

The National Championships – Herne Bay 1995.

The 1995 National Championships were held over the weekend of 24/25th June at Herne Bay S.C. near Whitstable. Unfortunately the hot and calm weather covering most of the British Isles did not extend to Kent where the prospective competitors were greeted by evil looking slate grey water, very large waves and a force 5-6 wind. As a result some five members chose to weigh their boats and not sail, leaving an entry of some 29 boats – the same entry as last year.

Launching conditions were horrible particularly for the lake sailors who were certainly not very terribly keen on the proceedings whereby an expert beach team launched the competitor complete with boat into the boiling mass! After that they were on their own – not surprisingly some fell over before the start and in fact only 23 started the first race.

Due to major sewage works next to the clubhouse (due to be completed one year ago!) the Race Officer held the first race three miles away from the clubhouse and well out in the deep water of the Thames where conditions were even more unpleasant than near the shore. As a spectator event the whole business became almost impossible to report as even with a pair of x20 binoculars I was unable to see much of the racing until the boats arrived at the leeward mark. I am told that the Race Officer set the usual triangle Olympic course but with very long reaching legs. Even worse was the dead run, sausage leg which became totally impossible to sail in a Streaker. Competitors sailed it in a series of reaches with a wear about at each corner as gybing was only for the insane.

As to the actual racing Alan Gillard attained the lead but not until Dave Butler had filled his boat and capsized at the wind mark. After this the champ continued on his untroubled way. Some respectful distance behind Steve King of Blackpool won a personal battle with a now recovered Butler for second place with Simon Cory fourth, Bernard Clark came fifth Heather Speller an excellent sixth. Only eleven finished and four boats had to be recovered later by rescue crews as their exhausted helmsmen were taken off. Two masts were broken – this compares with nine masts at Lancing in similar conditions two years ago, I believe this supports my contention that the Rigel mast is a better proposition than the Aldebaran.

Many of the competitors were not too keen to start the second race but some fifteen brave souls made the line slightly less sea but equal wind to the previous race. Once again Gillard shot off into the lead again followed by King (Butler had stayed ashore due to exhaustion). However King's joy was short lived as his rudder completely disintegrated leaving second to Cory. However Simon filled his boat, capsized in an attempt to empty it but was so tired that he was not quick enough to catch it before it inverted. Bernard Clark now held second place to the finish with Cory third. Steve Lynch was fourth with Steve Hamblin on returning to the class in fifth place and Chris Denby sixth. In fact all finished except the unfortunate King.

Sunday dawned with the weather relenting enough to allow proper tactical racing rather than pure survival conditions of the previous day. Wind remained at force 4-5 but sea state was more to the liking of the majority. In addition the Race Officer had been reminded that we are Streaker's not catamarans and the courses became shorter length triangles with no sausages legs.

Once again Gillard disappeared into the distance followed by Cory and Butler. King in his repaired boat was fourth with Clark fifth and Liam Beamish sixth. Liam's boat has an odd number (2030) – I am told by 'Young George' who knows about these things that this is an overseas number. However my records show that it has never been further abroad than Bradford – I rest my case!!

As a matter of interest Gillard came ashore muttering as he had not noticed the change of course overnight – he sailed a sausage leg while everybody else was sailing triangles, but he still had time to correct his mistake and win by miles.

The fourth race was actually started in watery sunshine with Gillard winning by an even bigger margin again from the steady Cory with King a delighted and well earned third. Clark was fourth with Lynch fifth and Butler sixth.

The fifth race was not raced as the tired competitors wanted to get off home – particularly important for those from the far North who had some seven hours of travelling to get home.

Once again Alan Gillard proved his total mastery of the conditions to win the Nationals for the sixth time with Simon Cory second again. King was an excellent third and has not stopped smiling since! He had a huge grin on his face at the presentation ceremony and was last seen heading towards the nearest bar to get monumentally pissed!! Bernard Clark was fourth again with Dave Butler fifth and Steve Lynch at last in the top six.

The Altogether Shield went to Blackpool by one point from Lancing. The Over Trophy went to Alan Simmons although he is well over 55. this released the Well Over Trophy to Class Treasure Peter Crooks. The Under Trophy went to class newcomer John-Paul Marks who came all the way from Jersey to sail – he found Saturday hard but went well on Sunday. The Scaling Belle Cup returned to the care of Heather Speller, also from Jersey. The Cadzow Trophy went to an old boat for a change. John Potter, Commodore of H.B.S.C and yours truly decided that we had enough of awarding the trophy to brand new boats from the builders – how do you separate one new Cory boat from the rest anyway? The trophy went to 1294 sailed by Darren Middleton of Blackpool. Well done young man!

That left Gillard to remove the rest of the loot in his wheelbarrow. He won the Tate & Lyle Trophy, the Downs Cup (race 1), the Viking Trophy (race 2), the Ripon Horn (race 3), and the beautiful new Heron Salver presented to us this weekend by our hosts for the winner of the fourth race. I hope nobody presents a trophy for the fifth race as we have not been able to hold one for four years!!

I can only finish by thanking our hosts for a superb weekend. Nothing proved too much trouble for this friendly club – reminds me of Lancing two years ago. They made us feel really welcome with the galley and bar open all the time, the beach party outstanding in terrible conditions, the rescue crews efficient and the sailing good. Nobody could complain of not getting their money's worth. In fact most were too knackered to complain at all! And no, I do not regret having sold my boat – one look at the conditions on Saturday frightened me to death!!

STREAKER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

HERNE BAY 1995

FINAL POS.N	SAIL No.	HELM	CLUB	POINTS - RACE No.				TOTAL POINTS
				1	2	3	4	
1	1424	ALAN GILLARD	ROTHERHAM	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	2.25
2	1461	SIMON CORY	DOWNNS	4	3	2	2	7
3	1402	STEVE KING	BLACKPOOL LC	2	16	4	3	9
4	1442	BERNARD CLARK	RIPON	5	2	5	4	11
5	1418	DAVE BUTLER	BLACKPOOL LC	3	27	3	6	12
6	1309	STEVE LYNCH	LANCING	10	4	8	5	17
7	2030	LIAM BEAMISH	LANCING	7	27	6	9	22
8	1380	HEATHER SPELLER	ST. CATHERINE'S	6	7	10	21	23
9	1052	STEVE HAMBLIN	BEXLEY	8	9	20	11	28
10	1458	ALAN SIMMONS	LANCING	23	8	11	8	27
11	1392	STEVE SKUDDER	BEXLEY	8	9	20	11	28
12	1463	CHRIS DENBY	DOWNNS	27	6	12	10	28
13	1360	PETER CROOKS	FILEY	11	12	9	12	32
14	1464	VIC BAINES	BLACKPOOL LC	12	11	15	18	38
15	1103	MIKE JUDD	BLACKPOOL LC	27	14	17	14	45
16	1378	TONY NEWCOMBE	ST. CATHERINE'S	23	27	7	15	45
17	1400	JOHN-PAUL MARKS	ST. CATHERINE'S	23	27	16	7	46
18	1130	ROB COMER	BLACKPOOL LC	27	13	14	21	48
19	1395	FRANK HUNT	WHITSTABLE	23	27	13	16	52
20	976	MEG WARREN	CHIPSTEAD	23	27	20	19	62
21	1394	DARREN MIDDLETON	BLACKPOOL LC	27	10	27	27	64
22	1420	CHRIS CHAPMAN	BLACKPOOL LC	23	27	27	17	67
23=	1439	TIM PERCIVAL	HERTS COUNTY	23	27	27	27	77
23=	102	DAVID TARBAT	BEXLEY	23	27	27	27	77
23=	1207	ROGER HORTON	LANCING	23	27	27	27	77
23=	1213	FRANK HAMBLIN	BEXLEY	23	27	27	27	77
23=	1313	PETER BRODIE	ROYAL VICTORIA	23	27	27	27	77
28=	1354	GEOFF TOWN	BROXBORNE	27	27	27	27	81
28=	1294	JEREMY DANIELL	DOWNNS	27	27	27	27	81