

BRIXHAM ROYAL TORBAY HERITAGE SAILING REGATTA 26th & 27th May 2023

From Penny Jolley, Regatta Organiser

What a wonderful mix of boats arrived in Brixham to celebrate the 26th year of the Regatta in its current form; the original event took place over 100 years ago under the auspices of King George V, whose Perpetual Challenge Cup is awarded annually to the fastest trawler.

A total of 30 boats entered in the Regatta this year, some increase over the past 10 years, when entries originally amounted to fewer than a dozen. The popularity and success are a tribute to the hard work of the Heritage Regatta Committee, its team of stalwart helpers, Brixham Yacht Club and Torbay Harbour Authority; the latter kindly extending free berthing facilities to our visiting Heritage vessels over the entire weekend, allowing the Regatta entry fee to be kept as low as possible, so a big thanks to them.

Boats and crews were met by the Regatta Bosun in the 'Follow Me' boat assist mooring in the sunshine on Friday and Saturday, following passages from as far afield as Brittany, Cornwall, the Tamar and the Isle of White. An informal start to the proceedings was on offer to boats sailing up from the west who were able to join in the passage race from Dartmouth, although many boats did arrive by Friday evening and started a weekend of serious socialising at the Yacht Club. A full list of boats appears at the end of this article.

Missin' Tackle, our local Shanty Side, enhanced the Regatta atmosphere in the sunny afternoon by performing on board Pilgrim; a beautiful new entrant, a Fife, Sybil of Cumae looked elegant alongside, but sadly Snark, the Thames Sailing Barge suffered damage en route and returned to her home port for repairs. Le Grand Lejon, a lugger from Brittany was another victim of the 'meteo' which gave a poor outlook, forcing her to head for home early on.

Registration and distribution of goodies bags at Brixham Yacht Club were accompanied by our excellent local sea shanty side "Missin' Tackle", who kindly gave their services in exchange for a pint, and followed by the crews' traditional fish pie supper, courtesy of Brixham Trawler Agents. The Concours d'Elegance judge, Colin Mawbey, took time and pleasure amongst the assembled boats; Colin is one of the skippers on Vigilance and was delighted to represent her during her absence at Will Sterling's yard for 'major surgery'.

The Parade of Sail preceded the Corinthian Sail in Company, led out by Pilgrim. With light North Easterlies forecast and the Lark championship racing in shore to the west of the bay, the regatta officer took the Heritage fleet from due east from Battery Point in a short sausage-shaped course. With 2 buoys strategically placed to afford the best views to spectators and an outer distance mark to separating the heritage boats from the Larks. True to the forecast, light and fluky winds ensued and the majority of entrants struggled to make the second mark before close of play. Notable exceptions were some of the faster boats in the large Yacht class (Sybil of Cumae, Cynthia etc) who managed to complete the course, receive a finishing gun, get tied up to the Town Heritage Pontoon, order a drink at the bar and start tucking into their first pappadum before the rest of us had got round to dropping our mainsails. A plus side of the weather was that most of the fleet spent the afternoon bathed in sunshine, with every square inch of sail up drifting in close proximity to the end of Brixham Breakwater which created a great spectacle for the crowd that had gathered there to watch.

Have a look at the Brixham Heritage Regatta Facebook page and website for the photographs, taken by members of Paignton Photographic club and spectacular drone photos by Paul Boomsma, as well as those taken by individuals out on the Bay.

Our excellent Sunday evening curry was followed by prize-giving; Brixham Yacht Club Commodore Sacha Hagar did sterling work making the presentations to the prize winners, Regatta Chairman, Richard Spreckley having computed results in his inimitable manner! For full results please visit the Regatta website .

Thanks go too to all the volunteers and the hard work by the berthing party was an enormous help; the behind the scenes staff at the Yacht Club, the 'front of house' Regatta volunteers team in their vivid lime polo shirts. I did overhear very pleasing remarks *"The warmest welcome"* *"Wonderfully organised and so very many new and friendly faces"* and *"We love the Heritage Regatta – wouldn't miss it; the highlight of our sailing calendar"* Our thanks to all the boats and boats' crews who came and made it all work. We look forward to seeing you at the **Heritage Rally on 16th September 2023**, a rather more low key affair.

2024 dates:

Brixham Heritage Regatta 27th - 28th May

This is the 100th birthday party of the Brixham Trawler Provident, who is sailing down from Scotland for the event. We have already had expressions of interest from wannabee participants and expect other Brixham Trawlers and Classics. Royalist will be amongst the fleet – I'm not sure which class she will fit into!