

## 2011 San Francisco Bay Folkboat International Regatta

Two members of the RLym YC, Chris Hills and Chris Baldwick, together with Simon Evans from LTSC recently competed in the San Francisco Bay Folkboat International Regatta.

This event is run every 2 years by the San Francisco Folkboat Association. In 2011 it was hosted by the Corinthian Yacht Club which is located at the tip of the Tiburon peninsula to the north of the Bay.



The Corinthian YC is the second oldest Club on the West Coast, now in its 125<sup>th</sup> year. This year is also the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of its present Club House, which features a magnificent ballroom on the second floor, beautifully panelled with Californian Redwood, and with fantastic views over the Bay towards Alcatraz and the City front. Hard to believe, but originally this was the Club's sail loft! All competing boats were moored right in front of the Club House in its own marina. This has to be one of the best located Clubs in the USA with its views, facilities and proximity to great sailing in the regular breezes on the Bay. It also has to be one of the friendliest and best organised, nothing was too much trouble, and various members hosted the visiting yachtsmen in their own homes.

The event itself has been running since 1977, and the San Francisco Folkboat fleet remains one of the most competitive one-design classes on the rough waters inside the Golden Gate.



There were visiting teams from Denmark, Holland Sweden, Germany and the Lymington team representing the UK Folkboat Association. Boats are lent to the visiting teams and allocated by lottery. Racing consisted of seven races across different parts of the Bay, the most dramatic course being right in front of the City, with a windward mark virtually under the Golden Gate bridge. With the fog rolling in under the bridge and the deep rumble of the fog horn booming out, this was an unforgettable mark rounding! It even made front page of the local press, if only as a weather report!



In fact, the weather could not have been better, with brilliant blue skies, and winds generally in the range of 18 to 28 knots by the time of the midday starts, though there were some huge holes! The fog coming under the bridge tends to stay in the centre of the Bay, and dissipates as it moves in an easterly direction towards Alcatraz.

Naturally, the US teams had a slight advantage, sailing on their own boats in tricky home waters, but at the end of the regatta after seven races, three teams, one Danish and two American, were tied for first place. The count back needed to go back over the three previous races to decide the winner, Per Bruch and his Danish team from Svenborg. Interestingly this was the only visiting team to have brought their own boat to the event, which helped even the odds a little.

So how did the Lymington team do?

Well, we managed to tear the port shroud out of our first boat, and then had to sail with a reserve boat, "Frihed" which was built in Denmark in 1961 by Brent Moller. She was a beautifully maintained wooden Folkboat, which rather unnerved us at first, as we had never raced a wooden Folkboat in the past, let alone a 50 year old one, and we did not want to break another boat! In the event, despite a need for some bilge pumping downwind, she did us proud, and we finished 8<sup>th</sup> overall, ahead of all the other visiting teams apart from the winning Danes, but we like to think we were actually first "borrowed boat" and first wooden boat. So, that's a double first then!

The next event will be held in 2013, probably in the week after the Americas Cup, and if it turns out to be half as good as this last one, it will be a must do event.

Now *where is* my 2013 diary?

Chris Baldwick