



Above
Team Foxy won the Gold Cup after 30 years of trying

Below
The club's imposing Victorian facade

Below left
Regatta chairman Karen Cox

the area and, importantly, talk to the locals at the bar the night you arrive.

"We are blessed with having the Goodwin Sands, which are well marked and used as a basis for the offshore race, but it can be challenging. There are lots of shallows and tides, but it is the fact there are plenty of opportunities to 'duck and dive' that makes sailing at Ramsgate so special."

HEADLINE SUPPORT

The regatta may be a special event for sailors, but why would a locally based marine insurance broker be prepared to come in as headline sponsor?

Hayley Abis, marine manager at Euromarine's Broadstairs office, said: "We knew we wanted to be a sponsor, but didn't know where. We could not have picked a better event for our brand. We are exceptionally happy to work with the club because it has the same values as us and it has a really similar culture as well."

"We know that the club strives to get the event back to how it was when 100 boats used to take part and we want to help it achieve that."

"The idea is to market our brand so that it is recognisable to sailors so, as well as headline sponsorship, we wanted to give something directly to the competitors, which is why all competitors at Ramsgate Week received a 10 per cent discount code with their entry," said Abis.

HOW TO WIN

Light winds and strong tides for the opening day of Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week 2019, a race around the Goodwin Sands, made for a challenging start for all competitors. The following day was challenging for a different reason, with winds in excess of 27 knots. Temperatures soared as southern England sweltered in a record heatwave

and although the wind generally erred on the light side, a 20-knot screamer midweek kept things exciting and provided a welcome relief from the heat, which reached 38.1C on the Thursday.

One victim of the lively conditions midweek was Richard Matthews' Team Oystercatcher XXXIII, a Ker 51, in IRC 1, which suffered most damage during a kite hoist. The team from West Mersea YC had won the first windy race of the series and were overall favourites, but had to retire from the regatta with two days to go.

That left the door open for home-club sailors John Barrett and Paul Woodward on Stiletto, a Corby 36, who with a scoreline of three firsts and two seconds, won the battle for overall honours from fellow club members Peter and Judith Jackson on Assasin, a Pronavia 42.

Local hotshots Barrett and Woodward also won the IRC Spinlock Championship, two points clear of the Jacksons.

So how do you win Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week? Woodward said: "Using the tides can give you a big advantage. The racing area is between the North and South Foreland and between Goodwin Sands and Brake Sands, off Ramsgate, with the strongest tides in the Gulf Stream, so there is

RED HOT RAMSGATE

Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week boasts new sponsors and increased entries. **SUE PELLING** braved record Kent temperatures to find out Royal Temple Yacht Club's recipe for success

Anyone who has visited the Royal Temple Yacht Club during Ramsgate Week will know why the event has gained its reputation as the 'friendly regatta'.

The four-storey, red brick clubhouse, dating back 162 years, is imposing, but the welcome as you walk through its grand entrance is warm and during the regatta the place is buzzing. A post-racing sundowner with fellow competitors on the balcony, overlooking the marina and North Sea beyond, is a lively affair and comes highly recommended.

Like many regattas, Ramsgate Week suffered a decline in entries over the last decade. A regular fleet of 100 boats or more dwindled and sponsors have been ever harder to attract. This year's edition of the event, however, enjoyed a bigger fleet with almost 60 entries, which is a 24 per cent increase on 2018

and includes a strong IRC and cruising class representation, as well as a healthy contingent from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Not only that, but the event boasts a line-up of loyal partners and with the continued backing of headline sponsor Euromarine Insurance Services the regatta team can plan ahead confidently for 2020.

"We have entered a new positive phase," says regatta chairman Karen Cox. "We are very grateful to all of our sponsors. We are absolutely delighted

Above
View from the clubhouse

Below
Stiletto on her way to an overall win at the sweltering 2019 edition



to have attracted more entries this year, and particularly pleased to once again welcome such an enthusiastic contingent from the continent, who appear to rank our event as one of the best in Europe."

One advantage of Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week is the fact that it is run from one central hub – Royal Temple YC. The clubhouse is the one and only place that all competitors gather post-racing, and the camaraderie is palpable, with prize-givings in the evening and a line-up of bands every night. The club puts a strong focus on the racing/social balance.

David Tomlinson, competing this year on Only Magic, a J/97, says: "At Ramsgate, even if you've had a bad day, you get back to the club and you get a pat on the back. Everyone at the regatta gets to know one another, regardless of where you finish on the water."

That is not to say, however, that

the racing at Ramsgate is less than competitive. With some of domestic racing's most historic trophies up for grabs, including the QEII Cup and the Gold Cup, and also the EAORA IRC Spinlock Championship, there is always plenty of strong competition throughout the week.

With strong tides and sandbanks, sea conditions can be challenging and your pilotage needs to be spot on. Ramsgate is not your average regatta.

Competitor David Tomlinson adds: "Look at the charts, read up about



plenty of opportunity to use it well.

“Near the Brake sands you will find the temporary race marks laid in less depth and this area is great for keeping out of the strong tides. When the wind is coming from the prevailing southwest – same as the tide direction – keep to the right. When the wind direction is cross-tide it becomes very shifty and you must play the shifts to gain big advantages.”

One team of first-timers to the event who made their trip from West Mersea YC worthwhile was Team Swuzzlebubble, a Farr Half Tonner) owned and helmed by Phil Plumtree. Not only did this well-seasoned crew clinch Class 3 overall with five clear wins, but they won Class 3 of the East Coast IRC Spinlock Championship, and took the prestigious QEII Cup from Barrett and Woodward.

In this light airs race on the Thursday, each had a 1,4 to count in the two-race event, but Swuzzlebubble was deemed overall winner by dint of a better final race. The QEII Cup, according to club records, is the only yachting cup ever presented by the Queen, who during her visit stayed at the club in one of the rooms overlooking the sea.

Plumtree said: “As a first-timer to this event, I would say it is important to have a good crew.”

Crew member Jerry Hill's father won the Goodwin Sands Race in 1971 and he was delighted to have done well at the regatta. “I'd always heard good things about the event and I have to say it's a lovely club with a lot of history.”

“It is challenging to race here because you have sands and strong tide, so my advice is to do your homework before you arrive.”

GOING FOR GOLD

The Gold Cup for IRC classes is one of the regatta's other big prizes, with past winners including Sir Edward Heath, and David Geaves with his 'Fiona' boats from Burnham-on-Crouch, who won it more times than anyone. A huge cheer greeted this year's winners as they went up to lift the trophy. Royal Temple sailors Mike, former commodore, and Jo Brand, aboard the X-34 Foxy, won the cup after 30 years of trying and were presented with it by Ramsgate mayor Ara Raushan.

“Gold Cup day was make or break for the Foxy team. We knew that to win our class and the IRC East Coast Championships, we simply had to win the race,” said Brand.

“The wind shifted five minutes after the start and this turned all the downwind legs into 60-70 degree apparent legs.

2020 DATES ANNOUNCED

Round the Goodwin Race
Sunday 26 July
Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week 2020
Mon 27-Fri 31 July
Entry details
ramsgateweek.com.



Our main competition all week had been with the HOD 35 Zarafa, last year's ORC world champions from Belgium. This gave us the will to push for every second of the race.

“We were able to hold our Code Zero for five legs of the course and without doubt that was the golden nugget that won the race for us.

As we crossed the finish line, we knew we had won our class, and then to find we had won the Gold Cup, the most prestigious trophy in Ramsgate, was a real bonus.”

He offered special thanks to the race management team, headed by regatta stalwart Peter Rumbelow from the Royal Torbay YC.

The Gold Cup, which resides in the huge trophy cabinet in the main club lounge, has a story behind it, as Paul Woodward, Ramsgate Week results coordinator, explained: “When Ted Heath won it, the club

Above
Strong tides and sandbanks make for interesting racing

Below
Regatta first-timers Swuzzlebubble won their class with five bullets and the QEII Cup

gave him special dispensation to take the solid gold cup home temporarily, because he wanted to make a duplicate, a gold-plated version for keeps. It was the only time it had left the club.

“A few years on, the club was broken into and the cup was among the trophies stolen. Thankfully, we were able to call upon Sir Edward and borrow his replica in order to make another one for the club, albeit gold-plated this time. We were, however, so grateful that we were able to replace it. It is still regarded as the ultimate trophy to win.”

FOREIGN AFFAIR

With Ramsgate's Channel location, it regularly attracts a strong fleet from France, Belgium, Holland and beyond. Given Euromarine Insurance Ramsgate Week's mid/late July timing, it is also the perfect feeder-style event for those on passage to other regattas such as Cowes Week.

Among the international line-up and loyal supporters of both Cowes and Ramsgate Week were Wouter and Leen Borghijs from Nieuwpoort, Belgium, sailing with their five-strong young family team, aged between 10 and 15, aboard an Archambault 35, Tontin Pups. They started the week with an IRC Class 1 win in the tactically demanding light airs 28nm round the Goodwin Sands race. That performance was followed with another win in the second race of the series.

However, the team and one young member in particular, Kwinten, will remember the event for more than just racing. This 15-year-old helmsman suffered appendicitis on the way out the startline on the Wednesday and was transferred to a local hospital for an operation. His mother Leen Borghijs was understandably grateful that the club dealt with the medical emergency so professionally and quickly.

Husband Leen said: “For us Ramsgate is the perfect stop-off for Cowes Week, and this is one of the many clubs in England that has good race management. They know their wind, current, and know how to set good courses depending on the conditions. It is always a good challenge, too, with the sand banks to take into consideration. We love it and



Above left
Team Stiletto, winners of IRC1, at the prize-giving

Above right
It was hot out there

Below left
Ramsgate mayor Ara Raushan presents the Gold Cup to Team Foxy

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would highly recommend it.”

Another foreign boat was the Dutch Vanilla, an X332 in IRC 2, headed by Niek Spiljard. This 1997 build showed a clean pair of heels to the fleet on the opening day. Spiljard has competed at the regatta four times. “It offers good race management, which is the key to a good regatta, and it is the perfect format because you have three to five hours sailing, then you come in early, with time for a shower and a beer and then back to the club for the evening entertainment.”

On the racing at Ramsgate, Spiljard said: “It is often shifty here, so get yourself a good tactician. Also, for any regatta I would say rent a house rather than staying on the boat if you can, because that can make a big difference.”

Another Dutch team on First 355 Mrs Jones, headed by Danny Besse, was sleeping on board, racing with all their bags and belongings down below. At their 15th Ramsgate Week, in Cruiser Class 5, they were early leaders but lost out with a couple of poor results that left them in second place in class to Nick Moulton on Dabtoe, a Sunfast 3200, from Walton & Frinton YC. The Dutch team was also second overall in the Gold Cup Cruiser class to locals Donald Gray on Jeanneau 42 DS Blown Away.

Besse said: “The club has a really good atmosphere and you always get good racing. It takes us approximately 14 hours to get here but you do need to prepare well the week before.”

Peter Jackson, who ran Ramsgate Week for best part of 11 years, six years as Rear Commodore Sailing, said it was vital to make

visitors feel welcome and offer as much advice as possible, particularly for newcomers. “There are a few local quirks in the conditions so we are only too pleased to answer any questions. We always give the foreign boats, and any first-timers, a briefing with tips and advice on things like back eddies and sand banks, and any other little quirks that may catch them out.”

NEWCOMERS ARE GO

Had there been a prize for inspiration, then Ken and Valerie Walsh's team aboard the Oceanis 34, Splash, from the home club, would have been well up the rankings. Just three years ago, this group of kite-surfers from Thanet, including Chris Lewendon and Paul Denton, had never been on a yacht.

Now they are prominent members of the club and regulars on the racecourse. Walsh said: “I used to do motor racing and needed to do something else to fuel my competitive spirit. A lot of my friends sailed here, so I bought a boat. “Actually it was a programme on TV that featured an Oceanis 34 that really inspired me. I liked the look of it. I had no idea about boats except for a bit of Laser sailing I did a long time ago, but that was it. Our crew did our Yachtmaster exam here at Royal Temple YC and the rest is history. We just muddle our way round and really enjoy it.”

In joint first place with three other boats in Cruiser Class 7 until the final day, Team Splash was pipped at the post and finished one point behind a Three-Quarter Tonner, Borsalino, sailed by James Fisher and crew from Haven Ports YC.

Walsh said: “We are a team who have proved it is possible to just buy a boat and take part. My advice is to just do it.”

