

Heritage Regatta report May 30th 2021

Our regatta went ahead this year in a somewhat reduced form due to limitations of numbers of participants required by the pandemic regulations and recommendations. Despite this 21 boats enjoyed the traditional Brixham welcome in bright sunshine for the whole weekend. The imposed limit of 20 visiting boats was rapidly taken up when we announced the event was taking place, with the furthest travelled and smallest boats signing up first. These were two of the now popular “junk” fleet, Amiina and Minnow, who travelled from Chichester and the Solent over a leisurely period of 4 days! As organisers we were very concerned about berthing for all our visitors due to delays in repairing our usual heritage pontoon after it was damaged by a large sinking vessel during the winter. However at the last minute the harbour authority completed basic repairs and handed over the pontoon to us at 14:00 on Friday after a couple of boats had already arrived. Very soon Richard Spreckley in our black RIB was out in the Bay shepherding entrants to their berths and the pontoon party could begin.

Saturday evening was for registration and traditional fish supper in the Brixham Yacht Club bar, albeit with the limitation of table only service and limited circulation of visitors. However a great time was had by all admiring the extensive views of Torbay now crowded with moored cruise ships. Each boat was presented with a “goody” bag containing their Heritage flag and most importantly a chart-let of the BYC racing marks that were to be used for the sailing on Sunday. The usual special large buoys used for course marking in previous years were unavailable due to their usage by the English Riviera dinghy championships being run simultaneously by BYC, hence the only alternative left to Heritage was use of the existing fixed BYC race marks.

Sunday dawned bright with a gentle Easterly breeze and a bit of a chop on the water. Our friends from Paignton photographic club had ideal conditions for their pictures taken both from fixed positions on the Breakwater and from their “borrowed” motor cruiser positioned off the harbour entrance. The Brixham trawlers Pilgrim and Vigilance commenced proceedings at 12:45, both with excellent timed starts to within a few seconds of the required time, some achievement with big heavy rigs and the light breeze. Others such as the lugger “Guiding Star” took a more leisurely approach from some way off the line and took 12 minutes to get going! As the fleet proceeded towards Paignton it was obvious that the dinghy course had been moved from the previous day and was now closer to our route. Dinghies not racing but waiting downwind of their committee boat were shepherded out of the way of leader, Pilgrim, and everyone else followed suit with no problems other than surprised looks on some dinghy sailors faces.

Sailing past the anchored cruise ships proved to be challenging with big wind shifts and shadows caused by these giants and the whole fleet slowed down trying to get past. The result was that the planned 3 laps of the bay was reduced to just one for most, however the elegant gaff rigged racer “Cynthia” showed her exceptional turn of speed and completed 3 laps to everyone else’s one! Regatta officer, Chris Coote, called a halt at 16:00 to give time for everyone to return to harbour and ready themselves for our traditional prize giving and curry supper in BYC, to round off the regatta in our usual style. However we were not able to hand out the actual trophies this year due to the restrictions, but commemorative glass tankards and winners pennants were taken to the tables together with raffle prizes. The intention is to superimpose pictures of the winner’s trophies on photographs of their boats taken during the regatta as a memento of their efforts.

The Regatta results are appended elsewhere but the winner of the prestigious “Kings Cup” presented by George 5th for Brixham trawlers was won by Pilgrim, and the Ibex trophy for fastest lap of the course went to Peter Lucas and his magnificent racer “Cynthia”. “Tamarind” is a regular entrant but surprised us this year with her crew choice. One was 2 years old and one, Harry, only 4 weeks old. An RNLI bear known as “Harry’s Bear” somehow found his way on board at prize giving! Both the recently restored double ender “Escape” and the smaller gaff cutter “Little Tern” attracted the judges eyes for the Concours award, and Little Tern was judged the winner. The junks with 5 boats was the largest class and the junk schooner rigged “Lexia” proved to be remarkably swift and able to complete the course ahead of similarly rigged local boat “Fly”. She was also the only boat to register a passage time from Dartmouth by inspection of her log and so

was awarded a trophy. "Minx" as a copy of a Morecombe Bay prawner was the only working boat in her class and Guiding Star the only dandy or lugger in hers, so each won a trophy. Maybe this will encourage more boats in these classes to attend and provide some competition in Class 2. The only yawl seen this year was White Cloud in amongst all the cutters and ketches and showed a good turn of speed when all sails were drawing. We have received many comments about the "Brixham" welcome and thank you for those, we will endeavour to repeat at our Heritage Rally Sept 25th 2021!!!!