

## Irwin Trophy. 1 December 2018

A day with variety, but not one for the faint-hearted. Congratulations not only to the winner – Drizabone – but to all who competed. One could also congratulate, for their good sense, those who withdrew.



And the winner is – Drizabone.

A near record number of 9 vessels signed on with good prospects of a brisk race. These were Imagine, Sundance, Boomaroo, Tiercel, Valentine, Drizabone, Tintagel, Warrior and Rosie. However, the forecast of northeasterly winds steadily increasing to about 19 knots was way off the mark this time! On the water winds were already well above the forecast and the lightly-crewed Warrior (with the benefit of foresight) withdrew before the start. The start was delayed by 15 minutes to allow boats to fight the tide to reach the starting line near West Channel no 3. The fleet set off on Course

1 (involving West#3, West#4, QA in various combinations and Grass Beds finish), mostly with reduced sail. With uncertain winds, some reefs were shaken out just before or soon after the start.

Not only was the wind forecast off the mark in terms of strength but the wind was fickle which compounded the challenges of a strong ebb tide. Rosie found a hole right at the start line and struggled to cross despite brisk winds elsewhere. Then it was a lively circuit, starting near W#3 to W#4, QA and back to W#3, then heading back towards W#4. However, at that point Sundance found a big hole in the wind and stalled. Tiercel blithely followed her into it and stalled also. Others, including Valentine, Drizabone, Tintagel and Boomaroo headed off to the far east prompting bitter thoughts that “those beggars will steal a big march on us here” but they found their own hole in the wind and no less tide. At this point Rosie found her second big calm and retired in favour of a social commitment, thus saving her the drama of 30 knots later on.

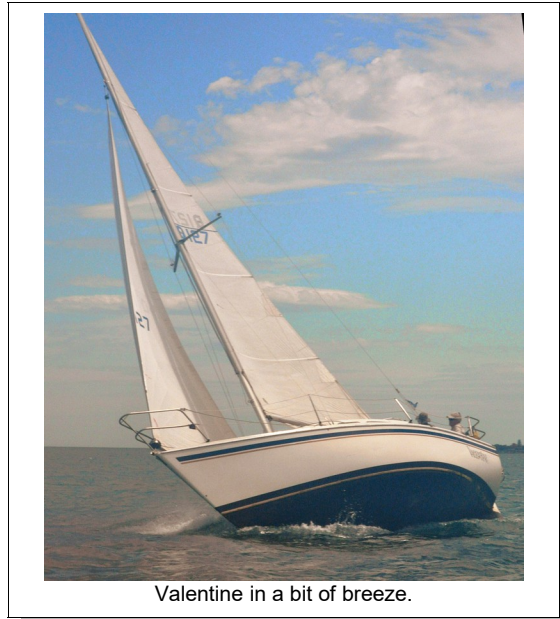


Valentine in pursuit of Tiercel (again).

The wind picked up again after a few minutes, but more moderately, so spinnakers were flown by Imagine (of course) and Tiercel, and jibs were exchanged for number 1s (later to be regretted).



Sundance in a calm patch



Valentine in a bit of breeze.



Valentine in reasonable breeze.

Another brisk leg between W4 and W3 and back to 4, when the wind really got up. At least there was room to manoeuvre when gusts around 30 knots caused uncontrollable rounding up - on the last reach to Grass Beds. Over the line (with relief all round) the order was Imagine, Sundance, Boomaroo, Tiercel, Valentine, Tintagel and Drizabone.

On handicap, implementing in part the "first shall be last and the last shall be first" principle, the winner was Drizabone, followed by Tiercel, Boomaroo, Tintagel, Sundance, Imagine and Valentine.

Back in the boatshed, over chips and well-earned drinks, admissions were exchanged of sails going submarine, sea anchors deployed and lost etc. Don't

know what happened to the BoMs wind records but the trace for South Channel Fort vanished around noon – did the anemometer blow off?

Extra thanks to the OODs on Swan (Jennifer Gilbert and Rob Hynam-Smith) for enduring a rugged day. And indeed thanks to all participants for attending and sailing without incident.