

## Norman Moore Trophy May 2010

### THE CLASH OF THE TITANS (& aspirant titans and part-time titans)

From the outset it was seemingly destined to end in a gladiatorial contest between two boats - but what a drama that final race showdown was. With the only Trophy contenders leading the race, and side by side, that final and critical gybe for Calvert on the last run of the concluding race settled a wonderful three-day battle of wits, heavy weather sailing skills and harbour knowledge. Congratulations to both *Skua* and *Marengo* for their outstanding performances, tied on points at the end, but *Skua*'s trophy by dint of their two race wins.

**R1:** Basically up and down the Thorney Channel with triangles pointing in every direction necessitating a bi-focal consultation of the chart. *Solitude*'s major misdemeanour at E Head blew *Spectre*'s chances out of the water and also allowed *Skua* to escape. The dead run and decision which way to pass outside the line and post posed some interesting and often wobbly decisions and those who could make a clean and efficient rounding of Star in the strong spring tide gained every time. If you didn't go aground at some point you weren't trying hard enough. *Marengo* steadily advanced in the building breeze and incessant rain and after *Skua* went momentarily aground on the final beat they were just two lengths behind at the finish.

**R2:** *Cockersootie* was first round the inflatable near the goalposts and held on past Ella Nore only losing out when sailing too low for Dunes when Simon in *Curlew* used a small favourable shift to enable them to make better speed albeit in more tide. *Curlew* was never to be headed in a bravura display – ironing those cotton sails was obviously beneficial. *Skua* suffered from a first mark altercation and 720° but recovered to 9<sup>th</sup>, while *Marengo* was held at bay by the speedy *Bluff* (making their only appearance) who finished a very creditable 3<sup>rd</sup>. 21 boats started.

**R3:** Half the fleet overstood Runway but not the A listers (the geese!) who launched themselves downwind to Rookwood with characteristic skill but *Gwahir*'s downwind speed was particularly impressive and their win totally merited. *Marengo* managed to hold off *Skua* with *Solitude* (always setting themselves a tough target of winning the event in just two days) in 4<sup>th</sup>.

**R4:** The eleven gung-ho survivors were given a short course in deference to a F6 and increasingly lumpy ebb. Carolyn responded to a special request from David Sloper to make a decent start ('at least in the second tier rather than the more normal third'!) with a brilliant start from the pin that set up their win. *Solitude* followed close behind at Freddie Brookes before they did yet another pearler (just checking the keel had been properly scrubbed?) and ceded 2<sup>nd</sup> place to *Skua* with *Curlew* again relishing a decent blow in 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**R5:** *Curlew* (Olly this time) was first round the inflatable but *Marengo* stalked them down the run to Thorney and although overlapped, *Curlew* managed to round in clean air and took the direct route to Dunes. Initially good, the dropping and fitful breeze then favoured the windward group and *Skua* was in front at Dunes with *Marengo* now on their tail. *Skua* alone held on to their kite en route to SWP – it looked very marginal but it gave them an extra length and was worth it for that. *Marengo* out-gybed *Skua* near Calvert and looked to be safe on the subsequent return beat to Channel but *Skua* was soon attacking again and both had to do a crash gybe half way

down the next run when shallow water might have ended their tussle in a quite different way (and then claimed *Cockersootie*). The event winning decision was when to do the final gybe for Calvert – *Skua* now marginally ahead continued towards the Winner on port and *Marengo* went on to starboard and slowed in the tide while *Skua* got to slacker water first before gybing. The short beat to SWP, fetch to E Head and final beat to Thorney offered *Marengo* no further opportunities. *Migrant* had a grandstand view of this epic two-hour battle from their 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

### Results

1<sup>st</sup> *Skua* (Harry and Prue Roome, Mark Chilton) 7 points

2<sup>nd</sup> *Marengo* (Carolyn Brigg, Sue Glover and David Sloper) 7 points

3<sup>rd</sup> *Curlew* (Simon Slater, Olly Gilchrist and Chris David) 14 points

4<sup>th</sup> *Migrant* (Charles Fisher, Richard and Carol Thompson) 21 points

5<sup>th</sup> *Buccaneer* (Mike and Bettine Bond, Steve Hammett) 28 points

1<sup>st</sup> Swan *Cockersootie* (Paul Ward) 31 points

### Brass tacks

- The winds were generally quite different to the various forecasts both in strength (Sunday max 14 knots but actually 27) and direction. A nightmare for the PRO who together with his expert team (on for all three days) nevertheless produced some excellent courses. Nice gesture by our Chairman to give them some fizz for their efforts and an amusing response when David Priscott and Bill Barnes sent up their wives ('the real decision makers'!) to collect.
- The leaders were four abreast planing into the leeward mark on the second lap of the first of the two breezy and bumpy races on Sunday afternoon. There was no margin for error, rules needed to be observed, water given where needed, boats preserved, injuries avoided – and a Trophy to be won. Respect!
- Those two short(er) races were amazing. Tough, exhilarating, demanding and fun. Amongst the best the harbour can produce - and no doubt good business for the physios and chandleries too.
- *Solitude* now has a port and starboard sticker to remind them that their trademark port tack approach to the first windward buoy is not always prudent or fleet-friendly. Can it be right that an infringing boat having done a 720° remains ahead of the wronged boat because of the complications it created (having to duck the port boat, miss the mark, then gybe away and find a gap as 20 boats approach the windward mark on starboard)?
- Does the (over?) abundance of screens and weather information make us wimpish on the margin? Saturday morning was great racing in miserable conditions but after the cancellation/postponement decision at lunchtime the breeze inevitably dropped (at least for a while). Or were we just relieved?
- *Gwaihir* (Rachel driving and Dad up front) won the first of the Sunday afternoon rampages and then went home. Statement made - just no need to strain the old man before he sets off around Britain.
- No discards? *Marengo* would have been a comfortable winner.
- 26 boats took part at some point over the weekend with an expected reduction on the final day as the front-runners and podium seekers persevered with the cool and unseasonal conditions.
- It is frequently debated of course but the enforced b2b races on Sunday might just trigger yet another look at the format – two days and six races perhaps?