

Dragon News

British Dragon Association



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Dragon Water

Dragon News Contents

Dragon Fixtures	1
Chairman's Report from Rory Bowman	2
Aberdeen Sponsorship Deal	2
Solent Venue Guide Graham Bailey with some local knowledge	4
Tactics from Dave Dellenbaugh Speed Tips for the First Beat	8
Technical Tips - No 10 from Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen	11
Tiller Talk by Graham Bailey	12
Tactics from Dave Dellenbaugh Strategy on Runs	14
Sailing a Dragon Upwind Simon Brien in light and shifty mode	16
Faking it for Lightweights Advice from Graham Bailey	18
The Edinburgh Cup 2005 report from Lowestoft by John Heyes	19
Fleet Reports	20-23
from Aldeburgh, Burnham on Crouch, Falmouth, Ireland, Lowestoft, Medway and The Solent	
South Coast Championship Matt Armstrong reports	24
East Coast Championship Peter Pank reports	24
Non-Technical Tuning Guide from Jesper Bank	25
New BDA Website Stop Press	25

UK Dragon Fixtures 2006

April 14th-17th East Coast Championship Burnham-on-Crouch	
May 28th-31st Edinburgh Cup	Cowes
June 3rd-10th European Championship	Cowes
August 26th-Sept 1st Gold Cup	Douarnenez
TBC South Coast Championship	Cowes

Irish Dragon Fixtures

May 12th-14th South Coast Championship	Kinsale
July 7th - 9th East Coast Championship	RStGYC, Dun Laoghaire
Sept 7th-10th National Championship	RIYC, Dun Laoghaire
Oct 6th-8th Fresh Water Regatta	Lough Derg

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The BDA is grateful to marine photographer Jacques Vapillon for allowing the reproduction of his photograph on the front cover of Dragon News and also for use of the photograph of *Kin* on page 16



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BDA CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Another season draws briefly to a close. Congratulations go to Poul-Richard for a hotly contested victory in Lowestoft's Edinburgh Cup; to Ivan Bradbury for the South Coast Championship; to "Uncle" Eric Williams for a superb season to capture the Citron Trophy; and finally to Martin Mackey and crew for an outstanding second overall in a strong fleet at Regates Royales.

And so we charge into 2006 and an early season build-up to the Aberdeen Dragon European Championship at the beginning of June. I am delighted that Aberdeen have announced their sponsorship of the Europeans and also their partner sponsorship of the BDA Race Series for the next three years.

This commitment has allowed the Edinburgh Cup organizers to offer free entry for the first three travelling boats to enter who have not participated in the Championship for over three years.

So if you have not tried our National Championship for a while, now is the time to join in the fun in Cowes. Having witnessed the planning teams at work for both the



"Dad it looks crowded in here, but lose some weight and I might come with you".

Europeans and Edinburgh Cup, I know both events will be exceptional – you need to be there.

The IDA rule review this year has produced only one real talking point – in any event where the weight limit is in force, we will be allowed to sail with three or four people.

Good news for families or light crews and Peticrows tell me they are planning a new cockpit layout. It will be interesting to see how popular this option will be.

Elsewhere please log on to the new version Dragon website www.britishdragons.org and give us your opinions. We are looking for volunteers to become involved in both the website and the annual magazine. We aim to continually improve these mediums and intend to send out 28,000 copies of the magazine in yachting publications again next December. So we would welcome your thoughts on how best to promote the Dragon to a wider audience.

I look forward to seeing you in the busy UK season ahead, and at the Dinner on January 6th.

Rory Bowman



ABERDEEN ASSET MANAGEMENT, the global fund management group, will be the title sponsor of the prestigious Aberdeen Dragon European Championship, to be hosted by the Royal Yacht Squadron at Cowes, from June 2nd-10th 2006.

"The Dragon Class has a long, rich history and we are very pleased to be playing a part in a whole new chapter as sponsors of next year's Aberdeen Dragon European Championship", said Martin Gilbert, Aberdeen's CEO.

"We look forward to working closely with our colleagues at the Royal Yacht Squadron, the International Dragon Association and the British Dragon Association to ensure that the event is a resounding success for all concerned", he added.

Aberdeen is to further strengthen its links to the Dragon Class by becoming a Partner Sponsor of the British Dragon



photo – Hanno Thornycroft

Association for the next three years.

Rory Bowman, Chairman of the BDA, said; "We are delighted to welcome Aberdeen on board as title sponsor of the 2006 European Championship and as Partner Sponsor of the BDA for the next three years".

"Both agreements present Aberdeen with unique opportunities to engage with the worldwide membership of the esteemed Dragon Class and I'm sure that such a high profile association with the Dragons, The Royal Yacht Squadron and Cowes – three names that carry such prestige in the world of sailing – will prove highly beneficial. We are extremely grateful for their support."

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SOLENT VENUE GUIDE

A visitor's guide to racing the 2006 Dragon European Championship courses in the central Solent – essential advice from Solent 'local apprentice' Graham Bailey

The Solent remains one of the premier racing venues in the world. The huge variety of available race-tracks have been enjoyed by club racers, championship and grand-prix sailors for many decades but few informative texts on central Solent racing exist.

This is most probably because gaining sufficient local knowledge is a lifetime's work and those of us doing our apprenticeship there 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 which enable some degree of analysis that was not possible until recently.

WIND AND TIDE RESOURCES

Some clever technicians have placed various instruments 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. The instrument readings including current windspeed and direction, tide height, barometric pressure, sea temperature, air temperature and visibility, together with historical and archive data are all available online at www.bramblemet.co.uk

Furthermore, the current data is also available via WAP-enabled mobile telephones by directing your WAP browser to www.bramblemet.co.uk/wap although of course this cannot legally be accessed by competitors during racing.

There are detailed tidal atlases available, the first I believe was researched by Uffa Fox some 70 years ago. This excellent work has only 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. One could attempt a descriptive prose on what the tide is doing but this is not now necessary in light of this excellent tidal authority which gives the ebb and flood speed 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 race tracks. 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

It may be helpful to briefly summarise the tidal considerations.

- 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



photo – Hamo Thornycroft

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 toward 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 W-T chart opposite).

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 who may begin to think he 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 race track 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 beat.

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 W-T graphic between Calshot and East Bramble.

- Heading West from the mainland shore at Lee-on-the-Solent, the sea bed shelves gently before reaching maximum

SOLENT VENUE GUIDE continued

Bramble stake but if we do and the mark is positioned to the left, it will be in deep water so while the left side can come out ahead, the final approach on a flood tide should be from the shallows at the top right. The ebb is less critical.

Down the run, remember the tide will be parallel to the lee shore, if the mark is close enough so if we are in a full flood, it is easy to say "let's go down the South side of the run for maximum tidal stream". But then the tide curves towards Portsmouth as the lee-shore approaches and the danger is that before you know it, you have sailed beyond the port layline to the mark – classic and common error here which we continually re-learn.

Easterly

Easterlies are common also. 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, the leg will be almost parallel to the mainland shore. The tide is straightforward, with less inshore and more offshore, but be aware that within 2 hours 30 minutes of HW, the tide on the shore will turn first.

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

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photo – Hanno Thornycroft

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 go North in the same way as if the wind is in the West, you go West – I thought.

What I think he meant is this – if the wind is anywhere in the Northern sector, take the tack nearest the North first. If the wind is North West, then get onto port or if it is North East, stay on starboard.

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 come back to the middle.

Conversely a North Easterly will back, so if you headed left, you will be on a nice pressured-up 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 parallel to the Lee-on-the-Solent shore, ie the opposite way to the South Easterly above, there is likely to 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 the big right-handers on the other side of the beat.

Southerly

Southerlies occur less frequently but when they do, they are also reasonably shifty. 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 Eastern 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 race track, which I hope will not have polluted the minds of the free-thinking visitors.

WINNING TIDES

is available online at
www.winningtides.co.uk
(where there are also electronic versions,
with various enhancements)
The book is also available price £26.90
from Pascal Atkey, Cowes High Street,
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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...

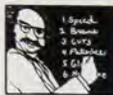
There is a wealth of knowledge in David's monthly newsletter, *Speed&Smarts*, packed with "how-to" tips for racing sailors.

The Dragons are grateful for his permission to reproduce articles from *Speed&Smarts* on a regular basis. We continue in this issue with

Speed Tips for the first Beat – on pages 8 and 9 overleaf,
and ***Strategy on Runs*** – on pages 14 and 15



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



BRAINSTORM

Speed tips for the first beat

As I said at the beginning of this issue, speed is very important on the first beat because your competitors are all so close together. By going fast, you can get your nose in front of the boats around you, and this will give you clear air plus a chance to play the shifts.

When you come off the starting line, you must settle quickly into a speed groove. Try not to get distracted by the boats nearby, and look for the sail trim and feel you had during your pre-start tune-up. Also, try to set a good tone for the rest of the race by focusing on speed, working hard to go fast and communicating with your crew. Here are some more tips.

→ **Keep your air clear.** Most fleets are packed pretty close together off the line, so having clean air can be a huge advantage. In fact, it's probably better to be slow with clean air than fast with dirty air.

Therefore, do not sail in bad air unless it's absolutely necessary. This is especially critical in lighter air where wind shadows are real killers. Look ahead to find lanes of clear air, and do everything you can to stay in them.

→ **Sail fast in bad air.** Occasionally you must "live" in bad air temporarily for tactical or strategic reasons. When this is a necessity, shift gears so you keep going fast.

Sailing in another boat's wind

shadow is a little like getting a lull in wind velocity. You usually need to add power to your sailplan, move your crew weight in and forward, bear off a few degrees and so on.

→ **Copy the other boats.** Your competitors are a great source of go-fast ideas, so keep an eye on them, especially early in a race or series (when you see them for the first time and you should be open to ideas about going faster).

Look at the shape of their sails (e.g. fullness, draft position, twist) and the attitude of their hull compared to yours. Pay particular attention to boats that are going faster than you, and don't be afraid to copy their set-up.

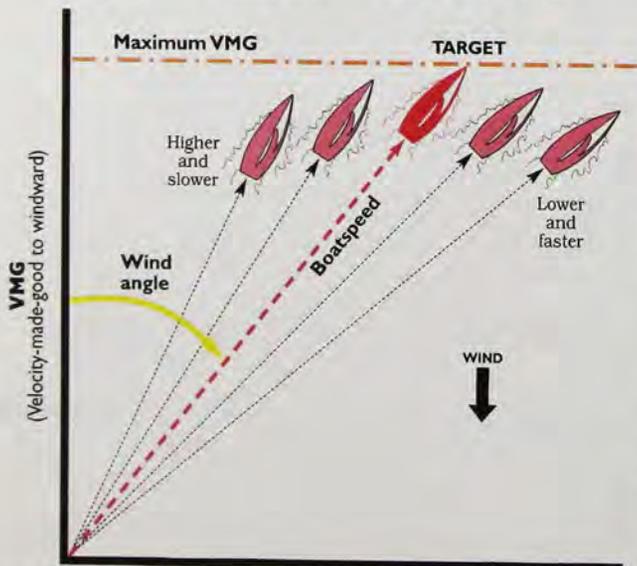
→ **Use other boats as a gauge.** In order to optimize your performance, you must always know whether you are going fast or not. And the only way to really judge your speed at any particular moment is by comparing yourself to nearby boats.

So make sure someone in your crew keeps an eye on other boats. Are you pointing as high and going as fast through the water? If not, try changing the trim of your sails or hull and see if it makes a difference. Keep experimenting like this to improve your speed.

→ **Use reference marks.** The ability to reproduce fast trim settings from race to race and day to day is very important. Therefore, I recommend using reference marks or scales on controls such as your jib leads, halyard tension, outhaul, cunningham and mast position.

It's better to have too many marks, since a few extra ones won't hurt (and they may help). Also, a mark on your sheets can be a great reference point for getting to a particular setting quickly (e.g. after a tack) or for fine-tuning your trim.

→ **Try a "wider groove."** It's not easy to go fast 100% of the time, but you should try to stay in the groove for as much of each leg as possible. One way to do this is by



Should you sail higher and slower or lower and faster? When you're trying to find a fast groove upwind, you have a wide range of headings and speeds from which to choose.

On most days, there is one speed and wind angle that will give you your best upwind performance. That is, one combination of pointing and speed will maximize your VMG (your velocity-made-good) to windward. This should be your "target."

How do you find your target boatspeed? On bigger boats with instruments, you often have charts of the speeds you should aim for in each wind velocity. On other boats, you have to go simply by feel or, better yet, by judging your relative performance versus nearby boats.

David Dellenbaugh's
SPEED & Smarts™

setting up your sails so you have a wider groove. For example, give your sails a little extra fullness, move their draft forward, and don't try to point quite so high.

By doing this you'll give up a little bit of high-end performance, but you should also have fewer times when you stall out and go very slowly. You'll be fast more of the time and improve your overall average speed (especially when you have waves or other conditions that make it hard to stay in the groove).

→ **Shift gears constantly.** Sailing conditions are always changing, and this means you must continually adjust the trim of your sails and hull in order to keep going as fast as possible. There's almost nothing slower than leaving your sheets cleated when you get a change in wind or waves.

It's especially critical to change gears, if necessary, right after the start. With the boats so close together, you need every inch you can get. Plus, as you come off the line, the conditions may be different than they were the last time you sailed upwind before the start.

→ **Work on communication.** If you want to shift gears smoothly and keep going fast, you need good communication among your crew. Every member of your team can and should contribute to speed, and communicating with other crewmembers is usually helpful in doing this.

Contributions include information about wind and waves that are coming, your speed relative to other boats, thoughts on sail trim and so on. When I'm driving I'd rather hear too much info than not enough, but you should talk with your own crew about the desired level of chatter.

→ **Execute good tacks.** On the first beat, tacking is an integral part of your overall speed equation. If you lose three feet on every tack, you will soon be in the second row with bad air and fewer tactical options. So work hard on tacking technique in practice.

One of the keys to good upwind speed is being able to get all the right sail settings consistently. To do this, you must have calibration scales on your sail controls so you can reproduce fast trim.



Once you start the race, make every tack count. Remember, you may need only a foot or two to cross the next starboard tacker. And that could mean the difference between going the right way with clear air or not.

→ **Watch for bad air and waves.** When you are approaching or leaving a mark, you will often find disturbed water or wind that could hurt your speed. At the start, for example, the water is often extra bumpy because lots of boats have been sailing in circles for quite a while. At the windward mark, you may find a wall of bad air from boats sailing down the first reach.

To keep going fast, you should adjust your set-up to compensate for these conditions. Typically you need to add some power to punch through the extra chop or bad air.

→ **Get rid of water and weeds.** There are some things you never want when sailing upwind, and these include weeds on your foils or water in your bilge. Therefore, be sure to bail out your boat and do a weed check a few minutes before your start. Then keep your boat weed-free and dry all the way up the first beat. If you have through-hull bailers and you aren't using them, close them to minimize drag.

→ **Use weight and sails to steer.** Every time you turn your rudder

you create drag, which is slow. So minimize rudder movement by using crew weight position and sail trim to turn the boat. For example, if you want to head up, trim your mainsheet a little and heel the boat slightly farther to leeward. If you do this every time you turn the boat, you could gain boatlengths over the course of the first beat.

→ **Figure out your targets.** If you sail a bigger boat with instruments, you should probably be using "target" speeds to optimize

your performance upwind. These speeds, which are different for every wind velocity, are determined by computer or by trial and error.

The problem is that you never know exactly which target speed to aim for until you sail against other boats. So as soon as you start racing up the first beat, watch your speed versus other boats. Make sure you are sailing the speed that will give you the best VMG upwind.

→ **Concentrate and work hard.** Above all else, speed comes from an attitude and a desire to go fast. To get your boat in the groove and keep it there, you must concentrate on speed for long periods of time.

This is hard work, but it will certainly make a difference in your position at the windward mark. •



When you're trying to fight your way out of a crowd, it's tempting to stick your boat into point mode. Remember, however, you can't force this. Before you can go high, you must go fast – so work on straight-ahead speed first, and then the height will follow.

Dragon News has teamed up with Dubarry to offer 3 lucky readers the chance to win a pair of Dubarry's high tech Ultima yachting boots or a pair of Clipper or Admiral deck shoes.



Dubarry is the leading manufacturer of marine footwear, with a heritage that goes back to the 1930's. Dubarry's success relies on its technical leadership and dedication to designing, producing and supplying the very best performance marine footwear.



A pair of Dubarry yachting boots are a must have item for all keen sailors. The Ultima retails at £170. Its water resistant leather is specially treated to dry quickly yet softly, enabling the boot to maintain its shape at all times. It features a high tech GORE-TEX® lining to ensure that feet stay moisture free, dry and comfortable, even in extreme conditions.

With an outsole modelled on the design of a Formula 1 car tyre, Dubarry's deckshoes are renowned for their proven non-slip, non-marking soles. The Clipper retailing at £120, and Admiral shoes costing £75, reflect Dubarry's excellence in quality and are ideal for use on and off the water.



Admirals



Clipper

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The first name to be drawn will win a pair of the Ultima boots, the second name will receive a pair of the Clipper shoes and the third name drawn will win the Admiral shoes. To win a pair of Dubarry boots or deckshoes, just answer the question below and send the entry form to: FAO Sheila Fallon, Dubarry of Ireland, Ballinasloe, County Galway, Ireland

Q Which sport provided the inspiration for Dubarry's non-slip sole?

A.....

Title.....**Forename**.....**Surname**.....

Address.....

Postcode.....**Country**.....

Tel Number (inc STD code).....**Date of birth**.....

Email.....

Shoe size.....

From time to time, Dubarry may send information containing news, special offers and product information. If you do not wish to receive this data, please tick here



See more East Coast Dragon photographs on www.photosail.co.uk photography by Hugh Bourn

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Image source for International Dragons, Solent keelboat classes, IRM, IRC and Handicap classes

Technical Tips

10 - Trim

TACKING

The genoa winchless system is sometimes used incorrectly, which slows tacking. It was designed so the front crew should ease the fine tune and take it in again on the new tack.

The middleman lets off and pulls in the coarse genoa. This way the crew never crosses in the cockpit and has a better weight distribution resulting in a quicker manoeuvre and acceleration from the tack.

DOWNWIND

Heel the boat to weather; the front crew sits next to the mast and the middleman on the side deck, allowing the helmsman a better line of sight.

The frontman holds the spinnaker downhaul so the pole can come back in surfing whilst the middleman eases the sheet.

I try to employ the same principle as the kite surfers – follow the spinnaker rather than staying with a steady course and requiring the spinnaker to be trimmed to this.

Keep the boat behind the power!

Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen

Europe's favourite Dragon mast is now available in the UK from **Rig Magic**.

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Of all the moving parts on the Dragon, the tiller is the most overlooked in terms of its potential contribution to boatspeed. Everything else, such as the basic geometry of the rig, tensions, sail shapes, trim and direction, can be quantified. Yet the main instrument connecting the helmsman to the Dragon, through which he (or she) may feel the effects of all of the rest of the quantifiable variables, is largely incapable of useful measurement. This leaves us to cope on the basis of feel.

This short collection of thoughts is not concerned with usual discussion as to rig tune, boat trim, sail shape, kinetics or other visible techniques but simply about what we can begin to learn through what the tiller is telling us while we sail along in a straight line, upwind, with apparently not much else going on.

The writer, having sailed numerous different types of dinghies, dayboats and various large, medium and small offshore racing boats, never gave the tiller a second thought, and steerage generally was taken for granted until he was given a lesson in feel by a certain Danish Dragon ace who made a guest appearance aboard an Admiral's Cupper in 1999. Poul took hold of the wheel and after about 40 seconds, asked: "the front of the rudder...is it round in section?" Of course, it was but how on earth could he tell that just by holding the wheel?

The answer is that our Dane has developed an almost super-human sense of feel which the rest of us could only ever aspire to – and we should. We can all improve our steering and our speed by learning to take more notice of what the tiller has to tell us.

Perhaps we should begin with the tiller/human connection, or, how to hold it. Golfers have thought about this in much more detail than we have. They understand better than anyone the importance of grip. They need to achieve a reliable connection with their club that is sufficiently firm to give them control yet not so tight that they lose all feel. In this respect, the sailor has the same issues as the golfer with the added entertainment of a club that fights back.

Upwind, the club, or rather the tiller, tends to exert a leeward pressure commonly and unimaginatively known as 'weather helm'. Generally speaking, a very small amount of weather helm is a good thing and we can 'feel' the pressure we are most comfortable with. The pressure should be just sufficient that if we let go of the tiller, it will move slowly to leeward and the boat will luff up. Actually, that is what the text books say, but we have to tune in to something much more subtle than that.

We should apply the minimum grip to keep the tiller under control thereby retaining the maximum feel which will enable us to feel anything else which might be going on such as a variation in the amount of weather helm.

Aside from the general background pressure, the tiller will also talk to us when we negotiate waves. We have a constant slight pressure as we maintain a course upwind but that will increase and then reverse as the bow first rises up and over a wave and then falls down the other side. The



(photo 1) Or perhaps we lost concentration and loaded the tiller up for a few seconds

The simple cure is to deploy the elbow lock to prevent the fall off and you will hold a steadier and higher course without the constant struggle

issue at this point is that if we have maintained just sufficient pressure to 'feel' the weather helm, then we will not have sufficient control to stop the tiller coming toward us as the bow begins to drop on the down side of the wave. This is compounded with a bad set of waves where the tiller will be fighting for all its worth or shouting at us.

There are texts which will say that you should luff up as the wave approaches and bear away as you accelerate down the back of the wave. The tiller naturally wants to lend itself

to this net result, and it may be fast in long-rolling waves but most Dragon venues will be in waves of a length that is too short for the benefits of direction changing (responding to the apparent wind consequences of decreases and increases in boatspeed) to outweigh the disadvantages of not holding a straight course.

Aside from loss in speed, there is great potential to lose height as the boat pivots on the top of the wave, the tiller unloads and possibly pushes from leeward (lee-helm). We are looking to minimise both types of losses.

Each individual can find a way of dealing with these issues but the writer prefers a combination of two techniques. The first way of controlling the changes and occasional reverses in pressure is to lock the tiller arm elbow in position. This in combination with an appropriate firming of the grip tends to steady her up more effectively than tightening the grip alone. If you are faced with a particularly short, and difficult series of waves such as would be created by a passing motorboat, the way to be absolutely sure that you will not lose ground to leeward is to put the tiller extension down to the coaming and to hold it there until the waves have passed. The writer will engage an extended tiller hand finger to lock the extension firmly against the coaming and at this point, the Dragon will pitch and the tiller will push and pull and generally nag but the course will be true throughout.

In stronger winds, the waves are a constant battle as the bow tends to fall to leeward over the back of the wave which in turn loads up the tiller before the process repeats itself – the boat 'stagger's'. The simple cure is to deploy the elbow lock to prevent the fall off and you will hold a steadier and

higher course without the constant struggle. This is an extremely powerful technique and yet it is nothing more than holding her steady, and perhaps slightly higher than she would otherwise want to be sailed when there is so much bow out of the water on the tops of the waves.

The helmsman's new-found levels of control and feel will tell him that, periodically, weather helm is released independently of any wave activity. This can be due to small changes in trim, weight distribution, apparent windspeed or perhaps we lost concentration and loaded the tiller up for a few seconds (photo 1), which then gave a period of zero helm until she settled back into her preferred mode.

Having said earlier that a very small amount of weather helm is to be preferred, the boat is at its fastest upwind when the weather helm is neutralised or 'released' (photo 2). The trouble is that neutral helm does not last very long but whenever it is achieved, you are content in the knowledge, fed to you by your tiller arm, that the boat is accelerating, albeit for a limited period.

Knowing this, you can begin to think about when to best use the available acceleration. One way is to help further mitigate the slowing effects of a bad set of waves by first applying a fraction more helm than would otherwise keep a steady course and then releasing the helm just as the waves meet the boat. At this point you are in elbow-locked mode but the net helm is neutral and the boat is at its most willing.

Another application of this temporary 'released' state of the helm is that it frees up some valuable grey matter that would be otherwise be designated to keeping the speed up. The time to concentrate the hardest is in fact when the boat is at its slowest and so conversely, when the tiller is in a released state, much less attention is required and the boat will find its own way. Knowing the boat is accelerating, the helmsman can take the opportunity to do any of those things which



(photo 2) The boat is at its fastest upwind when the weather helm is neutralised or 'released'

normally distract him, such as looking around at the competition or the more practised exponent will be able to perform complex tasks such as looking at a navigation chart or consuming some refreshment.

These few personal thoughts about the Dragon tiller raise many questions that are beyond the scope of this article or the competence of its author, but hopefully we can all aspire to higher levels of tiller awareness that we now know exist. The author fears, however, the inevitability of the day that the great Dane takes the tiller of an unfamiliar boat and asks "the rudder – is it blue?"

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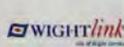
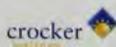
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How to sail fast up the first beat when you have

Oscillating shifts

When the wind is shifting back and forth (as it often is), the key to a successful first beat is catching the first shift after the start and then staying "in phase" with the breeze until you reach the windward mark. Here are some ideas on how to do that:

- **Find the median.** With an oscillating breeze, it's important to figure out the median, or average, wind direction. This is usually the direction that's midway between the farthest left shift and the farthest right shift you've seen.

Even more useful than the average wind direction are your median headings on each tack. These are the compass courses you are steering when the wind direction is at its median. You should always know whether you are sailing above or below your median on each tack, since this will tell you if you are lifted or headed.

- **Modify your median.** Once you figure out your median wind direction and headings, don't stop thinking about them. Sometimes the average wind direction shifts slightly to the left or right as you sail up the first beat. Make sure you notice this and adjust your numbers accordingly (during the first leg and afterward).

- **Tack on the headers.** Most racing sailors know that, when the wind is oscillating, they should tack on the headers to sail on the lifts. But when you are getting headed, which is the best time to tack?

If you tack when you first start to get headed, you are probably still on a lift (sailing above your median) so that's not a good idea. If you wait until you reach your lowest heading, you will have sailed lower than average on that tack when you could have sailed above your median on the other tack. The best time to tack, therefore, is when you are at the median (see next page).

- **Timing is not so important.** In my experience, it's easier to keep track of the range of shifts than to figure out their timing. So I focus on identifying whether the wind is left or right at any moment, rather than trying to predict when the next shift will come.

There are, however, two times on the first beat when it helps to know about timing. One is at the start when you're trying to figure out how soon the first shift will come. Another is near the first mark when you need to know whether the wind will shift again before you get there.

- **The last shift.** When you are approaching the windward mark, treat the last oscillation as if it is a persistent shift. That is, instead of tacking on the header as usual, sail farther into it until you fetch the mark (see Diagram 1).

- **Play the middle.** It's usually a good idea to play the middle of the course when the wind is oscillating (see Diagram 3). This helps you stay away from the laylines, which are dead-ends in a shifty

breeze. If you start getting too close to a layline, be willing to tack on smaller headers to head back toward the middle.

- **Don't chase shifts.** It can be tempting, when you see a boat nearby on a huge lift, to sail toward that shift and try to get it. However, this rarely works. More often than not, you must sail on a header to reach the other boat. And when you get there, half the time that great shift is gone.

It's better to focus on sailing in the wind you have. Use other boats as a guide to know how much you are lifted or headed, but don't try to sail for their shift. One exception to this is that it often works to go out of your way for better wind pressure, especially in lighter air.

- **To cover or not?** It's very difficult to "cover" other boats when the wind is shifty. You normally cover by staying between the other boat(s) and the next mark. If you try this in an oscillating breeze, however, you are likely to lose.

That's because if the boat you are covering is playing the shifts perfectly, you won't be (since you're in a different breeze than they are). In shifty winds, you must sail your own race first and worry about other boats second.

- **Sail fast on lifts.** If you are sailing on a lift (and you should almost always be sailing on a lift when the wind is oscillating!), you should sail just slightly lower and faster than normal (assuming you will have to tack at least once more on the beat). This will get you to the next shift sooner and maximize your VMG in the direction of the median wind (see Diagram 2). ●

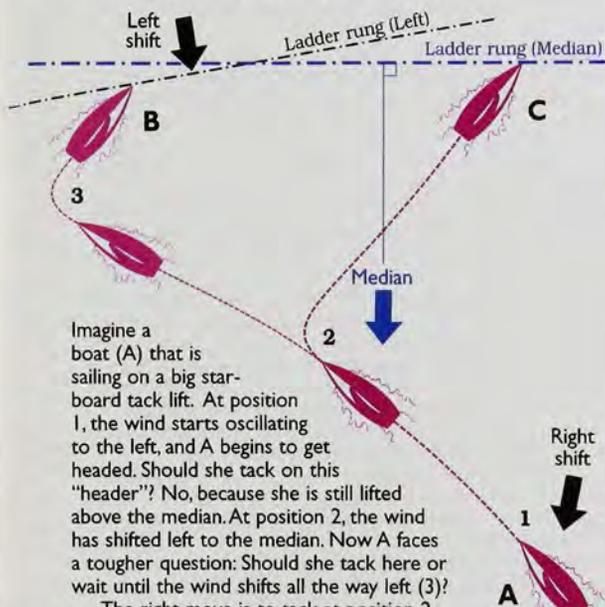


In the last issue I used this photo to help show that the wind is always shifting. It also provides a perfect example of what a fleet looks like in a classic oscillating breeze. When the wind oscillates back and forth, you often have obvious puffs and lulls, which is certainly the case here. Another characteristic of oscillating winds is that boats are lifted and headed across different parts of the course. You can see that boats on both tacks are sailing quite a range of compass courses in this photo. Boat 06, for example, has a big lift compared to the other starboard tackers.

JH Peterson photo

David Dellenbaugh's
SPEED & Smarts™

1. When to tack on a header



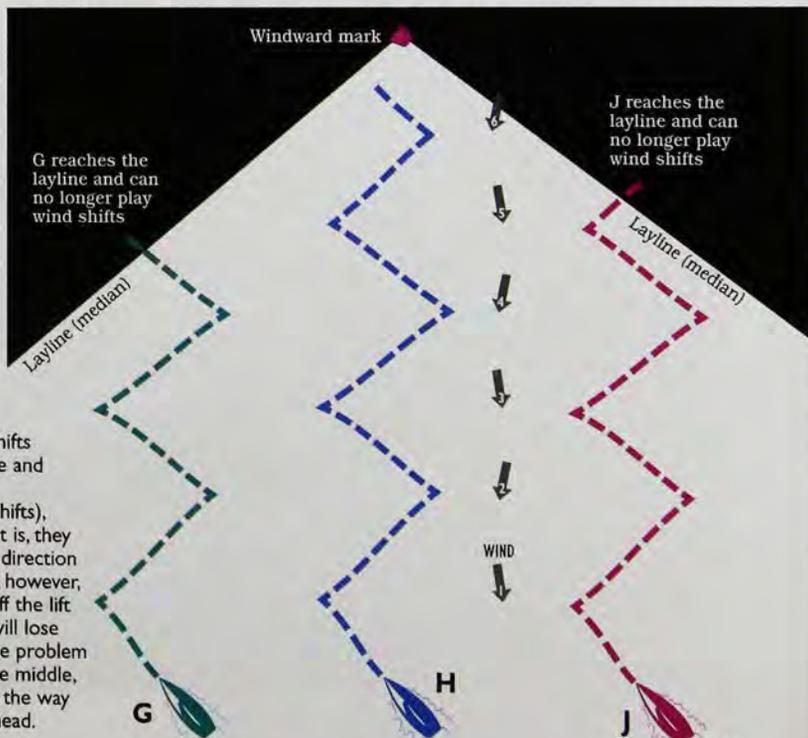
Imagine a boat (A) that is sailing on a big starboard tack lift. At position 1, the wind starts oscillating to the left, and A begins to get headed. Should she tack on this "header"? No, because she is still lifted above the median. At position 2, the wind has shifted left to the median. Now A faces a tougher question: Should she tack here or wait until the wind shifts all the way left (3)?

The right move is to tack at position 2. From 2 to 3, the wind is always left of the median. Therefore, port is the lifted tack during that time, so A should sail on port tack. If A keeps sailing on starboard to position 3, she will temporarily be ahead (B) when the wind shifts left. This is desirable if there are no more shifts before the mark. But if the wind shifts at least once more on the beat, C is in a much better position because she is farther upwind in the direction of the median.

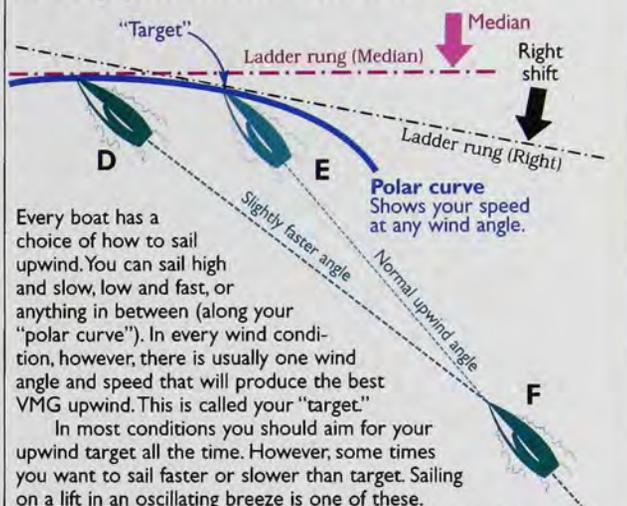
3. Stay in the middle

Why does it usually work to stay near the middle of the course when the wind is oscillating? Assume that three boats (G, H and J) start a race at different positions on the line as shown. The wind is a classic oscillating breeze that shifts regularly back and forth across a steady median. For our example, assume the wind shifts equally and simultaneously for all three boats. If each boat plays the shifts perfectly, they will all tack at the same time and will always be on the same tack.

For most of the first beat (the first 4 shifts), these boats are equal with each other. That is, they all make the same progress upwind in the direction of the median breeze. Before the 5th shift, however, G faces a problem. She must either tack off the lift or sail past the layline. In either case she will lose ground to the other boats. J faces the same problem before the 6th shift. Only H, which is in the middle, can continue playing the shifts properly all the way to the mark. That's why she'll come out ahead.



2. Why you should sail fast on a lift



Every boat has a choice of how to sail upwind. You can sail high and slow, low and fast, or anything in between (along your "polar curve"). In every wind condition, however, there is usually one wind angle and speed that will produce the best VMG upwind. This is called your "target."

In most conditions you should aim for your upwind target all the time. However, some times you want to sail faster or slower than target. Sailing on a lift in an oscillating breeze is one of these.

Picture a boat (F) that is sailing on a lift. If she sails her optimal upwind speed, she will end up at E. This speed gives her the best VMG possible relative to the right shift in which she is sailing. However, this is not her goal. She is really trying to maximize her VMG in the direction of the median wind direction. It turns out the best way to do this is by sailing slightly faster so she ends up at D. This optimizes her VMG toward the median and also gets her to the next shift sooner.

SAILING A DRAGON UPWIND in Light and Shifty Conditions

Simon Brien (*Kin* IRL 182) considers the optimum combination of balance, trim and helm control, taking into account the 'Mickey Mouse Ear'

The Dragon is widely regarded as the world's best one-design keelboat class, possibly due to its exquisite lines, depth and closeness of racing throughout Europe and worldwide, and the camaraderie in the class. However, it must be remembered that the design dates back 75 years and the boat weighs 1.8 tons.

This in itself provides another dimension to the racing. It is not a racing dinghy or planing sportsboat that can be tacked and gybed or manoeuvred without consideration and respect to the balance, sail trim and rudder movements.

For those moving into the class from dinghies, sportsboats or keelboats with transom-hung rudders, it can take a while to settle into the optimum combination of balance, trim and helm control to maximise boat speed.

With a long keel and 'Mickey Mouse Ear' rudder at the end, and 1.8 tons to keep moving at maximum speed there are many aspects to consider.

CREW POSITION AND BALANCE

Generally in light weather, the crew should sit as far forward as possible within the cockpit, perhaps with one on the lee rail (depending on wind strength) to maintain a small amount of leeward heel, which is preferable for the balance and feel of the helmsman.

Personally, except in very light weather, I prefer to sit to weather as I feel there is a better feel for coming wind shifts

and variances in strength, as well as better visibility of the game of chess on the race course and the overall sail trim.

WORKING THE SHIFTS AND VARIATIONS IN WIND STRENGTH

In light variable conditions, often as the wind increases, even marginally, it can veer, causing what appears as a rapid lift. The immediate response is often to put the tiller down to alter course to suit the new wind direction and strength – this is where the 'Mickey Mouse Ear' comes into play.

On *Kin*, we have found that with the displacement, long keel and 'Mickey Mouse Ear' rudder, it is best in these conditions to alter the entire sail trim of the boat to suit the new wind direction. We ease the genoa and main (very marginally), without first dramatically moving the tiller, thereby we increase the boat speed to the optimum. Once up to full speed, we start to alter course smoothly and progressively, simultaneously trimming the genoa and main back to full close-hauled beating.

This process of easing sheets, optimising speed, progressively beginning to 'point up' and 'trim on' can all happen within a matter of five to ten seconds. However, well executed crew work, particularly between the helmsman and front man can readily maximise boat speed and optimise pointing once the boat speed is achieved.

On *Kin*, I have been fortunate to sail with the same team

Simon Brien and the *Kin* team taking part in the GP Petit Navire regatta 2005 – photo Jacques Vapillon



for many years and like on any boat, or in a team sport, the instinctive actions of each member to their respective role pays dividends. Often by the time there is a board meeting over sail trim adjustments – the moment has gone!

Basically, in light winds, adjust trim first, then progressively alter course. Regular, aggressive tiller movements cause the good old 'Mickey Mouse Ear' to act like a brake.

LIGHT WINDS AND A SHORT CHOP

Sounds horrible and these are probably the most difficult conditions in which to sail a Dragon.

Basically, all of the aforementioned still applies but the chop just adds to the problem.

When sailing along in a relatively flat sea, balance, trim and optimising speed and pointing are paramount. However, in advance of a changing wave pattern that you see ahead of you, trim needs to be adjusted to maintain and, if possible, increase speed for the new conditions.

Immediately before hitting the new wave pattern we ease sheets marginally, and also ease the runners to optimise power. We have found that in particular the easing of the runner in advance of the waves keeps the momentum and power in the rig.

Obviously once past the wave or wave pattern, alter the rig set up as before.

A FEW OTHER MINOR POINTERS

- Main traveller pulled to weather – to keep the boom on the centreline
- Main sheet – not over sheeted with plenty of twist in leech
- Genoa Halyard – just enough tension to take creases out of luff
- Genoa Sheet – leech 4-5cm off spreaders, and just touching or 1-2cm off shrouds at deck level.

Basically, genoa leech profile should match main leech twist.

LIGHT WINDS – REALLY LUMPY SEA

Conditions which can often occur after windy conditions when the wind has gone through and left a lumpy sea.

Everything stated above still applies, except boat speed is paramount and optimising pointing becomes secondary.

We have experimented with putting on the inner barber to bring it close to the deck level and easing the sheet in lumpy conditions, thereby creating much more depth in the headsail. This can be particularly effective when carried out in these conditions.

FINALLY

After racing dinghies for many years and different keelboats, getting involved in the Dragon Class in 1992 has since provided myself and the *Kin* team with exceptional one-design racing on both the Irish and International circuits.

Each year, the class has gone from strength to strength, not only in Ireland, but worldwide, with many of the world's best yachtsmen sailing in the class (don't know if that's a good thing – it keeps getting more difficult to win!).

We have enjoyed regattas in many of the exquisite venues that the class has taken us to – from Martinique to Fremantle, Douarnenez, Cannes, Palma, St Tropez – I don't know what other class can host such a magnificent circuit, race organisation and social scene – a bit we quite enjoy!

Most of all, the Dragon Class has introduced us to competitors worldwide who have become great friends.

Seventy five years on, the class offers more than any other class worldwide. If you haven't tried racing one – have a go!

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FAKING IT FOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

or
How to make up
a 45 kilo deficit
by building some
automatic gears
into the rig set-up
– some tips from
GRAHAM BAILEY



GBR 660 *Aimee* testing raked spreaders, forward shrouds and slack jumpers prior to Cowes Week 2005

Excellent tuning guides are readily available from the main boat and sail manufacturers – use these as your set-up bible and if you are confident of your speed, then read no further. Sailing light? Don't have the edge against the max weight crews? Consider the following suggestions, which make the rig more forgiving.

1. RAKE THE SPREADERS

The spreaders are connected by a bar that runs through the mast. In the standard set-up this bar is straight, which makes for a fairly neutral setting in terms of the fore / aft deflection. You can alter the spreader setting by bending the bar, but leave this to a pro unless you have metalwork O-levels and a full shed of tools.

Raking the spreaders aft by 10 or 20 mm (measured at the tip) puts a bit more life into the mid-mast, which otherwise can be too stiff for us lightweights. This change allows the mid-mast to bend more readily, making it easier to de-power as the wind increases. It also helps to encourage a slightly more automatic wave and gust response because the tube is not held so rigidly in column.

2. MOVE THE SHROUD POSITION FORWARD AT DECK LEVEL

The shrouds may be taken to the forward adjustment holes through the deck so that, when sighting through the shrouds from athwartships, the entry point of both cap shrouds is just about in line with the forward face of the mast at deck-level.

This has a similar effect on the mid-mast as moving the spreaders aft, but to a lesser degree. Move the lower shrouds forward also – as close behind the caps as your equipment will allow.

In the breeze as you tighten the runner, you also put more tension in the caps since you now are pulling against them, which is like having automatically self-adjusting cap shrouds.

In the light, you can ease the runner and the mast wants to go forward slightly more. This reduces tension in the cap. You also get more headstay sag – good for power and pointing – (yes, sag the headstay to point higher).

In effect, you get a wider power-band with the ability to lose and gain power more easily adjusting only the runner tension.

3. SLACKEN YOUR JUMPERS

Some people like to adjust their jumpers and have the facility to do so from the cockpit. There may be a small benefit to this if you get it absolutely right and you don't mind spending your time thinking about it and looking up.

If you have a very small brain like mine, the less things you have to think about the better, so try fixing the jumpers at about 4 or 5 on the Loos tension gauge and forgetting about them. This tends to put a bit more life in the top mast and is probably the best all round fast-forward gear, particularly in unstable conditions.

4. LET THE MAST GO FORWARD AT DECK LEVEL AS THE WIND INCREASES

The new boats are now leading their mast ram controls aft so that it can be controlled while hiking. It's simple – if you have maximum runner on and you are still over-powered, ease the ram a bit.

5. PUT MORE RAKE IN THE MAST

If you are expecting a very windy race, set the forestay to one hole higher than your usual setting. Lightweights really can fake that extra 45 kgs with this adjustment.

Be careful though and only do this when it is going to be very windy all day because the power disappears easily if the wind should drop again, so you will be sitting in while the fatties are still hiking hard.

Don't go straight into a race without having tried this first as you may find you run out of adjustment on your runners. Remember also that you cannot alter the forestay length while racing.

SUMMARY

GB is not generally a believer in minute dimensional changes but the above suggestions all promote a more forgiving rig tune which will particularly appeal to the lighter crews.

Lastly, you will note that there is no suggestion that you should sit out further – but if you can, you should, if only on the front of the gust to help keep the tiller from loading up.

EDINBURGH CUP 2005

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John Heyes, MD Yachts & Yachting

The Edinburgh Cup, held from 30th May to 4th June, at the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club, Lowestoft, is the National Championship for the International Dragon Class and it was a tough and testing week for the 36-boat fleet.

Monday's race, held in a bruising 18 knots and very lumpy seas saw Peticrow boat builder Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen win from Rob Campbell in second place, with David Palmer in third. Palmer was crewed by Andy Beadsworth and David Carr, fresh from their bronze medal in the Star Class in Holland.

Tuesday's race was a contrast with little wind but the same strong tides and sand banks to get over. With the windward mark out on the edge of the shelf in deep water, the race was all about crawling up the shore before sliding out into the tide on a well judged layline. Runaway winner was Solent expert Eric Williams sailing with Jamie Lea, and that other potent Cowes team of Julia and Graham Bailey with David Heritage were not far behind. There was some controversy after one well-placed boat rounded the spreader mark but not the windward mark; claiming the marks had swapped places and that the spreader buoy was in the more windward position. He won his case leaving many others somewhat bemused.

Races 3 and 4 were held in a stronger 12-14 knot breeze and saw some great downwind sleigh rides in the classic Lowestoft chop. Johnnie Ross-Murphy and Ed Peel from Ireland scored wins in both races, sailing very cleanly and avoiding the numerous snakes and ladders upwind. It was possible to trade places many times on the same beat as sudden changes in tide over the sandbanks and a constantly shifting breeze regularly shuffled the pack.

Race 4 also ended in controversy after the fleet surfed downwind on a change of course bearing to find a leeward mark that was not there. The race officer had to abandon the race but after a protest the last mark roundings were used to gain a fair result of the two thirds of the race that had been sailed.

Friday's race in light airs saw local Squib champion Jimmy Tubby and host club Commodore Nick Faulkner hold off the double Olympic gold medallist Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen for three laps to score a great win. The Baileys in *Aimee* were on a charge, showing great downhill speed to squeeze out brother Richard, crewing James Mehew in *Comanche* for third.

With the top three boats all close on points and a strong breeze forecast it was all to play for in Saturday's final race. At stake was not just the famous trophy donated by HRH Prince Philip who used to race his own Dragon, *Blue Bottle*, but the event was also a qualifier for next summer's Europeans in Cowes. Racing in a gusty Force 5 breeze with the windward mark close in under the shore it was always going to be fluky approaching the mark. Sudden gusts and short-lived shifts characterised the final showdown race of the series.

David Palmer in *Princess Jalina* with Andy Beadsworth and David Carr led the race, fending off Class Chairman Rory Bowman who revelled in the breezy conditions. Eric Williams, second overall overnight was up there, fighting



Edinburgh Cup winner GBR 705 Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen seen in action here on the Solent – photo by Hamo Thornycroft

hard for the trophy in fourth place. Both Palmer and Williams must have believed they were in with a good chance of lifting the Cup as Hoj-Jensen thought he may have been over at the start and returned to re-cross, rounding the first mark in tenth. He even lost a few places and it was not until the final beat to the finish that he made the charge, passing six boats to finish fifth, just enough to take the Edinburgh Cup from David Palmer by a point, who in turn was only a single point ahead of Eric Williams. Fourth was Rory Bowman and fifth Julia Bailey.

Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen, a two-time Olympic Gold medallist and multiple World Champion, sailing with Thomas Wilton and Andrew Norden, thus re-claimed the Edinburgh Cup in dramatic style on the last upwind leg to the finish of the final race.

Hoj-Jensen was sailing the latest, injection-moulded boat from his own yard and with a Peticrow sail inventory, whereas both Palmer and Williams used similar hulls teamed with North sails.

John Heyes

MISSING SILVERWARE Edinburgh Cup Trophies

When phoning round before this year's event to check up on the trophies for individual races we were unable to locate the following two trophies:

1. The BDA Plate – awarded to the winner of 6th Race, believed to be last presented in 2000.
2. The Puffin Plate – awarded to the best placed Dragon more than 25 years old. Not presented for four or five years, this plate may not be engraved as an Edinburgh Cup Trophy. Have you got it in your trophy collection? It has been suggested that it might be somewhere in the West Country...

If you have any information on either of these trophies, please contact Class Chairman Rory Bowman and if possible, send a photograph.

NB. There have been complaints from members, of trophies not being engraved. Please ensure that the BDA's valuable trophies are kept up-to-date and clean for the next winner!

ALDEBURGH

IN 2005 WE SAW THE FULL introduction of the Aldeburgh fleet's new-style racing programme. The points series was held on specified Saturdays, approximately once a month, on which three races were held. This was done in the knowledge that all of us have other commitments but that, forewarned, we would be more likely to commit to turning up on the same weekend as our fellow Dragon sailors for some intensive sailing.

It has worked. Admittedly on one weekend Dusty Hughes turned up to find an absence of competitors. Some of us had the excuse of international competition or weddings but where were the others? The weather didn't entirely co-operate. One weekend was so windy that only one race was sailed and *Kraken* nearly filled up in it. On another the wind was so light that some boats never made it to the start line against the tide.

These were minor problems set against a much-liked format. In the end *Kraken* won the series which ended in what were effectively three match races between Rick Gillingham in *Navaho* and Mike Hayles in *Kraken*. These were very close and characterised by tactical ineptitude on both sides, but slightly less by Mike especially since Rick's lapses included a conviction for ABH (or possibly driving without due care) against a Swallow. As a consolation prize in the points series he won the Margaret Roney Cup in one of its slower renewals.

The regatta provided extremely close racing both at the front of the fleet between *Kraken*, *Navaho* and *Yeah Baby* but also in the middle where *Orion* and *Panther* had a close battle. In the end *Navaho* won on countback from *Kraken*. Both had two firsts and two seconds to count but *Navaho* won the last race. Before that, however, there had been one of the closest finishes seen with six feet between first and third after 11 miles. The race officer was heard wishing she had had a photo-finish camera.

Away from home Rory won the East Coasts at Lowestoft, but had a slightly disappointing Edinburgh Cup for him (he didn't win). *Kraken* and *Panther* also went to Lowestoft. *Kraken* had moments of success but was inconsistent. *Panther* made sure of enjoyment and education. *Kraken* also went on the gastronomic circuit in France at La Baule and La Trinite, collecting a creditable tenth in the European Championship.

2006 will see innovation in the form of personal handicaps. A trophy is being awarded and it will be interesting to see who manages to deceive the handicapper before placing his bet on the regatta result. Watch this space.

Patrick Gifford

BURNHAM

'THE DRAGON DIARY' is a well kept secret (many would wish it was completely secret). Hidden behind the bar, it is only brought out by relatively few authors wishing to record humorous, surprising, but mainly tragic events. Some entries are worthy of recall – they are included in this season's report.

At the 2004 Dragon Dinner Martyn Fogg

won the much-coveted Clanger award. The events qualifying Foggy for the award are surpassed only by his antics this year, of which more later.

For the first race of the season in mid March, Foggy forgot to take any sails with him and then having acquired some, sailed straight onto the mud. The diary tells me that the shock of the cold water meant that Foggy was fully awake to acknowledge the first Clanger Points of 2005.

Despite Easter being exceptionally early this year, our main event – the Burnham Dragon Easter Regatta – was keenly supported, attracting entries from Cowes, the Medway, and as far away as Ostend. Lack of wind gave race officer Kim Allen some real headaches in the early stages but patience and professionalism (and some of the blowy stuff) meant we finally completed the full number of races.

The Regatta saw the first outing of the beautiful, newly-built wooden boat *Merithe*, skippered by Richard Jordan. She was built by two young lads from Hull, who were watching eagerly from ashore (they don't sail). Going into the final day's racing, three boats – *Spindrift*, *Avalanche*, and *Merithe* – were clearly ahead and had a shot at the overall title. Having gone ashore, heard the protests and tallied the points, it was the consistent Gary Harrison, crewed by son Tom and Martin 'Stavros' Payne in *Spindrift*, who bagged the Easter Regatta title on the countback from Mark Wade, crewed by Mandy and John Davies in *Avalanche*. Richard Jordan, Jeremy Field and 'Little Legs' took third spot in *Merithe*.

The Regatta benefited again from generous sponsorship – thanks to Bolle, Peticrows, Mailspeed, Musto, Cadburys, Allen Brothers, Forrester Hyde, and Rice & Coles, whose contributions certainly helped make the event a resounding success.

The travelling season began in early May, with a major exodus of the Burnham fleet (*Danish Blue*, *Hand of Fortune*, *Spindrift*, *Leah*, and *Magic*) to Douarnenez. I don't have the results to hand but the Diary helps me out with an entry entitled 'Too much Magic?' Apparently David Andrassi in the new *Magic* searched the whole start line of 100 boats to find the old *Magic* and proceeded to try and mate the two. And abracadabra – much damage and red faces – but sadly no baby dragons.

The East Coast Championship and Edinburgh Cup were held in Lowestoft this year with eight Burnham boats out of 36 entries. Top places in the East Coasts were *Quicksilver* seventh, *Chips* ninth, *Hand of Fortune* 18th. And in the Edinburgh Cup, *Danish Blue* first, *Quicksilver* ninth, *Hand of Fortune* tenth. Other Burnham boats were *Ganador*, *Jubilee*, *Mithrandir* and *Spoof*.

Back on the river, towards the end of May we had good sailing but some big winds and the Diary records a number of races with many more starters than finishers. One such entry is entitled 'Campbell in the Soup' and records a blowy day when Rob was crewing on *Amok*, coming round Redward onto the wind in second place, when Rob's hiking aid gave way. Rob went over the side but was still attached by a line tight around his finger towing him deeper and deeper under the water until only his white hair was still visible beneath the murky waters. He

was rescued by Poul Richard in a motor boat and went back to watch the FA Cup Final in the club. Some people will do anything to avoid coming second.

Five Burnham boats (*Danish Blue*, *Hand of Fortune*, *Quicksilver*, *Avalanche* and *Tsunami*) made the trip to the Dragon Worlds in Neustadt at the end of August. The event was highly competitive with Poul Richard taking fifth place and the next highest Burnham boat being Mike Holmes in *Hand of Fortune* at 35th out of 73 entries.

Burnham Week saw great weather, great racing, great socialising and some big hangovers. I can't remember much except David Hall won in *Flame Again* – congratulations David.

Martin Makey and the new *Ganador* went to the Regatta Royale in Cannes. Many people asked Martin the secret of his success after he came second overall including two seconds in a fleet of 93 – was it some new found talent? Martin says it was all down to 'Doc' Sudell and 'Ropes' Phil Green, who kept him sober and calm. Martin also claims that being bang on the start line, brilliant boatspeed and inspired helming (combined with his usual modesty) helped a little. Congratulations Martin – try and do better next year.

On November 5th and 6th we have a party of Russians visitors arriving to have a weekend of team racing. There will be four 'Russian' and four Burnham boats competing in five races; plus the normal Saturday afternoon fleet race to involve all Burnham Dragons and provide a few vodka opportunities.

As we go to press, there is much speculation over this year's winner of the Clanger. Not that the author wishes to influence the decision but I will finish with one more Diary entry for October 15th which says 'A beautiful day with sun and a steady Force 4-5 – out to Inner Crouch with Campbell in the lead. Foggy in *Hatrick*, desperate to keep *Amok* behind them, decided that they might go a little faster if they jettisoned some ballast...in the form of

The Falmouth fleet seen in action during Henri-Lloyd Falmouth Week – photo Roger Hollingsworth



Duncan...and sailed on with spinnaker and sheets tangled in what looked like a piece of modern art. *Amok*, as always doing the honourable thing, retired to pluck Duncan from the water in what I can only describe as a text-book 'MOB rescue'. The points are adding up. Foggy!

As always, the success of the season stems from a lot of hard work from our supporters and there are a number of people to be thanked. Our race officers and team including Bruce Burnett, Edwin Buckley, Paul Noonan and Kim Allen, supported by Roger and Sue Mant have done a fantastic job throughout the season. Everyone in the fleet helps out but I would particularly like to thank Woody and Kate Cole and the team who all did a fantastic job with the Easter Regatta, and Matt Walker and his Crewsearch cohorts who continue to do a great job for both owners and crew. I would also like to thank all of the house staff including Tony, Margaret, Barbara, Caroline and Peter Hughes.

Finally, although much has been said elsewhere, I know the entire fleet would want to join in paying tribute to two great characters and friends of the fleet who died this year, Peter Gimpel and Tony Glaze.
Clive Morgan

FALMOUTH

NOW ALL THE DRAGONS are safely tucked away for the winter, or sent on their holidays to the South of France after another eventful season, it is time to reflect.

A fair degree of racing has taken place for Dragons this year, on Tuesday evenings courtesy of Flushing SC, Friday evenings courtesy of the Royal Cornwall YC and Mylor SC, through to the very enjoyable and entertaining Saturday village regattas. The calendar culminated in the main event of Henri-Lloyd Falmouth Week, which has established itself as the second largest annual regatta week behind Cowes Week, but has the advantage of the sailing taking place in some of the best sailing waters in the world.

The Dragons, who had their courses positioned in the safety of the Carrick Roads, welcomed two visitors to the fleet of 10 entries. *Galax II* (GBR 615), skippered by Mr P Thomas, and *Buccaneer* (GBR 256), skippered by Mr G Day. Unfortunately, Mr Day was unable to bring his own boat down to the event, as his trailer gave up the ghost in Wales on the way down. As he did not want to miss the event, he left his boat in Wales and then chartered *Buccaneer* (GBR 256) for the week.

With a very full social programme ashore, the week was always going to be long and tiring. However, the weather was very generous for most of the time, with brilliant sunshine and light breezes. Although during the week the start time of 2pm, meant that the late afternoon sea breeze could, and did, turn things around in some of the races by 180 degrees, keeping all the crews on their toes.

The regatta format was for one race a day, over six days, allowing for one discard. Race 1 saw only four competitors arrive at the start line. Mike Couldry in *Rainbow* (GBR



Great weather for the Burnham Week Dragons – photo Hugh Bourn

686), claimed first place, with Clive Hoyle in *Ferris Wolf* (GBR 524) second and Tim Dewhurst in *Quartet* (GBR 505) third.

Race 2 had a much larger contingent of eight competitors on the start line with again *Rainbow* (GBR 686) coming out on top, followed this time by *Quartet* (GBR 505) and *Ferris Wolf* (GBR 524) in third. Mr J Gibbons sailing *Encore* (GBR 488) recorded his best result of the week finishing fourth.

Race 3 saw the same line up at the front as in race 2, but the main activity was taking place in the middle of the fleet. On one leeward mark rounding, a number of Dragons were arriving at the same time, the skipper on one of these boats, reputedly *Tana* (GBR 498), advised his crew not to worry, as he was fully in control and up to date on the rules. Unfortunately, he took his eye slightly off the ball, went through an involuntary gybe, and lost one of his crew over the side. After recovering his crew, he rounded the leeward mark, all on his own.

Race 4 was now showing a regular pattern in the top two positions, with again *Rainbow* (GBR 686) finishing just ahead of *Quartet* (GBR 505), but this time it was Nick Offord, who has joined the local Dragon fleet this season, who progressively improved and finished a well-deserved third in *Tucano* (GBR 695).

Race 5 and 6 reflected the results in race 4, with *Rainbow* (GBR 686) again prevailing over the fleet, followed by *Quartet* (GBR 505) and *Tucano* (GBR 695). Race 5 saw Mr P Thomas record his best of the week in *Galax II* (GBR 615) in fourth, and similarly in race 6, Mr Peter Flutter sailing *Quicksilver* (GBR 534), saving his best to last finishing fourth.

The last race on the Saturday did not form part of the overall week, but is known as the Champagne Race, run by Falmouth Town – with the prize being Champagne. Only the top two competitors for the week ventured out to the course, and the weather was not very appealing, large rain showers and a fair amount of breeze. As a result, the race became more akin to a match race, and never really saw more than a few boat lengths between the two boats around the entire racecourse. However, *Rainbow* (GBR

686) just managed to fend off the advances of *Quartet* (GBR 505) and rounded of a very successful week with another victory.

Looking forward to next season, again Henri-Lloyd Falmouth Week will be the local highlight, and with the Gold Cup taking place in France a few weeks after, would serve as an ideal warm up for that very prestigious event, and we would love to welcome more visitors to our fleet next year. The organisers are anxious to attract more Dragons to Falmouth. Those interested please see website www.falmouthweek.co.uk or e-mail falmouthweek@btinternet.com for more information.
Tim Dewhurst

IRISH FLEET

AFTER THE EXCITEMENT of St Tropez and the 75th Anniversary, 2005 was a year of consolidation for the Irish fleets and, for the officers, time to think about the Worlds in Dun Laoghaire in 2007.

Our three regular championships, the East Coasts, the South Coasts and the Nationals, were augmented by a new event at the close of the season in fresh water and this was a huge popular success, as BDA Chairman Rory Bowman will attest as he guest helmed *Das Boot* in this inaugural Lough Derg event.

The first regatta after the cold douche of Douarnenez was the East Coast Championship. This was hosted by the National YC in Dun Laoghaire and was won by the evergreen Simon Brien in *Kin*. Neil Hegarty was second in *Phantom* and IDA Treasurer Andrew Craig was third in *Chimaera*.

A month later at the end of June the National Championship was held in Kinsale in challenging conditions. Stavros (Martin Payne) won the series, followed by Simon Brien and the Lavery/Bowing/Maguire team in *Das Boot*. Simon was the inaugural winner of the beautiful Finnegan Cup which had been presented to the Irish Fleet by John Finnegan (Jane & Chiang) in 2004 as

FLEET REPORTS

part of the 75th celebrations. It is now to be perpetually awarded to the best Irish result in the final two races of the National Championship.

The South Coast Championship was held in beautiful Glandore in September and won by Ward Woods in *Jessica*. Second was Andrew Craig, and third Cameron Good in *Tatsu*. The legendary hospitality of the Glandore Inn was enjoyed by all and everyone vowed to return as soon as possible.

And so to the new and highly popular event of the calendar: a fresh water series on the largest lake on the Shannon waterway – Lough Derg. It was hosted superbly by the Lough Derg YC in the second weekend of October. Of course it was a little shifty but this is lake sailing, and what a wonderful lake to sail on.

We had great racing on the Friday and Saturday, but unfortunately racing had to be canned on Sunday as gusts topped 35 knots and the waves grew murderously steep. Recovery of boats was an object lesson for regatta organisers everywhere. There was a predetermined order for lifting, and no barging was tolerated. The 'crane' was a hydraulic on a flat-bed truck – operated by a septuagenarian genius with a Game Boy-style 'remote', and as trailers were hauled away they were hosed down by a power wash. Fifteen boats took part and the organisers can confidently expect 25 next year.

Following a number of discussions during the season, at the Irish AGM it was agreed to draw up a formal set of criteria for race officers to help them provide the kind of championship racing that most Dragon sailors want. This includes – minimum beats of 1.5 to 2 miles, full windward leg to finish, possibility of two races on some days but length of races not to be compromised.

The decision made at the IDA agm to allow four crew in the Dragon has been welcomed by most Irish Dragon sailors. Even those who are against it cannot see

that it will do any real harm. On the contrary, it is a sign that the class is progressive and prepared to try new things which may make the class even more popular.

Next season crews look forward to the Europeans in Cowes in June and the Gold Cup in Douarnenez in August.

The Irish fleet particularly welcomes visitors to Dun Laoghaire for the Nationals in September 2006, which will be held at the same time of year as the Worlds in 2007.
Tim Pearson

LOWESTOFT

WE HAD A BUSY winter and spring organising the two main regattas – the East Coasts and the Edinburgh Cup – and all of our meetings were kindly hosted by Peter Colby at Wymondham.

We were able to take the Dragons to Lowestoft on April 2nd and then we were training new crews till Friday May 27th arrived. All the local yachts were launched early so that all 35 Dragons would be in the water ready for Saturday. We were fortunate that Waveney DC allowed us to use their 'Iron Horse' to tow the Dragons around the car park and ABP allowed us to use their facilities for storing trailers and cars.

After all the excitement of the East Coast and Edinburgh Cup, we had a week spare before the June Regatta. We were pleased that some visitors had stayed for this event, which was held in good weather and won by Rob Campbell with Jimmy Tubby in *Merlin* and Sarah Sullivan in *Jubilee* equal second.

Saturday racing continued until Lowestoft Sea Week, which was won by *Merlin* with Jimmy Tubby and the Commodore Nick Faulkner. A collision on the start line between *Mystere* and *Merlin* resulted in a large hole on the starboard side of *Merlin* and Jimmy Tubby fracturing a rib. Jimmy sailed the rest of the Week but has been unable to sail since and so missed the Southern.

The Blaxter Salver weekend took place in light winds and was won by Peter Colby from James Mehew, with *Secret* helmed by Peter Pank in third place.

We now have 12 Dragons at the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk YC and great effort will be put in over the winter to make sure we have enough crews next year. Jimmy Tubby has been elected Class Captain and our BDA Representative is Nick Faulkner.
Peter Pank

MEDWAY

2005 WAS ANOTHER GREAT season of Medway sailing. We had very good turn out throughout the season and fiercely competitive racing within the fleet.

In the overall results there was only one point between both first and second and second and third as well! The result on all three overall trophies was left to the last Saturday of racing. Before this race, two boats were tying for the end of season series trophy and the autumn series, and three boats were tying for the 'Rogue' – our trophy for the greatest number of firsts.

Racing was not only tight but also very busy – this year, we had up to 16 out of 17 boats on the start line for Saturday afternoon racing – and never less than nine Dragons competing.

The shore-side services have seen a boost for this season: Chatham Maritime Marina offer a dry-sailing package from our moorings which was used by two of our owners and the Medway YC is providing a weekly power-hosing service. This was taken up very well by our members and is proving to be a valuable service to facilitate Dragon sailing on our river.

Sailing this year kicked off in April with a day of three races back to back on windward-leeward courses to get everyone warmed up. Even though we get a lot of very good windward-leeward racing when we sail around the buoys, this was very good practice to shake the winter out of the sails and ourselves.

The next week we started Club racing and our regular Saturday afternoon racing series with 27 races this year began. Len Jones – who had not stopped sailing over the winter, really – and his co-owner Nick Jenkins in *Chouette* got off to a good start of the season winning the Proton Cup, which is decided over the first four races without discard.

For 2005, we introduced a new series to be raced for between the Medway Regatta and Burnham Week. This year, the Gallos in *Luna* won the trophy. Early in September, our Autumn Series for the 211-Cup starts and it doesn't finish till the last race. Stewart Coltart in his new Dragon *Valkyrie* and team Jones/Jenkins in *Chouette* were both very close to winning it. By winning the last race, Len and Nick put their hands on this trophy too. But in the big picture Stewart and Catriona beat them into third place for the season and came second overall this year. The winners of our overall series were team 'BBC', Philip Clarabut, Bruce Boyd and Peter Booth.

In July, it was the Medway Regatta, which

Martin Makey and crew in the new *Ganador* at Burnham Week – photo Hugh Bourn



was again won by Len Jones and Nick Jenkins, second were team BBC with Philip Clarabut on the helm and third was *Scimitar* with Julian and Claire Sowry and Sam Gray. This year the visitor's trophy was taken home by David Crabb and his team. The winners over the previous years, the Sowrys, are now members of the Medway Dragon Fleet.

Our travellers went abroad and to national events this year: we had representatives in La Baule, where the Sowrys won a race, in Ostend for the Belgian Championship and Len took his other Dragon *Rumours* to Lowestoft and Cowes for the qualifying events for the European Championship next year. He did well and qualified as third overall.

The Medway report would be incomplete without a brief recap on our socials: the Medway Yacht Club had its 125th birthday this year and this was celebrated with a ball in September. The Dragons had a number of casual suppers and this year we had a cocktail party after the last race to see the racing season out in style. The winter programme includes our Christmas lunch with wine tasting and our prize giving dinner in March.

The outlook: very bright! We are looking forward to getting at least one or two new – or new to us – boats, and at least two of our members are upgrading their boats to something newer. This means even more serious competition next year. We also have a number of very keen crews looking for regular slots or available at the last minute.

Next season we are also planning to hold a Medway Autumn Dragon (or MAD Weekend) with four or five windward-leeward races, and the usual party at the end of September.

We are always open to visitors who would like to come and sail with us at any time, not only for club events. Medway YC is conveniently located within 15 minutes drive from the M25/A2 junction.

Hilary Gallo

THE SOLENT

IT IS THAT TIME OF year again – nights are drawing in, leaves are falling off the trees, there is a slight nip in the air, and Julia Bailey is on the phone to her insurance broker upping the limit on her house contents silverware policy.

The Cowes fleet has experienced another superb year. Things got underway with the Spring series – the first gun was fired by the Island SC on April 24th with 14 Dragons on the water. The first race was won by Peter Nicholson on *Virago*, the silver fox putting an early marker down for the year. After four weekends of hard-fought racing, it was the lovable lawyer Mrs Julia Bailey who took the Spring Series Trophy with Gavia Wilkinson Cox in second and Nicholson a close third.

Midway through the Spring Series, the Cowes Fleet ran the Jubilee Regatta, created by the crew of *Stamperde* in 2004 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the class. This event was fittingly won this year by Neil Payne and crew on *Stamperde*. The rules of the regatta, which were created by Neil, state that only he can win it. We are looking



Some of The Solent fleet with GBR 465 *Reprise* (Keith and Thelma Skelsey) in the foreground – photo Hamo Thornycroft

into changing this rule for the 2006 season.

In the mid-season we unfortunately lost a couple of weekends due to either too much wind or too little wind. However, enough races were sailed to get a series in and it was John 'Cuddly' Dudley who took the trophy. John has been sailing Dragons for many years. Over the winter of 2004 he spent a considerable amount of time working on his boat, *Phase 2*. So when she was put into the water for the 2005 season, many thought he had bought a new racing machine. She looks lovely in the water and great to see John with this deserved win. Second overall was Neil Payne on *Stamperde* and third was Mrs Bailey on *Aimee*. I say Mrs Bailey, but she is quick to point out that it was Graham who did most of the driving in this, their worst performance in a series since records began in 1885.

For the summer series in early July, the start lines off the various clubs on The Parade regularly saw 20-plus Dragons gather to do battle. With this amount of competition, it was clearly going to take a special performance to take the title. It was Mrs Bailey who kept the pedal to the metal to take the series, by only two points from the legend, Mr Chris Brittain in *Caramba*, who took the runners-up spot. Third overall on the same points but with a worse discard was Peter Nicholson. After 12 races only five points separated the top four boats – great racing.

Cowes Week this year really was a corker – the competition at this event gets better and better. The racing is serious but Cowes is more about having a bit of fun – a good yacht race in the morning followed by a few beers by the water with your mates – what more could one ask for?

Neil Payne took fifth place overall, and fourth place went to Gavia Wilkinson Fox on *Jerboa*. In third was Eric Williams on *Ecstatic*. The real battle though, was between the top two, Graham Bailey and Poul Richard Hoj Jensen. These two get on quite well to the extent that Graham and Jules usually have Poul and Sophie to stay with them when they are in Cowes – was Poul nervous about upsetting his landlord?

Clearly not. The battle, which will go down in Cowes Week history, is now known as 'The Tangle on the Bramble' – for good reason. Graham put in his traditional OCS on the Wednesday and from that moment on he could afford no mistakes. Hoj Jo was always there at the front of the fleet and in the end it came down to the last race of the week. Overall victory, and by the closest of margins, went to Bailey, with Hoj Jensen second.

Fleet racing resumed in early September with the Autumn series. Again numbers on the start line regularly hit 20-odd boats. Let's make sure we build on that next year. The overall Autumn winner, Jeremy Field, has only been driving for a year and in that time I reckon he has helmed about 20 yacht races. Winning anything in Cowes these days is an achievement in itself but to win a series is superb – well done Mr Field. Second overall was perhaps one of the nicest, kindest, loveliest, tallest, people I know to race in the class, Mr Chris Brittain. And third it was that man Cuddly Dudley.

I am told that Graham was driving *Aimee* again in this one – hence their absence from the leaderboard. I understand that Graham and Julia, after initially not talking to each other for a couple of days, have now sorted out their differences and are once again on speaking terms. If he messes it up again though, they may get lawyers involved.

Red Funnel Ferries sponsor a series of windward/leeward races held over six weekends throughout the year – two races on a Saturday and two races on a Sunday. Each Cowes club takes it in turns to run these popular weekends.

The cream usually rises to the top and this year proved to be no exception as Peter Nicholson took the overall trophy with Mrs Bailey in second and the boys on *Rascal Rat* in third place.

The SCRA medal has always baffled me – I don't really know how the points work – but it is awarded by the South Coast Racing Association to a boat that has done extremely well throughout the year. This year it went to *Virago* helmed by Peter Nicholson – jolly well done young man.

The one everyone wants, however, is the Overall Series – this is for the boat that has performed consistently well over the course of the year. This year it really was very, very close, – a number of boats have had a superb year. *Virago*, *Rascal Rat*, *Jerboa*, *Aimee*, *Caramba* and *Phase 2* to name a few. But in the end there can be only one and that one, is again, the one, the only, Mrs Julia Bailey and her team on *Aimee*. A very good effort Jules. Always great to sail against you, your husband and H, or whoever else you bring along to make up team *Aimee*, keep it up you little monkey.

So that's it, all over for another year. Some things never change in Cowes, the wind, the tide, the rocks, Julia winning, Neil nearly winning, Rod always serving. Maybe that is what we all admire and love about the place. Whatever it is, it will be there next year and so will all of us – the Cowes Dragon Family – probably the best family in the world.

Matt Armstrong



Nick Hyde, Roy Roberts and Mick Keech enjoying Burnham Week
– photo Hugh Bourn

SOUTH COAST CHAMPIONSHIP

THE SOUTH COASTS CHAMPIONSHIP, organised by the Royal Corinthian YC and supported by Whitelink Ferries took place over the weekend of September 17th and 18th.

Twenty-four boats entered the event, numbers obviously bolstered by the fact that this was the last chance for some competitors to qualify for the European Championship which will be held in the Solent in 2006.

Principal Race Officer Ian Lallow had spent the week leading up to the event with at least one eye on the forecast and must have been a touch nervous when he realised that it was going to be a light and tight weekend. Eric Williams, the 'shiftmeister' was no doubt rubbing his hands together at this prospect. Rory Bowman, the 'heavy weather king', was slightly less confident and Owen Pay couldn't have cared less as he was treating the weekend as his stag do.

In the end the entire weekend was dominated by light northerly winds but as usual the Force was with Ian Lallow who did a superb job to get a series in. All races were sailed, with the exception of the final race, which was abandoned at the windward mark due to a lack of wind and building tide. No place was safe while racing, most boats going from hero to zero at some point during each race, Owen Pay, however, spent most of the weekend going from an outhouse to a penthouse – I think in every race he was almost last round the windward mark – great tactics which certainly paid off in the end.

Sixth overall was 1994 Cowes Week champion Len Jones who, like most, had a bit of an up and a down weekend but as usual with young Lenny, when he was up he was up and when he was down he was down, and when he was only half way up he was neither up nor down. Fifth overall was Burnham man Mike Holmes on *Hand of God*. Mike put in another solid performance both on the water and at the championship dinner on the Saturday night, when he proposed a toast to the Solent fleet on behalf of the visitors – there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Fourth overall and would you believe it, Owen Pay comes away on his stag weekend, drinks himself into all sorts of trouble and comes away with a superb result. Unlike some, I have always believed that if you drink enough you will do well enough and the Lampost is walking proof of that.

Third overall was multiple Edinburgh Cup winner Chris Pank with limited assistance from Class Captain Rory Bowman and Robin Naughton-Rumbo. The boys on *Yeah Baby* were in relaxed mood all weekend, Rory even staying up until after 9.30 on Saturday night. That probably cost him two places in the overall standings but as Rory said at 3 am on Sunday morning at the bar of the RCYC, 'half the fun of these events is seeing my sailing friends again and having a good, fun time'. It was an emotional moment for all present.

Second overall was Solent legend Eric Williams with Duncan Grindley and Rory Patten on *Ecstatic*. Eric won races 1 and 3, which, in the conditions, was no mean feat. However, the abandonment of the final race ended his chances of overall victory. Eric is one of the most consistent performers on the UK Dragon

circuit and most competitors regard it a pleasure to race against the wiley poor barge operator, affectionately known to some as Uncle Eric.

And so to the winner, in first place overall sailing *Elusive* and South Coast Champion 2005 Ivan Bradbury, Martin Payne and Will Willets – well done guys. Ivan has had a great season in what I think is his first year driving full time. Even Stavros calling tactics could not mess things up for him and he comes away from Cowes a well deserved winner.

Thanks to the Royal Corinthian for all their efforts, in particular Louise Morton, Willie Sanderson, PRO Ian Lallow and his race team, also to Rod Whitewood and the team behind the bar and to our sponsor Whitelink Ferries who continue to support the Solent Dragon Division.

Matt Armstrong

EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP

LOWESTOFT DRAGON FLEET members were down at the club early Friday morning to launch their Dragons and push their trailers down the Tug Arm. After that exercise we went in to be weighed and then waited for the visitors to arrive. Thirty-two Dragons were launched and moored that evening and those within the weight limits were able to sit down and have supper – a few were sent for reprocessing.

On Saturday the forecast was for winds of Force 5 but we left harbour in Force 3. During the race the wind rose to Force 5 gusting 6. A collision occurred in the first race when Mike Holmes became perched at the windward mark and hit *Ecstatic* carrying away his runners, he also hit *Princess Jaina* carrying away the runners and also causing the yacht to gybe. This was when the boom hit Mark Corvell on the head. They were towed in and Mark taken to hospital where he remained for several days. Average points were awarded to those boats involved and the race was won by Rory Bowman with Len Jones in second place.

The second race, sailed in even stronger winds with 12 yachts retiring through gear failure or sheer exhaustion, was won by Richard Jordan. Jones was again second, and Bowman third.

Sunday's races were sailed in light winds, but this did not stop Rory Bowman winning both races. Crewed by Chris Pank and Robin Naughton-Rumbo, Bowman therefore won the East Coast Championship from an entry of 35 Dragons.. Second in the fourth race was Martin Payne, and third was Len Jones crewed by PR-HJ. After several discussion/ protest meetings, they then took the runners-up trophy for the East Coast championship.

Peter Pank

Jesper Bank's non-Technical Tuning Guide

In 1998 when Jesper Bank had just won the Worlds and come second in the Europeans, Patrick Gifford was finding his main and genoa difficult to set up. After an exchange of faxes with Jesper, back came a clear, non-technical tuning guide, which is reproduced here...

Dear Patrick,

I have the exact opposite feeling about the sails than you have. As you have noticed, we sail with everything quite loose. Virtually no tension on the lowers, and the uppers so loose that the leeward shroud is loose (only just) in eight knots upwind sailing.

Looking up the mast it is straight sideways in winds up to 14 knots. As the wind increases, you tighten up the lowers until the top goes to leeward by approximately 8cm. This setting should be reached in 25 knots. Between 14 and 25 knots you apply the tension on the lowers that gives you the best feeling on the helm.

This is not as scientific as could be, but use it as a guide and try it. Forget what you are doing today. Look at the tension on the upper shrouds and on the lowers, get the feeling right. Then measure the tension. Not before.

You have most observations right (I had set out what we thought, from observation, he was doing). We do not use any runner tension in winds up to 6-7 knots. The appropriate headstay tension is coming from the mainsheet. This means that when you have set your main right, your headstay sag is also right. How can it possibly be any simpler?

The tension on the luff of the genoa is decided by the twist of the sail. Apply halyard tension until the telltales fly the same. If for some reason you want the top of the sail more powerful and less twisted, apply more and more tension.

As the wind increases, runner tension is needed. As a guideline: have 4-6cm of forestay sag with three people on the rail.

To make all this work you need a good stiff top (Jesper used fixed jumpers). When we measure the tension on our jumpers 50cm from the turnbuckle, our gauge shows 25. That tension gives you a 1cm forward bend when there is no sail up. When sailing in 10 knots you will see a 1-2cm aft

bend over the whole length of the mast.

This is a different approach to tuning, but I think a much more fun way, which leaves the fine tune open to each individual's style of sailing.

When you use the sails like this you will never feel underpowered or oversheeted.

In your basic set-up the most important factor is mast bend. Get that right and then try my way. I know you will feel the difference.

Jesper Bank

STOP PRESS... New BDA Website

YOUR COMMITTEE decided earlier this year to redesign our website and bring it up to date, and in November we launched the result of our hard work.

Please log on to www.britishdragons.org and tell us what you think. We have changed the format and updated much of the old site, and you can now connect directly through the sponsors links to Musto, Peticicrows, Bolle and Aberdeen Asset Management sites.

Your new website will be updated every two weeks, and we invite all members (and prospective members) to contribute and send us your photographs with a few lines of description.

The Class Captains of each Fleet will be reporting monthly to keep us up to date with 'what goes on' down their way, and if you have an amusing, interesting, or spectacular tale to tell, we look forward to posting it on the site.

www.britishdragons.org

TOM HARRISON DRAGON JEWELLERY

The new range of Tom Harrison Jewellery, produced exclusively for the BDA, includes:

Pendants, Earrings, Charm Bracelet, Cuff Links and Tie Pin in Sterling Silver and 9 or 19 carat Yellow Gold.

These can be ordered from the new BDA website:
www.britishdragons.org





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- 1st Prix Petit Navire Douarnenez
- 1st Wellness Cup

2004 Results.

- 1st Gold Cup
- 1st Danish Nationals
- 1st East Coast Championships
- 1st Dutch Championships
- 1st Classics St Tropez

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