

Swallow Championship 2010 Report

Friday 25th June saw a fleet of Swallows set off from Itchenor to compete for the 2010 Class Championships under the burgee of the Royal Southern Sailing Club at Hamble. The Vernon Trophy passage race there looked to be in doubt due to lack of wind, but a light sea breeze filled in to allow a slightly delayed start. This breeze carried the fleet out of Chichester Harbour and with the help of the tide we arrived at the forts in good order. Here the wind deserted and the fleet was becalmed for some time. Eventually a breeze filled in from the west giving a brisk beat to the Hamble river. Buccaneer (Mike and Emma Bond) was easily first there but she and Cockersootie (Paul Ward and family) sadly failed to identify the finish mark and so conceded victory to Marengo (Olly Sloper and friends). A couple of the navigationally challenged sailors managed to run aground at the entrance of the Hamble despite warnings from Masquerade who was escorting the fleet but all eventually made it safely to the R.S.Y.C.

The competitors then spent an enjoyable evening at the local Italian restaurant where the highlight was community singing lead by Anthony Lunch, exhibiting some hitherto unknown talents for both singing and cajoling an initially reluctant choir. Fortunately the management enjoyed the diversion so the Swallows were not forcibly ejected.

The Championships started in earnest on Saturday with three races at the mouth of Southampton Water near Hill Head. After a long slow sail out, racing got underway in a light southerly wind on an Olympic triangle course. The first race was won by Marengo with Gwaihir second and Solitude third. During a short break for lunch the wind swung to the west and the race officer managed to get in two windward leeward courses before the fleet set off back to Hamble after some 9 hours on the water. Once ashore the competitors were able to slake their thirst on the balcony of the R.S.Y.C. and then enjoy a buffet supper. Thank you Richard for doing such a good job organising the social functions.

After day one, several teams were on similar points with Solitude leading the pack, so there was all to play for on Sunday which dawned bright with more light winds. This time the fleet was towed to the starting area so racing was underway by 1030 in a light south westerly. First race was an Olympic triangle followed by a windward leeward course. In the light winds and strong tides there was much place changing and a little drama when unexpectedly a very large container ship using the North Channel carved through the fleet. After a very enjoyable weekend of close racing the final result was:

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| 1st Marengo | Carolyn Brigg, Mike Ewart-Smith and David Sloper. Carolyn also wins the Thurne Tankard for the first lady |
| 2 nd Gwaihir | Rob Struckett, Olly Sloper and Rachael Struckett |
| 3 rd Migrant | Charles Fisher, Richard and Carol Thompson, who also win the Fractured Hip Trophy (total age 200!) |

The class is very grateful to the Royal Southern Sailing Club for their hospitality and especially the race officer David Arnold and his team for running the racing in very difficult conditions. We would also like to thank Carolyn, for providing Masquerade, as the Mother Ship and especially for towing all the Swallows home when the wind died on Sunday evening even if she was eating our cake which we had left on board by mistake!

Blue Phantom