

## Regatta at YOSC — racing at last!

Steve Parry

*Against all the odds our Annual Regatta with/against YOSC did take place and Steve tells the tale*

**A**fter a summer of very limited 'messing about in boats', the prospect of an away-day to Naburn, and some actual racing, seemed like the World Championship and the Nationals had arrived all in one go!

The RYA's Covid-19 advice was amended just in time to allow YOSC to feel able to host the annual regatta that has been held year and year about at our two clubs since Mike Craggs were a lad. And, although we could not look forward to the usual lunchtime feast traditionally provided by the home-club, we could at least enjoy a socially distanced picnic on the bank-side lawn at YOSC.

### Eight boat line-up

So it was that, having entrusted our sandwiches to Hugh and Steve in the rescue boat, an enthusiastic flotilla of six assorted craft left the YRISC pontoons and drifted down stream in a warm sunny interval on a day of black clouds that threatened a damp luncheon and even damper racing.

*"...and embarrassed several of the more seasoned hands..."*

But by the time we reached Yacht Services a pleasant breeze had filled in, the clouds no longer looked quite so threatening and we all made it to YOSC in time to find Steve Axford and his small team ready and waiting to run the first race. Two single-handed Enterprises took to the water to provide the only home-club opposition, so it was an eight-boat line up for Race 1, which was to be a straight fight based on PY handicaps.

Predictably enough the wind dropped to zero as we ghosted up the first beat, struggling to make headway over the current, but somehow Pete Craggs managed to find just enough puff to propel his Aero well clear of the pack and go on to establish such a convincing lead that he ended up lapping the back markers! Larry Gray led the Enterprise duo, leaving his team-mate as tail end sweeper. Oliver and Matthew Gabbitas battled it out at the front of the pack with Mike and Angela always in contention. Rob seemed able to coax unexpected speed from his purple-sailed yellow submarine and embarrassed several of the more seasoned hands (myself included).

*"...an exemplary display of light airs sailing."*

Everyone was glad to stop by the end as rain did finally threaten and lunch was looking increasingly attractive. No sooner were we off the water than the black clouds slipped north, dumping themselves on York and leaving the sun to come out in Naburn and the perfect sailing breeze to spring up!

### A win for YRISC

In the sure and certain knowledge that this would all change by the start of the second race, we relaxed on the lawn and enjoyed some much-missed socialising, albeit at two metre distancing. Meanwhile Mike and Angela regretfully headed home with a sick note for both boat and crew. Sure enough, the wind did indeed drop away in time for Race 2,



*'Action' from the Regatta – that buoy is a long way off!*

a pursuit race based on personal handicap. Of course, Jacob and I had been trying to go as slowly as possible in the first race in order to secure a good handicap for Race 2 (!) but it still didn't quite work out. Even with a 20min delay to his start Pete overtook the 'rabbit' (the slow Enterprise) very rapidly and went on to reel in the rest of us in an exemplary display of light-airs sailing. Larry pulled clear with Oliver on his tail as the wind gradually died to nothing, and after fighting the current for too long the rest of us gave up and returned to shore.

The final result placed Pete in first place, Larry in second and Oliver in third. We were able to enjoy a short, socially distanced prize giving before heading home under tow. It did not matter in the least that the sailing had been a bit rubbish, it was just great to be back on the water and enjoying some friendly competition.

**We returned with our heads held high, having not only brought the winner's trophy back to YRISC but also having won the 'turn-out award' 6-2!!**



# The Aero Nationals at Eastbourne

Peter Craggs

*Peter Craggs was pleasantly surprised when the 2020 RS Aero Nationals actually took place*

**I**t was just a few days into New Year when I last raced a boat. Since then the world has changed and we've found ourselves in a strange place where even the chance to escape into the normally safe world of small boat racing had gone.

Even as things eased and we were slowly allowed back on the water I'd watched event after event get cancelled and my assumption was that in 2020 the RS Aero Nationals would end up being recorded as *the year that didn't happen*. So I was slightly surprised to see positive chatter about the event throughout early summer and, whilst it was downgraded from European to National status, it was about six weeks before the event that the go-ahead was given. Restricted to 100 boats it sold out in hours.

## Nationals Covid-19 style

Eastbourne Sovereign Sailing Club which was hosting the Nationals was a new club to me. I made the trek south a day before racing started. Having seen it mentioned in plenty of pre-event emails that Eastbourne was the sunniest place in the country it was inevitable that, as I arrived, the rain started and it was relentless for the rest of the day.

*"...and the steep shingle bank  
southerners call a beach"*

Registration and boat parking were stricter than normal and it was only once I'd registered and been advised of my allocated dinghy parking space that I could unload. Perhaps amusingly, I had to haul the boat uphill to the boat park! Once at the top I could finally see the sea and the steep shingle bank southerners call a beach.

With no face-to-face briefing (I'd watched it on YouTube in the comfort of my own front room a few days earlier)



*Peter enjoying the brisk conditions during the RS Aero Nationals*

and a 1300 start, it was a relaxed morning before racing began. The forecast was breezy with the chance of thunder. In fact all barring the last day of the Championship looked windy.

Just as we were getting ready the *Change to SI* flag was hoisted as the race officer announced he was taking the option to increase the number of races from two to three. So there went my two-race gentle re-introduction to racing plan.

## Launching

I'd read about launching at Eastbourne in various event reports and it always sounded slightly hairy. Nothing I'd seen suggested these reports were embellished in any way.

To minimise people on the beach for the Covid-19 races we were allocated groups and were released to launch in these smaller numbers rather than the traditional free for all. I was allocated into the orange group and we were launching last.



With no changing rooms available it was a change-on-the-beach event and you just learnt to

live within your allotted spot. In some ways (this is written in the knowledge that our changing was always completed in sunshine) it worked better than battling into a changing room.

*"Four hours later we were sent out for  
two races ..."*

Launching wasn't quite as bad as it looked; the light weight of the Aero meant it was easy enough for two people to carry the boat into the water. You then got the board in, rudder down and set off. First day aside (when we had a reach) we had offshore winds for most of the event which flattened the sea and made avoiding the large wooden sea defences easy. Onshore breeze would have been more 'interesting'. Out at sea we had clear water, and no other boats sharing the area. One or two suggested it wasn't particularly deep but I didn't test that so can't report back.

With all the Aero9 fleet decamping into the 7 rig due to the windy forecast we only had two start sequences. The first race took a few attempts to get away, and secretly I think we were all grateful for the practice!



*"It really was that dark"* © Gary Smith

By the time we were lining up for race three the sky inland had darkened. If you've seen the photos, it really was that dark, with the odd bolt of lightning for good measure. Out at sea it was more pleasant. With the third race done we had our first landing session and, whilst it was slow going awaiting your turn, everyone got in safely and the drag up the beach wasn't quite as unpleasant as it looked.

### Lively racing & a long wait

Saturday lived up to expectations and was windy as forecast, but any doubts about it being un-sailable were cast aside as the release flags went up and this time the orange group was first to launch so we got 40 extra minutes bobbing around at sea.

Having not raced for eight months the second day in a row of three back-to-back races certainly made itself felt. It's always a challenge being 'match fit' just sailing club races but when even those haven't happened it's a proper battle. However I made it round all three and was actually quite happy with the results. The offshore breeze provided a lively ride parallel to the beach, reasonably close to Eastbourne's famous pier.



Getting ashore was slow going again with a long queue of Aeros waiting for their turn. Once back on the shore the shingle bank seemed steeper than the day before!

Sunday also promised wind, and my walk to the boat indicated that the forecast wasn't wrong! But everything was ready and the first batch of Aeros was all ready to go when the release flags went down and the postponement went up. Big gusts were being recorded out at sea, so it was time to indulge in that championship favourite, the waiting game! Social distancing was required and, whilst we sat suitably apart and discussed how it was windier at X event, we could marvel at the café nearby where the tables were all Covid-compliant but the prospective customers didn't really get the message that you can catch the virus in a queue...

*"We then had another championship favourite, the wait afloat."*

Four hours later we were sent out for two races in a much reduced breeze, in fact the second race was the lightest of the event so far. With only two races sailed on Sunday the championship was now back to the correct number having sailed an additional race on Friday. Getting ashore seemed to take an age and the shingle bank was even steeper.

### Last day – light winds

Monday wasn't looking good with the forecast at the opposite end of the scale and it did indeed dawn bright with little wind. But we launched on time, had a couple of general recalls and then managed to get round a slightly shortened course. The last run was very light with the wind fading fast.

We then had another championship favourite, the wait afloat. It is always worse on the last day as the drive home is usually lurking in the background. Most events have a 'no sound signal after xxxxx time' in the sailing instructions and this was no different but 1500 was a long way off (and I have had a 1459 start before!). So we wallowed around in light/no wind



*Peter racing at a windy Eastbourne*

hoping the forecast 180° swing would kick in and provide the few knots that was suggested. Impressively it did. A fairly pleasant onshore breeze arrived and away we went. It became, what I think was, the first Aero Nationals to complete all scheduled races. The last race was a bit light and nothing memorable, I think I discarded it, but it was a nice sit in the sunshine beforehand. Once up the, even steeper, shingle bank it was time to pack up and head home.

Was that it for 2020 Aero racing? The weather certainly felt like autumn was here when I stopped off on the way home still in shorts and T shirt. The beach chatter had been that the Aero9 Nationals (which should have taken place with the 5 & 7 fleets at this event) would be sailed during the Inlands at Draycote Sailing Club. A change-outside event in October seemed ambitious but then again sailing in the Nationals had seemed unlikely for most of the year. Time would tell...

*ESSC deserves credit for running the event, probably a very tough call but well thought out and, with loads of space outside, it was actually pretty much business as usual. Fair play to Eastbourne too. Initial downpour aside, the sun shone pretty much all the time.*

### Wanted – New Sailing Secretary

Mike Craggs is standing down as Sailing Secretary after the AGM so we need a replacement. The 2021 Sailing Programme will have been completed so the new Sailing Sec can ease into the job. If you are interested then please speak to Mike or any Committee member



# Club racing – and worth the wait

Angela Craggs

**A**fter several weeks of social sailing we finally had some club racing on a rather breezy last Sunday in September.

Hugh offered to run some racing for the four boats that were at the Club that day. The wind was 'round the corner' so a course was set there. We settled on two races back-to-back. The first would be a standard first-past-the-post race with the following one being a pursuit race, based on the timings in the first race. Matthew was sailing his Streaker, Peter his Aero 9 and GP14s were sailed by Steve P, with crew Jacob, and Mike and I.

The wind was quite gusty so the sailing was lively. The course was beat/run from the corner to Yacht Services. Peter got ahead early on and had a chance to practise with the 9 rig without any interference from the rest of us. Matthew also sailed his own race but the two GPs had a real ding-dong battle. Neither boat could break away from the other. It was neck and neck as we approached the line after four laps, with Steve just pipping us to finish ahead.

## Pursuit race

Hugh then dished out our handicaps and Matthew led off in the 35 minute pursuit race. We started at the same time as Steve with an 8 minute penalty and Peter was 5 minutes after us. Once again

racing was close between the GPs until ten minutes before the end when we collected a large branch around our rudder which all but stopped us. Steve was able to pull ahead. By that time Peter was ahead of both GPs and chasing Matthew. However Matthew managed to keep ahead to win.

It was excellent racing and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks to Hugh and Becki who ran the racing on a chilly, grey day.

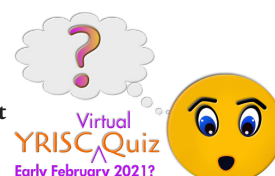
*As it has turned out that was probably the only club racing in 2020 but it was also some of the best racing we have taken part in. A nice memory to carry through the winter to next season.*

## A few things to note...

Mike will soon be starting work on the **Sailing Programme 2021**. It is early to ask but if there are any dates when you know you cannot do race officer duty could you please let him know at – [mike\\_craggs@hotmail.com](mailto:mike_craggs@hotmail.com)

The **Annual Dinner** will **not** take place this year

There are plans for a **Club Quiz** in early February, probably using Zoom. The committee is looking for suggestions for questions, themes, formats, whatever you can think of? There must be some bright ideas out there. Any volunteers to put some or all of it together? Contact [yrisc@hotmail.com](mailto:yrisc@hotmail.com).



On **Sunday 6 December** (Covid permitting) we will hold a **Clearing-up Day** to put away boats and tidy/shut down the site for winter. Reminders and further details will be sent in due course, but please make a note of the date now.



## YRISC Covid-19 guidelines

You can only sail if you can launch and recover alone or with members of your household/bubble. If possible, please come in clothing you can sail in. Access to the clubhouse is permitted only to use toilets and to access equipment. Social distancing and hygiene recommendations apply at all times.

We are unlikely to sail the Icicle Series this year but there are **additional rules for winter sailing**

- Wet suits **must** be worn
- The rescue boat **must be on the water** and ready for use

*Remember that sailing is at your own risk. Keep an eye on the forecast, and on the conditions on the day, and only sail within your capabilities.*