again in superb conditions. Rob Campbell took the trophy away, with very little separating the clutch of boats at his heels.

The East Coast Championship moves to Burnham at Easter next year because of competition from Cowes to use the late May Bank Holiday at the start of the Edinburgh Cup, but we look forward to welcoming you all back to Lowestoft in 2002.

## Southern Areas and Edinburgh Cup

THIS YEAR'S South Coast Championship and the 52nd National Championship Regatta for the prized Edinburgh Cup were held in Falmouth, Cornwall from Sunday 17th June to Saturday 23rd June. The Royal Cornwall YC organised both events under the excellent stewardship of Rear Commodore Sue Mantle. The enthusiasm of Alan Dowell who sadly died earlier this year, coupled with the tremendous efforts of Peter Flutter and Mike Rangelcroft, not to mention many unsung heroes from the RCYC, ensured that both the sailing and social events were well organised and enjoyed by all.

A total of 42 boats were welcomed by the RCYC, six of which were Classics. Ireland was well represented with five entries and many of the English fleet came from Burnham and the Solent. Boats arriving on the Friday were greeted with a blustery Force 5 and heavy showers. However, the trough of low pressure was forecast to move through by Sunday and thankfully the forecast proved true. In fact Falmouth was blessed with weather more akin to the South of France than to Cornwall.

### SOUTH COAST CHAMPIONSHIP

The first day of the Southern broke with a brisk northerly wind of 20 knots. With some apprehension of a strengthening wind, 33 boats left Port Pendennis to head for the bay. Our concerns about deteriorating conditions didn't materialise and the offshore winds stayed steadily in the north. The line had little or no bias and the windward leg was about three miles long. Most boats went off to the west seeking lifts off the land. Our own tactics were to go east and find clear airs which paid off.

The first race was won by Peter Bowring in *Phantom* (IRL 159) with fellow countryman Andy Craig in *Chimaera* (IRL 160) in second place and *Elusive* (GBR 656) helmed by Martin Payne coming in third. Race two was run with only a short break back to back with race one. After a general recall *Aimee* (GBR 660) helmed by Julia Bailey took first position with *Phantom* in second position and *Supremacy* (GBR 669) helmed by Andy Cassells in third position.

Day two broke with not a breath of wind and cloudless skies. The scene at Port Pendennis was of drying spinnakers, changing head sails and adjusting rigs. By 10 am however, there was enough wind to creep into the bay and gradually a 5 - 10 knot southerly breeze filled in. In sparkling waters, with a beautiful backdrop of Falmouth Bay, 35 boats lined up for race three. Those boats going to the right of the course found some advantage which became more noticeable as the day went on. Martin Payne in *Elusive* led from the start, with Andy Craig in *Chimaera* finishing

second and Eric Williams in his restored *Frantic* (GBR 598) finishing third.

In race four the wind became a challenge, gradually shifting towards the south west, with the Race Officer moving marks as the race progressed. Boats taking the left side of the course on the first beat lost heavily to those taking the right. *Virago* (GBR 609) helmed by Peter Nicholson took the advantage, led at the first mark and kept out in front to the finish. Ted Sawyer in *Landed Immigrant* (USA 310) finished second with *Comanche* (GBR 649) helmed by James Mehew in third position.

On Monday evening the prize giving was held in the Royal Cornwall YC and later we enjoyed an excellent BBQ in the grounds of the yacht club. The festivities ran on until the early hours until some of the crews realized that they would be helming the following day in the crews race.

**South Coast Championship Results:** 1st *Chimaera* (IRL 160) Andy Craig (2/5/2/6) 15, 2nd *Aimee* (GBR 660) Julia Bailey (7/1/11/4) 23, 3rd *Quicksilver II* (GBR 572) Rob Campbell (4/4/7/11) 26, 4th *Landed Immigrant* (USA 310) Ted Sawyer (15/8/5/2) 30, 5th *Elusive* (GBR 656) Martin Payne (3/7/1/2/3) 34; **Classics:** 1st *Mistress* (GBR 637) Bill Daniels 96.5, 2nd *Therio* (GBR 324) David Crabb 98, 3rd *Buccaneer* (GBR 256) Mark Webster 117.

### EDINBURGH CUP 2001

The 52nd Edinburgh Cup commenced on Wednesday 20th June. A total of 42 boats from Ireland, Scotland, England and the USA took part including six Classics.

#### Day One

With very light airs from the south west, the Race Officer had to delay the start of Race 1 by an hour until the wind built. A windward leeward course was set about two miles south of St. Anthony Light. After a general recall boats found that by going right they gained advantage of the wind shifts. Rory Bowman in *Yeah Baby* (GBR 662) took first place with John Lavery in *UB2* (IRL 157) in second place. Rick Gillingham in *Navaho* (GBR 664) took third place.

In Race 2 most boats gathered at the committee boat end with those going right gaining advantage. At the end of the first run there was a wind shift which resulted in a massive change in positions, particularly in the middle of the fleet. As the wind swung to the north west the Race Officer changed the course and this allowed *Kin* (IRL 165) helmed by Simon Brien to take the lead which he held to the finish. In second position was *Landed Immigrant* (USA 310) helmed by Ted Sawyer and in third position *Yeah Baby*.

### Day Two

With a forecast of south west Force 3-4 for Race 3, we were surprised to see a flat calm, with not a breath of air. But by 10 am an onshore breeze picked up and held steady at five knots for the start. Boats divided equally between left and right and those boats who sought wind strength and occasional shifts took the lead. In first place was *Phantom* (IRL 159) helmed by Peter Bowring, in second place *Quicksilver II* (GBR 572) helmed by Rob Campbell and in third place *UB2* (IRL 157) helmed by John Lavery.

The onshore breeze built slightly for the fourth race in the afternoon and there was a clean start with no boats over the line. Unfortunately at the end of the second run the wind died and boats were left drifting in the tide at the leeward mark. Some boats kedged in the hope that the wind would build and for half an hour we wallowed as the windex span round. The race was abandoned just five minutes before an offshore breeze materialised.

### Day Three

Once again Falmouth looked more like the South of France than Cornwall. A light easterly breeze allowed boats to slip out of the harbour and as we moved into the bay the winds freshened to about Force 2-3. Race 5 was started in perfect weather with 41 boats on the line but only to achieve a general recall. The second start resulted in a raft of boats tangled up with the committee boat. At the first mark *Apalala* rounded first with Classic boat *Mistress* in second place. *Yeah Baby*, took first place, with *Apalala* (GBR 627) helmed by Chris Caws in second place and *Eclipse* (GBR 670) helmed by Danny Sinclair in third place.

Six boats were OCS at the start of Race 6. The wind stayed in the east but with an easterly lull and light airs downwind racing was difficult. Eric Williams in *Frantic* (GBR 598) took first place with Andy Craig in *Chimaera* second, and *Quicksilver II* in third place.

### Day Four

This was the last day of the Edinburgh Cup and since Race 4 had been abandoned, it was agreed that Race 7 would be run. The start was delayed by an hour and a half until

sufficient wind built from the south west to give a fair race. Light variable southerly winds made downwind sailing frustrating. However, *Quicksilver II* took the lead from the start and helmed by Rob Campbell took first place. *Navaho*, Rick Gillingham, took second place and *Phantom*, Peter Bowring took third place.

**Overall Results:** 1st *Yeah Baby* (GBR 662) Rory Bowman (1/3/7/6/1) 18, 2nd *Navaho* (GBR 664) Rick Gillingham (3/10/6/2/5) 26, 3rd *Phantom* (IRL 159) Peter Bowring (9/1/3/11/4) 28, 4th *Chimaera* (IRL 160) Andy Craig (5/6/8/13/2) 34, 5th *Landed Immigrant* (USA 310) Ted Sawyer (2/5/11/7/9) 34, 6th *UB2* (IRL157) John Lavery (2/3/9/5/17.5) 36.5, 7th *Eclipse* (GBR 670) Danny Sinclair (8/5/16/3/6) 38, 8th *Frantic* (GBR 598) Eric Williams (7/11.5/14/9/1) 42.5, 9th *Njord* (GBR 653) Owen Pay (6/4/13/22/8) 53, 10th *Aimee* (GBR 660) Julia Bailey (17/7/12/12/8) 56. **Classics:** 1st *Mistress* (GBR 637) Bill Daniels 124, 2nd *Therio* (GBR 324) David Crabb 137, 3rd *Buccaneer* (GBR 256) Mark Webster 154.

In addition, Rory Bowman was presented with the Yachtsman's Trophy for winning races 1-3 and the Lancelotti Trophy for winning race 5. The Salamander Trophy was presented to Peter Bowring for winning races 5-7. Bill Daniels was presented with the Puffin Plate as the first boat over 25 years and the Ratsey and Laphorn Cup as the overall winner of the Classics.

### Reflections

Everyone will have their own story to tell, tales of their own battles pitched against closely matched boats, the odd disaster as something breaks or a pile up at the leeward mark but for some, their stories provided much amusement in the bar. We will remember Rob Campbell losing his crew Jetske overboard, David Andrassi in Magic for leaving his windex in another's mast and Bill Daniels' crew who sat on the crossrees – reportedly sent there for criticising Bill's headgear. But most of all we'll remember the great hospitality, excellent social programme and fantastic weather that Falmouth provided. We look forward to returning there for the Gold Cup in 2004.

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## GARDASEE CUP MARBLEHEAD TROPHY

THIS IS AN undiscovered gem of a regatta, great weather, a beautiful setting and warm breezes after a long English winter. Throw in great food, cheap but excellent wine, and a shortish drive to Venice and who could not enjoy it? Malcasine, some 900 miles from the Medway YC at Rochester, lies on the eastern shore of Lake Garda beneath the massive Dolomites. It is a classic lakeside village of yellow and terracotta buildings, attractive hotels and restaurants, clustered round its own tiny harbour.

Two kilometres north is a small sailing centre at Navene, the centre of this year's Gardasee and Marblehead Trophies, which took place over three days 10-12th May. The 25 entries comprised 18 German Dragons, two from Denmark, and one each from Italy, Switzerland, Spain, American and, yes, a British boat! Magnificent snow-capped mountains dominate the lake and the locals claim that at this time of the year, the Ventora blowing from the north in the morning and the Auro, from the south in the afternoon are the norm. But not this year – at least not at their usual times!

On Day One the morning breeze died at 11am just as the briefing started and a postponement flag was run up at 1130. The race eventually got away at 3.30pm in brilliant sunshine when the Force 3 breeze had settled from the south. Two very short beats and runs were completed and Spain followed by Denmark were the victors. Three attempts were then made to restart the fleet but two general recalls followed by a massive shift one minute before the gun led to a cancellation and return to base in a torrential downpour.

Day Two – it blew all night but by 11am the breeze had gone again and it was 3.30pm before we got away in a sparkling Force 2-3. The left-hand side up the shore paid handsomely on the short beat to the first mark and *Fandango* (GB97) and *Notorious* (DEN 317) were never headed. Race 3 got underway immediately and the crowding at the pin end again showed that the experts were looking for the lift up the shore. It was looking good, but on the port tack to the mark a lift caused many to overstand and gave those to leeward the break they needed! Spain led Germany round this mark and

to the finish, but a deadly silence for them both indicated OCS and *Notorious*, led home from *Scarlett*, the Swiss boat.

Day Three, and at last the Race Committee had decided to start the fleet when the morning northerly was blowing. The 8am start came as a surprise to some, but it was worth it as the conditions were superb. Brilliant early morning sun and a very brisk Force 4-5. A clean start, a cracking beat, left-hand side paying at first, then a big lift on starboard on the approach to the mark, followed by a header at the rounding caused many place changes as one or two boats, cutting it a bit fine, parked on the buoy. But then to the spreader, a hairy gybe, and off down the run with bow waves to the coachroof, stern waves over the transom, surfing, lurching, broaching, pumping and generally flying. A 'good-to-be-alive' sail. The same again for the second round and back for the next start within 45 minutes. *Calypso* (G 912) and *Humbo* (G892) were the winners of this one.

Barely time for a coke(!) before we were off again for more of the same. Mueller-Spreer (yes, he was there) led from the start up the left-hand side and won followed by *Bumble Bee* (G 905), and it was all over by 9.45am!

Overall Results: 1st *Notorious* (Den 317) F Eriksen ( with Ole Borresen), 2nd *Calypso* (G912) D. Krautgartner, 3rd *Gollum* (G863) P. Froeschl. Our Results? Well, not outstanding, but we were the first British boat!

David Dale

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## PROFESSOR PAYNE WRITES

Dear Dragon Sailors,

I have been lucky enough to experience Dragon Racing/Training and Fun sailing over the nine summers and past four winters and would like to share some memories and future winter ideas with you.

In general the Dragon Class has to be the premier One-Design keelboat in the World. Arguments would come from many corners, not least the Etchells, but no other class can offer the 'Full Package'. Great venues, competitive racing, tweakable 'bits of string' and above all fun, quality people full of individual characters and many practised teams. I have seen the class develop (99% because of 'The Man', Poul-Richard), from a classic, streamline Olympic beauty, to a Formula 1 racing machine, with class, finesse and power, that gives all three sailing individuals deserved satisfaction and achievement. No matter how the results turn out, the passion for Dragon sailing remains.

During the past winters, while most, if not all of the British Fleet have been locked away in garages, barns and mushroom farms, there has been Dragon racing at the highest level in Portugal and Spain. During February Vilamoura, the Algarve, Portugal, host a series of races that cater for every level of sailor. On the Saturday there is a one-off race that links in with a golf day on the Tuesday. Sunday and Monday see a carnival atmosphere with four more races. Then after the golfing 'if only's' and 'I don't play that much these days', Wednesday brings in the heavy artillery for the main event. After the prize giving on Saturday, all competitors leave full of sunshine, confidence and excitement, anticipating the start of their season.

From Vilamoura a four-hour journey north will see you in Cascais. As two weeks later the Juan Carlos Trophy is up for grabs in a 'full on' four-day regatta. Cascais has to be the

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premier sailing area in Europe, with its new marina, fantastic sailing conditions, sunshine and one of the best Irish bars!

The beginning of April now sees an additional event in Palma, Mallorca. As this year's winners I can only praise the enthusiastic Michael Domecq (ESP 60) for his insight to host such a timely event in a 'so easy to fly to venue'. Calanova offers hotels at very good prices, a marina so quiet you could sleep on your boat and a friendly club who value the effort visitors make to travel. It gives access to the bay of Palma where Dragon racing is at its best and is the ideal warm-up regatta for the Princess Sophia Trophy later in the month.

So this fourth event completes what will be called the Iberian Championship, very similar to our Citron Trophy, which I know all about!

If any of this has made you think 'let's do it', or 'we need to find out more', talk to me. I have a plan to take boats straight from Cannes to Palma and a ferry during the winter from Southampton to Setabul, Portugal.

The time is now, life is short - go train/race/sail/practise, and make this winter fun.

Martin Payne