



Off the start.

# Fenwick on minimum points

## Nationals

There were a number of unusual aspects about the IC nationals. It was a three day event instead of the usual five so there was no long distance race and the social calendar was rather depleted. Sailors had been given a choice of Dale, at the far end of Milford Haven, in early July or West Kirby on the Wirral in the autumn. The vote had gone for the former, only a fortnight before the world championships at Travemünde on the Baltic, so most of the top names were missing and there were only 10 participants.

Strangely, it was possible to get from the border to Dale, on the opposite side of the country, with a similar number of ultra low speed traps as there were via the A5 to Llangollen, virtually within sight of the border. The first day of racing was the day after the general election when the number of Labour MPs in Wales had increased although the number of Labour votes decreased, blamed by locals on the speed limit crisis.

The championships were run in conjunction with the corresponding event for the Cherubs although they were to continue for a fourth day and the fleets used different courses, the canoes on triangle-sausage-triangle. Race Officer Arky had been one of George Cherry's white water kayak paddlers in his Hatfield Polytechnic days.

A three masted sailing ship had been moved away by the start of racing, to be replaced by an LPG tanker, which was moved immediately racing finished on the first day. An Irish car ferry came in and went out and there were various small sailing craft making the haven busy.

The first day, Friday, was fairly calm, sunny with winds just reaching force 3. As the forecast for the next day was not good Arky proposed to bank a fourth race.

Mike Fenwick completed the first lap of the first race just ahead of Clive Everest, who then capsized but was quickly back up again, the rest of the field well back. They held these positions over the next lap and then until the finish, Fenwick 12 seconds faster on time.

The sky had clouded over by the start of the second race. Tony Robertshaw led the fleet to the leeward mark for the first time, followed by Fenwick, James Hofman, Martin Robb and Stephen Clarke as the next to arrive. Over the next lap Hofman took the lead, he and Fenwick breaking free of the rest. Hofman was in the oldest boat in the fleet, the only remaining asymmetric, finishing over a minute clear on time, the first time he had ever won an IC race. He was eight minutes up on third placed Stephen Fleming.

The wind had died to force 1 by the third race. Fenwick was again the first to complete the first lap with Everest, Hofman and Robb as the next three. The course was shortened, Fenwick comfortably ahead of Hofman, himself clear of Everest, Robb and the rest.

The Cherubs didn't need any more of this so racing reverted to the original programme.

Rain and strong winds followed overnight, as forecast. The canoes did not feel any need to go out and break things so they stayed onshore and walked along the road to Dale Fort to watch the Cherubs capsizing.

Sunday was much more sensible, sunny intervals with force 3 winds.



Hofman with distinctive asymmetric, off Dale Fort.



Clive Everest off Dale.



National champion Mike Fenwick.