
NEWS OF THE CCRC WORLD

Issue 3 - August 1989

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Race No. 16 THE LADIES SALVER or, THE FILLIES PLATE

Viewpoint from the Fohn Wind Ladies Ensemble Edited by MCP

Equipe Cordon Sanitaire

Our team comprised three nurses, a doctor, a priest and Old Captain Birdseye - a team well equipped to cope with all transactions from the temporal to the terminal, but not (as yet) renowned for sparkling performance on the water. It was a democratic decision that Mid-wife Wendy should steer the boat all the way to Newtown Creek.

Old Captain Birdseye just couldn't resist telling everyone within range that his crew were better looking than their's, so Fohn Wind copped the Race Report and some side-long glances that do not bode well for his future peace of mind.

Volunteers and Pressed Ladies

In the absence of another committee boat, Gunshot volunteered for the OOD duties. Di Wallace managed to conceal her acute disappointment at not helming CCRC's most popular boat, and Peter and Colin were touchingly supportive towards Di in her darkest hour - but such are the sacrifices that great clubs demand of their officers and their wives.

The Motley at The Start

Ard Righ slipped through the melee of boats manoeuvring at random before the later start and headed for Newtown Creek in a sedate and control-

led way, unhindered by unjust accusations of spinnaker. She was the second boat to finish the shortened course, still unflustered and free of insult.

A spinnaker start for the rest of the fleet produced mixed fortunes. Rimau flew through with Boadicia at the helm surrounded by piratical looking subordinates and Brown Bomber, helmed by a serene looking Helen Chivers hit the line on the dot with spinnaker up and pulling hard at top knots.

On Fohn Wind Old Captain Birdseye ran true to form by immediately reneging on his promise not to use insulting or obscene language when the spinnaker wrapped beautifully round the forestay, producing two rather smaller spinnakers.

The nurses exchanged the sort of looks they do in the Casualty Ward on Saturday night when another wounded drunk is brought in. Father Alexander granted a swift dispensation whilst Dr. Barker pulled the spinny down. Then we all started again, properly dressed this time.

The Browndown Run

We were heading for the Browndown outfall via the Dolphin Passage with a perfectly set spinnaker and the mainsail fluttering nicely. Apart from the occasional rude remark from Captain Birdseye to "put the helm up" or "bear off a bit" we had a good chat about all the important things in life - like people who were not there to defend themselves, bodily malfunctions, children etc..

At the Dolphin Passage we met those nice Scottish people on Caragh who are always so polite, and shortly afterwards we met some very resolute people on Sareema. All the others were way ahead by now.

Captain Birdseye was drawing odious comparisons about our performance against the ladies on Marigold and Goldeneye so we served afternoon tea to cool him down and to convince Father Alexander we are not all like that.

We passed Gilkicker behind Mons Meg. We could not hear what Hugh Caldwell was saying to Margaret and we speculated a bit on that. Finally we decided that Hugh must be much more polite than Captain Birdseye because he does not wave his arms around as much when he talks.

A Small Side Show

An Air Display at Lee-on-Solent proved a very welcome break and kept all the men-folk happy about World War II memories (before our time). It made a welcome distraction from the "put the helm up and bear off a bit" routine.

In fact they were so busy with their chatter about the relative destructive capability of modern warfare that they did not notice the charming photo-



"...you are forbidden to make any jokes about mothers"

grapher in a rubber boat who took several snaps of the boat "with spinnaker up and lady at the helm". But we noticed him and we were ready for him, composed and alert with the best side showing. We thought it must be Harpers, Vogue, Country Life or some such chique publication. Sadly, it turned out to be the PMB Photographic of Leicestershire. Well, you never know, do you?

More Technical Jargon

After Browndown, we had to beat to Mother Bank against the tide. This seemed to be just as trying as running with the spinnaker up. Captain Birdseye had been expressly forbidden to make any jokes about "Mothers" by his boss, Paediatric Nurse Judy, otherwise known to all as Darling. He limited himself to "point up until the tell tales flutter" and "sheet in until you are just off the spreaders". We weren't really sure whether he was being obliquely rude or not, but Darling shook her head and said it was alright, she had heard it all before.

At the mark Sareema went round first followed by Marigold, Caragh and us. Captain Birdseye said that Hugh Caldwell of Mons Meg had given up the unequal struggle and had retired. We were still wondering what he meant as Hugh looked much too young to retire when he started the "helm up and bear off" bit again.

We had barely settled to this routine and we were looking forward to another chat when all the men started to rush around and shout at each other whilst ignoring us.

Apparently this was a "windshift". It meant we had to the same as we did previously, but in the opposite direction this time. When all the furore settled down again, it was definitely the "point up and sheet in" bit. Helmswoman Wendy, speaking for all of us, said "There's really nothing to it, I just don't know what all these men make such a fuss about!"

The Solent Traverse

We crossed the Solent doing the "point up and sheet in" thing again whilst the men had long intense parleys about the next mark and tidal streams.

They all knew exactly where the mark should be, but none of them could actually point to it. All nurses can recall hypercondriacs who suffer from exactly the same syndrome.



"... I don't know what all the fuss is about."

According to Captain Birdseye, we had "gone high". It was certainly a very hot day and there were some strange odours about. The fridge couldn't cope and the milk was on the blink and some very odd remarks had been made about the Browndown Outfall. Darling said that he was probably overwrought and we should treat the remark with contempt it deserves. The everyone became excited again as Gunshot had been sighted at anchor close by Frigate. This meant that we would finish quite soon.

"Free off" yelled Captain Birdseye.

"Free off for the finish".

Ad Finitum Ex Decorum

Now nurses are known to be very down to earth in their approach to most human failings and very few of us are not familiar with the full range of human invective. One Saturday night in Casualty will broaden anyone's vocabulary. But this was something quite new. None of us had ever been told to "FREE off" before, and we concluded in a swift and sisterly conference, that this time he had definitely gone too far.

"No" said spokeswoman Wendy, "you free off yourself." And would you believe it, Captain Birdseye, Dr. Barker, and Father Alexander all started beavering away at winches and travellers, easing the sheets and cheering loudly at the same time!

Then we crossed the line to polite courteous congratulations from the ladies and gentlemen on Gunshot.

On The Trots

After the finish we sailed on to Newtown Creek quite sedately. Apparently, it doesn't matter about the tell-tales after a race and you are allowed to converse normally and take comfort breaks as well. We joined the rest of the fleet laying at anchor off Newtown Creek and selected the perfect spot to settle, like a cow in a pasture. Health Visitor Noelle was handling the anchor under the watchful gaze of Captain Birdseye when he said; "This is the bitter end."

"Oh, I don't think so," replied Noelle, using all the charm and patience that her calling demands, "Just a bit trying at times, but not really as bad as that!"