

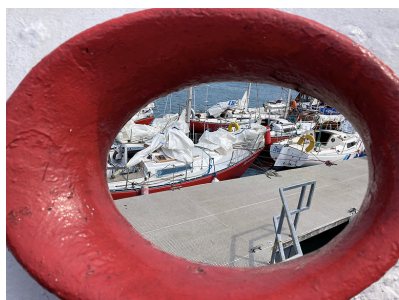
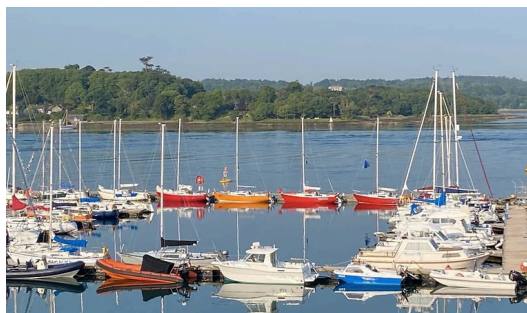
RUFFIAN GOLDEN JUBILEE 2023 – A WONDERFUL YEAR OF CELEBRATORY EVENTS

2023 marked the 50th anniversary of the Ruffian 23 and it was celebrated in style with many events throughout the year in all corners of Ireland and further afield in Hong Kong.

RUFFIAN GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS IN PORTAFERRY - JUNE 15-18

17 Ruffian 23s congregated in Portaferry on Strangford Lough on a sunny weekend in June to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Irish-designed and built one-design class. Heather Kennedy, daughter of the late Billy Brown who designed the Ruffian 23, was one of the main organisers. There were 9 Ruffians from Carrickfergus, 6 from Dun Laoghaire, 1 from Poolbeg, and 1 from the homeport of Portaferry. All were snugly berthed on Portaferry marina following their arrival on Thursday evening.

On Friday morning, after a briefing from race officer John McAlea and Heather Kennedy, the fleet headed off up Strangford Lough with a favourable tide under spinnakers. They were guided into White Rock Bay, where they rafted up on the pontoon alongside the Down Cruising Club (the old lightship Petrel located at Ballydorn) and enjoyed a BBQ lunch in glorious weather aboard the lightship before casting off and heading back to Portaferry.



Friday's post-sailing festivities kicked off with an evening in the company of the Brown family, Michael Cutliffe (Ruffian 23 owner since 1979), and Weatherly Yachts craftsmen. Michael gave a short presentation on the history of the Ruffian 23s and some recollections



of cruising adventures aboard Ruffians over the years. Heather and William Brown recalled childhood memories of their father Billy and Uncle Dickie when they were designing, building and sailing the Ruffian 23, which was exported to such diverse locations as Iceland, Uruguay, the Netherlands, the UK, Ireland and Hong Kong. Robert Beckett, who worked at Weatherly Yachts alongside the Brown brothers, recounted his days in the 'piggery' and the factory assembling the Ruffians using what was innovative technology at the time.

On Saturday morning race officer John McAlea got racing away in a light Southerly breeze with a very strong flood tide. Spinnakers were hoisted and dropped, places changed, and after many gybes and multiple involuntary pirouettes, the course was shortened at committee boat Fantan, a Ruffian 33. Druid (CSC) got the gun, hotly pursued by Loco (NYC/DMYC). Paper Tiger (PSC) was next to approach the line but was unfortunate to be taken to the wrong side of the committee boat by the tide. Next in line, Hot Orange (CSC) suffered the same fate at the pin end, and Ruffles (DMYC) finished to take third place.

Ruffles won the subsequent race with Ripples second, followed by Paper Tiger, Bloodhound and Loco. A number of boats got swept past the line, the wrong side of the outer limit buoy, and despite all their efforts there was no way back against the strong ebb.



At the prize giving RO John McAlea thanked all the competitors who travelled to Portaferry for the weekend and gave special thanks to Brendan Duffy (Carmen, DMYC) for proposing the anniversary regatta approximately a year ago. Heather Kennedy, Billy Brown's daughter, presented Michael Cutliffe, Ruffles DMYC, with first prize of a lovely framed model of a Ruffian 23. Second was Loco



NYC/DMYC, helmed by Ann Kirwan, and third was Bloodhound CSC, helmed by Walter Ewing.

Dinner was followed by a night of music and craic in the club into the early hours. The following day the Ruffians set off for home and were waved off by the Brown family from the shore of Strangford Lough.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS NATIONAL YACHT CLUB – JULY 28-30

Race officer Suzanne McGarry ran the National Yacht Club hosted seven-race fifteen-boat Ruffian Championships over three days, initially in very breezy conditions. Two second places on the final day of the Championships handed overall victory to Stephen Penney's Hot Orange from Carrickfergus Sailing Club, with RStGYC's Stephen Gill sailing Shannagh second, with third place going to Ann Kirwan from the NYC sailing Bandit. Thanks to Suzanne and the race management team who provided great racing, and to the National Yacht Club for hosting the Ruffian Golden Jubilee National Championships.



ALL IRELAND TEAM RACING IN WESTPORT - SEPTEMBER 9-10

The next major event in the Ruffian Golden Jubilee calendar was the All Ireland Team Racing Championship hosted by Mayo Sailing Club in September. Four teams from around the country competed in the event on the beautiful waters of Clew Bay, Co. Mayo.

Race Officer Colin McMullen set a trapezoid course with marks to be rounded to starboard, and Saturday's racing got underway in a light Westerly breeze. The 3 on-the-water umpires, Ailbe Millerick, Eunice Kennedy, and Jill Fleming made their presence felt from early on with a number of boats falling foul of their red penalty flags.

The Race Management organisation was flawless and the very well planned boat changes worked seamlessly. At the end of day one, 18 races later, the West team from Mayo SC led with 8 race wins to the East's 6 so they would both contest Sunday's 3 race final. The Barbarians and the South with 2 race wins each would contest the petit-final for 3rd and 4th place. A tired but happy bunch of 60 sailors, mark layers, umpires, and the committee boat race management team retired to the clubhouse for drinks and a meal, thanks to the shore-based volunteers from MSC.

In Sunday's final the East won the first race but the West won the next 2 to take the title. The East were runners up with the Barbarians taking 3rd place. Huge credit is due to Mayo Sailing Club for supplying 12 Ruffians, 12 owners reps, the race management team of Colin, Ed, Brendan, Alex, Gillian and Martin, and the shore crew who fed and watered all at sea and ashore over the weekend. A particular thanks is due to Fergal Guilfoyle, Colin McMullen, MSC Commodore Bobby Conlon, and MSC Ruffian Class Captain Pat O'Malley for organising the event. Congratulations to Mayo SC skippers Fergal Guilfoyle, David Quinn, and Libby Lambe and their crews for winning the event.



RUFFIAN GOLDEN JUBILEE HOSTED BY THE ROYAL HONG KONG YACHT CLUB - OCTOBER 20-23

Hong Kong – photos credit Guy Newell HK Ruffians

A team of 20 Irish Ruffian sailors travelled to Hong Kong to compete in the Golden Jubilee Ruffian Interport Regatta, the 7th Interport Challenge. The first two Interport events took place in the early '90s before the event was revived in 2009, when the Irish Ruffians were invited to Hong Kong. Since then, the event has been held every three years in alternate locations, but the 2021 visit to Hong Kong was delayed by two years due to Covid. However, this turned out to be fortuitous as the 7th Ruffian Interport Challenge took place during the 50th anniversary year of the Ruffian fleet.

The event kicked off on Friday October 20 with a briefing and practice session in Victoria Harbour, followed by a Sunset Cruise of the harbour with the fabulous Hong Kong skyline as a backdrop, before docking at the RHKYC pontoon for a welcome party hosted by the Hong Kong Ruffians. The racing started on Saturday October 21 with two club fleet races in the harbour where the Irish Team were allocated four Ruffians, each with five Irish crew and an owner's representative in a passive role, racing against four Hong Kong Ruffians. The Irish team won out by a small margin in both closely contested races.

After racing the teams retired to the magnificent facilities of the RHKYC club at Kellett Island in the heart of Hong Kong with fabulous views of the Hong Kong and Kowloon skylines, before heading for a dinner and much craic in a local restaurant with entertainment provided by “Flare”, a 5-piece band fronted by the helm of Ruffian 23 Helios.



The teams assembled on Sunday morning for a tribute to the Ruffian Golden Jubilee by the RHKYC pipe band followed by a photo-shoot of all the participants on the pontoon steps. The teams set off on the 19 nautical miles passage race from Victoria Harbour, with lovely scenery around Tung Lung Chau Island, Shelter Island, and into Shelter Cove. Buster won the race in 4.5 hours, with all boats finishing within the next hour. Drinks and a BBQ were enjoyed in the beautiful setting of the RHKYC clubhouse at Shelter Cove before a bus brought the team back to the Irish team hotel in Wanchai.



It was back to Shelter Cove early on Monday morning for the final three races of the 5-race Interport Challenge (the passage race did not count for event points). Race Officer Ian Fleming gave a briefing before heading out aboard the committee vessel Hector Ross to lay the course and get the team racing underway, in a light breeze with the temperature over 30 degrees C. The on-the-water umpires kept a close watch on proceedings, and used their red flags on a

number of occasions. The Irish team got off to a great start, winning Race One by a comfortable margin. Race Two was hotly contested, with the Hong Kong team ahead at one stage before the Irish claimed the win by out-maneuvring the hosts on a slow downwind leg from marks 2 to 3. After a 20 degree wind shift the RO laid a windward-leeward course for the final race which the Irish team won with 14 points to Hong Kong's 22 points. The teams retired to the welcome shade of RHKYC's Shelter Cove clubhouse, where they enjoyed a few drinks before heading back on the bus to the Kellett Island clubhouse for a lavish rooftop wrap-up party and the prize giving.

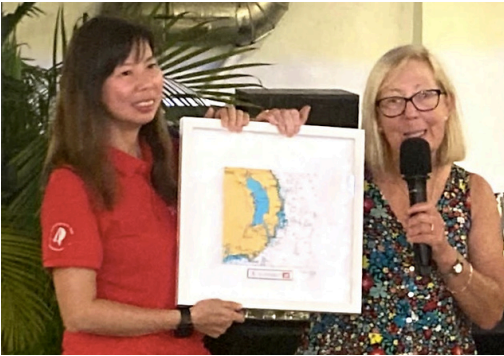


As the sun set the rooftop setting afforded fabulous views of the harbour and skylines of Hong Kong and Kowloon. RHKYC Commodore Lucy Sutro welcomed the Irish team and exchanged the RHKYC burgees with those of the visiting clubs – the National Yacht Club, Schull Harbour Sailing Club, the Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club, and Clontarf Yacht & Boat Club.



Following a few words from Irish Ruffian Class Captain Feena Lynch, Irish team captain Ann Kirwan paid tribute to the fantastic organisation from the Hong Kong Ruffian Committee, especially Chairlady Kat Chan, Vice-Chairlady Vivian Cheung, and Secretary Paul Oen.

Ann presented Chairlady Kat with a gift of a framed handcrafted 3-dimensional chart of Strangford Lough with Portaferry, Northern Ireland, the birthplace of the Ruffian 23 fifty years ago, which was specially commissioned from Latitude's Bobby Nash of Kinsale.



The prize giving and presentation of the Interport Perpetual Cup rounded off the evening. As the home team had won the previous 2 challenges in Hong Kong in 2009 and 2015, the Irish team was delighted to win the 2023 Golden Jubilee Interport.



The Irish team helm & crews were:

Ann Kirwan & Brendan Briscoe & Brian Buggy (NYC), Ian Cutcliffe & Helen Bradley (DMYC)
 Brian Cullen & Mark Bourne, Markie Becker & Feena Lynch (NYC), Shane Brodie (CY&BC)
 Cian Mullee & Maeve Curley & Andrew Beatty (MSC), Declan McCarthy (DMYC), Charain Fong (HK)
 Nick Miller & Natalia Niewidok & Aoife Hall (SID), Eimear NíMhéalóid & Eoin ÓhEochaidh (DMYC)

Huge thanks to the HK Ruffian Association and the RHKYC for hosting the 7th Ruffian Interport, and for treating the Irish team to incredibly generous hospitality. We look forward to welcoming Hong Kong back to Ireland in 2026, although the 2023 Golden Jubilee Interport will be a hard act to follow.

PRIZE GIVING DINNER NOVEMBER 2023

To round off the Golden Jubilee year, the annual Ruffian prize giving dinner was held in the National YC in November. Those attending were treated to a slide show of the Portaferry celebrations in June, the team racing in Westport in September and the Hong Kong trip in October.

Heather Kennedy and William Brown attended and were both delighted and surprised to accept the Weatherly Trophy, a half-model of a Ruffian 23, on behalf of Portaferry SC, for an outstanding contribution to the Ruffians in 2023. Class captain Feena Lynch presented the trophy to Heather and William.



MG MOTOR “SAILING CLUB OF THE YEAR 2024”



We received great news on Saturday January 6 2024 on learning that the National Yacht Club and the Ruffian Association were chosen to jointly share the MG Motor “Sailing Club of the Year 2024” award. This truly was the icing on the Ruffian Golden Jubilee year cake! The coveted Ship’s Wheel was presented in the National Yacht Club on Thursday February 29th 2024. See photos of the evening below.

