



# MULTI-CLASS ACTION

Race officer **NIGEL SHARP** reports on a successful Falmouth Sailing Week, with a huge variety of classes and boats out racing

It was not long after the Second World War that the Falmouth area clubs first got together to jointly organise regattas on consecutive days.

Falmouth Sailing Week's current format has now been well established for many years: seven days of racing organised by the Port of Falmouth Sailing Association (POFSA) with six days nominally hosted by one of the local clubs – Helford River SC, Mylor YC, Restronguet SC, Royal Cornwall YC, St Mawes SC and Flushing SC, each of which host the daily teas and prizegivings – and the traditional Champagne Race (now sponsored by Ancasta) on the other day; and with competing boats split into two fleets with a dozen classes of dinghies and mostly traditional open boats sailing in the sheltered waters of the Carrick Roads, while seven keelboat classes and the Firebird catamarans race in Falmouth Bay.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear to POFSA that some competitors, particularly those in the Bay, think that seven days of racing is too long, but at the same time others still enjoy a full week. While it was decided this year to retain seven days of racing, a compromise was made with

the Bay classes which, it was hoped, would suit everyone: the first four days would be standalone regattas (with two regatta-type courses on each of the first three days and then the traditional long regatta type course race on Champagne Day) and over the last three days there would be a series of races – possibly as many as three per day – over mainly windward-leeward courses. Meanwhile in the Carrick Roads, the format would remain unchanged: one race per day on regatta-type courses for most classes, but with the Ajaxes sailing a second race on two days and the Sunbeams sailing a second (windward/leeward) race on each of the last three days.

For the third year I was the Race Officer for the Carrick Roads races with a highly experienced team on board Jack Penty's committee boat Noon Hi. Our race format included an initial beat from the committee boat to a specially laid windward mark and thereafter followed regatta-type courses using the 20-or-so navigation marks and fixed, seasonally laid racing marks. The Carrick Roads, which is mostly less than a mile wide, is

**Above** Falmouth Working Boats always enjoy close racing

**Below** Racing takes place in Falmouth Bay as well as in the Carrick Roads

a challenging piece of water in which to run such multiple class races, but all the more enjoyable for that.

As it turned out, strong winds forced us to cancel one day of racing – St Mawes SC's day on the Friday – although that was no surprise to anyone as the forecast had been consistently bad for that day all week. But apart from that, competitors enjoyed mostly brisk and challenging breezes all week, generally between north-west and south-west. On the opening day, the classes starting in the last group endured torrential rain halfway through the race, resulting in the wind veering enough to turn the beats



into fetches, and dropping to almost nothing. For a while it looked as if we would have to dispatch RIBs to different marks of the course to display Flag S and shorten the course for various classes to ensure they didn't run out of time, but thankfully the wind not only filled in again but also backed to its (more or less) original direction. Thankfully, also, that turned out to be the only occasion all week when we had to even consider shortening any courses. Two days later, however, it initially looked as if we might not get in any race at all. The forecast was for a veering south-westerly, but when we first arrived in the Roads there was the faintest wind from the south-east and so we set up a line and windward mark accordingly. Just as we were about to get the racing underway, however, all around us we could see zephyrs coming from a number of different directions, so up went the answering pennant. Luckily, soon afterwards it settled with reasonably convincing strength from the west-south-west and so we moved across the other side of the Roads and set ourselves up again. The first start was delayed by just over an hour but eventually good racing was enjoyed by all.

Each day the dinghy class was the first to start, and it was important to send them on a course which would

take them away from the bigger boats starting after them. Dinghy racing was reinstated to Falmouth Week in 2018 after many years being run as a separate regatta, and this year the local boats welcomed five visitors from Burghfield Sailing Club. Two of these – David Entwistle and Pete Barlow, both sailing Blazes, prevailed in the overall results followed by Partick Clarke (the first local sailor) in his Aero. "You are so lucky to have a large piece of water to sail in," said Entwistle afterwards, "and the format you deploy to use large sections of the Carrick Roads to race in, is an absolute winner for us inland pond sailors, and is a real driver in making the decision to come to Falmouth."

The Flying Fifteen and Handicap Dayboats classes were dominated

**Above** L-r J/80 Jem; Balaton 31 Levity in R fleet

respectively by Simon Kneller's Really Flying and Howard Paterson's Dragon Integrity, each of which counted five first places.

In the Hine Downing-sponsored Falmouth Working Boat class – the biggest class in the Week with 13 taking part and, many would say, the most spectacular with their uniquely coloured topsails – overall victory went to John Peters' Rita which, having discarded a 5th place, only had to count firsts and seconds. But there was close racing throughout the class all week, perhaps best illustrated by the fact that six boats finished within a minute of a half of each other on corrected time in the nearly three-hour first race.

While the Ajax class was dominated by Polyphemus – owned by Mike Grice →

## TIPS FOR SETTING REGATTA-TYPE COURSES FOR MULTIPLE CLASSES IN CONFINED WATERS LIKE THE CARRICK ROADS

- Avoid anchoring the committee boat, the distance mark or the windward mark in the 30 metre-plus deep water channel.
- While there is a need for reasonable precision when laying and re-laying the line and windward mark in a shifty wind, don't be too fussy – competitors don't like to be kept waiting and it's not the Olympic Games.
- Try not to lay the windward mark too close to a high-sided shore, although that can be difficult when the wind is blowing across such a narrow bit of water.
- Think carefully about courses at low water springs – although Falmouth is often billed as the third largest deep water harbour in the world, it has some very shallow bits!
- Although the Sailing Instructions clearly state that boats must not go through the start line after their start, try to set a course which makes it impossible for them to make such a mistake.
- Give the competitors a variety of downwind leg angles – for most this will enhance the enjoyment and it should be fairer for the boats in the handicap classes with different reaching and running abilities.
- Avoid starboard roundings of windward marks, especially the first one when boats may still be bunched up together – the rules make it considerably safer to allow boats to approach the windward mark on a starboard tack lay line and then just bear away.
- Never have different classes going round the same mark in opposite directions.



and mostly helmed by John Howard – just one point separated the next three boats, with Ian Woods’ Artemis just securing second place. Meanwhile in the Falmouth Gaffers class, two points separated the first three boats with David Brunyee’s Arlette narrowly beating Andy Platt’s Scallywag and Mike Rangecroft’s Miss Agnes.

The Piper/Rustlers, the newest class to be welcomed to Falmouth Week, also enjoyed close racing. The Piper was designed by David Boyd in the 1960s. Since 2006, Rustler Yachts has been producing the Rustler 24 with the same hull and with a rig which is slightly different, but close enough to allow the two types to race level. After nearly two hours of racing on Tuesday, for instance, the first five boats finished within 48 seconds of each other; and the series was won by Bob Edwards’ Piper Kelpie followed by John Todd’s Rustler Mistress and Charles Taylor’s Piper Piccolino.

But the closest racing took place at the top of the Sunbeam fleet, sponsored by Mylor Yacht Harbour. The Sunbeams were scheduled to have two series: the all-week ten race series and the mini-series of six races over last three days. In the final results in both series, David and Emma Mantle’s Whimsey finished level on points (and with identical placings) at the top of the table – with John Fox’s Pixy in the full-week series and with Roger Ford in Audry in the mini-series – but the “last race” tie-break procedure knocked her back to second place...in both series. The disappointment that the Mantles must have felt can only have been accentuated with the memory that they lost two of the mini-series races by just one second – one to Audry and the other to Pixy.

Meanwhile in Falmouth Bay, my opposite number Chris Davis – Race Officer for the eighth year and again with an experienced team supporting him on board Andrew Poole’s committee boat Sweet Briar – ran up to 14 races



for all classes. After IRC 1 produced four different winners in the seven standalone races, the end of week series was dominated by Simon Britten’s Briand One Tonner Hero which won four of the six races, closely followed by Rupert Tildesley’s Archambault A31 Omerta.

Robin Edwards’ GK34 Firebird of St Helier won five of IRC 2’s standalone races but slipped to third in the series which was won by David Cunliffe’s Laser 28 Encore just a point ahead of John Hicks’ Half Tonner Rampage.

In IRC 3, Stuart Higgins’ Hunter Impala Atalanta won nine out of 13 races, giving a comfortable victory. Chris Jelliss’ Hunter Sonata A Little Trifle and Luke Goodden’s GK24 Kizzy fought it out for second place with the latter prevailing by just a point.

There were also three classes for boats using an alternative rating system, the South West Yacht Time Correction system (YTC) which was started at Mylor YC a few years ago and is spreading in popularity throughout the West Country. Harry Hill’s Open 30 Alice’s Mirror won four of the standalone races and then all but one of the series races. The XP44 minX, sailed by Gary Fry, his wife and their two young children, was second. YTC Division 2 mostly proved to be a battle between Simone Kennett’s Sigma 33 Jambo! and Christopher

**Above l-r**  
Ultraviolet scored three bullets in the Firebird class; Omerta was a close second in the Class 1 series

**Below l-r**  
Howard Paterson and crew of Dragon Integrity; Chris Bell and crew from Sadler 34 Hawk; Verity Cunliffe from Sunbeam Whimsey with Simon Boote from Ancasta; young Fry family crew from XP44 minX with Chris Davies (RO Bay Fleet and Rear Commodore Sailing RCYC)



By Nigel Sharp (chairman of the Port of Falmouth Sailing Association and Race Officer for the Carrick Roads in Falmouth Sailing Week)



Bell’s Sadler 34 Hawk with the two of them finishing level on points in the series, but with the “most firsts” tiebreak procedure giving victory to the latter. Kevin McLean’s Dehler 34 Infinity and Clive Catherall’s Sigma 33 Rumble mostly shared the spoils in the YTC white sails class standalone races, but in the series Julia Hopkins’ S&S 30 Jemelda took overall victory. In the IF Boats (formerly known as Marieholms), Matt Davis’s Mathilde proved the importance of consistency by taking overall victory without a single race win.

In the Firebird class, Harvey Bowden’s Hyper and Peter Stephens’ Ultraviolet won all but one of the standalone races but in the series Steve Hutt’s Cornish Meadow beat them into second and third by the narrowest of margins.

**The dates for Falmouth Sailing Week in 2020 will be 8-15 August** ■

In past years some dinghy classes have held their National Championships in conjunction with Falmouth Sailing Week, and the Port of Falmouth Sailing Association would be pleased to hear from any dinghy classes which might be interested in doing so in future.  
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