

Fast times for Four Peaks

Treacherous hill conditions and cold weather presented new challenges to competitors in the Aberdeen Boat Club's Four Peaks Race, but brisk winds led to yachts finishing in faster times than expected.

The Four Peaks, which is one of Hong Kong's most gruelling sports events, took place over the weekend of the 25th and 26th of January 1997. Competitors were required to sail between, and scale, four of Hong Kong's highest peaks – Lantau Peak (934m) on Lantau Island, Mt Stenhouse (353m) on Lamma Island, Ma On Shan (702m) in Sai Kung and Violet Hill (433m) in Repulse Bay, respectively.

Finishing 1st in Division A Class I and 1st overall was Andy Foster's *X-Calibur* (a considerable improvement on last year's performance). *Stripped* (Willy Roberts) took 2nd with the Royal Navy yacht *Vengeance* skippered by Rick Hanslip 3rd and winning Division A Class II.

"We sailed with the same team this year as last and trained for the race," Mr Foster said, "and this worked out the way we had planned both for the runs as well as the sail. We had a very good running time on Lantau, arriving 8th and ending up 2nd. The change in course, making the ascent in daylight, made the run a lot safer."

Andy Foster is leaving for the United Kingdom in mid-1997, but will return to Hong Kong on a regular basis – probably once every three months – and continue his sailing here.

Pre-race favourite, *Confetti*, lost time when it tangled with a fishing net while leaving the Lamma drop zone.

A number of firsts were recorded for the race – the participation of a team from the Chinese Yachting Association and the first all-woman team. The Chinese team joined local yacht *Tipsy Too*, a Cardinal 46, skippered Dr YK Szeto, which came in 4th in Class II while the all-woman entry in *Fast Exit*, an X-99, helmed by Inge Stompf-Jepsen came in 13th overall.

ABC Four Peaks Race 1997

Combined PYS results
(Class I, II and III)

Pos.	Yacht
1	X-Calibur
2	Stripped
3	Vengeance
4	Tripp Tide
5	X-Stream
6	Wizard
7	Gipsy
8	Windseeker
9	Getafix
10	Boss Hogg
11	Skysong
12	Shearwater 5
13	Fast Exit
14	Marinero
15	Tru Blu
16	Tamarisk
17	Tipsy Too
18	Shikari
19	Confetti
dnf	Eclipse

PYS results
(B division)

Pos.	Yacht
1	Sawadee*
2	Dream Wind
dsq	Koala**
dnf	Ariki III

* 2hr penalty on corrected time for hill climbing infringement

"Conditions were not ideal for a heavy boat such as the Cardinal 46," Dr Szeto indicated. "Our hill running times were quite good. My team comprised mostly national dinghy sailors and I had to hold a number of training sessions with them prior to the race."

Dr Szeto praised the race organisers who looked after the Chinese team and expects there will be greater Chinese participation the next time around.

"I also like the change in course. This should be done each year to make the race more interesting," he said. In the meantime, Dr Szeto is gearing up for the San Fernando Race in March.

Race officials changed the course because of safety concerns. "The safety of the competitors is our prime objective in this race," commented Bob Johnson, Commodore of the Aberdeen Boat Club, "and we felt that the new course was preferable and offered competitors good, close racing."

There was only one mishap when John Cox fell during his descent of Mt Stenhouse on Lamma, breaking his ankle. A member of the Royal Hong Kong Police yacht *Eclipse*, he was discharged from hospital the next day. The yacht, skippered by John Kilburn, had to withdraw as a result of the accident.

This year's Four Peaks Race had the support of various organizations including San Miguel, Coca Cola, Apple Computers, Hongkong Telecom and Premium Source.