

Portchester SC was the venue for the second event of the RS400 Southern Championship. We arrived to a friendly welcome. After the obligatory cup of tea, the boats were rigged and thoughts turned to the sailing.

A number of competitors admitted to living close to Portchester sailing club, but never having sailed there. Well it turns out that we've been missing something!

The sailing area is in the north part of Portsmouth Harbour by Portchester castle. Plenty of space for some blasting about, which it turns out, is a good thing.

The wind for the day started at just under 20kts and built to around 25kts by the end of the day. Add in bright sunshine all day and the recipe for fun is just about there. 30 crews seemed to think so anyway.

Now this is where the information dries up a little. I'll admit to not really paying a huge amount of attention to what the other competitors were doing most of the time. Had I known that we would finish in the designated report writers position, I may have taken more notice!

With the wind and tide conditions as they were, a decent chop was making concentration on your own boat more important than in more benign conditions.

None of this seemed to bother Russ and Penny Clarke, who disappeared around the course with a pace that nobody else could match. They won the first two races and with the wind increasing, they along with some others in the fleet decided that discretion was the better part of valour and headed back to the welcoming arms of the Portchester shore crew.

With a discard coming into play upon the commencement of race 3 there was an opportunity for those who had been involved in various 'moments' in the previous two races to recover a result, or frankly just to enjoy full bore downwind blasting. The boats in 2-7th were all pretty close on the race course all day, so this one could make all the difference.

After a close race, Rob Jones and Amelia Camm took the race from Sean Cleary and Annalise Nixon by a matter of inches on the line. When the results came out at the end of the day it proved how close a number of boats had been and how one mistake or good tactical call could make all the difference.

Russ and Penny ran out deserved winners with a display of controlled speed that was head and shoulders above everybody else on the day.

There was a single point between places 2-6. Making up the podium places, 2nd place went to Francisco and Teresa Lobato. 3rd place went to Steve Restall and Chris Stubbs.

Finally, a big thank you to Portchester Sailing Club. The race management and the shore side volunteers were a credit to what must be one of the most friendly clubs that we have visited.