



Success in Scottish Waters

Jens Kuhn

Last winter Pete came up with the idea to have some boats from our club attend the Regatta at the East Lothian Yacht club in North Berwick. Being quite a fan of the place, even though I never managed to sail there, I was keen to attend, and so was Steve (P) who has family close by.

It was decided I would crew for Steve. Sailing the regatta in my Topper didn't seem too attractive as I feared I would have to compete in the Youth Squad...

Two separate courses

So on Friday 3 June, I joined Steve, his wife and the Old Yellow GP14 on the trail up the A1, while Pete took his Aero early on Saturday morning. Mike and Angela attended as shore support and photographers.

"...as an evil sea mist descended upon us..."

Having made it to North Berwick, we left the boat on the provided staging area/dinghy park which obviously was part of a golf course, and where it would rest during the night, enjoying the sea view and preparing for its coming adventure.

Come Saturday morning, the place was now buzzing with dinghies and people. We found out that Steve and I were the only ones sailing a GP14, and that we were bunched up in a general handicap class with boats so diverse as a Laser

5000 skiff, a Laser 4.7 and, on the second day, a Topper (the only one partaking, rendering my fears about the giant youth squad quite invalid...). Most of the boats on the beach were actually RS varieties, mainly 200s, 400s and a sizeable fleet of Aeros. Lasers were frequent too, so were Streakers.

The races would be sailed on two different courses. Most single handers sailing to the west of the town while the rest, including the handicap fleet, were on the East side, towards Bass Rock.

The briefing revealed a few changes to the original plans, and we had some trouble understanding the new course, until we realised that the paper we had been given actually only contained one course, not two.

Delayed by the haar

Once all set and ready, we had to endure a delay as an evil sea mist descended upon us, but less than an hour later, we were off. And so nice it was to sail on the



Above: The day started like this but...

Below: ...then the haar crept in.



sea as opposed to a constricted river. In Hugh's honour we even saw a puffin bobbing on the water as we sailed by. Soon though, we were busy trying to find out where the course was, what all the markers meant and when our start would be. In the first race we had some confusion about the second rounding mark, which looked a lot like something a fisherman had left behind. We also had trouble staying ahead of the little Laser 4.7 which was amazingly well sailed by

its young skipper. The biggest boat in the fleet on the other hand was nowhere to be seen, but as we would beat it on handicap in any case that didn't concern us too much.

Overall we had a good time, not winning anything, but achieving a steady second place in all three races, the third of which was shortened due to a thunderstorm. We also got into quite a routine in using the spinnaker, something I didn't have much experience of before.

Success!

Sunday morning greeted us with light winds and I almost felt a little disappointed. I was wrong, of course, as the winds picked up steadily while swinging around the course during most of the day, making life for the race officer interesting. We had to wait a little while for the course to be adjusted.

Once we were away we got things right even more than the day before. Despite Steve having lost one of his magic socks in the changing room (I think it was the green, starboard, one) we managed to



leave the Laser 4.7 way behind in the first race. The second race coincided with strengthening winds,

Great to see our younger members out on the river and learning the ropes



The Old Yellow Boat in action, with a mist-shrouded Bass Rock beyond

and we were creaming along really nicely, at one point managing to round the windward mark perfectly, passing the Laser 5000 who had got themselves stuck and were sailing backwards.

The final race presented even stronger winds and a new direction that had us basically reaching up and down the course. (We skipped the spinnaker for this one as we were more or less flying anyway.)

Overall we managed to win all the races on the second day, securing first place in the handicap fleet (to be fair, there were never more than 4 boats at a time, but still, some of them were fast boats.).

Pete, in the meantime, was doing well in his Aero on the other side of the race area, securing a third place overall, ***thus making York RI Sailing Club a force to be reckoned with on the Firth of Forth hereafter.***



Travels with the Old Yellow Boat (part 1)

Steve Parry

This year has been one of the busiest yet for *Sea Willow*, with entries at the GP14 Inland Championships at Bassenthwaite in May, East Lothian YC Regatta in June, the GP14 Welsh Area Championships in July and the National Championships in Looe in August, and we haven't finished yet!

But to begin at the beginning...

The wrong wind, Gromit!

Our travelling season started at the GP14 Inland Championships where 30 boats took to the water for a six-race series run over two days. Phil and I travelled up in fine weather on the Friday only to find that the conditions at the lake were rather less pleasant, with a keen force 5—6 wind and heavy showers driving on shore. Fortunately we had booked a top notch B&B just across the road!

"...like the radiating ripples from a stone tossed into a pond."

Saturday dawned bright and sunny but by the time the 5* breakfast had been consumed, the breeze on the lake was building rapidly. The usual rigging, chatting and general bonhomie filled the morning while the clatter of halyards in the wind steadily grew in number and volume.

For those who are not familiar with Bassenthwaite, I should explain that it is a relatively narrow piece of water aligned roughly East-West with steeply rising fells to the North and South and comparatively flatter ground to both ends. As a result, East and West winds are good for sailing but North and South winds are challenging: they drop

off the fells and burst onto the surface of the lake like the radiating ripples from a stone tossed into a pond. When these winds are strong they cause all sorts of entertainment in the fleet!

The wind for the weekend was set from the North West so we knew it was going to be hard work both for the race officer in setting a course and for the less athletic of the competitors in keeping their boats the right way up. The snag for us was that Phil and I were much the oldest team competing and by definition the least agile! As Phil said in his 'Eeyore' voice: *'With a bit of luck we shall manage to end up last in this lot'* and *'The spinnaker is staying in the bag!'*

After a couple of general recalls Race 1 got under way and, although it was something of a workout, we stayed the right way up, unlike one or two others.

Much to Phil's surprise we avoided last place in spite of not touching the spinnaker. Race 2 followed in similar fashion with the same result.

"...as Phil shot across to the 'high side' like a gazelle..."

By Race 3 we were getting the hang of it and managed to finish two places further up, in 24th position. We did have one really hairy moment when, fully hiked on the beat, a massive gust hit us on our leeward side, I couldn't haul myself in fast enough as the floor of the boat leapt up to meet me and water rose over my waist. Luckily Phil had taken the time to do one press-up over the winter break and this now paid off as he shot across to the 'high side' like a gazelle and threw his 15 stone



The sailing club (above) and Bassenthwaite lake



over the gunwale! *Sea Willow* came up, shook herself and carried on!

Once on shore there was all the usual post-race banter before we headed back to the B&B to change for dinner in the club house, followed by a short quiz. Good company but lots of tired limbs.

Complicated course

Sunday brought sunshine and a little less wind, albeit from the same direction. This time the kite was used and we managed to make 23rd in race five. As the best sailing area in NW winds is fairly small, the OOD set a complicated course involving much gybing and tacking with frequent hoisting and dropping of the kite. All excellent practice but by the end of race six we were glad to stop and head for the showers.

Our final placing after others had discarded their poorest results was 28th, not great but not last! And we were the only vintage boat at the event with our

nearest rival being at least 35 years younger! To our delight this was recognised at the prize-giving when we

were presented with the newly donated and very fine *Vintage Award*. Feeling suitably inspired Phil and I headed for

home and looked forward to our next adventure with the *Old Yellow Boat*.

But that will be another story...

Wild and windy at Ullswater

Angela Craggs

Although several regulars were unable to get to Ullswater this year, almost thirty of us did make it. We certainly had a variety of boats from Optimists to an RS400, with Toppers, a Laser, GP14s, a Vision and even a dayboat.

Mike and I went up on the Thursday. We discovered that the grassy hill at the launch site was no more. Instead there was hard standing for yachts. Fortunately there is a bit of lumpy grass near to the lake which was OK as a lunch spot.

It was a beautiful evening, Ullswater at its best. We enjoyed a very pleasant sail but then Ullswater gave us a taste of what was in store for the weekend. Waves with white caps appeared and a prolonged squall arrived soon after.

“...I’ve never sailed so fast before...”

After a very wet and windy night we sailed on Friday afternoon, this time swapping the genoa for a jib. Peter and Phil were already out in the RS400, spinnaker and spray flying.

As more people arrived ‘our’ camping field began to fill up. Many of us had fish and chips from the on-site chippy whilst some chose to dine in a bit more style in Pooley Bridge.

Sail while you can

Everyone was up and away in good time on Saturday morning. The forecast was for the wind to increase so we all wanted to get some sailing in before then.

The wind was strong even at that time in the morning. The RS400 was already revelling in the conditions. Jens was out



in his Topper. Steve H went out in the dayboat. Ian and family had a short sail in their GP. Kate went off in her Laser and Mike and I planed our GP across the lake. Unfortunately it was too windy for the Optimists sailors but they enjoyed playing in the water instead. Megan tried an open-water swim with Colin and Nikki.

The wind quietened down for a while so Michael went out in his Topper. Mike took Matthew and Oliver out in the GP. Then I ventured out again with Mike. The wind obviously saw me coming as it piped up again. I’ve never sailed so fast before — and we had the jib on. Kate took Oliver out in the Laser (as ballast) and they had a great time planing across the lake, though Oliver hasn’t yet learnt to fulfil the duties of a crew — protecting the helm from the spray. He ducked.

Hugh’s rope trick

We were all off the water by 3:30pm so the BBQs were fired up a bit earlier than

normal. After we had eaten Hugh got the Napiers involved in a rope trick. It was hilarious for the spectators. Lots of advice was offered but in the end we all admitted defeat. Then we played cricket until bad light stopped play.

Unfortunately we had rain overnight so we all had wet tents to put away on Sunday. The strong wind was all over the place, with vicious gusts so very few ventured out. Kate’s Laser proved to be a popular choice for some exciting sailing. The wind dropped slightly so Peter and Oliver went out in the Vision and Nikki took their Topper. After lunch the wind started to increase again and sailing was abandoned. Boats were packed away and we all headed home.

Kate contacted Ullswater Steamers after the weekend to ask for their weather records for Saturday. The maximum gust they recorded was 35.8mph at 2:40pm whilst the mean wind speed never dropped below 20mph from 1—6pm.