

As always, there was much anticipation as crews assembled at the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC) for the skippers' briefing and welcoming party of the 28th Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta.

Held from the 18th to the 25th of November 2017, this unique event involves three passage races along the west coast of peninsular Malaysia, with overnight stops in Pulau Pangkor, Penang and Langkawi. Since variety is the spice of life, the regatta also includes inshores in both Penang and Langkawi. Local knowledge helps but, more importantly, the event is a test of seamanship and a test of how to deal with challenging conditions.

The organisers, under the chairmanship of RSYC commodore, Jeff Harris, laid on an enjoyable opening function with superb Malay cuisine, traditional dancing and also belly-dancers noticeably younger than previous years!

The event originated in 1990 with the support of the event's patron and founder member, the Raja Muda of Selangor, then Crown Prince of the State of Selangor Darul Ehsan, who is now the Sultan and Ruler of the State, with the Raja Muda title having passed to his son. Meanwhile the Sultan maintains a keen interest in the event, which is supported by the state of Selangor.

Attending the opening function were Dato Seri Nazri Aziz, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Elizabeth Wong, State Executive Councillor for Tourism, Environment, Green Technology and Consumer Affairs.

Once again, the event was supported by the Royal Malaysian Police with SP Tharama participating for his 25th time in escorting the fleet, however safety was boosted with the addition of Yellow Brick trackers for the passage races.

#### **Saturday** 18th November 2017 — Port Klang to Pangkor

It was bright but slightly hazy, with partial cloud cover, when the fleet assembled in the start area where principal race officer, Jerry Rollin, sounded the warning signal on schedule at 1255, with 10-minute intervals between each start.

First off at 1300 was Class 6, Classic Cruising, comprising five boats including Jeremy Camp's Maxi Mixer, *Old Pulteney Cabaret 6*, the Royal Malaysian Armed Forces Contessa 320D, *Marikh*, Adale Adham's Oyster 55, *Chantique*, and Simpson Marine's Ericson 38, *Francis*.

Another founding father, Dato Johan Ariff, provided his Swan 46, *La Samudra 2*, to Dominic Liddell who, together with friends, sailed in memory of Faye Khoo, a strong supporter of the regatta over the years. She tragically passed away earlier in the year.

Noticeably absent was the Bristol cutter, *Eveline*, although some of its illustrious crew joined other entrants.

Class 5, the Cruising fleet and the biggest of all with nine boats, was next away at 1310. Bob and Judy Howison's globe-trotting Elan Impression 434, *Kinabalu*, with friends on board from the United States,

Daniel Pang's Hanse 400, *Mystic River*, led the charge over the line along with Tristram Denyer's Dufour 350, *Iseulta\**, from Australia. Regular returnees in the class were *Lady Bubbly*, *VG Offshore*, Yasuto Fuda's *Fortissimo X*, Ken Yap's *Millennium 2*, Arne Hayn's Dehler 34, *Flameoff Delite*, and Dato Alex Nah's Hunter 49, *Virgo*.

Surprisingly, several of the boats were short-handed so FH again had the pleasure of joining Chris Mitchell on his Adams Naut 40, *Lady Bubbly*, for two of the passage races.

Mitchell held *Lady Bubbly* back to avoid the melee on the front line, instead leading the second wave including the

Yamaha 31, *Fortissimo X*, the Dehler 38, *VG Offshore*, and the Hunter 326, *Millennium 2*.

It did not take long to overtake the back marker in Class 6, *Francis*, before *Lady Bubbly* was overhauled by the Class 2 Premier Cruising fleet, including

Geoff Hill's Smith Custom Santacruz 73, *Antipodes*, followed by *Starlight* and then by the Class 1 (IRC 0 and 1) boats, including the Reichel-Pugh 66, *Alive*, Sarab Singh's Welbourn 52, *Windsikher II* and the Sydney GTS 43, *Otonomous Mandrake III*, with Fred Kinmonth on the helm.

Fortunately, the cloud cover gave some protection from the sun and the 7 to 8-knot breeze was somewhat better than the forecast 3 knots... gusting 4.

Unlike last year when *VG Offshore* led *Lady Bubbly* toward Pangkor, there was a reversal of roles with *Lady Bubbly* this year extending its lead. The sea breeze held, building to 13 knots, but it was not to last. Having initially headed inshore, *Lady Bubbly* was obliged to gybe out to avoid a line of fishing nets.

Less spectacular than in past years, around 1900 the sun slipped below the horizon and the crew settled in for the night sail.

With *Kinabalu* having initially opened up a considerable lead over *Lady Bubbly*, it was surprising to find ourselves side by side in the dark. Unfortunately, in the process of reverting to the jib, the kite fouled on a stay which took sometime to clear allowing *Kinabalu* to move ahead only to be hauled in again.

As dawn arrived, the breeze eased considerably with 'three eggs' briefly appearing on the instrumentation. However the current helped *Lady Bubbly* maintain some momentum, crossing the finish line at 07:31:15 on Sunday morning in 2nd place behind *Mystic River* that finished at 06:43:03. It took a further 17 minutes after *Lady Bubbly's* finish for *Kinabalu* to cross the line

giving *Lady Bubbly* victory on handicap. Out of the nine boats in the class, only *Fortissimo X* still managed to finish leaving the rest of the fleet wallowing on the race course, before reverting to engines, their results being taken at Gate 2 and, in the case of *Virgo*, Gate 1.

In Class 6, *La Samudra 2* finished at 04:54:45 to take line and handicap honours.

In the six-boat Class 4, the First 44.7, *Fujin* (ex-*Ichi Ban*) chartered by David Fuller with 1984 Olympian Jamie Wilmot, onboard, likewise took line and handicap honours ahead of regatta chairman, Jeff Harris, on the chartered J-130 *Jing Jing*.

In Class 2, Premier IRC Cruising, *Antipodes* took line honours at 00:44:40 losing out to Andrew Cocks' Simonis Voogd 56, *Starlight*, with the Royal Malaysian Armed Forces dk 56, *Zuhal*, 3rd.

Richard Barnhurst's Beneteau First 45, *FastTrack*, retired with a damaged main and, while still at sea, dispatched crew on to a fishing boat who then, on reaching shore, headed to Langkawi to collect a replacement and return to Pangkor in time for the next start on Monday.

— continued overleaf

# RAJA MUDA REGATTA

*Lady Bubbly* nails the start in Pangkor (main picture)



*Continued from previous page* — In Class 1, *Alive* was first home at 23:19:06 on Saturday evening. However, with *Windsikher II* likewise beating the midnight chimes, finishing only 20 minutes behind, handicap honours went to the latter. Gordon Ketelbey’s Farr 40, *Ramrod*, and *Mandrake III* finished 2nd and 3rd on handicap with just four minutes separating the two crossing the line.

A relaxing day was spent on Pangkor before the evening’s traditional celebrations got underway at at the Sea View Resort. Whilst not the most salubrious of venues, it has its own unique charm, and is an integral part of the Raja Muda Regatta. Surprisingly the karaoke did not seem as popular this year compared with last, when Kinmonth stole the show.

**Monday** 20th November 2017 — *Pangkor to Penang*

The afternoon start meant that crews could enjoy a relatively relaxed morning, although baggage did have to be loaded on to the luggage barge by 0900 for conveyance on to Penang or otherwise add unnecessary weight to competing boats. It was also not so relaxing for the *FastTrack* team whose adventures with the delivery of their spare mainsail continued when their taxi broke down.

It was, however, another magnificent day when the fleet assembled around the Malaysian Marine Police craft acting as the committee vessel, in anticipation of the 1255 warning signal.



It was an exciting start in Class 5 in the 10-knot breeze with *Lady Bubbly* leading *VG Offshore* and *Mystic River*. *Delite* was alongside but, with sufficient space and speed, *Lady Bubbly* nailed the line. The majority of the boats headed offshore whilst *Lady Bubbly* went more central. The Class 1 fleet tended to hug the shore line out of the current while *Antipodes* in Class 2 likewise headed out to sea in search of breeze.

There was a minor drama on *Lady Bubbly*

after repositioning the starboard jib sheet car when it suddenly flew off the end of the track, having been improperly secured. Using the lazy sheet and a spare car, the situation was salvaged and progress resumed.

The sight of a line of buoys indicating a fishing net with white water breaking around a small rock further ahead meant it was time to head out . . .

By 1600, cucumber, sardine and onion sandwiches had been served and, although the wind had eased, *Lady Bubbly* was making reasonable progress along the coastline at 4+ knots, giving the crew a breather and even a chance to browse a copy of FH.

By 1700, the crew were restless for a pre-sundowner so, on



the health conscious vessel, out came the rum and coconut water, to admittedly be followed by a gin and tonic as the sun went down!

Due to a lightning strike prior to the commencement of the regatta, Mitchell had been forced to replace *Lady Bubbly*’s electronics, most of which still needed calibrating. The only reliable instrument was the windex. Still, as the sun went down, *Lady Bubbly* was back up to 6 knots and heading 343 degrees again, weaving its way around

lines of nets. According to the tracker, it was lying 4th in class with *Fortissimo X* leading on handicap.

Initially, the plan was to stay on the outer edge of the notorious Kra Bank whose ever-changing format proved charts unreliable. However, with a change of duty, the new helm opted to sail on the tell tales which took the boat inshore and onto the bank where the rule then became “one foot below the keel, head out!”

Around 0300 there was a major windshift with the smell of earth indicating the land breeze had finally kicked in. Good progress then continued as the distant lights in the sky above Penang appeared on the horizon. The search for the finish boat had all crew on deck scouring the horizon for the flashing beacon which was eventually spotted and reached at 06:21:57. Not so lucky were the crew on *Fortissimo X* who went in search of the finish towards the west side of the island. When the results were calculated, this elevated *Lady Bubbly* to 3rd with *Kinabalu* taking line and handicap honours in Class 5.

Meanwhile, *La Samudra 2* took line honours followed by *Chantique* with *Marikh* 3rd and winning on handicap, having apparently, like *Fortissimo X*, sailed over the Kra Bank. It was nearly three hours before the rest of Class 6 finished.

In Class 4, *Fujin* beat the midnight chimes with John Kara’s Beneteau First 45, *Insanity*, beating *Jing Jing* across the line by five minutes. There was again a considerable gap before the rest of the class finished. The Azuree 40, *Lion Rock*, brought up the rear.

In Premier Cruising Class 2, *Antipodes* again took line honours in 8 hours 35 minutes and 9 seconds but *FastTrack* claimed handicap honours despite trashing two headsails. Just three minutes separated *Zuhal* and *Antipodes* and *Antipodes* and *Starlight* on corrected.

In Class 1, finishing the 62.3nm in 7 hours 55 minutes and 50 seconds, *Alive* took line honours but slipped to 5th on handicap with *Mandrake III* winning the day.

The major reclamation of Penang harbour is now a reality with work well underway to create more land for towering residential blocks in an already saturated market. Perhaps its only saving grace is the promised new marina. As a result, access to the Straits Quay marina was restricted and crews had to be ferried in and out.

That afternoon the traditional rickshaw race was held under the supervision of marina manager, John Fergusson, formerly of RSYC. The event seems more restrained in the restricted space than the former tricycle races, but still proved entertaining for the spectators and participants as well as bruising for the latter. The crew of *Starlight* took the honours and the whisky over *Alive*.

**Wednesday** 22nd November 2017 — *The Faye Khoo Penang Harbour Races*

In memory of Faye Khoo, the inshore Penang races have been renamed The Faye Khoo Penang Harbour Races, a fitting memorial for her contribution to the regatta. She may indeed have been watching over proceedings since, despite the traditionally light conditions, the breeze kicked in with two windward / leeward races completed by the racing fleet and a geometric by the cruisers.

The AP postponement flag was briefly raised between a couple of the starts to allow slower boats to clear the line before the start of the next class. *VG Offshore* and *Lion Rock* were noticeably late for their starts while *Lion Rock* was also late in dropping its kite at the leeward mark, forcing it to sail on well beyond the mark.

Meanwhile, the wind continued to build to 10-13 knots with *Windsikher II* sustaining damage to its new kite at the top mark.

RO Jerry Rollin, despite being short-handed and encountering difficulties with anchoring the second committee vessel at the finish line for the cruising fleet, was delighted with the outcome, where conditions have been traditionally fickle: “One of the best days of sailing in Penang Harbour,” he noted.

The awards party was particularly auspicious held at Khoo Kongsi, the clan house for the Khoo family in Penang, which makes a spectacular setting for functions for first timers and returnees to Georgetown. Numerous hawkers served a variety of Penang street food, washed down with Tiger beer. Entertainment was provided by a fire eater and probably the best lion dancers in Asia.

Awards for the Pangkor to Penang race were presented along with those for the harbour racing with *Marikh*, *Fortissimo X* and *FastTrack* winning their harbour races in Classes 6, 5 and 2 respectively. *Fujin* won both its Class 4 windward / leewards with *Ramrod* and *Windsikher II* winning the Class 1 races.

**Thursday** 23rd November 2017 — *Penang to Langkawi*

For the final passage race, FH re-united with Rama and the *VG Offshore* team with whom we completed the passage races last year. Short-handed with just three up FH was made most welcome.

At 1255, there was barely 4 knots so the RO went in search of breeze moving the start further up the course. Within one hour,

racing was underway with *VG Offshore* well placed for the Class 5 start, leading *Lady Bubbly*, which was inside nearer the committee vessel, followed by *Iseulta*, which tacked away early into clean air.

Many of those starting later seemed to head inshore, no doubt hoping to pick up the land breeze when it arrived. On the horizon looking back towards Penang, grey storm clouds were building over the mainland while rain storms were encroaching near Penang. The wind continued to build with white caps and a 15 knot + breeze.

About a mile behind, *Chantique* ran into problems with a torn headsail followed by a torn main. It retired but not before going to the aid of *Simba*, which broke its rudder and was towed by *Chantique* into calmer waters. At the time, there was not a great deal of sympathy onboard *VG Offshore* for *Chantique* as it had offered to replenish *VG Offshore*’s depleted beer supply but didn’t.

Meanwhile, *Lady Bubbly* was spotted making inroads into *VG*



*Offshore*’s lead although at the expense of a torn (but repairable) asymmetrical. *Mystic River* took line honours but was beaten on handicap by *Kinabalu*. *VG Offshore* crossed the finish line at 22:22:30 pleased to have beaten *Lady Bubbly*

over the water by 11 minutes. *Lady Bubbly* had the last laugh, though, beating *VG Offshore* by exactly one minute on corrected.

*La Samudra 2* again took honours in Class 6, as did *Fujin* in Class 4 and *Antipodes* in Class 2. *Alive* completed the shortened 50nm race to take line and handicap honours in 4 hours 9 minutes and 25 seconds.

With *Virgo*, *Chantique* and *Simba* retiring, *Millennium 2* was the only one (for a change) still racing after midnight, finishing at 0039. Once moored up at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, it was time to hit Charlie’s Place which was a-buzz with crews celebrating and others recounting their travel woes.

**Friday** 24th November 2017 — *Langkawi Harbour Races*

Instead of a lay day, and a chance to explore the island of Langkawi, the organiser have, for the past few years, — continued overleaf



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expected crews to get back on the water and continue racing.

This time FH reconnected with Bob and Judy Howison, who have been globe-trotting since June 2010 when they

collected their Elan Impression 434, *Kinabalu*, at Kip Marina in Scotland. With just four up they were pleased to get additional help from a Dutch cruising sailor (although things did not go as smoothly as expected).

In the downwind start for the Class 5 fleet, on a geometric course within Bass Harbour, *Kinabalu* ran along the line with *Millennium 2* off the starboard bow and *Lady Bubbly* approaching on port tack at the pin end. Almost running out of room, *Kinabalu* just managed to dip in behind *Lady Bubbly*, squeeze in between the pin, hoist its colourful kite, and accelerate away! A heart stopping, but exhilarating, moment!

With seemingly more breeze in the 10 to 15-knot range in the middle of the harbour, *Kinabalu* made good progress building a lead over those that started nearer the committee boat, including *Iseulta* and *VG Offshore*.

The gybe in towards the mark, though, was a disaster. The bright green asymmetrical had to be dropped. Although still leading the fleet, *Iseulta* was right in *Kinabalu's* wake. The passage to the

next mark was uneventful but, having rounded and in the process of hoisting the kite again, it was realised the tack line was not connected. It was also found later that a guy was fed between the jib sheets! Howison, however, was unfazed, relieved that we had managed to use "three get out of jail cards" with no damage to the boat nor crew, and still finishing 2nd behind *Fortissimo X*.

*Cabaret 6* took the handicap honours in Class 6 and *Antipodes* the honours in its Class 2's harbour race.

*Fujin* added two further bullets to its tally after two windward / leeward races as did *Windsikher II* in Class 1.

## **Saturday 25th November 2017 — Langkawi Harbour Races**

A wet morning kept everyone ashore until the AP postponement flag was lowered and crews headed out to contest the final day, again within the confines of Bass Harbour.



Class 6 was sent on a 10.5nm course around two marks, through a gate and back to the start / finish line. *Cabaret 6* again took the handicap honours but had left it too late to seriously challenge *La Samudra 2*, which took overall and the Eveline Trophy.

*Fortissimo X* also again took the honours in Class 5, winning their 13.4nm race around Pulau Intan Besar but were unable to topple *Kinabalu* from the top of the podium in overall. *Lady Bubbly* finished 2nd with *Fortissimo X* 3rd.

Class 4 were given a 14.7nm race around the scenic islands of Pulau Singa Kechie and Pulau Intan Besar. Yet again it was *Fujin* that won the day earning eight straight bullets to win overall. A fitting achievement having entered their first Raja Muda 20 years ago.

There were initial concerns whether *Jing Jing* had started correctly as there was a discrepancy in the Sailing Instructions between the text for the start and the diagram. However, as the words take precedence over the drawing, *Jing Jing's* result stood. *Prime Factor* finished 2nd overall with *Jing Jing* 3rd.

Two windward / leeward races for Class 2 saw *Antipodes* take the first, and *FastTrack* the second. This was a source of amazement for the crew as having destroyed another headsail they were obliged to stop and hoist their sole remaining No.4. *Antipodes* took the series and collected the Jugra Challenge Cup with *FastTrack* and *Starlight* 2nd and 3rd respectively.

The Class 1 final two races were won by *Mandrake III* and *Ramrod* but *Windsikher II* had done enough to retain the overall title and the Raja Muda Cup for the third consecutive year. *Mandrake III* finished 2nd and *Ramrod* 3rd.

The evening's festivities included dinner and prize-giving at the RLYC with music and dancing bringing the curtain down on what, for most, had been the quickest and driest RMSIR in memory.

The logistics of moving from one location to another involves meticulous planning, for which the RSYC organisers, race management and supporters deserve much credit. The event is indeed special and should be undertaken at least once, so mark the dates for the next edition — 16th to 24th November 2018.