

RS200s at Itchenor

Itchenor Sailing Club hosted a very successful RS200 Open Meeting, as part of the South East Area Series, on Sunday. The weather forecast for the Bank Holiday weekend was dire but Chichester Harbour produced one of its glorious bright days with a fluctuating breeze which rewarded ten visitors who joined an equal number from the home fleet. All four races took place in a flooding tide which challenged the fleet when the wind dropped and encouraged pin-end starts to shorten the dash for the shore on the first beat to escape from the current.

In the first race Ben Saxton and Kate MacGregor did a horizon job on the fleet to give them a comfortable win. Dave and Emma Derby (father and daughter) won the fight for second place, while the 3rd, 4th and 5th-placed boats were all OCS, leaving Sam Tozer and Lucy Preston to take third.

The second race included the only general recall of the day and later the wind died almost completely. Despite a hairy leeward mark rounding, Pete Vincent and Tessa Nicholls led from start to finish. The Derbys again were second, followed in glorious third by Itchenor's finest Rick Neall and Sara Terry.

Before the third race there was a long pause and an aborted starting sequence while Roddy Bridge, the PRO, showed great patience with the wind, chasing it first left then right. When the gun finally went several boats were caught well below the line due to the tide and struggled to start. Ben and Kate won the first beat and never looked in danger. Mike Chapman and Lynne Ratcliffe were second on the water but their OCS gave second place to the very consistent Derby family. Patch Fillery and Jo Hursell, the latest recruits to Itchenor's ever-growing RS200 fleet, were third.

Going into the last race there were still three possible winners. At last there was a proper steady force 3 and glorious sunshine. Pete and Tessa just beat the late arrivals Steve Dunn and Rachel Jones to the windward mark and then a three-way tussle ensued between Ben and Kate, the Derbys and Pete and Tessa who led for 3_ laps before being pipped by Ben and Kate on the last run.

Ben and Kate's three bullets gave them a well-deserved first and they were presented with the historic Itchenor Burgee Trophy by the Commodore. They also won the first Youth prize. In second were the Derbys, Dave winning the Master's prize. Pete and Tessa were third, while the first lady helm was Hannah Yuill, crewed by Andy Robertson. The fleet enjoyed the legendary Itchenor tea and cakes on the lawn before the dinner for the RS200 fleet in the evening in the gleaming new dining room in the Clubhouse.

Grateful thanks to the PRO Roddy Bridge and his team and to our International 14 friends who took some wonderful photographs which you will find at:
<http://picasaweb.google.com/penman.photos/RS200ItchenorBurgEE25May2008> and
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vb47rt4llyl&fmt=6>.