

On The Water



with
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Ocean Leopard to enter race for Island honours

Friend to use youthful exuberance to compete on Solent and spark interest in big boats

OCEAN LEOPARD has entered this year's Round the Island Race – and skipper Lee Friend is confident of long-term success for big-boat racing in the Solent.

The 82ft boat, based in Gunwharf Quays, will be crewed by members of Portsmouth Sailing Club and Portsmouth Rugby Club as it attempts to triumph in a competition it has graced in the past.

Last year Friend skippered Ocean Leopard to second place line honours in Class, while it also won Portsmouth Sailing Club's annual Parhelion Autumn Series Group 3.

The Round the Island Race, first held in 1931, consists of a full, 50-mile circumnavigation of the Isle Of Wight and is expected to attract thousands of spectators and competitors to the island.

The event is hosted by Island Sailing Club (ISC) and with over 900 entries already confirmed, there is expected to be strong competition when racing begins on Saturday, June 27.

Friend believes the race will provide a wonderful opportunity for his younger crew to gain great experience in a rare boat class.

He said: 'I was looking for some very keen young crew members for the Round the Island Race and they volunteered through Portsmouth Sailing Club.'

'This is an opportunity for them to expand their focus beyond dinghies.'

'A lot of the guys are young and fit, which will really help.'

'We're looking forward to this year as there are a lot of races to participate in and hopefully win.'



RARING TO GO Ocean Leopard skipper Lee Friend, far left, with his crew for this year's Round the Island Race

Skipper Friend is hopeful that Ocean Leopard's involvement can again spark interest in big-boat racing, with the Southsea shoreline having once been a highly-popular place to view yacht racing.

With the America's Cup World Series due to take place on the Solent in July, Friend believes the groundswell of interest in the sport can aid other racing classes and lead to a resurgence in big-boat sailing in the area.

'It'll bring a lot more boats to this

end of the Solent as it's a great viewing platform,' he said.

'We'd like to bring back regular boat racing off Southsea Common.'

'You've got the ramparts around the harbour entrance to stand on, so it's quite a good spot.'

'We're trying to promote more big-boat racing as it has lapsed in recent years.'

'The Americas Cup brings a lot of focus back on the region again, as it's an ideal place to race.'

At 82ft long, Ocean Leopard is one

of the larger boats to enter the Round the Island Race and Friend feels it is their size that makes these boats mesmerizing to watch.

He added: 'The sheer size of the boats makes it a spectacular spectator sport and we hope to have a new, large classic fleet sailing in these waters.'

Standard entries for this year's Round the Island Race close at midnight on Saturday, June 13.

More information on the event can be found by logging on to aroundtheisland.org.uk

Trafalgar welcomes members of Portchester

PORTCHESTER Sailing Club members spent an exciting and informative evening at Trafalgar Wharf as the club seeks to establish links with local sailing businesses and further expand opportunities for its youth sailing section.

The outfit's status as a recognised RYA Training Centre, Champion Club and RYA OnBoard Centre enables hundreds of children from the area to get out on the water each year.

This has significantly increased opportunities for young people to start sailing, while their Champion Club status offers funding and coaching benefits, as well as Centre of Excellence designation for junior racing and training.

Furthermore, the Portsmouth Harbour-based club offer a range of on-and-off-the-water courses, including day skipper theory and powerboat certification, thanks to their status as an approved RYA Training Centre.

Trafalgar Wharf, in Portchester, is the largest indoor drystack boat storage facility in the country, offering 70,000 square foot of space for the safe accommodation of a range of water vessels.

Alongside its impressive drystack, it also offers a range of other facilities, including restaurants, fuelling pumps and wi-fi.

After seeing it in action, the Portchester youngsters were given a chance to have their photo taken on the impressive forklift before being given a guided tour of the new marina.

The evening visit also saw Jo Miles, of Trafalgar Wharf, present the club with 15 protective helmets which will enable Portchester to provide sail training to local schools through their RYA OnBoard scheme.

Having been launched in 2008, the RYA's OnBoard scheme has afforded sailing experience to around half-a-million children from the ages of eight to 18 across the UK, while the club has worked extensively with schools and groups in the area since becoming an OnBoard Centre in 2011.

Hannah Cockle, RYA sailing development officer for Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight, said: 'It's great that this partnership between the local sailing club and local business benefits youngsters getting into the sport.'

Holman claims first-ever D-Zero nationals title at SailFest



MASTERCLASS Dan Holman and Ian Morgan in competition

DOZENS of local sailors turned out over the Bank Holiday weekend for the return of GJW Direct SailFest.

Organised by Gosport-based SailRacer, the event offered a pioneering combination of mixed-class racing and shore-based workshops across three days at Calshot Activity Centre.

For the first time, the multi-class event this year welcomed the inaugural D-Zero nationals and the RAF SA Regatta – alongside the headline GJW Direct SailFest regatta.

Despite some shifty conditions, the organisers

managed to fit in the full complement of eight races.

D-Zero designer Dan Holman delivered a masterclass in sailing his new boat in breeze, to take the honour of first-ever D-Zero national champion, with Ian Morgan and David Somerville completing the podium.

In the title competition, Finn sailor Cameron Tweedle produced some strong performances in ideal conditions on the final two days to secure victory from second-placed ISO sailors John Gill and Julie Daniels, with Jon Tweedle – also in a Finn – taking third.

Tweedle claimed a second trophy in the 2015 RAF SA regatta, which saw him emerge victorious over Tweedle in second, with the RS400 of Steve Bales and James Sargeant taking the third spot on the podium.

Alongside its packed on-the-water schedule, SailFest has gained a reputation for providing extensive off-the-water activities.

This year, RYA coach Chris Taylor provided a brief on expected conditions on the race course, followed later by a detailed debrief of the racing, with these sessions proving very popular.

Principal race officer David Henshall believes the shifty conditions made for a weekend of top-level sailing.

He said: 'Despite some challenging combinations of light winds, tides and the departing cruise liners, I felt that the three days delivered up some superb racing for everyone.'

'This was a great opportunity for some fun sailing, not only against boats from the same class but other classes of a similar nature.'

'I look forward to being involved with this event again – and I hope to be seeing many more boats in future.'