

FLEET REPORTS



Sandy Ellis sailing GBR 422 *Heuschrecke* at the Edinburgh Cup in Torbay – photo by James Walker

take to Plymouth for a great start to the season. Following the same successful format there will be a training weekend to follow.

Not only was this an initiative to introduce Dragons to Plymouth but also for Plymouth to show itself off as having excellent sailing waters for keelboats. There is however, a wider objective which is to promote more interaction between the fleets in the South West. There is no reason why the fleets in Torbay and Falmouth cannot, with the Dragons based at Dartmouth and Plymouth, encourage this initiative to swell the numbers and size of the class in this part of the world.

On the domestic front during the remainder of the season, racing was dominated by Sandy Ellis' *Heuschrecke*, with *Humoresque*, *Snappdragon* and the refurbished *Pendragon*, sailed by Colin Peters, keeping him on his mettle. *Heuschrecke* won most of the trophies although *Humoresque* won the Herald Express championship week-end.

The Torbay Fleet and the Royal Torbay YC were honoured to host so many boats at the Edinburgh Cup which was well attended bearing in mind the number of Dragon regattas taking place in this 75th Anniversary year. Unfortunately the weather was not in the mood to celebrate being too

light to run the South West Championship and too strong to make the Edinburgh Cup an easy event. But congratulations to Rory Bowman and his team of Duncan Grindley and Chris Panks in *Yeah Baby* for winning the Edinburgh Cup, and to Martin Payne and Ivan Bradbury in *Elusive* for coming second and Richard Jordan, Matthew Armstrong and Jeremy Field for coming third in their last big regatta in *Chaotic*.

For Torbay Royal Regatta, two Torbay members with Cowes-based Dragons, Richard Cullen, crewed by Lisa Guy and alternately by John Tilbrook and Simon Howard in *Supremacy* and Gavia Wilkinson-Cox crewed by Mark Hart and Roger Guy, in *Jerboa* joined the fleet. Again the weather was less than kind for the event, blowing 25 knots on the first day. Fortunately the wind came predominantly from the north-north-west and the sea state did not reflect the wind strength so the race officer enabled all the races to be completed successfully.

Jerboa, won five out of six races to take the bulk of the awesome array of fine trophies, with *Heuschrecke*, the Pedersen & Theusen rocketship, sailed by Sandy Ellis and his son Pete and Jim White, second and *Supremacy* third.

Can I finish by reflecting on the fact that after such a busy anniversary year, many Dragon sailors may hanker after less travelling abroad and if you do, you will be welcomed by the Royal Western Yacht Club on March 25th-28th 2005 for the Easter Regatta and on August 27th-29th 2005 for the Torbay Royal Regatta.

Paul Patenall

Technical Tips

1. PREPARE YOUR BOAT

Check:

- shackles, runners and blocks
- bilges are clear of debris
- you have a good towline in addition to anchor warp
- lifejackets

2. SETTINGS

Set to be easy and fast

Heavy weather helm shows the boat is overpowered and slow

- depower the rig by flattening the mainsail with the mast ram
- raise genoa barber
- use the backstay to open mainsail leach

3 - Heavy Weather

3. TECHNIQUES Upwind:

- ease the main before tacking
- use the waves to help pull the bow round in the tack
- allow extra at the lay lines to avoid tacks and to ease off for greater speed

Downwind:

- running slightly by the lee is fast and allows you to use the waves... but take care and practise first!
- gybe when speed is maxed
- ease the kicker before the gybe, in flat water
- flatten spinnaker by sheeting in and pulling in barber to stop rolling

Eric Williams



See more East Coast Dragon photographs on my website at:

www.photosail.co.uk

photography by
Hugh Bourn

For Medway photographs
contact Mike Spurgin
on 01474 814352
email: tamikes@hotmail.com