

From the latest 40-foot Ker design, *Kuku Ker Chu*, to the 100-year old Bristol Pilot Cutter, *Eveline*, the 22nd Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta attracted a myriad of craft, whose crews took on what many consider the most challenging regatta in the region.

Organised by the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC)\*, the event, first held in 1990, was staged between the 18th and 26th of November 2011. Starting from Port Kang, Malaysia, it comprised three passage races along the west coast of Malaysia taking the fleet from Port Klang to Pangkor, Pangkor to Penang and Penang to Langkawi. If that wasn't a sufficient test of seamanship, the regatta included harbour racing in both Penang and Langkawi. This challenging yet popular format, with some adjustments and additions, has been in effect since 1992.



Not only challenging for the participants, the 'Raja Muda' is similarly challenging for the organizers. Malcolm Elliott (above) has stepped into the shoes of former regatta director, John Ferguson, although Ferguson has retained some involvement as the current manager of marina operations at Straits Quay\*\* where the fleet laid over in Penang. As Elliott explains, the regatta is away from its home port for the duration of racing, so it has to be entirely self-sufficient. The transport of participants' luggage, the on-the-water race management, stopovers and security all have to be addressed. He gives much praise to the many supporters including Tourism Malaysia, the Selangor State and the Royal Malaysian Marine Police.

A number of changes and new initiatives were introduced for 2011. The stop-over in Pangkor

returned to the Sea View Resort after the experiment last year with the new Pangkor Marina Island venue, where the shallow access proved challenging. The berthing in Penang moved from the rundown Tanjung City Marina to the newly constructed Eastern & Oriental (E&O) marina, the Straits Quay. The facilities were a considerable improvement but surprisingly several boats again found themselves stranded at low tide. The venue is also some way from the city centre where the historical aspects of Penang add considerably to the atmosphere of the stopover.



Proceedings got underway with a skippers' briefing and opening party at the RSYC where various dignitaries and RSYC commodore, Dato' Alex Nah, welcomed participants. In a moving moment, RSYC committee member, K Selvam, took the opportunity to drop down on one knee and propose to the lovely Veena, who accepted without hesitation.



Straits Quay Marina, Penang (above) and rickshaw racing (below)

Racing was scheduled to start at 1100 for the Cruising Class but, as in past years, conditions were light so a short postponement occurred

until a five-knot breeze developed. This gave *Musitari*, having experienced engine problems, at least the opportunity to reach the line in time for the start.

First over the line was *Kay Sira*, whilst *Eveline*, which somewhat surprisingly was attempting to fly its kite, was still heading backwards! Having finally crossed the line, the old Shanghai-built cutter then criss-crossed the channel, the crew seemingly under the influence of their new sponsor's 'Old

Pulteney' single malt scotch whiskey, something



they later assured us was not the case . . . well not all of them.

With the usual concerns over classifications and having consulted the participants, the principal race officer, Jerry Rollin, introduced an additional informal category combining IRC Classes 1, 3 and 4.

The rest of the fleets got away without incident apart from one boat which, despite the skipper's appeal to the RO, was over by a country mile.

*Australian Maid* had also experienced engine problems prior to departure from the RSYC but managed to effect repairs and just reached the start line within the prescribed 30-minute time limit.

The breeze filled to 11 knots and the fleet made good progress along the coast until the sea-breeze died and the land-breeze filled in. *Hi Fi* had done well but strayed too far out and suffered, allowing the trailing fleet, which had stayed inshore, to significantly close the gap. *Hi Fi* found itself in the unusual position of 7th, and last in Class 1, giving it a disadvantage considering there were to be no dropped results.

*Katsu* strayed too far inshore and found itself parked on a sand spit and finished 3rd in Class 3. New entrant in the Asian circuit was the impressive *Swan 76, Silandra V*, which showed its pedigree with 2nd place on handicap in Class 2.

*EFG Bank Mandrake* in Class 1, Team Strongbow The Goat from Australia on the chartered *Baby Tonga* in Class 2, *Windsikher* in Class 3, *Mat Salleh* Class 4, *Fortissimo 8* in Class 5 and, remarkably, *Eveline* in Class 6, the latter with an elapsed time of 25:51:35, all took handicap honours.

Concerns over the depth of water at the entrance to Pangkor Marina Island and last year's function meant the fleet returned to the rustic island setting of the Sea View Hotel & Holiday Resort and home of several pairs of greater hornbills.

Most of the boats anchored off the beach in front of the resort where the awards party was held with an enjoyable buffet, washed down with free-flow Tiger and Strongbow and with fire dancers to entertain.

Once again the Club Cruising fleet was scheduled to start first at noon on the passage race from Pangkor to Penang. However, after an earlier tropical rainstorm and having parked the police launch (acting as committee boat) in its designated position, there was zero wind. *Eveline* reported that further out they had found a 3 to 5-knot breeze so the RO decided to relocate their start and return to the original position for the remaining starts. However, with conditions not improving, the RO announced that there would be a postponement for all and headed up the course in search of wind.

After motoring for around one hour there were expressions of concern over fuel supplies even though all boats were required,



under sailing instruction 26e, to carry sufficient fuel for 30nm. The RO found himself in a quandary whether to allow boats to go back to refuel if they needed to, to continue racing, provide a supply of fuel at the finish line or potentially abandon racing for the day. Fortunately this was easily resolved — a breeze filled in and racing got underway.

The water was too deep to lay an anchor for the pin so the police RIB was used. But the starting line then proved to be a 'moving target', *Eveline* just not making it within its one-hour time limit.

# RAJA MUDA REGATTA



*Windsikher* at the pin (top) and entering port (above)

Once the fleet got moving it was, for most, an enjoyable sail, the *J/92S, NiJinski*, in particular relishing the reaching conditions before the breeze swung further round on the nose but good enough to take handicap honours in Class 4. Once again, *Hi Fi* streaked ahead to take line and handicap honours in Class 1. With the finish at the southern end of Penang, compared with last year's northern finish, it further shortened the race by some 12nm to just 50nm, but still saw many vessels foundering for an hour or two. Unlike last year, it did, however, mean that all arrived well in time for the afternoon's activities. *Intrigue*, after experiencing generator problems on the voyage to Pangkor, played no further part in the regatta.

*Hi Fi*, Team Strongbow The Goat, *Foxy Lady 5, NiJinsky, Rascal* and *Kay Sira* took their respective honours in Classes 1-6 respectively.

The media were provided with transport onboard the 120-year-old *Vega*\*\*\*, which proved a comfortable and enjoyable ride with splendid catering. It was particularly interesting arriving as dawn broke over Penang (pictured above) with the sky lightening up through the rigging and the island's profile appearing much as it would have been observed by the sailors of yesteryear (ignoring the skyscrapers!).

The berthing in Penang was moved from the Tanjung City Marina to the Straits Quay, a new retail marina and integral part of the Seri Tanjung Pinang property development by the E&O Group. Here former Royal Selangor

— continued overleaf

*Continued from previous page* — Yacht Club's general manager, John Ferguson, played host. A good move, considering the dilapidated pontoons at Tanjung City Marina.

Plans for the island reclamations in the harbour, outlined in FH Number 246, are still on the drawing board and, according to Ferguson, will include a more extensive marina.

That afternoon the traditional tricycle race that previously saw the organizers commandeer a number of local tricycles from their operators, was replaced by races on four specially-designed rickshaws. The rickshaws were sponsored by a number of local organizations. The races proved equally entertaining and, although there were many shenanigans going on between competitors, there was considerably less damage than in past years. This would normally have involved payouts to appease the tricycle owners for the damage incurred. The crew of *Silandra V* in particular got into the spirit of the event, their passenger blowing a trumpet whilst racing (see previous pages). And a special race was held to recognize the coincidence that it was competed for by a Mr Rick Shaw!

The new venue, however, is some way from the UNESCO World Heritage preserved historical areas of Penang and, unless staying downtown, it meant making a special trip to enjoy the real atmosphere of George Town.



Harbour racing in Penang during the Raja Muda is notorious for light conditions and, again, it lived up to its reputation. The start was delayed until 1315 when a light southeasterly sprang up but struggled to maintain 5 knots. The race for Class 1 and Multihulls, the latter which joined in Penang, were both shortened. Meanwhile one would not wish to be a birthday boy on one of the Malaysian Armed Forces boats as one unlucky crew member found himself strung up by his wrists and ankles to the spinnaker pole!

With the breeze building and hitting 13 knots, a second race got underway which again saw *Hi Fi* excel. Unfortunately David Ross's new *Kuku Ker Chu*, failed to live up to expectations with the crew going through a steep learning curve. The Ker 40 was well placed on the first upwind leg but progress was slowed when the spinnaker was torn during a hatch hoist. Repacked into the wrong bag it was then briefly re-hoisted allowing even Ross's former Ker 32, *Kuku Ker Chu*, now *Foxy Lady 5*, to sail through. A further kite rip left Ross unamused . . .



Returning to base, the two navy boats *Zuhai* and *Utarid* ran aground within the marina, along with *Hi Fi*.

That evening the participants enjoyed the traditional awards party at the Khoo Kongsi (the Khoo clan house, above) where the lion and ethnic (top) dancing lived up to expectations along with the splendid Penang hawker-style catering.

The wind next morning was late arriving so, once again, the RO upped sticks and headed off in the direction of Langkawi until sufficient breeze developed to get the fleet away. Unfortunately, at this stage an incident between *Hi Fi* and *NiJinsky* saw *Hi Fi* retire without its bowsprit, and *NiJinsky* damaging its port-side gunwale.

Progress continued slowly for the rest of the fleet until a northeasterly clicked in resulting in a close reach for most in 20-25 knots.



*Kuku Ker Chu* finally came into its own in Class 1 finishing the 47nm passage in an elapsed time of 5:41:12. *Australian Maid* and *Foxy Lady 5* took the handicap honours in Classes 2 and 3 respectively while *Mat Salleh* came out on top in Class 4.

*Rascal* collected the honours in Class 5 whilst students from the Langkawi Sailing School on *Kay Sira* captured honours in Class 6. In Class 7 Multihulls, *Fantasia II* claimed the honours finishing just two minutes ahead of *Miss Saigon* on elapsed time.

After arriving in Langkawi, Classes 2, 5, 6 and 7 were back on the water for an afternoon race in Bass Harbour, followed next day by further harbour races comprising two windward/leeward races for the racing classes and a passage race for the rest.

Two bullets saw *Mandrake* collecting The Raja Muda Cup in Class 1. The Cassidy 55, *Australian Maid*, finished strongly to win Class 2 Premier Cruising and the Jugra Challenge Cup.

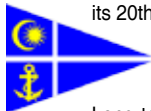
The Sydney 40, *Windsikher*, finished with two bullets to see Sareb Jeet Singh collect the Dato' Abdul Aziz Ismail Challenge Trophy in Class 3, whilst Neil Ankorn's Farr 1104, *Mat Salleh*, picked-up the RSYC Cruising Challenge Trophy in Class 4.

With victory on the final day, *Rascal* took the Class 5 overall honours whilst *Kay Sira* in Class 6 collected the Eveline Trophy. Rolf Heemskerck's chartered Stealth 12.6, *Sidewinder*, finished strongly with two bullets to win overall in Multihulls.

Wrapping up the regatta principal race officer, Jerry Rollin, commented: "It's been good fun and good sailing. We've got lucky and seen new locations, tried some things differently yet retained the old atmosphere."

Despite a number of boats dropping out at the last minute, the 31 boats that left Port Klang were joined by three multihulls along the way. With many old timers returning, including Australian John Wardill for the 19th time, there were numerous new entries either participating for the first time or entering new boats. The organisers, of course, are keen to attract more.

Overall the 22nd Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta lived up to and, for many, exceeded expectations. The proven formula combining passage and harbour races, the mixed conditions requiring considerable tactical skills — and indeed luck — make this regatta a real test of seamanship. Hopefully, in due course, more participants will respond and will take-up the challenge. The organisers deserve nothing less!



\* Royal Selangor Yacht Club First registered as Port Sweetenham Yacht Club in 1969. The club's name was changed to Selangor Yacht Club in 1972. On its 20th anniversary in March 1989, it was given approval to call itself Royal Selangor Yacht Club by his Royal Highness the Sultan of Selangor. A fire in 1992 destroyed the club house which was rebuilt in 1996. Their more than 1,000 members own some 30 keelboats and 60 powerboats. Long-term plans include a possible relocation to a new marina.

\*\* Straits Quay Opened in 2011, Straits Quay is a focal point amid the E&O's property development, the marina provides 40 berths from 10m to 25m in length. The approach channel and marina basin were dredged to a depth of 3m below chart datum. Pre-booking is recommended. marina@straitsquay.com

\*\*\* *Vega* Built in 1891-92 by Ola H Nerhus at the Nerhuson shipyard in Ølve, Norway. Certified for Arctic waters this 'Hardanger jacht' was built as a deep-sea, heavy load carrier involved primarily in the Baltic trade. Today it carries different cargoes. Cargoes of hope, including medical and educational equipment to remote islands of East Timor and isolated island communities of eastern Indonesia. This year's cargo included 50 kits for midwives. *Vega* relies on volunteer crew and private and corporate sponsorship. www.sailvega.com

