

There was a warm reception for the 43 crews at the Royal Selangor Yacht Club's welcoming party for the 21st Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta. Hosted by the State of Selangor, on Friday the 19th of November 2010, it saw the return of many old hands and a number of new faces.

Port Klang to Pangkor

Conditions on Saturday the 20th of November 2010



for the scheduled start at 1100 for Class 6 (Non-IRC Classic) were light, but with the tide scheduled to turn at 1117 the principal race officer, Jerry Rollin, was keen to get the fleet away, rather than delay the start to avoid the adverse current.

It was a struggle for all five entries to even cross the line. The lightweight *Musitari* had a considerable advantage while *El Oro** crossed side on . . . or perhaps stern first. *Sirius 1935* and *Coup de Soleil* were involved in a close encounter after which *Sirius 1935* spent an age completing a penalty turn.

The day hadn't started well for Simon Blundell, skipper of *El Oro*. The bow of the ship's inflatable punctured on an old wreck lying alongside the pontoon. But it still floated and was repaired en-route.

Gains and losses were made amongst the fleet exiting Port Klang but *El Oro*, with FH on board, managed to maintain momentum easing ahead of *Musitari* and the rest of the fleet. *Sirius 1935* sailed into a hole and again took an age to sail out. Shortly after 1300 a 6-knot breeze kicked in and *El Oro* leapt into life.

Meanwhile, back at the start the RO chose to make things easier for the remaining five classes by moving the line further down the channel. This got Class 5 (Non-IRC Cruising) away 35 minutes behind schedule, with the others following at 5 minute intervals.

All did not go smoothly during the Class 3 (IRC 3) start. *Babe*, *Australian Maid*, *Sailplane* and *Walawala* all approached the pin end on port tack. *Walawala* had an overlap to windward of *Sailplane* and continued to sail towards the pin where *Sailplane* was forced to bear away. *Walawala*, meanwhile, hit the mark (much to the consternation of the Malaysian Marine Police whose RIB was being used for this purpose) and did a penalty turn. *Sailplane*, in avoiding *Walawala*, hit *Australian Maid* damaging its spinnaker pole. The *Maid* had been unable to avoid *Sailplane* because *Babe*, sailing close to leeward, did not alter course and also made contact with the *Maid*. The protest saw *Babe* and *Walawala* penalised with *Babe* demoted from 1st to 3rd and *Walawala* 4th to 6th.

Back on *El Oro*, it's secret weapon — a 160 MacDiarmid** jib

— was paying dividends with the big ketch making 5.2 knots in the 7-knot breeze. The onboard Automated Identity System (AIS) revealed there were mixed fortunes on the course with the TP52, *Strewth*, making 8.2 knots whilst *Sirius 1935* was making barely 2 knots. It was not long before the Class 1 (IRC 1) and Class 2 (IRC 2) boats were overtaking, including *Jelik III* which had taken a more offshore course.

After sunset the breeze began to die and a long and somewhat frustrating session began. Fortunately *El Oro* still managed to maintain momentum while many parked up. Boats continued to pass in the night with Class 5 boats permitted to motor.

Storm clouds clung to the coast line while a light shower cooled *El Oro*.

Shortly after sunrise, *El Oro* again sprung into life as the breeze strengthened to 6-7 knots and, close-hauled, hit 5.8 knots. Over the radio *Sirius 1935* announced it was retiring, due to a medical emergency (the owner's son suffering severe toothache), and was proceeding directly to Pangkor.

By noon the wind had died and boat speed was down to 0.6 knots but, fortunately for the Classic Class, the cut-off was 28 hours compared with

26 hours for the other classes. Consequently, many of those still behind radioed in to announce their retreat. At this stage *El Oro* still had 7.2nm to go in three hours 10 minutes. Boat speed was down to 1.2 knots with the flood tide pushing it to leeward. But the breeze picked up and *El Oro* crossed the finish at 1445 to a round of applause by the RO and assistants . . . with just 15 minutes to spare.

It came as quite a surprise to those on *El Oro*, others in Class 6 and the

— continued overleaf

Raja Muda REGATTA

El Oro (right), a 75-foot cutter-ketch, heads northeast up the Malacca Strait towards Pangkor



Continued from previous page — RO that *Musitari* had beaten *El Oro* finishing at 0935 which resulted in a protest by *El Oro*. Suggestions that *Musitari* may have motored were not substantiated by the International Jury.

It was also a surprise that the new *Free Fire* took line honours in IRC 1, finishing ahead of both *Evolution Racing* and *Jelik III* but dropped to 3rd on handicap, honours going to *Evolution Racing*.

Baby Tonga, *Zuhrah*, *Kuku Ker Chu* and *Sapphire Star*

89nm leg, a somewhat disgruntled Neil Pryde of *Hi Fi* (4th) wondered why he'd even got out of bed!

The crews of *Baby Tonga* and *Sapphire Star* were more upbeat after their wins and partied on to the tunes of the Candy Band.

Pangkor to Penang

After a heavy overnight storm, it was a wet and drizzly morning that greeted crews, but by 0900 the skies began clearing. It was a close call exiting the marina with, at one stage just 2cm below the keel (despite being guided by a pilot who had been warned *El Oro* needed three metres).

There was precious little wind for the Classics, and their early start was abandoned after a major wind shift

of what little breeze there was. To avoid delay, the RO chose to use a virtual pin at 200 degrees for the next start. *Musitari*, *Eveline* and *Coup de Soleil* appeared to be well positioned whilst *El Oro* was making 0.2 knots backwards from the line and *Sirius 1935* was reverting to the bucket trick to haul its bow around. Soon, however, *El Oro* managed to find some zephyrs, making 1.5 knots, but with no evidence of the wind filling in. A triple goose wing with the spinnaker, main and mizzen helped maintain

momentum through eddies off the end of Pulau Pangkor.

Meanwhile the other classes scheduled to start at 1300 motored past following the RO in search of wind. It was not until an hour later that they finally got underway, having found a southwesterly which made for a

colourful downwind start on *El Oro*'s horizon. Most of the fleet appeared to be following the rhumbline with a few exceptions taking the inside track and others heading offshore.

Then the breeze strengthened to 10 knots when *El Oro* again sprang into life aided by what is known on board as its 'monkey' — a mizzen stay sail. Making 6 knots, *El Oro* was even closing on the boats ahead. The breeze still held in after the 1900 sunset and by 1930 it was time to change to the 160 jib again with boat speed picking up a further 10%. But it was not to last with boat speed dropping as the full moon broke through.

At 0100, *El Oro* was still some 35nm from the finish and if it was thought the first leg was slow the second was turning out to be even slower. In fact, over the next hour, *El Oro* went backwards a half mile before the anchor was dropped.

In something of an experiment, the 'monkey' was raised on the jib halyard and, having raised the anchor, *El Oro* was again underway, recouping the distance lost.

Progress remained slow until it was noted on the satnav that a storm was approaching from behind, bringing both *Coup de Soleil* and *Sirius 1935* back in contact. *El Oro* managed to outrun the storm making a healthy 8 knots before the breeze again died after sunrise.

By 0800, there was still 8nm to go to reach Penang and, because of repairs to Penang Bridge, the course had been extended 12nm to finish off the northwest corner of the island.

By 1030, there was still 12nm to go and still over 5 hours to the cut-off. Hopes remained high! In close proximity were *Simone* and *Cabaret 6*. *Musitari* was spotted making rapid headway, obviously under power, hugging the coast line.

Sadly, *El Oro* ran out of time with some 3nm still to go at the cut-off. However, it still won the day based on time at Gate 2. Meanwhile, *Musitari*, which declared it had motored after the first gate, finished last based on its time at that gate.

Again it had been a frustrating race with light winds and counter currents slowing the progress of even the IRC 1 boats.

Evolution Racing, *Baby Tonga* and *Kuku Ker Chu* repeated their 1st place finishes as did *Sapphire Star* in Cruising, the only one in its class to complete the course under sail. *Babe* earned the bullet in IRC 3.

A slow passage then followed to enter Penang Harbour from the north. Some of *Mat Salleh*'s crew were evacuated to organize the annual trishaw race. By the time a mooring had been found for *El Oro* at Tanjung City Marina, it was after 1900 and the welcoming party was winding up. A splendid Indian meal followed at the Sri Ananda Bahwan Restaurant shared with the crew of *Coup de Soleil* and *Sirius 1935*.

Penang Harbour

It was a case of *déjà vu* when the fleet arrived in the start area for the harbour races, the flags on the committee boats hanging limply. Split between two race areas, Jerry Rollin and John Ferguson shared RO duties. Ferguson, GM of RSYC was organizing the regatta for the last time before relocating to Penang to manage the new E&O Marina. He reminisced over some of the more memorable moments during past Raja Mudas, including one 44-hour stretch without sleep concluding with the organization of a prize-giving

party at the E&O and another watching the Rugby World Cup in Langkawi in 2003. He will be sorely missed.

The lack of zephyrs meant the AP flag was raised at 1155 but fortunately, unlike the preceding year, by 1430 the breeze filled in and Ferguson got the Classics away on a geometric course. First over the line was *Musitari* while *El Oro* languished well back amongst the Cruising fleet in the second start. It was a splendid recovery by *El Oro* at the finish, trailing *Musitari* by just 5 seconds. However, on the day it was the 100-year-old Bristol pilot cutter, *Eveline*, that took handicap honours.

Fortissimo 8 and *Baby Tonga* took the honours in Class 5 (Non-IRC Cruising) and IRC 2 respectively. *Virgo* was particularly unhappy about the lack of communication over the 1700 cut-off.

IRC 3 and IRC 4 respectively. Taking advantage of the breeze, Rollin set a second short race with *Hi Fi* and *Kuku Ker Chu* repeating their earlier victories

The hawker stall-style dining and flavours of Penang, and the excellent lion dance on pillars (see cover) at the prize-giving in the Khoo clan house, again made for a splendid evening despite the drizzle.

Penang to Langkawi

It was a bright morning as the fleet completed final preparations at the Tanjung City Marina for the final passage race to Langkawi. But like many other marinas, the pontoons at Tanjung City Marina were looking somewhat the worse for wear. One victim was *Vega****, which had offered its services to accompany the fleets . . . and had the scars to prove it.

The RO was able to send the Classics off early, taking

handicap honours.

Conditions appeared ideal for *Intrigue* and *Yasooda* with elapsed times comparable to those in IRC 1, but neither was good enough on handicap to topple *Baby Tonga* in IRC 2.

Zuhrah took line honours in IRC 3 with *Australian Maid* 2nd. But *Koull Baby* did best on handicap to lead the field. Although *Kuku Ker Chu* took line honours, it was *Mat Salleh* that prevailed in IRC 4 on corrected. It was *Rascal's* time to shine winning line and handicap honours, and relegating *Sapphire Star* to 2nd in Class 5.

El Oro, with owner Tim Wilson onboard, took line honours but for the second day it was *Eveline* that won corrected in Classic.

Bass Harbour, Langkawi

The 10-knot northwesterly meant racing got underway on schedule in Bass Harbour. A fish trap proved the downfall of *Evolution Racing*, giving *Hi Fi* the chance to close the gap. In the final race, *Strewh* took advantage of a recall of the rest of the IRC 1 fleet and tied with *Free Fire* for 3rd. *Hi Fi* got

the jump on *Evolution Racing* and, whilst the latter clawed its way back to 2nd place to tie the series with *Hi Fi*, it was *Hi Fi* that retained its title and the Raja Muda Cup with its win in the last race.

In IRC 2, having won both harbour races in Langkawi, *Baby Tonga* made it six bullets in a row to make it a hatrick

of wins for the Jugra Cup. *Shahtoosh* was 2nd.

In IRC 3, *Babe's* regatta seemed fated from the start. It got no better in the penultimate race, snaring the mooring line of the windward mark. It hung on for 3rd place in the series but proved no match for the Ker 11.3. *Koull Baby*. David Ross' Ker 32, *Kuku Ker Chu*, also excelled with six out of seven bullets to take the IRC 4 series over *Piccolo* and *Mata Hari*.

Sapphire Star added a 4th win to its tally to clinch Class 5 (Non-IRC Cruising) ahead of *Rascal* and *Jenzminc VI*. *El Oro*, despite finishing 2nd behind *Sirius 1935* in the final race, took gold in the series. *Eveline* was 3rd. Incidentally, 'el oro' means 'the gold' in Spanish!

The prize-giving at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club brought the 21st Raja Muda Regatta to a close.

* *El Oro* built 1972, launched in 1975, the 75' cutter-ketch is the sistership of *Kriter*, which was designed and built to compete in the 1973 Whitbread Round the World Race, now known as the Volvo Race. It finished 3rd. *Kriter* was designed by Georges Auzepy-Brenneur and built by Nautic Saintonge Yard, Royan, France

** **MacDiarmid Sails** Ian MacDiarmid has been designing and making sails for the past 34 years. He is recognised for his part in developing the asymmetrical spinnaker

*** *Vega* built by Ole & Johann Nerhus in Norway some time before 1893 as a deep-sea carrier certified for Arctic waters. Acquired by Alfred Olsson, after modifications and rebuilding, it was re-launched as the *Vega of Bergkvara*. Discovered by Captain Shane Granger, it has been lovingly restored. Today *Vega* is involved in humanitarian projects

