



## OU Sailing Association Arrow Trophy 2025

**By Lana Davies (Sa 15)**

The weekend of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2025 saw OUs come together to compete in one of the most hotly contested sporting events of the year – the Arrow Trophy. This year's event saw 21 School Alumni Teams battling it out across 2 fleets for the honours of the Arrow Trophy (Sunsail Fleet) and Bobby Reynolds Tankard (Fairview Fleet). The OUSA (OU Sailing Association) has a long history of competition in this event, with Uppingham being one of only two schools to have competed in every sailed edition of the Arrow Trophy since 1992. The Old Uppinghamian boat raced in the Fairview Fleet this year, skippered by **John Tildesley (WB 72)**, placing a respectable 5<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> following some very close racing.

The first half of the event unfortunately saw less sailing than was anticipated. The race committee had communicated a likely cancellation of Saturday's racing, with Storm Amy predicted to bring winds of up to 50 knots to the Solent. It was therefore key for the team to collect our Fairview from the Hamble on Friday before the wind strengthened significantly. After a swift departure and blustery delivery of the team's Fairview 38, 'C'est si Bon', to Cowes, the team convened for a traditional Friday night curry feast at Spice Central. This was followed by the annual Dark and Stormy Night, hosted by the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club and attended by all competing schools. With racing now having been officially cancelled, all teams instead looked to make as much of a success of the night as possible – something completed to great effect.

Following an enjoyable evening for all, and after a restful night's sleep split between the boat and the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC), Saturday dawned accompanied by the forecasted strong winds. The wind ranged between 30 - 40 knots throughout the day, reinforcing the decision made to cancel racing. The team made the best they could out of the situation, with activities ranging from a spa trip for **Will Wakeford (WB 17)**, pizzeria visits for **Kala and Lana Davies (Sa, 17 and 15)**, a business meeting for **Simon Ward (F 75)** to some light shopping for **Steven Parker (Fgh 98)**. **Matthew Mason (WD 20)** completed the team, and all



gathered aboard 'C'est si Bon' for some Uppingham trivia, dominated by Will Wakeford. This was followed by some boat prep to stand us in good stead for Sunday's racing, with key areas of the boat polished to perfection. All then got ready for what some consider the highlight of the event – the competitors' dinner, hosted by RORC. This evening saw competitors, seated by school, enjoy a three-course dinner while anticipating a day's racing ahead.

Sunday brought the promised sailable winds, with each fleet completing 3 races in building breeze ranging between 10 - 18 knots. Race 1 saw us off to a strong start, completing 2 Windward Leewards and finishing in a close 4<sup>th</sup> behind Marlborough after maintaining clear air throughout the race. The team managed to pull off smooth manoeuvres throughout under the watchful eye of Skipper John and Tactician Lana. Steven, Simon, Matthew, Will and Kala rotated around jib and main trimming positions, and following a clean race all looked forward to pushing the next start.



Unfortunately, Race 2 saw us chasing the fleet from the start after having to avoid another school on the line. However, following an ingenious team decision at the top mark to sail downwind on the side of the course with less tide, our fortunes greatly improved. This move saw us go from 10<sup>th</sup> around the top mark to 4<sup>th</sup>, a position we maintained for the rest of the race. On the second downwind, we almost overtook Radley and Pangbourne to finish in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, however the leg was not quite long enough for us to do this, resulting in another 4<sup>th</sup> place finish – consistency is key! Team spirits were high, and all were feeling confident going into the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final race of the day.

This race saw us have our best start yet at the pin end of the line. However, this meant we were trapped on the left side of the course in the weaker tide. While this was our friend on the downwind legs, it was not on the upwind, and this combined with a jib slip on the first leg led to us rounding the top mark in 10<sup>th</sup>.

We did manage to gain a place on this downwind, overtaking Sherbourne, through our established downwind tactics and excellent sailing by the lee. We ended up crossing the line in 9<sup>th</sup> place, after a brief skirmish with Marlborough, who had decided to sail us away from the line and into another boat with no time or opportunity. Thankfully, all collisions were avoided, and we overall finished a place ahead of Marlborough in the results.

Overall, we finished 4<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>, resulting in a final finishing position of 5<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>. Downside came 1<sup>st</sup> out of the Fairview Fleet, winning the Bobby Reynolds Tankard, with three 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes, followed by Radley, Pangbourne, and then Oundle. In the Sunsail fleet, Cheltenham prevailed to take home the overall Arrow Trophy. Racing was close throughout the day, and the team is looking forward to improving on this year's solid foundations in next year's competition, with the ultimate aim to move back up to the Sunsail Fleet in future.





### **2025 Crew**

Skipper John Tildesley (WB 72)  
 Simon Ward (F 75)  
 Steven Parker (Fgh 98)  
 Lana Davies (Sa 15)  
 Kala Davies (Sa 17)  
 Will Wakeford (WB 17)  
 Mathew Mason (WD 23)

**If you're interested in joining the OUSA, and taking part in the Arrow Trophy next year, please reach out to Lana Davies (Sa 15) or David Gavins (LH 73).**

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**See you on the water!**

