

The 23rd Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta, organised by the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC) and held from 16th to 24th of November 2012, as always provided challenging offshore and inshore yacht racing.

First held in 1990, its current format comprises three overnight passage races in Malaysian waters from Port Klang to Pangkor (89nm), Pangkor to Penang (63nm) and Penang to Langkawi (53nm). The inclusion of harbour racing in Penang

Raja Muda REGATTA



and Langkawi adds up to a real test of seamanship of skippers and crews.

This year there was 35 participating boats, with the sponsors including Tourism Malaysia and Tourism Selangor along with a number of other organisations.

The organisers also face a challenge in decamping from the RSYC for a week, taking with them all essential supplies to organise the event, and arranging for luggage to be transported from place to place.

Unfortunately, it was not all plain sailing this year. The disappearance of the Tiger beer supplier early on in the Penang prizegiving, along with his kegs, meant there were a number of thirsty sailors, until alternative supplies were drafted in. Conditions also proved challenging in the first two

passage legs with patience indeed a virtue. "One of the longest legs I've ever experienced," said *NiJinsky's* skipper, Jeff Harris, having crossed the line after more than 22 hours on the Pangkor to Penang leg. Others weren't so lucky, missing the cut-off!

The fleet was somewhat reduced with economic conditions still impacting. No large racing class boats participated other than Geoff Hill's Smith 72, *Antipodes*, which found itself in Premier Cruising. Hong Kong-owned boats were down to just three: *Antipodes*, *EFG Bank Mandrake* and William Lo's Hanse 545, *No Name*.

Perhaps a sign of the times, the 40-footers were out in force with a highly competitive cluster of six boats: the Beneteau First 44.7, *Ichi Ban*, the Mills King 40, *Foxy Lady VI*, the Ker 40, *Kuku Ker Chu*, the Navy's dk47, *Utariid*, the Mills 40, *Mandrake* and Ben Copley's new RP 45, *Katsu*.

For many, the Raja Muda is a feeder race to the Phuket King's Cup. But, as Brian Pozzey on *Relapse*, says: "It stands unique as an

event in its own right," a view point with which FH concurs. "One of the most tactical races, where local knowledge of currents and tides provides a major advantage." he added.

Congregating at the RSYC for the opening function, the participants were welcomed by the commodore, Tan It Beng, with each skipper presented with a souvenir and entertained by belly dancing maidens.

Demonstrating that in the Raja Muda Regatta one can expect the unexpected, during the party a floating island of palm trees crashed into the pontoons but fortunately *Baby Tonga* and others remained unscathed!

Security and support vessels were this year provided by Maritim Malaysia and, although doing a good job, the past incumbents — the Marine Police — were missed. The committee boat, a 20m Carmarc-designed aluminium water jet lifeboat, proved versatile but, as the Race Director

Malcolm Elliot warned, the rubber tyre surrounding it was designed for oil rigs, not yachts sailing too close!

Port Klang to Pangkor Although initially dry, a squall came through immediately preceding the 1100 start for the Non-IRC Cruising Classes with first off Class 6, the six classics, considered to be over 30 years of age or design, including the venerable Bristol Pilot Cutter, *Eveline*.



Five minutes later an assortment of yachts in Class 5, including the Beneteau 350, *Aeolus XC*, and the Oyster 55, *Chantique*, followed in the second Non-IRC Cruising Class.

Two hours later it was the turn of the IRC boats with first off the four in IRC Class 4 including the J/92S, *NiJinsky*, and the Swan 42, *Sea Bass* (ex-*La Samudra*)



Harbour racing (top), *Kuku Ker Chu* (below) and *Bill Lo's No Name* (inset)

competing for the RSYC Challenge Cup.

Five Class 2 entries competing in Premier Cruising for the Jugra Cup followed, including the Beneteau First 53f5, *Baby Tonga*, the Cassidy 55, *Australian Maid*, team Sailing Adventures on *Relapse*, a Young 50, the Hanse 545, *No Name*, and *Antipodes*.

Last to set sail were the six IRC Class 1 yachts competing for the Raja Muda Cup, all expecting to be among the first across the finish line. It was not to be.

Although it had brightened up, winds remained light but reasonable progress was made by the later starters. Conditions were very patchy with some finding wind, others not. Onboard *Baby Tonga*, chartered by Dominic Liddell as part of his extended

50th birthday celebrations, were his friends and crew primarily from the usual entry *Mat Salleh*, all under the watchful eye of sailing legend Fraser Johnston.

Ahead, *Mandrake*, *Ichi Ban*, *Antipodes* all appeared to be parked before tacking right. On reaching the area, a demonstrative group of fishermen warned of their nets ahead. Unfortunately, by then *Baby Tonga* had lost much of its momentum but eventually managed to take evasive action, losing 25+ minutes in so doing. Others, including *Kuku Ker Chu*, later had no warnings with entanglement putting pay to any victory expectations.

Conditions remained patchy. Both *Australian Maid* and *Antipodes* from Class 2 were long gone but ahead *Foxy Lady VI* was still visible. On the horizon a dark cloud loomed; *Foxy Lady VI* appeared to be heading into it, others opted to skirt it.

Onboard *Baby Tonga*, anticipating the worst, the No.3 jib was prepared but, despite showers, a reasonable breeze held. Inconsistent conditions overnight meant alternating sails from the drifter to the No.1 but always mindful of plugging in the No.3 when appropriate. Constant trimming of both the main and jib meant reasonable progress was made. At dawn, the crew were able to anticipate breakfast at the Sea View Hotel & Holiday Resort instead of the usual lunch they would normally expect had they been sailing *Mat Salleh*! And so it was that the proprietor of the resort extended a warm welcome to old friends, offering a new experimental dish of seafood with Italian noodles (you guessed it . . . spaghetti!).

On board the Naud 40, *Lady Bubbly*, with just three onboard they were forced to drop the hook for the first of three times after two hours but, with most others only making gates 3 and 1, they eventually, when all scores were finally tallied, took the honours without the use of their iron maiden.

A downpour failed to interrupt the evening's celebrations where *Ichi Ban*, *Antipodes*, *NiJinsky* and *Virgo* also took their respective Class honours.

Pangkor to Penang It was reasonably bright with just enough of a light breeze to get racing underway on schedule.

Two cats, *Fantasia II*, which impressed last year, and the flash-looking *Mojo*, opted to join in Pangkor instead of Penang. Both ultimately retired and motored when conditions failed to improve.

Despite some initial misgivings, *Baby Tonga* had a great start to lead *Antipodes*, *Australian Maid* and *Relapse* across the start-line. Ultimately those that chose to stay inshore, found themselves fighting eddies. Many in the fleet parked up and dropped their hooks whilst others found themselves aground or ended up going backwards. Those that risked the outer currents benefitted.



It proved a long and frustrating period of 4-5 hours for most before a light breeze picked up. On *Baby Tonga* this resulted in the decision to head out to sea and, hopefully, benefit from the currents in the Malacca Straits before they again turned.

Meanwhile, *Australian Maid* had again headed out early, picked up a sea breeze, heeled over and was off again over the horizon. As night fell the breeze held in and developed, helping *Baby Tonga* make good progress averaging for a while 5 knots. It was subsequently determined to head back towards the shallows before the current turned.

As the sky lightened during the initial stages of dawn, sufficient wind just helped carry *Baby Tonga* over the line before 0600.

With the Tanjung City Marina now in a state of disrepair, the fleet was once again accommodated at Eastern & Oriental's Straits Quay where former RSYC GM and Raja Muda organiser, John Ferguson, now overseas marine activities.

Festivities again got underway that afternoon with the 2nd annual rickshaw race replacing the old tricycle race, where so much damage was caused



to bikes and limbs. In the final, *Baby Tonga* gave Australian Maid a run for its money before the latter triumphed to claim the rickshaw honours and a bottle of Mount Gay rum.

Penang Harbour Racing It appeared as if it would be the same old story of little or no zephyrs for the Penang Harbour Races . . . and so it was for at least the first two hours. However, a breeze finally filled in allowing the two race officers to get their respective fleets away. In the case of the Cruising boats on one geometric course around the harbour, and the others in IRC 1, 4 and Class 7 (Multihull) on two windward/leewards. There were some close calls at the start of IRC 1 with *Foxy Lady VI* in the thick of it. — continued overleaf



Continued from previous page — Over on the other start *Relapse* successfully sort redress against the RO having become entangled with a loop in the pin end mooring line but by the time they were free the competition were long gone.



The cultural experience of the prizegiving function normally held at the Khoo Kongsi (Khoo clan house) was greatly missed replaced by the backdrop of the Straits Quay shopping mall. The Penang hawker stalls were still as enticing, offering an array of Malaysian flavours to savour. The disappearance of the Tiger beer supplier resulted for some in an early switch to Mount Gay but the beer supply was reconnected and even offered more generously without the need for beer coupons. Meanwhile school dance and martial arts troupes entertained.



Awards were presented for the Pangkor to Penang leg where the light-handed *Ichi Ban*, with just six up, again took IRC Class 1 despite its bowman having done a runner after the first race.

Australian Maid got the better of *Antipodes* on corrected time in Class 2, whilst *Sea Bass* took the honours in Class 4. *Fortissimo 8* was initially awarded victory in Class 5 but, having motored part of the way, *Rascal* was subsequently elevated to the honour. The Countess 37, *Sidiqi*, took Class 6 honours.

In the harbour races, *Lady Bubbly* claimed the Class 6 award whilst *Fortissimo 8* took Class 5.

In IRC Class 4, *NiJinsky* in Race 1 and *Skybird* in Race 2 claimed the honours. A particularly close finish separated by just 3 seconds

saw *Katsu* take line honours from *Kuku Ker Chu* in IRC Class 1 but both lost out on handicap to *Ichi Ban* which added two bullets for the day.

In the multihulls, last year's champion, Rolf Heemskerk, chartering the new *Stealth 11.8*, *Hurricane*, took line honours whilst Henry Kaye continued to struggle with his *Sea Cart 26*, *Sweet Chariot*, bringing up the rear.

Penang to Langkawi It was picture postcard conditions on Thursday, the 22nd of November 2012, as the fleet left Straits Quay. But where was the wind? Now out on the water with no reason to hang around Penang, the RO, Jerry Rollin, upped sticks and headed off towards Langkawi in search of the elusive zephyrs with the fleet motoring behind. Nearly 10nm up the track, a 6-8 knot northwesterly was encountered and by 1400 racing was back underway.



Conditions continued to vary throughout the passage with patches, big wind shifts, squalls and currents all combining to challenge the skippers and tacticians. In the early hours a more consistent breeze set in, aiding the tail-enders.

Despite its DSQ in the 2nd leg for failing to turn off its engine immediately before its start, *Eveline* rallied and, despite taking over 14 hours, bounced back with handicap honours in Class 6.

Honours again went to *Ichi Ban*, *Australian Maid*, *Skybird*, *Rascal* and *Mojo* in their respective classes.

Langkawi Harbour Races Not for the faint hearted, Premier Cruising, Classes 5, 6 and 7 were back on the water by 1300 on Friday for the start of the Langkawi Harbour races. Finishing with a win gave *Australian Maid* a 1-point advantage over *Antipodes* going into the final day. Nick Smith's Ericson 38, *Free Wind*, claimed the honours to earn its first bullet of the series in Class 5 whilst in Class 6 *Eveline* added a second bullet to its tally.

The big guns joined the fray the next morning but once again conditions failed to live up to expectations, with drizzle and fluky winds continuing to add to the challenges of this year's Raja Muda.

Classes 5, 6 and Premier Cruising again headed off around Bass Harbour, after which a significant wind shift disrupted the start of the IRC Classes. When they finally got away, they were soon lost from view when the heavens opened. Enough was enough for the RO who then called a halt to any further racing.

Celebrations continued that evening at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club with *Australian Maid* collecting the Jugra Cup in Premier Cruising, *Sea Bass* returned to winning ways to secure the RSYC Challenge Cup in IRC Class 4, while *Rascal*, despite a 4th place finish, hung on to win Cruising Class 5. A final bullet for *Lady Bubbly* in Class 6 gave them the Eveline Trophy while *Mojo* got its magic working to earn another bullet and take the multihull series. With five bullets out of six races in IRC Class 1 it was David Fuller and crew of *Ichi Ban* that collected the Raja Muda Cup.

Everyone who participated will take away memories, highs and lows, of this the 23rd Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta. Many will be back to take on the elements and challenges that this unique event throws before them.

