



Exeter University Sailing Club



Exeter's Yachting Captain, Annabel Bates on board "Bates Family & Co" at the Reunion Race Weekend © Will Roberts

Rory Cheetham Memorial Cup awarded at Exeter University's debut Reunion Race Weekend

Exeter University Sailing Club took a break from revision last weekend to host their brand-new event: "EUSC Reunion Race Weekend". Open to members, alumni and family alike, the event saw **five teams** descend on the Royal Southern Yacht Club at Hamble to match race on the Solent. They were competing for the **Rory Cheetham Memorial Cup**, in memory of their colleague and fellow Exeter sailor who passed away earlier this year. As he would have wanted, a fantastic weekend of friendly racing ensued.



Match Racing on the hottest day in April 2018 © Will Roberts

Good wind all weekend meant that the sailors managed to fit in a full round robin of 10 races on Saturday and another four on Sunday (starting slightly later than planned that day, perhaps!) to give a clear basis for the tense knockout stages that followed.

Quentin Bes-Green of Southampton cruised to victory, proving that quality over quantity, is the key to success. They didn't lose a single race the whole weekend, despite having only three crew on Saturday and two on Sunday! Thanks were definitely due to Annabel Bates, jumping ship to provide a stand-in crew for the finals.



Exeter Freshers at work © Will Roberts

However, Bes-Green's team were pushed to their limits in a tight final with Exeter (helmed by Freddie Liardet), with a steadily building wind providing difficult conditions. Exeter's kite went for a dip, so Southampton were able to win the two races, best out of three.



Annabel Bates, Edd Harvey, Will Robert Richard Moxley and Ellie Bates
© Will Roberts (hmm, technically impressive selfie?!)

Bates Family & Co came 3rd, after sailing well all weekend, whilst the 'newby' Exeter freshers (helmed by Ed Harris) took 4th place. The wooden spoon prize was presented to Exeter's alumni team (helmed by Alex Hawkes, former Exeter Commodore), who finished in 5th place.



Exeter's Commodore, Belle Body, introduces the Prize Giving at the Royal Southern YC © Will Roberts

All were in good spirits at the Prize Giving on Sunday, when the winners were awarded the Rory Cheetham Cup. As stipulated by the Cheetham family, the cup was filled with the sponsor's drink, Exmoor Ales, and duly 'chugged' by the winning team!



Quentin Bes-Green (Southampton), Richard Moxey and Annabel Bates (Exeter) 'chug' Exmoor Ale from the Rory Cheetham Trophy (Sam Munday not in photo) © Will Roberts

As well as the sailing, competitors enjoyed some great tanning time, as the sun came out making it the hottest April day in history. Sadly, the rain kicked in during the evening, but this didn't dampen the sailors' spirits, who still enjoyed partying on Saturday evening. They headed to Jesters for the social and danced away until the early hours (in case the earlier reference to a late start on Sunday was not recognised for what it was).



Exeter Freshers seem to have got the hang of the on-shore side of things.... © Will Roberts

Exeter's Commodore, Belle Body, gave the prizes and commented: "The weekend ran smoothly with lots of sailors new to match racing and some to J80s as well, a vast amount was learnt by all and provided for competitive racing in idyllic weather conditions."

The Cup was donated by the Cheetham family. **Rory Cheetham** was an active member of the Exeter University Sailing Club, its joint Social Secretary in the current academic year and skipper of one of the two Exeter entries in the 2017 J80 World Championships, sailed in the Cheetham J80. A former student of Manchester Grammar School and rugby player with Wilmslow Wolves, Rory, a keen conservationist, was studying biology at Exeter with a view to becoming a shark specialist. A regular surfer, as well as sailor, Rory was surfing on Saunton Beach in Devon on a January day this year in perfect conditions. On his way back to Exeter, Rory, who suffered from a rare genetic heart condition, ARVC, passed away.

His father has written about him on **Rory Cheetham's Just Giving** page - <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/be-more-rory>, the family seeking to give support **Surfers Against Sewage** - www.sas.org.uk, whose head has responded on the Just Giving blog, acknowledging the contributions already exceeding £11,000 toward their **Plastic Free Coastlines Campaign**. The same weekend as the Reunion Race, Rory's fellow Social Secretary of EUSC this year, **Phoebe Warren**, ran in the London Marathon, raising money for SAS in memory of Rory. Another friend, Phil Snell recently completed a charity ride - "**No Andorrdinary Ride**" - on Rory's red bike, from Exeter to Andorra (to join Exeter Snowsports), also raising funds for the Surfers Against Sewage, via the above Just Giving page. For its debut run, the **EUSC Reunion Race Weekend** was a great success, and, hopefully, it is one which we will see hosted annually.

Thanks to Will Roberts, Exeter's Treasurer, for the photos (not sure how he managed the RIB selfie, but apparently the camera was kindly loaned by University of Exeter Sport).

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