

WHITSUN with the RBODs

We had the most unusual of circumstances for the Whitsun Regatta - a warm and sunny bank holiday weekend with a steady breeze - well deserved after the uninspiring Spring. A colourful scene was provided by the fleet of eight RBODs racing for the Georgina Kennedy Memorial Trophy and the President's Cup.

Race 1

Short tacking against a strong flood tide was the overriding feature of the weekend which put considerable pressure on the person swinging the lead and resulted in a number of groundings for all boats which made or broke races. *AQUAMARINE* provided a notable parking incident when Fluffy's powerful shove to get her afloat resulted in the boat sailing off leaving him standing in the mud in just his superhero aquapants. 'I shall return!' called Angela 'I should bloody well hope so' was Hubby's reply. *MANDARIN* managed 2 successive lead-line assisted groundings - nowhere near her record but pushing her to the back of the fleet all the same. On this note, there was some hushed echo-sounder talk among the crews after the race, not least from the aging men whose doctors would question the wisdom of jumping over the side of a boat into soft mud, exerting oneself to extreme limits before somehow heaving themselves back on board. Is leading a dying art? Do modern echo-sounders work through wood? Are electronic devices the Devil's work?

Discuss.....

Meanwhile, back to the racing where the intermittent rocket-ship *BERYL* powered into the lead on the leg towards Ron Pipe. Sadly for the burgundy brigade, shorter tacks helped the wily *RED JACKET* regain the lead which she held to the finish, however, a twist was to follow when it was pointed out that a number of boats elected to leave Ron Pipe to starboard which, although neater, wasn't what the course card said. *PHALAROPE* had already enjoyed a good day crossing the line in third and this pushed her up to first whilst *MANDARIN* and *WHITE ROSE* secured a welcome second and third to provide an interesting score-card at the end of day 1. Mention must be made of *GANNET*'s first race of the season with Adrian and a visiting Turkish sailor producing some impressive speed but was sadly one of the victims of the navigational error. As a side note, it was noted how sharp Adrian's haircut looked on his reaching the shore.

Race 2

PHALAROPE showed great speed on the beat and it looked like this could be a pink victory but an unfortunate pit stop on the mud allowed *RED JACKET* through with *AQUAMARINE* close on their heels. En-route to Holliwell the fleet was engulfed by a swarm of 20 plus Squibs plus an errant RCOD; a combination that helped some but hindered others such as *AQUAMARINE* who was threatening to snatch the lead from *RED JACKET*, who ultimately narrowly took line honours from the turquoise team.

Race 3

Another beautiful sailing day and another long beat to Holliwell. Starting on the south shore, the fleet crossed to the north with *MANDARIN* emerging in the lead, enjoying a welcome return to form with Sarah, the Queen of Leading, keeping Dad off the mud and Clare introducing much needed improvements to tacking techniques, the orange team built a substantial lead on the long haul down the river followed by the Red Baron, *AQUA* and Mr Pink. *BLUE JACKET* was having a much better day in fifth position with the unfortunate rocket ship sadly having had to return to earth/mooring after a major plowing incident. Approaching Pinto, *MANDARIN*'s lead was reduced but looked secure and only a bizarre twist of fate could possibly affect the finishing order. On cue, this arrived in the form of an out of control cruiser bearing down on the leader with their crew unnecessarily shouting 'we don't know what we're doing!' Evasive action to avoid a collision left *MANDARIN* pinned out away from the mark allowing *RED JACKET* to catch up. Neck and neck at Redward, the reds eased ahead on the run to take line honours and the President's Cup. An unfortunate incident which decided the series but I'll get over it in a few decades.

The tenacity award must go to *WHITE ROSE* when Peter and Helena completed the gruelling course after around 4 hours of racing, a well-deserved cheer went up from the balcony and this perseverance gave WR a credible fifth place overall.

Chris and Tom's consistency ensured the name *PHALAROPE* is engraved on the trophy this year. Well done to them and to all who participated making this an exciting and memorable event. Many thanks to the race box team for keeping us all in order.

Will Dallimore
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