



2002 Scottish Series by Peter Booth with photos by Simon Tait



Well another Scottish Series is over and this year the Sonatas had a disappointing entry of only nine boats although the racing was still of a high quality. This year the CCC opted not to have an overnight race for Sonatas and Sigma 33 and one or two other classes but replaced it with a day race starting from Inverkip on the Friday at 09.30. The Sigmas were obviously too keen to get to Tarbert as many were over the start line so they had a recall. This left the Sonatas to show the way (right or wrong) to Mountstuart Beacon 6 miles away. With a reluctance by the class to split away the fleet sailed the first half of this leg down the Inverclyde shore with only Random FFD making a break for the Cowal shore. Later classes indicated that this was probably the better side of the beat, however by the time Mountstuart was reached the pecking order was fairly well established and in the fairly fresh force 4 SWly it was proving a struggle for those who were only 3 up. Round Mtstuart we freed off for a gusty reach of 5.5 miles to Portachur buoy but this was too close a reach for any spinnakers to appear.

Round this buoy and it was back on to a beat to clear Garroch Head to the south of Bute about 3 miles. Then a fetch of nine miles to a laid buoy at Lamont shelf (difficult to locate if not using GPS), continue past this mark a further 6 miles to a laid buoy at Tarbert Bank still a fetch. There was little opportunity to pick up any places over this last 15 miles but then as usual the final one mile beat into Tarbert proved to be very tricky with the gusts coming off the hills and wind shifts coming out of the harbour or the wind disappearing altogether!!!! The final positions being Jammie Dodger, Tragedy and Scruples. But it was a pleasant sail although we had not used the spinnaker over a course of 28 NM covered in a little over six hours.



Sat morning was fairly bright and with a forecast of continuing southerly winds F4-5 with locally 6 off Arran we thought we would get another good days sailing and the CCC had promised a second race for Sonatas. The course set was Olympic Triangles with a beat in excess of 4 miles. As is usual in the north of Loch Fyne the wind in this direction proved very gusty and with boats going over to the west shore to get the lifts the tactics were fairly well established but again it was Heath Gairns and Graham Campbell in Jammie Dodger who were showing the best boat speed and no matter how hard Murray Caldwell tried he could not haul him in. During the race the wind speed increased up above the forecast 6 and with wind speeds across the deck reported to be 43 knots boat handling became a little difficult and the crew of

a certain black Sonata having consumed amongst other things more than one and a half bottles of malt on the Friday evening were glad to see the finish line and I think all Sonatas were more than happy to return safely to Tarbert without the 2nd promised race in those conditions.

Sundays forecast was for showers and sunny intervals F 2-3 locally 4 S becoming SE. The wind again was proving to difficult to find any consistency of strength although it was generally towards the top of the forecast strength. Today we were sailing amongst the Sportsboats and Sigma 33 classes which can provide a different set of problems. The first race was Windward / Leeward and at the windward mark the first time Jammie Dodger led once more but was followed by Firebird having decided to put in an appearance from the 2nd half of the fleet. This was not to be maintained however and Tagedy, So and Pied Piper all pulled through but non could touch Jammie Dodger. In the 2nd race again a windward leeward course the wind was starting to show the shift to the east that was forecast and yet again Heath and Graham covered every move towards that side of the course and by the time we reached the windward mark the race was over as the next two laps saw us reaching in and out of Cork 1720,s and other sports boats to go up and down the course without tacking and the order at the finish saw Jammie Dodger win from Alan Harper in Pied Piper and George Reid in Off Quay doing well to pick up third .



Monday saw an almost perfect Loch Fyne sailing day with sunshine and almost steady force 3 winds. Race 1 yet again saw JD come out first at the windward mark and was to remain there for the whole race despite the determined efforts of Chris Tait in Scruples and Alan Harper to pull him in on the downwind finish. The second race showed a growing feeling of dejavous as yet again JD and crew sailed a near perfect race this time Murray Caldwell proved to be the 2nd best and again Alan Harper was 3rd.



Tues morning dawned with only the minor placings to sail for but with a determination not to let Heath do a whitewash of 7 wins . Thankfully Tragedy managed to force his way through to take the final gun of the weekend. This time it was Tim Tindal who put in a determined effort from the 2nd half of the fleet to finish in 5th position.

The weekend was an excellent regatta's sailing with fresh to strong winds almost all the time but all the Sonatas came through it with great credit and no breakages (a pity some of these flash machines cannot say the same). Shoreside there were some good parties but a little more sobriety by the crew of Firebird would be appreciated next year. Just because the Skipper said get the weight down they thought they had to drink it all the first day. Hopefully next year the turnout will be back up - watch for a questionnaire appearing on the bulletin board and please answer it as the CCC is having a debriefing meeting shortly.

