



## Cowes Week 2009

### Saturday

The first day provided a good Force 3/4 breeze, although racing was not so pleasant due to light rain and poor visibility. Penny sailed by Julian Money and Tim Bailey led from the start. The fleet made slow progress, with 5 boats abreast passing Lepe Spit. The rest of the race Emily sailed by Malcolm Glaister; Danny sailed by Roger Wickens with Sunbeam newcomers Nikki Linfield and Nik Kemp and Penny vied for the lead. Going round the last leeward mark Danny led from Emily, Penny and Query sailed by Tim Hill, Nick Leach and Petra Tanner (who had recovered after being over the line at the start). The last leg proved to be very interesting as a large ship passed through. This, along with the dying wind and large shifts close to Castle Point meant the fleet ended up in what seemed like a tense game of snakes and ladders. Emily fared the best and overhauled Danny, whilst

Query overtook Penny for third place.

### Sunday

Sunday dawned with a Force 4 wind but with plenty of calm patches on the mainland shore. Penny led from the start and eked out a useful lead over the first 7 miles. Unfortunately, on a long beat from Hillhead to West Knoll Penny failed to correctly identify the windward mark and sailed off towards Cowes. The Sunbeams that had gone west first on the long beat fared best and at West Knoll Fay, sailed by Richard and Sarah Pearson led from Argosy sailed by Becky Wickens, Peter Craig-Wood and Susie Barker, and Honey sailed by Graham Colbourne and Pam Dickson. The penultimate beat from the Hillhead shore to laid mark 'g' proved to be even more eventful. On the chart issued to all competitors, laid mark 'g' was shown to lie on the Ryde Middle Bank. However, a lately issued amendment made clear that this mark would be south of the Bramble bank, some miles away! Fay (along with Dainty) was unaware of this change and headed off to Ryde Middle Bank. Query inherited the lead closely pursued by Argosy and Danny. The final beat saw the wind gusting to Force 6. Emily, who had given the rest of the fleet a 5-minute head start due to gear failure before the start, powered through to

take third place behind Query and Danny.

#### Monday

Provided the first reaching start of the week and Penny again led the way to the first mark at North Ryde Middle, closely pursued by Danny and Query. Query took the lead on the first beat and was narrowly ahead of Danny at the first windward mark (West Knoll) although Mystery (sailed by Viv and Anna Williams and making their first appearance of the week) showed their raw pace by temporarily taking the lead. At the final windward mark (East Knoll) Query led from Danny and Mystery. Danny managed to overhaul Query on the final beat to the finish and Argosy took third (and almost overtook the leaders after successfully spotting every wind shift on this final leg). Penny finished fourth and Emily pipped Mystery for fifth just before the finish.

#### Tuesday

Provided the strongest winds of the week with gusts up to 25 knots and some swimming with Johnny Hornby going overboard from Melody and Mike Hollis treading water aboard Dainty. There was another reaching start, this time to West Ryde Middle. Danny led from Query. Penny overtook Query on the first beat. At the end of the

penultimate beat Danny led narrowly from Penny and Query. During the final beat there were a number of large wind shifts and Penny managed to overtake Danny (albeit temporarily). Danny won their second consecutive race from Penny and Query.

#### Wednesday

The tides strengthened during the second half of the week and this, along with the lighter winds led to some Classic Cowes Week racing with Sunbeams, at times, being miles apart! The wind was blowing only 5 knots at the start but with the tide under us, we made quick progress to Murrays, the windward mark off Gurnard. The fleet stopped at this point and Emily, Query, Fay, Harmony (sailed by Duncan O'Kelly and Toby Spreckley) and Penny (with guest helm Jonathan Money aboard) opted to reach across to the Beaulieu shore, whilst others attempted to hold station off Gurnard waiting for the wind to fill in. Honey sailed by Bill and Pam Dickson and Graham Colbourne stayed on the Gurnard shore for 15 minutes and then decided to go out into the stronger tide. At this stage Emily, Query, Fay, Penny and Harmony were becalmed off Beaulieu and the wind filled in first in the Central Solent. Honey and Dainty (sailed by Peter Nicholson and Mike Hollis) were suddenly in the pound

seats and when the race was shortened at Quinell, Honey won by 28 minutes from Emily and Dainty.

#### Thursday

Another light wind day dawned and with the tide turning to the west the race committee opted for another reaching start. Honey started at the Royal Yacht Squadron end of the start line and led by some margin at the first mark, Gales HSB, from Penny and Emily. Once round the leeward mark a strong tide sluiced the fleet to West Knoll. There followed a long run to the east and those Sunbeams who went north over the Bramble Bank made some good gains. At the next mark Mystery (with guest helm Alan Stannah on his only outing of the week) took the lead from Danny and Penny (also with guest helm Jonathan Money). The remainder of the race consisted of one short beat followed by two long reaches. Mystery won convincingly, followed by Danny, Penny and Honey (Graham Colbourne).

#### Friday

The wind remained light for the rest of the week. A light northwesterly wind resulted in the fleet reaching or running for the first 1 ½ hours of the race! The early leader was Fay but after the first beat was overhauled by Danny and Query and the boats stayed in these positions

until the finish. Emily's off-wind performance was seriously compromised after their spinnaker pole snapped into two pieces but they did well to hang onto fourth place. Danny's win guaranteed their retention of the Betty Moore Cup with no need to sail the final race.

#### Saturday

The sunbeam start was delayed due to the light winds but this meant the start took place with a huge ebb tide running west. The decision was taken to again have a downwind start - this resulted in a number of boats taking some minutes to get over the start line. The situation was not helped by some boats opting to start on the wrong start line! Danny fittingly led from start to finish in a shortened race, followed by Mystery, Emily, Query and Fay. Query managed to hold onto second place overall, with Emily in third place.

Nick Leach