

TOLEMAN SOLENT 70



The Toleman Twins get lift off.

Nobody was surprised when May 3rd dawned as a cold blustery day, after all, isn't that the traditional weather for this opening race of the season? Nineteen boats braved the start line, with only two non-starters. Robert Cook and Ginger Donohoo in Aquaglide have obviously reached the conclusion that they no longer have to risk imminent personal injury, and large repair bills, to prove their racing ability to fellow competitors. The sickening thing is that they are probably right!

As always at the first race it is good to see some new boats, faces and sponsors, indeed U.K.O.B.A. were delighted to welcome Ted Toleman as overall sponsor for the event. Class IIID saw two new Phantoms, "Avia Watches" driven by Ian Birnie, and "Fayanagin" driven by the Toleman twins. Chris Jones, also a newcomer, took to the water in a 25' Fletcher powered by twin Merc. 175's.

Class IIIC also had some new faces in the form of George Restorick, driving Barry Drinkwater's boat of last season now re-christened "Boobed Again", as well as Graham Stuart in "Marshan Warrior", Adam Younger in "Bosscat", and Mike Jones in "Knickers". Bruce Nash is certainly not a new face, but he did have a new 21' Phantom called "London and Manchester Assurance", and also his wife Avril as navigator for the first time.

It was especially good to see a couple of new IIIB boats out for the first time, both are Marshans, with "The Artful Dodger" sporting a Yamaha 85 engine, the first of its kind to race in this class. "Hydrophobia" had the more usual Mercury, and it will prove an interesting comparison throughout the year. Both were unfortunately forced to retire at this event due to heavy seas.

In all, twelve boats were forced to retire after the first lap, which was not only a reflection of the weather conditions, but also included a liberal sprinkling of first race mechanical problems. Peter and Jan Armstrong in "Aphrodisiac" had a nasty moment when they "stuffed" their 23' rig on the second lap. Both suffered considerably as the water was forced up inside their helmets, and the resulting black eyes drew many a joke about husband and wife teams. This

was the first time that either Peter or Jan had experienced the problem of going through a wave rather than over it, and both agreed that they would not like to do it again in a hurry.

The Solent is a most confusing area for even the best of navigators, and this year saw a most unfortunate mix-up resulting from two buoys being similarly named. The course called for boats to turn around North-East Ryde Middle, but at speeds in excess of 50 mph it is not surprising that three boats mistook North Ryde Middle for the correct mark and carried on the race confident that they were on course. Aphrodisiac realised their error and returned, losing valuable time. This left only the Toleman twins and Ian Birnie on the wrong course, and sadly resulted in their eventual disqualification. It must be stressed that this is a constant problem in this area of water, buoys are



Bruce and Avril Nash in London & Manchester Assurance.

Photos by: Julian Felstead.

Boat Name	Driver	Co-Driver
CLASS III		
1. Pobjoy Mint Two	P. Bloomfield	J. Baker
2. London & Manchester Assurance	B. Nash	A. Nash
3. Marshan Warrior	G. Stuart	N. Murning
CLASS II		
1. Skean Dhu	Countess of Arran	R. Trigg
CRUISER CLASS		
1. Splash Down	D. Graham-Smith	P. Warner



Exciting competition between Fayanagin and Pobjoy Mint Two.

scattered every way you look, and have distinctly illegible names.

Whilst all this was happening at one end of the course, Lady Arran and Roger Trigg were having fun and games at the other in Skean Dhu. Fiona stopped close to a buoy to check one of her engines, and succeeded in tipping Roger overboard as he inspected the problem. Although the story was funny in the telling, Fiona was terrified at the time that Roger had been caught between the boat and buoy, and was most relieved to see him bob safely to the surface unhurt. It is at times such as this when all drivers are instantly aware, and glad of, the stringent safety regulations that insist on fully padded

life-jackets and helmets being worn

The race was finally called to a halt after a gale warning was received in Race Control. Peter Bloomfield and the Toleman twins were so busy battling it out with each other for first position that neither noticed the curtailment flag, and blithely carried on into the distance. Eventually they were brought to a halt by one of the marker boats, and it was then that the issue concerning North-East Ryde Middle came to light.

After driving a superb race the Tolemans were understandably upset to find they had made a navigational error, but their position had to be officially

sorted out as a mistake would have put every other boat's championship points in dispute.

It is ironic that Peter Bloomfield was forced to put in a protest, Peter has been an excellent diplomat with Class III for many years, and usually clears up any dispute well before an official protest is necessary. This time the problem could not be avoided, and by the end of the evening the race committee had decided that both "Avia Watches" and "Fayanagin" must be disqualified. Both crews had driven superbly in new boats, and despite some bad luck this time, look well set to provide exciting racing throughout the coming season. ●

Photos by Julian Felstead.

Peter Bloomfield wins Class III in Pobjoy Mint II.

