

Dragon News

British Dragon Association



2008

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- New design tri-radial spinnaker



2007 RESULTS

World Championship	1 3 6 7 8 9
Grand Prix Douarnenez	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Gold Cup	2 5 6 7 8 9
Edinburgh Cup	1 2 3 4 5 6
European Championship	2 4 5 6 8 9
Regate Royale	1 2 4 6 7 8



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Front Cover: close mark rounding at the 2007 Edinburgh Cup in Weymouth – photo by Fiona Brown
www.fionabrown.phanfare.com

2007
**ABERDEEN
WORLD
DRAGON
CHAMPIONSHIP**
held for the first time
in Ireland
–photos and
a full report by
Tim Pearson on
the racing at
Dun Laoghaire
can be found on
pages 4-6



BRITISH DRAGON ASSOCIATION

Website: www.britishdragons.org

Dragon Fixtures 2008

January 11th BDA AGM and Annual Dinner Royal Thames YC,
Knightsbridge

May 24th-26th East Coast Championship, Lowestoft
Royal Norfolk&Suffolk YC

July 6th-8th South Coast Championship, Plymouth Royal Western YC

July 9th-12th Edinburgh Cup, Plymouth Royal Western YC

July 17th-20th National Championship, Ireland Dun Laoghaire

August 1st-9th European Championship, Norway Oslo

August 29th-Sept 5th Dragon Gold Cup, Portugal Cascais

Further details of International events can be found on the IDA website:
www.intradragon.org

David Dellenbaugh's
SPEED&Smarts™



Great value, top tips from David Dellenbaugh

Starting helmsman for *America 3*'s successful defence of the 1992 America's Cup and coach and tactician for *Mighty Mary*'s 1995 campaign...

There is a wealth of knowledge in David's monthly newsletter, Speed&Smarts, packed with "how-to" tips for racing sailors. The Dragons are grateful for his permission to reproduce articles from Speed&Smarts on a regular basis.

We continue in this issue with:

Wind Shifts – look for changes in wind direction –on pages 10-11 and

Wind Velocity – try to find the best pressure on pages 14 to 15

Check out Dave Dellenbaugh's sample issue of Speed&Smarts on:
www.speedandsmarts.com

BDA CHAIRMAN Rob Campbell's Report

Yet another season comes to an end. The main BDA events in 2007 were all won by different people. I was fortunate to win the East Coasts on the Medway. The South Coasts at Weymouth were won by Ivan Bradbury and our congratulations go to David Palmer for winning the 2007 Edinburgh Cup, also at Weymouth. This was the first time the class has held the Edinburgh Cup at Weymouth and all who attended considered it to have some of the best facilities in the UK. The racecourse is open, largely unaffected by land or tide and the town is absolutely charming. The only disappointment was a smallish entry to the 2007 Edinburgh Cup - this really needs to be addressed as I would hope for a substantially larger fleet for our National Championship.

With this in mind, your committee decided to make early decisions on the dates and venues for our events in 2008 and they were announced several months ago. We have Lowestoft for the East Coasts and another new venue, Plymouth, for our South Coasts and Edinburgh Cup. Most of you will have sailed out of Plymouth at some time or another and will know what great sailing waters are available just outside the breakwater. Get it in your diaries now!

I am also very pleased to report that the UK has been awarded the 2013 Dragon World Championship, to be held in Weymouth. The only caveat is that the final decision is dependent on the BDA making a satisfactory presentation to the IDA at the appropriate time three years before the event. We will be using some of the facilities currently being developed for the 2012 Olympics, so I am absolutely confident we will be able to satisfy the IDA as to our suitability. The UK last held the World Championship in 1989, so it is definitely due to be held in the UK again.

Outside the UK, Len Jones achieved the UK's best away from home result, third overall in the Worlds at Dun Laoghaire.

I am pleased to report that Aberdeen Asset Management will continue to support the British Dragon class in 2008. Their generosity has been vital to us, and we are most grateful.

Two areas I think most will find of interest were dealt with at the IDA AGM in October 2007. Professional participation in our races was discussed. There was almost universal support for maintaining the status quo so that we can all continue to race against the very best. A proposal was put

forward to have separate prizes for the corinthian section of the fleets, but this was not carried.

Following a small number of boat sinkings over the last couple of years, the IDA Technical Committee led by Mike Hayles

proposed a number of technical rule changes to increase the buoyancy in our boats. It was decided that all new boats from 1st March 2008 must contain 2,500 litres of positive buoyancy. Please note this applies to new boats only, as it would be impractical to incorporate this into our current boats.

At the 2007 BDA AGM, it was suggested that we try to strengthen the public profile of the Dragon class. To this end, we appointed Fiona Brown to increase our publicity. I hope you will agree that it has been positive and we plan to continue to develop this in 2008. Fiona is very experienced in this field, working with, inter alia, the Melges and Etchells classes on their publicity.

Our website continues to progress. Mike Holmes has worked to ensure it always contains up to date news. Two other developments are now in place. Firstly, one can see who are current members, that is have paid the current year's subscriptions. This is vital to enable a regatta organiser to check that an entrant is a current member of the British Association (a class requirement that has not been adequately monitored in recent years). It will also help local fleet captains collect dues each year! Secondly, we have now introduced a confidential section containing members' addresses, emails, telephones etc. This replaces the white book, will be much more economical and should be more up to date. Our thanks go to our secretary, Kate Sanderson, who has worked tirelessly on these projects.

Philip Clarabut, our Treasurer, has decided to retire after three years in the post. Thanks, Philip for your support to the class. Your officers are proposing Nick Hyde as his successor.

I will also be retiring, having taken on responsibilities with the International Association, and am very pleased to recommend to you Owen Pay as my successor. Owen is currently Vice Chairman and is already fully immersed in the organisation for the 2008 South Coasts and Edinburgh Cup. I guess everyone knows Owen - he is hard to miss! He was sailing Dragons well before me, so he is certainly well time-served.



photo - Geoff Butcher

Rob on the way to winning the East Coasts
photo - Mike Spurgin



In the world of sailing, like the world of investment, there is always more to discover.



That is why we are delighted to sponsor the British Dragon Association.

At Aberdeen Asset Management, we prefer to take the time to discover things for ourselves.

Every year, we meet hundreds of senior managers from companies around the globe to gain a good understanding of their business. Only a small number meet our exacting investment standards, in terms of quality and value, and we only invest in companies when we feel completely comfortable with what we've discovered.

That's why we're delighted to be associated with a sport that depends on a strong sense of teamwork, adventure, coupled with unstinting effort, whatever the conditions.

We therefore wish the British Dragon Association every success going forward.

Do remember the value of investments can go down as well as up, and investors may not get back what they originally invested. Past performance is not a guide to future performance.

www.aberdeen-asset.com





photo – David Branigan/Oceansport



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Tim Pearson reviews the light airs championship which saw four Irish helmsmen figure in the top ten

After a dismal July and August, the summer weather finally put in an appearance to greet the first Dragons arriving in Dun Laoghaire at the beginning of September for the first ever Dragon World Championship to be held in Ireland.

Unfortunately the high pressure also dictated light winds for most of the World Championship, sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management, and the high-scoring series was decided on six races instead of the scheduled eight.

The 68-boat fleet boasted some of the best keelboat sailors in the world, with between them an Olympic medal tally of four golds, a silver and a

bronze. Additionally many are world champions in the Dragon and other classes including Snipe, 505, Soling, Flying Dutchman and Fireball.

A strong Danish contingent included multiple gold medallist Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen who has won four European championships, four Gold Cups and was World champion in 1989. Also in the Danish line-up were defending world champion Jorgen Schonherr, who has won three other World championship titles in various classes, and the mercurial Frank Berg who has won six Danish national championships and was second in the Europeans in 2007.

Of course, German sailor Tommy Müller, a former Gold Cup winner who came to check out the vagaries of Dublin Bay in 2006 and won the Irish national title that year, was a key contender, especially as he was crewed by Vincent Hoesch who is no

stranger to the Dragon circuit podium.

Among the 15 competing nations the Russians had sent a very strong challenge, led by Alexei Krylov, a former Olympic 470 sailor and Snipe world champion in 2002, and Markus Wieser, the 2007 European Dragon Champion.

The 18-boat Irish challenge was headed by Neil Hegarty, the newly-crowned Irish national champion, and former Irish champion and European silver-medallist Andrew Craig of the host Royal St George YC. Other strong Irish contenders include John Lavery, former national Dragon champion and world Fireball champion in the 1990s, John Ross-Murphy, winner of the Grand Prix in Douarnenez in 2005, Don O'Donoghue, Regates Royales winner in 2006 and South Coast Champion in 2007 (all from Dublin), and Mick Cotter and Simon Brien, both former Irish national Dragon champions.

The Racing

Race 1

Britain's Gavia Wilkinson-Cox sailing *Jerboa* was the winner of the opening race on Sunday, September 2nd with surprise results for some of the top helmsmen in the 68-boat fleet.

Although poor visibility and 30-knot north westerly winds postponed racing for more than two hours, when racing started at 3pm winds had reduced to under six knots but visibility had improved dramatically. The first windward leg of just under two miles was slow going in a choppy sea and ebbing tide.

Wilkinson-Cox – one of three women helming – won the pin end start with plenty of room that allowed her sail low and fast to the left-hand side of the

...a significant advantage that left her ten lengths clear at the weather mark...

course. It was a significant advantage that left her ten lengths clear at the weather mark, closely followed by Irish Dragon Secretary Tim Pearson and Northern Ireland's Simon Brien.

Crewed by Ron Rosenberg and John Mortimer, the Cowes helmswoman was chased hard by Northern Ireland's Simon Brien as winds freshened to ten knots at times.

Former Irish champion, Brien, sailing with brother Mark and David Gomes overhauled her at the start of the second downwind leg but the former windsurfing champion came back to win her first ever World championship race. She described the result as 'the highlight' of her 30-year Dragon career after coming ashore at the Royal St. George YC.

Third overall was Britain's Robert Campbell in *Quicksilver III*.

Races 2 and 3

Monday was a day of frustration on Dublin Bay. The morning race was sailed in perfect north westerly conditions only to peter out by lunch time.

Marcus Wieser, the current European champion, sailing the Ukrainian Dragon *Bunker Queen*, emerged the most consistent performer with a first and a fourth place to lead overall from Danish rival Frank Berg.

After a swing in to the north east for race three the wind died away. There was some frustration but wide acknowledgement that race officer Alan Crosbie had some difficult decisions to



Irish entry James Mathews, Rob Jacob and David Good – photo David Branigan/Oceansport

make to set the course.

By the second leeward mark the Swiss entry sailed by Uli Libor, who has won Olympic silver and bronze in the Flying Dutchman, had broken away from the main bulk of the fleet along with half a dozen others and managed to cross the line in only two knots of wind.

It left many struggling to finish inside the 30 minute time limit with only 35

finishers recorded from a fleet of 68 starters. After three races Ireland's Andrew Craig was leading local hopes in 11th place.

Tommy Muller was convinced that his championship hopes had disappeared like the breeze as he had the distinction of finishing a Dragon race in last position for the first time in his life.

Race 4

Arrival of HRH's yacht – venue for the party highlight of the week – photo Gareth Craig (fotosail.com)





The best of the Irish – Neil Hegarty, David Williams and Peter Bowring in *Phantom* finished sixth overall – photo Gareth Craig (fotosail.com)

After Monday's race three ended in disarray, race four on Tuesday was in stark contrast with a steady sea breeze from 155 degrees and very little place changing in the top ten.

Denmark's Frank Berg closed the gap on Marcus Wieser of Germany at what should have been the half way stage of the Aberdeen Dragon World championships, with only 4.7 points separating them.

Showing emphatic determination, Tommy Muller led around every mark to take the gun ahead of Britain's Quentin Strauss, and keep his championship hopes alive.

Irish boats continued to fare well with two local boats helmed by Don O'Donoghue and John Ross Murphy finishing fourth and fifth respectively.

Gavia Wilkinson-Cox on her way to winning the first race – photo Gareth Craig (fotosail.com)



Third overall was Irish champion boat *Phantom* sailed by Neil Hegarty, David Williams and Peter Bowring. The trio was reinstated from an OCS score in race two, a race in which they had finished second, on the grounds that the recall procedure was not correctly followed.

Races 5 and 6

Two more races and a discard revealed a completely new leader board after Wednesday's racing in light but steady westerly conditions with some bright autumn sunshine.

The winds never reached 10 knots and a strong flood tide dictated tactics in a day when a long port tack off the start line was favoured by the majority of the fleet in both races.

In a masterly display of big fleet sailing Germany's Tommy Muller scored a 15th and a second bullet in the two races to move to the top of the 68-boat fleet by a narrow margin.

Marcus Wieser, however, the overall leader after four races, was judged OCS in race five and finished 55th in race 6 to see his championship hopes evaporate.

Four Irish boats held their positions in the top ten with top placed Neil Hegarty dropping from third to sixth overall with a 20 and 34th scored.

The Ukraine's Yvegen Braslavets was the winner of race five. He was followed by Britain's David Palmer who experienced the ultimate frustration of discovering he was OCS as he crossed the finish line. Switzerland's Uli Libor took his place with Lars Jensen of Denmark third.

Final result

In a frustrating anticlimax, no more races were sailed. On both Thursday and Friday there was scarcely a zephyr and reluctantly, PRO Alan Crosbie was

Showing emphatic determination, Tommy Muller led around every mark...

unable to send out the fleet.

So Germany's Tommy Muller, Vincent Hoesh and Max Sheibmayr won the Aberdeen Dragon World Championship on *Sinewave* after a light air high-scoring series.

Second overall was Swiss Olympic medallist Uli Libor with Stephan Hellriegel and Frank Butzmann on *Gaudium*. Third was Britain's Len Jones crewed by Claus Hoj Jensen and Jamie Lea on *Rumours*.

Four Irish boats featured in the top ten with Irish champions Neil Hegarty, David Williams and Peter Bowring sixth. Simon Brien's Belfast Lough entry *Kin* was seventh and the Royal St. George YC's Andrew Craig eighth. Clubmate John Ross Murphy ended the six race series tenth. These results are all the more remarkable when you consider that all the other boats in the top 10 were crewed by professionals.

Best of the British entry, after Len Jones' third place, were Poul Richard Hoj-Jensen in 12th, Gavia Wilkinson-Cox in 13th, and Swede Thomas Olog who sailed Nicola McLennan's and Tom Wilton's *Biff* into 17th place.



David Palmer GBR 700 and his boys

Heavy airs start Day One



EDINBURGH CUP

report and photos
by Fiona Brown

Close battle on Day Four – Andrew Craig
IRL 192 nearest the camera



EDINBURGH CUP

For the first time ever Weymouth played host to the International Dragon South Coast Championship and the historic Edinburgh Cup. The South Coast event was held from 1st-3rd July, followed by the Edinburgh Cup from 4th-7th July 2007 with the boats based in Weymouth's lovely Georgian harbour.

The South Coasts attracted 20 entries for three days of heavy airs sailing. No one team dominated the competition with three different winners in four races. Overall Ivan Bradbury was the most consistent performer with a 1, 4, 6, 3 scoreline, and he and his crew of Martin Payne and Will Willetts were declared the 2007 Southern Area Champions. Second place went to David Palmer with Eric Williams third.

The strong winds continued into the Edinburgh Cup, for which the fleet increased to 24. Race Officer Derek Abbott and his Yacht Clubs of Weymouth team coped admirably with the difficult conditions and demonstrated Weymouth's well deserved reputation as a premiere sailing venue with five excellent championship races.

From the start one team stood out. Sixty-six year old David Palmer had been sailing in the class for four years but had yet to win a major championship, however, all that was about to change. He and his crew of Kasper Harsberg and Mark Pettitt, were on stunning form and by day three had done enough to win with a race to spare. The team counted a score of 1, 2, 2, 1 and even in the final race, when they took the opportunity to relax and enjoy a cruise around the course with Kasper's wife Gitte replacing Mark Pettitt, they still managed a ninth.

Often when a championship is won in this way the final race is something of a non-event. But that certainly wasn't the case here as the battle for second and third places was extremely tight with Andrew Craig, Neil Hegarty and Len Jones vying for second place and almost any one in the top ten technically capable of taking third, making the final race one of the closest and most exciting of the series.

At last the wind had dropped and as the boats came off the line it was clear no quarter would be given. Craig gained an early small lead which he defended with style to take second place on the podium, but behind him places were constantly changing all the way to the finish in the battle for third overall. Hegarty finished second and immediately turned back to see where Jones was. In the closing seconds Tim Tavinor slipped past the pin for third with Quentin Strauss fourth, Edouard

Wylleman fifth and Jones sixth. Aboard Jones' and Hegarty's boats brains were whirring overtime as points were calculated to establish that both now counted 16 meaning Jones had just taken third overall on countback.

At the prize giving David Palmer paid tribute to his crewmen Kasper Harsberg and Mark Pettitt. He also paid tribute to his late father who taught him to sail and who he knew would be particularly proud of his winning this historic trophy. Finally he thanked the Edinburgh Cup fleet for providing such excellent competition and the town, clubs and people of Weymouth for making the fleet so very welcome.

TOP TEN RESULTS

1st GBR700 David Palmer 1, 2, 2, 1, (9) - 6 points; 2nd IRL192 Andrew Craig 6, (7), 6, 2, 1 - 15 pts; 3rd GBR708 Len Jones (9), 1, 3, 6, 6 - 16 pts; 4th IRL176 Neil Hegarty 4, 6, 4, (7), 2 - 16 pts; 5th GBR729 Tim Tavinor 5, 8, (15), 4, 3 - 20 pts; 6th GBR723 Quentin Strauss 7, (18), 13, 3, 4 - 27 pts; 7th GBR684 Michael Holmes 3, 11, (12), 5, 10 - 29 pts; 8th GBR653 Owen Pay (12), 3, 9, 10, 8 - 30 pts; 9th GBR656 Ivan Bradbury 14, 4, 1, (15), 13 - 31 pts; 10th GBR719 Paul Woodman (13), 5, 5, 9, 13 - 32 pts

For full results go to - <http://www.edinburghcup07.co.uk/Re.htm>







WIND SHIFTS

Look for changes in wind direction

One thing you can say for sure about the wind direction is that it's always changing. Even when it seems like a nice steady day, the wind is constantly wriggling back and forth at least a little bit. And whenever the wind shifts, it creates a large opportunity to gain distance on the other boats in your fleet.

Wind shifts are generally the most significant strategic factor of all. Each time the wind changes direction it re-shuffles the fleet standings, and in almost every race the potential gains and losses due to wind shifts are greater than any other factor, including boatspeed!

For all these reasons, it's very important to understand what the wind is doing – both before and during your race – and how best to use the wind to your advantage.

Many windward legs are only 10 or 20 minutes long so general, large-scale forecasts (like the ones you get on the web, radio or TV) are not very helpful. It is much, much more important to rely on:

– *Local knowledge:* In the specific venue where you are racing, what does the wind usually do when it blows from each direction? Use your own experience from past regattas and ask local sailors to tell you what happens.

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Sail toward the next shift.

When the wind direction is changing, your basic strategic move upwind is to sail in the direction where you expect the wind to shift next. For example, if you think the wind will veer (shift clockwise), sail on port tack toward that shift (and vice versa).

By doing this you will end up on a higher "ladder rung" when the wind shifts, and therefore you will be more advanced in the race. Of course, there could always be reasons (e.g. current, wind pressure) when it might pay to sail away from the next shift.

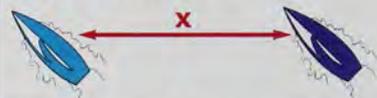
– *Your own observations:* These are even more important than 'local knowledge' because they apply to your race area on the specific day when you are racing. Be sure to collect these before the start, and keep observing during the race.

There are many reasons why the wind changes direction. These include the movement of weather systems, thermal heating, changing current, clouds and geographic effects. Keep your head out of the boat and try to understand which of these apply to your particular situation – this will help you know which way the wind will shift next.

– *Sail toward the next shift!*
When you expect that the wind will change direction (it happens every beat!), the key idea in your strategic gameplan should be to sail in the direction of the next windshift.

– When making a strategic plan for your windward leg, the

Why shifts are critical



Size of wind shift	Distance (approx.) gained or lost
2°	5% of x
5°	12% of x
10°	25% of x
15°	37% of x

Changes in wind direction can have a profound impact on the relative positions of boats that are racing upwind. The bigger the shift and the farther apart the boats, the greater the gain and loss that occurs. For example, if two boats are a mile apart in opposite corners of the beat and the wind shifts just one little degree, each boat will gain or lose approximately 150 feet!



One common cause of changes in the wind direction is the presence of land near the race course. The wind encounters more friction when it flows over the bumpy contours of land, and this often affects its direction. The degree of change is influenced by your proximity to shore (the closer you are, the bigger the shift) and by the angle of the wind to the shoreline.

JH Peterson photo

David Dellenbaugh's **SPEED & Smarts™**

relative importance of windshifts will depend on several factors:

- In light air, windshifts are less critical; wind pressure and current are more important.

- The importance of windshifts is proportional to their size.

- Shifts are more critical on longer beats where the boats get more separation (farther apart).

• Windshifts almost always fall into one of two categories - they are either oscillating (shifting back and forth around a median direction) or persistent (changing steadily in one direction). If you want strategic success, you must constantly ask yourself one simple question during each windward leg: Is the wind direction oscillating or persistent?

The way you answer this question will make a huge difference in how you play the shifts. For example, if you think the wind is oscillating and you get headed you should tack. But if you think the wind is shifting persistently, you should keep sailing into the shift.

• Sometimes what appears to be a wind shift is really a change in wind velocity, not in its direction. If you are sailing along and the wind velocity suddenly drops (without changing direction), your apparent wind will shift forward temporarily and it will seem like you're headed.

Be careful not to treat this "velocity shift" like a real change in direction. If you suspect a change in velocity, wait 30 seconds or so and see if the 'velocity shift' disappears once your boatspeed adjusts to the new wind velocity.

• Windshifts are different every day. Sometimes it's very easy to see them on the water; other times it's impossible. Sometimes when a shift hits your boat it is solid right away; other times you have to sail farther into the shift to make sure it's real.

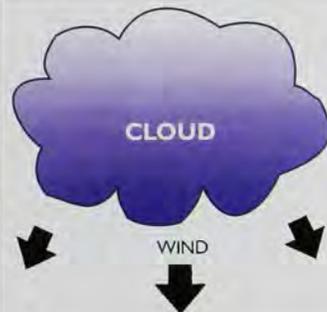
When you are trying to make a gameplan to take advantage of the shifts, there is nothing as valuable as sailing around in your race area before the start, just watching (and recording) what the wind is doing.



Geographic effects

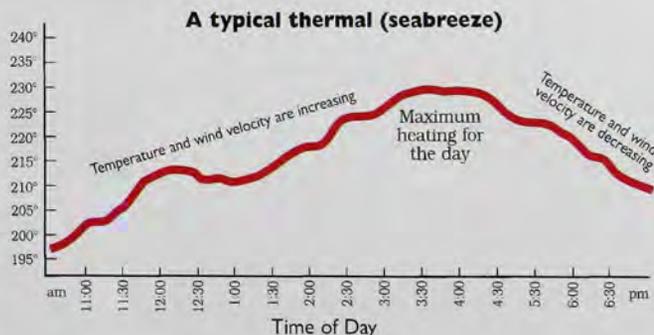
When the wind is blowing from the land at an angle to the shoreline, it tends to shift in direction so it flows more perpendicularly off the land. This effect is more pronounced as you get closer to shore. Usually, if you sail the tack that takes you more directly toward land, you will get progressively headed as you approach the shore. This "geographic shift" is like a basic persistent windshift, but it is easier to predict because it usually happens in the same place and to the same degree (so be sure to check this out before your race).

If the wind is blowing straight off the shore, it will act like an oscillating breeze, so look for more frequent and substantial back-and-forth shifts closer to land.



The influence of clouds

Another reason why the wind changes direction is the presence and movement of clouds. The bigger the cloud, the more potential there is for associated windshifts. Usually, the wind on the downwind side of a cloud 'fans out' in front of the cloud (and it's stronger too). Therefore, it's usually good to sail toward clouds. For example, if there is a big dark cloud coming down the left side of the beat, sail that way because the cloud will probably shift the wind direction left until it passes.



When you are sailing in a thermal "sea breeze", the wind direction usually changes slowly as the temperature of the land increases or decreases during the day. While the land heats up in late morning and early afternoon, the breeze builds in strength and gradually shifts (often to the right) toward the standard 'seabreeze direction' for that venue. Then in the late afternoon, after the warmest part of the day, the land starts cooling and the wind shifts back the other way (decreasing in strength).

Thermal breezes are great examples of persistent shifts. However, as the seabreeze develops it doesn't always shift constantly in the expected direction. As the graph above shows, there are often some small oscillations as the wind settles in. While these shifts may not be significant on a long beat, they can make a big difference strategically to boats that usually sail short windward legs.

COWES KEELBOAT BOATCAMP



Rackham leads the racing

More than 30 would-be keelboat sailors came to Cowes over the weekend of 16th-17th June to take part in the Cowes Keelboat Boatcamp being jointly organised by the Cowes Daring and International Dragon fleets and hosted by the Royal London YC.

The objective of the weekend was to introduce as many wannabe new keelboat helmsmen and crews as possible to the joys of the Cowes keelboat scene and the organisers were delighted with the interest the event generated. The participants ranged in age from 15 to over 50 and included five wonderfully enthusiastic sea cadets as well as several potential new owners. Most had some previous keelboat or dinghy racing experience, a couple had raced Dragons in the past but wanted a 'refresher course' to reintroduce them to the fleet, and a few were keen beginners with only limited racing experience.

Eight Dragons and three Darings took part, each manned by their owner and one experienced crew who were able to take two newcomers out at a time. The Darings offered the visitors an opportunity to race with them in the formal Cowes keelboat races and eight of the participants took up this invitation. Meanwhile the Dragons set up a series of informal training exercises on Saturday followed by three short course races on Sunday allowing 22 boatcampers the chance to try different roles in the boat, sail with different crews and

generally have fun while learning all about Dragon sailing. Thanks to the generous support of Marlin RIBs, quick transfers between the boat and dock were possible and everyone spent the maximum possible time sailing.

Despite the blustery conditions both the regulars and the newcomers all had a whale of a time and one lucky boatcamper was delighted to find themselves on the winning Daring which certainly made their experience all the more exciting.

Everyone agreed that this new social initiative was a fantastic way of drawing the classes together...

In addition to the boats out sailing there was also a Dragon and a Daring moored on the Trinity Landing giving those awaiting their turn afloat a chance to look over the boats in detail and speak with the Cowes keelboat regulars about how to get further involved. The moored boats were dressed overall and attracted a lot of attention from other passers by keen to find out more about these beautiful boats.

To ensure that the participants got a truly comprehensive picture of the Cowes keelboat scene all were invited to join the Cowes Keelboat Fleets' Nearly Midsummer Night's party hosted by the Royal Corinthian YC on Saturday night. Here the Daring and Dragon sailors were joined by the Etchells crews, fresh back from competing in their British National Championship, and a great time was had by all. Everyone agreed that this new social initiative was a fantastic way of drawing the classes together and plans are now afoot for this

Close racing between *Caramba* and *Supremacy*



to become a regular event.

By Sunday afternoon 30 happy but exhausted boatcampers had been put to the test in a range of conditions and all came home with big grins on their faces, vowing to return to sail with the fleets again soon.

"We're delighted with how the weekend went. It's introduced a whole new group of sailors to the Dragon and Daring fleets and there were some excellent crews amongst the participants who I know will be quickly snatched up. It was also heartening to find several potential new owners taking part and we'll be working with them in the coming weeks to find them boats and get them out racing. On behalf of both the Dragon and Daring fleets I'd like to thank the Royal London Yacht Club, Marlin RIBs, Race Officer Richard Palmer, the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club and all the volunteers who helped make the event possible. We'll certainly be looking to repeat the event again next year." Commented International Dragon Solent Fleet Captain Gavia Wilkinson-Cox.



Marlin RIBs bringing the teams in for lunch

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EDINBURGH CUP SCENES

photos by Fiona Brown



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WIND VELOCITY

Try to find the best pressure

The wind is what makes every sailboat go and, almost always, more is better. Increased velocity makes you move faster through the water and also allows you to point higher. Therefore, when it comes to wind velocity the perfect strategy is easy: just find the area of your course with better pressure and head that way!

Like wind direction, the velocity of the breeze is always changing. Even on a day when it looks like the wind is steady and equal all over your racing area, there will almost always be slight differences in pressure across the course.

The key is to find these and take advantage of them.



How to find the puffs

There are a number of ways to identify better pressure on the beat. The most widely used, and usually most reliable, method is simply looking at the pattern and color of the water surface to windward.

There is usually more wind velocity where you can see:

- Bigger ripples or waves
- More tightly packed ripples/waves
- More or bigger whitecaps
- Darker colors (because of the way more ripples reflect the sky color).

You can also use other visual indicators to gauge wind pressure:

- Heel angle of other sailboats
- Pointing angle of other boats
- Action of flags or smoke
- Position and shape of clouds

Many times the differences in

pressure across the course are very subtle – they're big enough to make a significant difference in your performance, but small enough so they are barely perceptible. To find them you must look very closely, use all the indicators available, and train your eye to see very subtle distinctions (*see below*).

Wind pressure strategies

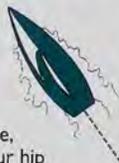
When you are developing a strategy for the next windward leg, don't underestimate the value of finding better pressure. Most sailors focus primarily on windshifts, but sailing in more wind is definitely fast.

There are two important goals when you are strategizing: 1) Figure out where the best wind pressure is on the windward leg; and 2) Make sure that your strategy fits with the wind velocity that you have. Here are some ideas on how to do this:

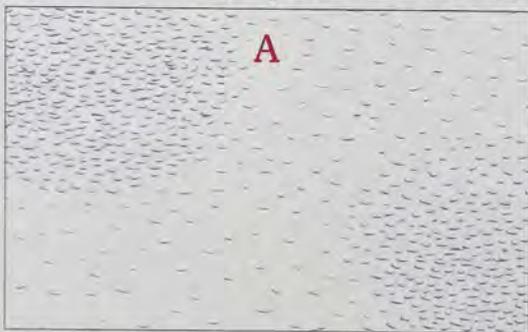
✓ Remember that the wind you will get is coming toward you from the direction of your *apparent wind*. Therefore, line yourself up so your masthead fly is pointing toward the puffs you want to get.

One good way to evaluate wind strength on the beat is by watching the angle of other boats. We usually use another boat's heading to estimate the wind *direction* that she has. For example, if a boat on your windward hip is sailing higher than you, she probably has a lift.

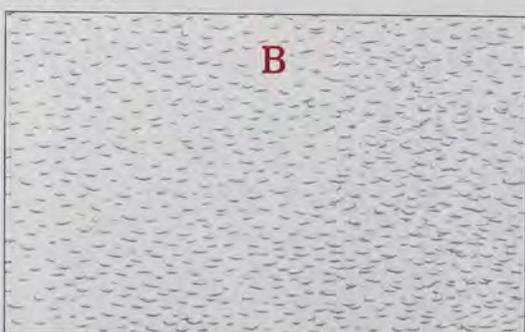
However, her angle of sail can also tell us a lot about wind pressure, especially in light to moderate breeze. It could be that the boat on your hip is pointing higher simply because she has more breeze than you. Even one or two knots more breeze may let her sail significantly closer to the wind than you can, so consider this when you are looking for pressure.



Sometimes the 'puffs' are not so obvious



A



B

When sailors think about finding puffs, they often imagine a shifty wind blowing off the land (A). In this situation there is usually a large difference in wind velocity between puffs and lulls, so it's easy to spot areas where there is more or less wind pressure. However, most windward legs do not look like this. Usually the differences in wind pressure on a beat are much more subtle, and a "puff" may bring only one extra knot of wind velocity (B). This is often hard to see, but it could make a huge difference in your boatspeed. Therefore, you must train your eyes to pick up the subtle signs of more wind, especially on those days when it looks like the wind is the same everywhere. (In B there appears to be better wind pressure on the lower right side of the course.)

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Finding the best wind pressure is critical in light air or when there are differences in wind velocity across the windward leg. These conditions often exist on small lakes and other bodies of water where the sailing area is quite close to shore. *JH Peterson photo*

✓ If there are big clouds on your course, there is usually more wind pressure fanning out on their downwind (front) side. This means it's a good idea to sail toward clouds that are moving down your beat.

✓ In a large fleet and light air, there is often more pressure on the sides of the course since the wind tends to lift up over the mass of boats in the middle. It's not unusual for boats on both sides to come out ahead of boats in the middle.

✓ In light air it's especially important to look for areas of better pressure because they have a relatively huge impact on your speed and pointing. In these conditions,

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Sail toward more wind.

OK, this may seem so obvious it doesn't need to be stated, but it's amazing how often boats fail to sail toward better pressure on the beat. Of course, wind pressure is just one of many strategic considerations; however, wind is the force that powers a boat, and more wind almost always makes a boat go faster.

So put a high priority on staying in areas of better wind – this is a sure-fire strategy, especially when the breeze is light to medium, or when there's a big difference in wind velocity between the puffs and lulls.

pressure is king! So be willing to sail extra distance or take more risk to stay in areas of better wind.

✓ In heavy air, pay particular attention to *course geometry* (i.e. your position relative to the windward mark) because your tacking angle is narrower and it's easy to reach the laylines.

✓ When you want to tack, try to do this in a puff rather than a lull. You will lose a lot less in maneuvers if you perform them when you have good pressure.

✓ When you are racing upwind, you will get puffs (and shifts) more quickly than when you are sailing around in the starting area (because you are sailing toward the shifts at a speed equal to your VMG, rather than waiting for them to come).

✓ Sometimes you must be proactive in getting to a puff sooner. It often pays to pinch toward a puff on your windward side or foot to a puff ahead of you (see page 15).

✓ Once you're in a puff, try to *maximize the advantage* you get from it. For example, be willing to sail a little high or low to stay in it longer. If possible, sail to the far side of the puff and then tack – this way you can sail back through the puff again if it lasts long enough.

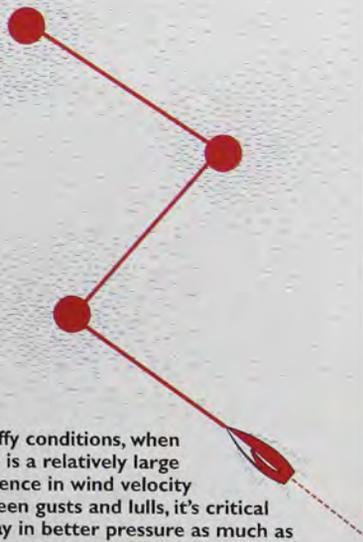
✓ Beware of *velocity shifts*. These are temporary changes in

your apparent wind direction caused by changes in pressure. When you sail into a lull it looks like you are getting a header; a puff appears like a lift. Be sure to change gears when this happens and don't be fooled into thinking these are real shifts in direction.

✓ It's very important to keep a *good lookout* for wind pressure around the course while you are racing. Assign at least one person to watch what's happening to windward on both sides of the course.

✓ Keep in mind that **current** can have a great impact on wind pressure. The great thing about sailing upwind is that when you find better current you will also have better wind pressure, so head directly for these areas. •

"Connect the dots"



In puffy conditions, when there is a relatively large difference in wind velocity between gusts and lulls, it's critical to stay in better pressure as much as possible. The best strategy is often a "connect-the-dots" approach where you sail a course that takes you from puff to puff. Though it's not usually a great idea to chase after wind shifts, going for puffs works well.

FLEET REPORTS

ALDEBURGH

IT HAS BEEN a relatively quiet season for the Dragon fleet. There have been a lot of distractions. Rory has had family responsibilities, Rick has had a new project to start and the building and racing of the 8-Metre *Ganymede* has also pre-occupied a number of Dragon owners. The result has been that the normal points racing has been dominated by *Basilisk*, largely because either Mike or Patrick was generally able to turn up, even if the other was away. She didn't have it all her own way, being beaten by Dusty Hughes in *Pongo* one weekend, aided by a traitorous Patrick and Shelley and, on handicap, by *Orion* with an equally traitorous Mike at the helm. In the handicap racing she distinguished herself by winning the summer series and the Vaughan-Brown Cup. It just shows what being there can do for you.

The regatta was quite different. All the absentees turned up and we even had two visitors in the form of James Mehew with *Comanche* and Matt Lingley with *Kestrel*. As a result there were ten boats on the line, the best turn out for a while. Rory showed that he hadn't forgotten how to race at Aldeburgh and won convincingly from Rick in conditions that varied between the very windy and the pleasant. We believe that both visitors were

sufficiently impressed that they are likely to apply for membership! On handicap, the Hunt family in *Panther*, led by Jonathan, their eminence grise, showed very convincing form to win as easily as Rory had done in the open category.

Nereid was the only boat to venture away from home, and indeed is enjoying the south of France as I write. She has been to all three major British events, which were mostly characterised by an excess of wind and also a wind-chill below freezing on the Medway. She has also travelled to Finland (tee shirt and shorts much of the time), Ireland (very competitive worlds and great entertainment) and France (report awaited). It has definitely proved a good arrangement for all concerned.

Underneath the low turnout for club racing there are some promising developments. Balloo and Sarah have bought *Hawkeye* (now *Kite*) effectively adding an active boat to the fleet. We also expect to see more of Matt Lingley next year. There are also now quite a number of younger members who are keen crews and very willing to aid the growth of the class. Charlie Sprake has indeed been on a rapid learning course in Finland and Ireland. Optimism therefore prevails for 2008.

Patrick Gifford

BURNHAM

BEFORE TALKING about 2007 I must first go back to November 2006 and the class dinner, one of the most important highlights of the Dragon fleet's year – unfortunately it always happens after going to press for the previous year. This is the event at which the Clanger trophy is presented for the faux pas of the year. This year it was won by David Hall in *Flame Again* for letting off a flare on an extremely windy day in the Roach River, while concerned that he was being driven on to a lee shore. After a few moments of real thought he was able to sail off unaided. The build-up and suspense as to who is the ultimate winner is the highlight of the evening and the previous year's winner Martin Fogg did this with great panache.

Continuing on the previous year theme for a moment, the weather having been so benign the fleet wanted to continue to sail after its traditional finish date up to Christmas. We were rewarded with some excellent sailing conditions, which made it all worthwhile. The winner was GBR 718 *Spindrift* Gary Harrison with some help from Robert Campbell, but just as important to mention is the fact that Bruce Burnett put up a trophy for the series to be named the Santa Series, thank you Bruce.

The 2007 season started with a bang with some heavy winds, blowing out winter cobwebs, so much so that by the time we got to Easter it felt as if we had never had a winter break. The Burnham Bowl (Easter trophy) saw six visitors join us on the river, interestingly up 100 per cent on the previous year, when the event was run concurrently with the Dragon East Coast Championship. After three races, the event was wide open with three different winners, but GBR 688 *Quicksilver III*, Robert Campbell came with a winning rush, taking the last three races and the trophy. The early season dominance of *Quicksilver III* continued with her winning both the Saturday and Sunday Spring Series.

Over the weekend of 12th and 13th May we hosted a team-racing event against Norddeutscher Regatta Verein (NRV) from Hamburg. Twelve sailors plus friends arrived on the Friday to sail with us on the Crouch. This very competitive event is sailed in a friendly manner – the Corinthian lent two teams, making for an eight boats a side



event. On Saturday, racing was restricted to one race due to high winds – not ideal conditions for match racing – but by the Sunday the wind had moderated to allow two good races. The Corinthian won all three flights to retain the trophy.

The Dragon East Coast Championship this year was held on the Medway and nine Burnham boats made the trip. It was a strange weekend with the wind building to near unsailable conditions on the final day. In these conditions Robert Campbell took a heavy knock on his wrist but was not aware that he had broken it until he came ashore. Fortunately he still finished high enough to take the Trophy for the second year running.

In early July the Dragons were in Weymouth for the South Coast Championship, followed by the Nationals – the Edinburgh Cup. Seven Burnham boats were present for what was again predominantly a very windy week.

Tim Tavinor sailing *Biff* GBR 729 was highest placed Burnham boat in fifth place, followed by *Hand Of Fortune* GBR 684 Mike Holmes in seventh.



Back on the domestic front, and maybe partly due to Robert being sidelined as his wrist mended, Mike Holmes and Tony Allen in *Hand Of Fortune* won both the Saturday and Sunday seasons points.

Burnham Week, the late season regatta, again saw the numbers reduced, mainly due to three Burnham boats having departed to Ireland for the

Worlds. This still left a competitive fleet, particularly at the weekends. David Hall in GBR 617 *Flame Again* picked up the lion's share of the trophies.

The fleet is currently into the autumn trophies and seeing fleet numbers increase as the travellers and those who have been away during the summer return to the river – we have been having some fantastic turnouts.

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FLEET REPORTS

Other items well worth mentioning, we have so far held three out of the four scheduled mini series i.e. four back to back races, sailing over a windward leeward course from a committee boat. These are very popular events and are currently being headed by GBR 722 *Avalanche* Mark Wade, with Tim Taviner sailing *Frank* (a genetic name for what ever boat he has available from Petticrows.) snapping at his heels.

On 28th August we added a new event to our calendar – The Pub Race. This looked like an ordinary points race, but finished at the steps on Foulness Island in the River Roach, where we moored our boats and were ferried ashore for lunch at the George and Dragon. As Foulness is MOD land, this footpath is the only legal point of entry to the island from the water – the pub is like going back to the 'Fifties as it does not receive regular trade. It was made even more enjoyable being a fine day and we were able to sit outside and enjoy the sun.

We have extended our box league system to five events this year. Boats are put into boxes of four and the results over two weekends' sailing decide the winner of the box, who is then presented with a case of wine and promoted a division. The last placed boat in the box drops a division. This has helped to create extra appeal and competition for boats that are not the usual trophy winners.

The fleet is renowned for its travelling and this year has been no different with Burnham members having competed in the Grand Prix Petit Navire, Douarnenez; The Trophy International, La Baule; The Belgian Nationals, Ostend; The Internazionale d'Italia, San Remo; Cowes Week and the World Championship in Dun Laoghaire Ireland (I am sorry if I have missed an event out).

The class held their annual summer party on the first Saturday of Burnham week. As in the two previous years it was held in the Holmes' barn with a marquee for extra accommodation should the weather be more typical of an English summer. A coach from Burnham and back enabled sailors and friends to thoroughly enjoy the Pimm's, wine, beer and hog roast.

The last event before going to press was a visit by members of the Pirogovo Dragon Yacht Club, Moscow, to team race against the Royal Corinthian Dragons on the 20th and 21st October.

The weather, being glorious for late October, was unfortunately detrimental to the sailing, but we did achieve four very good races on the Saturday before the wind completely deserted the river on Sunday. Poul Richard Hoj-Jensen, Robert Campbell, Mark Wade, Ian Gray and Mike Holmes made up the home team and they won three of the four races sailed, but this certainly flattered the score line as the racing was extremely tight and all the races were determined by the odd position. The Dragons laid on a full social programme for the visitors, which included a tour and cocktail party at Petticrow's boat yard and a traditional roast beef lunch. On the Sunday in the absence of wind our guests were taken up river by boat to see more of the local vicinity, which included going ashore at North Farnbridge for a drink in the Ferry Boat Inn.

The 2007 season has been a very successful one for the Burnham Dragon class and I am sure the fleet will be looking forward to 2008 with equal optimism.

Michael Holmes

LOWESTOFT

IT DOESN'T SEEM two minutes ago since I wrote my report for 2006, but what a difference a year can make. Then I wrote of light winds, sun, tans – but this year it seems to have been completely the opposite, sun in short supply, rain and strong winds in

profusion. From the writer's point of view, thank God for the South American Championship in November, otherwise I think the racing en-famille that we have enjoyed over the last three years would have been a thing of distant memory! Have you noticed how global warming last year has become climate change this?

Chris and *Kuling* had a busy start to the year taking part in regattas in Cannes, Antibes and Monaco (great fun apparently but no notable results), prior to moving on to Palma for the Princess Sophia Trophy and the Gold Cup. Palma proved to be rather disappointing with that terrible weather again – it rained almost every day and on two days of the Gold Cup there was no racing at all. However, *Kuling* shone through with an excellent 15th out of 89 entrants, and helped the Great Britain team to a memorable second place in the Nations Cup. Basically they have been the 2007 star of the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk YC.

Early May saw Peter Colby with *T'Ai Fun*, and Norman Blowers with *Mystere* off on their annual pilgrimage to Douarnenez for the Grand Prix Petit Navire. They must be getting soft in their old age – not one story of damage to themselves or anyone else – what is the world coming to.

In May the writer's *Gitane*, *Kuling* and James Mehew with *Comanche* ventured down to the Medway for a fantastically well-organised East Coast Championship [well done to Stewart



Gitane at the Edinburgh Cup

RACING GEAR



BDA/Fiona Brown Photo

Coltard and his team]. I think the best we can say about our results is nothing, although there was some kudos in simply getting through the week – very strong winds and mild hyperthermia were again the order of the day. But the social stuff was good, and it was great to see everyone again after the winter. And we do think it's so very important to support the regional championships if we are to keep the Dragon Class strong in the UK.

James and *Comanche* ventured south again in July for Aldeburgh Week – coming a creditable third in very different conditions to the open sea we enjoy in our home waters off Lowestoft.

Gitane supported the South Coasts and Edinburgh Cup, and that's about the extent of our involvement, as strong winds and 90 kilos under weight had its inevitable consequence – but again we got through it, and it was great to see everyone again!

When I went out to our class members for news, one cryptic comment was that the most outstanding news for the year was the disappearance of half the fleet for the season. I suppose reading the previous few paragraphs it was a bit like that, but nevertheless there were four to five boats on the water each week, with new member Fergal O'Driscoll, Peter Pank, Annie Smith and Peter Johnson, Nick Faulkner and Jimmy Tubby keeping a 'core' fleet. They were joined now and again by the rest of us, in between our travels. The Offshore Challenge saw seven boats contesting, with Nick, Jimmy and *Merlin* taking the honours, and *Kuling* and *Gitane* taking the minor places. The annual RNSYC Sea Week regatta in June saw *Merlin* again winning overall honours.

Please don't forget the revamped RNSYC hosts the East Coasts next year – we're already well advanced with the organisation. With a bit of the good weather we normally get in May it should be a great event – that's what we are aiming for and we're looking forward to a good visiting fleet for this qualifier for the Worlds and Europeans.

And so to Uruguay for four of the Lowestoft fleet – *Gitane*, *Kuling*, *Comanche* and *Merlin* are already in Punta del Este – what a brilliant event it will be. The girls have the bikinis and fake tan packed, and the men their shorts, with six packs honed to perfection – NOT! Please .. please .. please make Uruguay have global warming!

Peter Stokes

MEDWAY

2007 HAS BEEN a busy year for the Medway fleet mainly because of the now three-year cycle of holding the East Coast Dragon Championship. It is only the second time that this event has been held on the River Medway and the same template that the BDA Treasurer Philip Clarabut used three years previously, was swung into action again. This time we had 31 entries with 14 visitors. Excellent racing was had by the fleet over the Whitsun weekend along with some very good social events including the now obligatory hog roast held in Jaspas Wright's barn on the Cliffe Peninsula and an excellent dinner on the Sunday evening.

The main difficulty with the weekend was the weather, typical for the early part of 2007: rain, wind, no wind, take your pick except for sunshine. The final race was held on the Monday and was near the BDA limit with 25 mph of wind blowing steadily throughout the morning with driving rain. Ten competitors braved the conditions and were rewarded with some fine exhilarating sailing. The Championship was closely



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FLEET REPORTS

fought between Rob Campbell and Len Jones with the BDA Chairman winning on count back. Quentin Strauss was an excellent third. I would like to thank all the members of the class and the MYC itself for helping out with the event. Most of the visitors were put up by the class and this contributed greatly to the enjoyment of the weekend.

This year brought about some changes and new members to the class. Simon Wynn sold *Beowulf* and acquired *Alcyone* GBR710 from Mark and Mandy Wade. Edwin and Sue Hannant sold their old *Borressen* and reappeared with a nearly new *Petticrow* also named *Gandalf* GBR726. Richard Jones bought a new *Petticrow* with wonderful teak decks and cuddy. Lastly, Julian and Claire Sowry have a habit of confusing us with their sail numbers. They started off on the *Medway* in 650 and this year were sailing in 715 before a new *Petticrow* arrived and had the new number 730. She also has teak decks and cuddy and with her white and blue colour scheme looks particularly fine. She has also been going pretty fast and winning

races but more anon.

This year saw the introduction of a league, which was an idea that the Burnham Fleet introduced successfully last year. The fleet has been divided into three groups and after each mini-series, usually five to six races, the top two of the league rise up and two drop. The winners and losers have been surprising at times since there is no allowance for discards. The league has given considerable amusement to the fleet too: John and Lizzie Shilling won a bottle of champagne for rising up a division and Lizzie was heard to exclaim "My God, we have never won anything before!"

Away from the Medway, a number of boats have travelled regularly, notably Len Jones in *Rumours* GBR708, Simon Wynn, the *BBC* crew and others travelling to the major UK regattas, Worlds in Dublin, La Boule and Ostend. Some of these regattas are great fun and give a variation to sailing on the river and the experience of sailing among some top rank sailors. Len Jones had a successful season in the UK and did very well in difficult

conditions in the Worlds where he finished an excellent third. Julian and Claire Sowry also did well in La Baule where they finished sixth.

The *BBC* trio of Boyd, Booth and Clarabut had decided to sell their boat at the end of the season but chose a suitably bizarre way of disposing of the boat. They had travelled to Cannes to race in the Regatta Royale at the end of September and were racing initially in rather quiet conditions. However, a thunder squall blew up with winds well over 30 knots with a particularly steep breaking sea. Initially, when sailing downwind, she was pooped by a large breaking sea filling her to the floorboards. This inrush of water was dealt with quite well and a few minutes later when beating she was swamped by two waves coming from the beam. There was little to do other than to swim off the boat and she sank quickly in 40m of water. Stavros was quickly on the scene and rescued the trio. So far, she has yet to be found and this was a sad end to a successful *Dragon* but nevertheless, an unusual way of 'selling' her.



GBR646 Hilary and Ina Gallow's *Luna* at the Edinburgh Cup - photo Fiona Brown

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ENTRY FORM

(Closing date for entries 6th March)

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The 2008 Easter Trophy	- Entry fee	£60
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I agree to be bound by the terms of the Notice of Race and any other rules that govern this event. In particular, have read items 20 and 21 of the Notice of Race and confirm that I agree to their provisions and that my boat will conform to their requirements throughout the event.

Signed.....

Dated.....

Please send the completed Entry Form with a cheque made payable to The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, The Quay, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8AX.
or Make payment by debiting credit/debit card:

Name on Card.....Card No:.....
Expiry Date:Verification Code:.....

Cardholder Signature:.....



FLEET REPORTS

Sailing on the Medway this year has been almost a season of two halves, the first being wet and windy while latterly, we have had quiet conditions which led to the cancellation of most of the MAD w/e and one other race. However, there has been some excellent racing throughout the fleet. The tides this year have also allowed us to have a number of high water courses in the Otterham and Yantlet channels. This can give wide expanses of water and near tideless conditions. We have also had high turnout of the fleet with up to 17 boats on a number of occasions and averaging 12 over the year. It has been a great pleasure to see our oldest and only wooden Dragon reappear. *Royalist*, a Pedersen Thuesen boat, was the British entry for the 1972 Munich Olympics. She has had a successful career on the Medway in the hands of Roger and Jo Dawe but was starting to show signs of *anno domini*. Roger took the step to rebuild her using the expert local boat builder Ray King. She was relaunched recently with new decks and a much new woodwork generally and looks magnificent. While her rig is now right up to date, Roger has not let modernity get too far and she still has two pairs of winches although quite what they are for is unclear.

The series winners for the year are Julian and Clare Sowry in *Scimitar* who have had a very consistent season with Len second and the Coltarts in *Valkyrie* third. The Medway season ends on the last w/e of October and in mid November, we are off for our annual fleet cycle ride along the shores of the Swale for a spot of bird watching and probably more importantly, a pub lunch.

Stewart Coltart
Medway Fleet Captain

SOLENT

THE SEASON STARTED with the Spring Series on April 28th, with nice gentle breezes and sunshine – prompting many predictions of a warm summer (including the Met Office predicting the hottest summer ever). The usual stalwarts were joined by Tim Blackwell, who had purchased *Virago*, and Tony Singer, with his beautiful wooden Lallow Dragon *Cavalier*. Tim got off to a pretty impressive start by winning his second ever race in a Dragon. Unfortunately the weather was lulling us into a false sense of security,

as was soon shown when racing was lost on the first Red Funnel weekend; preparing for the summer already. The Spring Series was eventually won by *Njord*.

The Mid-Season series kicked off on June 2nd with Eric Williams stamping his authority early by winning the first race. But, unfortunately that was the only race that Eric turned out for in this particular series. *Fuzzy Duck VI* also showed good form early on with a couple of firsts, but failed to complete enough races to capitalise on this. This left *Caramba* and *Njord* to fight over the spoils, with a rapidly improving *Supremacy* joining in as well, although she could never fully recover from some shocking early results.

Racing stopped for several weekends as the fleet held a 'Boat Camp' weekend to try and encourage more people into sailing Dragons. The Boat Camp was a great success with over 30 participants, some of whom have continued crewing through the rest of the season. The following weekend was the Round the Island Race and then the next two weekends encompassed Weymouth. Once the fleet returned to club racing, on the weekend of July, 14th, *Caramba* triumphed in the series and *Supremacy* learnt not to move the mast at the beginning of the season (unless they want to give everyone else a head start again).

The Summer Series started the following weekend, interrupted by Cowes Week followed by the Jubilee

Regatta, and finishing the weekend of September 8th. *Supremacy* finally shook off her most problems and won this series.

Cowes Week was a window of fine weather, during an otherwise foul summer. The disappointingly small fleet had great close racing enjoyed by the four visitors: *Blue Skies*, *Ganymede*, *Rumours*, and *Valanga*. David Palmer built on his success at the Edinburgh Cup and won the week. Cowes Week is won by a combination of boat speed, 'yottigation', and sheer endurance. Rumour has it that the visitors enjoyed themselves so much that we should see three more in 2008.

The Jubilee Regatta is a four-race mini series raced for on the weekend following Cowes Week. The weather had returned to form with strong winds and lots of rain. The Baileys, in their newly launched *Aimee*, managed to win this series convincingly.

The beginning of Autumn Series also heralded the beginning of summer weather, where some of the most beautiful days sailing were enjoyed. Unfortunately numbers were down because of the exodus to the South of France, but the racing was keen all the same. *Njord* managed to overcome the challenge from the rejuvenated *Supremacy* to win the series.

Throughout the season, on six selected weekends, the fleet head over to the Bramble Bank for two daily Windward/Leeward races. This series is sponsored by Red Funnel, and is a chance to participate in regatta-style



GBR 708 Len Jones' *Rumours*, third at the Edinburgh Cup and third at the Worlds

races, rather than the normal round the cans-style. This series was won by *Njord*, with *Supremacy* in second, and *Kedron 3* in third.

The AGM and Prize Giving were held the weekend October 21st. Gavia Wilkinson-Cox stepped down as Class Captain, having led the Solent fleet through a very busy period, and Ben Hancock was elected to replace her. The prize-giving dinner became a 'Rugby World Cup Final and Prize Giving Dinner', and after the disappointment of the Rugby, *Njord* was presented with the Class Championship, with *Jerboa* winning the SCRA Medal.

Owen Pay

SOUTH WEST

WITH THE COLLAPSE of the Torbay fleet, and the selling of the last resident Dragon in the port, it was decided to rename the Fleet as the South West Fleet, and include the Falmouth Fleet as well. The hope was that we could get the boats to do more than their local races.

The season has shown some promise, with five boats coming to the line for the Dartmouth Royal Regatta, which was won by *Dragonfly* (R.Jobson) taking bullets in all but one of the races.

Falmouth Week was a bit thin on the



GBR653 *Njord*, Owen Pay, won The Solent Fleet championship
- photo Hamo Thornycroft

ground, with only four boats competing, and this was won conclusively by *Ducru* GBR686 (C. Hunt), scoring straight wins.

It is clear that if Dragons are to remain a viable class in the West Country, then we, as owners must encourage others to join us. With this in mind, the Committee has awarded the Edinburgh Cup to the Royal Western in 2008, and to the Royal Cornwall in 2009. The success of these events is very much dependent on all of the SW

fleet competing. I will help transporting boats if necessary, but PLEASE do your very best to compete, or if necessary, lend your boat to somebody.

I apologise for a short report from the SouthWest, but I have only sailed *Moonbeam* twice this year and that was only to check out the new rig!

2008 can and will be better for all of us. Good varnishing
David Jephcott

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EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

The 2007 East Coast Dragon Championship took place at Medway Yacht Club over the May Bank Holiday weekend. Thirty-one Dragons competed - 16 local Medway boats and 15 visitors from Burnham, Lowestoft, Aldeburgh, Cowes and one foreigner from Belgium. Over the three days five races were sailed in challenging and changeable conditions.

The East Coast Dragon Champion and winner of the Silver Salver for 2007 was British Dragon Association Chairman Rob Campbell from Burnham in *Quicksilver III*, crewed by Matt Walker and Marc Ellis. Local sailor Len Jones in *Rumours* crewed by Philip Catmur and Jamie Lee took second position. The decision was very close with both crews on the same points and Rob winning on count back. Fleet newcomer Quentin Strauss was third, crewed by Kasper Harsberg and Ben Gray. Particular credit should go to Tony Singer in *Cavalier*, a beautiful wooden cold-moulded Lallo Dragon recently renovated by Petticrows, who finished fourth overall. Tony had not helmed until this year and crewed by Martin Payne and Jo Richardson he showed great élan in obtaining such a good set of results, including two third places. A particular cheer was given at the prize giving to Wendy Howland, who won the best helmswoman prize sailing *Whistle*.

On the first day the wind was a light ENE; the first start was a general recall but following the use of the Z flag the subsequent start was uneventful. Two good races were sailed in light airs. The co-incidence of the Thames Barge Race led to a wonderful spectacle and a few close shaves - the barges travel with surprising speed and appear not to

recognise the sacrosanct 'port-starboard' rule. The result of these races were a port of things to come with Rob Campbell winning the first race, Quentin Strauss winning the second and Len Jones second and third.

On the second day the weather was at its most capricious being cyclonic variable with heavy intermittent rain. Setting a course was a challenge for the Race Officer Robin Ridsdell-Smith with an ebbing tide and a SE wind direction but the race started on time. The third race was won by Stewart Coltart in *Valkyrie* holding off a determined challenge from Patrick Gifford in *Nereid*. The race was remarkable for the vagaries of the wind leading to spinnakers being set on the windward as well as the downwind leg and the passage of a ship splitting the fleet. In the fourth race the wind had strengthened to seven knots. After a general recall, the Z flag was flown leading to seven boats being penalised by a 20 per cent place penalty. While this dealt a heavy penalty for boats over the line, it was preferable to being sent home with a black flag. Rob Campbell came through to win his second race with Len Jones in second place.

On the Monday the weather was even worse, blowing 20-25 knots with low cloud, heavy drizzle and a poor forecast. The starting line was set downriver in Kethole Reach where there was plenty of sea room. Conditions deterred many competitors and 11 boats took to the start line. The heavy-weight crews had an advantage and Quentin Strauss won, with Len Jones second. Only half the fleet ventured their spinnakers giving entertaining downhill legs - Jones had a spectacular broach on the second run

and finished with a shredded spinnaker. Nick Jenkins in *Chouette* limped over the line awash but triumphant.

The mud on the Medway caught out a few boats with Edwin Hannant in *Gandalf* running aground during one of the races (despite local knowledge); Edouard Wylleman from Belgium, the only foreign competitor, also parked his boat C4 between races.

Off the water on Saturday night a whole hog roast was demolished by the fleet at Jaspar Wright's barn and on Sunday a formal championship dinner took place in the Medway YC, preceded by a Champagne reception sponsored by Petticrows - Stavros rounded off the evening in his usual irrepressible form.

The event was very generously sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management, Petticrows, MDL Marinas and Craftinsure, which allowed us to present generous prizes to competitors and keep down the cost of the event.
Stewart and Catriona Coltart

OVERALL RESULTS: 1st *Quicksilver III* GBR 688 (Rob Campbell/Marc Ellis/Matt Walker) RCYC; 2nd *Rumours* GBR708 (Len Jones/Philip Catmur/Jamie Lea) MYC; 3rd *Gill* GBR723 (Quentin Strauss/TBC) MYC; 4th *Cavalier* GBR718 (Tony Singer/Martin Payne/TBC) RYS; 5th *Valkyrie* GBR707 (Stewart Coltart/Catriona Coltart/Tim Townsend) MYC; 6th *Frank* GBR729 (Tim Taviner/Nicola MacLennan/Thomas Wilton) RCYC; 7th *Scimitar* GBR730 (Julian Sowry/Claire Sowry) MYC; 8th *Avalanche* GBR722 (Mark Wade/Amanda Wade/John Davies) RCYC; 9th *Scorpio* GBR586 (Ian Gray/Keith Gray/Rene Nel) RCYC; 10th *Esoteric* GBR696 (Robert Sheppard/Don McMillan/Simon Cash) MYC; 11th *Nereid* GBR717 (Patrick Gifford/Michael Gifford/Jaud Bertrand) AYC; 12th *Njord* GBR653 (Owen Pay/Josie Pay/Mike Gagg) ISC; 13th *Spindrift* GBR712 (Gary Harrison/Tom Harrison/Zoe Rogers) RCYC; 14th *Chouette* GBR677 (Nick Jenkins/David Dale/TBC) MYC; 15th *Leah* GBR711 (Colin Woodcock/TBC) RCYC; 16th *Luna* GBR646 (Hilary Gallo/Ina Gallo/S Cox) MYC; 17th *Kulling* GBR709 (Chris Dicker/Selina Dicker/Joanna Webster) RYS; 18th *Alcyone* GBR710 (Simon Wynn/Chris Brealy/BrianMcKenzie) MYC; 19th *C4* BEL66 (Edouard Wylleman/Phil Taylor/Alison Dart) RNSYC; 20th *Hand of Fortune* GBR684 (Mike Holmes/Alex Burnett/TBC) RCYC; 21st *BBC* GBR683 (Philip Clarabut/Bruce Boyd/Peter Booth) MYC; 22nd *Gandalf* GBR726 (Edwin Hannant/TBC) MYC; 23rd *Exult* GBR721 (Richard Jones/Luc Tricard/H Shawayer) MYC; 24th *Water Rat* GBR728 (Jono Ratnage/Jeremy Field/Max) RCYC; 25th *Black Mark* GBR620 (Mark Rowntree/David Black/Bruce Noble) MYC; 26th *Gilane* GBR699 (Peter Stokes/Helen Stokes/Nick Stokes) RNSYC; 27th *Dax* GBR645 (Mike Lutener/James Lutener/Nick Stewart) MYC; 28th *Shark* GBR582 (David Fry/Kelly Tolhurst/Richard Allardyce) MYC; 29th *Ulysses* GBR634 (John Shilling/TBC) MYC; 30th *Whistle* GBR560 (Wendy Howland/Nicky Strauss/Gill White) MYC; 31st *Gadabout* GBR675 (Geoff/Pat Doug/Johnstone/Alan Nicholas) MYC.

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For more on North Dragon Sails Contact your local North Sails agent.

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