

## Vane A National Championship 2019.

The championship for the Vane A's is taking place at Fleetwood this week, with six days of racing from the 28<sup>th</sup> of July through to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August. On Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup>, competition for the main event is suspended while boats race in a knock-out format for the magnificent Yachting Monthly Cup. Our club has three crews racing, Graham and Shaun Wyeth, with Ray Baker, sailing 'Lance', Lewis, Russell and Thomas Wyeth, sailing 'Carbon Copy', and Peter Fothergill and Paul Edwards sailing 'Reference Point'. All three boats were built by club member Pete Lawley. Lewis, Russell and Thomas are also some of our youngest members, and respect is due to them for taking on this prestigious event.

Fleetwood is notorious for being a wild and woolly place, with wind and rain blasting straight off the Irish Sea. Well, it has been raining but so far only on the first day, Sunday, have boats been forced down to smaller rigs. Monday and Tuesday saw lighter, shifty winds, making for difficult racing. On Wednesday the wind was back, together with the rain which saw bridges washed away in adjoining Yorkshire.

Our boats found good speed in Sunday's breeze, with Peter and Paul leading the points at the end of the day and Graham, Shaun and Ray only three points behind. Lewis, Russell and Thomas were about in the middle of the fleet. In the extremely shifty breezes on the Monday, Graham, Shaun and Ray's lifetimes of experience counted, and they won 17 of the 20 points available, making them leading boat overall. Peter and Paul were only five points behind in third, and Lewis, Russell and Thomas had taken some big scalps but remained about half way up the fleet.

By the Tuesday the wind had swung into a totally different direction, but remained shifty. Again Graham, Shaun and Ray's feel for the shifts served them well, but by the end of the day they had dropped to second overall. Peter and Paul had another disappointing day, but remained tying in third place. Lewis, Russell and Thomas sailed well, and by the end of the racing found themselves in a group of boats scoring within three points of each other, so for them it's all to play for. The forecast for Thursday is for quite strong winds.

In Wednesday's Yachting Monthly Cup racing, Fleetwood's true nature returned, with strong NW winds. Shaun, Graham and Ray were down to third suit. The winds came complete with knock-down gusts which saw even the redoubtable 46 lb 'Blue Note' on her beam ends. Among our crews Graham, Shaun and Ray performed best, getting through to the quarter finals. A great performance for a light displacement boat. The trophy was won by Graham Butler's 'Dignity', a Bantock designed mid-weight yacht.

Thursday's forecast is for a less squally moderate wind, hopefully backing to give less skewed beats. Only two days to go, and Gosport have 'Lance' in second and 'Reference Point' in equal third places. There are plenty of points to be won and the outcome is far from settled. I'll keep you posted as the news comes in.

Mervyn