



Dragon News

British Dragon Association
2010





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*As at 30th September, 2009



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Cover Picture: Gannador's crew enjoying Falmouth – Photo: Fiona Brown



Your Chairman at The Dinghy Show

Chairman's Report

It is amazing how quickly two years pass. I had such great plans about what I wanted to achieve, but at times have been too busy dealing with the day-to-day issues to implement all my grand plans. But, maybe that is a good thing?

First I would like to thank Patrick Gifford, Nick Hyde, and Tim Wilkes for their continuous support. Patrick will be an excellent Chairman; I have really appreciated his advice and experience over the last two years; I would have had a much bumpier ride with out his guidance. Tim is very enthusiastic and has many new ideas about how to promote the class. Nick has been a steady hand on the finances and I have had no concerns in that area; which is unusual and very important.

Our relationship with Aberdeen Asset Management has strengthened and they sponsored the BDA through 2009. This extra money has allowed the BDA to help fund our regional regattas during a difficult economic period when sponsorship from other sources has been virtually impossible to obtain.

In February a Dragon was seen at the Dinghy Show for the first time. This is not as mad as it seems because the Squib class were also there as well as the Hunter 707. The new Dragon, generously supplied by Petticrows, caused a big stir and there was a lot of interest. Many of the people who admired the boat were not aware that Dragon's were raced so competitively, this will "plant a seed" in current dinghy sailors who may look to move up in the near future. We will be at the Dinghy Show again in 2010.

As to the sailing: well it was a busy year with three regional Championships as well the Edinburgh Cup. Burnham kicked off with a fantastically well run East-Coasts with stunning weather. There were five visitors supplementing the substantial Burnham fleet, resulting in twenty entries. Scorpio was the popular victor with four top three places.

Then followed the heat wave, which actually turned out to be the last of the Summer of 2009. At the tail end of this heat wave the fleet converged on the ever-popular venue of Falmouth, for the South-Western Championships and the Edinburgh Cup; sadly the weather deteriorated but the quality of racing was excellent. The RCYC looked after us admirably, and Jonathon Money once more demonstrated what an excellent PRO he is. "Gorgeous Worgeous" dominated both events. Fortunately entry numbers were up on the previous year with 27 boats competing.

This year also saw the introduction of The Corinthian Cup; which is presented to the first boat overall in the Edinburgh Cup whose entire crew are ISAF Category One. Quicksilver IV was the winner of The Corinthian Cup in 2009. This initiative has proved very popular, after some initial concerns, and will be extended to the regional Championships in 2010.

The South Coasts were held in Cowes in quite extreme conditions at both ends of the wind spectrum. "Rumours" was the victor over the small, but very competitive fleet of 11 boats.

The newly resurrected Abersoch fleet has gone from strength to strength, and will host the Northern Area Championships in July 2010. The Abersoch fleet will also host the Edinburgh Cup in 2011, which should boost this fledgling fleet further. I for one am looking forward to participating in Dragon events in North Wales once more.

At eighty years old the Dragon is the grand old lady of the international keelboat classes. We have seen off challenges from other keelboats successfully in the past; but now we are competing with more professional outfits with commercial marketing budgets and access to professional marketing services. We have to up our game, and we have many members who are top-flight sales and marketing professionals in their private life. Some of these members are now part of the marketing committee, which will develop a marketing strategy to guide the Officers on best use of our resources.

Owen Pay

BDA Events

Date	Event	Location
29 - 31 May	East Coast Championships	Medway
17 - 20 June	Northern Areas	Abersoch
27 - 29 June	South Coast Championships	Cowes
30 June - 3 July	Edinburgh Cup	Cowes

Other Events

Date	Event	Location
2 - 5 April	Burnham Easter Regatta	Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex
8 July	Medway Regatta	Medway
22 - 25 July	Irish Championships	Belfast Lough
31 July - 7th August	Cowes Week	Cowes, Isle of Wight
14 - 15 August	Yarmouth Regatta	Yarmouth, Isle of Wight
22 - 17 August	Aldeburgh Week	Aldeburgh, Suffolk
28 August - 4 September	Burnham Week	Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex

South Western Championship

Twenty-four crews assembled at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Falmouth for the Dragon South Western Championship sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management, from 5-7 July 2009. This warm up event for the Edinburgh Cup offered three days of challenging and closely fought sailing and gave the BDA an opportunity to experiment with multiple short course windward leeward races instead of the more traditional single long race per day format.

Etchells and Melges 24 World Champion Bill Hardesty from San Diego, USA, was taking part in his first ever Dragon regatta, but he didn't let that hold him back. Helming GBR723 Gorgeous Worgeous, crewed by owner Quentin Strauss and Nigel Young, Hardesty opened the regatta somewhat contentiously. He finished race one in first place, but was subsequently disqualified over a port/starboard infringement. This proved to be a minor blip, and in race two he took third, before going on to win the remaining



With winds ranging from the high teens to over thirty knots it was to be a heavy air regatta. The opening four-race day was sailed in 20-25 knots from the southwest with regular rainsqualls. Day two brought even stronger southwesterly winds with a steady 25-28 knots, squalls of over 30 knots, more rain and a broken rig for the crew of GBR740 Pageboy X. Having completed two races the Race Committee wisely elected to send the crews in for the day as conditions worsened. Fortunately the wind abated and the sun came out for the last day enabling the fleet to enjoy two final races in 16-20 knots from the north.

six races of the series. As a result he found himself as the only boat to fly the special blue "Aberdeen" spinnaker, which is flown daily by the event leader. Speaking after racing Bill Hardesty commented "For me it's been nice to meet a new group - classes like this can be very tight but the Dragon group is really open and welcoming."

Although Hardesty dominated the podium there were two other race winners in the series. Race one ultimately went to American Ted Sawyer, crewed by Martin "Stavros" Payne and Will Willett aboard USA310 Clairvoyant. For



Sawyer this victory was particularly sweet, as he had celebrated his 78th birthday just the previous day, making him the oldest competitor racing. The other win went to Rob Campbell's GBR743 Quicksilver, crewed by John Torrance and Matt Walker, in race two.

Rob Campbell put together a consistent series with his worst result being a ninth in race four. Going into the final race the battle for second and third was between Campbell and Andrew Craig, sailing IRL192 Chimaera with Pedro Andrade and Peter Bowring/Brian Matthews, who had also delivered a very consistent performance to lie in second, just ahead of Campbell, going into the final day.

Campbell went all out in the final race to cross the finish second and glancing anxiously over his shoulder to see if he had enough separation to claim the runner up position. Sadly Craig was just too close in fourth and beat Campbell by a single point overall.

Speaking after racing Craig was very impressed with both the venue and Hardesty's blistering boat speed. "I was here for the Edinburgh Cup in 2001 and Falmouth is a fabulous place to sail, nice open water, not too much tide and a very nice yacht club. We've had eight short races in strong winds, the Race Officer has done a very good job turning the races around quickly and making very good, fair racecourses. Bill had impressive speed and has to be a strong favourite for the Edinburgh Cup, especially if the wind stays strong."

The battle for fourth and fifth was also tight between Len Jones from the Medway, sailing GBR708 Rumours with Jamie Lea and Jeremy Jordan; and Julia Bailey, sailing GBR720 Aimee with husband Graham Bailey and David Heritage. Sadly gear failure forced Bailey to retire from race six which ultimately proved to be the decisive moment in the regatta for her and when Jones beat her in both races on the final day he gained a two point advantage and fourth place overall.

Fiona Brown

Dragon South Western Championship Top Ten Results

1st Gorgeous Worgeous GBR 72	- 93
Bill Hardesty, Quentin Stauss, Nigel Young	
2nd Chimaera IRL 192	- 19
Andrew Craig, Peter Bowring/Brian Matthews, Pedro Andrade	
3rd Quicksilver IV GBR 743	- 20
Rob Campbell, John Torrance, Matt Walker	
4th Rumours GBR 708	- 46
Len Jones, Jamie Lea, Jeremy Jordan	
5th Aimee GBR 720	- 48
Julia Bailey, Graham Bailey, David Heritage	
6th Clairvoyant USA 310	- 50
Edward Sawyer, Martin Payne, Will Willett	
7th Scimitar GBR 730	- 61
Julian Sowry, Claire Sowry, Hilary Gallow	
8th Jerboa GBR 716	- 66
Gavia Wilkinson-Cox, Mark Hart, Mark Daly	
9th Flawless GBR 741	- 66
Chris Hunt, John Wilson, Tim Cunliffe	
10th Ganador GBR 704	- 85
Martin Makey, Tom Makey, Rowena Jones	

Edinburgh Cup 2009

– Falmouth

Following hard on the heels of the Southwestern Championship, the 2009 Edinburgh Cup also sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management and hosted by the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, Falmouth, from 8-11 July, brought a welcome change of conditions from near gales to light to moderate winds. The event opened with a delightful Welcome Reception and Dinner, incorporating the prize giving for the Southwestern Championship. held at the Royal Cornwall's harbour side clubhouse.

The opening day's racing in 12-18 knots with big shifts gave the teams plenty to think about and Bill Hardesty, helming GBR723 Gorgeous Worgeous, crewed by owner Quentin Strauss and Nigel Young, followed his South-Westerns victory with a win in the first race as Medway's Len Jones, sailing GBR708 Rumours with Jamie Lea and Jeremy Jordan, took second and Julia Bailey of Cowes, sailing GBR720 Aimee with husband Graham Bailey and David Heritage, third. In the second race Andrew Craig, sailing IRL192 Chimaera with Pedro Andrade and Brian Matthew, who had finished sixth in the opener, relished the change of conditions to win from Gavia Wilkinson-Cox of

Cowes, sailing GBR716 Jerboa with Mark Hart and Mark Daley, with Rob Campbell helming GBR743 Quicksilver, crewed by John Torrance and Matt Walker, third.

Day two's light northerly winds were if anything even more shifty and the ever wily Gavia Wilkinson-Cox took race three with Tim Tavinor of Burnham, sailing GBR744 Biff with Thomas and Nicola Wilton, in second and Andrew Craig third. In race four Rob Campbell and Bill Hardesty fought for the lead all the way around the course with Campbell eventually taking victory from Hardesty in the closing moments. Third place went to the family team of Clive, Graeme, and Rory Page sailing GBR740 Pageboy X. In the overall standings this gave Rob Campbell the lead by one point, Bill Hardesty and Andrew Craig both counted 19 points overall with Hardesty taking second on count back while Len Jones lay in fourth.

In recognition of day three's extremely light and variably south westerly the Race Officer wisely decided to bring the course inshore and reduce the leg length. After three general recalls the fleet finally got underway for a



Perhaps the left side pays



Close action on the run

spectacularly close race. Gavia Wilkinson-Cox took her second win of the regatta with Andrew Craig a close second, American Ted Sawyer, sailing USA310 Clairvoyant with Will Willett and the one and only Stavros, third and Bill Hardesty fourth. With the discard now in play Andrew Craig reclaimed the overall lead by two points from Bill Hardesty with Rob Campbell third and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox fourth.

That evening competitors and their guests enjoyed a wonderful Gala Dinner celebrating not only the Edinburgh Cup but also the 80th Anniversary of the Dragon Class. Joining the assembled company were a number of special guests including Mike & Diana Williamson whose involvement with the Dragon Class spans more than 50 years. The dinner was held at spectacular Trebah Gardens on the Helford River. Guests were transported to the venue by traditional ferryboat and enjoyed a champagne reception overlooking the gardens followed by a delicious dinner featuring local produce before returning to Falmouth by historic coach.

Going into the final race next morning Craig led the regatta on 12 points with Hardesty two points behind. Campbell was third overall on 18 points, and Wilkinson-Cox was just one point behind him in fourth. With 12-15 knots from the south-south-west, rain, very low visibility and strong winds forecast PRO Jonathan Money wisely opted to hold the final race in the relative shelter of Carrick Roads.

The fleet got away at the first attempt with Craig and Hardesty opting for the committee boat end and Wilkinson-Cox and Campbell vying for the pin, a battle that Wilkinson-Cox won for the second day running. Craig and Wilkinson-Cox got the slightly better starts and as they set up off the beat it was clear that neither side was particularly favoured.

Having crossed tacks with Craig several times on the beat Hardesty approached the first mark on the starboard lay line and Craig tacked in under his lee bow. It was a gutsy call and initially looked to be a winning move despite a slightly fumbled tack, but then Julia Bailey, sailing GBR720





Magic drives upwind

Aimee with husband Graham Bailey and David Heritage, and Thorkild Junker, sailing GBR748 Cool Runnings with Jochem Visser and Tom Whitburn, came in from the port lay line ahead of them. Keen not to interfere with the battle for the lead Bailey deliberately over stood to give room but Thorkild got his line spot on and tacked right on Craig's face.

As first Junker then Bailey and Hardesty rounded cleanly Craig desperately struggled to make the mark ending up almost head to wind. For a few seconds it looked as if he might just get away with it, but as more and more boats sailed over the top of him he lost momentum, the current took hold and he slid inexorably into the mark. Ahead Hardesty's team were eagle eyed and as the contact came Nigel Young hailed to confirm that they had seen the infringement and were looking for turns.

Craig's drama rapidly had a knock on effect and as more and more boats ran into the logjam, both Wilkinson-Cox and Campbell were forced to abandon their original mark approaches and find alternatively slots back down the fleet. Wilkinson-Cox finally rounded in twelfth rather than the fifth she had looked good for and Campbell suffered even more failing to find a slot in the starboard tackers and eventually rounding in the twenties. By the time Craig had taken his penalty he was deep into the fleet too.

For Hardesty it was now just a matter of sailing conservatively and on the first run he did an excellent job to slip past Bailey and Junker and into the lead, which he then held until the finish with Bailey second, Junker third and Julian Sowry, sailing GBR730 Scimitar with wife Claire

Sowry and Hilary Gallo, fourth. Wilkinson-Cox briefly entertained hopes of a second place overall, but although she was able to claw back from twelfth to fifth it wasn't enough as Craig was also grinding his way back up the fleet eventually crossing the line in ninth.

Ultimately it was Bill Hardesty who claimed the historic Edinburgh Cup trophy with Andrew Craig second overall and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox filling the third podium slot.

After the prize giving Bill Hardesty said, "It's been a great week and sailing with Nigel and Quentin has been a lot of fun. With a new team it usually takes a few days and we were lucky and were able to have good speed in the heavy winds of the warm up South Westerns. But as the winds got lighter for the Edinburgh Cup we were equal with everybody else and we had to sail well and we were just on par until today's race so it was close."



Bill's very happy owner Quentin Strauss commented: "We're delighted with the outcome of the regatta, we're dead chuffed to have been successful in the end. It was very tight sailing with a group of very talented sailors throughout. The weather conditions were variable, quite challenging and difficult at times making it a far from easy regatta to figure out the right ways to go. The race management was excellent and the team here has done an outstanding job."

Third placed Gavia Wilkinson-Cox was delighted to be the top British helm at the event for the second year running. "We're thrilled to bits to have got a third and my two Marks [Hart and Daly] did a fantastic job. We were third last year and we're third this year and we've retained our position."

This year, for the first time, the Edinburgh Cup featured a Corinthian Division for all amateur crews that hold ISAF Sailor Classification 1. IDA Chairman Rob Campbell, who finished fourth, was the delighted winner of the new Corinthian Trophy. Second Corinthian place went to Mark and Mandy Wade in GBR722 Avalanche, crewed by Duncan Grindley with Clive Page in Third.

Fiona Brown



Dragon Edinburgh Cup 2009 Overall Top Ten

1st Gorgeous Worgeous GBR 723	15
Bill Hardesty, Quentin Strauss, Nigel Young	
2nd Chimaera IRL 192	21
Andrew Craig, Pedro Andrade, Brian Matthew	
3rd Jerboa GBR 716	24
Gavia Wilkinson-Cox, Mark Hart, Mark Daly	
4th Quicksilver IV GBR 743	31
Rob Campbell, John Torrance, Matt Walker	
5th Rumours GBR 708	32
Len Jones, Jamie Lea, Jeremy Jordan	

6th Biff GBR 744	34
Tim Taviner, Thomas, Nicola Wilton	
7th Cool Runnings GBR 748	39
Thorkild Junker, Jochem Visser, Tom Whitburn	
8th Aimee GBR 720	44
Julia Bailey, Graham Bailey, David Heritage	
9th Clairvoyant USA 310	49
Edward Sawyer, Martyn Payne, William Willett	
10th Avalanche GBR 722	49
Mark Wade, Mandy Wade, Duncan Grindley	



Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club

Irish Dragon

Championships

22nd - 25th July 2010

Cultra, Co. Down

Provisional Programme 8 Races

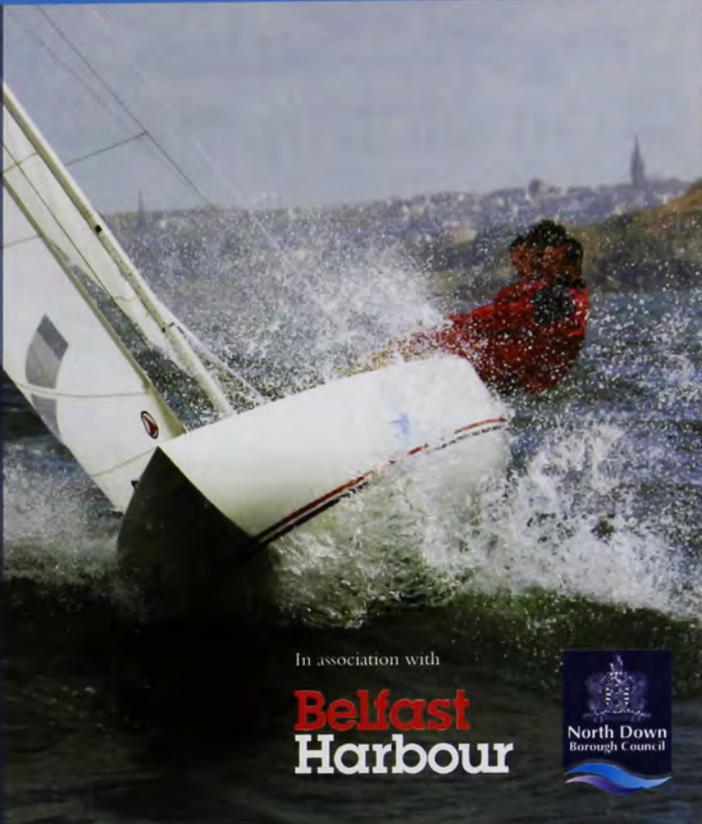
2 Races - Thursday 22nd July

3 Races - Friday 23rd July

2 Races - Saturday 24th July

1 Race - Sunday 25th July

*A relaxed and enjoyable social programme
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IRISH DRAGON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2010

Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club is located on the Southern Shores of Belfast Lough.

Belfast Lough is an open Lough on the east coast of Ireland and provides an excellent venue for Championship Racing with an extensive race area and minimal tidal influence.

Royal North is famous for its warm welcome and hospitality and has a heritage with Dragons dating back to the 1930's. The Club has previously hosted the Edinburgh Cup, Irish Championships and British Northern Area Championships.

THE RACING

The Irish Dragon fleet comprises boats from Dublin Bay, Kinsale and Glandore and with 'Kin' being the main Dragon racing from Royal North.

A high standard of racing is enjoyed within Ireland with many Irish competitors regularly competing internationally.

We expect a high turnout of the Irish fleet for the 2010 Irish Championship at Royal North of Ireland and would welcome out International friends to come and visit us in our home waters and enjoy a competitive and most enjoyable 4 days racing.

For further details visit website www.rniyc.org or contact:

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Dragon South Coast Championship 2009

The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club Cowes played host to the Dragon South Coast Championship supported by Aberdeen Asset Management, from 24-26 July.

The regatta opened in south-westerly winds of 20-25 knots with gusts up towards 30 knots and the first day's single race was to be a good indicator of things to come as Len Jones of the Medway, sailing GBR708 Rumours with Jamie Lea and Philip Catmore went at it hammer and tongs against Solent regulars Julia Bailey, sailing GBR720 Aimee

guests of their sponsor Aberdeen Asset Management joined them.

Sunday's final day saw the winds back up into the high teens with gusts into the 20s, again from the southwest and again with plenty of shifts and velocity variations. From the start of race three Cullen took the lead from Bailey and going into the final beat it looked like he had the race in the bag. Sadly on the last leg he was torn between keeping a loose cover on the chasing pack and facing down Bailey



Rumours - the winning boat

with Pedro Andrade, Steve Richardson and Joe Bailey; Owen Pay, sailing GBR653 Njord with wife Josy Roberts Pay and Dave Ross; and Eric Williams, sailing GBR682 Ecstatic with Duncan Grindley and Joanna Richardson. After two laps the leading boats crossed the line within seconds of each other. Ultimate victor was Jones with Williams second, Bailey third and Pay fourth. After racing the teams enjoyed a welcome cocktail reception and supper at the Royal Corinthian's beautiful clubhouse.

Saturday dawned bright and sunny with a shifty south-westerly of 10-15 knots. The programme for Saturday called for only one Championship race, as the crews were also scheduled to take part in the Household Division Regatta, and this time Richard Davies, sailing his brand new GBR742 Flotation, with John Nangle and Susan Breare, joined the leading pack in what was to prove another incredibly close race. Jones took his second victory by a winning margin of 43 seconds – the biggest of the regatta by some way - as Pay and Williams fought it out for second with Pay just getting it on the line. Davies finished fourth just ahead of Bailey. Following sailing the crews repaired to the Squadron Lawn for afternoon tea before moving on to the Royal Corinthian for the Championship Dinner, where

and he made the wrong call allowing her to slip through for victory. Cullen finished second with Jones third, Williams fourth and Pay fifth.

Cullen was also looking pretty good in race four until he bore away round the first mark onto the run and there was a nasty bang as the runner gave way forcing him to pull out. Falmouth's Chris Hunt, sailing GBR741 Flawless with Mike Relling and Julian Cook, now had a clear lead on the pack and faultlessly defended his position for the remainder of the race despite frequent challenges from Jones and Williams. On the line Hunt took the laurels with Jones second, Williams third, Pay fourth and Bailey fifth.

As the fifth and final race got underway the skies darkened and the first of a series of small squally showers came through. For Jones it was now a matter of putting the icing on the cake and from the start he and his team put in a bravura performance to win the race by 24 seconds from Williams, with Bailey third and Michael Hayles, sailing GBR717 Nereid with his all family crew of wife Monique and son Nicholas, fourth.

In the overall standings Len Jones took victory by five points from Eric Williams with Julia Bailey third, Owen Pay fourth and Mike Hayles fifth. At the prize giving a delighted Len Jones stepped forward to collect the Brigadier Henson Trophy for the South Coast Championship for the second time, having previously won it in 2006.

Speaking at the prize giving Len Jones said, "We've had a very nice weekend, it's been well organised and the courses were very good and fair. The competition has been great too. Eric is extremely fast downwind and he knows the Solent like the back of his hand so you can never write him off. Obviously Julia Bailey is a fantastic sailor who also knows the waters very well and Owen Pay was getting better and better as the weekend went on. What surprised me was how relaxed the weekend was – it's all been very gentlemanly and I don't think there's been one protest all weekend although the racing was very close indeed."

"The shore-side has also been great with wonderful parties at the Corinthian and it was lovely to go for tea on the Squadron Lawn on Saturday too. I wasn't planning on doing this event, but my wife Amanda persuaded me because the family like it here so much and I'm really glad we came."

Alongside the main prizes there was also a special presentation for the top performance by a Classic Dragon, which went to Matthew Lingley sailing GBR207 Kestrel with Jack Gifford and Gemma Knill.

Fiona Brown

Dragon South Coast Championship Top Five Overall

1 GBR 708 Rumours	5
Len Jones, Jamie Lea, Philip Catmore	
2 GBR 682 Ecstatic	10
Eric Williams, Duncan Grindley, Joanna Richardson	
3 GBR 720 Aimee	12
Julia Bailey, Graham Bailey, David Heritage	
4 GBR 653 Njord	15
Owen Pay, Josy Roberts-Pay, Dave Ross	
5 GBR 717 Nereid	23
Michael, Monique & Nicholas Hayles	

Classic Dragons Update

For some time now the BDA has been working on producing a register of the Classic, wooden carvel-planked, Dragons that are, or have been on the British register. The early results of this exercise have been on the website for some time but a much more comprehensive set of data has now been posted there. In order to compile this I have relied on work done previously by Peter Wilson, Mike Pollett, Pat Hobbs and Tim Wilkes as well as the records of the BDA and registers of classic Dragons from Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the US. There are still a number of gaps and there is more data that I already have which needs to be put into the right format. I intend to do that over time but felt that it was preferable to produce a record that is reasonably full in a timely way.

It would be excellent if all those who have an interest in these boats looked at the database to see whether it reminds them of any details that have not been picked up. If it does please let me know. The greatest mystery is where all these boats now are. The numbers go up to 465 and there have been over 400 actual boats with a British number at some point in time. Even allowing for exports and the ravages of time it is reasonable to suppose that there might be at least 150 remaining in Britain. Dragons are, after all, well-built boats; which were a luxury item when new. In fact there are only a maximum of about 45 known to the BDA so there should be perhaps another 100 in barns somewhere in the country. Let's hope that they become the subject of projects to bring them back to their former racing level, or at least to provide extremely elegant day sailing. Among them are several Pedersen and Thuesen boats such as Ratpack, Eva, Maj-Britt and Blue Haze have proved capable of winning major international events in the recent past. They were so well built that there is no reason why the others, which have been "lost", should not be capable of the same speed.

Do get in touch. It would be very nice to breathe contemporary life into a register much of which threatens to become ancient history.

Patrick Gifford

BDA Classic Championship

Combines with Cowes Classics Week – 18- 23rd July

This year the British Dragon Association is holding the Classic Championship during Cowes Classics Week – The Metre & Classic Keelboat Regatta.

Classic Week will be held two weeks after the Edinburgh Cup, and two weeks before Cowes Week, followed by Yarmouth Regatta, so travellers to the Isle of Wight can take advantage of several regattas on the island, with recovery time between them!

The Classics Week Regatta is now in its third year and in association with the 9th British Classic Yacht Club Panerai and has already become firmly established and continues to grow in size and stature. Some 180 boats are expected this year, including the classic super yachts – such as the big metre boats and the new replica of Britannia – as well as a special event for the Square Metre (German Rule) boats that became the Windfall yachts.

The regatta will consist of committee boat starts and at least three separate race tracks to keep each fleet apart and in clear water for fairer racing. There will be a mix of laid courses and round the buoys to provide variety, some non-series (fun) racing to add to the regatta ethos and a full. A full social calendar will be on offer so participants can share their passion for classic sailing classes.

The regatta is open to all Dragons – as a classic design, but only boats defined as classics (built prior to 1973) will be eligible for the Classic Dragon Championship. Further details and NOR will be distributed to class members via the local fleets, and will be available on the BDA website www.britishdragons.org.uk

Further details of the classic regatta can be found on www.cowesclassicsweek.org.uk.

There is lots of information about last year's event and details of the 2010 event will be posted as plans are firmed up.

For more information about the Classic Dragon Championship contact:

Richard Cullen rcullen@wightwireless.com



2010

The Metre &
Classic Keelboat
Regatta

Cowes Classics Week

BDA Northern Areas – 2010

Hosted by Abersoch's South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club
Friday 18th – Sunday 20th June



Sponsored by:



SCYC's enjoys a cliffside location, capturing a stunning view over-looking Tremadog Bay with the Snowdonia National Park as a backdrop – simply breath taking! The bay offers a race area that is sheltered, near tideless, and free from commercial shipping – a popular choice for UK based class associations who invite SCYC to host their national and regional regattas.

SCYC's aim is to attract as many visiting Dragons as possible, and to host a very memorable regatta both waterside and shore side.

So what's the unique attraction? We get the opportunity to:

- Share this very special sailing location,
- Invite all comers from England's east coast and south coast to compete against the re-established Abersoch *Welsh Dragon* fleet, consisting of at least ten boats.
- Add an additional spice to the mix... we very much hope to attract from Ireland a strong representation from our Celtic cousins.

Thanks to the geographical location of Abersoch, encouraging sporting rivalry between the Welsh, Irish and English nations has always been the tradition of our club – the result is always a heady mix of waterside competition, and shoreside camaraderie at the bar.

The Northern Championship regatta has been diarised in such a way as to enable the Irish contingent planning to attend The Edinburgh Cup at the end of the month to sharpen their skills in our bay, then leave their trailerised boats secure in Hafan Pwllheli's compound, ready for transport to the south coast.



South Caernarfonshire Yacht Club Abersoch Dragon Fleet



2010 Season Preview

Developing The Fleet Through 2010

The revived Abersoch fleet can now celebrate it's first birthday. The first three boats were acquired by 1st Jan 2009, this number rose to six by Easter, and seven by the end of the first season.

Growth of the fleet is still a top priority. The year end has kept us bang on track with three further Dragons acquired by early January, bringing the total fleet number to ten. We now have every chance of hitting the target of twelve Dragons by Easter. Our end goal is eighteen Dragons, if we hit this number we'll have cracked it!

To ensure the fleet expansion retains momentum we have three angles of attack;

- Continuing to adhere to the financial limit of £15k, this includes boat, trailer, rig and sails, just add water.
- Each Dragon owner/syndicate is targeted with attracting a new member to the fleet.
- We have lorry loads of fun on and off the water, people see it, and we welcome them to join the fun and be part of it – just buy a Dragon... on your own, or jointly with some friends.

Dragon Racing at Abersoch SCYC

The 2010 club racing season will closely reflect last year's successful schedule. The Dragon class racing will be every other weekend ensuring the highest possible turn out with everyone itching to sail their beautiful boats. The format is Saturday two races late afternoon followed by a

couple of beers in the bar, Sunday is a single race late morning. Once again we will also be throwing in a couple of Friday evening races, probably one in each of the months of June, July, August. In addition to this we'll have special club race events for the Dragons including for example the 1st August series - daily racing over a five/six day period.

In addition SCYC is hosting the BDA Northern's 17th to 20th June. Boats will be launched and recovered at Pwllheli Marina, racing based from Abersoch's SCYC with moorings available for all competitors. We have coordinated the date of this event with the south coast based Edinburgh Cup, encouraging the Irish fleet to join us, then securely store their Dragons in Pwllheli, (massive secure compound available), for collection and travel south to compete in the Edinburgh Cup at the end of the month.

The Wider Picture

We have our eye on the 2011 Edinburgh Cup, scheduled for hosting by Abersoch's SCYC. With 2011 in mind, this season will be focussed on developing the fleet's sailing skills,

learning how to get the best out of a Dragon in a range of wind conditions and sea states.

To get to grips with sailing Dragons competitively we have some good championship yachters within the club to help us, we are in touch with the Irish fleet, and may even call on outside support as we look to find that all illusive 'speed button'.

Racing against other Dragon fleets is also very helpful in developing a competitive edge, as we look to improve our rig tuning, sail trimming & handling, and helping expertise. The current financial squeeze will have an impact on our ability to travel, but we are aiming to get at least one or two of the Abersoch Dragons 'on the road'. Burnham Easter Regatta looks interesting diary wise, and it would be great if a couple of Abersoch Dragons could attend this year's Edinburgh Cup.

That's it – see you on the water!

Rob Riddell – Class Captain



Aldeburgh Fleet Round Up



The Aldeburgh Dragon fleet enjoyed a typical season in 2009. Competitive racing on short courses interspersed with the demands of small children and teenagers, cruising in the Adriatic, the Dragon national and international circuit, golf and of course the demands of 8-metre sailing. Rick Gillingham and Rory Bowman were under the thumb of their children, Balloo and Sarah very sensibly decided that their classic yacht in the Adriatic was magnetic, Mike Hayles and Patrick Gifford travelled around Europe, Jonathan Hunt captained his golf club and Peter Wilson, Tim Hannon and, sometimes, Rufus Gilday sailed on If. In the end seven boats took part in the season's points series and nine were seen in the Regatta, including a visit from Kestrel, which is more normally based on the South Coast. This may not sound like many but is a good result when realistically there are eight boats locally based that could race in the fleet.

The end result of the season's points was that Basilisk, sailed by either Patrick or Mike won both the personal handicap and points series. It is, after all, a considerable advantage to have two helmsmen available and even two boats so that one is always there, eagerly awaiting crew on its mooring, like a faithful Labrador. The reason for success was the simple virtue of turning up and being the only boat not to need to count a DNC in her overall result. It is, of course, also true that Basilisk has always been a fast boat, though she has now put on a bit

of middle-aged spread, which doesn't impede her much on smooth water. By the end of June Basilisk had won 5 races and finished second in one race in a 12

race series with 8 to count. This was to prove an insuperable advantage for Rory to try to overcome. Once the demands of young school age children had been dealt with he turned up and won 6 races on the trot but had to count two DNCs for the overall result. Rick Gillingham was in a similar position but with slightly worse results from the races sailed.

The position on personal handicap was different. The aim of this series is to handicap the helmsmen, though it is actually done on the boats. The result can be confusion when helmsmen and crew swap boats. Had Apache, the Tom Gibbon and Peter Cazalet combination, completed enough races she could easily have threatened Basilisk's dominance. The six races she sailed counted four wins and two seconds. Some of these were

earned by Patrick Gifford's guest appearance as helmsman for a day, aided by the very keen Will Gibbon. Rory in contrast only won three of his six straight wins once the handicap results were calculated. There is a risk that the handicapper will penalise both Basilisk and Apache next year. Patrick has argued, successfully so far, that he and Mike are, on average, no better than Rick and that Basilisk is quite a lot older than Navaho. This argument may not work much longer since the statistics are beginning to pile up against it. In Apache's case, she has been very much refurbished and there has been a change of helmsman which the handicap hasn't quite caught up with. More lead in the saddle is required.

In the other Aldeburgh season's racing, Rory won the Margaret Roney Cup round Havergate Island when only Basilisk managed to stay close to him on a 7-mile long beat against the tide. However, Basilisk won the early season handicap series and, rather improbably, the Iken race in which every upriver withy is a mark of the course and to stray out of the sometimes very narrow and twisting channel is to invite a muddy paddle.





Aldeburgh Regatta was won convincingly by Rory, in Yeah Baby. Although at different moments both Patrick in Basilisk and Rick in Navaho threatened briefly it was always going to be uphill work for them after Patrick had committed the major sin of omitting the Q mark when well in the lead in the first race and Rick the minor one of letting Rory pass him in the closing stages of the same race. Patrick struggled hard in the rest of the races but picked up penalties for rule infringements even in races in which he finished first. He did, however, have the satisfaction of winning a three boat short-tacking duel with Rory and Rick when they both went hard aground. It was noticeable that Rick was much faster into the water than Rory! Patrick and Rick ultimately suffered the temporary indignity of finding themselves in last and second last place for a while in the final race. It was a very satisfactory revenge for Rory who had lost the previous year's regatta by a few feet in the last race. On handicap Rick won a consolation prize by staying close enough to Rory to make his time advantage tell. The fleet was joined by Kestrel, which had sailed all the way from the Solent to take part, ending her cruise tied up to the Q mark as an exhausted Matt Lingley slept(for more detail read his report in E-news). The afternoon handicap was won by Basilisk, helmed

by Alan Krailing (who is the current Lark class champion and was recently second in the Endeavour Trophy) who had been crewing for Patrick in the morning racing. Patrick, in flagrant contravention of restrictive practice agreements among helmsmen, was seen on the foredeck. Not quite as supple as he used to be but still.... Also very relevant practice for Alan's trip to the Worlds (see below and E-news).

Away from home Basilisk and Nereid were the only travellers, while Kestrel travelled to join us. Nereid was much travelled, starting the year in France with Mike. She then went to the fleshpots of Burnham on Crouch and Falmouth(actually the Tresanton Hotel would score well in France!) with Patrick before doing the South Coasts in Cowes with Mike. Patrick also took her to the French Championship at la Baule where he won two races but was far too inconsistent. She also went to the Worlds in Medemblik, helmed by Alan Krailing and crewed by Helen Pynn, where they were shocked by the number of ex-Olympic sailors competing against them. They found that Dragons really do all go the same speed so that the race course always seemed crowded. Dinghies, whether Larks at Waldringfield or Solos at that

mecca of yachting, the Thames at Ranelagh, apparently don't. She has now returned to her Cannes winter base. Poor Basilisk, on the other hand, after going to La Baule and the Edinburgh Cup in Falmouth with Mike, is, at the time of writing, still shivering in Aldeburgh..

Next year we plan a similar programme. We very much encourage people to try a Dragon on our unusual estuary. They are different to anything else on the river, apart from their bigger sister If, in the type of performance they offer. We are planning a taster day in July for anyone who is interested but would, of course, love to meet anyone at any time who is interested in sailing Dragons at Aldeburgh.

Patrick Gifford

Burnham Fleet Report

Notwithstanding the fact that writing this report will severely tax my aging memory banks, (I wish I had kept my diary up to date), it is always a pleasure to report good news. That's the story of the Dragon Class this year, simply, a 'successful year' Our fleet in Burnham now stands at 23 Dragons, we remain for a large part of the year a, 'home fleet' and a 'Regatta fleet', but during the Spring and Autumn of our racing programme, we all join together and race our home waters.

Both fleets have been as active as ever, and our numbers are increasing. This year we welcomed three new boats, 'Fistral', owned by Mark Dean, Simon Spratt, and Colin Green, who are new to Dragon racing, but keen to get out there and mix with the competition. 'Beauty and the Beast' (a great name for a Dragon and most appropriate) which is owned and now campaigned by Katie Cole and Rob Campbell. B&B is 15 years old, and has been rebuilt by Katie, she is to be raced on the river, and it is worth noting that Rob, who is usually supreme on the river, has less wins in B&B than Kate, proving once again, that the old boats are just as quick as the modern craft, and with Kate on the helm a winner. We also welcomed 'Page boys X' to the fleet, owned and raced by Clive Page and crewed with brother Graham and Clive's son Rory. They have already earned our respect with some good results this year, and they promise to be stars on the river next year.

The racing program in Burnham starts on the third weekend of March and continues to the third week of

November, eight and half months of racing both Saturday and Sunday. Also on our programme was our annual Easter Regatta, and in May we hosted the British Dragon Association East Coast Championships. These two regattas mixed in with seven series of cup races, means there is plenty of opportunity for helms and crews to make their mark on the trophies. We are very grateful for the support and sponsorship we received from Aberdeen Asset Management, helping us to make the East Coast's a great success.

'Celebration' is one of my favourite words in the English language, and celebrate we did this year with four mini series, 4 races of about 45 minutes in each series, and windward/leeward courses. These races are great fun, there is always a buzz in the bar afterwards, and the winners never get to take home the Champagne! Race officers Edwin and Pat Buckley and their team, really look after us, and we will always be grateful for their input into the Dragon calendar.

Our travelling fleet have also been very active, most notable being Rob Campbell, the current International Dragon Association Chairman, who has raced six regattas this year with the fleets in France, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, Portugal, and Australia. The international fleet can't complain they do not see their Chairman, well done Rob.

Ian Gray, helming his Dragon Scorpio, and crewed by Keith Gray and Nigel Cole, travelled to the Medway this

year and were crowned top boat, well done team, it is great to see you bringing back the silver from the Medway, and I suspect (and hope) they will visit us in Burnham next year, for revenge.

We also celebrate success in the Dragon World Championships which were held in Medemblik, our good friend Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen, with an all Danish crew, were the victors. Well done Poul-Richard, we are proud to have a World Champion with us.

On the social side, we thank Tim and Kay Tavinor and family for hosting our summer party in their garden. BBQ's aplenty, local beer and Pimms, set off the evening of square dancing and story telling, this is a firm favourite in our calendar. We toasted ourselves at the end of November with our annual black tie dinner, prize giving and 'Clanger Award', it is a sad time to be coming off the water and laying up boats, but we can look forward to non sailing activities, to include forest walking, and horse racing this winter, all arranged with a smile by Gerry Gray.

Finalizing our programme for next year is now the priority for the day. It will be ambitious and exciting, and includes provisional plans to team race with the Russian fleet on their home waters of Lake Pirogovo, near Moscow, and a trip to Hamburg to race with our friends on the Alster, mixed in of course, with some good food, laughter and wine.

And so to 2010...

Colin Woodcock. Class Captain



East Coast Championship 2010 – Medway



The Medway Yacht Club and the Medway Dragon Fleet are pleased to invite you to the Dragon East Coast Championships to be held 29th - 31st May 2010. Up to eight races will be held with excellent on-shore social events after racing.

The Notice of Race is available from:
www.medwayyachtclub.com/dragons

For further details please contact: Vice Captain: Julian Sowry M: 07710 037349

We look forward to welcoming you all at the Medway Yacht Club



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Medway Fleet Report

The Medway Fleet has had a great sailing season losing only one race due to weather.

Our four principal race series were won by three different boats and eight different boats recorded race wins – this is great for the fleet and shows the speed difference between the boats is less than a few years ago.

Congratulations to the overall winners – Stewart and Catriona Coltart, crewed by Peter Booth, in Valkyrie (GBR 747). Second overall was Scimitar (GBR 730) with Esoteric (GBR 696) third.

The fleet has been a little more adventurous with travelling this year with boats supporting both the Burnham Easter regatta and the East Coast Championships at Burnham-on-Crouch.

Representatives also went to La Baule, Deauville, and the Belgian Open championships.

Len Jones in Rumours (GBR 708) won Cowes week, as well as the South Coast Championship, which is no mean feat for a visitor to the Solent.

Quentin Strauss, with an American guest helm, won the Edinburgh Cup in Falmouth in Gorgeous Worgeous (GBR 723). Helming in his own right he was highest place Brit at the Europeans in Saint Tropez and also well placed at the World Championships in Medemblik. Well done to him.

Our class continues to be strong socially with over 90 people sitting down for our Prize giving dinner in November with Tim and Kay Tavinor as guests and the Medway Yacht Club Commodore's good lady presenting the prizes.

We have managed to get a turnout of 13/14 boats for nearly every race of the season and we are looking forward to next year's racing when we welcome new members to our fleet who have purchased a Dragon for the first time.

As a fleet we are now preparing for the East Coast Championships which we will be hosting in 2010 over the second May bank holiday. Everyone is welcome to come and join us here on the Medway for what I hope will be a great regatta.

Don Macmillan – Class Captain

Solent Fleet Report

2009 has been an excellent year for Dragon sailing on the Solent. Very few days sailing have been lost due to an over abundance or lack of wind. In addition to the regular weekend racing that takes place from end of April until the end of October, the fleet has enjoyed welcoming visitors to the South Coast Championship (24-26th July) and Cowes Week (1-7th August). We also welcomed two new boats - Nick Jones new Dragon (GBR 739), Dilemma, and Thorkild Junker on Cool Runnings (GBR 748).

Early Season Competition

With several travelers in the fleet, competition has varied throughout the season. Eric Williams proved impossible to beat on the 6 days Ecstatic was on the start line, and dominated the spring series. Njord however won on points using the expedient tactic of turning out more. Class Captain Richard Cullen was slow to emerge from winter hibernation so the rivalry between Supremacy and Njord had a rather slow start. Jerboa, back from a dominatrix performance spanking the foreigners on the continent, joined us briefly for the mid-season series and with 5 firsts and 6 seconds, carrying away the Citron plate. While the travellers departed to Falmouth for the Edinburgh Cup, and assorted summer holidays, Richard Cullen in Supremacy pulled into the lead winning the summer series convincingly, if perhaps a bit short of opposition.

South Coast Championships

The fleet was delighted to host the South Coast Championships, and thanks Tony Singer for taking on the organisation of the event. All participants agreed that despite the weather, the event had been very enjoyable, and as a dry run for the Edinburgh Cup in 2010 showed how Cowes facilities can deliver hugely enjoyable Dragon events. Tony has taken on organisation of the 2010 Edinburgh Cup, and we encourage all members of the BDA to book holiday now, and join us in Cowes from 27th June to 3rd July, for the South Coasts and Edinburgh cup.

Cowes Week highlights

Following the South Coasts, several visitors elected to stay on for the ultimate sailing party that is Cowes Week. We welcomed Ganador, Seafire and Rumours back to The Island. Several other sailors joined the fleet for the week: Rob Gray had kindly loaned Rackham to Chris Dicker, who brought Peter and Helen Stokes down from Lowestoft, Richard Davies arrived with the new Flotation, Buddha and team Flawless added boisterous Cornish glamour, and

Matt Lingley sailed Kestral from Aldeburgh to join in. With such a social bunch, post race drinks and social events kept the fleet in high spirits. (But ... we better mention the sailing.) This was an excellent Cowes Week, although the wind strength was on the light side, the Dragon fleet was as always, fiercely competitive. The racing was challenging but finally Rumours dominated the week after a shaky start. Eric Williams in Ecstatic never gave up but, like all the rest of us, struggled to counter Rumours consistency and boat-speed. The points were close up to the last day, so excellent competitive racing combined with the spectacle and social whirl that is the UK's largest keel boat regatta made it a hugely enjoyable week for all.

1st – Rumours Len Jones, Mark Hart, Philip Catmur

2nd – Ecstatic Eric Williams, Jo Richardson, Aileen Goodman/ Duncan Grindley

3rd – Aimee Julia Bailey, Steve Richardson, Pedro Andrade & Joe Bailey

4th – Njord Owen Pay, Chris Brittain, Gillian Brittain/ Josy Roberts-Pay

5th – Ganador Martin Makey, Tom Makey, James Wade

Following Cowes Week, most of the fleet joined in the less hyped, but truly delightful Yarmouth regatta. As an antidote to Cowes, this town regatta attracts 6 "classic" classes and sponsorship from Tattinger. You can guess the rest.

Autumn and Late Series

After a busy summer we all take a rest for the second half of August and resume sailing early September. By the Autumn Series, when travelers returned Supremacy, had pulled ahead aided by the god of weather who decreed that the beginning of September should deliver a balmy, sun-filled but sadly breezeless few days in Costa del Cowes. Annual "talk like a Pirate Day" came and went without a single Dragon timber being shivered, although a few tots of rum, may have been consumed on the shore in the Indian Summer sunshine.

Nick Jones by the beginning of September was getting Dilemma (GBR 739) up to speed, causing a memorable incident with a tanker and pilot boat. Njord meanwhile lost her mast and the last 4 weeks of sailing, so was unable to dent Supremacy's supremacy.

Richard Cullen, Fleet Captain



Final Fleet Results

Top honours for the Red Funnel series (5 weekends of windward leeward over season) go to Richard Cullen and Supremacy, while top horrors for the season are awarded to his co-owner Keith Skelsey and regular crew Matt Hill who managed to put Supremacy out of action for a couple of weeks by casually sailing into a cruiser on their jaunt to the Yarmouth regatta. As if the Solent isn't big enough.

End of season results are:

1 Supremacy

2 Njord

3 Jerboa

4 Cavalier

A bumper year in the Solent in 2010

With the South Coast Championship Edinburgh Cup scheduled for Cowes in 2010, we recommend visitors consider staying on for some club racing, the Metre and Classic Keelboat Regatta, Cowes Week, and Yarmouth Regatta. It is excellent fun on our "South Island" at the peak of the season. Here are the dates for your diary:

South Coast Championship

27-29 June

Edinburgh Cup

30 June - 3 July

Solent Keelboat Series

10-11 July, 17-18 July

The Metre and Classic Keelboat Regatta

19-23 July

Solent Keelboat Series

24-25 July

Cowes Week

31 July - 7 August

Yarmouth Regatta

14-15 August

Why you should visit Cowes in 2010

South Coast Championship & Edinburgh Cup **27th June - 3rd July 2010**

The 2010 Edinburgh Cup and South Coast Championship will be held in Cowes, Isle of Wight, from the last weekend in June hosted by the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Cowes, and generously sponsored by Aberdeen Asset Management.

The Solent Fleet last hosted the Dragon National Championship in 2005, and they look forward to welcoming the UK fleet and International Dragon sailors, and their families, back to Cowes.

The Isle of Wight as a Regatta and Holiday Venue

For the sailors, there is a wide-range of accommodation, shops, pubs and restaurants all located within easy walking distance of the marinas and yacht clubs.

The Isle of Wight, as a holiday destination, provides plentiful entertainment for non-mariners. The Island boasts 12 award-winning beaches, and attractions including the Needles and Osborne House (the Summer palace of Queen Victoria), roman villas, dinosaur remains, and a host of land based outdoor activities including riding, walking

and bicycling. A Daily Family / Spouses' Programme will be arranged which will include many of these attractions.

Racing Format

Racing will be organized around the Bramble Bank, the area in the Solent outside of the shipping channels, and least affected by the tides. Regular visitors will know that the geography of the Solent affords protection and safety, but attention to tidal charts is important!

The South Coast Championship **27th - 29th June, 2010**

The Championship will consist of up to 8 windward-leeward races, with 2-3 races a day run in quick succession, in the format introduced for the South-West Championships 2009.

The Edinburgh Cup **30th June - 3rd July 2010**

As in all previous championships, the Regatta will consist of up to 6 races, with each beat a minimum of 1.5 nautical miles. In addition to the Competitor racing, the Committee will be scheduling a Crews' Race, and for the first time a Visitors' Race in recognition of Aberdeen's ongoing support.



The Social Programme

The après-sail Programme is designed to help visitors enjoy a "rounded" Cowes experience, sampling the variety of sailing clubs, with formal and informal events that the local Dragon sailors enjoy. There will be Daily post-racing drinks and Prize givings, plus drinks receptions and two Championship dinners – so pack the glad rags.

Administration

While skippers will of course make their own choice, most of the fleet will be moored on pontoons in the Cowes Yacht Haven, and this is included in the Entry Fee, which also includes launching and recovery.

Free Ferry:

For sailors prepared to travel Off-peak with their Dragon, a free Red Funnel passage from Southampton to Cowes East is available.

With all that there is on offer, why not consider extending your stay, and spend July in Cowes?

After the Edinburgh Cup, there will be three weekends of Club sailing and the Metre and Classic Keelboat Regatta, 19-23 July. Cowes Week swiftly follows from 31st July to 7th August, and then the Yarmouth Regatta (14th-15th August) rounds off the season.

Useful Web sites:

Edinburgh cup event details

<http://www.edinburghcup.co.uk>

(coming soon)

Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Cowes

<http://www.rcyc.co.uk>

Cowes online

<http://www.cowes.co.uk>

Cowes Week

<http://www.cowesweek.co.uk>

The Metre and Classic Keelboat Regatta

<http://www.cowesclassicsweek.org.uk/>

Yarmouth Regatta – Royal Solent Yacht Club

<http://www.royalsolent.org/index.php>



	Entry Fee	Entry Fee after 12th June
Edinburgh Cup South Coast	£285.00	£310.00
Championship & Edinburgh Cup	£390.00	£440.00

Racing in the Solent

Editors Note: The following article was published in the BDA Magazine 4 years ago and helped many competitors who find the Solent a daunting place to sail. I found this particularly useful, as I was one of the many who could not decode the Solent tides. Thanks to Graham Bailey for allowing us to publish this article once again:

The Solent remains one of the premier racing venues in the world. Club racers, championship and grand-prix racers have enjoyed the huge varieties of available racetracks for many decades but few informative texts on central Solent racing exist.

This is probably because gaining sufficient local knowledge is a lifetime's work and those of us doing our apprenticeship are likely to conk-out long before we are ready to publish our thesis on this most challenging subject. There are, however, certain tools available today that enable some degree of analysis that was not possible until recently.

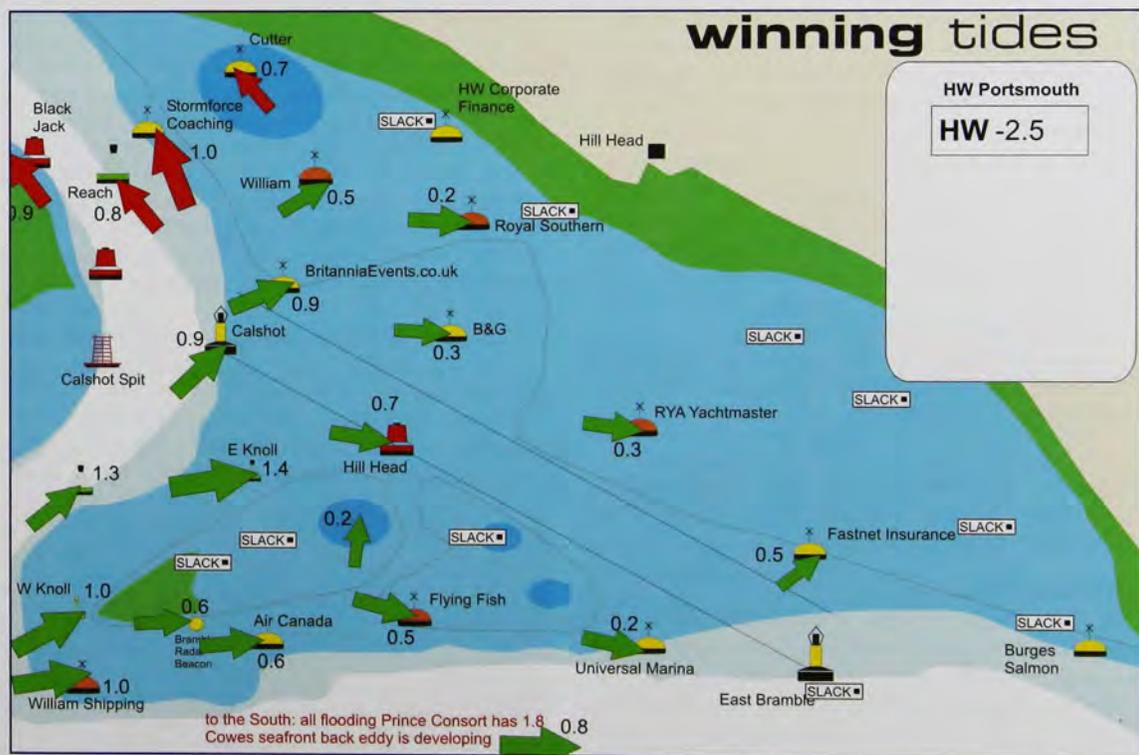
Wind and Tide Resources

Various instruments have been placed on the Bramble Stake, which is smack bang in the middle of the Solent, and likely to be within 200 metres of the weather mark if we are racing in prevailing South- Westerly winds. Historical archive data is also available online at: www.bramblemet.co.uk.

Even though this data is accessible via your mobile phone it would, of course, be illegal to access whilst racing!

There are also some detailed atlases available; Uffa Fox researched the first some 75 years ago. This excellent work has recently been surpassed by another bunch of clever technicians who have used the latest techniques to measure tidal flows for the entire Solent. These are available in (water resistant) book form or electronically from www.winningtides.co.uk, Fig 1 is an example of the detailed tidal analysis available in this publication. One could attempt a descriptive prose on what the tide is doing but this is now not necessary in light of this excellent tidal authority that gives the ebb and flood and direction at half hourly intervals.

The electronic version has corrections for spring or neap tides plus many other features to help familiarise competitors with the various racetracks. Winning Tides have kindly allowed me reproduce a sample of their work for the purpose of this article, and I have no hesitation in recommending their product to anyone intending to race in the Solent.



Tide

A Summary:

- The tide floods to the East and ebbs to the West
- The ebb is stronger than the flood and so does not last so long, but apart from that the features of the flood are largely mirrored in the ebb with the exception of some local features which are graphically represented in Winning Tides
- A flood tide, when it reaches the central Solent, will diverge and slow down. The main stream will continue fast down the South side of the Solent, towards Portsmouth, while the Northern stream heads up to Southampton. It is this divergence, which has created the Bramble Bank, which famously dries out sufficiently at low springs to host a cricket match.
- About 2 hours 30 minutes before high water, the ebb begins on the North shore and just off the Royal Yacht Squadron close to the beach, heading West (see Fig 1). For a significant period in time therefore the tide can be flooding in the centre and ebbing on the edges. This tremendous feature can be off-putting to the unfamiliar, which may begin to think they will have no chance against the locally experienced sailors. The local sailors often like to think this too! However, so often is this apparent advantage disproved by the free-thinking (blissfully ignorant) visitor that one must recognise "local knowledge" as a fine balance between the advantage of knowing certain things and the burden of being caught out when they don't happen as they did last time. This is the challenge for us local apprentices.
- The main championship racetrack, to the East of the Bramble Stake, is in the "divergent" zone, where the tidal flows are significantly slower than those in the main channels. So tide is less of a factor and a clever race officer can position the track to give balanced choices between the two sides of the course. There is a channel running through this area for smaller tonnage to get to and from Southampton without going the long way round the West side of Bramble. This is marked on the graphic between Calshot and East Bramble.
- Heading West from the mainland shore, at Lee-on-the-Solent, the seabed shelves gently before reaching maximum depth in the North Channel and then becoming shallow again on the Bramble Bank.

The Sea Breeze

Early July will have some potential for sea breeze generation. The signs to look out for are a strong sun and bubbly cumulus cloud appearing over the mainland shore to the North and North East. The main sea breeze direction is from the South West. It can arrive quite suddenly. On a good sea breeze day the wind will come in



before 10:30am, at about 10 to 12 knots from the South West, and then build to about 18 to 22 knots. On a less good sea breeze day the wind may not come in until 3:00 or 4:00pm.

There is an alternative sea breeze direction; it can come in from the South East. It is also possible to have the two different breezes competing against each other with the South Easterly starting first. The South Westerly normally wins those contests, but quite often there can be very little wind in the central Solent whilst the battle rages.

Gradient Winds - Westerly

Normally a South Westerly and this is a relatively stable direction and will allow for a long windward leg to be set starting near the Lee-on-Solent shore, with the weather marked placed on the Bramble Bank. In this scenario, if the start line is sufficiently close to the lee shore then the tidal flow will be parallel to the shore. Further up the beat the tidal flow will be closer to the direction of the wind. Watch out for the cross-tide start line therefore, and keep a look out for any shipping using the North Channel which are likely to cross about a third of the way up the beat.

Left, right, and middle options are always available on this track, but if the windward mark is placed to the left of the Bramble Stake (looking upwind) there is a tendency for the left to pay in both a flood and an ebb tide.

Conversely, if the weather mark is to the right of the stake then the right can do well. It all depends on where the mark is placed.

It may be that we don't get within half a mile of the stake, but if we do and the mark is positioned to the left it will





be be in deep water. If this is the case then whilst the left side can come out ahead, the final approach on a flood tide should be from the shallows at top right (don't bang the port tack lay-line). The ebb is less critical.

Down the run remember the tide will be parallel to the lee shore (if close enough). So if we are in full flood it is easy to say: "stay right" (South) for maximum tidal stream. But then the tide will start pushing you towards Portsmouth, as you approach the shore, and the danger is that you may have sailed above the port lay-line. This is a classic, and common error, which we continually repeat!

Easterly

Easterlies can occur as well. A typical Easterly will feature blue skies and a slight haze. If we get this, these winds are very stable and straight. The track is likely to be set to the East of the North Channel; and if the wind is to the South of East (as it often is) then the leg will be parallel to the mainland shore. The tide is straightforward with less inshore and more offshore, but be aware that the tide turns inshore first up to 2 hours 30 minutes before HW.

With the wind in this direction there tends to be more wind nearer the shore, so left for the wind is generally good but right options counter balance this during the flood. The ebb tide will be more of a left game – you will find the locals on the left; but I have also observed Ho-Jo coming in from the right with a 30 yard advantage so this is not a golden rule.

Northerly

"When the wind is in the North, go North"; these famous words were uttered by Owen Parker who skippered Ted Heath's Morning Cloud in the 1970s, and have crystallised into Solent lore. It took me several seasons to work out what he meant, because if the wind is in the North you

have no choice but to North – I thought. What I think he meant is this: if the wind is anywhere in the Northern sector take the tack nearest due North first.

In both scenarios the wind is unstable, but the big gains are with gusts that come straight down Southampton Water. A North Westerly will veer in those gusts, so if you have done your port tack early you will have a nice right-hander, with increased pressure, to return to the middle. Conversely a North Easterly will back, so if you had headed left you will be on a nice lifted port tack back to the fleet.

Apart from Owen's rule, the other thing to look out for is that if the track is set close and parallel to the Lee-on-Solent shore (for a North-Westerly) it is possible that there will be less wind near the shore. That is not to say that the left will always come out ahead however, since right shifts are regularly dished out nearer the shore. This is truly a direction for staying offshore, taking the shifts and keeping your head when you see big right-handers on the other side of the beat.

Southerly

Southerlies occur less frequently, but when they do they are also reasonably shift. Owen's rule has no application to this reverse direction. In fact it is more the case that if the wind is in the South go East or West. Generally the wind in the Western Solent will be more West, and conversely the wind in the Easter Solent will have more East. Either corner could pay therefore depending on placement of the weather mark, so watch out for Ho Jo coming out of the middle.

Summary

We have only scratched the surface of this topic with a few thoughts to get your head around the central Solent racetrack, which I hope will not have polluted the minds of the freethinking visitors.

1st in 2009 Worlds

Petticrows.... Continuing to refine the world's premier international keelboat

- 2010 hull to new Ian Howlett design.
- Vacuum infused with the latest vinylester resins to guarantee maximum stiffness and optimised centre of gravity.
- Proven upgraded safety features with over 2007 litres of buoyancy.
- Choice of fit out: Traditional traveller beam or central control console.
- Reduced windage features on deck.
- New aerodynamic mast section.
- New integrated solar panel on deck.
- Ready to race straight from the factory.
- Service team and spares on site at most major regattas.



2009 Dagon World Championship trophy - Petticrow Dragons came 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th.....

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Howlett