

Report on Twilight of the pre-Christmas series 30th November and Harbour race 2nd December.

By Pam Mann

This Thursday 30th November, the weather forecast was for rain and possible thunder storms in the afternoon. Five yachts braved the rain to race but it was not to be. Wil Meure, skipper of *Stardust Dancer*, was almost ready to pick up crew, Daryl Watson, when he was observed by the race officials to rush to the bow and drop the anchor, just 50 metres from the jetty in front of the clubhouse. Meanwhile to the northwest ominous black clouds were piling up, threatening a violent storm with lightning. Five minutes from the start of the pursuit race the storm hit the yachts with strong winds and frequent lightning. *Sea Gems* started at 6pm but by then visibility was greatly reduced and skippers were, rightly so, worried for the safety of boats and crew.

Sea Gems indicated they would continue if other skippers were willing. *Kalista*, and *Another Girl, Another Planet (AGAP)* decided to withdraw so *Sea Gems* decided to retire also. *Stardust Dancer* had run out of diesel and hoisted sail and sailed back to his mooring at Castle Forbes Bay. This left only *French Connection* and in consideration of the storm, race officials decided to cancel the race. The sailing committee decided to hold another race next Thursday 7th December to make the series.



The Commodore, John Flowers, had arranged with caterer Kate Hoorweg of Chomps Elysees Catering and Fine Food, for a sit down dinner to be supplied at the clubhouse as this was to be the last Twilight before Christmas. 29 People attended (after hurried visits home to shower and dry out) and all enjoyed a great meal with plenty of lively discussion. Everyone was keen on the suggestion that, at the end of each Twilight series, a similar meal be enjoyed. It is remarkable how a brilliant meal improves ones the outlook on the weather. A strange and interesting phenomenon.

The weather was still wet and windy for the scheduled Saturday Harbour race. Squalls were coming through regularly but mercifully no lightning. *Stardust Dancer* was still having trouble with his diesel and as Jeff Sharp on *French Connection* was out at the start line nice and early and as Robbie Seabrook was on the jetty waiting to crew on *Stardust Dancer*, Jeff decided to go and see if they could help. It turned out that *Stardust* would not be racing. *French Connection* was the only boat willing to race in the miserable weather. The race officials and *French Connection* were willing to continue with the race and naturally first place went go to *French Connection*.

The course had been set of 3 laps from start/line to One Tree Point, Hospital Bay and back to the start/finish line. *French Connection* quickly sailed out of sight of the one remaining race official, due to rain squalls. By the time the boat was approaching the start/finish line for the second time, the required minimum time for the fastest boat had been reached, so the race was shortened to two laps only. We all hope next weekend's second leg of the McLaren series (Kermantie Challenge Trophy) will bring kinder weather.

