



## Abersoch Adventures

Steve Parry

*In August Steve and Jens took the Old Yellow Boat to Abersoch for the GP14 UK National Championships*

**T**his was to be my third sailing trip to the seaside Shangri-La of North Wales that is Abersoch (on a good day!). Having competed at this venue in the GP14 Worlds 2003 and then again at the Nationals 2008, I was looking forward to rediscovering the delights of Cardigan Bay, sand in the wet-suit and six sun-filled days on the water.

Jens and I had teamed up once more and despite a serious lack of practice, we left York bright and early on Saturday 3rd August with high hopes of Bronze Fleet success. The journey was unexpectedly easy, the route being much improved since 2008 by the removal of traffic lights on the Welsh border! We arrived in plenty of time to join the queue of familiar faces waiting to access the beach with cars and boats.

### A lesson learnt

With registration completed and the boat rigged there was time to chat to old friends before we set off to find our B&B. There was however one important lesson that we re-learned first: never alter a critical piece of kit just before you head off to an away event. In this case it was only the dinghy trolley wheels. The completely useless nature of my shiny, new, hard-tyre, barrow wheels when confronted with sand resulted in an emergency run back to Pwllheli to buy some pneumatic jobs. As a bonus we did find a great tea shop!

Sunday was the first day of competition and once the race briefing was over some 56 GP14s took to the water and headed

out into the bay for the practice race followed by the first series race. Gate starts were the order of the day. The fleet behaved itself for both races and there were no recalls. The wind was fair and we were able to give the spinnaker an airing but our lack of practice showed as we finished the day among the tail end of the fleet. But we had boats behind us and we felt it had been a great warm-up for the rest of the week.

### *"Memories of turning turtle at North Berwick... came to mind"*

Day 2 dawned with more wind in the forecast and we set out in the hope of finding lots of exciting off-wind planing. The big question was: *"do we risk the kite and a swim, or do we play it safe, forget the kite and hope to overtake lots of capsizers?"* Memories of turning turtle at North Berwick earlier in the season came to mind and we decided to play it safe! We rounded the windward mark in the first race well up the fleet but the lack of a kite soon showed as boat after boat flew past us. Many found themselves in trouble in the gusts and a number did go over but not enough to validate our strategy and we eventually crossed the line (with an exciting 3-boat photo finish in which we just lost out) to take 47th place. The wind increased during the short lunch interval and the afternoon race turned out to be much more



*The Old Yellow Boat amongst the kite-flyers (Photo by SailPics)*

exciting with the Old Yellow Boat positively flying down the reaches, even under just two sails. Most of the back end of the fleet left their kites in their bags so we had plenty of racing company and we all passed numerous upturned Silver Fleet show-offs! It was exhausting work but resulted in 38th place at the finish. Jens and I celebrated with chocolate bars on the return to shore!

### Too much wind!

The morning of day three produced some truly appalling weather and the race officer rapidly hoisted the cancellation flag on the club pole. The sun did eventually appear but the force 5-6 wind did not abate and sight-seeing was therefore the order of the day.



Day 4 had been scheduled as the reserve day and, although the wind and seas were still somewhat challenging, it had to be used in order to make up the 2-race deficit. Not only that, but the forecast for Thursday promised very little wind ahead of a massive storm on Friday and



Steve and Jens in the OYB at Abersoch

(Photo by SailPics)

of the week, managing to finish last in the second race.

Both Jens and I were feeling pretty tired by the time the gun went for race 3 and just to add to the muscle agony, the wind freshened as we toiled up the first beat. By the time we rounded

the top mark we felt too weary to mess about with the kite. And I, for one, did not fancy the idea of adding capsized practice to the day's activities! Again, most of the tailenders felt the same way so we still enjoyed some really close racing, and some good surfing/planing under two sails.

**Too little wind and too much!**

As predicted, days 5 and 6 produced hopeless sailing conditions. There was hardly a breath of wind on the Thursday and the fleet was held on shore for

several hours while the race officer went looking for a steady breeze in which to set a course. We did eventually get underway (with a line start) in a gentle sea breeze that saw the Old Yellow Boat complete the first lap in the high teens but half way up the second beat the wind died completely and the sea became a millpond. The race abandoned flag appeared, tow lines were offered and we all trudged home. If only the race had been one lap!

Day 6 lived fully up to the worst expectations and in fact many of us took our masts down and packed up our boats on the Thursday night before the storm arrived. So Friday was another sight-seeing day and a chance to buy a gift or two for those who had been left at home

The closing ceremony in the evening was great fun and we managed to walk away with the *Marston Plate*, given to the winning Series One boat in the competition.

***Don't tell anybody, but the Old Yellow Boat was the only Series One boat in the competition!***

Saturday. With this in mind, the Day 4 card was rewritten to give us three races. We knew then that we were in for a work-out!

*"If only the race had been one lap!"*

Wind conditions did in fact ease a little throughout races 1 and 2 but we decided that, rather than risk an upset in the early stages that would probably ruin the whole day, we would save the kite until the final race. This was the wrong decision! We achieved our worst result

# A little bit of history

Angela Craggs

**If you are interested in seeing what our club and the river used to be like more than 50 years ago then click on the link below which leads to two films of sailing in the 1960s at BTYC (York), as YRISC was formerly known.**

Amongst other things, you will be able to admire the wonderfully wide river with very few moorings, low river banks, our shiny, brass bell, ladders down to the jetties, a well-maintained railway bridge, the newly-built Clubhouse (opened in 1964) without a veranda, a rather high river (some things never change), a makeshift start below the bridge and GP14s racing with jibs only. (Genoas appeared later)

The Watkins Trophy was raced for annually between the different BTYC divisions, with each division taking it in turns to host the event (Apart from York, we only remember London and Leicester). York didn't win the Watkins until 1976 when Mike and I, with Trevor Henderson and Hazel Harrison represented BTYC (York). The Club won the trophy for a second time in 1979.



Mike & I with the Watkins Trophy in 1976

We still sail for the Compass Trophy, though now the compass no longer functions. Harry Jones, in GP 6223 (*Black Harry*), won the trophy in 1968. According to the Trophy Board that was the first time the race was held.

<https://www.gp14.org/films-from-1960s-of-vintage-boats-racing-in-york>

# Around the Opens with the Aero (Part 1) *Peter Craggs*

*During this year Peter has been travelling around the Open Meetings with his RSAero — and his RS400 (once)*

**T**he plan was a simple one. Start the year with lots of Open Meetings and get the sea legs back working ready for the Nationals in my favourite venue of North Berwick in late July.

As with most plans they don't always survive the first encounter with reality. My first event was held over the Easter weekend at a new venue, to me, Weston, located on the shore of Southampton water. It was gloriously warm but the wind was pretty much absent all weekend. Somehow we completed three races on Saturday but Sunday was lost to the weather.



*Weather app showing Force 0 for Weston*

## Double tides!

It was an interesting spot to sail with strange double tides — high water at 1324 & 1521! Being a few miles from the Solent we probably had access to the most sailing weather data in the country with all sorts of apps available to tell us what we could plainly see — an absolute flat calm. However an early season sea breeze did fill in for the prize giving!

*"...it didn't feel as if I'd had much sailing given the time spent in the car!"*

The following week it should have been the *RS Sprints* at Rutland Water. Weather warnings suggested 40 knots was possible so I had a sleep-in and looked at the AP flags from home!

May promised to be a mad month with events every weekend so I opted to do just one day of the Yorkshire Dales Aero Open. A rather lively breeze greeted us, though it did moderate a bit before we got going, but it was a rather unpleasant wild ride round an alphabet-soup course. Three events down and it didn't feel as if I'd had much sailing given the time spent in the car!



*Peter racing in chilly conditions at the Yorkshire Dales Aero Open (Photo: Paul Hargreaves Photography)*

## You've no chance tomorrow!

At Phil's suggestion, we dug the RS400 out for the next weekend's racing and made our first competitive RS400 appearance since 2015. Again it was a new venue — South Shields, so there was plenty to go awry. However, despite the jib halyard's best attempts at spoiling things, we made it. And we had some decent racing in a good breeze in a remarkably impressive part of the world.

*"...the starting strategy involved being on a run going away from the line with 30 seconds to go!"*

We discovered that the *block of flats* that was moving had DFDS written in the side and whoever had ordered the ferry had measured the Tyne very carefully, not a lot of space remained!

A week later I was off to Lymington with the Aero back in tow. I've been to Lymington quite a few times but never raced there so this was finally a chance to put it right. The forecast promised little and the heavy rain on arrival didn't suggest it was wrong!

The Saturday briefing included the race officer (mis)quoting Napoleon ("You don't need a good race officer, you need a lucky race officer...") and talking up the sea breeze. The weather station in the clubhouse, which got its data from a platform mid Solent, read 0.5 knots at one point. Whilst I was admiring the accuracy of an anemometer calibrated to such a degree, a helpful local told me we would sail. Just when I thought he was going to offer some sage advice about the sea breeze he clarified those comments —



*'because you've no chance tomorrow'!*

A sea breeze did appear, not perfect but something to work with, but brutal tides meant it was rather distorted and the starting strategy involved being on a run going away from the line with 30 seconds to go! Somehow we got three races in, followed by a long sail home, as the previously helpful tide was now against us.

Sunday was indeed grim, plenty of sunshine but windless. However we launched on time at 0930 and congregated in the bay with the AP flag hanging. We had a go at starting



but that was aborted. We got one drifter in before the inevitable happened and we were sent home before the tide turned.

**Wind at last!**

The Aero stayed on the south coast for that week as I'd hidden it away at Hayling so I could return for their Bank Holiday Weekend Regatta without having to tow it again. Two races a day out in the Bay in wind! Exactly what was needed, it had just taken a very long time

to get to this point. We sailed in mixed fleets but there were a few Aeros to compete against so it gave me the chance to stretch my legs on the open sea.

*"Exactly what was needed..."*

May was over but one more away weekend loomed — the East Lothian Regatta in North Berwick. This *should* have been a good warm-up for the Nationals in July. However there was yet more sitting around in no wind on the

Saturday (see Jens' article on bird watching in the August Newsletter). But at least it was followed by something rather more lively on the Sunday.

All good practice for the Nationals six weeks later.

**To be concluded**

# The reflections were lovely

*Angela Craggs*

*The Annual Regatta between YRISC and YOSC took place in difficult conditions*

**T**he forecast for the Annual Regatta was dreadful — 3mph winds. Unfortunately the weather was true to forecast so OD, Peter Craggs, had an unenviable task.

He needed to conjure up three pursuit races with virtually no wind and, as the river was up slightly, a stronger than usual current. Ably assisted by Thomas, he set a short course outside the Club. There were six boats competing – the Miracle (for just the first race) and four GPs from YRISC and one Enterprise from YOSC. The first race was a 35 min pursuit race based on boat class. The Miracle set off first and the GPs a little later, swiftly followed by the Enterprise. It was a struggle to keep the boats moving (forwards) in the conditions but everyone persisted. In the final few minutes of the race Steve P and Yvonne (GP) had a tense battle with Larry and Peter in the Enterprise, with Steve coming out on top.

**Battle with the BBQ**

Meanwhile Hugh, Kate and Megan were doing battle with the BBQ in an effort to get lunch ready in time for the sailors' return ashore. Hot dogs, sandwiches and

cake with tea or coffee were on offer and, as the sun was shining, they were eaten outside.

Two 30-minute pursuit races were run back-to-back in the afternoon, both based on a personal handicap derived from the previous race. Jens was first away in the race immediately after lunch and benefited from a gentle breeze which took him well round the course before it disappeared. Unfortunately the breeze had died before the last boats had even started.

**Three-way tie**

In the final race Bernard led the fleet and all the boats got through the bridge and around the windward mark. However the stronger current and complete lack of wind meant that the boats stalled at or under the bridge. All except one – Matthew and Oliver managed to break away and left the others drifting back towards the windward mark. Eventually some did get through the bridge but it was too late to close the gap.

The Regatta finished with a 3-way tie, which was broken by the finishing positions in the final race. Larry and Peter were third, Steve P and Yvonne, second and Matthew and Oliver claimed the trophies for first place.



*Megan presented the Regatta Trophies to Matthew and Oliver*



*Well done to all concerned. The whole event was quite hard work for organisers and competitors alike but if it's any consolation the reflections were lovely!*