

Brixham Heritage Regatta 2022



All six junk participants in a row. From left to right, Derek and Jenny Pilgrim's Chopsticks; Sally and Steve Peake's Minnow; Edward Hooper's Amiina; Ted and Fiona Stone's Fly; Jonathan Snodgrass's Lexia; and Iain Blair's Mr Fox.

The photo above, and those on the following page, were taken by **Stuart Chapman** who kindly gave us permission to publish them in our magazine. Stuart is a member of Paignton Photographic Club which was officially appointed to take photos of the 2022 Brixham Heritage Regattas as they have done since 2018.

Well done to all who attended. It is hoped that the success of this event will encourage more JR boats to attend future regattas in Brixham.

Those of you who live in the South West will be aware of the 'super yacht' that caught fire in a Marina in Torbay. Derek Pilgrim sent us a photo of the harbour in which the Junks rafted up for the Heritage Regatta and in the background can be seen what he described as "expensive smoke"!

This year the Regatta organisers set up a special class for the junks and the results of the 'Junk Race' are as follows:

- 1st, *Lexia* - Jonathan Snodgrass with Pete Hill - Winner Junk class (from Dartmouth)
- 2nd, *Amiina* - Edward Hooper - (from Poole)
- 3rd *Minnow* - Steve and Sally Peake - (from Cowes)

Winner of the trophy for the furthest distance sailed to reach Brixham went to Iain Blair who sailed *Mr Fox* from Ashlett.

Not content with racing *Amiina* at Brixham, Edward informs me that *Amiina* became the outright winner of Poole to Yarmouth Sam Gill trophy race organised by Poole Yacht Club for class 3 boats. Of the 13 entrants 12 were Bermudans (of which 6 were Splinters), and the beautiful *Amiina* beat the lot!"

Congratulations to all of you, but especially to Edward and *Amiina* showing their class what is what!





'JUNKETS' AT THE BRIXHAM HERITAGE SAILING REGATTAS - AN OVERVIEW FROM 2019 TO 2022

BY JONATHAN SNODGRASS

Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta

www.brixhamheritageregatta.uk which takes place annually in late May, and its associated Rally in late September, are described as "A celebration of vessels from a bygone era". Junk Rig fits that

The following are extracts from the instructions for the 2022 event:

The Regatta Format

Regatta Entrants'22

The Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta, is not a race; in the modern era it is now a Corinthian Fleet, sail-in-company ... Handicaps are applied to Classes 2 to 6, purely so that the Regatta Officer and the team can judge which boats have shown the best expertise and sailing skills during the afternoon's event.

Class 1 - Sailing Trawlers and Large Working Boats
Open to gaff, lug or similar rigged working boats and direct derivatives over 60 feet length on deck.

Class 2 - Working Boats

Open for all gaff, lug or similar rigged working boats, direct derivatives and replicas between 30 and 60 feet length on deck. Class 2a Junk Rigged Vessels.

Class 3 - Small Working Boats

This class is for all gaff, lug or similar rigged working boats under 30 feet length on deck and replicas.

Class 4 - Cruising and Open yachts, Gaff Rig

Open for gaff rig yachts and replicas, principally designed for cruising or recreational use.

Class 5 - Cruising and Open yachts, Bermudan Rig

Open for wooden traditional yachts and replicas, generally over 30 years old - designed for cruising or recreational use.

Class 6 - Cruising Yachts, over 30 years old (with any rig or construction)

Open for any vessel not included in the above classes.

I think that it was Ted Stone, who lives in Brixham with the two loves of his life, Fiona and Fly, who first suggested that the 2019 JRA AGM and an associated 'Junket' should take place at the Brixham Heritage Sailing Regatta. Well done Ted !!

Nine junks attended. Reports on that event by David Tyler (DT), James Gray (JG) and Mark Case (MC) are in Issue 80 June 2019 of the JRA magazine and a report by James Gray on his and *River Rat's* adventures sailing from Gravesend, during the Regatta and their return is in Issue 81 October 2019. These extracts give the flavour

of that event, a flavour fully repeated in 2021 and 2022:

(DT) For legal/liability reasons, the big Brixham trawlers, gaff ketches from 60ft to 80ft, are not allowed to race, and for safety reasons are started at five minute intervals. Then followed two large fishing luggers. Half an hour after the first of the trawlers, the junk fleet started. Weaverbird was first to cross the start line, closely followed by Ti Gitu, Lexia and Fly. Hui-Mar, Chopsticks, Alanouwoly and RiverRat made up the remainder of the junks. There was no formal handicapping, as it was not a formal race, the regatta committee deciding "who had shown the most sailing skill".

The sailing committee adjudged *Weaverbird* to have turned in the best sailing performance, with *Fly* second and *Alanouwoly* third. *Weaverbird* also picked up the award for the boat that had come from furthest away - 380 miles. (*Blossom* also started, but ... suffered a rig failure and had to withdraw.) And last, but by no means least, little *River Rat*, (18ft), received a special award for perseverance at the prize-giving. To have sailed all the way down from Gravesend, completed a lap of the course in water that had been chopped up into a rather confused state by the much larger vessels, suffered a knockdown with the mast in the water when approaching the finish but then picking himself up, dusting himself down and finishing in good order - well, what can I say? Perseverance seems a somewhat inadequate word. Well done, James!

(JG) I'm afraid I was far from the action, having daydreamed myself into being a long way from the start line, my start was 30 minutes late! (Not bad by my standards.) The weekend was an absolute joy from my perspective, right from the very warm welcome on arrival. To be nestled in amongst a fleet of 10 junks, within the larger group of beautiful older boats; to be in such good company throughout; and enjoying the hospitality of the Brixham Yacht Club in such a lovely harbour. The regatta itself was great fun. Such a privilege to be sailing among such gorgeous vessels.

(MC) Returning to the club house before seven, it was plain to see that the prize-giving celebrations were well underway, with crowds of people drinking, celebrating and enjoying the sailing talk. The weekend ended with groups of junkies spread around the room, sharing tales of sailing, boats and very diverse lives. It was a great weekend, so thank you to all of the members and friends who made it to Brixham.

(JG) And a special message to anyone who's thinking of sailing to a junket (especially an AGM junket) - go for it! The more you stretch yourself and the boat, the greater the satisfaction, and the warmer the welcome when you arrive! (And the JRA AGM was also a great success. "But that, children, is another story!" Sadly it was to be a one off because the Brixham Sailing Club later said that, for reasons of space and facilities, they could not host it

again. "No hard feelings my lover, but you're just too big!" For those that don't know, that's 'Devon Speak'.)

The pandemic precluded holding the Regatta in 2020. However, during a break in the pandemic lockdowns, the Regatta Committee was determined to hold an event in 2021. Attendance had to be limited to 24 vessels, compared with over twice that in previous years. Five were junks: *Minnow*, *Mr Fox*, *Amiina*, *Lexia* and *Fly*. Full reports by Sally Peake (SP), Jonathan Snodgrass (JS) and Linda Crew-Gee (LC-G) are in Issue 87 October 2021 of the JRA magazine, with some extracts below:

(JS) Interestingly Torbay is this year a 'parking place' for numbers of very large cruise ships which are out of commission due to Covid. It rapidly became clear that some of the fleet were 'navigationally challenged'! And the marker buoys were very small. At least one skipper claimed that the committee had deliberately hidden the buoys behind the cruise ships. When the organisers called time, *Cynthia*, the Edwardian gentleman's racing boat had done three laps of the three mile circuit, Pete and I on *Lexia* had done two, and some had not completed one. But all had enjoyed themselves.

{LC-G} Spending time together with JRA friends, being on the water, surrounded by beautiful boats and quirky little Brixham harbour felt to me like a precious little present I had stolen from life. ... personally enriched ... I lived in sheer joy for a few short days ... We all enjoyed this event so much that I hope more members will take part in organising and sharing in the pleasures of these sailing get-togethers in future.

(SP) *Minnow* (Sally Peake) won the prize for sailing furthest to reach Brixham from her home port in the River Medina, Isle of Wight. This she shared with *Mr Fox* (Iain Blair) whose home port of Ashlett Creek in Southampton Water can be only metres less in distance. *Amiina* (Edward Hooper) won the Regatta class for junk-rigged boats on handicap - she is only 21ft and carries a split junk rig and is very fast. *Lexia* took line honours through brilliant navigation (Jonathan Snodgrass) and superlative helming (Pete Hill) and also won the prize for the fastest recorded passage from her home port of Dartmouth whence a number of the Regatta entries came. And *Fly* (Ted Stone), who is based in Brixham, was most welcoming and delighted to have other junks and crews with whom to sail in company. Thanks must go to all at Brixham YC for making the junk fleet so welcome.

And so to 2022.

Post Covid, or at least post restrictions, the Regatta fleet numbered around 30 of which 6 were junks: *Minnow* (Sally and Steve Peake), *Mr Fox* (Ian Blair), *Amiina* (Edward Hooper), *Fly* (Ted and Fiona Stone plus guests), *Lexia* (Jonathan Snodgrass and Peter Hill) and *Chopsticks* (Derek and Jenny Pilgrim). And because of

our strong attendance, the junks became a standalone Class 3. We feel privileged to be so accepted by this event. Let us hope that we can keep that up.

Again it was a wonderfully organised, welcoming and friendly event. All the kind words written above about 2019 and 2021 would apply in 2022. The weather was again very kind. The parked cruise ships had gone back to their business, so the navigation was much less fraught. And the event is such good value for money. The entry fee is £25 up to 25 feet LOD and £35 up to 39 feet LOD. This covers (officially) two nights on the Brixham town pontoon (perhaps three unofficially), a generous goody bag, and a fish pie supper for all the crew. (Fish quality and cooking superb, quantity apparently unlimited: this is of course Brixham!)

However, sadly, the Class One fleet of magnificent "sailing trawlers and large wooden working boats over 60 feet" was reduced to just *Pilgrim* and *Vigilance*. (The Brixham based Trinity Sailing with its fleet of 3 large vessels having ceased trading and its boats laid up; times are hard.) But there were still so many interesting and magnificent boats. Again Peter Lucas in *Cynthia*, the Edwardian gentleman's 50 foot LOA racing machine, led the fleet and deservedly was again awarded the top prize for presentation. He was however hotly pursued by the young Katie McCabe in *Falanda*, a 26 foot Morgan Chiles, who turned lots of heads as she sped though the fleet.

In the Junk Rig Class Three, *Lexia* was fastest and considered Best in Class with *Minnow* Runner Up. The prize for the boat which had travelled furthest to the Regatta was awarded to *Mr Fox*. It is interesting that this prize has been given to a junk rigged boat in 2019, 2020 and now 2022. That perhaps says as much about 'Junkies' as about the junk rig.

And on Saturday 24 September 2022 there will be the Brixham Heritage Sailing Rally, apparently all the same fun, but smaller and somewhat less formal. See you there?

The JRA can be found online at:

<https://junkrigassociation.org/>

