

JRA SUMMER RALLY 2010 - PLYMOUTH

This year's summer rally was held at the Mayflower Sailing Club, Plymouth over the weekend of 22nd and 23rd May 2010. The weekend coincided with the start of the Jester Challenge.

Twenty six members and friends attended the rally along with 4 boats. Jonathan and Jane Snodgrass came in their Sunbird 32 '*Lexia*', Dennis and Dawn Shepherd in '*Hui Mar*' an Atlanta 28. Dennis Sidebotham came in his schooner rigged Barbican 33 '*JanvierAcquilla*' and Robin Blain towed his Macgregor 26 '*Bunny*' all the way from Dorset.



'Lexia'



'Hui Mar'



'Janvier Acquilla'



'Bunny'

Normally at this rally members bring their boats alongside the jetty adjacent to the sailing club from which the public leave on the trip boats. Over the years this jetty has gradually fallen into disrepair and this time we found it had been closed and trip boats transferred to a new facility near by which was not available to us. Consequently members had to travel to the various local marinas to join member's boats.

This worked quite well on Saturday, but with all the boats coming from different directions, it was rather difficult trying to get them to sail together for photographs. Sunday was quite the opposite with our junk rigged boats lost amongst all those trying to see the start of the jester Challenge.

We were lucky with the weather. The sun shone all weekend which helps make a successful rally but light winds did cause some problems especially on the Sunday during the start of the Jester Challenge when having your engine ticking over was required to avoid colliding with other yachts jostling for a good view of the start.



Skipper, Mate and crew ready for an afternoon's sailing in Plymouth Sound



After enjoying a few hours sailing in the Sound the boats returned to the marinas and the crews disembarked to prepare for the evening. We met again in the at the Mayflower Sailing Club

where we enjoyed dinner before listening to an illustrated talk by one of our members Gerald Richards and his wife who in 2009 did what he calls the 'oldies gap year thing' and sailed his Sunbird 32 schooner '*Footloose Falcon*' to Aland in the Baltic via the Frisian Islands, Danish Fjords, Kiel Kanal, Gota Kanal, Stockholme archipelago, lake Malaren and finally circumnavigating Aland.



Sunday saw the start of the Jester Challenge. This is not a race but a challenge for individual skippers to take their boats all under 30' unless agreed by the other entrants, from Plymouth in England to Newport, Rhode Island, America in the shortest time possible. 24 boats started the challenge but only 9 finished. One competitor was washed overboard but managed to get back on board, another had to be rescued and lost his boat. Many retired along the way. Details of the Challenge can be found at www.jesterinfo.org and is well worth a look.

We headed out into Plymouth Sound to watch the start of the Jester Challenge along with many other boats. The water became somewhat crowded as we became lost in the melee. It was difficult to see which boats were the entrants and which were merely spectators. The entrants must have felt relieved when they finally got away and put some distance between themselves and the spectators. Notwithstanding it was a great send off.



Amongst the entrants was '*Jester*' herself, not the original which had been lost some years ago but an exact replica now owned by Trevor Leek. Other entrants in junk rigged boats included Tim McCloy in '*China Blue*' and Roger Taylor in '*Mingming*'



It's nice to see the different types of boats taking part in this challenge. One boat clearly wants everyone to know they are supporting a very worthwhile cause whilst another though it may be wise to take a companion to help with the steering. I'm not sure of the significance of the tape over her mouth, whether this was sealing a leak or just keeping her quiet. In the event this entrant retired with equipment failure. Perhaps his lady friend became a little deflated with the experience!



The Plymouth rally often turns up surprises and as can be seen this year was no exception. Last year we were entertained by two dolphins playing around the boats, sadly this year they were nowhere to be seen.

As we all know it is important to keep a good look out and this is especially important when sailing in confined waters as this picture shows.

This ferry crept up on us whilst we were busy watching the start of the Jester Challenge.

This year's summer rally was again a great success but it would not be so if not supported by our members.
Thanks to all who came along.

