

Fantastic sailing in the Shanghai and Nimrod Cup!

Maris Lyons tells the story

As the bruises, aches and pains subside following some of the most enjoyable days racing many of us have experienced, it is time to ask what makes the Shanghai and Nimrod Cup event so memorable and so special, again and again? You can guarantee that in the lively chitchat that follows the racing in the bar as the adrenalin wears off and we all chew the fat, somebody will ask why this event is called the Shanghai and Nimrod Cup. It's an interesting story, and for those of you who do not know, here's the background.



This year the regatta commenced with a steady blow of 20-25 knots, gusting 30s. The first race was from Penarth Pier, around the cans, finishing up in the bay of Sully. It was an exciting race that left our Mediterranean based crew member so in awe of our tides that he was still scratching his head as he left.



The Shanghai Cup was first presented in 1873 at the Shanghai Yacht Club, in China of course! The cup itself is a stunningly impressive piece of artwork made out of solid silver and weighing 14lb 8oz. In 1876, the cup was presented to the Welshman, Mr G B Hill, who was living in Shanghai at the time, and won the regatta on his boat *Nimrod*. At this time, the cup was said to be worth \$433! The cup was passed through the generations, remaining in the Hill family from 1876 until 1995 when an heir presented the cup to Cardiff Bay Yacht Club. Such an honour was bestowed upon the Club through this gesture, and so followed the Club's ambition to hold an annual regatta at CBYC that would become a major event in the yachting calendar. This year however, marked a special year for the Club with the development of its sponsorship relationship with Greenbank. Jonathon Smith, of Greenbank Partnerships said *"Greenbank was greatly honoured to be given the opportunity to sponsor the Shanghai and Nimrod Cup and to contribute, albeit in a very small way, to the history of this event. We would like to thank all of those who participated and made the competition the continuing success that it is."*



Andy Freemantle took first place on his Elan 295, *Shooting Star*. He sailed a great race and was closely followed by Steve Cooper's J80 *Junior High* in 2nd, and Tony Rayer's SB3, *Sceptre*, sailed by Nathan Bailey in 3rd.

Races Two and Three took place in Sully Bay and were windward/leeward courses; always a good test of boat handling, team work and tactics.

Once again **Shooting Star** shone brightly with a 1st in race 2 and a 3rd in race 3. Second in race 2 was the unpronounceable J/109 **Vrijgezeilig** sailed by the Lyons & Heidweiler team and in 3rd place was Alan Shaft & Nick Hankins' Projection 920, **Sleeper**.

Race Four took the fleet around the buoys, close to Flat Holm, and then to Penarth to finish. The wind started to pick up from 25knots when the leaders neared Flat Holm and the big black cloud that ominously sat a little way out was getting closer and closer and darker and darker. Most of the faster boats like the J109s managed to make it to the finish line before being hit by the squall and broaching as they finished. But the smaller sports boats and slower PY boats were still near Flat Holm when the bursting black cloud hit them. The rain shot down like pellets, and the squalling wind knocked many boats flat, testing everyone on the water. But thankfully, everyone made it back safely enough; shaken, not stirred. There were a few costly ripped spinnakers and many an overpowering broach and wipe out, but thankfully nobody was hurt. The buzz inside the lock was electric. We were all blissfully exhausted, beaten and bedraggled, but grinning from ear to ear. A fantastic day on the water was evident from all that could be overheard in the bar afterwards. In fact I heard a few say that it was one of the best days on the water they'd ever had.

The top positions of race 4 went to the J109 class, with **Vrijgezeilig** leading the way in 1st place, Jonathan and Andrea Tithecott's **Judgement Day** 2nd, and John Ballinger's **Jackhammer** 3rd.

We sailors achieved the honour of a 'double whammy' this year, by having both Syd Thomas and David Cairncross as our race officers. With this team assisted by Nick Sawyer laying the marks, we relished the formula one team of race management who created this exhilarating day on the water and did so managing to please a wide cross section of boats. Happily the OODs were supported by Mike Bailey and his boat was used as the committee boat.



One of the special ingredients of the Shanghai Cup is the social programme that runs alongside it. And it seems Mr Sawyer was auditioning for his own special award for his tireless and cheerful contribution to this year's event on and off the water. Traditionally, each Saturday evening has a themed party night at the club. This year was no different with Nick organising and comparing a Surf Night after the first days racing. He even provided the 'rogue wave' that eventually threw everyone off the surfboard. It was a lot of fun.

When we all returned the following Saturday for our final day's racing, we were all revved up and raring to go. Our first race of the day, Race 5, was outside and around the cans. Once again the race management ran a superb course taking into consideration the conditions for both the fast and slow boats with plenty of action up and down wind and legs that were just the right length. It was another blustery day with around 20-25knots, very occasionally gusting a few more. The winner of this race turned out to be Nathan Bailey in **Sceptre**, with **Shooting Star** coming 2nd, and **Sleeper** 3rd. The crews then headed back to CBYC for some lunch and a little rest before beginning the two final



gruelling races in the Bay. Twenty boats sailing around such a small race area inside the Bay can certainly get the blood flowing and that's before you add in the number of laps that our greatly esteemed race officers send us on. Once again thoroughly enjoyable races, that finished with Andy Freemantle's **Shooting Star** winning them both. **Judgement Day** came 2nd in race 6 and **Sleeper** 3rd in races 6 & 7, and **Sceptre** took 3rd place in race 7. And so the stimulating race series was over.



We all went home and showered only to return to a beautifully transformed clubhouse, and indeed crew. What a dinner jacket can't do for a man, eh girls?

On the dance floor, the band Mojo Soul squeezed out every last bit of energy that we didn't expel in the bay.



The prize giving saw Andy Freemantle crowned winner of the individual prize with his boat *Shooting Star*. In second place was Shaft & Hankins' *Sleeper* and in 3rd was Rayer's *Sceptre*, helmed by Nathan Bailey.



But it wasn't any one of them that won the cup, because of course this is a team event and here is how the team prizes went:

3rd *Vrijgezeilig, Sceptre, Offbeat*
 2nd *Shooting Star, G&T, Purple Haze*
 1st *Judgement Day, Junior High, Musketeer*
 Congratulations guys!



On behalf of all of us sailors, I would like to reciprocate with a deed, and get on my knees and bow my head in a Chinese gesture of thanks for two fantastic weekends of

racing. But they still hurt too much from all those laps in the bay. And so I hope Greenbank that you will accept these 'mere words' from all of us at Cardiff Bay Yacht Club:

Thank you or *Shia Shia* as the locals would say in Shanghai!

Our thanks go to our sponsors, Greenbank Partnerships, to Mike Bailey as without his photographs we would not have been able to illustrate this event properly and to CBYC staff for putting on a superb evening.

