

INTERNATIONAL SHRIMPER WEEK 2012

Ninety two boats, three dogs and more than two hundred people (aged from two to eighty two) attended this year's International Shrimper Week which returned to the Falmouth area for the first time since 2006.

The whole ethos of the week was that, although there were organised activities every day, people were free to choose whether to join in with them or to go off and do their own thing. "Typically between a third and a half joined in with the official events," organiser Mark Osborn said later, "which is a blessing in disguise because we couldn't really cope if they all turned up in one place".



After a briefing at Restronguet Sailing Club and a dinner at Castaways in Mylor on Saturday evening, the waterborne activities got under way on Sunday morning. Colin Campbell's *Camilla* led a fleet of thirty five boats out past St Anthony lighthouse to Porthcurnick beach to visit the Hidden Hut cafe which had recently featured in a television programme.

Later in the afternoon when the tide was up, Shrimper owners Claud and Sheila Lanyon treated about eighty people to a cream tea at their house in St Just Pool opposite the beautiful 13th century church. One visiting Shrimper owner described the setting as "totally majestic" and said that if he didn't do anything else for the rest of the week it would still have been worth coming. Most boats then returned to Mylor for a "free" evening.

On Monday there was a treasure hunt which involved looking for clues on the water in the morning and ashore in St Mawes in the afternoon. However, by this time it was apparent that the forecast for later in the week was poor, and a number of people decided to sail to the beautiful Helford River as they were concerned they wouldn't be able to do so on Thursday as scheduled.

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Some got all the way up to Gweek and still managed to get back to St Mawes for the evening function at Freshwater Boatyard.

There were over thirty boats there and, with numbers swelled by local sailors coming by road, a specially-arranged fish and chip van served 140 suppers.



There was a wonderful atmosphere as bagpiper Ian Forbes from *Dabchick* entertained the crowd and Steve Przybylski from *Dawn of Polruan* was declared the winner of the treasure hunt.

The next afternoon almost fifty boats went up to Truro. Most of those then gathered on the Ruan pontoon further down the Truro River where a cooking competition was held.



The one rule was that only a single-burner cooker could be used but huge efforts were made and the results were of an extraordinarily high standard. Tony Hampton – a trained chef who has reputedly cooked for the Royal family – headed up the team of three judges.

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After some difficult deliberations they awarded the trophy (a tin of macaroni cheese mounted on a plinth) to Paul and Jenny Oliver from *Lady Lalla* who had produced three courses – avocado, prawns and asparagus salad; a chicken, ginger and honey stir fry; and braised nectarines with brandy, yoghurt and cream.

Wednesday was race day which was held under the burgee of St Mawes S.C and run by race officer Tim Pratt, himself a former Shrimper owner.



In the morning the fleet was divided into two – odd and even sail numbers - and the top fifteen from each went into an afternoon final. This was won quite easily by John and Sheila Hindmarsh in *Salamanda*, but the next four boats finished within ten seconds of each other. The wind conditions were perfect – light in the morning when some of the competitors were doing their first ever Shrimper race, and force 4 to 5 in the afternoon for the more experienced “qualifiers”. However, the stronger wind was accompanied by heavy rain which drove most boats back to Mylor straight afterwards. This might have resulted in a poor turnout at Smugglers Cottage on the River Fal where a BBQ was planned, but after Mark’s “three line whip” e-mail, about seventy people turned up, mostly by road, and were grateful when a wood-burning fire was lit – on the evening before midsummer’s day!

Although the weather on Thursday and Friday wasn’t quite as bad as expected, many people had already planned land-based activities, including visits to the Eden Project, St Ives, Trelissick gardens and even Cornish Crabbers in Rock where the Shrimpers are built.

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The week ended on Friday evening with a dinner attended by 160 people at Falmouth's Princess Pavilions, where a "ditty" was sung by a quartet lead by Tony Coles. The Plymouth Plate prize for navigation was awarded to Christopher Froehlich who had sailed *Trista* singlehanded from Poole to attend this very successful event. Andrew Mullins in *Whimbrel of Watton* was awarded the Seamanship award.

Several boats stayed on for a second week in the Fal to watch the J Class yachts racing and the Pendennis Cup racing , the following week.

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