

The National Championships – Eastbourne 1986.

This year's Nationals were held over the Saturday and Sunday 16th & 17th August and attracted an entry of 31 boats, although one entrant failed to arrive. This compares favourably with the 27 boats that sailed when the event was last held in the south, at Downs SC. 1984, but failed to match last years record of 35 boats. Nevertheless, the Association can be well pleased with the turnout, bearing in mind current trends and the falling support in some of the more established Classes.

The participants assembled on a bright sunny Saturday morning with a brisk, westerly force 5-6 blowing, which was forecast to imminently reduce to 3-4. This reduction inevitably did not occur and the competitors were in for some exhilarating but exhausting sailing, with screaming reaches hairy runs and long hard beats. Fortunately, the beach area was somewhat sheltered thus launching and recovery presented no problems. The six race series comprising a practice race and five championship races (four to count) were to be sailed over Olympic type courses, with three races each day.

The practice race eventually got under way after what seemed to be an interminable delay with virtually all competitors on the water, although a few decided to come in early to conserve their energy. Ralph Scholfield found that his tiller was too heavy with the rudder blade angled too far aft and felt his time would be better spent on shore making minor adjustments to correct the situation, before the championship races started. During the course of the race there were many retirements, usually following capsizes, and with very little at stake, most helms felt there was not much point in tiring themselves unnecessarily. However, former champion Frank Catt and John Edwards seemingly were sailing as though the race was the last of the series, not just the practice race. They battled every inch of the way, revelling in the conditions and setting the scene for the rest of the day. Frank eventually crossed the line to win following a quick recovery from a capsize at the gybe mark, with John a close second.

The first championship race started at 14:15 after a break for lunch. Now, it is felt in some quarters that it is unlucky to win the practice race and this thought may have crossed Frank Catt's mind as he saw John Edwards start well to gain a good lead at the windward mark. Frank was second round followed by Chris Cottrill, Roger Phillips, Ralph Schofield and Steve Main. The leading pair were soon pulling away from the following group but with John still well ahead of Frank. By the second beat Roger had passed Chris to hold third place and Colin Woodruff moved into sixth place. Frank, being noticeably faster on the off-wind legs, was now closing the gap on John, making a lot of ground on the sausage leg and a third of the way up the final beat crossed just behind John's transom on port, with John on starboard tack. John not wanting to get involved in a tacking match, sailed what he considered the shortest route to the line and although Frank did cross him on starboard at one point John regained the initiative to win the closest finish of the championship. Roger and Chris held onto their third and fourth positions, with Ralph fifth and Stephen sixth.

The first and second races were to be sailed back to back but most of the competitors who finished the first race came ashore for a brief rest before the start of the second. The final race of the day saw a depleted fleet of twenty-two boats starting, due to minor gear failures and fatigue by some helms. With little respite in the wind and the tide now on flood, most of the fleet were tacking inshore beating against the current. Frank having started well and gaining clear wind was soon leading being first at the windward mark, followed by Chris and John with Steve Skudder, Stephen Main and Roger close behind. At the wing mark Frank had extended his lead from Chris and John whilst behind the two Steve's, Richard Plowright, Eddie Styles and Steven Garrett were

clear of the rest of the fleet, Roger and Ralph having retired through exhaustion and gear failure in Ralph's case. Stephen Main also retired soon afterwards leaving the others to battle on for the honours. The order stayed the same until half way up the third beat, when both Chris and Steve Skudder suffered swamped boats in the waves. Both opted to capsize to clear the water and unfortunately Steve found his mast was surprisingly grounding in shallow water which hampered his recovery, and lost him several valuable places. Frank held onto his lead to the line with John taking second place from Chris, and Richard finishing fourth.

So with Saturday's proceedings over, in terms of aquatic pursuits, a very tired but cheerful troop of helms came ashore and headed for a hot shower and a pint of the amber nectar, or that other brew that reaches the 'other' parts.

Fortunately the weather conditions had not inflicted any major damage, only one broken centreboard and a few loose pintail screws being reported. There were two casualties however who would not be sailing next day, Chris Herbert who had ripped out a shroud plate that would require a bit of carpentry to fix and a very sad Tom Pearson who had aggravated an old leg injury. But with the boats under their covers on the beach, attention was turned to the evening festivities, which for some was the Tenth Anniversary Dinner.

Sunday morning brought a completely different set of conditions. On arrival at the beach there was only a hint of a breeze with clear skies out to sea and clouds over the Downs, which gave a light early morning shower. It was obvious that lack of wind would be the day's problem rather than too much. Also with the forecast being light variable, southeast to northeast, the tide would be a big factor to contend with. There were further problems, as the committee boat was found to be leaking and required shore repairs, causing a delay to the racing and sadly the days racing were to be run in conjunction with a Topper/Miracle open meeting. The variable wind conditions also provided problems for the Race Officer, course laying being a constant worry.

Race three started at 11:40 with the fleet beating into a North-easterly direction against the tide that was ebbing. The boats made reasonable progress, on starboard tack, sailing directly against the current but port tacking beam onto the flow only carried them back down the course with little forward distance made. The helms soon realised they had to sail the long starboard tack way past the lay-line to the mark and even then having several attempts at rounding. It was difficult to tell who would round first, as every time someone seemed to be in a good position they were carried back past the buoy. However, eventually Frank Catt successfully rounded closely followed by Roger Phillips and Stephen Main. Suddenly the rest of the fleet were finding the way round and there was a long line of boats streaming along the reach, with the tide now aiding their progress. At the leeward the order was unchanged with Peter Hayward in fourth place, but with the wind filling in slightly and now more easterly the windward leg was completed with some ease. The race was finished at the end of the sausage leg with the order still unchanged, Jerry Styles and Richard Rawlinson being fifth and sixth respectively.

After an extended lunch break, during which the Association AGM was held, the wind conditions were much the same although now south-easterly. The 14:30 start was postponed presumably whilst the Race Officer cogitated, and race 4 started at 14:55 with the tide still on the ebb. Several boats seemed to over stand the windward mark, probably a reaction from the previous race, but Colin Woodruff sailed brilliantly to be first round with a good lead over George Robinson and Stephen Main. Following these three were Frank Catt, Steven Garrett and Chris Cottrill. By the second beat Colin was maintaining his lead but George had dropped to fourth place behind Stephen and Frank, this being the order as they rounded onto the sausage leg run. The order stayed the same down the run even though the leaders had to cross between the on-coming Miracles as they approached the leeward mark. There seemed to be Toppers and Miracles

everywhere as the Streaker's made their way up the final beat but at the line Colin crossed still well ahead of Stephen. However the battle for third between Frank and George was being keenly fought, with a close tacking dual all the way up the windward leg. Frank was covering George until near the line when he allowed George to break free and they crossed the line not knowing who was ahead. They had to ask the Committee Boat, who gave honours to George. Chris was fifth with John Edwards sixth.

This time the fleet stayed afloat for the fifth and final race. The wind was now easterly, and still light, which required the marks to be moved once more but the tide was now flooding being a contributory factor to the first general recall of the championship. The fleet got away cleanly at the second attempt, at 16:56, with Colin, Chris and Frank getting good starts. Frank was first around the windward mark, determined to finish the day as he started it, but Alan Bambrough and Steve Skudder had moved up to round second and third. At the wing mark Frank had opened up a good lead but with the wind dropping and a strong cross tide, progress to the leeward mark was very slow. The leaders opted to sail down the windward side to protect their wind, but as the following pack spread out behind them it seemed that those taking the leeward side might fair better because of the tide. However, the tide was pushing everyone down from the mark making the final approach a dead run, with several helms gybing onto port. Frank eventually rounded with his lead intact followed by Steve, Peter Hayward and Ralph Schofield, the latter pair having gained several places. As the main pack arrived at the mark there was quite a melee with a large raft of boats, seemingly locked together around the buoy, by which time a shortened course had been signalled. Even after the leading boats had finished others were still struggling to lay the lee mark and several simply gave up and retired. Frank held his lead to the line with Peter just crossing Steve to take second place, Steve being third, Alan fourth and Chris fifth.

With three wins and a second place, Frank Catt gained his third Streaker National Championship having previously won in 1980 & 1984, John Edwards was second overall with former International Moth Champion Chris Cottrill third. Frank was presented with the Tate & Lyle Streaker Trophy, which he holds for the next twelve months, and hopefully will be invited to represent the Class in the 'Endeavour' and 'Top Dog' events. The 'Under' and 'Over' Salvors went to Stephen Main and Alan Bambrough respectively and the Cadzow Concours d'Elegance Cup was awarded to Richard Plowrights new boat 'Gem NI'. Downs Sailing Club, having the highest placed three members took the Altogether Shield.

We congratulate Frank and the other prize winners, and thank all who made the trip to Eastbourne thus making the event an enjoyable sporting occasion.

The full list of officially approved results appear overleaf, there being a few corrections and adjustments to those presented at the prize giving.

Roy Garrett.

Quote of the event.....

From the Race Officer – 'the course will be kept short to provide more laps sailed'.

Heard on the beach – 'if that was their short course can't imagine what their big ones like!'

STREAKER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

EASTBOURNE 1986

FINAL POS.N	SAIL No.	HELM	CLUB	BOAT NAME	POINTS - RACE No.					TOTAL POINTS
					1	2	3	4	5	
1	1296	F CATT	DOWNS	NIK NAK	2	3/4	3/4	4	3/4	4 1/4
2	1289	J EDWARDS	FILEY	BAGGY WRINKLE	3/4	2	30	6	7	15 3/4
3	1164	C COTTRILL	TELFORD	OVER THE HILL	4	3	11	5	5	17
4	1132	S MAIN	DOWNS	THUMPER TOO	6	25	4	2	9	21
5	1311	R PHILLIPS	DOWNS	DIPPER	3	25	2	17	8	30
6	305	R RAWLINGSON	CONISTON	BRASS MONKEY	26	7	6	8	11	32
7	1264	S SKUDDER	BEXLEY	LAURALOU	11	11	7	32	3	32
8	1293	P HAYWARD	MID-WARKS	RADICAL POSTURE	26	25	3	7	2	37
9	1310	R PLOWRIGHT	FILEY	GEM'N'I	9	4	8	16	29	37
10	1137	C WOODRUFF	BEWL-VAL'Y	NIKI	7	25	18	3/4	12	37 3/4
11	805	A BAMBROUGH	BEXLEY	JAYBIRD	12	9	13	13	4	38
12	866	E STYLES	DOWNS	DUMPER	10	5	12	23	16	43
13	865	R SCHOLFIELD	THAMESMEAD	CUSTER WOLF	5	25	9	14	19	47
14	443	R STREET	BEWL-VAL'Y	BEN NEVIS	8	8	15	24	20	51
15	862	J STYLES	DOWNS	THUMPER	26	25	5	21	6	57
16	1084	S GARRETT	BEXLEY	TOPLASS	26	6	17	11	29	60
17	863	K RIX	WALTON-O-T	LINDISFARNE II	13	12	27	25	13	63
18	1291	S CORY	DOWNS	EUREKA	14	25	19	15	18	66
19	1162	H CAINE	ELTON	MINUS ONE	36	36	10	12	10	68
20	1290	P CROOKS	FILEY	FREE FALL	26	13	26	20	17	76
21	1189	G ROBINSON	SCALING DAM	BLUE MEANIE	36	36	22	3	15	76
22	1100	S LYNCH	DOWNS	DEFECTOR	26	10	24	26	29	86
23	1021	D WRIGHT	SCALING DAM	BARE NELL	36	36	14	9	29	88
24	1295	M SEATON	MID-WARKS	SMOKEY BARE	26	25	16	22	29	89
25	1054	N ROSS	DOWNS	CUCUMBA RUMBA	26	25	20	19	29	90
26	1251	D VAUGHAN	TELFORD		36	36	23	18	14	91
27	2031	B STOKES	TONBRIDGE	TIPSEA	36	36	25	29	29	119
28	1285	A CIVILL	SUTTON BING'M	FOLLOW THE BEAR	26	36	21	36	36	119
29	1277	T PEARSON	MID-WARKS		26	25	36	36	36	123
30=	1056	C HERBERT	DOWNS	CUCUMBA NUMBA	36	36	36	36	36	144
30=	438	N KENT	BEXLEY		36	36	36	36	36	144

Tate & Lyle Championship Trophy.
 Under Salver
 Over Salver
 Concours d'Elegance
 Altogether Shield

F. Catt. Downs SC.
 S Main. Downs SC.
 A Bambrough Bexley SC.
 R Plowrite Filey SC.
 Downs SC.