



BRIXHAM ROYAL TORBAY HERITAGE SAILING REGATTA 25th & 26th May 2024

From Penny Jolley, Regatta Organiser

Brixham blossomed with beautiful boats over the late May bank holiday! Many crews coming not only to sail in company with a wide variety of heritage boats but also to celebrate the 100th birthday of the famous Brixham sailing trawler, Provident.

It is now 27 years since the revival of the Heritage Regatta in its present form; the original event took place over 100 years ago under the auspices of King George V, whose Perpetual Challenge Cup(1912) is awarded annually to the fastest trawler.

A total of 42 boats entered in the Regatta this year, some increase over the past 10 years, when entries originally amounted to fewer than a dozen. The popularity and success are a tribute to the hard work of the Heritage Regatta Committee, its crew of stalwart volunteers, Brixham Yacht Club and Torbay Harbour Authority; the latter kindly extending free berthing facilities to our visiting Heritage vessels over the entire weekend, allowing the Regatta entry fee to be kept as low as possible, so a big thanks to them.

Boats and crews were met by the Regatta Bosun in the 'Follow Me' boat to assist mooring in the sunshine on Friday and Saturday, following passages from as far afield as Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Wight. On Saturday and Sunday the MDL Event pontoon was hired into service as the remaining boats continued to arrive (and thanks to MDL for working so closely with the Regatta committee.) A full list of all 38 boats at the regatta appears at the end of this article.

This year offered a Pint and Pasty Regatta Reception on board Provident on the Friday evening, these were kindly sponsored by the Prince William pub and Fuller's pasties and accompanied by the singing duo of Black Gold on the quayside in the late sunshine. The Town Heritage pontoon looked particularly spectacular with the TS Royalist, cadets aloft, lying alongside amongst the regatta boats dressed overall.

With the lugger Le Grand Lejon, Provident from Scotland and junk crews from Australia and the USA the Regatta this year had a decidedly international flavour. Following the reception Brixham Yacht

Club invited the crews to their Friday evening 'Happy Hour' and the club continued to extend the warmest hospitality over the entire weekend, staff coping enthusiastically with the record numbers.

The scuddy skies gave Saturday arrivals an interesting sail to Brixham; an informal start to the proceedings was on offer to boats sailing up from the west who were able to join in the passage race from Dartmouth. This is a self-timed competition for boats both over and under 30'.

Everyone soon embraced the reality that actually regattas are all about moving boats around and socialising, interspersed with occasional bouts of sailing, amiable seamanship and entertainment. The afternoon started with Missin' Tackle and All Hands On Deck singing sea shanties, the latter performing a specially composed song on board the deck of Provident.

Registration included distribution of excellent goodies bags, supported by Bays Brewery and Seawood Chandlery of Torquay, Regatta mugs courtesy of Dolphin boatyard and Regatta flags from Rockfish; this was followed by the crews' traditional fish pie supper, courtesy of Waterdance Fishing. This year numbers necessitated two sittings which all the crews worked around with good humour and much ale!

A special mention must be given to the crew of Leader who had a thwarted passage from Gloucester Docks, with a delayed departure by a broken bridge; off Padstow the RNLI were called to assist her round to Newlyn where she remained awaiting repairs. Nothing daunted the skipper, bosun, first mate and chair of trustees made their own way up to Brixham, arriving for a late supper on Saturday evening. We managed to fix them all up with a sail in Sunday's Regatta before they returned to Leader; happily repairs have been successful and she has now returned to Ireland – with promises for a visit here next year along with Bryan Boru.

Our thanks to the Concours d'Elegance judge, Martin Elliott, who assessed the assembled boats over the course of the weekend; Martin is the South West Gaffers President. An unenviable task amongst such a variety of yachts, trawlers, working boats, replicas and dinghies; thanks to him for the careful time and consideration he gave to the Regatta.

Sunday morning was brilliant! A brisk northerly wind gave us dry conditions in bright sunshine – "the best Heritage Regatta conditions I have sailed in" was the remark made by many of the skippers.

The Parade of Sail was led out by Royalist giving spectators on the Breakwater excellent views of the fleet. The Corinthian Sail in Company was started with the trawlers leading off the 7 classes of boats. The regatta officer's careful course planning offered the Heritage fleet magnificent sailing in the conditions with a reach due east from Battery Point to Breakwater Bay, then a fetch out into the middle of Torbay and a beat down towards the Paignton mark. The junk rigged boats sail much the same as gaff rigged, being shy of anything near windward. The majority of the boats had a superb sail, with the fastest lap timed at 21 minutes (by Lulotte, a Swan owned by Ben Morris); the two little Drascombe luggers wisely hugged the harbour in the choppy conditions.

Nearly all boats finished the 4 lap course; hard work but exhilarating sailing, and very commendable for the small working boats and ideal for the large boats. Not too windy for them to have all their sails up which has afforded some great pix.

Have a look at the Brixham Heritage Regatta Facebook page and website for the photographs, taken by members of Paignton Photographic club, Wendy Searle and Christian Topf, as well as those taken by individuals out on the Bay. Our thanks to Roger and Jackie Gater who took the seaborne photographers out in their lovely launch.

The excellent Sunday curry buffet at Brixham Yacht Club was followed by distribution of the impressive and historic silverware at prize-giving; Peter Milligan, chair of the Vigilance Trustees, presented the trophies and was proud to represent Vigilance during her continued absence at Will Sterling's yard for 'major surgery'. For full results please visit the Regatta website. Two additional awards were made: first Provident was presented with the National Historic Ships Flagship of the Year and second the Regatta Organiser, Penny Jolley, was presented with the OGA President's Commendation for outstanding contributions to traditional sail in the South West.

Thanks go too to all the volunteers and the hard work by the berthing party was an enormous help; the behind the scenes staff at the Harbour Authority, Brixham Yacht Club, the 'front of house' and Regatta volunteers crew in their vivid fuchsia polo shirts.

"We couldn't believe the number of beautiful boats assembled – what organisation!"

"The friendliest Regatta – and gets better every year"

"We had to miss last year and feel as if we're coming home!"

"The highlight of my sailing year!"

Our thanks to all the boats and boats' crews who came and made it all work. We look forward to seeing you at the **Heritage Rally on 7th September 2024**, a rather more low key affair.

2025 dates:

Brixham Heritage Regatta 24th - 25th May

LIST OF BOATS AT BRIXHAM HERITAGE REGATTA 2024

ARABELLA OF TORQUAY

BLUEBELL

BRYONY

CARIAD

CAUPONA

CHARLIE BRAVO

CYNTHIA

ESCAPE

FALANDA

FLY

HANNAH

ISLAND BOUND

ISOBEL

KIE MAR

KRKA

LE GRAND LEJON

LETTY

LEXIA

LOWENNA

LULOTTE

MAID OF SHANNON

MATAWA

MINNOW

MINX

MISCHIEF

MORNING VICAR

NORA

PENELOPE PUGWASH

PILGRIM

PROVIDENT

RADIANCE

ROXANNE

SUSAN J

TAMARIND

TREBAH

WHITE CLOUD

WHITE ROSE

WHIRLAWAY