

Despite blustery conditions prior to the event which delayed the arrival of some Phuket boats, winds were less than ideal for the 15th Royal Langkawi International Regatta. However, apart from one day when racing was abandoned, Race Officer Simon James, managed to complete at least one race each day for each class.

Hosted and organized by the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, it was a struggle for sponsorship although the event was still 'supported' by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture Malaysia, Tourism Malaysia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, Kedah State Government and the Langkawi Development Association (LADA). Commercial supporters included Volvo with the provision of courtesy cars while various outfits provided gifts for the lucky draw.

Lennart Stegland, managing director of Volvo Car Malaysia Sdn Bhd, indicated during a press briefing that his company was considering increasing its involvement next year. No doubt a considerable relief for the organizers if it happens.

Recent developments at the RLYC have seen an expansion of the marina with a further 50 berths, six of which are for superyachts. *M5* (ex-*Mirabella*), the world's largest sloop, was there for the duration of the regatta.

Tuesday 10th January 2017

Out of 30 entries, only *Linda* failed to make the start line for the first race, having been delayed by on passage from Phuket.

The RO had to do some juggling between classes to try to ensure fair competition. In Racing, therefore, the two TP52s, Kevin Whitcraft's *THA72*, skippered by his 21-year-old son, Don, and former five-time champion Peter Ahern's syndicated, *Oil*, were matched against the Ker 42 Custom, *Black Baza* with Steve Manning at the helm, Scott Bradley's Sydney 40, *Imagine*, and the Malaysian Armed Forces (Navy) dk 47, *Uranus*.

After an 80-minute postponement, racing finally got underway in bright sunshine ... and barely five knots.

Racing was first off. On the first of

their windward / leeward races with the mark at 1.2nm, *Oi!* ran out of space at the heavily biased pin end and had to gybe around and start in the second tier behind *THA72*. *Imagine* got off to a flying start, recording victory on handicap ahead of *THA72*.

IRC 1, IRC 2, Sportsboats and Multihulls followed to their mark, set at 0.8 nm, on a two-lap windward / leeward.

In the third start for IRC 2, comprising four boats, past winner, Niels Degenkolw's *Phoenix* set the pace across the line at the pin end, pursued by Jeremy Camps' *Impala 28*, *Old Pulteney The Blue Angel*. *Phoenix* last year finished in 2nd place behind *Mata Hari* which, much to Degenkolw's delight, had this year been elevated to IRC 1.

Seven *Platus*, most provided by the Malaysian Armed Forces, competed, including two Thai teams, *Pine-Pacific* and Burapha University Sailing Team, along with regulars Singapore Management University (SMU). Other local teams included the Malaysian Armed Forces Team 1, *Siput*, the University Malaysia Terengganu and the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC). The RSYC Team sailed their boat up from Port Klang, which paid dividends. Four of the fleet hit the line at the pin end with the rest stretched out.

The three Multihulls were next off on a geometric course representing a wide spectrum of boats from the 12.81m *Tantrum Too* trimaran, the 11.6m *Mojo* catamaran down to the 6m Pulse 600 Corsair trimaran, *Fetz Ma*. Interestingly, the Pulse 600 is owned and skippered by Gerhard Pils, formerly in charge of BMW Malaysia and a past sponsor of the regatta, now retired and residing in Langkawi.

It was a David and Goliath moment in the Multihulls when *Fetz Ma* got the better of its bigger competitors, finishing

in 1st place on handicap in the shortened first race ahead of *Tantrum Too*. Positions were reversed in Race 2.

Competition was especially keen in the Sportsboats Class with *Pine-Pacific* taking the first race and the Malaysian Armed Forces Team 1 the second.

Having initially been consolidated into a combined Club Class, this was later split into Club Cruising, Ocean Rover and White Sails.

In Club Cruising, Chris Mitchell's Adams Naut 40, *Lady Bubbly*, renewed its battle with Ramasamay Menon's Dehler 38, *VG Offshore*, and the new entry Korolev Nikolai's Hanse 44, *Milashka*. Sent on the same geometric course as the Multihulls, both were shortened at Gate 4. Once again *Lady Bubbly* took the honours.

In Ocean Rover, long time participant, Wulf Hennig Lessing's *My Toy* took on a new challenge from a young pretender, Fabian Fernandez's Ron Holland's 1979 Eygthene 24, *Freedom 12*. They, along with *White Sails*, were sent on a geometric course with a 0.8nm beat to the windward mark followed by a slightly longer downwind leg before crossing the harbour to Gate 5 and heading back up to the windward mark and into the finish. The race was shortened at Gate 5, with *Freedom 12* winning the day.

After a year's absence, having returned from the Maldives, John Ormston was back with his Moody 44, *Invictas Reward*, to challenge for supremacy over A'dale Adham Ayahudin's Oyster 55, *Chantique*, which, in the surprise absence of *Eveline*, carried many of its crew. Well positioned at the start, *Invictas Reward*, went on to claim victory by a 30-second nose ahead of *Chantique* to also claim handicap honours.

With the six-knot breeze having swung southeasterly, the RO upped stumps and relocated into Kuah Harbour, much to the consternation of the Harbour Master. He then sent the five fleets on a second windward / leeward with the mark for Racing at 1.2nm at 130 degrees and the red triangle mark for the rest at 0.8nm at 120 degrees. The offset was to avoid fishing nets.

In Racing, *THA72* took revenge in the second race to claim line and handicap honours ahead of *Black Baza*.

In IRC 1, at the end of the day *Mata Hari* claimed two line and handicap wins with John Kara's *Insanity* scoring two 2nd places.

In IRC 2, *Phoenix* made it two daily doubles ahead of *The Blue Angel*. Sailescapes Farrgo Ladies, skippered by Liz Schoch, finished 3rd in both.

The opening and prize presentation dinner held at the RLYC was a chance to catch up with old friends and make new.

Wednesday 11th January 2017

FH had the pleasure of rejoining John Ormston and his two-man crew, Craig and Adrian, on *Invictas Reward*, having previously crewed the Moody 44 to 2nd place in Ocean Rover A in the 2015 RLIR. That was Ormston's first ever regatta!

It was a bright morning but the postponement (AP) flag was already up, barely fluttering on the committee vessel. Reports from various mark boats around the course in Bass Harbour varied from 2.5 knots at 90 degrees to 4.6 knots at 70-80 degrees. However, with the breeze finally settling around 6 knots windward / leeward courses for Racing, IRC1, IRC 2 and Sportsboats were laid and geometrics for Multihulls and the Club Class divisions.

In the sixth start for the combined Club divisions, *Invictas Reward* was well placed leading *Lady Bubbly*, *Chantique* and *VG Offshore* across the line. All but *Invictas Reward* tacked early towards the windward mark, while the former opted to stay in the breeze. *VG Offshore* rounded the top mark first but *Lady Bubbly* needed to give *Invictas Reward* water as they rounded together.

With no spinnaker, *Invictas Reward* sailed goose-winged; likewise *Chantique* and *Linda*, which joined the White Sails division having damaged its spinnaker on the passage from Phuket. Barely making three



knots, even the cockpit hood was raised and the solar panel tilted to capture all available zephyrs of the easing breeze.

A tactical decision by the skipper kept *Invictas Reward* mid-stream whereas *Chantique*, which had overhauled *Invictas Reward*, benefitting from its bigger sail area downwind, headed inshore going for speed over direction and then reaching back to the leeward mark and rounding ahead of *Invictas Reward*. In a somewhat puzzling strategy, it then headed back inshore, the way it came

whilst *Invictas Reward* stayed mid-harbour and was back in front when they again crossed mid-stream heading for Gate 5.

Linda led the White Sails division through the gate and back up to the windward mark before again running down to the finish line, *Invictas Reward* leading *Chantique* by 35 seconds but trailing *Linda*. At the time, *Linda*'s handicap was unknown. So, it was a pleasant surprise for *Invictas Reward* to later find they had earned another bullet.

Meanwhile the Multihulls, Club Cruising and Ocean Rover completed the same course with *Tantrum Too*, *VG Offshore* and *Freedom 12* winning their classes.

Two windward / leeward races for Racing, IRC 1, IRC 2 and Sportsboats saw *THA72* score two bullets whilst *Oi!* added a 2nd and 3rd to its tally.

Both *Mata Hari* and *Phoenix* continued to dominate IRC 1 and IRC 2 respectively.

In Sportsboats, the Malaysian Armed Forces Team 1 took daily honours with a 1st and 2nd place with the RSYC team in 2nd place with a 1st and 4th.

Sometimes the organizers of regattas can overdo the hospitality with prizegiving functions each night. So, to occasionally have a free evening makes a pleasant change. This year all functions were held at the RSYC without the involvement of other resorts which would normally host at least one function. Sailors that evening were left to their own devices as they were on Friday.

Thursday 12th January 2017

Conditions were looking ominous when the RO headed out early morning in search of breeze having raised the AP flag ashore before venturing out. Reports from various locations were phoned in but, shortly before 1400, racing was abandoned for the day.



Bumpy daisies (opposite bottom), *Fetz Ma* lifts a hull (middle) and a trio of *Platus* (below)

It was, therefore, an early prize-giving party that got underway mid-afternoon at the RLYC's Charlie's Bar with only the prizes from Wednesday to be distributed.

Friday 13th January 2017

After two days of harbour racing, the RO was keen to provide some variety and headed out to the East Coast and set up windward / leewards for most and a geometric for the Club Class and Multihulls.

On its way out *THA72* may have scraped an obstacle with its keel as goggles were passed over by the media boat for an inspection. They were luckier than *Invictas Reward* which found itself lodged on rocks. Fortunately the incoming tide and wash from the ferries helped dislodge it just in time for the start!

After getting racing underway on the first of two windward / leewards, the AP was again raised. With the breeze easing the RO then decided to amend the geometrical courses for Club Class and Multihulls also to a windward / leeward.

When racing resumed the Farrgo Ladies Team in IRC 2 had a good start, leading *The Blue Angel* and *Phoenix* over the line.

In the combined Club Class start, *My Toy* was caught OCS and was obliged to restart. Unlike *Chantique* and *VG Offshore*, which opted for a pin end start, *Invictas Reward* seemed better placed at the committee vessel end.

There was considerable congestion at the shorter windward mark with *Linda* on starboard tack and *Lady Bubbly* on port. *Lady Bubbly* left it late to take evasive action with the two boats glancing each other and being carried beyond the mark, meaning a gybe to remake the mark. Apparently it exonerated itself with a 360 turn. Meanwhile, *VG*

— continued on page 75

Continued from page 73 — *Offshore* and *Invictas Reward* stayed out of trouble and sailed away, while *My Toy* came 'scorching' in to the mark on a reach.

In Sportsboats, RSYC rounded the top mark on their second lap first and held on to the finish.

The breeze continued to ease so the RO gave the Racing Class the option to stay out for another race or head back to the marina. They all favoured another race.

The windward mark was reset at 1.2nm before *Uranus* got off to a great start ahead of *Oi!* at the pin end.

Ocean Rover and White Sails were sent home while the rest tried another race.

In Multihulls, *Fetz Ma* again took an early lead only to be overhauled by *Tantrum Too*. In Club Cruising, *Lady Bubbly* was unusually slow off the mark.

On the way back to the marina, *My Toy* had engine problems with *Chantique* earning brownie points after taking it under tow.

THA72 again dominated Racing and took a comfortable lead into the final day. *Emagine* had a one-point advantage over *Black Baza* going in to the final day, taking into account a discard.

Likewise Vincent Chan's Titan 36, *Mata Hari*, *KL Registry* had sewn up IRC 1 ahead of *Insanity* and *PhPlus*, while *Phoenix* held a five-point lead over *The Blue Angel* in IRC 2.

In Sportsboats, RSYC held a slender two-point lead over the Malaysian Armed Forces Team 1 with *Pine-Pacific* just two points behind.

Positions in Multihulls remained the same. *Tantrum Too* held a two-point lead over *Fetz Ma* with *Mojo* out of contention.

VG Offshore made it two wins for the day with *Milashka* two 2nd places leaving *Lady Bubbly* still lying in 2nd overall.

Saturday 14th January 2017

Traditionally the final day's racing has usually been in Bass Harbour but, with the flags hanging limply in the marina, the RO opted to return to the East Coast. Conditions were still disappointing when the fleet arrived in the race area, with barely a ripple on the shimmering sea.

However, by 1054 the RO was able to lower the AP flag with most classes initially on a two-lap windward / leeward before the combined Club Class was sent on one lap only.

In IRC 2, Fargo Ladies again led their fleet after *Phoenix* was caught OCS and obliged to restart.

In the light breeze, there was again congestion — both *PhPlus* and *Chantique* hit the windward mark and had to bear away before finally rounding.

VG Offshore had to make a last minute correction to round before it and *Invictas Reward* again sailed away.

Invictas Reward took line honours in White Sails with *Chantique* 2nd and *Linda* bringing up the rear. The handicap of the Moody 44 now stood higher than that of the Oyster 55, *Chantique*, and the Bavaria 49, *Linda*, yet it still managed to pull off a victory and a clean sweep of the series to take 1st. *Linda* finished 2nd and *Chantique* 3rd.

After just one race, and with little hope of more wind, the RO called it a day.

My Toy finally got the better of *Freedom 12* on handicap but it was too little too late with *Freedom 12* taking the Ocean Rover honours.

In Club Cruising, *Milashka* took line and handicap honours with *VG Offshore* 2nd

on corrected finishing 13 seconds ahead of *Lady Bubbly*. *VG Offshore* took the series ahead of *Milashka* and *Lady Bubbly* and won the RLYC Commodore's Challenge Cup.

In Sportsboats, the University of Malaysia Terengganu Team rounded the windward mark first on their final lap but were overhauled by both RSYC and *Pine-Pacific* at the line. RSYC claimed overall and the Langkawi Sports Trophy, with the Malaysian Armed Forces Team 1 2nd and *Pine-Pacific* 3rd.



Tantrum Too with five out of six wins, won the Malaysia Multihull Challenge Cup. *Fetz Ma* finished 2nd and *Mojo* 3rd.

Both *Mata Hari* and *Phoenix* made it a clean sweep of all their races to win IRC 1 and IRC 2 respectively. *Mata Hari* claimed the LADA IRC Challenge Trophy and *Phoenix* the RLIR IRC 2 Challenge Trophy.

Don Whitcraft, helming *THA72*, dominated the Racing Class, winning six of seven races and the Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy.

In memory of the founding Chairman and first Commodore of the RSYC the Tunku Abdullah Sportsmanship Trophy was awarded to *Mojo*.

The closing dinner and prize presentation brought the curtain down on another RLIR. After numerous challenges faced by the new RLYC general manager, Tayfun Koksul, the RLIR Organising Committee Chair, YM Tunku Soraya Dakhlah and her brother, the RLYC commodore, YM Tunku Dato' Yaacob Khyra, were relieved and pleased that all had gone well and look forward to all and more returning next year.