

## »» Daring race reports - 2003

### The Islands Cup

A small team of Darings took up the challenge and came to Las Palmas, Gran Canaria to compete in the first of what we hope will be an annual event in March. Hosted and organised by the Royal Club Nautico de Gran Canaria, and with the sponsorship of Diageo's Johnnie Walker, THE ISLANDS CUP (Island of Gran Canaria V Isle of Wight) regatta in Brenta 24 's was held over the weekend of 22 -23 March. David Gower brought a Dolphin team, with Ken Newman as our visiting race committee member, and Jamie Clark a Loup Garou VIII. The teams arrived on Wednesday evening, and had two days training before the weekend regatta. The format was for four races on Saturday and three on Sunday, with each race being two windward and two leeward legs to give a 35 to 40 minute race time.

The Brentas are a bit like a Melges 24 (or as someone said an economic version of one!) very weight sensitive with a thin long rudder that means the control in a broach is difficult, and the asymmetric spinnakers add to the fun. The learning curve was very steep, and Jamie was KING of the broaches during the training in winds of 18 to 24 Knots from the North North East. David's team did much better downwind with the Genneka however Jamie prevailed upwind. On Friday evening at the welcome drinks party some of the locals were forthcoming with advice - Jamie put this into practice and never broached again.

The weather on Saturday started off with winds from the NNE at about 15 to 16 Knots. The three Spanish boats local knowledge combined with boat handling experience was evident and two days training was not sufficient to beat them, however our boats had been well tested in training with the few breakages fixed, we were ready for the building winds. Race two saw one Spanish boat retire due to breakages and David was again in front of Jamie for the second time. The third race started as the wind strengthened to 22 Knots with gusts up to 27, the leading Spanish boat lost its mast and Jamie finished second. Racing was then abandoned for the day as the wind continued to strengthen.

On Sunday morning the wind was from the East 3 to 7 Knots and very patchy, local knowledge was most useful and the two Spanish boats made sure that they kept the Daring teams behind. However, on a number of occasions the Darings were looking very good, until the wind abandoned them, with each race the boats were closer and closer making for some interesting racing (the Darings probably needed another couple of days to get on top of the locals) Jamie sailed hard and David was not allowed to finish ahead even though on a number of occasions he went the right way. The racing was clean with only one protest, a Spanish boat barging in at the start, Jamie and Mark had red flags out of their pockets so fast that the Spaniards had no option other than to complete their 720!!

The final results were Spain First, Jamie second (with a plaque and a bottle of Johnnie Walker Gold Label to celebrate with), Spain third, David fourth and Spain 5th (No mast to compete on day two). The other side of the event was the gastronomic tour of Las Palmas, and I believe that every one will be leaving Grand Canaria somewhat heavier than on arrival, after visiting a good selection of local restaurants. I realise that I haven't mentioned the weather, but then again down here one does not because it is always from good to perfect sunshine, with temperatures from 22 to 26 Degrees, however the breeze makes it feel cooler, especially in the evenings.

Photos can be seen on the website, and a Canarian team hope to be coming to the Daring tram racing event in July.

Mark McNeill

### **26th - 27th April, the 1st weekend of the Red Funnel Series**

Given a choice between racing in the Solent or in Bermuda in April, Giles Peckham decided on Bermuda: a possibly unfortunate choice as his first day's racing was cancelled due to high winds. Here, however, the season opened on Saturday with sunshine and a force three to four south westerly. The Island SC committee boat was anchored north of Marinetrack, the new name for Kelvin Hughes. The wind steadied to about 235 degrees, but with enough variations in strength and direction to allow plenty of opportunities to overtake. The course was a straight windward-leeward, with no spreader marks or leeward gates being used.

In the first race, Lavina Perry helming Dreamer went left up the first beat and lead the fleet, holding off the Defiant dream team of Robin Aisher, Charles Perry and Fabian French. However, at the last leeward mark Defiant picked up a shift, tacked away from Dreamer and squeezed ahead. John Sichel, on board Darling, rounded the last mark in fourth position, behind Dynamite (now sporting this season's fashionable accessory, a tiller extension), saw that there was more wind on the left hand side of the beat and sailed to the port layline. This was the winning move, and Darling took the first race of the season. Final result Darling first, Defiant second, Dreamer third.

For the second race, the committee decided to see who was paying attention by moving nearer to Hill Head, and changing from course "X" to course "Y". With the flood building, the tide became more of a consideration, especially at the windward mark which was placed in the deeper channel just to the south of the Bramble bank. Defiant led around the last leeward mark, followed closely by Dancer. Lord Burnham tacked around the mark, a move which made Dreamer's approach much more exciting. Dynamite's rounding was much calmer and she moved ahead of Dreamer. Unfortunately for Dancer, the left hadn't paid. Defiant won, after a last minute reminder from the tactician that the finish line was to starboard of the committee boat, Dynamite was second and Dreamer third.

With stronger winds on Sunday of about thirty knots, again from the south west, the race committee decided to run one race using the ISC shore line

and the fixed Solent racing marks. A running start took the fleet east with Sunsail, on the western end of the Ryde Middle bank, as the first mark. Dynamite led around the mark, chased by Darius and Defiant. The beat back to Gales HSB, off Castle Point, saw Richard Acland on the helm take Darius into first place, closely contested by Dynamite helmed by Douglas Winton. Another long run took the fleet to DB Marine, on the eastern end of the Ryde Middle bank, during which places among the top three remained unchanged. On the final beat back Robin Aisher on Defiant moved into second position, with Darius winning and Dynamite in third.

Edward Fryer

### **3rd - 5th May, Solent Series**

Sat 3 May

Saturday saw the Daring fleet out in a sunny SSW force 3 to 4, the tide starting the ebb off the Squadron, 2 hours before high water brought the fleet taking along the green to Gurnard and then on round Egypt Point to Ocean Safety. Devius established an early lead. Defiant judged the angle well for the reach across the tide to Quinell and moved up from 7th to take the lead at the mark. But she failed to consolidate her position after the jibe and in the hunt for tiny West Knoll, Darling and Division Bell pulled ahead. A short reach to Air Canada paid to hand the spinnaker. A short beat to Gurnard followed, then a reach off to Marinetrack (ex Kelvin Hughes). Darling took the opportunity to extend her lead further, followed by Division Bell. The final beat back to the Island shore to Norris led Darling in to the shifty conditions off Osborne Bay. Division Bell seized their opportunity as Darling struggled in a hole without wind and finished first from Darling.

Sun 4 May

Sunday with the first of the ebb tide brought the entire fleet to the outer end of the Corinthian lined (marked by the Trinity House buoy) to fetch Gales, the first mark before reaching off to East Knoll. Decoy pulled away cleanly at the start with clear air and rounded Gales first. The reach across the rapidly building ebb tide to the invisible East Knoll mark split the fleet with Daring 1 leading half the fleet to the west and Defiant leading the more windward half of the fleet. Defiant made the East Knoll first. The race then took on a series of reaches too and fro between the Bramble and the Island with some interest arising at the windward marks between Darling and Dynamite approaching on port and Devius and Dreamer on Starboard. Dido and Darius made some gains in the final stages. Defiant maintained her lead to the finish followed by Daring 1 and Deinos.

Mon 5 May

Monday's Corinthian Line start was a beat up the island shore to Ocean Safety. Darius came off the worst from a close quarter struggle off the Squadron steps (only a few yards from the inner end of the line) at the start gun and was required to make reparations. The rest of the fleet got away well, but for Dynamite who was marked DNS. Streak, Decoy Defiant and Dolphin led the pack beating passed Gurnard and close to Egypt Point. The reach

across to South Bramble settled the lead positions into Decoy, Streak, Defiant and Dolphin; Deinos and Dynamite stayed on the Island shore on their approach South Bramble with little gain. On the reach across to Marinetrack, and then the beat back to Prince Consort Decoy held her lead from Streak, Dynamite who gained well on the beat, Defiant and Destroyer. On the reach East to West Ryde Middle Streak fell back. As a sharp cold front came in from the Southwest over the mainland the wind backed slightly. The final beat and reach between Gales HSB and Norris led to some close tacking with the finish being taken by Decoy followed by Dynamite (DNS), Defiant second and Devious. Streak, Doublet and Darius enjoyed a close tacking dual to the line all finishing very tightly.

Charles Hewitt

### **10th - 11th May, Solent Series - Royal London Yacht Club Regatta**

With a southerly force three, the first leg to Ocean Safety against the tide was a challenge. Decoy lead around the point, only to run aground on the Grantham rocks. The rest of the fleet were undecided as to whether it paid to sail inshore out of the tide or offshore where the wind seemed to be stronger. Some carried spinnakers, some didn't. Inshore seemed best, and Devius arrived at the mark first, closely followed by Streak. After the Spinnaker run to Royal Thames, Streak had difficulty handing her spinnaker and dropped back, leaving Dauntless and Diamond to chase Devius. On the beat to Gurnard, both the inshore course up the mainland shore and the left hand side of the beat seemed to pay off, with a number of boats overstanding on the starboard tack lay-line. Devius continued to hold her lead around Deck, Air Canada, Clipper and Gales HSB to the finish, while Diamond and Dauntless exchanged places a couple of times, the finishing order being Devius, Diamond, Dauntless.

Sunday's race started in a light south-easterly with a reach to Gales HSB. Audax lead the way but Decanter took the lead on the run and looked to be in a strong position at East Knoll. However, Dionysus gradually overhauled her on the following legs around Air Canada, Deck and West Ryde Middle. On the beat to West Ryde Middle, most boats headed right into the predicted favourable tide in the channel but the wind backed and helped those who tacked off to the left. Another run to Hill Head and a beat to Norris saw Darius claw her way past Decanter to take second place. Dionysus' apparently unassailable lead at Norris evaporated on the spinnaker reach to the finish line as the wind died in Cowes Roads. As the fleet bunched it was anybody's race but Dionysus just managed to pull away at the last minute to take a deserved first place, followed by a close finish between Dauntless, Decanter and Destroyer in that order.

Juliet Dibben

### **17th and 18th May, Red Funnel Series**

The second Red Funnel weekend of the season was run by the Royal Thames Yacht Club, and with the forecast promising strong southerly winds the race committee decided that only in Osborne Bay was there sufficient

shelter for racing to go ahead. The start line was set just to the north of Peel Bank, but with a long sail against the ebb, some boats unfortunately didn't make the start area in time for the first race.

Racing was characterised by significant shifts in wind strength and direction as it came off the island shore, and the ebb building during the afternoon gave a strong cross tide. In the first race, Richard Ottaway, helming Decoy, mastered the shifts to open a significant lead on the fleet, chased hard by Bruce Huber in Dionysus and Robin Aisher in Defiant. Tony Leach in Devius made late gains on the left of the last beat, and finished third behind Dionysus.

In the second race, Dionysus showed well on the first beat, but problems with her spinnaker halyard gave Defiant and Decoy the opportunity to close up on the first run. The second beat and run were closely contested by all three boats, but with the cross tide the runs were exclusively on starboard gybe and the leeward mark required a spinnaker drop and gybe; always a fun manoeuvre for the crew, and especially so in stronger winds. Unwilling to give up an inch, Dionysus and Defiant left their drops a little late, and gave Decoy the opportunity to slip through into first position. Dionysus finished second and Defiant third.

With a forecast of strong South Westerly winds on Sunday, the race committee again laid a course in Osborne Bay. Conditions were testing but all the boats got away cleanly at the start. During the first windward leg the wind backed a little, favouring the boats that had started on the left hand end of the line. At the first mark, Decoy arrived first, just ahead of Devius and Dauntless. Dreamer should have been there too but overstood the lay line with the cross-tide. At the spreader mark, both Decoy and Devius gybed before setting their spinnakers, a move which helped them to consolidate their lead a little. With the wind increasing, the race committee decide to shorten the race after one more windward leg. Decoy maintained her lead and Devius managed to fight off an attack by Dauntless to hold on to second place.

Edward Fryer and Giles Peckham

### **24th, 25th and 26th May, John Dibben Memorial Trophy**

The Island Sailing Club hosted the John Dibben Memorial Trophy regatta for the Daring Class over the bank holiday weekend. In Saturday's race, Loup Garou lead the fleet to the first mark on the Ryde Middle Bank but then lost out on the beat back to CHC when the boats inshore found a favourable lift on port tack. Darius arrived first with Decoy second and these two held their places for the rest of the race back down to the Bank and then up to Prince Consort, Gurnard and the finish line. With offshore winds and foul tide, there were many place changes behind them, including Dionysus working her way up into third place for the finish.

Sunday was changeable with 8-10 knots of wind from the North West. At the Etchells warning (15 min before Daring start) the Race Committee displayed a course with Lepe Spit as the first windward mark. As the Etchells had an open

meeting elsewhere a number of Daring sailors assumed that to be the Daring course (as it was the previous day), wrote it down and headed out into the Solent to the strongly favoured outer end of the line. Others including Loup Garou stayed in the harbour to re-check the course and sure enough the first windward mark was changed to Quinnell just prior to the Daring warning gun. At the start half the fleet headed towards Lepe spit and the other half towards Quinnell. Loup Garou rounded Quinnell first and went on to win the race. 100 meters from the finish line Dancer, in second, fell into a hole and was passed by Destroyer for second place with Dancer third.

In superb sailing conditions on the Monday, the fleet ran down from the start to West Ryde Middle before beating across to Quinnell. Dauntless lead at the first mark but found herself on the outside of a twenty degree wind shift which allowed Darius and Decoy to overtake. On the following run to West Knoll, Dauntless stayed on the mainland shore before gybing out for the mark and took second place again. There were no more place changes between these three on the following legs to Lepe Spit, Gales HSB and the finish line. Double Knot spent most of the race following in fourth and Decanter pulled through into fifth by taking the right hand side of the beat to Lepe Spit.

Overall, Loup Garou won the John Dibben Memorial Trophy, with Darius second and Decoy third.

There was also a good turnout for the Class Dinner at the Royal London Yacht Club on Sunday. The food was excellent and the company even better!

Giles Peckham and Jamie Clark

### **31st May and 1st June, Solent Series**

Saturday 31st May

With an easterly breeze and ebbing tide the Royal Corinthian set a beat to Daks Simpson followed by West Ryde Middle, D B Marine and Line. At the start the wind failed completely to the extent that of the 17 boats that came to the line only 10 started within required time limits. Double Knot and Derring Do found a private breeze and were a good half mile ahead at Norris Point. The wind then died and the depleted fleet bunched up and most kedged. A frail seabreeze came in and Daks was reached under spinnaker, the order being Derring Do, Division Belle, Double Knot, Decanter and Darling, with the rest of the fleet well adrift. After West Ryde, on what was by now a run to D B Marine, the seabreeze was not well established in the eastern Solent and Division Belle, Double Knot and Decanter arrived together at the almost windless mark. At the turn Decanter was first to find a private wind as the three struggled to get back into the westerly seabreeze. The final leg then became a pleasant beat to the finish with the order at the line being: 1st. Decanter, 2nd Double Knot, 3rd Division Belle.

Sunday 1st June

The wind was again in the East as 12 boats came to the line with most favouring the outer mark. The foul tide pushed out Destroyer and Dauntless

with Decanter getting the best of the start. The first leg to Sunsail, beating against a young ebb was a choice between staying up the middle or going closer inshore. In the end the middle was the better choice for Destroyer, Darling and Decanter who reached Sunsail well ahead of the rest of the fleet. The last 2-3 hundred yards to the mark were somewhat fraught as the wind died and the lead changed several times. In the end it was Decanter who squeezed round followed by Destroyer and Darling. On the run to Gurnard both Destroyer and Darling passed Decanter, but as the three rounded Gurnard for the beat up the shore to the line Decanter rounded very tightly and held the windward berth. On the tight beat up the Green Decanter eased ahead and was happy to see the shorten course flag. The final order was Decanter, Darling, Destroyer.

Jeremy Preston

### **7th - 8th June, Red Funnel Championship**

The 3rd Red Funnel Championship weekend was run by the Royal London Yacht Club. Saturday's racing was held in the Clipper area in a light to medium south westerly. In the first race there were opposing views on which side of the beat was favoured. Those that went left came out on top, with more pressure in the breeze than those who went right, looking for less strength in the flood tide. Dionysus (Bruce Huber) dominated the race from start to finish, with Darius (Chippy Kenyon) coming in second, and Decoy (Richard Ottaway) rapidly closing for 3rd.

The second race saw the fleet well bunched at the first windward mark, with the pecking order largely established on the down wind leg as some boats went left, allowing some of those behind at the first mark to catch up. Decoy was unstoppable in the lead, and won the race from Dionysus who slipped past Darius (Richard Acland) into second in the closing stages of the final beat (Darius overstood the finish line because she was aiming for the wrong committee boat!)

On Sunday the conditions were very different. The wind was already force five before the start and increased during the day to the point where the second race had to be cancelled. The course was set inshore of Peel Bank in the lee of the Island. With the wind shifting left just before the start, the start line on the first race became heavily biased towards the pin end. Darius found the perfect slot, tacking across the line on the gun to lead the fleet up the first beat. With good boat speed, she pulled away and held a comfortable lead at the windward mark. Medina II (Alastair Spear-Cole) started in second place but was overhauled by both Decoy and Dauntless (Giles Peckham) on the first leg. The following run was exciting, with most of the boats flying their smaller, reaching spinnakers. Dauntless paid the price for a late spinnaker drop as the pole dipped into the water and Doublet (Robin Richardson) passed her as it was recovered. A windshift up the last beat allowed Dauntless to retake third place while Darius and Decoy held first and second places respectively.

Richard Acland & Giles Peckham

### **14th - 15th June, Solent Series**

In light a South Easterly breeze, the Island Sailing Club sent the Daring fleet eastwards, against the tide to Daks Simpson. Doublet had the best start and held the lead while they tacked up the Island shore. Dionysus started back in the pack but eventually pulled through to second place by the time they reached the mark, with Division Belle in third. The short run took the fleet around West Ryde Middle and down to AAA Insurance off Cowes Green. There were no place changes amongst the leaders on the run but as they beat back up the shore to Daks again Dionysus found a nice wind shift and passed Doublet to take the lead. Dauntless passed Division Belle momentarily and Decoy sailed around both of them by staying offshore in stronger wind. However, one tack inshore then put Division Belle back in third place and these were the positions they held at the last windward mark. On the run via West Ryde Middle to the finish line, Doublet took an inshore course, found some wind and retook the lead. As the three leaders approached the finish line in a dying breeze, Doublet headed for the inshore end, Division Belle the offshore end and Dionysus the middle. In a nail-biting finish they all approached the line together and finished within seconds of each other. First gun went to Dionysus (Bruce Huber), second to Division Belle (Calum Sillars) and third to Doublet (Robin Richardson).

Giles Peckham

### **21st - 22nd June, Stug Perry Regatta**

In an easterly force four, the RCYC set a course up and down the length of the Brambles Bank. In the first race on Saturday, the boats who tacked out into the favourable flood tide south of the bank came out ahead at the first mark. Dauntless led from Dreamer but as they ran downwind the following fleet took Dreamer's wind and she fell back. Division Belle came through to win the fight for second place at the leeward mark. Dauntless stayed ahead to the finish, Division Belle remained in second place and Dionysus worked her way up to third.

In the second race, despite the fact that the tide had turned, a stronger wind on the right hand side of the course again made that side favoured. Dauntless again took the lead by the first mark, this time just ahead of Division Belle. As they hoisted their spinnakers at the spreader mark, Division Belle suffered a twist and dropped back but held on to second place. Dauntless led to the finish and Decanter held off Dionysus to take third.

On Sunday, in similar conditions, Darius took the lead by the first mark, with Defiant and Loup Garou in pursuit. As they approached the leeward mark, the wind died on the left, allowing Dauntless to move up into second place. However, Dauntless tacked away to the left just before the wind swung twenty degrees to the right and she dropped below tenth place. Loup Garou had taken the far right course and came out on top at the windward mark, with Defiant close behind and Darius in third place. However, with a strong flood tide, Defiant managed to miss the mark and Loup Garou hit it. Darius was

able to sail around both to retake the lead which she held to the finish at the end of the run. Defiant took second place and Loup Garou third. Dauntless pulled back a few places towards the end of the beat, two more as Darling took Double Knot out at the mark and two more by doing a gybe-set at the spreader mark. This left her in fourth place, just enough to clinch the Stug Perry Trophy with one race to spare.

The second race on Sunday had to be abandoned when the mark-laying boat broke down.

Giles Peckham

### **28th - 29th June, Solent Series**

In a light south westerly wind, The Royal Corinthian Yacht Club sent the Darings on a short windward leg to Gurnard before the long run against the tide to East Bramble via Spanker and Hill Head. Loup Garou led at Gurnard, with Dauntless second and Dolphin third. Dauntless quickly rolled Loup Garou and led the fleet to the Brambles Bank. Loup Garou gybed onto starboard first, to take the right hand side of the course along the southern edge of the bank, taking Division Belle with her. Dauntless continued on to the shallowest part of the bank, together with Dynamite and Streak, but lost the wind, allowing the other two to overtake. When Loup Garou later gybed back over towards Hill Head, Division Belle and Dauntless stayed on the right hand side for a little longer, kept the wind and moved up into first and second places respectively. On the spinnaker reach to East Bramble, Dauntless again went right in search of more wind and found enough to retake the lead. There then followed a long leg to the finish which started as a beat, then turned into a spinnaker reach as a south easterly pushed in, and then reverted to a beat in the south westerly sea breeze. Some boats stayed in the middle of the channel, trying to hold on to the last of the ebb tide and had their moments when they looked good. Damsel and Devius reached up inshore, trying to hold on to most of the south-easterly wind but that didn't pay in the end. Dauntless covered and held on to win while Decoy slipped through inshore in the closing stages of the leg to take second place from Loup Garou.

After Saturday's drift round the Solent, Sunday was the perfect Daring breeze. Force 3 and a fairly steady East South East direction. It was sunny and yes there was also tide sweeping us fast towards the Needles. The first beat was short tacking up under Norris Castle and into Osborne bay before we nosed out into the tide to round West Ryde Middle. Positions changed on almost every tack as helms stood on too long into the tide or went too close in the sloppy water by the wall. By the end of the first beat however Darling (11) had broken clear and had what looked like an unassailable lead. Loup Garou VIII (29) and Destroyer(32) were battling it out for second and third while Decoy (7), Dynamite(9), Diamond (5) and Streak (23) were all in the next bunch. We whooshed back down the Solent with spinnakers flying and 3.5 knots of tide underneath us. Things were to change ..... as we rounded Gurnard, Darling's main came tumbling down. She was last seen drifting at an alarming rate, jib only up, dragging her kedge towards the needles. This left the game open for Loup Garou VIII and Destroyer who battled the whole way back to West Ryde

Middle and all the way back to the finish line with each one overtaking the other. The finish gun went with Loup Garou VIII first and Destroyer second. Decoy finally broke free of Dynamite (9) on the beat back up and finished 3rd. There was a photo finish for 4th and 5th place between Diamond (5) and Dynamite (9). A perfect day on the Solent.

After both races, the RCYC held a barbeque and prizegiving which was a very successful new innovation, appreciated by all the racers.

Giles Peckham and Barbara Langford

### **5th - 6th July, Royal Yacht Squadron Red Funnel series**

The weekend's racing was held on the Brambles Bank and started in a light westerly wind on the Saturday. In race one, the last of the ebb pushed a number of boats over the line at the start but Division Belle made a clean get-away and led at the windward mark, closely followed by Decoy. The wind strength varied across the course and those who found the stronger patches came out on top. Division Belle sailed a great race and led to the finish. Loup Garou overtook Decoy upwind and held on to take second place. Decoy then took the left hand side of downwind leg, lost the wind and let Doublet come through into third place.

In race two, the tide had started to turn into a flood. Those who started on the pin end came out on top, despite many of them overstanding the windward mark. Doublet led the pack at the windward mark. On the following run, Dolphin stayed out on the right hand side and caught right up with Doublet, while those who sailed out to the left suffered from significantly less wind. On the second beat, the left hand side again seemed to pay but a right hand shift near the top mark caught a few boats out. On the last run the conditions changed and those who took the left hand side of the course, especially Decanter and Devius found more wind. However, Doublet covered well and continued on to win the race, with Dolphin second and Dynamite third.

Race three on Sunday started in a light south westerly wind and a flooding tide. Decoy started at the pin end and went out to the left hand side of the course, picking up an early lead, with Dauntless in second place. Defiant and Darling avoided the common mistake of overstanding the mark and followed close behind. An early gybe at the spreader mark helped to avoid the wind shadow from the following pack and the lead was unchanged at the leeward mark. Upwind, Decoy tried to push Dauntless out into the tide but lost a little with every tack, finally allowing Dauntless to get inside and take the lead at the windward mark. A brief luffing match followed the gybe-set at the spreader mark but by this time Doublet had come through into third place and Decoy bore away to protect her second place. After an incident-free short beat to the line, they finished in the same order.

By the start of race four, the wind had increased to a force three. This time it was Devius who took the pin end and sailed out to the left hand side. She came in to the windward mark first, with Defiant second, followed by Dido and Doublet. Downwind, Defiant sailed deep into the right and came out ahead at

the next mark, with Devius and Dauntless behind her. Devius had dropped to third place by the windward mark and Defiant seemed to have a good lead going into the run. However, Dauntless took her wind and just managed to get inside at the leeward mark. The last-minute spinnaker drop and two gybes was a bit of a frenzy but Dauntless managed to keep the lead she had just won, with Defiant in second place and Decoy in third.

Giles Peckham

### **12th - 13th July, Royal Thames Yacht Club Regatta**

The Cory Cup was the prize for Saturday's race, with each boat representing a different yacht club. An light easterly wind and an ebb tide encouraged the fleet to start inshore for the first leg to Norris. However, line bias and a stronger wind offshore favoured the boats on the middle of the line. Thus Decoy reached the Shrape first, followed by Loup Garou, Double Knot, Darling and Division Belle. By the time they reached Norris, Decoy and Loup Garou remained in the lead while Dauntless had come through to third place. The first boats were cautious about tacking out for Norris and overstood a little, allowing some of the followers to make up ground. Spinnakers were eventually set for the close reach to East Knoll and dropped again for the following reach to Gales HSB. On the following spinnaker reach to West Knoll, Dauntless passed Loup Garou. With the shallow Brambles Bank to cross, some boats touched the bottom briefly but weren't slowed. As they rounded West Knoll to head for Ocean Safety, spinnakers were dropped but reset again later. Dauntless was on the heels of Decoy who close-covered as the fleet short-tacked up the shore to the finish line. Dauntless tried to shake her off but only succeeded in bumping on the rocks which slowed her down. Darius and Streak went aground rather more firmly and needed help to get off. Places remained unchanged in the top three with Decoy (House Of Commons Yacht Club) first, Dauntless (Island Sailing Club) second and Loup Garou (Royal London Yacht Club) third.

The wind had increased to an easterly force three for Sunday's race and again the tide was ebbing strongly. Dauntless and Darius started on the inshore end of the line and were first to the breakwater on the first leg to Norris, with Devius just behind. By the time they tacked out for the mark, Decoy had recovered from a bad start to lie third behind Dauntless and Darius. A short run to West Ryde Middle was followed by a beat back up to Daks Simpson. The whole fleet headed inshore to cheat the tide and Decanter benefited from a backing wind to overtake Decoy. On the run past Sunsail to Royal Thames, Darius gybed to stay in the stronger tide to the south but Decanter benefited from the stronger wind on the right hand side of the course to overtake her. The next leg to Ray Marine was a close spinnaker reach and Decoy managed to roll Darius to take third place. From Ray Marine the course took the fleet around Gurnard to starboard and AAA Insurance to port before crossing the finish line. Dauntless and Decoy immediately struck out for the Island shore and beat up Gurnard Bay while Darius and Decanter beat up the mainland shore before tacking across to the mark. Decanter tacked across first and came in behind Decoy in Gurnard Bay but Darius held on further and came across ahead of Dauntless at Egypt point to take the

lead. Dynamite went even further and appeared to have taken third place but was disqualified for being over the line at the start. Thus Darius finished first, with Dauntless second and Decoy third.

Giles Peckham

### **19th - 20th July, The Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club 50th Anniversary Long Distance Race and Solent Series**

In a South Westerly force 2 and a flood tide, the fleet tacked along the Island shore to Gurnard Ledge. Division Belle quickly took the lead. Dauntless caught up but ran aground in Gurnard Bay and was stuck fast for more than 5 minutes, putting her very much last. Division Belle tacked out to the mark a little early, allowing the fleet to catch up. On the near-beat across to Macmillan Reeds on the mainland shore, Darius took the lead and Decanter second place, while Division Belle retained third. For the beat to Hamstead Ledge, back on the island shore, most of the fleet kept to the mainland shore but Dauntless crossed the channel early and caught up to joint third at the mark, with Doublet, Dynamite and Division Belle. Dancer ran aground on the gently shelving shore off Newtown and eventually retired. Darius had stretched her lead, with Decanter still in second place as they ran down to Lepe Spit buoy. On the beat back up to Elephant, Decanter made the mistake of staying on the mainland shore. Division Belle caught up and then overtook her to take second place. The final run down to Seascoppe turned out to be very long indeed. The wind started to die as the tide began to turn against the fleet. Darius managed to reach the Brambles Bank and anchor before it was too late but the rest of the fleet were caught in mid channel and drifted back out of sight. Dynamite and Damsel made for the island shore and were able to make it up to Cowes but neither made it as far as Seascoppe. Darius hauled up her anchor an hour later as a South Easterly filled in and she was able to make Seascoppe to win the race. The rest of the fleet retired except Doublet, last seen drifting backwards off Lepe Beach. She eventually turned up off Cowes and reached Seascoppe an hour after Darius to take second place.

On Sunday the fleet beat down to Ocean Safety in a brisk south westerly against a flood tide, Loup Garou arriving first, followed by Deva and Audax. On the close reach to Quinell, Loup Garou was unable to make the mark without dropping her spinnaker which set her back and as they rounded, Deva's backstay broke so she was forced to retire. Decoy gybed at the mark to stay out in the tide and was able to pull through into second place behind Audax on the run down to Hill Head. At the end of the run, Decoy was inside Audax at the mark and then led up the beat to South Bramble. On the following legs to Seascoppe, Prince Consort, West Ryde Middle and the finish line, Decoy saw her lead eroded on the runs as she chose to fly her small spinnaker but was able to gain ground again on the beats. At the finish it was Decoy first, Audax second and Doublet third.

Giles Peckham, Barbara Langford and Robin Richardson

## 26th - 27th July, Household Division Yacht Club Regatta and Solent Series

Saturday's weather, overcast and drizzly, wasn't ideal for sailing but there were still twenty three Darings on the start line. In a south-easterly force two to three, the fleet was sent to the east against the tide to Gales HSB. The favoured inshore end of the start line was hotly contested and too many boats crossed the line early, causing a general recall. On the restart, the race committee flew the black flag, indicating that premature starters would be immediately disqualified from the day's race. Still there were too many boats over the line and another general recall resulted. After a postponement, the third start was successful, although again, some boats were over the line and did not go back. By this time, fifteen of the twenty three boats were disqualified but did not realise it and all twenty three battled around the race course. Medina II arrived at Gales HSB first and still led at South Bramble but lost out by heading left up the beat back to Gales HSB. Defiant took over and led back to South Bramble and beyond to Quinnet. On the beat to Gurnard, Decanter stayed on the mainland shore a little longer before coming across to the island shore and took the lead from Defiant. After a short beat back to the finish line, there were no guns for the disqualified boats and Defiant was declared the winner, with Medina II in second place and Division Belle in third.

Giles Peckham

After the foul weather of the previous day, we woke up to a beautiful day with a shifty force 2-3 westerly breeze.

The committee managed to send us away first time with Decoy being caught the wrong side of the line at the start, but managed to return and continue. The first mark was Raymarine at the mouth of the Beaulieu river. Loup Garou rounded first with the rest of the fleet close behind. The fleet then headed in shore towards the mainland to get out of the tide. Unfortunately despite it being only an hour after high water Doublet and Devius managed to get stuck on Lepe spit in a falling tide (Beware Cowes Week!). Doublet managed to get off the mud and despite being very last managed to retrieve a couple of places. Devius' crew meanwhile decided that they had to get out and push but when that didn't work, they called the RYS launch for assistance. Suddenly a breeze filled in and Devius was off! Somewhat alarmingly, Nick and Donald were left standing in chest-high water, some distance off shore, Nick smoking a cigarette, while Devius sailed away with the other two crew on board. Fortunately, at that point the RYS launch arrived. The launch driver said "Good afternoon gentlemen. May I be of some assistance?", to which Nick's reply was "Only if you're going in my direction"!

Meanwhile the rest of the fleet pursued Loup Garou on a long run leaving Air Canada to starboard and then on to West Ryde Middle. The fleet divided before the brambles some going closer to the main land to keep out of the tide while others saw a strengthening breeze on the right side of the course which made it hard for Loup Garou to cover. The right side paid and by West Ryde Middle, Dionysus had slipped ahead with the rest of the fleet in close contention.

A short beat back to Prince Consort with the tide allowed some close racing, but again the right hand side of the course paid and Defiant hit the right hand corner and managed to arrive at Prince Consort on starboard just behind Dionysus and just in front of Darling and Loup Garou, but a late spinnaker hoist by both Loup Garou and Defiant allowed Darling through.

A short return run to West Ryde Middle with a strengthening breeze meant there were no further place changes, and Dionysus rounded first with Darling, Loup Garou, Defiant and Audax all very close.

We were heading back to the finish line, but this time despite the tide in full flood taking the fleet home the left hand side of the course paid and Audax and Dreamer who had come from nowhere, got a great lift heading in shore and made up several places. Approaching the finish, Dionysus on port was nearly held off the line by Victories to allow Audax to slip through, but a perfectly timed luff got Dionysus' bows across the line ahead. Final finishing positions were Dionysus first, Audax second and Defiant third.

Myles Harrison, with contributions from Paul Miller and Brian Bracken

### **Cowes Week 2003**

Cowes Week this year was blessed with sun and warm winds, allowing us to enjoy some excellent racing on all eight days. Although there were no strong winds to challenge the boat-handling skills of the crews, the very changeable winds created some big challenges for the tacticians. Dionysus established a very strong lead early on, with three consecutive wins. Although she did not always start at the front of the fleet, her crew made very few mistakes and with good downwind boat-speed she was always able to climb up to the front of the fleet. Dauntless lead the second race from start to finish but was swept the wrong side of the finish line when the wind died and she had to retire. A similar fate befell a number of other boats. Dynamite took the lead early in the fourth race and covered well to win. On Wednesday, Dauntless worked up a ten-minute lead at the first mark, West Bay, and never looked back. On Thursday, the fleet anchored as the wind died, some on the Bramble Bank and some at the next mark, South Ryde Middle. As the breeze filled in, Decanter, in pole position, weighed anchor at the right time and footed off into a lift to win the one-leg sprint to the finish. On Friday, Dauntless lead from the first mark but again was pipped by Dionysus when the wind died ahead of the sea breeze off Calshot Beach. Division Belle led the last race from the first mark but lost to Dauntless in a tacking duel just yards from the finish line. First overall was Dionysus (Bruce Huber, Andrew Greene, James Axtell, Sam Axtell, Jonathan Goodwin) with a very impressive four wins, three seconds and a third, giving her third place in the whole White Group. Second was Dauntless (Milo Carver, Giles Peckham, Jane Peckham, Hugh Sutherland, Tim Peach); third was Decanter (Jeremy Preston, Neil Ratcliffe, Alex Ward, Jeremy Davis, Charles Massey).

Giles Peckham

## 16th - 18th August, Bembridge Sailing Club and Sea View Yacht Club Regattas

16th August, Bembridge Sailing Club

The strong easterly wind brought with it a large swell, something the Darings don't experience in Cowes. There was a long first leg against the tide from the committee boat to East Nab. Shortly after the start, a 15 degree right hand shift benefited those boats that had started on the right hand side of the beat and by the first mark it was Dreamer in first place, followed by Dynamite and Decoy. Dauntless followed but lost her spinnaker overboard. Since it was not attached to anything, she had to go back for it, surprising a few of the following boats! The dead run was followed by a shy spinnaker reach and an early gybe was important. After rounding the leeward mark, the course took the fleet back up to East Nab and most of them stayed on port tack for as long as they could, to benefit from both the slacker tide and the right hand shift. A number of boats overstood the next mark but a little overstanding was not a problem. Dynamite managed to overhaul Dreamer by sailing faster and rounded first. Decoy rounded in third place but was caught by Dauntless who managed to gybe inside her at the wing mark and take third place. Dynamite had lost her spinnaker halyard up the mast earlier in the race and was forced into an early drop to put the jib back up. Dreamer rounded close behind and Dynamite was sailing slowly with a slack jib halyard. In the beat to the finish line, Dreamer managed to get clear air and cross ahead of Dynamite to take first place. Dauntless finished third.

Giles Peckham

17th August, Sea View Yacht Club Regatta

Once the tide released the committee boat from Bembridge the course was set for a long-ish Olympic triangle up to Nab East, St Helens and an orange inflatable leeward mark. At the start the fleet predictably split left and right seemingly agreed that one extreme or the other would pay.

At the first windward, Audax could confirm that the middle did not pay with Defiant and Dionysus taking the left; Dynamite, Division Belle and Dreamer taking the right and both gaining on the middle. Dionysus got to the windward just ahead of Defiant both followed closely by Division Belle. Dreamer having made a famous charge back up from a lacklustre start failed to get all the way out to the layline and lost a place or two in the rounding.

The first reach proved to be a no-overtaking zone but the choice of passing to windward or leeward of an anchored ship on the second deep reach clearly exercised a few tacticians though at the leeward the lead remained unchanged. The next beat again saw splits along the right-left line with Dionysus, Division Belle and Dynamite going right; Defiant and Dreamer going left. The deciding factor turned out to be the ability to call the layline in the slowly veering wind, and the final windward finished with Defiant, Dionysus and Division Belle rounding first. The reaches that followed brought no changes of place and the shortened course at the leeward mark (or was it

nearby - few of us seemed to know at the time), though confusing, confirmed the winner as Defiant followed by Dionysus and Division Belle.

18th August, Sea View Yacht Club Regatta

With a new wind direction from the South West placing the windward mark near the entrance to Bembridge Harbour, several boats took the opportunity to try the wind direction on the starboard layline on the way out from the moorings and I'm sure many tacticians were smugly counting their gains as they sailed back to the start line. The start itself seems to have occupied enough attention that few of the nine boats appeared to notice the 10 degree back that had both made port tack favoured at the start but would also make that layline heading useless at best.

Dolphin and Audax noticed the shift and were moved to take a port-tack start which saw both cross close behind each starboard tacker and immediately taking a gain. Perhaps blinded by that starboard layline information though they failed to pick up the progressive nature of the shift and promptly sailed to the back of the fleet via the great circle!

Up front Division Belle, Dionysus, Dynamite and Decoy fought an heroic battle for the lead through fitful shifts to the first windward mark on the windward-leeward course. The deciding factor turned out to be playing the lift in on port tack as close to the mark as possible and Decoy, Division Belle, and Dionysus rounded first. On the run, the lure of the left called every boat except Audax now firmly in last and looking for a way back by sailing the shortest course: the only advantage to being last is that no-one follows when you take a flier. The approach to the leeward mark saw the lead boats still in the same order, though closer with the back of the fleet within two minutes of the front.

The second round looked a bit like a replay of the first though spinnaker halyards appeared to be trickier for some boats with at least three nestling at the top of the mast when they were needed. For Decoy this proved to be a real problem at the leeward mark and in spite of choosing the lifted port tack out of the mark, they were soon fighting to stay in the top four as the fleet abandoned the right-left choice in favour of playing the shifts through the middle of the course to the last top mark. By now only Division Belle had established an unassailable lead and the hunt was on to try to get into the remaining two podium spots.

Several tacks and thousands of 'they're doing well over there' comments later the final windward leg ended with Division Belle ahead easily followed by Dynamite. With the left side seeming to be safe, Division Belle and Dynamite went left, Damsel and Streak went right and Audax went down the middle. For once the middle paid and at the last leeward Audax had moved up into 3rd close behind Dynamite and just a touch ahead of Damsel for the final very short reach to the finish the whole fleet finishing within about 3 minutes: close (and enjoyable) racing indeed on a well set course. Our thanks to Seaview Yacht Club's race committee!

Paul Miller

## 23rd - 25th August, Daring Regatta, East Wight

### Saturday

A windward-leeward course in a light and faltering southwesterly breeze was always going to be a challenge, and the first windward leg showed that ability to maintain boatspeed was more important than choosing a side. At the top mark Dynamite had established a little lead over Dolphin and Decoy with a number of boats close enough behind to threaten any leader that could not get away to clear air. The leeward leg seemed to confirm that sailing angles to gybe downwind is the answer in light air as Division Belle, Dashing and Streak made good gains to take second, third and fourth behind Dynamite.

As the conditions got lighter still on the next beat Division Belle and Streak seemed to pick up the scraps of wind and avoid the hole just below the top mark to move into first and second with Dynamite and Dashing taking up the third and fourth spot going into the run to the shortened course finish line. Two hundred yards short of the finish line the tide seemed more likely to drag boats across the finish line than the wind, and boats that had set up to either side gained by being able to reach up more toward the line allowing Dashing to move into first followed by Division Belle, Streak and Dynamite.

Race 2 on Saturday was cancelled due to light winds.

### The Ladies' Race (Sunday)

After the calm of Saturday afternoon, it was a relief to wake up to a gentle force three Easterly on Sunday morning. The East Wight committee set a good windward, leeward course, well inside the expected course of the Round the Island power boat racers. Nine Daring ladies came to the near perfect start line. There was close racing and much unaccustomed hard work by husbands and boyfriends. A full course was sailed with Sam Axtell (nee Benham), in Dionysis, the worthy winner, having led from start to finish. Adele Carritt and Lindy Janson filled the next two places. It was notable that the first three boats were all sailed by East Wight ladies. Local knowledge had no apparent impact, but should there be a special prize for the first lady with no Island connections? Or, is it the case that, quite simply, anyone qualified to enter will be likely to have one? After the near fiasco last year, when the wind almost completely died, forcing the race committee to shorten at the first mark, there should be no complaints about this year's race.

### Main Race (No 2)

The wind held up well during the afternoon for race two which was sailed in an East going tide and Easterly wind that was moving slowly towards the South. Jonathan Peel set another good line with an apparent port bias of about five degrees. However with a stronger favourable tide on the righthand side of the course, the Starboard end was favoured. The race committee must have feared for their safety as the majority of boats fought for pole position and were pushed up by those heading for the line close hauled. The end result, after much shouting of "up,up" was four boats over the line, who did not

return. Dolphin, apparently, had the best of the start & sailed well clear to be unchallenged for the whole race, finishing in front by a wide margin to be met by silence from the committee boat. She was one of those "OCS". Behind her quite a scrap developed with much place changing. Decoy, although closely challenged by several boats, managed to round the final windward mark with a two or three boats length lead over Defiant. However, the on-form Dashing lived up to her name, making up much ground on the final windward leg by going right, to round the last mark just behind Defiant and thus set up an intriguing struggle on the run for home. All three boats closed up with both Defiant & Dashing unwilling to challenge the weather of the one in front. At the finish, they were all on the line together, with Decoy the winner by about half a length. But Dashing really had the whip out and pipped Defiant by the shortest of short heads for second place (forgive the horse racing analogy but since both crews would be equally at home with four legs under them, they won't mind!) .This was a particularly gratifying result for Philip Bown of Dashing, who won on Saturday, but looked as if he would not be able to sail on Sunday as a result of a broken main halyard. However, borrowing a portable talurit machine from Vernon Stratton, he demonstrated considerable skill as a rigger by repairing it personally, finishing only just in the nick of time. Vernon, many thanks from the Daring Class.

#### Monday Race 1

A pleasant easterly breeze blowing over a slight chop reminded us all that Darings are not as dry as we had become used to! The breeze oscillated through about ten degrees in the start area and the division between left and right was not so pronounced for this windward-leeward course. Instead the boats that did best followed the lifts and tried not to overstand on the initial beat.

Starting well helps too and Doublet succeeded there getting off to a good start and keeping their lead to the top mark followed fairly closely by Dreamer and Defiant. Having established the order, little changed through the following rounds with close tactical sailing among the leaders with Dreamer and Defiant often too close to call.

In the end, Doublet held their lead to win followed by Dreamer and Defiant.

#### Novice Race

General confusion and a bit of impatience made for a chaotic start as boats seemed to fan out as if escaping the scene of a crime. Some boats seemed to be a little uncertain of the course, while others seemed to be uncertain of the start time and the first short beat developed an early lead for boats that knew what they were doing on the initial two legs. From there Darling opted for a very shy spinnaker while Destroyer headed back to the first mark adding to the general confusion over the course.

Once around NW Mining Ground though, the objective seemed clear to all with the only choice being between sailing south of Ryde Middle risking a foul tide or sailing north of Ryde Middle and sailing a longer course. Though no-

one really tried the north track, those that went north initially (Defiant, Dolphin, Medina II, Audax) seemed to gain on those that stayed to the rhumb line.

In the end the lead remained unchanged at the finish with Defiant, helmed by Oliver Trefgarne, taking first followed by Dionysus and Darling. All three were only slightly behind Meryel and Deborah who arrived at the RCYC committee box just before the first boat!

Thanks to Paul Miller for Saturday's and Monday's reports. Thanks to "anon" for Sunday's report!

### **30th - 31st August, RYS Regatta**

In beautiful sailing conditions on Saturday, the fleet was sent eastwards on a reach to West Ryde Middle, just as the ebb tide started to set in. As they neared the mark, they were able to set spinnakers but most of the fleet had sailed high of the rhumb line and found themselves in a hole. Division Belle sailed the rhumb line and arrived first, followed by Dauntless and then Doublet, who had taken the most southerly route. Following a beat to Air Canada, the long run against the tide to Sunsail split the fleet. Division Belle was holding the lead until the wind backed, allowing Dauntless to overtake. The beat to Seascope was uneventful but on the following very long run to DB Marine, Division Belle overtook Dauntless by staying north and Defiant took third place from Doublet by sailing south. Doublet managed to overtake Defiant again on the following beat by sailing around the bows of a moored ship but Loup Garou took the left hand side of the beat and picked up a shift to overtake them both. However, Loup Garou's third place was short-lived as she sailed away from the next mark on port gybe when the following mark could easily be laid on starboard. Doublet took third place again and the final leg from North Ryde Middle to the RYS finish line turned into a close reach with no further place-changes. Thus Division Belle finished first, with Dauntless second and Doublet third.

Sunday's race was cancelled due to lack of wind.

Giles Peckham

### **6th - 7th September, Red Funnel Regatta**

The south-westerly wind filled in at 1.30 on Saturday, allowing the race committee to set a windward-leeward course between Air Canada and South Bramble. The Bramble Bank gave some shelter from the tide and so the right hand side of the beats was favoured. In the first race, Darius pulled ahead of the pack with good boat speed to lead at the first mark. Decoy pursued her, caught up on the second beat and managed to overtake her just before the second rounding of the windward mark. Darius hit the mark and her penalty turn gave Decoy a margin to maintain her lead and win the race, with Darius second. Meanwhile, Dauntless held on to third place until the final short beat to the finish line when Decanter overtook her with superior boat speed.

In the second race, those who started at the committee boat end and tacked away first took the lead, Decoy reaching the windward mark first, with Damsel

second and Dauntless third. Such was the premium on staying out of the tide before tacking out for the windward mark, that on the second lap, Dauntless and many of the pursuing fleet overstood the windward mark, allowing Diamond to come through to third place. The last two legs were uneventful for the top three and so they finished in that order, Decoy, Darius and then Diamond.

Giles Peckham

In light southeasterly winds on Sunday, the committee set a decently short windward leeward course presumably so that two races could be finished; a novelty in recent weeks. The start was generally good, plenty of boats on the line, most of them moving, and the left seemed to be favoured for tide if not for breeze. By the first mark, Decoy had established a short lead over Doublet and Dynamite followed by a number of boats, some struggling in the dying breeze and everyone trying to guess the best route down the run. Decoy and a handful of others chose the left for the run, while Doublet and Dynamite went right for more breeze, and as the wind continued to die the leaders and several other piled around the leeward mark draining all that was left of the wind.

While the majority of boats chose the left for the beat, a hardy few went right; perhaps thinking that a dying southeast would be followed by anything except a northerly wind; and perhaps a bit smug thinking of the gains to be made from the now becalmed group on the left. Humble pie was soon served on the right as a scant breeze trickled in from the northwest to carry the left side to the shortened course finish line before the right even got moving. The top spots went to the canny or perhaps psychic: Decoy followed very closely indeed by Devius, Doublet and Defiant. The elapsed difference between the top four boats being just 30 seconds or in the conditions about three boat-lengths!

The second race was (mercifully) abandoned before the warning signal.

Paul Miller

### **13th - 14th September, Solent Series**

The weekend's weather was perfect for sailing, a west to southwesterly force 2 to 3 and brilliant sunshine. On Saturday, Decanter and Decoy made the best start on the outer end of the line and headed inshore for the beat up to Peel Bank. Decoy eventually passed Decanter and Darius moved up into third place. Most of the lead boats overstood the mark a little, allowing some of the followers to catch up. After the run to West Ryde Middle, the leaders beat up the Ryde Middle Bank to South Ryde Middle, while Dauntless put one long tack into Osborne Bay to get out of the tide and moved up from sixth to take the lead. The reach to North Ryde Middle was just too shy for a spinnaker; Dauntless tried it but it didn't pay. On the following long beat to SE Ryde Middle, the Island shore was again the place to be and this time Decoy followed Dauntless over there. Decanter tacked off to the left and dropped well down the fleet as she fought against the foul tide. The lay line to SE Ryde

Middle was a difficult call. Decoy tacked first and overtook Dauntless who had overstood it. The following run to the finish was uneventful, leaving Decoy first, Dauntless second and Darius third.

At the start on Sunday, the tide was just turning and the outer end of the line was favoured in all respects. Diamond made the best start and continued to lead the fleet up the beat to Sunsail, only being passed by Decoy on the tack to the mark. On the run to Spanker, Dauntless took the Island shore looking for less adverse tide. There also seemed to be more wind on that side of the course and she was able to take first place by the mark. On the following beat back to North Ryde Middle, Decoy took the right hand side and found a twenty degree wind bend in her favour, together with a stronger breeze, allowing her to retake the lead. Diamond also benefited from the right hand side and took second place although Dauntless was soon able to sail around her to get inside at the mark. After the short run to West Ryde Middle, there was a beat back to Daks Simpson. As the wind backed, the boats were lifted up almost to the lay line. Diamond tacked away from some dirty air but this put her out in the tide. Meanwhile, Devius sailed fast and caught up with her at the mark. Diamond took the more direct route to the finish line and managed to hold on to third place, while Decoy and Dauntless remained in first and second place respectively.

Giles Peckham

### **20th - 21st September, Red Funnel Championship**

The weather on Saturday could hardly have been better. The sun shone all day and the wind blew a steady force two to three from the west. The racing was held near East Bramble in a weak neap flood tide. Starting at the favoured committee boat end of the line and tacking out into the tide helped Dynamite to reach the windward mark first, closely followed by Decanter and Dauntless. Two coasters came through the fleet just before the mark, making life interesting for a few of the boats on the right hand side of the course! The two lead boats then went right on the run but lost to Dauntless who held a better breeze on the left. On the next beat, Dynamite overstood the mark on the right hand side as the wind lifted, allowing Decoy to take third place. With no place changes on the run, the top three rounded the leeward mark in the same order and headed for the finish line. Dauntless tacked for the line and Decanter decided to clear her wind before following. Meanwhile, Decoy tacked early and headed for the favoured committee boat end of the finish line. Decanter recognised the danger and tried to shut Decoy out but Decoy just managed to tack inside her and cross the line ahead to take second place.

Conditions for the second race on Saturday were the same as for the first. Decoy came away from the start with a good lead which she held to the first mark, followed by Dynamite and Dreamer. On the run, Loup Garou took the left hand side and managed to take the lead, ahead of Decoy and Dauntless. On the beat, Loup Garou continued to extend her lead and went on to win the race, with Decoy still in second place. On the second run, the right hand side

paid and Dreamer slipped past Dauntless to take third place which she held to the finish.

Conditions on Sunday were different. The wind had swung to the west and the tide was just beginning to flood. Dynamite took an early lead in the first race but lost to Doublet by taking the right hand side of the run. Dauntless similarly overhauled Decanter to take third place. Doublet held the lead to the next windward mark but executed a bear-away set into lighter wind and lost the lead to Dynamite. Decoy managed to catch up well on the beat and passed Dauntless on the run but in switching her one halyard from spinnaker to jib, let Dauntless through on the inside. On the leg to the finish, Dynamite held her lead, while Doublet covered Dauntless and allowed Decoy to slip through into third place again.

The pin end of the line was favoured in the second race, despite the foul tide out there. Another great race for Dynamite. She led the race from start to finish with Decanter following, both showing very good boat speed. Diamond started well on the pin end and plugged the left hand side of the beats which worked for her and gave her third place.

Giles Peckham

### **27th - 28th September, RTYC Regatta**

The wind on Saturday died during the morning and racing had to be cancelled for the day.

On Sunday the wind was a shifty force 3 from the north east and large gains were made immediately by those on the right hand side of the first beat. Decoy, Decanter and Dancer made it to Royal Thames first and while the others sailed high of the rhumb line to North Ryde Middle, Dancer stayed low and made a large gain towards the end of the leg as the wind lightened on the left of the course. Dancer rounded first, followed by Decoy and then Decanter, Doublet and Dauntless together. On the beat to Seascope, those who took the right hand side avoided the hole on the left and picked up a good right shift. This enabled Dolphin and Double Knot to catch up with the leaders and when Decoy overstood the mark with a navigation error, Dolphin slipped through to take the lead. On the spinnaker run to Norris, Double Knot and Diamond lost all they had gained by gybing away onto port, while the rest of the fleet were able to sail directly to the mark without gybing. Dolphin, Decanter and Decoy remained in first, second and third places respectively for the duration of the run and the final beat to the finish line.

Giles Peckham

### **4th - 5th October, RCYC Regatta**

Saturday's race was held in a very pleasant north westerly with a neap flood tide throughout. The outer end of the line was favoured for the first beat up to Quinnet. Quite a shifty wind, with those going up the middle working the shifts best. Those on the wings of the beat fared less well. First there was Defiant, followed by Decanter, Devius and Darius. After a short reach to Lepe Spit, the

run back to the line saw Dolphin heading right initially, and catching up significantly. Through the line and on to Gales HSB, followed by a beat all the way back to Royal Thames. Those that went left on the beat, lee-bowing the flood tide did best, with Defiant, Decanter and Decoy setting the pace. On the run back to the line after another reach from Lepe Spit, Decanter went right with Defiant gybing inside her. Defiant looked very strong initially, but with a very close finish Decanter managed to hold her off, with Decoy a credible third.

However, the biggest smiles in the bar afterwards were from the Decoy team of Richard and Nicky Ottaway and David Chaplin. Richard should have been in Blackpool, but had his priorities absolutely right in being on his boat at Cowes. They needed one more result to secure the season's points trophy for the first time, which they did with ease. Well done Decoy!

Richard Acland

On Sunday the winter chill started to bite but it was beautifully sunny and blowing a force four from the north-west. The first beat to Lepe Spit was largely on starboard tack and those who had started to leeward were able to pull ahead as the wind backed nearer to the mark. Audax rounded first, followed by Decanter and Devius. All three sailed a little low on the tight spinnaker reach to Gales HSB and were rolled by Dauntless and Dynamite who took first and second places respectively. Up the following beat to Royal Thames, Dynamite lost out to Defiant on the wind shifts as the wind veered to the north. The close spinnaker reach to Lepe spit was exciting as the wind gusted off the beach. Some elected to put up their smaller reaching spinnakers which overall seemed to be more effective. The gybe at Lepe Spit was followed by another close reach to the finish line. Half way home, Dauntless' spinnaker pole downhaul broke, forcing her to drop her spinnaker. Fortunately, by this time she had extended her lead to a few hundred yards and was able to make it to the line without losing her lead. In the duel behind her, Dynamite tried various ways to sail around Defiant and eventually succeeded to windward just a few yards from the finish. Thus Dynamite finished second and Defiant third.

Giles Peckham