



OU Sailing Association Arrow Trophy 2022

By Lana Davies (Sa 15)

Following a close second place in the 2021 Arrow Trophy, it was with much eagerness and anticipation the 2022 Old Uppinghamian Sailing Team reconvened in the Solent to compete in the 2022 Arrow Trophy, with both familiar and new faces appearing to race against other school alumni teams in the Sunsail 41 fleet. Incoming bad weather on the Friday, prior to the weekend of racing, meant our 5:30pm Portsmouth departure was brought earlier to midday, causing many to have to speed over on the Red Jet from Southampton and leaving those who made it to the boat in time to motor it over to Cowes in stormy seas and high wind: wet weather gear, not optional.

Finally, everyone successfully made it to Cowes in time for a lovely dinner onboard our boat, The British Virgin Islands, with the assembled team and copious amounts of black pepper to accompany our meal, both provided by **David Gavins (LH 73)**. Following introductions and a preview of David's infamous quiz, the team headed to the Royal London Yacht Club for the Arrow Trophy's Dark and Stormy Night, attended by all school alumni teams, for a chance to mingle with, and get to know the competition.

Following an enjoyable evening for all, the crew awoke, and after enjoying a hearty breakfast, had a crew briefing, with positions onboard assigned. **John Tildesley (WB 72)**, acted as skipper, with the aid of **Thea Crawshaw (L 05)** as tactician. **Jo Cave (Fd 89)** and **Steven Parker (Fgh 98)** were up front, in charge of spinnaker and said spinnaker's pole, a fairly relaxing job on Day 1 due to the use of spinnakers banned by the Race Committee because of high winds! **David Wells (H 80)**, **Harriet Powell (L 06)** and **Simon Ward (F 75)** were mainly on jib trim, with sisters **Kala (Sa 17)** and **Lana Davies (Sa 15)** trimming the main, however everyone helped anywhere when needed, and all provided much needed weight on the rail on Day 1, with heavy winds and frequent gusts necessitating it. David Gavins (LH 73) placed himself down below in the galley, providing the team with much needed fuel throughout the day, coffees and teas at inopportune times, and hearty encouragement whenever his head appeared out of the companion way.



Day 1 brought winds of around 16 knots, with gusts up to 25 knots, leading to the race committee making the decision for every boat to reef and banning the use of spinnakers. This led to blustery race conditions, with lots of grinding involved for those on sail trim and much time spent on the rail in an effort to keep the extremely heeled boat flat. We crossed the line in the first race of the day slightly late, with a lot of the fleet on top of us, however we made up for this with significant gains over the succeeding upwinds and downwinds, thanks to some great tactical calls from Thea and John that caused us to use the tide to our advantage. This led to us successfully overtaking several boats including King's Canterbury and Cheltenham and finishing in sixth place, with the first race providing a great learning opportunity for us as a fresh crew.

The second race, despite our manoeuvres being smoother and boat speed strong due to the practice Race 1 provided, was not as successful, with two boats, including long-time rival Dulwich, overtaking us on the final upwind, leading to a finishing position of tenth. By Races 3 and 4 our starting and boat handling as a crew was much improved, leaving us in good positions off the line in both, and not far from the leaders as we rounded the first mark. The spinnaker pole finally saw some action with us successfully poling out the jib on the downwinds under the instruction of Steven and Jo. However, on one of our final downwinds a particularly hairy gybe during a gust led to our first and only breakage of the weekend, with the force of the boom slamming across the boat causing a rivet attaching the vang to the boom to pop out. Luckily, we did not have to go upwind again that day – a task that would have been challenging without the use of the vang, as it is key for sail shape, particularly in stronger winds. Despite this crucial breakage, we finished Races 3 and 4 in a respectable sixth once again, ending the day with consistent results across most races.

Following on from a challenging yet exciting day of racing, we headed back ashore to enjoy some of David's finest canapes while partaking in round two of his infamous quiz. The evening saw us enjoy a dinner at Cowes Marina, with all the other schools in attendance – the only disappointment of the night was the fact our second-place trophy from last year was not presented! (Presentation has been scheduled for later this year).

Day 2 saw polar opposite conditions from Day 1, with dying wind of around 6 knots and flatter waters. Luckily, our fleet was able to have one start, with the larger Fairview fleet unfortunately not managing to race that day. This race saw our best result yet despite the light winds, and we were finally able to fly our spinnaker during racing, leading to some more active and exciting downwinds. Our vang problem was not able to be fixed overnight, so a bootleg rope system was rigged up on board that managed to perform the job of the missing rivet well. We ended up crossing the line in fourth and were glad to end our races on a high, despite subsequent racing for the day being cancelled due to lack of wind, the weather had otherwise been excellent.

We finished the weekend in sixth place overall and second in the Charterhouse Bowl Fleet, a result we were very happy with, especially with so many new faces on board. Norwich beat us by a respectable seven points to take the Charterhouse Bowl, with Bradfield once again sailing well over the whole weekend to take first place overall for the second year in row.

This year's Arrow Trophy provided a fantastic weekend of sailing for the OU Sailing Team, with many of the crew now counting down the days until next year's regatta!



If there are any OU sailors – novice or expert – who would like to get involved in OUSA regattas, David Gavins (LH 73) would love to hear from you. Please contact david.gavins@btinternet.com to get involved.
