

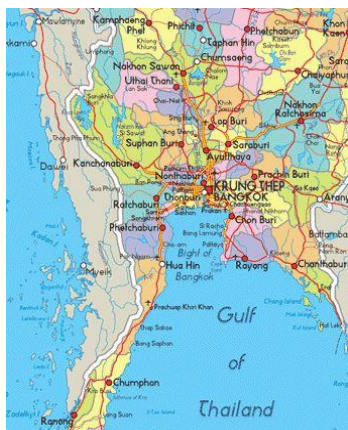
SINGHA

INTERNATIONAL OK DINGHY

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

PATTAYA, THAILAND 2013

For many the event commenced on a freezing cold day in January when we packed our boats into containers which were shipped to Laem Chabang, the container port that serves Bangkok. Two months later the containers arrived safely at the Royal Varuna Yacht Club, thanks to the considerable efforts of Rut Subniran and his team.



The majority of competitors flew into Bangkok airport and transferred to Pattaya by bus, taxi or minibus. The airport is situated to the east of Bangkok, so we were spared the city's traffic jams. These we experienced instead once we turned off the motorway and entered Pattaya. Despite it being mid evening, it was a very slow journey through Central Pattaya as vans, cars and hundreds of motor bikes and scooters competed for a piece of road. The traffic thinned and the minibus toiled up a very steep hill before descending quickly to the waters edge and the Royal Varuna Yacht Club.

We had arrived in paradise!

The white two storey clubhouse has a central clubroom which is open to the elements. Everyone met here to enjoy the excellent facilities on offer and to admire the wonderful view in the shade of the balcony and the cooling breeze that was blowing off the water.

The Club also boasts three accommodation blocks surrounding a large square of grass, plenty of car parking space and room for six containers—all within a compound which offered 24 hour security.



Many of the competitors started arriving a week early in late March to give themselves time to acclimatise to the heat of 38°C and high humidity. Initially every movement was an effort as we adjusted to the heat. Fortunately drinking water was available on tap and 5 to 6 litres were consumed daily.



Measurement was completed swiftly; fortunately the Junior clubroom area offered shade and a breeze whilst the checks were carried out. The sail measurement checks were managed in one of the large air-conditioned rooms upstairs—there was no shortage of volunteers for this job!



Very soon the competition was underway. The Commodore, David Littlejohn welcomed us with a response from Mike Wilde, our Southern Hemisphere Vice President. A representative from each country raised their national flag in the growing twilight. The Opening Ceremony finished

with the best buffet the OK Dinghy fleet has ever experienced—there was even food left over! We are indebted to the Singha Beer Company which offered very generous sponsorship, providing two bottles of



water each day for the competitors and generous quantities of beer, ably served by the delightful Singha Beer girls in the evenings.



The Practice race was held on Sunday. Rash vests and hikers were all that was needed as the spray in the choppy Force 4 wind over the conditions felt like a warm bath. A hat, sunglasses and plenty of drinking water were essential kit. The only complaint—the sun cream kept running into the eyes!



Launch and retrieval was ably managed by the boat boys employed by the Club. They were most efficient at assisting us attach our fixed rudders in the surf each morning. When



conditions warranted it, they would carry a boat ashore onto its waiting trolley to ensure no damage was incurred. At the end of a hard day's racing the boat boys would also help pull our boats up the grass to our designated spots—an amazing service that we really appreciated.



At the end of the day tactics and positions were discussed around the results board before we changed out of our sailing gear and joined family and friends to savour a beer in the dying light.

The Royal Varuna Yacht Club provided all the facilities we needed; there was a fully





stocked Bar that remained open as long as there were customers to serve and the kitchen was able to produce delicious meals at all times of the day.

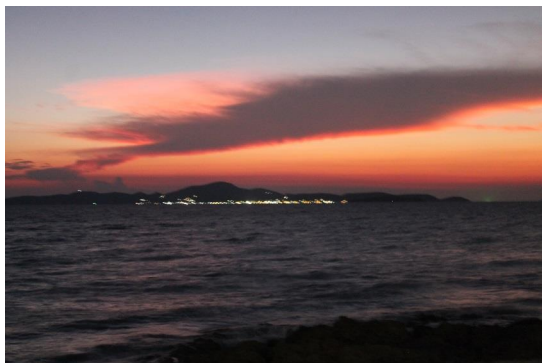
The Championship had built in a layday to allow us time to explore the local area and visit local attractions. There was plenty to occupy all ages from shopping to lazing on the

beaches, visiting temples to watching the traditional Thai dancing. Numerous local restaurants catered for all tastes at all prices. Taxis were easy to hail and were inexpensive to hire.

In the fortnight that I was in Thailand I saw no rain, the skies were often hazy but temperatures were consistently high, a very pleasant change from the unseasonably cold weather that Europe had been experiencing.



It was the second time that the International OK Dinghy had ventured to a new location and it is one that will see us return to in the future.



What of the racing you ask—turn over to read more!

The World Championship

We left the shore at 12:30 for the short hike up to the start line. By now the thermal breeze was blowing a very consistent Force 4 from a steady direction. Kevin Wilson from Australia was our International Race Officer ably assisted by Mark Taylor (AUS) and a team of local helpers on a converted fishing boat. It was a sturdy vessel, however, even with its bulk it was unable to resist the wave action driven by the breeze. The Race Team nominated to view the racing from the lower rather than from the upper deck! We commenced racing at 13:00 and were heading



home by 16:30 after two back to back races, each lasting approximately 70 minutes. We were kept in order by International Juror Bill Bell from Australia and his team who buzzed around the course in their little RIBs. With a surf running from early in the day, transferring to the RIBs involved wading, sometimes chest high, through the surf and then scrambling into the vessels. Drybags were essential kit!



Robert Deaves, our Marketing man, posted a full report, with photographs, of each day's racing each evening. His reports are excellent, making the front page of ISAF and Yachts & Yachting. You can read his reports using this address: <http://www.okdia.org/results/w13.php#dayone>



Roger Blassé World Champion

Congratulations to Roger Blassé (AUS) on winning the World Championship for a second time



Michael Williams



Nick Craig

Nick Craig (GBR) came second with Michael Williams (AUS) 3rd, just 3 points behind him.



Paul Rhodes (NZL) 4th



Mark Jackson (AUS) 5th



Greg Wilcox (NZL) 6th



Jorgen Svendsen (DEN) 7th



Stefan Myralf (DEN) 8th



Andre Budzien (GER) 9th



Terry Currys (GBR) 10th



The Royal Varuna Yacht Club ran a superb championship. Their organisational skills and attention to detail were excellent. The communication between all interested parties was very efficient.

The story began with a chance meeting between André Blassé, our then President and Rut Subniran. They agreed the general principles and thereafter numerous emails finalised the Championship. It helped having a very useful conversation with Gareth Owen at Northampton who gave us some very useful tips about sailing in Thailand and getting around this very special country.



As Sailing Secretary, Chris Dando attended to all of the details concerning entries for 74 participants. We were kept very busy before and during the event. Everything ran like clockwork and I know the sailors had a Championship to remember for many reasons including a fantastic venue, wonderful weather, awesome racing and superb evening entertainment at the Club. Without the able assistance of Richard the general manager, none of this would have happened.



Thank you very much Royal Varuna Yacht Club for making this an exceptional World Championship from all in the OKDIA organisation.

