

NORTH SEA YACHT RACE 'best'

THE twentieth anniversary North Sea Yacht Race has been hailed as the 'best yet' after a memorable crossing in near perfect conditions and the success of this year's event has prompted calls from the winning Scottish skipper to attract more UK based boats to take part, writes *Dave Morgan*.

Overall victor John Murphy from Port Edgar Yacht Club was full of praise for the event which he described as a 'superb' passage race. 'It deserves much better support from Scottish boats,' he told *Yachting Life*, after being confirmed as Class 6/7 victor and overall winner.

His Sun Kiss 45, Alouette well known on the Forth and no stranger to the North Sea Race, arrived at the finish line in Banff Bay shortly before 6am on 7 July just 42hrs 39mins after the start in Stavanger Fjord on 5 July. Sailing off an LYS of 1.23 Alouette snatched Class and overall honours with a corrected time of 52:27:34. She was one of only four Scottish yachts to start the event.

'It's a great race with a really friendly atmosphere. We all had great fun in Norway and at Macduff Harbour where everyone could relax after the event. The weather was brilliant, the atmosphere superb and the welcome fantastic,' said John.

His enthusiasm was shared by the rest of fleet. Everybody enjoyed the race, a change from some previous years which were hit by bad weather. The winds were never above brisk and fell light by the half way mark. Even though one or two boats were beaten by the ghosting airs towards the end, the majority managed to complete the crossing within the 90 hour time limit.

Twenty-three yachts left Stavanger Fjord in good winds and made steady progress to the Slepner Oilfield where the fleet ran into lighter airs, but fast boats like Alouette were far enough ahead to make an early landfall.

The winner was beaten to the line by the Norwegian Castro 43 racing sloop, Fritt Fram Too, whose skipper Tore Haugen from Baerum crossed the finish at 2.42am some 39hrs 21 mins after leaving Stavanger.

Two Norwegian yachts, a Fenix called Fenita, and an Elan 40

appropriately called Spirit of Islay retired as winds died in mid crossing, but the rest of the fleet struggled on to the finish.

Tied up and waiting to welcome the finishers at Macduff Harbour was former North Sea Yacht Race class winner Lovinda, whose owners, Sven and Irene Mathisen from Stavanger, called in at the end of a 12,000 mile, year long transatlantic voyage from Norway in their Wiling sloop.

Although Norwegian boats dominated the event, Alouette and an enthusiastic crew from Dunbar Sailing Club flew the flag for Scotland. While the Sun Kiss took pole, retired Dunbar dentist Sandy MacDonald won the Grampian TV Offshore Racing Trophy with his Ohlson 35 Nyvaig. Sandy and his crew, sailing in the joined Class 3 and 4 echoed the overall winner's praise for the event.

Plans are already being made for the 21st North Sea Yacht Race with Scottish yachts being targeted to join an event which has become known on both sides of the North Sea as the 'friendly invasion'.

RESULTS:

Overall North Sea Yacht Race
Winner: Alouette John Murphy (Sun Kiss 45) Dunbar Yacht Club.

Class 6/7: 1 Alouette; 2 Alexis Odd Olsen (X452) Stord Sailing Club; 3 Fritt Fram Too Tore Haugen (Castro 43) Baerum Sailing Club; 4 Linnea Anita Neshavn (X512) Haugesund Sailing Club; 5 Arrivaderci Kjetil Flesja (Comfortina 39) Stavanger Sailing Club; 6 Xanadu Hans Petter Brun (Comfortina 35) Gandsfjord Sailing Club; 7 Impuls Reno Karlsen (Sun Legende 41) Stavanger; 8 Andante Axel Schwerdt (Beneteau 473 Offshore) Stavanger.

Class 5: 1 Necesses Odd Svendsen (Hallberg Rassy 39) Stavanger; 2 Loffen Stale Tonnessen (Albin Stratus) Stavanger; 3 Vivind T Ola Sorby (Norlin 37) KNS; 4 Ventus Kjell O Klungreaug (Bavaria sloop) Asane Sailing Club; 5 Julie Jack Petter Messel (Hallberg Rassy 34) Stavanger; 6 Roundabout Roger Moir (Corrida) Royal Tay Yacht Club; 7 Equinox Scotland.

Class 3/4: 1 Ardente Olvind Fjelodsbe (Finnfire 33) Batlag Ran Sailing Club; 2 Signe B Torleif Paulsen (Scanmar 33) Stavanger; 3 Nyvaig Sandy MacDonald (Ohlsen 35) Dunbar Yacht Club; 4 Fenita Ander Ellefsen (Fenix) Stavanger.

Class 1 (no spinnakers and Gaffers):
1 Kamalie of Lister John Jakobsen (double ender) Farsund Sailing Club; 2 Selene Jom Skille (Hallberg Rassy Monsun 31) Norway.



Delighted North Sea Yacht Race winner John Murphy (left) and his Port Edgar Yacht Club Sun Kiss 45 crew collected plenty of trophies at the prizegiving held in the Banff Springs Hotel.