

EAST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP on the Medway



GBR 684 *Hand of Fortune* ahead of GBR 660 *Aimee*
— photo by Mike Spurgin

For the East Coast Championship, at the end of May, we had 31 entries – one withdrew – so we had 30 boats on the start line. This included 16 visitors, most of them first-time visitors to our big river.

The regatta started with a party on Friday night at the Medway YC. MDL Chatham Maritime Marina, the main sponsor of the event, craned the visiting boats in and then invited everyone to welcome drinks on the other side of the river in the club house, where they also enjoyed a curry buffet.

On Saturday a south-easterly was blowing so Race Officer Lesley Brooman set the course for the first race in Kethole Reach. Rory Bowman in GBR 662 *Yeah Baby* from Aldeburgh YC finished first, followed by GBR 681 *Kraken* with Mike Hayles, also Aldeburgh, and Mike Holmes from the Royal Corinthian YC in Burnham in GBR 684 *Hand of Fortune*. The second race, with the course was moved into Long Reach, was won by Mike Holmes, second came the Baileys in GBR 660 *Aimee*, third was Medway boat GBR 677 *Chouette* with Len Jones and Nick Jenkins.

A hog-roast in Jasper's timber framed barn provided a great evening in historic surroundings. Outside was Richard Green's *Aurora*, her restoration was not quite finished in time for the event. We ate the whole pig and drank lots of beer and wine (again). Local chandlery Pirate's Cave gave a pair

of gloves for the foredeck crew of a boat finishing outside the podium places for each of the five races. Three pairs of Dragon sunglasses were also donated – these were raffled each day.

On the second day, in a light westerly, experienced river-sailor Ricky Gillingham from Aldeburgh won the first race in GBR 664 *Navaho*. Second was Woody in his new boat GBR 696 *Leah*, leaving GBR 617 *Flame Again* with David Hall in third place. Rory, Duncan and Chris won the second race of the day in *Yeah Baby*. Julia Bailey came second and Nigel Cole from the Royal Corinthian YC Burnham in GBR 644 *Tsunami* sailed over the line as third.

The Championship Dinner was one of the biggest ever held at the Medway YC and required a marquee attached to the club house. The highlight of the evening were the speakers: the Pirate and the Admiral. Martin Payne and David Dale were on form but we'll let you guess which was which character.

On Monday morning Lesley Brooman wanted to get a "short and sharp fifth race" in before the wind went completely. It meant that the support RIBs had to tow the Dragons to Long Reach, where we had a bit of breeze. Just at that point, the crew of GBR 576 *Excalibur* were letting themselves in to the Library to pick up their sails after a leisurely breakfast. They finally thumbed a tow off a cruiser and made it to the race area just in time for the start.

The wind held and Rory Bowman won the final race, Julia, Graham and "H" came second and after the late start, Martin Payne in Paul Patenall's *Excalibur* got a third.

The prize giving took place on Monday afternoon in glorious sunshine. The results were close – Julia Bailey won by one point. Rory Bowman, winner of three races, was second. Third was GBR 679 *Avalanche* with Mark Wade and crew, who proved that consistency really pays: they had a series of fourth and fifth places to count.

The event was very fair and we only had two protests. According to jury chairman Rob Owens this was partly due to the presence of two judges on the water who observed the mark roundings very closely.

It was fantastic to have the support of the whole of the Medway YC, in fact one participant felt "that the whole club has entered into the spirit of this event." Most of the visitors said they'd definitely be back in 2007. This is the greatest compliment we could receive and we look forward to welcoming you all again.

Hilary and Ina Gallo

Technical Tips

8 – The Run and Bearaway Set

THE RUN IS NOT a time to switch off, relax and get your energy ready for the next beat. It is another leg of the course where there is opportunity to overtake the boats that are in front of you.

You need to be thinking about the run on the approach to the windward mark. Look at which gybe will take you closer to the leeward marks and make a clear call to the crew as to what the plan is as you round the spreader mark.

The bear away set is the most common call, mainly because if you gybe at the spreader mark, you will be

sailing in the lee of all the boats sailing across the spreader leg – in light winds this is not a good move.

If the bear away call is made, you need a pair of eyes looking back asap after rounding, to call to the helmsperson if you are in clear air, and what to do about it if you are being covered.

In the moment after rounding the spreader mark there will be much jostling for position. It is here that you can suddenly be engulfed by boats taking your wind – before you know it you could have lost four or five places.

Therefore you need to be most alert at keeping a clear lane. The person looking back, normally the front man/woman, sitting or standing at the mast, needs to evaluate whether to go high with the fleet in order to keep clear air, or to sail low and sacrifice a few places to keep clear air.

Jamie Lea