

## **Itchenor Keelboat Week 19 to 23 June 2023 – Sunbeam Report**

Twenty-Seven Sunbeams entered the 2023 IKW regatta which took place in the second week following the Sunbeam Centenary Regatta. 5 of the 6 boats who had made the long journey up from Falmouth stayed to increase the fleet to a size that meant space would be at a premium were all boats to start together. If laid bow to stern the fleet would stretch for a distance of just over 18 London buses (and displace enough water to fill 2.5 Olympic swimming pools). Given the limitations of the Chichester reach it was decided to again split the fleet into flights which would sail each other, with around 13 boats in each race. If conditions allowed, combined starts would take place, probably from the Stocker lake.

A draw was held during the preceding Saturday with the Falmouth boats drawn first followed by the Silver fleet and then the remainder. The red group looked to be the one to avoid but this did possibly benefit those who had managed to be picked in one of the other three groups. Coloured ribbons were once again to be worn on the backstay and Monday morning saw an outpost of Peter Jones's haberdashery department set up on the club lawn to hand out the ribbons. Being the first two starts of the day, the crews then quickly left to join their boats and get down to the start for an 11:30 kick off. The five or was it six weeks of high pressure and northerlies meant the fleet were slightly surprised to find Betivuka waiting nearby in the vicinity of Chalkdock, and no long run down to beyond the Thorney channel needed, but this did at least allow boats to practise the beat towards the likely windward mark just to the west of East Head.

The first two flights started on time, surprising a large yacht exiting the harbour, and mainly made for the eastern shore to get out of the flooding tide. The second group of starters, with the benefit of having watched the earlier start, mainly went for the western side and were soon able to get onto the plateau that stretches to the north of Astra. During this time, the Molly team, who had been chartered by the HM to make some fine adjustments to the position of some of the port hand withies, were still tied up with their work and sadly did not make the start.

The fleet raced round a number of marks in the main harbour area to a finish at Runway where a long start line awaited them for the second batch of races. This time the course was a windward leeward one with the second leeward leg taking the boats down to a finish near Chalkdock, conveniently on the way home. The long final run from Treloar posed the usual problem in a southerly breeze of how to protect your wind from the boats astern, and there were several very close finishes as the tide and wind favoured first one group then the other. Time for tea and tall tales of derring do.

Tuesday morning dawned overcast and humid following some thunder overnight. The wind sounded stronger than it had the previous day and the sun failed to appear. Sunbeams were the second start some 30 minutes after the Swallows and only one pair of races was scheduled. Betivuka was positioned in the Stocker lake and the PRO announced that flag Romeo would fly meaning a whole fleet start. A long course was signalled with many buoys, and the windward mark over the Winner bank a long way south to try and spread the fleet out. For those familiar with Fed Week, this was a typical start in a south westerly wind and strongish flood tide. A dash to East Head shore to try and get out of the tide and then round the corner and at some point, onto the Winner Bank. A quick run down to Gardner, up to Calvert and then a longish run down to Channel, the PRO keen to try and tick off all the racing marks in the harbour. After some further roundings, a leg to Rookwood took the fleet back into the Chichester Reach for a couple of windward leeward legs and a finish off Wear. A

healthy breeze, the appearance of the sun and over two hours of racing meant there were some tired people on return to the club for tea.

Two pairs of races were scheduled for Wednesday which would see the first set of round-robins completed and a start made on the second set. Incidentally, the term round-robin is probably a corruption of the French phrase *ruban rond* (round ribbon) which was a device similar to the round-robin of the Navy whereby signatures to a letter of protest were placed in a circle to prevent identification of the ring leaders. Sunbeams were the first start at 1pm from a long line in the Stocker Lake. The wind was 5 to 10 degrees towards the south compared to Tuesday and 2 to 3 knots less, and the best route was difficult to judge, although the first start mainly headed for the East Head shore. The second Sunbeam start saw a variety of tactics but this time it did seem to pay to get onto the shallows of the Winner bank as soon as possible. A run down to a laid mark then back to Calvert before a further run to Pivot with a finish at John's Folly.

There followed a quick turn round with a long line set for a whole fleet start. A slight shift in the wind made the committee boat end favourite and resulted in a general recall. A restart under flag Uniform saw the fleet get cleanly away. The time was close to HW and the few boats that went into East Head for the early ebb benefited well by the time the fleet converged at the windward mark Treloar. A long run to Channel with little tide in the middle followed by a beat back to Treloar then a spinnaker run down and across the harbour to finish at Wear. The last leg from Walrus provided overtaking opportunities for the boats behind.

Readers may be interested to know that prior to the start of the first race V32 Holly was seen with its mainsail down. This was so that Martin could attempt to climb the mast to retrieve the spinnaker halyard which had gone awol. Realising this was not achievable in the lumpy waters, Martin and Vicky lowered their jib and lashed a block to the jib halyard, running their towing warp through the block to act as a spinnaker halyard. Although the spinnaker had to be flown from a lower height than normal, it is worth noting that Holly was placed first and second in her two races of the day.

Thursday was another day for racing mark bingo, with eleven marks forming the course for a whole fleet race. The forecast for the day had been for lighter winds but by the time the fleet left their moorings at around 1145, a sea breeze had set in at around 10 knots, rising to 12 knots by the time of the 2pm start. The breeze then built slowly throughout the race and moved slowly from SW to W midway through the race from around 3:30pm. The tide also changed during the race, increasing the apparent wind on the beats in the Chichester channel. None of this seemed to affect the familiar leading pack of boats made up from a mix of Itchenor and Falmouth sailors. By the end of the day, the overall results showed two Falmouth boats in the top five, with another race tomorrow.

And so to the final day, Friday - another sunny day with a good but this time, westerly breeze. The Sunbeam series had already been won with a day to spare by a very consistent Holly recording 1sts and 2nds in every race. Lying second was Fleury on 12 points with Danny on 17 and with the possibility of taking second open to her if she could finish first or second in the final race. Penny, Pintail and Kitty, were tied on 21 points, so all to play for to take fourth place overall.

The start was off Kate Winslet's house near Ellanore for a whole fleet race to the first (and so far unticked-off) mark, Mill Rythe. The slightly biased start line saw the fleet evenly spread along its length with boats looking to tack and use the shallows to the south of Pilsey to avoid the full strength of the incoming tide. On the second beat to Calvert, the increasing effect of the sea breeze caused a large shift to the south causing some challenging moments and Sky finding out how shallow it is very close to East Head, with a few moments spent well and truly aground. At the finish, Fleury, Jabberwocky and

Serendipity took the podium places followed by Holly and Danny. The top placed Cornish boat, Pintail, sailed by Paul Pullen and Timmy Bailey finished 6<sup>th</sup> which secured her fourth overall in the series.

At the prize giving, Holly was awarded the well-deserved Wengen bell. The Danny Salver for the first Silver fleet boat, was presented to Alchemy. Another new set of prizes were the Captain's Day trophies for the winners of the Wednesday races which saw Holly taking the inaugural Captain's Cup and Kitty the Silver Goblet. In the Silver fleet, Honey was awarded the Silver Jug trophy. The visiting Cornish boats of Pintail, Penny, Whimsey, Milly and Joy were presented with two cases of beer (a traditional Cornish prize for the Falmouth working boats) and given a very warm round of applause by all three keelboat fleets. Full results are available on the ISC website [here](#).