

The National Championships – Derwent Reservoir 1994

The 1994 National Championships were held at Derwent Reservoir SC on the weekend 26th and 27th June. This beautiful lake is located on the borders of the counties of Durham and Northumberland and the lake is big enough for the club to run points racing and a training event at the same time that our Nationals were taking place. In spite of the ideal location the attendance was disappointing with only 39 boats plus the Sneaker attending. You will note from the results (and Vernon's earlier comments) that no final positions was given to Simon's baby, sailed on this occasion by Mac Hateley from Bexley – this is because the boat is unmeasured (and un-measurable) and thus has no Certificate.

The first race was held in a pleasant force 2 and was by far the best of the entire series. The OOD set a long course with good beats. All the competitors seemed pleased, particularly Alan Gillard (1424) who shot off into a huge lead on the first beat, never to be seen again by the rest of the fleet. Paul Hobson (1448), sailing a 2 day old Cory GRP boat, pulled through to 2nd after spending the first couple of laps getting used to his new craft. Simon Cory (1450) was 3rd with Bernard Clark (1442) in 4th. 'Young' George Robinson (1406) followed in 5th place with Richard Plowright (1321) in 6th.

The second race was sailed in similar conditions but this time the OOD made several attempts to set the course. He was using fixed marks for the course and this meant that in order to set a true beat he had to repeatedly move the start line. Of course Sod's Law of the Sea applied approximately 10 minutes after he had set the fleet off on their race, with the wind swinging 20 degrees and the beats becoming horribly one sided. Gillard once again led up the beat to find that Hobson was noticeably quicker downwind. Much passing and re-passing occurred but Gillard finally triumphed by a couple of lengths at the finish. This time Clark beat Cory for 3rd place, Philip Harvey sailing one of Chris Cottrill's old boats (1164) came an excellent 5th followed by Mike Tomlinson (1407) in 6th. The winner of this race received the new Viking Trophy which was presented by guess who – yes, Alan Gillard!

The last race on Saturday suffered from an even larger dose of Sod's Law for exactly the same reasons. The boats finally started after many attempts to get a true beat, the wind changed but even more than in the previous race and the beats all but disappeared. The succession of reaches and runs suited Hobson who finally got his own back on Gillard. Cory was again 3rd, with John Tate (1310) 4th, Robinson 5th and Plowright 6th. The winner of this race also received a new trophy – The Ripon Horn. This trophy was made by Vic Hawkins (1432) and presented on behalf of Ripon Sailing Club.

Sunday proved totally different as far as weather conditions were concerned. Competitors were greeted on arrival by white tops and a 30-40 mph wind (Ed: gosh Vernon you must have got up late – it was glorious at 6:00am). The old and wise stayed ashore. The OOD postponed the start for 1 hour in the hope that conditions would ease. They did but of course Sod struck again immediately after the race was started when the wind came back even stronger than previously. This time there was no whinging about biased courses and one sided beats. Most helms were far too busy attempting (unsuccessfully in most cases) to survive. Once again Mr Gillard went for a gentle 'yot' whilst everybody else went for a swim, or two, or three! 17 boats started but only 10 brave souls made the finish line. Ian Whitfield (1446) was a good 2nd, and Steve King (1402) sailed round with a huge grin on his face to finish in 3rd place with Hobson finishing 4th. Plowright finished in 5th place and Dave Butler (1418), another big lad from Blackpool 6th. For the record other brave finishers were Steve Lynch, John Tate and Jeanette Hunt – well done young lady! I had to mention Jeanette as she sails my old boat – 1395.

Attempts to sail the last race were doomed to failure. It was started in what I feel were clearly unsuitable conditions. The wind was now a steady 40 mph with frequent stronger gusts. 13 hero's started but all were blown over on the beat. The wind was now so strong that it became impossible to right the capsized dinghies and helms were left clinging to their upturned hulls whilst they were tossed around like toys – matters had now progressed from being thoroughly nasty to actually dangerous. However the rescue crews came out tops – personnel were removed from their capsized craft which were left to drift ashore on their own. Surprisingly boat damage was minor and human damage nil. The whole incident was compounded by the host club who were sailing points racing on the other end of the lake. All their boats fell over too but the OOD in charge of that racing was unsure how many boats were racing and thus how many crews were involved. One of their sailors became very hysterical and at this point panic replaced clear thinking. An ambulance was called in case anyone was hypothermic but this alerted the police and they then called in the RAF! We were now inundated with a full scale disaster situation, including an Air/Sea Rescue helicopter but no casualties. I am glad that I did not have to pay the bill for the helicopter at £8000 per hour. To think that I can never get a helicopter to train my soldiers when I need one!

Anyway so concluded another Nationals with only 4 races sailed (Ed: If we had a trophy for the fifth race would anyone ever win it?). One year we will surely complete the full programme. Alan Gillard once again collected his usual haul of trophies with the Downs Cup, the Viking Trophy and the Nationals Trophy (for a record 5th time). The Under Trophy was retained by Nicola White and the Over Trophy by Richard Plowright. George Robinson won the Well Over Trophy, the Cadzow Trophy went to Mike Tomlinson (1407) and the Scaling Belle Cup to Jeanette Hunt. The Altogether Shield for the club with 3 best helms overall went by a mere one quarter of a point to Scaling Dam over Ripon, and Paul Hobson took home the Ripon Horn for winning race 3.

It remains to me to thank Derwent Reservoir SC for hosting the Championships – they produced a barbecue for us on Saturday evening where the food was plentiful and the beer excellent. The OOD and his team did their best in trying circumstances and the rescue crew's were absolutely outstanding in atrocious conditions. On reflection I cannot remember seeing worse conditions at any time in my 42 years experience of dinghy sailing.

Vernon Penketh (1420)

List of Prizewinners.

Tate and Lyle National Championship Trophy	Alan Gillard	Scaling Dam SC
Downs Cup	Alan Gillard	Scaling Dam SC
Viking Trophy	Alan Gillard	Scaling Dam SC
Ripon Horn	Paul Hobson	Herne Bay SC
Scaling Belle Cup	Jeanette Hunt	Ardleigh SC
Under Trophy	Nicola White	Downs SC
Over Trophy	Richard Plowright	Ripon SC
Well Over Trophy	George Robinson	Scaling Dam SC
Altogether Shield		Scaling Dam SC
Cadzow Trophy (Concours d'Elegance Trophy)	Mike Tomlinson	Ripon SC

STREAKER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
DERWENT RESERVOIR 1994

FINAL POS.N	SAIL No.	HELM	CLUB	POINTS - RACE No.				TOTAL POINTS	
				1	2	3	4		
1	1424	A GILLARD	SCALING DAM	1	1	2	1	2.25	
2	1448	P HOBSON	HERNE BAY	2	2	1	4	4.75	
3	1450	S CORY	DOWNNS	3	4	3	7	10	
4	1442	B CLARK	RIPON	4	3	7	RTD	14	
5	1321	R PLOWRIGHT	RIPON	6	11	6	5	17	
6	1310	J TATE	SCALING DAM	12	7	4	9	20	
7	1446	I WHITFIELD	FILEY	11	8	12	2	21	
8	1407	M TOMLINSON	RIPON	7	6	10	RTD	23	
9	1418	D BUTLER	BLACKPOOL LC	9	10	22	6	25	
10	1406	G ROBINSON	SCALING DAM	5	15	5	DNS	25	
11	1309	S LYNCH	LANCING	10	9	11	8	26	
12	1164	P HARVEY	GLASGOW UNIV.	8	5	15	RTD	28	
13	1395	J HUNT	ARDLEIGH	18	12	8	10	30	
14	1402	S KING	BLACKPOOL LC	23	13	24	3	39	
15	1351	J WELLS	RIPON	15	16	14	RTD	45	
16	1394	D MIDDLETON	BLACKPOOL LC	13	14	19	RTD	46	
17	1325	A HARVEY	SHEFFIELD VIKING	14	20	20	RTD	54	
18	1360	P CROOKS	FILEY	17	19	18	DNS	54	
19	1129	G CUTHERBERTSON	MONKLANDS	21	22	13	RTD	56	
20	1426	K WALKER	RIPON	16	14	17	DNS	57	
21	1130	M CLEMENT	RIPON	DNS	18	9	DNS	57	
22	1429	N WHITE	DOWNNS	20	17	21	DNS	58	
23	1245	C CHAPMAN	BLACKPOOL LC	22	21	26	RTD	69	
24	196	C HILL	BLACKPOOL LC	19	25	27	RTD	71	
25	1107	M BARSON	HERNE BAY	26	23	23	RTD	72	
26	1021	D WRIGHT	SCALING DAM	DNS	26	16	DNS	72	
27	1334	R COMER	BLACKPOOL LC	25	DSQ	28	RTD	74	
28	1311	D PYBUS	THORNTON STEWARD	24	27	25	DNS	76	
29	1103	M JUDD	BLACKPOOL LC	27	28	29	RTD	84	
	2500	M HATELEY	BEXLEY	No results - unstayed rig trial.					

Quotable quotes – on the 1994 Nationals.

‘This place is really boring, all there is; is hills and sheep’ (Ed. Should we now add ‘and hurricanes’?).

‘I saw Alan Gillard go past at about 1 million miles per hour and thought; ****, that’s one fast Streaker, then I fell in!’

‘I sat on the upturned hull of my boat, legs and arms wrapped around the centreboard, and watched the carnage. Suddenly the world went wet and green, I came up for air – still clinging on – took a big breath and went through 360 degrees again – suddenly the idea of swimming seemed much better than staying with the boat!’

‘They pulled me into the rescue boat head first and as I moved to get more comfortable they (the rescue crew) said ‘sit down you’re rocking the boat’ – at which point a 3 foot wave broke over us’.

‘You have got plenty of beer in the bar haven’t you?’ (Streaker Sailor)

‘We always have plenty of beer’ (DRSC member)

‘We’re planning a good session tonight and we don’t want to run out....’

‘We’ve never run out yet’. (tone of indignation from DRSC member!)

‘That’s what they always say, and then when the beer runs out at 10:30pm there’s tears....’

(Rumour has it that despite the best endeavours of the DRSC rescue crew and the Blackpool Mafia, the beer did in fact last the night!).

‘I thought I’d rounded the windward mark and then I realised it wasn’t a mark at all, it was Dave Butler’.