

The Thames Trafalgar Race, organised jointly by Little Ship Club and Erith YC, took place over the weekend September 30/October 1 - and proved a very happy hunting ground for the three boats from HPYC which took part.

On the Saturday, the course was from Greenwich, through the Thames Barrier and downriver to beyond Tilbury, with a turning mark at the bottom of Lower Hope Reach, followed by another "about turn" just below the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge (M25 crossing), the course going back to Thurrock before finally heading to the finish line at Erith.

It was more than five hours of intense concentration, as the river changes direction all the time, the wind changes direction through the high buildings, and there were countless sail changes from spinnaker to code zero to plain sail and back.

On the Sunday the course was a simple down tide drag race from Erith (where there had been a magnificent dinner on Saturday night) back to Greenwich. Strong winds were forecast but failed to materialise.

Robert Leggett's X 332 Apex finished a hugely successful season, making the most of the predominantly fair tide and light winds to win both legs of the race - convincingly first overall. . Richard and Cathy Brown's Arcona 410 Brave came third on the Saturday and second on the Sunday, finishing second overall on aggregate time for the two legs.

Not far behind came the third HPYC entry Brillig, a First 31.7. And the three boats won the Sir Robin Knox Johnston Cup, awarded to the top team of three boats from a single club.

The Thames Trafalgar race is a great way to finish the racing season, not least because entrants qualify for a bargain berthing deal - £140 for two weeks in Limehouse Marina. With great hospitality from the host clubs, and the excitement of sailing on the Thames, this is an event which merits more support from HPYC. Why not join in next year?