

Ajax 2019 Race Reports

Ajax National Championships – Royal Harwich Yacht Club 19-22
September 2019

Report by Mike Clayton, Pictures by Will Patten

The defending champions from St Mawes joined nine local boats for the eight race series sailed in Dovercourt Bay, Harwich. The St Mawes crew chartered Mandalay, one of the three Ajax's donated to the Royal Harwich Yacht Club earlier in the year.

Day 1

The fleet enjoyed three competitive races in Dovercourt Bay. Race Officer Graham Louth set windward leeward courses for the first two races and a triangle-sausage for race 3.

The first race started in an ESE F3 and Polly Oliver (Mike Clayton, Bob Portway, John Gill), Mandalay (Paul Scullion, Ian Woods, Jack Elsby-Hartman) and Thunderer (John Williams, Hugh Williams, James Williams) got the best starts. All three arrived at the windward mark close together with Polly Oliver on the inside and Mandalay on the outside. The outer boats benefitted and Mandalay led down the run with Thunderer and Polly Oliver close behind. On the second beat Mandalay and Thunderer found more wind and extended away to the finish. Behind the front three Orwell VI (Richard Merriweather, Mark Ingram, Simon Abley) pulled through to secure fourth.

In the second race Polly Oliver started well at the pin end with Mandalay mid line. These two quickly established a lead with Mandalay again finding a faster lane to the windward mark. Thunderer pulled through on the run to challenge Polly Oliver. On the second beat Polly Oliver found the best shifts to lead at the windward mark and held on to win with Mandalay second and Thunderer third.



After a short pause to adjust the course to the wind shifting to the East, the third race started with Polly Oliver again getting the best start at the pin end. She pulled away up the beat with Orwell VI close behind and Mandalay recovering from a poor start getting to the first mark third. Behind these three Pegasus (Belinda Joslin, Sian Goodman, Steph Hensley) was going well and moved ahead of Thunderer. Polly Oliver stayed ahead for the first lap but on the second beat Orwell VI

found some good shifts to lead with Mandalay closing. At the windward mark Mandalay was able to squeeze round while a boat length behind Orwell VI held off Polly Oliver to round second.

These positions remain unchanged on the final run and short beat to the finish.

Leading Overall (after day 1). Mandalay (Paul Scullion) 1,2,1; Polly Oliver (Mike Clayton) 3,1,3; Orwell VI (Richard Merriweather) 4,4,2; Thunderer (John Williams) 2,3,5

Day 2

This was another sunny day with good winds on the East Coast - A solid F4 gusting F5 for the

first race blowing from the ESE. The sea looked a lovely shade of brown as sand was blown in from the Cork Sands. The 4th race started with some pin end bias with Polly Oliver and Orwell VI at the pin end. These two pulled away and Orwell VI tacked off and cleared the rest of the fleet including Mandalay and Thunderer. For these four the approach to the windward mark was going to be key and Orwell VI judged the lay line to perfection allowing the initial flood to push her up and round first, followed by Mandalay, Telamon (Gordon Sutton, Mike Moore, Phil Codling) and Polly Oliver. Orwell VI and Polly Oliver gybed early and went round the leeward mark first and second. On the next beat Orwell VI extended away whilst both Mandalay and Telamon caught Polly Oliver.

For Race 5 the course was reset and the line was biased towards the Committee Boat. Polly Oliver started at that end and tacked onto port early. Orwell VI again was going much faster than everyone else and led round the first mark for a comfortable win. Behind, Polly Oliver and Thunderer had a dual on the run with Polly Oliver managing to surf ahead. Mandalay recovered from a disastrous first beat to finish 4th.



Finally Race 6, a triangle sausage. Orwell VI with two race wins for the day was buried at the start with Mandalay and Polly Oliver clear at the committee boat end. Mandalay went right and Polly Oliver left. At the windward mark Polly Oliver rounded with a narrow lead from Mandalay with Telamon and Thunderer close together behind them. On the second beat Mandalay again went right and pulled ahead for the win with Polly Oliver a comfortable second. Behind Orwell VI had recovered and managed

to split Thunderer and Telamon with Telamon gaining their second third place of the day.

The day belonged to Orwell VI, but Mandalay did enough to stay 4 points clear of Polly Oliver, with Orwell VI 1 point behind in third.

Day 3

With a forecast of F2 to F3 and initially sunny skies the fleet set off from Shotley for the final two races of the series. Race Officer Graham Louth set windward leeward courses for the last two races, but in Dovercourt Bay the wind gradually dropped to around 8 knots for the start of the seventh championship race. Two boats including Orwell VI were OCS and Mandalay and Polly Oliver both had good starts. After returning Orwell VI went right and gained significantly, whilst Guillemot (David Mayne, Kelvin Douglas, David Pearce), Pegasus and Thunderer all sailed good beats. At the windward mark Mandalay rounded first, followed by Orwell VI, Guillemot and Pegasus. Thunderer failed to round the mark and needed to do turns. On the run Polly Oliver gybed early and passed Pegasus, the other places remained unchanged. The main change on the second beat was Pegasus regaining fourth by passing Polly Oliver. At the finish Mandalay had a comfortable lead, with Orwell VI, Guillemot and Pegasus finishing close together. This was enough to give Mandalay the championships with a race to spare.

For the final race the course was shifted following a wind shift to the right. At the start Polly Oliver was OCS (already halfway round the Committee Boat) whilst Orwell VI and Mandalay and Thunderer all had good starts.

A number of boats including Mandalay, Orwell VI and Telamon went right with Thunderer, Guillemot, Dionysius and Polly Oliver going left. Those that went right lost out as the wind faded with Thunderer reaching the windward mark first, closely followed by Dionysius and Polly Oliver. On a slow run Thunderer and Polly Oliver gybed and headed inshore and established a gap on the boats behind. Guillemot and Pegasus passed Dionysius and the whole



fleet were hearted when the Race Officer shortened the course to one 45 minute lap. Congratulations to Paul Scullion, Ian Woods and Jack Elsby-Hartmen for a well deserved win against a competitive East Coast fleet. The top four boats all won races and there was competitive racing through the fleet.

Thanks to the race team of Graham Louth, Caroline Louth and Peter Wright and Support Boat Crews Will Patten, Joe Hunt, Paul Wright, Charles Twiss, Mark Freeman and Jack Moore

[Results - Click Here!](#)

Pin Mill Regatta - 7 September 2019

The forecast was for about 13 knots northerly. All the forecasts agreed and the course was set giving a windward/ leeward loop in sea reach. 7 boats started.

The start line was between the club mast and No5 buoy. Orwell VI got the best start followed by Thunderer and Teal. All boats hoisted spinnakers apart from Guillimot, who were short of crew and only 2 up. There was a shy spinnaker reach to Collimer. Orwell VI extended her lead slightly but then sailed away as the rest of the fleet ran out of wind for a few minutes.

At Collimer, Orwell VI bore away with a good lead of about 50 meters and was followed by Thunderer and Teal on the dead run down to Fagbury. Positions were unchanged on the run. On the beat back up to No2, Orwell extended away from Thunderer slightly but Thunderer increased her lead over the following pack. On the following run back to Fagbury, positions remained the same but the wind was increasing noticeably.

On the beat back up to Collimer, Thunderer, with only 2 crew members, still in second, started to struggle. The wind by now was gusting 25 knots or more. Orwell continued to increase her lead and Teal, Telamon and Pegasus started to catch Thunderer. Telamon was catching Teal and finally overtook her.

Getting close to Collimer, Thunderer was struck by a sudden violent gust which laid her flat despite the Mainsail being dumped and the jib eased. In the chaos, the spinnaker washed out of the boat and brought progress to a dead stop. The spinnaker got under the boat and wrapped around the rudder. By the time the mess had been cleared, 3 boats had got past. Teal had suffered a knock down in the same gust which had let Pegasus past.

After Collimer there was a close fetch back to the Pin Mill line.

Orwell VI won comfortably followed by the Commodore in Telamon, then Pegasus, and Teal.

Thunderer started racing again in close proximity to Puffin and Guillemot. These 3 had a close battle all the way back up river and all finished within 1 boat length of each other.

Congratulations to Orwell VI in winning the Jock Marshall trophy. Well done to the whole fleet for completing the course in challenging conditions!

Ajax Short Sharp Series Report - 31 August 2019

On Saturday 31st August the Ajax fleet had a second short sharp series, in preparation for the forthcoming class championships. Ewen Stamp as Race Officer needed all of his many years of experience to cope with a shifting southerly wind that varied in strength from almost nothing to some F5 gusts. In addition he had a fleet of seven Ajax's all of whom were keen to practise their starts, with boats over the line in all but one of the races. In the first race Thunderer was a culprit but after having to spill wind to slow enough to return she was able to hook on to a 60 degree lift that favoured those on the right. Meanwhile Orwell VI who had the best start at the pin found herself at the back of the fleet by the first mark, and Polly Oliver who started mid line and looked set to lead could only manage third at the windward mark behind Thunderer and Pegasus. These positions remained unchanged until the last run of a two lap windward leeward course when Polly Oliver managed to catch Pegasus on the run and claim second place.

The second race was more straightforward with Polly Oliver leading from start to finish chased by Orwell VI and with Thunderer pulling through to finish third. For the third race it was the turn of Polly Oliver to be over joined by Orwell VI. For this race, the triangular course was shortened to one lap as the wind died on the first beat. Pegasus led round the first mark and stayed ahead until the final beat when Thunderer and Telamon came through. Orwell VI came through to finish fourth with Polly Oliver and Sirius left becalmed at the first mark.

Race 4 was a second triangular course. Polly Oliver got the best start with Orwell VI to leeward but not able to gain an advantage. These two opened up a small lead on the first triangle with Polly Oliver extending on the second beat. At the windward mark crews either had to manage a windward hoist, or have moved their spinnakers round on the short beat. Polly Oliver chose the latter course and extended their lead, whilst Orwell VI and Thunderer both opted for a windward hoist.

The final race was really a winner take all duel between Thunderer and Polly Oliver who both had two race wins. Polly Oliver led off the start but Thunderer opted for a gybe-set at the windward mark and found a streak of wind to lead at the leeward mark. They held this for the second lap but on the third beat Polly Oliver found a favourable shift and rounded the windward mark ahead and held on for a third race win and overall victory.

Sunday 25th August - Autumn Series Races 4 & 5

Six boats came down to Clamp House on hot Sunday afternoon. The gradient wind was from the East-South-East but did not build with any sea breeze effect. The first start was delayed to allow time for three boats to reach Clamp House. The course was a beat from the line to Collimer (P), a run to Bay (P), a second beat to No3 (P) and a run to finish on the start line. Polly Oliver and Thunderer got the best starts, but were challenged by Telamon who found a wind bend on the Shotley shore. Polly Oliver also tucked into this and was able to get ahead of Thunderer and lead round Collimer after a long and tortuous beat. A quicker spinnaker hoist by Thunderer saw them take the lead, but Guillemot found some wind on the Nacton shore and sailed through under both Polly Oliver and Thunderer to take the lead. The course was shortened to finish on the beat after rounding Bay. The leading three boats rounded together with Polly Oliver outside Guillemot and Thunderer just astern. When they tacked onto starboard Thunderer was able to lee bow Polly Oliver to clinch second place. Behind these three Telamon managed to pass Sirius as they rounded Bay and hold on for fourth.

The second race required the fleet to pass No 3 to starboard and then beat to Collimer. The course setter had planned to go to Trimley but the crew had other ideas! Guillemot won the start and sailed away, finding the best wind shifts to gradually extend her lead to Collimer. Behind, Thunderer starting to leeward was able to cross Polly Oliver to the favoured right side and stay just far enough ahead. Behind Polly Oliver, Sirius and Telamon had another good race with Sirius getting to Collimer ahead and holding her place for the run back to Bay.

Results Guillemot 1,1; Thunderer 2,2; Polly Oliver 3,3; Sirius 5,4; Telamon 4,5; Puffin 6,6

Sunday 18 August - Autumn Series Races 2 & 3

Five boats raced on Sunday with a mercurial south westerly (ish) wind that varied in strength and direction to cause both joy and frustration for the fleet, often to the same boat on the same leg. For the first race with the flooding tide the course was set as a windward leeward between Deer Park and Prof, but the wind then went further south making the start of the first leg a fetch. Thunderer and Polly Oliver got the best starts and Thunderer was able to gain initially. Both boats were headed before they reached Deer Park and had to tack onto starboard to lay the mark. The next leg started as a shy spinnaker reach and the leading two, chased by Guillemot headed downriver, with positions unchanged. Telamon who had reached the windward mark third dropped back with crew training on the spinnaker hoist. On the second beat (and I use the word loosely) Polly Oliver was able to find a bigger lift than Thunderer and managed to round Deer Park just ahead, with Guillemot finding no room (or rights) as they tacked under Polly Oliver within three boat lengths of the mark. On the final leg to the finish Thunderer went high, drawing Polly Oliver with her to protect her position. These two then found themselves in less wind which shifted to the west, allowing Guillemot to snatch victory.

For the second race the course started from line B and after Deer Park and Prof took the fleet to Berners and Park Farm Beacon before a final beat to Deer Park and a reach to the finish. Polly Oliver and Thunderer were both OCS and Pegasus came back to join them. This was advantageous for all three as once they re-started they found a wind at 30 degrees to Guillemot and Telamon allowing them back into the race. Thunderer judged the approach to Deer Park best and rounded first followed by Polly Oliver and Guillemot. Polly Oliver suffered spinnaker problems attempting a windward drop at Prof allowing both Guillemot and Pegasus through. On the final beat to Deer Park Guillemot caught and passed Thunderer but this time it was their turn

to lose out on the reach to the finish with Thunderer catching and passing them as the line approached.

Results Guillemot 1,2; Thunderer 3,1; Polly Oliver 2,4; Pegasus 4,3; Telamon 5,5

Sunday 11 August - Autumn Series Race 1

The forecast for the area was F5 gusting 6, and in reality Shotley recorded F7 gusts as the fleet raced up the Stour. With a SW wind finding a beat was always going to be a challenge but the course sent the fleet from Trimley to Orwell and from Shotley Horse to Bristol with boats needing to tack on both legs.

Sadly the numbers were low, just three starters after Teal lost their mast on the way to the start having clipped a moored boat. The boats enjoyed a cracking sail with the spinnaker reach down the Stour the highlight. Polly Oliver won the start and edged ahead of Dionysius on the fetch to Collimer. They gradually extended on each leg for a comfortable win. The third boat Sirius sailed two up and completed the course without incident.

Results Polly Oliver 1; Dionysius 2; Sirius 3

Ajax Racing Regatta August 3rd & 4th

Six Ajaxes appeared for racing on the Saturday. Numbers were therefore slightly down on average. The wind was SE about 10 knots but quite variable in strength and with some significant shifts. The tide was flooding. The course was windward, leeward, with No6 being the windward mark and Downham the leeward.

Race 1

The fleet all started on Starboard with Orwell VI at the leeward end. They appeared to have made the best start but were OCS and had to return. Thunderer had Puffin just to windward and was unable to tack to join the rest of the fleet who had tacked over to the Woolvestone shore. Thunderer was able to edge out from under Puffin and pulled ahead while heading for the Nacton shore and tacked across the river to join the rest of the fleet who had short tacked up the Woolverstone shore. Pegasus had a good lead at the top mark and rounded comfortably ahead. Thunderer appeared to be second on the Starboard lay line but was surprised to find Puffin steaming across the river on port in good wind and on a massive lift. Puffin was able to just round in second but hit the mark in so doing. Orwell VI had crossed the river 30 yards behind Puffin but tacked onto Starboard for the top mark but understood the mark twice which put her to the back of the fleet.

Pegasus rounded the bottom mark with a comfortable lead and headed across to the Woolverstone shore. Teal had made ground on the run and had got an inside overlap on Thunderer. These 2 headed for the Nacton shore on the beat and Thunderer was able to get on the correct side of 2 shifts which got her ahead of both Pegasus and Teal.

Pegasus and Orwell were both on the Woolvertone shore by now, so Thunderer tacked across and arrived on the starboard lay line again with a comfortable lead over these two. However Teal

arrived at the top mark on port at great speed and on a huge lift. She was just able to round in front and maintain her lead to the line where the race was shortened.

Result: Teal, Thunderer, Orwell VI, Pegasus, Telamon, Puffin.

Race 2

The course was the same with approximately the same wind conditions.

The fleet again all started on Starboard. Thunderer was at the leeward end of the fleet and continued to the Nacton side. The rest of the fleet went to the Woolverstone side. Thunderer tacked back and joined the others with Pegasus again getting to the windward mark first, Thunderer second, Teal and Orwell VI in close proximity.

Teal and Orwell VI rolled over Thunderer on the run. These four boats rounded the bottom mark very close together. There was lots of place changing on the beat with the significant shifts. Orwell VI was just ahead at the top mark with Thunderer very close behind. These 2 pulled clear on the next run but Thunderer was unable to get an inside overlap at the bottom mark. Orwell tacked for the Nacton shore to get out of the tide. Thunderer stayed on Port and picked up 2 shifts which got her well ahead of Orwell when the next converged. Pegasus had done the same, so at the line it was

Thunderer, Pegasus, Orwell VI, Teal, Telamon, Puffin.

Sunday.

Race 3

The wind direction was the same as Saturday but slightly stronger at about 12 knots.

The course was therefore the same windward/ Leeward, using No6 and Downham.

The wind was more off the south shore and No6 could almost be layed in one. With a strong flood tide running, there was a premium on being close to the Club end of the line. Guillemot, having missed the first days racing because of a wedding, made the best start. Thunderer had failed to get to the favoured end because of congestion and made a bad start to leeward. The rest of the fleet were tightly packed at the club end.

Thunderer luckily found a gap to tack through and ended up close behind Guillemot on the approach to No6. The rest of the fleet were close behind on the run. Guillemot and Thunderer extended away from the fleet and had a tacking duel on the final beat but Guillemot held on to win comfortably with Orwell VI in third.

Race 4

As the wind had shifted more to the right, the course was changed to use Berners and Priory beacon as the marks.

The tide was running less strongly and at the start the fleet was spread out down the line. Thunderer and Pegasus were to leeward in clear air. Again, most of the fleet were trying to get to the club shore. Orwell VI got round first with Thunderer and Guillemot close behind, with the rest of the fleet still very close.

Orwell built a very comfortable lead to win easily, with Thunderer having to cover Guillemot to hold on to second.

All in all, the Ajax fleet had excellent close racing on 2 lovely days with places changing all the time.

Results

Thunderer: 2,1,2,2

Orwell VI: 3,3,3,1

Teal: 1,4,5,6

Ajax Summer Series 2019 - Overall

The series saw eleven boats racing an average turnout of just under 8. There were four boats claiming race wins and another three with top three finishes. Two boats, Orwell VI and Polly Oliver, dominated the series and both claimed five wins and two second places to tie on points, with Polly Oliver winning the series because they won the final race, the closest series finish in the memory of the class captain. The other race winners were Pegasus who sailed with an all female crew on most occasions and Guillemot.

Behind these four boats Telamon opened the series with two second places, but couldn't maintain that form for the rest of the series, and Thunderer was in the unusual position of not claiming any race wins to finish in 7th place, one point behind the more consistent Teal.

Ajax Summer Series Races 11 & 12

The final two races of the summer series were held on Sunday 28th July. A combination of the forecast, the later start time and the start of the school holidays reduced the entry to six boats, with one only able to make the second race because of a mix up over start times. Sailed on the last of the ebb tide the first race started at Clamp House with a run to Stratton, a beat to No 4, a run to no 3, a second beat to 4 with the finish at No 3. The initial run was close with Teal getting to Stratton first, closely followed by Guillemot, Polly Oliver and Orwell VI. On the long beat back to No 4, Orwell VI worked her way up through the fleet to lead followed by Guillemot and Polly Oliver. Teal struggled in the gusty conditions 2 up and had a close race with Telamon.

The places remained unchanged on the run, and on the second beat Orwell VI initially covered Polly Oliver on the Levington Shore, and then crossed to cover Guillemot who was making gains on the Shotley shore. This allowed Polly Oliver through both boats as they found more wind and were able to round No 4 with a small lead which they were able to hold on the run to the finish. Orwell VI and Guillemot rounded together and Guillemot managed to pass to leeward and just clinch second place. Further back Teal held off Telamon.

The second race of the day and the final race of the series was a series of three beats from No 3 to No 4 with two runs. Dionysius started on the Shotley shore with the rest of the fleet choosing the Levington side. Polly Oliver established an early lead and when midway up the beat Dionysius crossed over, the two boats were evenly matched. Polly Oliver again found more wind on the Levington side and led around No 4. They held on to this advantage to the finish, behind them Orwell VI and Guillemot had a close race with Orwell VI prevailing this time round. Dionysius persisted in trying the Shotley shore on subsequent beats and allowed the rest of the fleet past, while Teal again managed to remain ahead of Telamon.

Results: Polly Oliver 1,1; Orwell VI 3,2; Guillemot 2,3; Teal 4,4; Telamon 5,5; Dionysius DNS,6

Ajax Summer Series Races 9&10

With a northerly wind across the river there was little choice than to set a course with two short beats from Berners to Park Farm Beacon (both left to port) and from the First Red Can to Priory Beacon (both left to starboard) with a requirement to go through the line in each direction. For the first race the full course of two laps was sailed, the second was shortened on the way upriver on the second lap.

The beats were difficult with large shifts and gusts both having an impact. It was the kind of day when no place was safe as there were significant opportunities to overtake. Against this backdrop two victories for Orwell VI showed that good starting, and downwind speed could make it look fairly easy, but both races were closely contested with place changes throughout the fleet and no one boat remaining ahead for long. It was a day when even if you sailed the beat well someone could find more wind and a favourable shift and overtake you.

In the first race most boats started at the leeward end and Orwell VI used their spinnaker effectively to reach Berners ahead of Guillemot and Thunderer. Thunderer passed Guillemot on the beat to Park Farm Beacon and carried their spinnaker to overtake Orwell VI by the First Red Can. Orwell VI re-took the lead on the next lap and the order remained until the finish.

For the second race Orwell VI and Polly Oliver both flew spinnakers to good effect on the reach to Berners with Pegasus also going well. Thunderer and Guillemot came through on the next beat and by Priory Beacon Thunderer had a good lead. This evaporated quickly as they needed a windward hoist for their spinnaker and Polly Oliver led Orwell VI as the fleet reached the end of the first lap. After the line Orwell VI had the better downwind speed and stayed ahead to win. Polly Oliver maintained second just managing to cross Thunderer on the last beat, whilst Pegasus surged through to round Park Farm Beacon ahead of Guillemot.

Results: Orwell VI 1,1; Thunderer 2,3; Polly Oliver 4,2; Guillemot 3,5; Pegasus 5,4; Teal 6,10; Telamon 9,7; Puffin 7,9; Prometheus 8,8; Dionysius DNC,6

Ajax Summer Series Races 7&8

With the series leader Polly Oliver left in the marina with her crew late back from cruising in Finland the rest of the fleet had an opportunity to improve their positions. The course for both races was a beat to Grog, a run to Park Farm Beacon, a second beat to Grog and a run back to the finish line. Guillemot started the first race to windward of the fleet and found more wind to lead all the way on the long beat into the tide to Grog. Orwell VI, who started more to leeward made ground later in the beat to round second with Thunderer close behind. By Park Farm Beacon Thunderer managed to establish a leeward overlap on Orwell VI and was able to round second, but lost out upwind with Orwell VI pulling away on the second beat. Guillemot remained ahead of the fast finishing Orwell VI with Thunderer staying ahead of Pegasus to claim third.

For the second race the fleet split on the beat to Grog with Guillemot, Orwell VI and Pegasus each taking turns to lead up the club shore and Thunderer choosing the Nacton shore. Thunderer was just able to round Grog first closely followed by Orwell VI, Guillemot and

Pegasus. At this point your correspondent had to leave, but I can report that Orwell VI moved up to finish first and Thunderer dropped back to finish third, but I can't tell you how!

Results: Orwell VI 2,1; Guillemot 1,2; Thunderer 3,3; Pegasus 4,4; Teal 5,5; Sirius 6,6

Ajax Summer Series Races 5&6

After a week's break for the Prosser Plate the summer Series resumed on Sunday 30th June with wall to wall sunshine and a westerly breeze of 10 knots with some early gusts over 20 knots. The course was a windward-leeward between Deer Park and Prof (both to port) going through the line in each direction. For the first race a wind shift in the final minute caught many of the fleet at the wrong end of the line allowing Polly Oliver, Puffin and Pegasus to escape on port up river. Polly Oliver led around Deer Park to be followed by Pegasus who found more wind than Puffin on the first beat. On the run to Prof, Pegasus caught Polly Oliver and gained the inside berth to take the lead, which they then extended to take a well deserved first win for the all women crew. Behind Polly Oliver and Puffin maintained their places.

For the second race the tide was starting to ebb and Polly Oliver and Orwell VI led the fleet towards the Nacton shore with Puffin also in contention. Polly Oliver stood on and benefitted when Puffin and Orwell VI were headed approaching Deer Park and need an extra hitch on port to round the mark. Puffin, caught underneath Orwell VI hit the mark and ended up last, albeit by inches in a close finish with Prometheus at the end of the race. Ahead Polly Oliver maintained a narrow lead over Orwell VI and Pegasus pulled through to third.

Results. Polly Oliver 2,1; Pegasus 1,3; Orwell VI 6,2; Guillemot 4,6; Puffin 3,9; Telamon 8,4; Sirius 7,5; Prometheus 5,8; Teal 9,7

Prosser Plate at RHYC - 22 June 2019

The racing was brilliantly organised by George Finch assisted by Lucy. George launched his own rib to lay the course, as all the club RIBs and dorys were in use by Junior Sailing.

Six races were sailed from a committee boat start line near Priory. The windward Mark was placed near Berners Beacon.

The wind was straight up river from the East with an element of sea breeze at about 10 – 14 knots. Brilliant sunshine made it a fabulous day. Each race lasted about 16 minutes with 1 lap of a Windward / Leeward course.

The first race had Guillemot making a good start at the favoured pin end of the line. Unfortunately, she found herself hard on the mud in the first part of the beat. This left Orwell VI with a clear lead on the beat. Thunderer tacked early across to the Woolverstone side of the river but this only payed slightly with Orwell VI able to just cross and round the windward mark in first place. Thunderer tried to take her wind on the downwind leg and moved from side to side behind but was unable to get an overlap and Orwell rounded the bottom mark in the lead and held onto the line. Pegasus sailed steadily to finish third.

Race 2 found Thunderer starting first at the Pin end at speed. She was able to tack and cross the fleet and took another tack towards PFB while Pegasus crossed the river early. This did not pay

and Thunderer was able to cross her and round the windward mark in first place. There was a good deal of shouting at the windward mark behind as all the fleet converged in close proximity. Guillemot sailed steadily to be second with Orwell VI in third.

Race 3 found Orwell VI making a good start. Pegasus again crossed the river very early and made good gains, being ahead of Thunderer who had crossed next. Orwell crossed late and made bigger gains rounding the top mark comfortably ahead. Thunderer squeezed ahead of Pegasus at the top mark but was passed on the run. Orwell VI won easily but Thunderer got by Pegasus on the final beat to be second.

Race 4 again found Thunderer making a good start at the pin end. She tacked and crossed the fleet and crossed the river early and this paid well. She rounded the top mark again with a comfortable lead and held on to win with Pegasus in second and Orwell VI just ahead of Guillemot in third.

Race 5 saw a very close race between Thunderer and Orwell VI. Thunderer again started at the pin and crossed the river early. Orwell was just behind at the top mark and sailed very fast down the run. There was a gybing duel trying to keep clear wind and get the inside berth at the bottom mark. Thunderer just got to the bottom mark first and held on to win from Orwell VI and then Pegasus.

Race 6 saw Pegasus and Orwell VI cross the river very early. Thunderer and Guillemot crossed late on this occasion and were able to round first and second and held on to these positions on the run with Orwell finishing in third.

Gordon Sutton (Commodore) presented the plate to Thunderer.

Many thanks to George and Lucy for providing an excellent day for all.

RESULTS

Totals with 1 Discard

Thunderer (2) 1 2 1 1 1 6

Orwell VI 1 (3) 1 3 2 3 10

Pegasus 3 4 3 2 3 (5) 15

Guillemot (6) 2 5 4 4 2 17

Telamon 4 (6) 4 5 5 4 22

Puffin 5 5 (6) 6 6 6 28

Ajax Summer Series Races 3 & 4

A reduced fleet of seven boats raced, with the entry and the course area restricted because of the Optimist Area Championships. The wind gradually increased during the morning to a F3 and some gusts into F5. The course took the fleet to Prof, a beat to Berners, and run to Park Farm Beacon and a beat to Park Bight, for the second lap the second beat went to No 6 and then the finish. On the first leg both Orwell VI and Dionysius flew spinnakers and these two led around Prof with Polly Oliver close behind. Polly Oliver tacked early on the beat to Berners and reached it behind Orwell VI and ahead of Dionysius. The front two boats then opened out a good lead on the run to Park Farm Beacon. Behind Guillemot managed to get ahead of Dionysius. On the second and final beat to Berners Orwell VI held on for a long time on starboard allowing Polly

Oliver to seize first place and sail the rest of the race unchallenged. Orwell VI managed to stay ahead of Guillemot for second.

The second race had the same course with an extra lap, and a change to round Berners to Starboard to match the dinghies. Again Orwell VI and Dionysius flew spinnakers on the reach to Prof, but a header close to the post allowed Polly Oliver to gain an overlap on Dionysius with Guillemot able to round in third behind them. Polly Oliver and Dionysius tacked early while Guillemot held on starboard. Polly Oliver was able to round first but Dionysius lost out to Guillemot and was not able to claw their way back. Behind the front three Orwell VI and Pegasus engaged in a close battle with Orwell VI coming out ahead to claim fourth.

Results: Polly Oliver 1,1; Guillemot 3,2; Orwell VI 2,4; Dionysius 4,3; Pegasus 5,5; Prometheus 6,6; Puffin 7,7

Ajax Summer Series Races 1 & 2

A dramatic days racing with lots of incidents for the 10 boats that sailed. Race 1 started with a fetch to Park Bight and two beats from there to Grog with a run/reach to the finish. After the course was set the wind shifted from the South to the SSE and strengthened resulting in a short race! Three boats were over at the start (Polly Oliver, Thunderer and Pegasus) and there was drama immediately Pegasus re-started with one crew member falling out, to be recovered very quickly by the remaining crew. Ahead of all this Orwell VI led the fleet to Park Bight and quickly established a clear lead, chased by Guillemot and Telamon. Behind these three racing was closer with more place changing on the short beats to Grog, but the three leaders remained unchallenged.

The second race extended to give a beat from Park Bight to Grog, a run to Prof, a second beat to Grog and a run to Priory Beacon with a beat to the finish. Polly Oliver, Thunderer and Orwell VI all had good starts to be confronted with a barge sailing up river as they headed towards Park Bight. Polly Oliver was able to squeeze to windward and Orwell VI was far enough to leeward to be little affected, but Thunderer lost several places as she sailed through the immediate lee of the barge. Polly Oliver and Orwell VI round Park Bight together and headed towards the shore. Orwell VI tacked to gain clear air but had to tack again on meeting a starboard tack boat, allowing Polly Oliver to round Grog with a clear lead. It then became clear that the Class Captain had misremembered the course he had set (Prof to be rounded to starboard) as he headed down to round it to Port. This handed the lead to Telamon with others in the fleet wondering, should they do as he (Polly Oliver) did, or as he said when setting the course! Out of the melee some boats such as Puffin gained and others did turns or unwound themselves. The fleet concatenated again at Priory Beacon with Telamon leading round and Puffin, and Dionysius close behind. Orwell VI rounded 5th and with Polly Oliver behind headed towards the channel where there appeared to be more wind. These two boats then gained a starboard hand lift with Orwell VI able to pass Telamon just before the line and claim a second victory, with Polly Oliver third on the water, but subsequently retiring following a collision with Dionysius. Behind these three there was further drama with Guillemot caught on port as she was finishing and losing two places as she did her turn to exonerate herself.

Results: Orwell VI 1,1; Telamon 3,2; Guillemot 2,7; Puffin 6,3; Dionysius 4,5; Teal 5,8; Prometheus 10,4; Thunderer 8,6; Pegasus 7,9; Polly Oliver 9,RAF

Ajax Spring Series 2019 - Overall

The series saw eleven boats racing with four different boats winning races in the series and ten of the boats on the podium for at least one race. Pegasus sailed with an all female crew and their results improved as the series went on narrowly losing their second place on the last reach

to the finish in the last race. 5th overall for the series Dionysius recovered from a slow start to get two race wins under different helms before fading at the end in the light and shifty conditions. In 4th place Orwell VI also claimed a race win, and was unfortunate not to get a second when leading race 8.

The usual suspects again occupied the podium with Thunderer making a late charge, winning the last three races to come third. Ahead of her Guillemot was consistent with six 2nd place finishes, but she did not claim any race wins. Polly Oliver retained the series for the 5th consecutive year, winning 4 races and doing enough in the others to secure the Spring Bell.

Sunday 2nd June Spring Series Races 9 & 10

Nine boats turned out for an early start on Sunday 2nd June. With the dinghies holding a scatter race and rounding all marks and posts to port a special leeward mark was laid near Park Bight for the Ajax's to round to starboard on their way to Grog. The wind was initially from the South, and forecast to go South-South West. In fact for the first start it went round to the south east giving a beat away from the line towards the first mark. Guillemot led the fleet away on the Nacton shore with Thunderer leading a group of boats who started mid-channel. After the special mark the wind started to oscillate a left patches of calm as the fleet beat into the strong flood tide. Pegasus did a turn after just failing to clear Teal on the beat and then found some wind near the channel only to be left drifting when the wind died. Guillemot and Thunderer stayed clear to round Grog with Puffin leading the rest of the fleet round. Places stayed the same on the run to the special mark but on the next beat Thunderer managed to find an extra lift to overtake Guillemot and hold on until the finish. Behind these two Orwell VI came through to finish third with Puffin holding on for fourth.

For the second race with the wind blowing from the forecast direction (SSW) the course took the fleet down to Prof for a second beat to Grog. Polly Oliver led at the first special mark having started at the leeward end of the line with Orwell VI leading the boats who started mid-channel. Behind these two leaders the fleet gained some big lifts to enable them to reach Grog without tacking, whilst Polly Oliver and Orwell VI both had to tack. This allowed Puffin to round first with Polly Oliver on her outside and Thunderer and Pegasus leading the boats just behind. This delayed Polly Oliver's spinnaker hoist and allowed Thunderer and Pegasus to lead round Prof. Position remained unchanged on the beat to Grog with Polly Oliver closing on the leading two. On the final reach to the finish Thunderer stayed ahead but Polly Oliver found more wind and managed to pass Pegasus just before the finish line.

Results: Thunderer 1,1; Guillemot 2,4; Polly Oliver 5,2; Orwell VI 3,5; Pegasus 6,3; Puffin 4,8; Teal 7,6; Dionysius 8,7; Sirius 9,9

Sunday 26th May - Spring Series 7 & 8

With a gusty wind veering between West and South West the Class Captain eschewed the Clamp House start listed in the programme and set a course from Park Bight to Deer Park with Race Office John Brooke using Lion to set a start and finish line just down river from Park Bight. For the first race the short start line put a priority on positioning with some boats having to start in a second rank. Polly Oliver quickly established a small lead, although behind her there were numerous place changes on the first beat with the significant wind shifts evident. At Deer Park the fleet were all able to round and hoist spinnakers before a large ship sailed up river. Polly Oliver rounded first with Thunderer and Pegasus behind. Polly Oliver extended on the run and had time to do a 360 for hitting Park Bight and still remain ahead of Thunderer at the start of the second and final beat. On the second beat Guillemot passed Pegasus with the remaining boats having a close battle. In fact this was so close the final three crossed the finish

line overlapped with Dionysius holding off Teal who managed to just edge across the line ahead of Orwell VI.

The same course was used for the second race but with Thunderer OCS at the start and Polly Oliver needing to do a 360 for a pre-start collision with Teal there was the opportunity for Orwell VI to open up a large lead on the first beat. Both Thunderer and Polly Oliver found some good shifts and followed Orwell VI round the windward mark. On the second beat the two chasing boats split leaving Orwell VI with a difficult choice who to cover. This allowed Thunderer, who benefitted from significant shifts and more wind on the marina shore to squeeze around Deer Park just ahead of Orwell VI. Behind these two both Guillemot and Dionysius caught up with Polly Oliver and the three rounded Deer Park together. On the final run to the finish Orwell VI chased Thunderer down the channel but was not able to find a way through, and Polly Oliver managed to hold off Guillemot and Dionysius to come home third.

Results: Thunderer 2,1; Polly Oliver 1,3; Guillemot 3,4; Orwell VI 7,2; Dionysius 5,5; Pegasus 4,7; Teal 6,6

Sunday 19th May - Spring Series 5 & 6

With little wind forecast and little evident 9 boats rigged on Sunday. In fact the wind did fill in for both races. The start was delayed until after the dinghies, with a triangular course of First Red Can, Priory Beacon and Cat House, all to starboard. With barely 5 knots of wind, the direction changed just before the start from the NE to the SE. Spinnakers were set, and Dionysius (helmed by Geoff Mayhew) led the way to the first mark, closely followed by Prometheus. Guillemot was an early casualty getting caught on a moored yacht as they set their spinnaker. With a good beat into the tide from Priory Beacon gains were made by staying out of the flooding tide and this tactic allowed Prometheus through when Dionysius tacked off too early for the lay line. They regained the lead at First Red Can by a slick gybe and held on to win. Behind these two Puffin sailed a conservative race to finish third holding off Teal and a fast closing Polly Oliver.

For the second race the course was windward/leeward with a beat to Berners followed by a run to Priory Beacon. Polly Oliver and Guillemot led off the line closely followed by Telamon and Dionysius. Polly Oliver passed Guillemot to lead at Berners and stretched away on the run. Guillemot closed on the second beat and run but couldn't find a way past on the final beat to the line. Behind these two Telamon and Dionysius battled for the final place on the podium.

Results. Dionysius 1,4; Polly Oliver 5,1; Teal 4,5; Prometheus 2,8; Telamon 7,3; Puffin 3,7; Pegasus 6,6; Guillemot RTD,2; Sirius 8,9

Sunday 12th May - Spring Series 3 & 4

10 Boats to the line for each race! Sunshine, F3-4 East wind, start 2 hours before H.W. what's not to like? Course using Grog and 7, through Line A each way, gave a longish opening beat and the Nacton shore favoured. Orwell VI (Richard Merriweather) sailed the perfect race to an easy win. The chasing pack contained Guillemot (David Mayne), Thunderer and Dionysius (Phil Mayhew), who finished in that order.

The 1st race was so much fun, we decided to do the second on the same course. This time there were some big shifts. Orwell VI, Telemon (Gordon Sutton), and Guillemot all looked able to win, but on the last beat, Dionysius came through to a hard fought win. Positions were changing throughout the race, with snakes and ladders shifts, and a lot less water along both shores (neap tide + high pressure) leading to some undignified groundings.

Full results> Orwell VI 1,3. Guillemot 2,2, , Dionysius 4,1,Telamon 5,4,Thunderer (John Williams) 3, 6, Teal (Bob Tate).6,5, Pegasus (Belinda K) 8, 7, Polly Oliver 7,10 (Hugh Rich, Puffin (David Pearce) 10,8, Prometheus (Tim Archer) 9,9.

Sunday 5th May – Spring Series 1 & 2

The 2019 season opened to a cold NNW wind in complete contrast to the much warmer weather of the previous year. With seven of the fleet launched for the start of the year five boats ventured out to race and one bimbled on the pontoon. The course for the first race was First Red Can, Bridgewood, First Red Can, Priory with the start and finish on the club Line. The wind shifted between a northerly (making the beat almost a fetch), and North Westerly and varied in strength, barely reaching the 15-knot gusts forecast.

Orwell VI, Dionysius and Guillemot chose to start close to the club shore with Polly Oliver and Teal further to windward. Polly Oliver was able to sail over the leeward boats on the reach to the first mark while Dionysius and Orwell VI engaged in a luffing match, with Orwell VI coming out ahead. Polly Oliver was able to maintain the lead on the beat to the first mark, and rounded ahead of Orwell VI with Guillemot in third. On the run, Orwell VI went higher and closed the gap on the leader, but was not able to gain room at the leeward mark. In much lighter conditions at the start of the second beat Polly Oliver extended away and Guillemot closed on Orwell VI to round Priory in second place, which they held to the finish.

In the second race the course was shortened with Priory used as the windward mark for both beats. It was a much closer race to the first mark with Orwell VI leading and Guillemot gaining room on Polly Oliver. The later two boats stayed closer to the western shore on the beat and Polly Oliver was able to round first closely followed by Orwell VI and Guillemot with Teal also in contention. Approaching the First Red Can Polly Oliver was able to sail over Guillemot and round first, with the other three boats close behind. Initially on the beat Orwell VI led, but Polly Oliver again found extra wind closer to the western shore and was able to regain the lead which they held to the finish. Behind her, Guillemot and Teal also passed Orwell VI.

Results: Polly Oliver (1,1); Guillemot (2,2) Teal (4,3); Orwell VI (3,4); Dionysius (5,5)