



*The
Celtic Challenge
(Ireland - v – Wales)
A Team Race Between
Glandore Harbour Yacht Club
and
Royal Anglesey Yacht Club
18th & 19th June 2016*

By Don Street and John Wyles

The Celtic Challenge is a fun team event between Glandore Harbour Yacht Club(GHYC) and the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club(RAYC). The format of racing is Admiral's Cup style team racing under the regular Racing Rules of Sailing with the aim of keeping race management & racing safe and simple. The event is sailed in International Dragons provided by GHYC members. The two teams sailed 4 boats each, drawn by lot, and exchanged the second day. Each boat is sailed by a minimum of three people, one of which is an owner's caretaker.

This regatta has its roots back in 2005 when some of the members of RAYC trailed their Menai Straits One Designs (designed by Fife and, built by Dickie in 1931) over to Glandore for the GHYC Classic Regatta. The first boat into Glandore ran out of cash while waiting for the others and being short of money they asked Keiran O'Donohue, then the owner and operator of the Glandore Inn, for an advance. He not only advanced them once but twice, they were very thirsty! The following morning he collected the ingredients for their breakfast from Skibbereen and delivered them to the RAYC sailors in Glandore.

As a result of this warm and friendly welcome RAYC has always brought boats to the bi-annual GHYC



Classic Regatta. Early in 2016, Tak Kershaw and Hugo Brean-Turner of RAYC were chatting about an away trip for the Fife fleet. No doubt they were in the RAYC bar, sheltering from the February storms, as they came up with the brilliant idea of inviting themselves back to Glandore!

Initially Tak approached Diarmuid O'Donovan, a GHYC Dragon sailor, asking if GHYC would be interested in "some sort of team race" on an

annual basis. A flurry of emails around the Dragon fleet confirmed interest and the dates and format for the first event to be held at GHYC on 18 & 19 June were agreed. A GHYC team will go to Anglesey next year. The beautiful perpetual trophy, pictured above, was kindly presented by Eamon Timoney of Fehily Timoney and Company. Eamon is a long standing member of GHYC and regularly sails with the Dragon fleet.

The GHYC Dragon fleet provided the eight boats in the water. Friday night there was an excellent reception party at GHYC clubhouse with plenty of liquid refreshments and great finger food. A draw was held for the boats to be sailed by each team on Saturday, with boats being reversed on Sunday to level the playing field.

The racing on Saturday, in perfect conditions, was excellent, close, tough, but no protests or collisions. With RAYC sailing Aphrodite, Sonata, War Baby & Gypsy they were a very competitive team against GHYC sailing Miss Fire, Panache, Teranaki & Phoenix. Don Street was very pleased to see Gypsy score 4, 5, 5 in the hands of RAYC skipper Hugo Brean-Turner. Gypsy is an 83 year old Anker and Jensen Wooden Dragon slightly younger than Don, who felt that at 85, while happy skippering, he is too old to crew. He watched from the Square, with a Heineken in hand, while Kevin Piercy, Gypsy's regular crew, sailed on Gypsy as owners rep. Don felt that Gypsy would have done even better if Hugo had not insisted in trying port tack starts!!!!

After the racing all sailors and supporters gathered at the Glandore Inn for a most enjoyable hoisting of pints and re hashing of races. Later there was an excellent dinner at the Glandore Bistro followed by further visits to the Glandore pubs with both teams competing for bragging rights in to the early hours. Daily race winner prizes were awarded to Aphrodite(RAYC), Sonata(RAYC) and Miss Fire(GHYC).

Sunday dawned wet and wild with forecasts of 25+ knots of wind, gusts in the mid 30s, so everyone assembled in the GHYC club house for tea and coffee while Sally & Julia prepared sandwiches. The wind was close to the limit at which Dragons, particularly old Dragons, can be raced.

After a one hour postponement a decision was made to race. The PRO John Williams aided by his wife Ann, despite being saturated, did an excellent job setting a triangular white sail course inside the harbour twice around.



Three exciting races were sailed in +/-20 knots with some wicked gusts. With GHYC now sailing Aphrodite, Sonata, War Baby & Gypsy they became the dominant team against RAYC now sailing Miss Fire, Panache, Teranaki & Phoenix. The starts became a little aggressive but the low scores in the 3 races for GHYC, almost all 1, 2 & 3, were to no avail due to boat breakdowns suffered by the RAYC boats which worked to their benefit in the end.

In the first race Gypsy(GHYC) achieved a good start, as did the other GHYC boats, after Sonata forced RAYC boats off the line. It was a screaming reach to the first mark, Gypsy rounded third, came hard on the wind and crew looked hard at the situation. Skipper and crew decided it was too much for the old girl and retired with resulting high scores for GHYC. Phoenix (RAYC) had runner issues and did not sail any race and Panache(RAYC) suffered the same in the second race of the day. Despite the GHYC performance ,RAYC earned average points for the 4 races missed due to breakdowns, which were based on their skipper's low Saturday scores.

After racing the cold and wet crews repaired straight to the Glandore Inn for beers, snacks and the usual post-mortems. At 1900ish everyone reconvened, showered & dry, up the hill in Casey's Bar for more refreshments and the prize giving run by the GHYC Vice Commodore/Sailing Secretary, John Wyles.

With a good crowd of GHYC members plus the Anglesey team the little bar was packed for the presentations. Daily race winner prizes were awarded to Sonata(GHYC), Aphrodite(GHYC) and War Baby(GHYC). There was a special presentation to RAYC's Anna who went for a swim from Teranaki.

The final result based on the grand total of each teams points (using the Low Point scoring system after applying SI Clause 17.5) for each team after 6 races was

RAYC - 67.9 - 1st place

GHYC - 98 - 2nd place

Kathleen Timoney presented the Celtic Challenge Trophy to RAYC's Ewan McEwan and then made a very



nice speech on behalf of Eamon, who was unfortunately away on business. In response Ewan expressed the hope that RAYC would be able to run as good a regatta next year.

Discussions on the date and format for return match next year at RAYC were well underway as everyone continued to enjoy themselves

During the evening GHYC also celebrated the 30th Anniversary

of the signing of the club's Articles of Association and the many founding members present were recognised.

Full details of the results can be found at

http://glandoreyc.com/Downloads/RacingResults/Celtic_Challenge_Results_2016.pdf

Feedback from the RAYC team who all got back in one piece despite being “completely ruined after three nights of drinking and merriment!” They love coming to Glandore because, in their words;

“You all made such an effort to welcome us all and we had the best weekend ever, full of laughter and fun, it was great to re-connect with people that I hadn't seen for a long time and to meet new



friends; we all agreed that your youngsters were all very impressive, they welcomed us and chatted away with a wonderful air of maturity so please pass on our sincere thanks for all that they did to look after us and welcome us onto the boats, Wow that Dragon sailing is fun! “

Pictures supplied by Kathleen Hayes & Mary J Casey