



LOUGH ERNE YACHT CLUB

Founded 1818. Oldest Yacht-Racing Club in Ireland
Gublusk Bay, Lower Lough Erne



SUMMER REGATTA and J/24 SILVER ANNIVERSARY

The 2008 Summer Regatta with the Silver Anniversary Celebration for LEYC's fleet of J/24 keelboats was a great success on the weekend 21 & 22 June 2008.

Over 70 Sailors in 26 sailing boats spread all over Gublusk Bay, LEYC's own home waters. Record club turnouts of ten J/24s and 8 Yeomen, took part each in five lively races. Adding the two catamaran races, that made a full dozen races, all efficiently handled. Lots of good hard racing gave lots of really good fun.

After over 85 had dined sumptuously, more than 100 spent notably on a raffle for valuable prizes, exercised mind and memory in a 1970s quiz, and danced, divine and dexterous, in a great Saturday night of fun provoked by that day's great sailing.

A dockside crowd gathered, heads clear and eager for Sunday's final sixth race, sadly cancelled as squalls gusted 38 knots. J/24 Fleet Captain, Bridget Rippey later remarked on the sense of camaraderie uniting all fleets that morning. An hour to tidy, an hour for lunch, another regal repast, prize giving at 1.00, and all was over by mid-afternoon, but for happy chat remaining.

Thank You Admiral – Race Officer

By long-standing regatta tradition, all of our Gublusk Bay was alive with sail. There was much praise for our Admiral and Regatta Race Officer, John Phillips, who, with easy yet effective discipline, ran Saturday's superbly competitive races in a hard boisterous east wind, on courses set round two traditional LEYC buoys at Ely and just off the WW2 Catalina slipway.

Gublusk Bay, once strewn with wartime flying boats, has long since – by a half-century and more - been all put to peaceful use by Lough Erne Yacht Club. Where once wings of war spread, our home bay has long been covered all across with sail for sport, from historic Fairy keelboats to children's Topper dinghies.

A particular spectacle in this regatta was the downwind running starts, keelboats manoeuvring to and fro off the Catalina slipway in the east end of the bay, then each fleet in turn running to the line, crew poised to hoist spinnaker, some to gybe neatly, and off at speed, right on signal, romping east wind from behind pressing spinnakers full, mighty and colourful, towards Ely race mark.

Then back upwind, J/24s joining and coming through the Fairy and Yeoman keelboats, one great fleet spread the bay tacking port and starboard, heeling, some broaching, in the hard gusty east wind, to the Catalina slipway inner bay mark again, another wild spinnaker run to Ely, and a final beat with all boats finishing about the same time, then all eager for the next pair of race starts.

The strategy for this regatta was simple – sailing and lots of it. In two main fleets, Fairy with Yeoman, and J/24s, we raced twice on Saturday morning, lunched ashore for barely one hour, then raced thrice more that afternoon, to get done as many as possible of the six races planned, wary of Sunday's windy forecast.

That strategy worked well. A few boats after the first race wandered back to berths, only to see the prompt signal for the next and scramble out again. The pace was infectious, in a day with ten race starts - and two more for the catamarans - crew worked hard and loved it.

We were there to race, and race we did, the whole day, harder and faster as the wind rose. In all, this was simply great racing fun in perhaps our best regatta in a dozen or more years past.



Roy Howard Memorial Cup

Celebrating 25 seasons of J/24 fleet sailing, Janet Howard, widow of the Club's first J/24 Fleet Captain in 1984, presented Robin Eagleson, skipper of the winning J/24 Luder Too, with the new Roy Howard Memorial Cup. Her short thank you speech raised a standing ovation in memory of her late husband Roy who had done so very much for sailing at LEYC.

Janet was supported by son David, whose plan to sail in his Father's former boat Jasper was thwarted by Sunday's gale. Plans are to try again next regatta.

When President of the J/24 Association of Ireland, Roy Howard's notable achievement was to secure the 1990 World J/24 Championship for Ireland. By apt coincidence, the first winner of the Roy Howard Memorial Cup is today's President, Robin Eagleson, member of both LEYC and Lough Neagh SC.

Thank You Silver Sponsors

Many thanks to Omagh's Creative Media (owned by Marcus Isherwood, J/24 Jadore) who designed and produced a Silver Anniversary Newsletter with the 25-year history of our J/24 fleet. A copy may be with this newsletter reporting the regatta.

The Creative Media publication tells the story of our two dozen various J/24s, the 13 in today's fleet, from World Championship winners to family sailors, and ten J/24 Fleet Captains of a fleet that played key parts for LEYC in the wider Sailing world.

Many thanks to Bright Star Marketing for funding, and to Abbeyset Print & Design for notice board banner.

Thanks also to the ten spot prize sponsors, from. Fermanagh, Catalina Marine Services, Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen Forum, Franco's Restaurant, and Manor House Marine, and from Cavan, Slieve Russell Hotel, Bear Essentials, Exotic Foods, Brackley Landscape Services, and Cavan Crystal.

Admiral's Address

At Prize Giving, the Admiral congratulated regatta participants. He spoke of Roy Howard's days at LEYC and his many contributions to club life. He recalled Michael Chrichton's first Yeoman, Crista, over 30 years ago, and wondered why so long before arrival of another and then so many, this and past season.

Regatta Race Results

Listed by place, boat, helm, race scores, nett total, using Low Points system, excepting worst race score if five races sailed.

Yeoman Fleet

- 1 Lady Rose, Trevor Whittaker, 1, 5, 1, 2, 1, nett 5
- 2 Crista, Bertie Forsythe, 3, 1, 2, 1, 2, nett 6
- 3 Nelly Kelly, Brendan Gallagher, 2, 3, 6, 3, 4, nett 12
- 4 Blue Diamond, Ed Beattie, 5, 4, 3, 5, DNC, nett 17
- 5 Utter Chaos, Sam Webb, DNS, 2, 5, DNC, 3, nett 19
- 6 Donald, Donald McCarthy, 4, 6, 4, 6, DNC, nett 20
- 7 Thief of Time, John McCrea, 6, 7, 7, 4, 5, nett 22
- 8 Dipper, Joe Kelly, 5 x DNC, nett 36

Fairy Fleet

- 1 Maeve, Michael Whaley, 1, 1, 2, 1, nett 3
- 2 Storm, Caroline Kelly, 3, 3, 1, DNC, nett 7
- 3 Snipe, Fred Ternan, 2, 2, DNC, DNC, nett 8

J/24 Fleet

- 1 Luder Too, Robin Eagleson, 5, 1, 1, 1, 1, nett 4
- 2 Jigalo, Tim Rippey, 2, 5, 2, 2, 5, nett 11
- 3 Jeriatrix, Michael Clarke, 3, 2, 3, 3, 4, nett 11
- 4 Mejolie, Barry Humphreys, 1, 4, 4, 5, 3, nett 12
- 5 Sayonara, Diarmuid O'Donovan, 4, 3, 4, 7, 2, nett 13
- 6 Skipjack, John Kane, 6, 8, 6, 4, 7, nett 23
- 7 Jet, Joey Kelly, 8, 6, 7, 6, 6, nett 25
- 8 Jorvik, Shaun Sowden, 7, 7, 8, 8, DNC, nett 30
- 9 Jade, Sean McCosker, 9, 9, 8, DNC, DNC, nett 37
- 10 Jasper, DNC, DNC, DNC, DNC, DNC, nett 44

Silver J/24 Prize Giving

The majority of sailors, over 40 were in ten J/24s, the largest club turnout ever. Joey Kelly was in Jet the first J/24 he brought here 30 years ago. John Mulholland's Jasper, once owned by Roy Howard, was to have his son David Howard for Sunday's races.

Robin Eagleson won of the new Roy Howard Memorial Cup and first prize. J/24 Fleet Captain, Bridget Rippey announced Tim Rippey's Jigalo for the second. Michael Clarke's Jeriatrix, best Westerly boats (after Luder Too) got the Morris Cup and a prize.

Another went to Barry Humphreys in Mejoolie, first race winner and fourth overall. These top prizes were elegant Cavan Crystal.

Souvenirs, wee crystal shot-glasses engraved LEYC 25th J/24, went to each J/24. The Fleet Captain, Bridget Rippey also announced one as fleet thanks to the Race Officer, John Phillips.

Likewise a fashionable J/24 tie with another J/24 shot-glass went to the Regatta's presiding Flag Officer, Rear Commodore, David Davidson, and his lady Anne, who gave out regatta trophies and all the elegant Silver Anniversary J/24 glassware.

Fairy and Yeoman Prizes

Fairy Fleet Captain, Clive Burges announced for the three Fairy keelboats, 6 sailors, one of LEYC's historic silver trophies each, Michael Whaley's Maeve, Archie Hamilton for Caroline Kelly in Storm, and third Fred Ternan's Snipe. These 102-year-old boats wisely did not sail in the later races and harder wind.

John McCrea, for Mary Anne Sutton, Fleet Captain, announced Yeoman fleet trophies - almost 16 sailors in 8 boats. These were some used hitherto for the PY handicap Cruiser fleet. Lady Dudley's elegant silver box went to first-placed Trevor Whittaker as an oddity arose from the Low Points System - a boats score is the total, excepting the worst, of her race scores.

Trevor excepted worst score (old term discard) was 5, and Bertie Forsythe's excepted score 3. These excepted made Trevor one point winner in nett points, Bertie second, and to a tyro Yeoman helm! Rarely is Bertie not first. He would have been had worst scores not been excluded. There was much bar room teasing.

Brendan Gallagher, in Nelly Kelly, crew Clive Burges, got another ex-Cruiser cup for third overall. Neat Yeoman mugs went to youngest helm Doug Beattie, youngest crew Henry McCarthy, and Jennifer Whittaker for courageous crew work.

Five Fast Catmarans

From Dublin, Mayo and Mallow, but none this year from Bangor, 10 sailors in 5 catamarans made their traditional June route to LEYC regatta, camped on the lawn, enjoyed two races in the hard winds, and Saturday's clubhouse crack. Wine bottle prizes went to AJ Lawrence, Gary Mangan and Simon Kearns.

Thank You Mejoolies

It was indicative of the spirit they found at LEYC and in its J/24 fleet that its most recent members, Cavan's Barry Humphreys and Ann Sheehy in Mejoolie were first to volunteer their valuable skills to the celebration part of the Silver J/24 Anniversary.

And, what a good job they did, with 1970's quiz and sartorial competitions for regatta night, the band with lively real dancing music, gathering raffle sponsors, and sourced the funding for those fine Silver Anniversary J/24 prizes in Cavan Crystal.

Thanks and RIB Rescue

Thanks to those who pulled flag strings, wrote sail numbers for the Race Officer, in that dozen starts, and dozen finishes, and to Liz Doherty, results secretary. Norman Spence's visitors afloat included Jacqui McVicker's parents to see her in winch action. RIB drivers were Robert Navan and David Robertson. Thanks.

As Sunday's race was cancelled, RNLI got a shout. Peter Scott already in our LEYC RIB was fast away, while RNLI crew gathered. In a wild wind, he found a frightened family in a wee motorboat in big Broad Lough box waves. He towed them into a lee, radioed location to the Lifeboat, and it took over on arrival.

As the regatta ended, this incident was an apt reminder of the good sense of all our safety practices in Sailing.

**More – see club notice board, local press, and websites.
Michael Clarke, Regatta Organiser, June 2008.**