

SW Area Report for ACM 2020

Our first sailing event of the year was the Helford Rally that follows straight on from Falmouth Classics. We have got used to scorching sunshine for this event over the past few years, but it was somewhat cooler this time. However, the favourable tides this year meant we were able to access the delightful Tremayne Quay for a BBQ on the first evening and get into Port Navas Yacht Club for dinner on the second. The latter proved to be a distinctly lively affair with full house, excellent food and sea shanties. For the race, we had a better wind than in recent years and fifteen boats crossed the start line off Durgan in a good breeze. After three laps of the course, Don Garman in *Mary Ritchie* was first in Class1 and Gil Hayward in *Mary Hay*, first in Class 2. The prizes were presented by Ashley Butler.

South West Gaffers second Plymouth Festival of Sail, that includes our annual race, took place from 8th-10th July. This year, the event was based at Queen Anne's Battery (QAB) marina. This was the first time we had held our main sailing event in the week, but it seemed to have little impact on the numbers taking part. We had 21 boats registered, including several trailer sailers, with some visitors from outside the Area and some new members joining many of the usual suspects.

The weather forecast for Tuesday, our race day, was not very encouraging with very light and variable winds. As it turned out, the wind was rather better than the forecast and was certainly enough to get the boats around the race course. The fastest boat, by some margin, and first overall on handicap was Bristol Channel Area member Robert Green's beautiful home-built gaff-yawl, *Lapwing*. Our evening event on race day was held at The Royal Western Yacht Club, where we had supper, the prizegiving and entertainment from the wonderful "Rubber Band", a group of very talented musicians from the Calstock area.

On the Wednesday, we left QAB for a cruise in company up the Tamar to Saltash that left Drake Island to starboard, taking several crews over "The Bridge" for the first time. There was then a relaxing run up the river, giving the crews chance to pit their wits against each other in the nautical quiz that had been set for the occasion by Paul Jolley. Chris and Cathy Danby were more knowledgeable than most and received a bottle of Rum for their trouble. The stop-over gave us all time for a pasty, a pint and a bit of a natter before returning to QAB for the now traditional pontoon party before dashing off to the B-bar in the Barbican for yet more food and music to end the event.

The Dittisham Rally this year coincided with an unusually strong summer storm that blew though the west country that weekend. With most water-borne activities in the area and some land-side events cancelled on the Saturday, it was no surprise that the planned race and parade of sail did not take place. Gil and Carolyn Hayward did a splendid job of rearranging things, however, hosting the Friday evening drinks reception in their house and getting the race moved to the Sunday. The prototype OGA dinghy had been taken to

Dittisham for the weekend and it was sailed in the race by Mike Bennett and John Wynn. They narrowly beat Mark Darley's *Pippin* to first place on handicap, allowing John to reclaim the trophy that he had, himself, donated for this event. This event has, justifiably, become very popular amongst the OGA trailer sailors, some of whom trail their boats a considerable distance to take part.

As is usually the case, our members took part, and often took away prizes, from many other sailing events in the area that are not organised by us.

At our recent AGM, the committee were re-elected *en bloc* and the officers remain unchanged.

Our 2020 programme is still being finalised but we expect it to feature many of the usual events.

David Bewick. SW Area Secretary