

ISLAND BARN 50TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN PURSUIT RACE CHALLENGE

sunday 20th september 2009



The first race ever held on the Island Barn Reservoir was a four hour Open Pursuit Race, sailed in torrential rain. It was won by Island Barn sailors and the trophy has resided in the club trophy cabinet ever since.

What could be more fitting, therefore, to celebrate our fiftieth birthday than to restage this event by challenging other clubs to an Open Pursuit Race Challenge. There will be a few tweaks to the original format. This time, there will be no four hour slog followed by a sodden journey home. We are expecting many, early rising teams from afar, so they will be greeted with bacon sandwiches and tea. A little later, there will be a civilised, ninety minute pursuit race. Island Barn sailors are renowned for their hospitality and, in character, we will serve our visitors a buffet lunch before inviting them to another ninety minute pursuit race in the afternoon. This will, of course, be followed by a traditional cream tea, during which the victorious team will be presented with the Island Barn Pursuit Team Trophy.

Civilised has been the key word up to now. But challenging clubs and class associations beware. While our sodden sailors of yesteryear were good, our members today are simply second to none. To beat our A team, clubs will need

to send their very best sailors. To stand any chance of taking home our venerable trophy, we advise challenging clubs to send two, three or even more teams.

What comprises a team? 4 boats of any type with a PYN between 900 and 1290. And being civilised, we naturally do not permit twin trapeze boats to sully our water. The 3 best results in each team in each race will be counted.

While the Team Trophy possesses an aura of history, individual sailors will also be racing for the new Island Barn Pursuit Trophy, which will be awarded to the overall winning boat. Modesty prevents the writer from declaring this will also be won by an Island Barn sailor, but I am afraid we cannot see anyone south of Ullswater taking this trophy home.

Is that all? Certainly not. Island Barn juniors, youths, ladies, masters and veterans also have no equal elsewhere, so we feel visiting sailors in these categories contemplating winning a prize will need to prepare themselves for a miserable journey home. Our 8 year olds, 18 year olds and 80 year olds take no prisoners and as for our ladies, the word is hardly appropriate - on the race course, that is.

While we have no fear of our trophies leaving our club we are fearful that this event will be overwhelmingly popular and so reluctantly we will be limiting the entry to 80 boats. The solution is simple. Enter early to ensure acceptance. We are sending a Notice of Race, Individual Entry Forms and Team Racing Forms to many clubs and class associations. If we have missed your club, you can download forms from The Island Barn web, www.islandbarn.org.uk. If you miss the boat, so to speak, we will return your cheque. We will publish accepted entries on the web as the event approaches.

We believe our Team Trophy is safe for another fifty years and will soon be joined in the trophy cabinet by the Individual Pursuit Trophy. So all sailors south of Ullswater - OK then - Rutland Water, turn out in force, come to a spectacular event and prove us wrong.

Footnote: The writer's brief was to include a history of the club, which he has clearly failed to do. But sailing historians, relax. An excellent history is on the club web (see above). Click on 'About Us', then 'Our History'. It's a very good read. And, truth be known, it's really what this event is about - a celebration of the vision, dedication and sheer hard work of our founding members.