



Neil Pryde's *Hi Fi* follows the Royal Malaysian Navy's *Uranus*, *Baby Tonga* approaching

Three hundred competitors from 11 countries in 41 boats (2012 : 36) with 76 races over five days were just some of the statistics principal race officer (RO) Simon James gave out in his speech at the final awards party of the 11th Royal Langkawi International Regatta.

Once again, former Malaysian prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife were in attendance to present the perpetual 'Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy'.

After 10 attempts it was a relieved and delighted Neil Pryde and crew from *Hi Fi Team Pryde* (Welbourn 52) who collected the trophy from Dr Mahathir being the one major Asian sailing award that had eluded him.

This was no mean feat considering he is recovering from hip replacement surgery which had seen him miss the opening regattas of the 2012/2013 season including the China Coast Regatta, the Raja Muda and the Phuket King's Cup. Although five-time winner Ray Roberts (*Evolution Racing*), four-time winner Peter Ahern (*Yo!*) and last year's winner Marcus Blackmore (*Hooligan*) did not compete, competition was still tough against Frank Pong's Reichel Pugh 75 *Jelik* (ex-*Pyewacket*), two dk47s of the Royal Malaysian Navy, *Utarid* and *Uranus*, along with Steve Manning's Sydney GTS 43, *Walawala 2*, Ben Copley's RP45,

*Katsu*, and the Peter Sorensen-chartered Beneteau First 53f5, *Baby Tonga*.

Unfortunately for Sorensen and crew the late withdrawal of *Big-A* and *Pytheas Aura* meant the Premier Cruising Class was decimated with the identical F53f5 *Overdrive* opting for Club Cruising whilst *Baby Tonga* joined Racing. Not surprisingly it struggled against the stiff competition for most of the regatta bringing up the rear in all but two of its races.

Although struggling for sponsors, (don't they all these days), the event remains one of the best organised regattas in the region, something the



Dr Mahathir present Neil Pryde his trophy (right) and mark rounding in Bass Harbour (below)

organiser, the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club, has plans to build on. According to RLYC commodore, Dato' Ya'acob bin Tunku Tan Sri Abdullah, support has primarily come from the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Youth & Sport with Tourism Malaysia its prime sponsor.

One of Malaysia's goals is to make Langkawi one of the world's top 10 island resort destinations with a somewhat

ambitious target of achieving this by 2015. There is noticeable evidence around the island of road improvements while properties abandoned during the 1998 Asian economic crisis are finally being completed or receiving a coat of paint

Aligned with this is the RLYC's desire to improve all aspects of the regatta and make it the 'Premier Yachting Regatta in ASEAN'. This includes having the largest number of participants in the region by 2018 through increased participation of

IRC Class yachts, working harder with regional regatta organisers to attract more yachts from Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand, enhancing their presence at international conferences and boat shows to promote the regatta and Langkawi and being substantially more visible globally through TV and the electronic media\*.

Undoubtedly an admirable goal and with the national sailing centre just across the harbour they should be able to rustle up a couple of hundred Optimist sailors to take on the Top of the Gulf as the biggest regatta in ASEAN.

Another barely tapped source is the fleet of Sunsail boats that sit on

their moorings in Langkawi or Phuket with just one entry, *Rattana*, this year. The overnight feeder race, 'The Champagne Run' from Phuket to Langkawi, would be a great way for anyone to start a charter, followed by five days of racing and partying in Langkawi before another week cruising the islands of Langkawi and/or Thailand. Surely that must be appealing to currently snowbound European or American sailors.

The organisers should also consider the success that the China Cup Regatta is having in attracting one design fleets by providing boats available to charter, ie. 30 Beneteau First 40.7s, 10 Soto 27s and 11 Far East 26s. Crews are seemingly willing to fly in to compete from around the globe avoiding the logistics of moving their own boats.

Of the 41 entries, 38 competed, split into nine classes plus an Under 25 Sportsboats division. White Sail, i.e. yachts without spinnakers, was a new category. With probably the most classes of any Asian regatta, it also meant that most skippers, over the course of the regatta, went home with at least one and in many cases multiple trophies except *Baby Tonga* in Racing with seven entries, *Cabaret 6* with four entries in IRC 1, and *Smystery*, *Rascal* and *Haffiman* with seven participants in Club Cruising.

A tropical depression over West Borneo sucked in most of the expected breeze, resulting in light airs for the early part of the regatta when it kicked off on Tuesday the 8th of January 2013. After waiting more than four hours, racing finally got underway in the afternoon but at least they all got a race under their belts.

Wednesday's races remained in Kuah (Bass) Harbour with windward/leewards for Racing, IRC 1 and Sportsboats and around the harbour for the rest.

With conditions forecast to be light and flukey the Around the Island Race was postponed until possibly Friday, although the fleet did venture out to the coastal courses, where again Racing and Sportsboats competed on windward/leewards whilst the others followed various geometric tracks. The 6 to 8-knot breeze was not to last with the RO having to shorten courses for the cruising classes.

Sunshine, blue sky, cotton wool puffs of cumuli clouds and perhaps more importantly for the participants a 10- to 12-knot breeze, were a



handicap honours with *Uranus* in 2nd place. Sportsboats likewise completed two races before the rest of the fleet returned from their geometric course and prepared for the start of their second race. This entailed repositioning the committee boat and pin before Racing and Sportboats were sent on 3-lap and 2-lap courses whilst the rest of the boats were given a short geometric passage.

Conditions were again forecast to be light when FH joined Charles and Sally Hay on *Smystery* for the concluding races on Saturday, the 12th of January 2013. Winner last year in Club Cruising of the RLYC's Commodore's

Challenge Cup, the Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45DS struggled this year in the lighter airs.

Sailed with friends from Falmouth in Britain, in an attempt to whistle up the wind the morning started with a sea shanty *The Larks They Sang Melodius\*\** and melodious it certainly was! It also seemed to do the trick with racing getting underway around 1045, again in Kuah Harbour.

Racing, IRC 1 and Sportsboats were again given windward/leeward courses of two or three laps while the rest were given an assortment of geometric courses within the harbour.

Seemingly in a good position approaching the Club Cruising start, *Smystery* got pushed up by *Poco* into an OCS position and was obliged to restart. There was further confusion over the marks of the course with both *Rascal* and *Smystery* heading off for a mark on Course 11 instead of Course 15 before *Smystery* realised its error.

Winning the first race of the day in Racing, *Hi Fi*, with six — continued overleaf

# Langkawi Regatta

welcome relief on Friday morning when sailing again returned inside Kuah Harbour. After wisely abandoning the idea for an around the island race for this year, but with prospects of the wind swinging more westerly, the course options inside the harbour became more limited.

*Jelik* whipped around the two-lap course in just 37 minutes 22 seconds to take line and handicap honours.

It was a different story in the second race of the day, three laps of the windward/leeward course with the wind



*Baby Tonga* surrounded by sportsboats (below) and *Katsu* (above)

swinging from 90 to 65 degrees resulting in a mark change. *Utarid* was caught OCS.

Whilst *Jelik* again took line honours in Race 7 it was *Walawala 2* that captured

*Continued from previous page* — of a possible nine bullets, had done enough to convincingly win its class and opted to head back to the marina to celebrate, rather than join the last race

Allowing for a dropped race, four points separated 2nd and 3rd-placed *Jelik* and *Walawala 2* so there was still everything to compete for, whilst the Navy boats also continued their fierce inter-service rivalry.

With *Utariid* winning the first race of the regatta, it was fitting on this occasion that *Uranus* came out on top. In 2nd place was *Walawala 2* and, hanging on to 2nd overall, *Jelik* 4th. Manning was still delighted with *Walawala 2*'s 3rd-place finish with the GTS 43 excelling upwind on the few occasions the wind topped 10 knots and remaining in touch with the fleet downwind.

In IRC 1, Niels Degenkolw had nothing but praise for his crew on *Phoenix* 'probably the best ever', which allowed him time to steer the boat without necessarily worrying about tactics. *Phoenix* recorded a perfect score of eight bullets from eight races to claim the LADA IRC Class Challenge Trophy. Jeff Harris on *NiJinsky* was left trailing in their wake to finish in 2nd and John Kara's *Skybird* 3rd.

Likewise with a perfect score of six bullets from six races, Rod Azzopardi's Beneteau Oceanis 423, *Dreamtime*, captured overall in the Bareboat Charter Class with *Morakot* from the Darwin Sailing Club 2nd and the Sunsail *Rattana* 3rd.

Club Cruising's eight entries were reduced to seven with *Free Wind* suffering mechanical failings on its delivery passage from Phuket. Eventual class winner, Fuda Yasuto's *Fortissimo 8* got off to an inauspicious start to the regatta when it was disqualified in the first race for failing

to go through a gate. The international jury, chaired by Langkawi resident Bryan Willis (below), was considerate during its deliberations and adjourned the hearing to allow *Fortissimo 8* to summon a witness. Unfortunately the witness, surprised at being summoned to support Yasuto's claim, instead confirmed they had not sailed the course! *My Toy* finished 2nd with *Poco* 3rd.



Although romping around the various courses, father and son, Simon and James Morris, on *Sirius 1935*, gave too much time to Dato Richard Curtis' centurian *Eveline* which finished with four of a possible six bullets. TC Gerrard's *Warisan Duyong* finished 3rd perhaps weighed down by the 40 or so slabs of beer onboard.

In White Sail, *Chantique* took the overall title, missing out in just one of its six races, for an otherwise perfect score with *Optoloi* finishing 2nd.

Earning six bullets from 10 races, Mohd Masyuri A Rahmat took the overall title and the Langkawi Sportsclass Trophy for Team ATM on their Platu, relegating the MYA/KFC crew to 2nd place with the Singapore Management University (SMU) crew 3rd. MYA's Mohd Faizal iz Norizan was, however, delighted to collect the Under 25 trophy ahead of regular participants SMU and the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, the latter perhaps more used to stronger winds.

Last year's new 'Sheila' to the regatta circuit from Australia, *Fantasia II* had taken the Multihull Racing Class by storm and, whilst performing commendably to defend its title, finished in 2nd place behind this year's new model from the Antipodes, *Mojo*\*\*\*.

Five bullets from eight races earned it the Malaysia Multihull Challenge Cup in the Multihull Racing Class with *Miss Saigon* finishing 3rd. With fiercely competitive starts, Grenville Fordham's Andaman Cabriolet, *Niña*, finally came good in the penultimate race to earn its one and only bullet for the regatta and finished 4th.

*Prima Donna* took the honours with four of a possible six bullets in Multihull Premier Cruising with *Vertical Time* and *Ivory Street* 2nd and 3rd respectively.

For those that knew him, no edition of the Royal Langkawi International Regatta (RLIR) can fail to remember the Founding Commodore of the RLYC and the RLIR, Tunku Abdullah (aka: Charlie). His foresight and memory will live on in the club and the regatta with a bar 'Charlie's Place' named after him and a special award — the Tunku Abdullah Sportsmanship Trophy. The winner this year, was Jeremy Camp of *Cabaret 6*.

Under somewhat trying light air conditions the race officials did a good job in completing, in most cases, the full programme of races, ably supported by local volunteers and support drafted in from Kuala Lumpur. The hospitality at the RLYC, as always, was excellent. After 11 year's involvement the Race Director Ahmad Zailani Bashah (Zak) is taking on new responsibilities and will indeed be hard to replace. FH will watch with interest the club's efforts in growing the regatta but, hopefully, not at the expense of the friendly and intimate nature of the event.



\* Let's hope *Fragrant Harbour*'s regular and extensive coverage is not forgotten in the rush to modernise. By the way, all our past reports of Royal Langkawi International Regattas can be found on <http://www.langkawiregatta.com/Press-General/Fragrant-Harbour.html>

\*\* *The Larks They Sang Melodius*, also known as *Pleasant and Delightful* or *The Dawning of the Day*

\*\*\* *Mojo* is a Schionning design G Force 1500 built by Noosa Marine in Australia. As the owner Peter Wilcox explained the concept being a minimalist style 40ft cabin on a 50ft hull adding greater stability, a compromise for living and racing. Full size showers and ceramic toilet add to the homely elements. *Mojo* finished 3rd in line honours in the Brisbane to Gladstone race and won the 2012 Surf City Race. Having joined Sail Indonesia, Wilcox had nothing but praise for the friendliness of the people he'd met enroute. LOA 15.7m, BOA 7.8m, Draft 0.5m, Headroom 1.96m