

Irish Nationals, Monkstown Bay SC, 24-26 October 2009

Report by Ewen Barry

Monkstown welcomed a great fleet of 8 visitors with 7 local boats, giving a total of 15 for the weekend. As always with Monkstown the event started with copious amounts of alcohol on Friday night.

We awoke to a howling breeze on Saturday morning so the wise decision was taken early on to abandon sailing for the day. A number of people went to Cork City for the afternoon for a few 'socials' as there was a jazz festival taking place for the weekend.

Sunday morning dawned and looked a lot calmer - approximately 15 knots in the bay. The decision was taken to race in the lower harbour area as it provides far better conditions than Monkstown Bay and helps eliminate local advantage. We all launched and made our way to the race area approx 4 to 5 miles from the club. The breeze built steadily and by the time we got to the race area it was a steady 25 kts gusting 30. To the amazement of some and the relief of others the race officer decided to proceed with racing. We were already down to 10 boats at this stage due to gear failure and crew failure (ye know who ye are!!). Race one started with Ewen & Charlo in 8961 trying a port flyer. They didn't manage to be first out of the blocks but found a gap down along the line and headed out right. The rest of the fleet headed left. It was a steady 25 knots at this stage with survival being the main aim. A number of boats capsized by the first windward mark. Ewen & Charlo were first around with Simon & Harry Briddon 2nd in 8906 and Alex Barry & Adam Kenney 3rd in 8679. The course was a windward leeward with most people opting to wire down the runs. Positions remained the same to the end of the race.

Race 2 started in a little less wind with Tim Bird & Richard Nurse in 8526 leading for the first two rounds with Harry & Simon and Ewen & Charlo chasing hard. With a gate leeward mark Ewen and Charlo went one side with Simon & Harry going the other. This gave Ewen & Charlo the edge on the final beat. Tim & Richard had a bit of a speed wobble on the last beat and capsized managing to recover quickly to get 3rd place. Race 3 and the final race of the day was sailed in similar conditions. Simon & Harry led for the whole race with Ewen & Charlo in a comfortable second until they capsized on the last run. When they righted their spinnaker was a mess and took a while to sort out. Meanwhile Jim Berry & Barney were storming up behind them, after 3 capsizes in the race. Then merrily passed Ewen & Charlo to finish 2nd with Ewen & Charlo in 3rd. At the end of the day Ewen & Charlo were tied on points with Harry and Simon, with Alex & Adam in 3rd. All that was left to do was to retire to the club again for tales of swims, if onlys, and crew mishaps.

The final day of the event dawned damp and slightly foggy. The decision was taken to race in the bay to allow time for packing Barney's rig after racing. With all 15 boats making the startline this time, racing was very close. Ewen & Charlo were first to the windward mark in race 4 closely followed by Wedgie & Scotty in 8925 (fresh from 14 hours beauty sleep). and 3rd were Alex & Adam. Again windward-leewards were the order of the day. Ewen & Charlo held on to win with Simon & Harry coming through to 2nd and Alex & Adam in 3rd. What turned out to be the final race of the event started off in approx 10 knots. First to the windward mark showing a great turn of speed were Wedgie and Scott closely followed by Ewen & Charlo. With local knowledge coming into play in the dying breeze Ewen & Charlo headed for the far shore while Wedgie & Scott gybed off. Ewen & Charlo went on to win the race with Alex & Adam 2nd and Matt & Daniel Hart in 8694 3rd. The breeze promptly died and a wise decision was made to abandon the rest of the races.

Thanks go to the great group of travellers who come year after year. This year saw a new boat in 8009, Matthew & James McNicholl from Co. Tyrone... hope to see ye again. If you haven't been to Monkstown before, speak to one of the guys to has - they'll confirm it's an event not to be missed. See ye all in 2010! Ewen.

I asked Jim Berry to write a few words as well. While most were struggling on Sunday (me more than most, despite top positions at mark one - but let's not dwell on that), Jim and Barney plugged away, with good upwind speed, and got a well-deserved second place in race 3. Here is his report, slightly shortened.

Saturday morning a mass of white horses 41 knots of wind. Dave Barry, the Race officer called it off for the day.

Sunday morning looked a lot better. 25 knots out beyond Cobh, Dave scheduled 4 races, first start 11.30am. Off we went on a wide spinnaker run to the starting area where it was "blowing fairish" (Barney's words). The result sheet speaks for itself. Ewen and Charles sailed well, closely pursued by Harry and Simon, except in the third race Barney and I overtook Ewen and Charles and they finished 3rd, their subsequent discard. Harry and Simon won this race. The longest sail of the day was by Roger Deane and Dennis Cartwright who damaged their kite at the start of the 2nd race then beat all the way back to Monkstown, 1 hour 15 minutes, picked up a spare, charged back to the race area, 30 minutes, only to find that Dave Barry had decided 3 races were enough for that day. But ten out of ten for effort. It was some very tired crews that made it back after a long beat.

Monday morning we looked out on flat calm and thickish mist. We sailed 2 races in the harbour, light winds and tricky currents. I went to the wrong place every time. Ewen and Charles won both races easily, leading from start to finish, the wind then died completely and the race officer sent us home.

A weekend of huge contrast but the hospitality was tremendous and the craic as good as ever. If you have never been before, make the effort next time, it is well worth it. Congratulations and thanks to Dave Barry and his race team and Monkstown Bay Sailing Club

Results (5 races, 4 to count)

1	IRL	8961	Ewen Barry & Charles Dwyer	1	1	3	1	1
2	GBR	8906	Harry & Simon Briddon	2	2	1	2	6
3	IRL	8679	Alex Barry & Adam Kenney	3	5	4	3	2
4	GBR	8526	Tim Bird & Richard Nurse	6	3	7	5	4
5	GBR	8907	Jim Berry & David Barnes	7	8	2	11	14
6	IRL	888	Colin Barry & Tim O'Connor	5	4	dnf	8	12
7	GBR	8497	Roger Deane & Dennis Cartwright	4	dnc	dnc	7	5
8	IRL	7771	Brian Jones & Garry Frost	8	dnc	5	9	10
9	GBR	8701	Rob Napier & Francis Cram	11	6	8	10	8
10	IRL	8552	Michael O'Brien & John O'Gorman	9	9	6	12	9
11	GBR	8694	Matt & Daniel Hart	dnf	dnc	dnc	4	3
12	IRL	8511	Brian Goggin & Stanley Browne	10	7	dnf	14	11
13	GBR	8925	Martin Wedge & Scott Allen	dnc	dnc	dnc	6	7
14	GBR	8009	Matthew & James McNicholl	dnf	dnf	dnc	13	13
15	IRL	8269	James & Lisa O'Brien	dnc	dnc	dnc	15	15

[Congratulations, Ewen and Charles. And well done the other Barry brothers, Colin and especially Alex, who had imported our own Adam Kenney to crew for him, posting consistently good results for a very worthy third overall. Ewen mentioned the youngsters from Northern Ireland, Matthew & James McNicholl. This was their first open meeting, and Sunday was a baptism of fire. But on Monday they looked in good shape, sailing well and flat, and they were difficult to pass (yes, we know!). Congratulations for coming all that way, and we hope to see more of you. Also worthy of commendation were the even younger brother/sister pairing of James and Lisa from the O'Brien clan - great effort, well done.]