

Burnham Week Grand Finale

Town Cup J/80 glory marks conclusion of 125th anniversary east coast event

Burnham-on-Crouch, UK (2 September, 2017): Digger Harden sailing the J/80 *Glorious Fools* with his seasoned team including joint owner Peter Jackson, Doug Duce and Tom Adams have won the coveted Town Cup, to mark the end of the 125th anniversary celebrations of Burnham Week, writes Sue Pelling.

In a new Town Cup three-race/no discard series format, which replaces the traditional one-off race on the final Saturday, competition has been intense. On equal points with one race win apiece from the first weekend *Glorious Fools* and the Corby 29 *Double Trouble* sailed by Duncan Haley had everything to play for in today's Town Cup shoot out.

In probably the most wind of the week, reaching no more than 7-8kts Hayley and team sailed well off the line and revelled in conditions; lots of light airs beating, which is the perfect scenario for Hayley's Corby 29 *Double Trouble*. So quick in those conditions, *Double Trouble* was leading overall on handicap by three or four minutes. However, a six-mile final run from the mouth of the River, was time enough for the Team *Glorious Fools* to reel in their opponents and take the overall Town Cup win.

Doug Duce commented "Hayley sailed a fantastic race and probably had the win in the bag for 90 per cent of the time. They give us 1 minute, 34 seconds per hour but on that long stretch home we were able to carry the breeze up under spinnaker all the way. It was also the perfect angle for us. It got a bit shy in spots but we kept going."

Celebrating the 125th Town Cup anniversary win, a happy smiling Digger Harden added: "We have all been second so many times in this special race, so it is absolutely fantastic to have finally won it in our own boat, in our own right, and in the 125th anniversary year."

Elsewhere on the River Crouch, the remaining fleets contesting Trophy Day enjoyed equally frustrating shifty conditions, which put crew skills to the ultimate test.

In the local one-design **Royal Burnham One-Designs**, overall winner of today's race and the week, David Smith who was sailing with Sarah Hastwell and Charlie Renwick on *Amanda*, said the weather, which was light for the entire week was "quite bonkers". Commenting on today's race Smith added: "At one point we were on a dead run and we were pointing at a fleet of **Squibs** also on a dead run. It was only when we got to about 50 yards of them, one of them spun round and went the other way. It has been weird all week. All I can say is hats of to Edwin Buckley the race officer who has kept his cool all week and done an amazing job to pull it off in such difficult conditions."

On his win, Smith said: "Amanda is very much set up for light airs and she works most efficiently in about 8-10kts, which is exactly what we got. Any more wind I

think we would have had a lot more competition, so I think I have been lucky in that respect. Personally, I really like all that snidly stuff. I know a lot of others lose concentration in those conditions but I love it, and my ace crew are experts at it too.”

Justin Waples cleaned up in the **Royal Corinthian One-Design** fleet in both the week series and final Bar Yacht Club Trophy race, while in the ultra strong Squib fleet, which mustered the largest overall fleet entry of 25 boats, former overall Cowes Week winners Malcolm Hutchings and Andy Ramsey/Jackie Hutchings on *Lady Penelope* won the week series and today’s Burnham Week Bowl.

Despite the lack of wind, the **Dragon** class enjoyed close racing. The boat to beat this week was the skillfully sailed *Pageboy XI* with Paul Taylor at the helm and crewed by Graeme Page and David Brown. Taylor said that in the ultra shifty conditions, crew work was absolutely paramount. “The spinnaker was up and down countless times, a lot of hard, accurate crew work was the key to our win, for sure. It was a case of using the luck when it came, and not getting too upset when you lost the lead. I think all three of us led at one stage or another.”

So close was the racing at the top of the fleet, any one of three boats (*Avalanche* – Mark Wade, and *Scorpio* – Ian Gray) could have won. Taylor added: “All three of us crossed the line very close together. We just broke free with the breeze and they [rest of the fleet] were dumped up the River Roach with no breeze.”

There was no stopping Andrew Courts and team on Roger Nobel’s Hustler SJ 27 *Grace and Danger* sailed by Stephen Gosling, Robert Noble, Steven Bratt, and Sophie Gosling in today’s **Class 5** Penrose Fitzgerald Cup. They managed to hold off week series winner Ant Law and team on the pretty International Folkboat *Tifano*. In **Class 6** *Jeannie*, an Elan 31 sailed by John Saunders won the Roach Trophy.

In memory of the late John Torrance, an active dingy sailor who passed away suddenly nearly a year ago, a special race in his honor was held mid week. Of the total 35 dinghies that took part a National 12 (Ben Harden) won the fast handicap fleet, while the slow handicap was won by an RS Tera Pro (Milly Drew).

In her closing thoughts, Jo Barker, the outgoing Burnham Week chairman commented on a successful 125th anniversary event: “With entries nearly 20 per cent up on last year, I see this premier east coast regatta, under the new chairmanship of Annie Reid, in capable hands and I have no doubt it will keep going from strength to strength. Despite the lack of racing this week, the atmosphere has been great and everyone seems to have enjoyed it. Sadly the weather is something we can’t control.”

The 125th anniversary Burnham Week prize giving ceremony took place at Crouch Yacht Club and the traditional grand fireworks display to mark the closure of this historic event was a huge success with celebratory activities around town running late into the night.

For results, and event information, go to: <http://www.burnhamweek.com>

Ends

About Burnham Week

Burnham Week has been running for 125 years, which makes it one of the oldest regattas of its type. It is, for the first time this year, run by Burnham Week Limited, which is a company owned by Burnham's four clubs – Royal Burnham YC, Royal Corinthian YC, Crouch YC, and Burnham SC. It was formerly run by its unincorporated predecessor, the Burnham Joint Clubs Committee.

Because the event has always taken place at the end of August, historically it marked the closure of the racing season and, in its heyday years between the late 50s and 70, Burnham Week attracted some of the largest racing boats on the circuit. Many of these ocean racers headed to Burnham for the final regatta of the season after completing the Fastnet Race.

The Town Cup contested by the largest yachts at the regatta, is one of sailing's most prestigious trophies. It was first presented in 1927 and is awarded on an annual basis by the Town Mayor at the prize giving ceremony at the Crouch Yacht Club. The winners are obliged to fill the cup, and parade it around the Town. One of the most popular winners, in 1972, was the then Prime Minister, Right Hon. Edward Heath MP and his team aboard Morning Cloud.

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Team Glorious Fools collecting the Town Cup – photo Alan Hanna



Glorious Fools crossing the Town Cup finish line at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club – photo Sue Pelling