

Itchenor Sailing Club

Points Week at Itchenor Sailing Club

Last week Itchenor Sailing Club held its annual Points Week – a festival of classic keelboat racing – this year supported by Strutt & Parker. There were a plethora of national and international champions and Olympians among the crews of the 56 boats taking part. However, the real star of the week was Chichester Harbour, full of water at high tide to allow courses to be set to maximise the conditions. 25 X One Designs raced for daily trophies and the Benson Platter for the week's winner, 17 Sunbeams, celebrating their 95th anniversary, competed for the Wengen Cow Bell, while the Buccaneer Trophy was the target for the 14 Swallows.

Monday dawned bright and clear with a steady breeze from the North: conditions that persisted through the day. Current XOD champion John Tremlett drove Lass to victory followed by former Benson Platter winner, Mark Palmer in Sweet X. Andy Oddie, himself a national champion, was third in Magic Dragon. Former XOD champion Alastair Ashford Foxglove visiting from Antigua showed well but navigation let him down as a mark was missed. Tuesday conditions matched Monday's. However, this time the Ashfords made no errors to seal the win, followed by another former XOD champion Michael Martell sailing Astralita with Lass again on the podium. By Wednesday the wind had swung to the South West to provide perfect conditions for the fleet to be sent to the extremes of the Harbour. Lass bounced back to lead Foxglove and Astralita in a close finish after over two hours of racing. Thursday provided the exception to the perfect weather – grey clouds, rain and very strong winds left race officer Roger Wickens no choice but to postpone racing until Friday. And so it was Friday with two competitive races that determined the overall winner. The first race podium was Sweet X, Foxglove and Astralita. This set up the final race with all to play for. Lass made no mistake with a victory followed by Sweet X. Roger Yeoman made up for a disappointing week with Xcitation's only top three result of the week.

There was also no doubting the quality of the Swallow fleet - current and past national champions, ex-world champions who have recently joined the class and many other potential challengers for the overall Buccaneer Trophy. Ironically it was class stalwarts Charles Fisher and Richard Thompson in Migrant who struck first with a clever first beat in the opening race in which they led from the start helped by a correct choice for the all important mid-race beat. James Hartley in Osprey - the brand new boat - showed their potential with a close win over Malcolm Green in Archon in race two having match raced up

the final beat. Archon was now being helmed by ex America's Cup skipper Andy Green who then went on to record two master class victories. Meanwhile Skua helmed by Harry and Prue Roome, had been steadily accumulating podium places. The action was shaping up for a grand finale when Thursday's racing was blown off. The two races on Friday were champagne sailing at its best and after an unusual course error by Carolyn Brigg in Marengo whilst leading comfortably, Skua pounced to record her first win of the week. It could still have gone several ways but in the final race Gwaihir helmed by Itchenor's Rear Commodore Sailing, Mike Wigmore, found her mojo at last to take the win from Skua finishing second for the fourth time but demonstrating the importance of consistency over the course of a varied but excellent week's sailing.

As with the other fleets the Sunbeams learned that racing in a large fleet good results were often dependent on competitors having good starts and sailing in clear air. In the first race of the week Tim Hill in Query took an early lead after selecting the correct side of the first beat. Query was, however, overhauled by Joe and Cathy Burnie's Fleury who recovered well after the first leg, and Penny helmed by Richard Pearson. On Tuesday Fleury and Polly with class captain Nick Leach in charge pulled away from the rest of the fleet on the second leg and held their positions to the finish. The final leg provided plenty of tactical opportunities that allowed some boats to make spectacular gains. Graham Colbourne's Honey crossed the line in third but was disqualified for being over the line at the start. This left Peter Taylor's Betty in third place.

Wednesday saw Fleury continue to show exceptional form and Joe Burnie won his third race of the week. Behind Fleury the results were in doubt until the final few hundred metres of the race due to the available tactical choices on the run to the finish. Query passed Melody helmed by Petra Tanner, for second place and only 15 seconds separated fourth to seventh place after the two-hour race, demonstrating how tight the final races were.

In Thursday's race postponed to Friday V18 Polly led from the start, having managed to stay out of the adverse tide at the start. Fleury and Query finished in second and third place respectively. The final race saw Melody take an early lead but she was overhauled by Query. Duncan O'Kelly in Harmony was third. The final results reflect how close the racing was, where only 8 points separated third and seventh places.

Results:

XOD

- | | | |
|---|----------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Lass | Richard Bullock, Jeremy Lear and John Tremlett |
| 2 | Foxglove | Alasdair and Jackie Ashford |
| 3 | Sweet X | Mark Palmer |

Swallow

- | | | |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Skua | Harry and Prue Roome |
| 2 | Archon | Sir Malcolm and Andy Green |
| 3 | Osprey | James Hartley, Jeremy Sibthorp, Robert Sutherland |

Sunbeam

- | | | |
|---|--------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Fleury | Joe and Cathy Burney |
| 2 | Query | Tim Hill |
| 3 | Polly | Nick Leach, Simon O'Hea |

-ENDS-

About Itchenor Sailing Club:

Itchenor Sailing Club is based in Chichester, West Sussex. Founded in 1927, the club hosts top class amateur racing throughout the summer as well as training and youth sailing facilities and events. ISC boasts a fine sailing heritage with members competing in nine separate Olympic Games. The attractive listed Clubhouse offers accommodation, an award winning chef, and a permanent in house team. The facilities are available on a limited basis for corporates to run events, team building and water based corporate entertainment. There are a limited number of sponsorship opportunities available.
<http://www.itchenorsc.co.uk>