

## EARLY BIRD TROPHY, SATURDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2017

Many a time, this first race of the season is lost to the weather but not this year. A glorious day greeted the 9 yachts who were to participate for the first cup of the year, the Early Bird Trophy. There had been worries that the wind would be too light to drag the fleet round the bay but the pessimism was unfounded, a force 2 to 3 easterly provided suitable motivation. The Race Officer set the fleet off against the wind towards the pier ends and the boats were closely bunched. *Icon* was first to round the harbour mark closely followed by *Antix* and then *Masquerade*. The fleet headed out to the bell buoy with quite a few forgetting how strong the spring tides are and how they can sweep you over the rock. *Antix* judged it nicely and overtook *Icon* and *Cold Steel* overtook *Masquerade*. The new boat, *Tiger Rag*, kept well up tide and rounded in 5<sup>th</sup> position.

The lead boats had not forgotten their spinnaker launching drills and colour burst out around the bell buoy. It was a slow run to Sandsend as the boats fought the tide. Initially, *Icon* hung on to *Antix's* transom but *Antix* found a little extra speed and pulled away, as did *Cold Steel* who shortened the gap on *Icon*. Spinnakers dropped neatly at Sandsend as boats turned in to the wind and started the beat back to complete the first lap. The majority tacked out to sea to obtain maximum benefit from the tide. The leaders, *Antix*, *Icon* and *Cold Steel* completed the first lap in just under an hour. The remainder were only a short distance behind and were in the order *Masquerade*, *Rampage*, *Tiger Rag*, *Bamboozle*, *Serenade of Parkstone* and *Double D*.

The short second lap saw equally efficient sail handling and the order remained unchanged and the finishing order was not affected by the handicap. **Result:** 1<sup>st</sup> *Antix*, John Allen, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Icon*, Neil & Lorraine Williamson, 3<sup>rd</sup> *Cold Steel*, Messrs Dey, Gowland & Jarvis.