

FD GBR

AUG 2003

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2 EDITORIAL

Thanks (in no particular order) Toby, James, Jamie, Cathy, Peter, Kieth, Tee, Phipps, Colin,

I honestly don't mean to be blowing my own trumpet here:- Jamie and Pete from our club recently joined the class rescuing GBR 310 to sail again. They were given rides in FDs, and shown what great boats they are. They were offered help to go out and find and buy the boat and have been supported since. They now think FD sailing is as good as we all do. All I feel is that we could all be more proactive in promoting the class at grass roots level, to enable others to share in the pleasure we have from the class. Please, half an hour after racing, or a club race when your normal partner is unavailable, could eventually mean another boat participating. If we could all do this occasionally, we could have a fleet like the NEDs, with 15 - 20 boats at every meeting.

GBR Nationals:- you can still enter, we have 12 boats committed now, come and join us at Saundersfoot, and persuade someone else from your club. Phone or email me for details, its not many weeks away,

Cover Pic:- Our brave boys, fighting it out at the top of the fleet in the Italian sunshine

Next issue:- mid October, deadline end September

Best photo e-mailed to me by the end of August becomes cover pic for next issue,

Comments on my interpretation of the newsletter game would be very welcome.

CORRECTION

More incompetence, Phipp's e-address is - Richard@sail-cd.demon.co.uk

NOTICE OF AGM

International Flying Dutchman
Class Organisation BRITISH SECTION

Notice is hereby given that the

2003 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at Rutland Sailing Club

at 18:00 hrs on Saturday 20th. September 2003

3 CHAIRMANS MESSAGE

Chairman makes excuses, saying he has his hands full, surely its someone elses mouth that is usually full of his hands??

Excellent job done by Steve, conducting the orchestra that is an international championships so only a pleasant sound comes out, despite some bits of chaos and confusion on the way.

STOP PRESS!!! DERVIO RESULTS

4	Tobes and James	9	5	5	1	2	4	6	6	11	29
40	Peter and Phipps	29	34	15	28	37	37	52	49	51	229
45	John and Jamie	51	48	13	47	44	45	41	51	30	268
50	Tony and Colin	52	53	37	50	51	44	43	46	39	310
67	Rosie and Neil	67	59	62	DNF	39	65	DNF	DNF	DNF	438
70	Julian and Cathy	66	58	60	DNF	54	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	457
72	Tee and Steve/JB	DNF	DNF	68	DNF	61	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	475

Full report stories and piccies in the next issue, but

72 boats, sunshine, loads of warm wind, loads of warm water, heatwave on shore, very hospitable club, best GBR result in a big international fleet for many years and a good indicator of things to come in Melbourne, more meetings than you can shake a stick at, good food at the yellow cafe.

LETTERS

Dear Richard and the Flying Dutchman Class,
Thank you for the surprise £50 that came through the post this morning! That is really kind of everyone. I'm glad to hear that more women sailors are discovering what a great boat the FD is. Richard - I presume that you can sort out all the right links so that FD sailors can get our Diaries. If you need/want me to do anything, let me know. Alternatively if anyone wants to get the Diaries direct, let me know and I'll add them to my database.

Cheers

Cathy, Team Cathy Foster

www.cathyfoster.co.uk

For those with even worse memories than me, Cathy Foster, in addition to doing a lot of coaching for the class in the nineties, also sailed the boat, possibly with Hugh Myers quite a bit too - maybe winning a NC in the early nineties??? - she is now in the middle of an Olympic campaign in the womens keelboat class, the Yngling, and would appreciate any help, both financially, and in kind.

As she is not blonde, and doesnt have a Scottish accent, help from sources outside the RYA is vital to the continuance of her campiagn, so log on to the website, and see what you can do to help.

4 CREWS UNION

Fully Stacked - James Cole

It's been a while since I wrote a Crews Union piece – delusions of helmsman type grandeur at finally being allowed to decide which clew we should be sailing on I suppose.

Another season has started – Oxford kicked that off with some very close racing and some of us have made our first trips to mainland Europe. First impressions of the year are of resurgence in the class. Interest in training events, people setting plans in motion to go to Como and a growing British presence at foreign regattas are all very encouraging. The question now is how we build up this interest and take this enthusiasm to the masses. My (new) illustrious helm is part of the 'think tank' that brought us great success at the National Dinghy Farce and is working with other members of the committee to decide where we go from here. All I can say is God Help Us and please rest assured that the ride is going to be interesting and varied – this 'think tank' is made up solely of helms and so rational, considered thought and argument just isn't going to happen.

I must take umbrage with certain comments from the little Welsh Git who slighted my intellectual capabilities in the last comic. Bastard. Crews have for many years been the maligned grunts in the front apparently just dangling around creating righting moment and little else. What most helms forget is that the crew has a better view of the rig, the opposition and the racecourse than them. A crew who gets involved in the boat set-up and tactics is invaluable. Where would Ado Stead have been without Pete Allam's input? Do you get the general idea?

Since I started putting tuning and tactical thoughts to paper it has been interesting how many crews have started to take an interest in the way that Toby and I sail, me calling the rig tune and tactics upwind whilst still getting very physical downhill. So far people have been surreptitious about asking for advice, almost embarrassed that they are doing their helm a disservice by wanting to get more active in the finer points of the boat. The key to overall boat speed is teamwork. Both of you should contribute equally to the whole, playing to each other's strengths. You don't need to be an intellectual giant to understand how the rig works or how a race unfolds. I have a great friend, a top-flight laser sailor, who used to scribble all sorts of stuff all over his boat, referring to those notes as conditions changed throughout a race, constantly adjusting and retuning to those guidelines. He was a helmsman and not as intelligent as a crew so possibly the notes were just to remind him to breathe occasionally, but you get my point.

So, get talking and get interactive but remember – if it's all going badly, default to non-committal grunts so that it can't possibly be your fault and you can still criticise your helm in the bar after the race.

5 2003 GBR AND WORLD EVENTS

Events coming up soon, **changes bold**, dates and contacts on main fixture list:-

Saundersfoot:-

The GBR national Championships, share with club regatta.
bay sheltered from SW, medium tides, m ways 20 miles
first start 1430 Saturday six races including long distance offshore
Competitors hearing and EGM, championship dinner, prizegiving
loads of accommodation, but book it now!

Rutland:-

Midlands, share with other performance classes, Ospreys, Contenders etc
best inland venue in GBR, vast lake, good launching, m ways 20 miles
annual dinner and AGM
camping opposite club, rooms in club, but book early

NEW FIXTURE OCT 04/05 Datchet, West London, Symmetric Grand Prix

Multiclass regatta for boats and people of a certain age and style, all
conventional performance boats, see Y+Y March 28, page 11.
big lake by Heathrow good facilities, good access
Two races Saturday, three Sunday, overall handicap prizes, class prizes and
interclass team prize.
Social Saturday night
camping on site

I am personally delighted to have pushed the swing at the right moment to get
the momentum going, and that the Javelin gang and my old mate Huw Pearce
from Datchet are providing competent action to complement my vague
dreaming. Links from IFDCO BS website. To www.sailfast.org

Dont complain about skiffs taking over the world, go FD sailing instead.

BOATS FOR SALE

GBR	65	all wood, c.1961	offers	Sarah Jefferson	01539 531519
GBR	???	GRP hull c.early 1970s	£500	Robert Coles	01206 396172
GBR	220	Tiptree GRP Feb 1970		Andy Seedhouses boat sales, Woodbridge	
GBR	319	DP yachting Nov 1979, damaged	£500	Jason Combes	01673 838274
GBR	381	L.Mader, all wood, 1970s	Offers	Richard Austin	01248 384075
Unregistered		Hoare, c.1978	£1500	Doug Seaden	01206 284412

If you buy or sell an FD, please let Tony Lyall know all the details including how to contact the new owner, so the class records can be kept up to date.

6 COACHING

May 17/ 18 saw a strong turn out for training at Rutland despite the poor forecast.

Saturday was bleak but the fleet went afloat anyway under the watchful eye of Julian Bridges with a guest appearance from David Wilkins. The emphasis was placed on rig tune although boat handling was also being studied. A break ashore was followed by starting practice. Unfortunately by this time the forecast was becoming accurate and a number of boats opted for an early shower. After a great meal at the club, Saturday evening was used to review the day's efforts. Video and digital stills provided an invaluable accompaniment to the time on the water as well as a few amusing moments.

Sunday was windier! With the fleet deciding that nothing constructive could be done afloat, the emphasis changed to tactics and boat preparation. The opportunity was taken for an honest look at people's boats with key areas being identified for improvement; this was followed by a tactics and strategy debate. One boat did launch and quickly proved that it was definitely too windy to achieve anything on the water! The weekend concluded with a goal setting and performance evaluation exercise.

Despite only a relatively short time afloat, the weekend proved a great success with everyone learning something new, from technique to tuning. The class extends its thanks to Julian and his team for their time and to David and Rutland Sailing Club for their support.

Keith Martins View

Primary feedback must be a huge thank you for an excellent weekend that demonstrated at every step preparation and forethought. The organizers had all put a great deal of effort in to making the event run smoothly, whatever the conditions, and it showed. Well done!

Personally, I was suffering from an awful cold and actually quite thankful not to be dragged on to the water in all conditions. The decision not to split the fleet by proceeding with marginal conditions therefore suited me. On the other hand the one-on-one we received from Toby and James was invaluable revealing a broken spreader. I knew there had to be some reason why we were not winning! I was sorry that we didn't manage more of the tacking and gybing exercises but with obvious attention on the leading pair plus the blustery conditions it was entirely understandable.

The classroom stuff was great although by Sunday evening, sufficient. It is amazing how in spite of much of tuning advice being familiar the fresh gem keeps on cropping up.

It was all very worthwhile and I am sorry not to be able to join you for next week-end. In fact it cured the cold!

Keith
GBR 363

7 COACHING

Tee Parry's View

As a result of unfavourable weather conditions, the programme for the weekend was very flexible. Saturday morning involved a briefing which gave an excellent insight into what would be expected of us and the activities we were about to do. The great thing was that all activities catered for whatever level of FD sailor you were.

Before going on the water we spent a half hour doing a string pulling session led by James. Personally I felt this was really interesting, and I actually realised that twenty years of listening to FD talk has paid off because I understood what was being said. Information was given on position of genoa cars and centreboard, tension in the lowers and shrouds, and the genoa halyard fine tune in various conditions. Then it was on to the water to experiment with the above, and to improve tacking and gybing techniques. The conditions were gusty which was challenging for some of us, and a great chance to learn more about lake sailing before the Europeans in Italy. The activities included follow my leader, and were all about focussing on good control of the boats position. Due to my lack of experience I chose to just deal with my basic boat control handling without having to worry too much about causing collisions with other boats. However I had loads of fun and went through a huge learning curve. Throughout the session we were videoed from a RIB by Cath or later analysis.

Later after a pitstop for tea, some boats went out for more games, however due to the increase in breeze a couple of us decided that the bar was the better option (true sailor style) The evening involved more beer and the video analysis. This was a brilliant idea, and I think that many of us will agree it was very informative and gave crews the opportunity to see the set up of their boats rig. Plus David Wilkins was there to offer his good advice. We also got the chance to giggle at one another doing silly things like falling off the trapeze and going for a swim, (identities will be kept confidential.)

Sunday was a day for staying inside because it was wet and very windy. So teacher Julian stepped into action with an helpful session on calibrating the boat and now poor Tweety will have numbers everywhere. Then we had Tobys rules quiz which was very useful and I reckon that many of us would like another, more in depth rules session. Although the weather was pretty poor and sailing restricted, the whole weekend was enjoyable, informative and of excellent use. I fully recommend the next one, and I would like to give a big thanks and CHEERS to Julian for the useful advice and organisation of the weekend.

Vicky Parry

8 2003 TRAVELLERS TROPHY UPDATE

Richard Phillips

The Travellers Trophy has been hotly contested this year with, currently, 14 FDs in contention (compared with a total of 12 last year). With 3 scheduled events to go there is a great deal of scope for place changes so give it a go! Attend Bala, Europeans, Nationals or create your own mini event - just need 3 FDs with at least one travelling from another club - please notify webmaster 30 days before event so that it can be advertised on the website.

Current leaders	Overall	Toby Dale
	Helm under 25 years old	Victoria Parry
	Woman helm	Rosie Pye
	Woman crew	Cathy Bridges

At a recent committee meeting it was decided to propose at the AGM that for 2003/4 all overseas events should be excluded from the UK Travellers Trophy so as not to penalise those that do not have time/money to travel to overseas events and to encourage larger attendance at main UK events.

GBR REGATTA REPORTS 2003

Handicap open, Corus Colours SC, Shotton, 13 03 03 - Jamie Whitaker.

Shotton is possibly the most unsuitable lake in the world for FD sailing. Despite this, the visitors came with their Fireball and Hornet and us in the FD to join a selection of club boats: Oppies, Toppers, Lasers, Solos, Graduates, Albacores and Scorpions. My feeling of trepidation was not helped when Julian said that he had been to this open every year since he moved to North Wales (prehistory), and each year with a different crew! Our appearance drew questions about the boat and how we intended to sail it on the tiny lake.

After breakfast we collected the knitting pattern for the day, the OOD wheeled the race office round the far side of the lake and we set off. Even drifting with genoa rolled and main flapping it took us no more than a minute to flap across to the start line. In clew 2/3 weather we popped the genoa and went for a fast reach to warm up (and frighten the local oppy kids).

We managed to get a clean start off a crowded line; there was just enough room to put a tack in to get back to the mark and another to round it. This beat had lasted no more than 45 seconds and two tacks. After the mark we bore away on to a screamer of a two sail reach. Stand as far back in the boat as possible and then go further, 30 seconds of this before a very short fetch and then back on to the beat. At the end of the beat a bear away on to a kite reach. Kite up and out on the wire. Just enough time to fill it and pump through a gust before diving back in to the boat to retrieve the pole.

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Handicap open, Corus Colours SC, Shotton, 13 03 03 - Jamie Whitaker.

The race lasted for three of these manic laps. After finishing (first on the water, no chance on handicap) it was ashore for lunch and the re-assembly of my hands with plasters and insulation tape (an idea copied by several others later).

The second race was much the same as the first apart from starting at the wrong end of the line, letting the Fireball through and due to lack of space never being able to catch back up again. There were many tacks and gybes all causing suffering to both Julian and me. It was during one of these tacks that I in all my grace tripped over the centreboard case and punched a hole through the side deck with my elbow. During this race I noticed that it was only us bothering to put the kite up. This should have sent alarm bells ringing, especially in the building breeze. But because we were 'well 'ard' and wanting to exploit every opportunity to show off we kept flying it. The showing off continued despite Julian's moans of complaint about how often the halyard had to be pulled, and of pain of pulling it.

The third race was even more tiring than the others - more plasters and insulation tape were used. Then everything went pear shaped. Like all good concerts the main spectacle is always kept till last. On the third lap's final reach we put the kite up (the only boat that did) and set off on the screamer of a reach that was created by the building breeze. As we approached the leeward mark, which we found later was going to be the final mark if we had got round it, Julian stood to start dropping the kite. He then disappeared abruptly from view, apparently on his back in the scuppers. The consequence was a mad rounding up to windward leaving no time to dump the sail. Before I worked out what was going on I was catapulted towards the spreaders. I found myself lying in the genoa slot with my legs over the shrouds and feet resting just above the upstairs window. After scrambling back to the cockpit I tried to drag the kite back into the chute. However I had to abandon this as the boat turned turtle. An FD capsizing is bound to attract attention, especially on a lake where it is not possible to be more than a spit from any boat (or the clubhouse). The safety/camera boat was already fairly close and took great glee in snapping us upside down alarmingly close to the shore.

After limping back to the shore we looked for damage. Apart from bruising and blisters both Julian and I were sort of in tact. The boat however was in a less good state. I noticed that the mast was bent sideways where I had landed on it. It was later discovered that not only was it bent but slightly twisted and the spreader bracket had changed shape. This made dropping my elbow through the deck earlier seem like a minor offence!

In terms of racing success the result was poor. Due to the premature ending of the third race we ended up being beaten by far too many boats. However in terms of fun it does score highly. Sailing on a lake 700m by 300m (felt smaller) altogether unsuitable for FD's should be tried at least once. Your boat handling will be put to the ultimate test!

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Oxford Tankards Open Meeting, Oxford SC, 26/27 04 03 - Toby Dale

A brisk Force 3-4 and occasional sunshine greeted the fleet on Saturday. Racing was frantic throughout the three scheduled races with constant pace changing and a different winner in every race. Peter Doran and Richard Phillips emerged as leaders overnight but were being closely pressed by Tony Lyall and Colin Burns while John Berry and Jamie Whitaker were the winners of the second race. Keith Martin and John Lansley kept up the pressure on the front-runners with a consistent set of 3rd places in all Races. Julian and Cathy Bridges were also in the running with a 4,2,4 score line.

Sunday was more overcast and a touch breezier. A change in crews due to other commitments saw Jamie appearing with Julian Bridges who showed a masterful display of heavy weather sailing to take the first two races of the day. Lyall and Burns were second in both.

The final race saw some of the closest racing of the weekend with never more than a few boat lengths between the leaders. The finish was the closest of the weekend with Lyall and Burns just preventing a hard charging Bridges and Whitaker from getting their third gun of the day by less than a boat length.

The final results gave Lyall and Burns the regatta from the Bridges and Whittaker while Doran and Phillips were third.

Overall Results:

Po s	Boat Type	Sail No	Helm	Crew	Pt s
1st	FD	385	Tony Lyall	Colin Burns	8
2n d	FD	380	Julian Bridges	Cathy Bridges/ Jamie Whitaker	10
3rd	FD	377	Peter Doran	Richard Phillips	13

2004 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Just a taster, Warnemunde, near Rostock, on the north east German coast, **now confirmed as 27 July to 03 Aug.** Having driven past on the way back from Denmark, it looks like very like coastal Suffolk / Essex. Warnemunde is the resort, Rostock the big town / port.

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Whitsun Regatta, Rutland SC, 25/26 05 03 - Toby Dale

May 25/26 saw the FD fleet return to Rutland SC following the successful training event the week before.

The fleet was greeted by a mixed bag of weather including sunshine, rain and gusty shifting winds making consistent sailing very difficult. Peter Doran and Richard Phillips who were able to progressively edge away from the fleet led most of race one. Unfortunately they were denied first place by a huge shift that allowed Toby Dale and James Cole to edge in front. Tom Clancy and Rob Borland took third.

Race two saw Dale/ Cole take the win with Doran/ Phillips again second with consistent sailing earning Rosie and Neil Pye third. The final race of the day was sailed in more breeze and again saw Dale/ Cole out in front, Clancy/ Borland were third again.

The days racing was being held as part of the handicap weekend and the final handicap results showed that Dale/ Cole had taken the overall event with Doran/ Phillips third.

Monday was scheduled for just one race. Dale/ Cole edged away and took the win, but the minor positions contested by five bats and were in doubt right to the finish. After many place changes just a few feet decided the final results. Second went to the Pye's, followed by Doran/ Phillips These boats were just ahead of Julian and Cathy Bridges, Clancy/Borland and Richard Austin and Peter Hadfield.

Our thanks go to Rutland Sailing Club for another great event.

Overall Results:

Pos	Sail No	Helm	Crew
1st	GBR382	Toby Dale	James Cole
2nd	GBR377	Peter Doran	Richard Phillips
3rd	GBR373	Rosie Pye	Neil Pye

2003 WORLD EVENTS

No apologies for including this again. If you feel the need to do one Euro regatta apart from Como, then it should be this one: -

As a favour to the NEDS, think about the Coen Gulcher memorial regatta on Oct 11/12. A weekend at Loostrecht, bashing around a small lake full of interesting traditional pleasure craft, the excellent Dutch hospitality, a fantastic clubhouse - a cross between the Royal Yacht Squadron and somewhere like Trent Valley SC - old money solidly built in wood in a gorgeous lakeside setting - and the NED regatta equating to Rutland as the end of season party. For most British sailors, its closer than visiting us in North Wales. Tony Lyall is bound to go, bother him for information, or try Marianne Lubbers, 030 6994646, mob 06 47940005, email - pr@sailfd.com

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Southern Area Champs, Lee on the Solent SC, 07/08 06 03 - Richard Phillips

Lee-on-the-Solent Sailing Club hosted the FD Southern Area Championship. Stephen Parry, race officer assisted by Dawn laid on two races on the Saturday consisting of triangles and sausages. There was, unusually for Lee, very little tide and the wind initially provided marginal trapezing conditions increasing during the second race.

The first race saw a bemused Rosie and Neil leading at the first mark as most of the rest of the fleet were heading up the shore expecting a longer first beat and adverse tide in the Solent where the mark was laid! Excitement continued testing the adaptability of the race officer as the leeward mark was removed! Hastily positioning committee boat at position of now removed leeward mark just in time for leading boats to round. Places changed as the boats who had overstood the first mark clawed back up the fleet. James & Toby eventually found their way to the lead after a battle with Peter and Andrew Weeks. Victoria Parry crewed by Peter Frith was third and Neil & Rosie finished 4th.

The second race saw Peter & Richard get away to a good start and after a short hike up the shore led at the first mark and then staid in front covering Toby & James up the last beat as the wind increased with Victoria and Peter 3rd and Tom & Rob 4th.

Sunday saw a significant increase in wind speed during the first beat which started in approx 20 knots of wind and soon rose to 30 gusting 40 contrary to weather forecast!! Racing was abandoned as a few boats capsized and the rapid increase in wave height made recovery difficult.

At the prize giving, Commodore John Best presented Toby and James with the trophy again!

Pos	Sail No	Helm	Crew	Points	R1	R2
1	GBR 382	Toby Dale	James Cole	3	1	2
2	GBR 377	Peter Doran	Richard Phillips	6	5	1
3	GBR 383	Victoria Parry	Peter Frith	6	3	3
4	GBR 350	Peter Weeks	Andrew Weeks	8	2	6
5	IRL 13	Tom Clancy	Rob Borland	10	6	4
6	GBR 373	Rosie Pye	Neil Pye	12	4	8
7	GBR 385	Tony Lyall	Colin Burns	13	8	5
8	GBR 380	Julian Bridges	Bethan	14	7	7
9	GBR290	Richard Austin	Peter Hadfield	18	9	9

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Long Distance Regatta, Bala SC, 05/06 07 03 - Colin Burns

5 FDs gathered at Lake Bala for the Bala Sailing Club Long distance and pursuit race. This race is normally of 3 hours duration over a distance of 20 miles. Competing on handicap in the force 0-1 wind proved not to be as difficult as thought.

Doran and Phillips in 377 lead at the first mark closely followed by Lyall/Burns in 385 and a Javelin, then Julian and Cathy Bridges in 380. After the next mark the fleet headed up the lake to the long distance mark. Gradually 385 reeled in 377 and rounded the mark first only for 377 to pass again on the run. The top three FDs were always very close with 377 holding onto the lead until the last mark when they got blanketed by the ever present Javelin leaving 385 to gybe inside 377 and the Javelin to take second place over the line and the first FD. 377 was second with 380 in 3rd.

The pursuit race on Sunday on the club course was held in a southerly force 1-2. 380 led to mark one with 377 second and 385 third. 380 held on to the lead until the fourth beat when 377 got past. Doran and Philips extended their lead from 380 and held on to the end of the 3 hour race. 380 finished second and 385 third. With a win and second place Doran/Philips took the weekend honours, while Lyall/Burns were second and Bridges/Bridges 3rd.

Overall Results:

Po s	Helm	Crew	R	R2	Pts	Long Distance Race	Pursuit Race
1	Doran	Phillips	2	1	3	9	3
2	Lyall	Burns	1	3	4	8	5
3	Bridges	Bridges	3	2	5	10	4
4	Clancy	Austin	4	4	8		
5	Whitaker	Hadfield	5	rtd	11		

2003 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Venue - Sandringham Yacht Club, Melbourne, Australia

Dates - 27 Dec 2003 -

Entry fee - AUS dollars 350

Late entry date - 281103

Final entry date - at clubs discretion (AUS dollars 525)

Website - <http://www.sailmelbourne.com.au>

So far, Toby and James, and Peter and Richard, have signed up for Australia, anyone else??

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Easter Regatta, Loostrecht, Nederlands, 19/20 04 03 - James Cole

Loostrecht – A Lesson in Humility

For a precious, short while the Dutch Easter (Egg) Regatta was looking good. We'd done everything right, the boat felt good and we were faster than everyone else on the lake. Only when we got ashore after the first race that realisation hit and we went from gods to nobodies in the space of a few seconds. The story of our escapade across the water starts a before that though and so we rewind to a time of youthful, optimistic enthusiasm. The veritable summer before the war.

We had said at the 50th Anniversary Regatta that we wanted to return for the Easter Egg. As it turned out, Tom Clancy's fine ship was to be sat languishing atop the Lyle Two Stack beside the Dutch lakes and so we opened negotiations to borrow her. This meant that we could do our rockstar bit of flying in and out of the event, leaving the chaps to do the hard mileage. Toby loved this idea – as any self-respecting helmsman would – and so this constituted a definite plan. We would re-mark the calibrations on Toms' boat and give him some assistance tuning it in return for this huge favour. Easy life.

It was sunny with a good breeze when we arrived at Schipol on the Friday before the racing started. Colin was steering the car to Loostrecht – I now understand why he's a crew! – and we arrived shaken but not stirred to unload the trailer. We threw the boat together and decided to get sailing as quickly as possible. Toby had switched his mobile phone off and so we missed Toms' call to say that he desperately needed to talk to us before we went sailing as there were one or two small problems with the boat. This was retrieved that evening!

The breeze had built to a good clew two blast and so we set forth hopefully. Toby successfully negotiated the harbour and full of vigour we unrolled the genoa. The boat felt horrible, the mast was a funny shape and water hosed up through the back of the centreboard case. There was the distinct lack of shroud rollers and I hadn't realised just how important these are if you are going to tack quickly and not destroy your genoa. This was not going to be fast!

A quick about-face back to the dinghy park resulted in several control systems being retied and the shroud turning points moved forward 15cm. This was interesting. I had taken an interest in this boat since she first arrived in the UK straight out of nice Mr Maders moulds. I had been the first crew to sail her and had always thought she was a naturally fast boat. She had been set up by David Wilkins and had a reputation as a light airs flyer. What had gone wrong and why were we audaciously moving fundamental points that David had positioned?

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Easter Regatta, Loostrecht, Nederlands, 19/20 04 03 - James Cole

Much discussion later it transpires that David uses a Proctor E. We now believe that the boat had originally had a Proctor E when she was tuned up but that this has been changed for the M5 now residing in the mast gate. This sort of explains it but having never used an E – except fleetingly on Biggles Flies.... and we broke that one – I can only presume that the tuning is radically different from the M5, Gamma, etc. Weird, I mean, I know that the M5 is stiffer but to have to change things that much is concerning. I intend to have a long chat with David about this because I am coming to the conclusion that he must be sailing very differently from Toby & I and he is much, much quicker than us. Hugh will also be tapped for knowledge.

With the rig now doing things that I was expecting, we set forth again and had a sneaky peek at Toms' Boysen Moller spinnaker. I have said before that I wanted to have a go and this was a golden opportunity. Its' a pity that there weren't any other Dutchmen (excuse the pun) sailing as I am keen to see how these kites react in the heat of battle. First impressions are that it isn't as powerful as our extra large Banks and I remain unconvinced about the 'football' shape. I am also firmly of the conviction that the brothers own kit differs from that which they have been selling. Their kite looked different to this at the 50th Anniversary bash and John reports that the genoas differed as well. Water was however still spouting up from the case like Old Faithful. Toby wasn't so much hiking as drowning!

A plan was needed..... Back in the dinghy park once again, we discovered that our steed sported the worst travesty of a slot gasket I've ever seen. It was solid to the point of inflexibility and didn't overlap properly. This had potential to be a serious problem. The water flooding out of the case caused huge amounts of turbulence under the hull and therefore the drag curve goes through the roof. This needed fixing if we were even going to bother launching the boat in anger. We weren't about to start turning the boat upside down to replace the offending gasket and so another solution needed to be found. With another Russian Roulette lift from Colin, I visited the local hardware store. I had decided that packing was the answer and so was on the quest for foam, plastic tubing (for rollers) and other items that may be useful. An ingenious contraption was fashioned on the Yacht Club terrace that evening and confidence was again restored for the following day.

I read the sailing instructions carefully, if slightly inebriated, so as to avoid the embarrassment of the first beat of the 50th when we realised that we hadn't a clue what the marks looked like. Our sails had been loaded into the Lyle ship before its' departure and we were now using known technology. We attended the briefing and eavesdropped when the Star and FD reps agreed with the race officer to do an extra triangle from the standard triangle, sausage, beat, finish.

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Easter Regatta, Loostrecht, Nederlands, 19/20 04 03 - James Cole

We rigged quickly and Toby didn't have to throw up before we launched. Things were looking rosy. We gauged the start line, realised that there was only one way to go, i.e. left, and in immaculate fashion started at the wrong end. This was due to a bit of a wind shift that we hadn't spotted and we came out sailing into a header on top of the fleet. Oops. Realising our problem, we didn't put the bow down after the start and sailed for VMG (Velocity Made Good – slow but steady speed to the windward mark, also known as stuffing). The boat felt awful and this wasn't improved by some of the changes that I called to tune the rig in an effort to help achieve 'max point'. This is something that I need to talk to David and Hugh about. The damage was, however, limited and only four boats crossed us. We tacked in a clear lane but one of those four had come back. They tacked straight ahead and so we went again to clear our air. Never, ever, ever sail in someone else's dirt. A short hitch later and we were camped on the inside of the lift, albeit in shifty conditions due to the proximity of an island shore. The traveller was, to coin one of JB's phrases, up and down like a naughty ladies knickers on boat race night. Toby actually had to work hard for once. A well-placed tack into the gap between two islands, the consequent lift on the other side that I had been looking for, and we were suddenly defending a useful lead.

Around the windward mark we went, 1 minute up on Enno who was next boat. Now, before the start, Toby had very cleverly spotted the wing mark. Amongst all those islands this was to prove a masterstroke. We reached off deep knowing that we were on course whilst Enno took the fleet high at an imaginary buoy. 1 minute turned into 2 by the gybe. This was great.

Defending is very different to free sailing. You have to put yourself between the opposition and the next buoy. Klaas and Adriaan flew up behind us and our lead was halved by the windward mark. Pumping hard down the run we opened up a little but they tried desperate measures on the next beat, going a different side of an island in an effort to get past. We rounded the next mark well in front, hoisted the kite and planed away. No gains were made for the next three legs and we crossed the line in, apparent, first. Now the problems started. The SI's state that if we are to do the longer course, number two pennant will be flown. Confident following the briefing, did we look for this flag? Did we hell. That said, neither did half the fleet, but that's still no excuse. The slippery race management had kept the pennant down and so when Enno crossed the line as we hared off on our

second reaches he won the race. To add insult to injury, we were out of time for finishing and so scored 22 whole points instead of the one we were expecting. After that, things just go worse. Sunday dawned to a lighter wind. Just the same four-knot range that JB and I had struggled with for so many years.

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Easter Regatta, Loostrecht, Nederlands, 19/20 04 03 - James Cole

The biggest chink in our armour was exposed in a strange boat with a recut and untested Banks LM genoa. Following the 50th, we had had our second best LM played with to tighten the entry. The theory was that the Continentals had out pointed us in the light stuff requiring us to make changes to stay in the game. Discussion with Hugh and our own hypothesising led us to remove some of the luff curve, thereby flattening the entry of the sail. We had used this once at Lee without any quantifying opposition and so this was a big gamble. At first it seemed to work but I couldn't get my head around the bends caused by the islands and we sailed ourselves down the fleet in spectacular style.

The first race was bad. At least it was better than the second:- we judged the line to perfection. Port tacked the fleet and had to all intents and purposes started well. Frustration from the first race overflowed and after we had to tack off to clear our air from Klaas, the only other boat to start with us, we deliberately went the wrong side of an island looking for better wind. This didn't work and we were last but one around the windward mark. Tony and Colin had a very good race, vying for a top five position at times and, despite capsizing, beat us.

Something radical was required. Before racing, we had spotted that the rig was not square in the boat. Arbitrarily and rather unscientifically tested, we believed that the port shroud was looser than the starboard one. Between the second and third races we ran off and adjusted this – Tom may need to check the exact position as I'm not convinced I didn't over do it. The final race that day was much better with us posting a seventh. All races were counting and we were still lurking in the bottom half of the fleet. We needed a result on Monday.

Monday dawned to no wind. The race officer proved a nice chap and sent us out anyway after a half-hour postponement. Several hours later the race actually started. We had made some changes since Sunday. One of the major differences was that we had hoisted Toms' almost new BM mainsail. After adjusting the batten tension – much to the disgust of Team Psychedelia who decided that it had been tied personally by the great man and must be right although it looked like a pile of poo – it seemed sweet. The depth was a lot further forward than our favourite Banks and I have to wonder if this is the route of our mid clew one speed problem. The Banks may be closing the slot beyond the acceptable whilst the BM is more flexible. Experiments and findings to follow. Interestingly, we were using the BM main for skinny dwarfs and it looked good. If anyone is willing to lend us a fat bastard version of this sail, please let me know as I'm now keen to have a squizz, and upwind speed was good.

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After a start line confrontation with Tony and Colin who hadn't spotted the last minute wind shift and so missed the dive for the pin end with the rest of the fleet we started in good order and went in to full Ullswater mode. That is, crew to leeward, calling the mainsail twist and genoa sheeting. It is important for the helm to know as the crew oscillates between 'point' and 'foot' as the breeze comes and goes. We learnt a new trick as well – unfortunately after the race – and that is to drop the lifters outboard in really light stuff. Those who have been paying attention to my previous ramblings will be aware that I'm an advocate of 'up and in' during light conditions but this was the first time I'd seen the lifters moved in this way. The Van de Pol's were the subject of my interest and they were run away leaders at the time. We were fighting back and had just got into forth place when the race was abandoned. Encouragingly, the large Banks kite was working very well in the drifting conditions – Hugh played with it after the 50th – and I'm now happy again.

The race being abandoned meant that we were left with an awful result - beaten by Tanja and her guest artiste German helm. Not exactly auspicious but we spent the flight home making notes and believe that we have taken far more out of the weekend than bruised egos. The modified genoa seems to work and will be in full working order for Como. I have got to play with some BM kit and this has raised some queries with the current Banks designs and we can be positive that we are sailing quite well, if naively, at times. The shape of the BM mainsails is of primary interest now. Discussions with Hugh will hopefully result in a change to the existing Banks to compensate but we should remember that our kit is faster than the Continentals in breeze. A compromise is probably therefore needed.

As a stepping-stone to Como, this regatta was invaluable. I still believe that Biggles will get whooped in Italy but at least we will be able to give a better showing than we would without it. The Easter Egg is a great event and the Dutch are always really friendly. I know that it's early in the season but if you are going to do just one International event beyond the Europeans pencil this one in to your diary for next year. It would appear that Team Physcedelia are building the bridges with our German brothers and we in Biggles are maintaining links with the Dutch roots of the Class. We need your support if this is to continue and thrive – there are several voices with funny accents already making noises about joining us for Saundersfoot and with your help these will build to a deafening crescendo. Think what it would do for the Class to have lots of International support for the Nationals – JB aimed at twenty boats and with our foreign friends this may still be possible but does mean we need to return the favour.

This article was brought to you by several bottles of red wine and the letters G and S.