

Manx Sailing and Cruising Club

Sea-Pie of Cultra victorious at West Highland Yachting Week

Jerry and Linda Colman's Sigma 33 Sea-Pie of Cultra, sailing under the burgee of the Manx Sailing and Cruising Club in Ramsey, returned from the West Coast of Scotland on Sunday loaded with silverware having won their Class at West Highland Week with 3 wins and two second places to count, putting the yacht several points ahead of the next in Class. The crew, Juan Hendy, Simon Pressly, May Shiu Chan, Alex Daniel, Keith Hardisty and Jerry put together a slick performance despite never having sailed as a team before, indeed for 2 of the crew, this was their first Yachting Regatta.

It's been a good year for Sea-Pie with a win in the IOM Copiers Round the Island Race in June and a 4th in the highly competitive fleet of 20 Sigmas in Dun Laoghaire in July (beaten by 2 ex-national champions and Mayrise, all from Scotland. We beat all the Irish boats.)

West Highland Week has been running annually for 71 years now and is unique in that the racing fleet moves between three centres on the beautiful West Coast (Craobh Haven near Crinan, Oban and Tobermory on Mull) interspersing passage races requiring good navigational skills with round the buoys racing requiring quick, faultless boat handling at each venue. Superb marina facilities (wish we had one in Ramsey) at each venue supported the fleet of 73 yachts this year plus the committee boats and mark boats, all operated by highly proficient volunteers. A great programme of social events mostly at the marinas including music (traditional and modern), food, prizegivings and dancing late into the night kept us all merry although sometimes a little tender in the mornings.

This year saw a white knuckle 130 mile delivery ride up to Craobh with the following wind gusting over 30 knots then after a bit of a rest a hefty dollop of Scottish rain, attacks of midges in huge numbers from which we happily escaped into the Lord of the Isles for a few beers and a helping of suckling pig. For the first few days of the Regatta a number of calm patches resulted in some races being cancelled. Later on however the weather improved a lot allowing the West Coast to show off its extraordinary scenery in good breezes in the brilliant August sunshine. The race officers did a great job to get a series completed. All the races were very competitive with several places being taken by a matter of seconds including the final passage race which we won by 2 seconds from sister yacht Mayrise who beat us in Dun Laoghaire in July. The week lived up to all its accolades as a family friendly but competitive regatta and we look forward to returning again next year.

Jerry Colman