

MIDLANDS DISTRICT IOM SERIES ROUND-UP 2009

By Tony Edwards



A real effort has been made by the Midlands Committee in conjunction with the newly formed Race Assistance Team to encourage this 6 event series and through sound race management to improve the quality and enjoyment of radio sailing. Starting with timely Notices of Race advertising each event on the forum, ensuring the races are properly run in an even-handed way through to enthusiastic after race reporting – all has helped to create a very successful and enjoyable series.



The series began with a great entry of 21 boats at Market Bosworth, but initially it was a case of nice day, shame about the wind. The Isis's of Mike Hounsel from Woodspring and Leicester's Don Charlesworth built a steady lead on the fleet during the morning drifting conditions. Mike Hounsel's trip from Bridport was worthwhile as he managed to perform equally well when the breeze eventually filled in, winning the day from Don with Mick Shillington making it a 1, 2, 3 for the Isis design.

Next on the circuit was the Welford Trophy event at Leicester's Charnwood Lake on the 26 April. Again conditions were light and testing which at Charnwood can be very difficult indeed. Peter Moor sailing his Isis narrowly won the day with a number of risky port end starts. Just second was Tony Edwards with his trusty Ericca, third Mike Weeks with his new Ericca 6 ahead of the Fatboy of Darin Ballington.

The third venue in the series was a mid May visit to the southern extremity of the district at Watermead which attracted an excellent turnout of 25 IOMs. The boats raced in two heats with a final total of 9 races (18 heats) sailed. It was a tricky wind direction, building to third rigs as the day progressed and consistency in the difficult sailing produced a close outcome. Tony Edwards (Ericca) 16 points eventually split the Isises of winner Peter Moor 15 points and Colin Trower with 24 points. Richard Wills sailing his own design Arion was 4th, Darin Ballington (FB) 5th and Mike Clifton (Cockatoo 08) 6th.

Manor Park in August hosted an excellent day of A and B rig sailing with 19 entries and a shifty southerly breeze. Getting the start and picking the shifts was the order of the day won convincingly by Tony Edwards' new Robot with 8 points, Mike Weeks 2nd on 19 points with his E6, Don Charlesworth (Isis) 3rd with 23 and Mick Shillington (Isis) 4th with 33 points. Darin played his trump card at this event leaving Fatboy on the bank to increase the wind shadow and acting as race officer for the day.

The fifth event scheduled for Burton was abandoned due to exceptional weed growth so, the event moved on to Two Islands which hosted the MacMcCullough trophy. The Milton Keynes club provided a bright day with a light top suit breeze for the 20 skippers drawn from a wide area and who sailed in two heats. The challenging conditions produced several A heat winners including Keith Tyson from Eastbourne (Italico), Darin Ballington ("Flatboy"), Don Charlesworth (Isis), Mick Shillington (Isis) and Mike Clifton (Cockatoo 08). When the music stopped it was Keith Tyson who won this close days racing, making his long journey worthwhile with Mike Clifton 2nd and Darin Ballington 3rd.



Finally the re-run of the aborted Burton event was hosted at Manor Park to coincide with the Midlands District AGM. A light fickle offshore northerly greeted the competitors assembled on Manor Park's cliff and the skippers were soon to discover most of the large "holes" in the wind during the day. Consistency proved the name of the game and whilst Mike Weeks (E6), Graham Allen (Stealth), Darin Ballington (FB) and Tony Edwards

(Robot) all won races, it was Tony's consistent top results that convincingly won him the day.

Whilst shroud attachment points are getting lower, the technical ability of Midland skippers is rising. The effort put into the organisation and management of this excellent inter-club series has resulted in increased attendance, enjoyable racing with little on the water conflict and is improving the standard of all the individual sailors involved. As a statistic 4



of the 6 races were sailed in light or very light conditions whilst 2 venues provided a healthy blow with 2nd and 3rd rigs. Weed has affected the result at several venues this year as elsewhere in the UK. A number of designs have been prominent – Mike Weeks has shown well with his Ericca 6. The Isis designs of Peter Moor, Mick Shillington and Don Charlesworth have been very competitive with Peter winning two events. Cockatoos have shown well in several hands including Mike Clifton, Keith Coxon and when the strings hold together Laurie Brown. Tony Edwards has shown great pace since completing his new Robot IOM which has now become a difficult boat to beat. Darin's consistent series of results with Fatboy coupled with the enthusiasm to attend every event deservedly won him the series overall and it is a tribute to his dedication that he has achieved so well in so short a time in radio sailing.

Don't miss this series in 2010, the dates for which will be included in the MYA Yearbook Diary. For 2010 the rules of the series have been modified to reduce the number of qualifying events making it easier for a greater number of skippers to qualify and keeping competitor interest through to the end of the series. It may become even more exciting than the tennis Masters at the 02 arena!

NOTE

I would like to congratulate Darin Ballington for winning the MDCS2009 series it was a worthy win for with his consistent results at the top. It is also important to recognise his work in helping to make the Midland District series the success it has become.

The series would not be as much fun without the skippers and the club officials to run the events. I think the Midlands have set the standard that others will wish to follow, in the running of quality events and the high standard of water side behaviour.

I would like to thank Gordon, Darin, Laurie, Tony, every club official and skipper for making the 2009 series a success, and hope you will take part and help with the fantastic race calendar for 2010.

**Graham Allen
Midland District**