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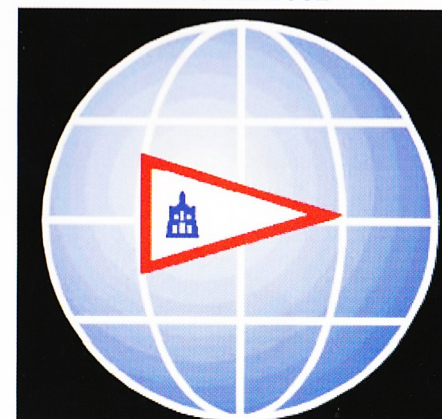
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## **News of the CCRC World**

Autumn 2002



**Chichester Cruiser Racing Club**  
for cruiser racing enthusiasts throughout Chichester Harbour





## CHICHESTER CRUISER RACING CLUB

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**Cover: Spinnakers are set at the start of the race to Beaulieu on 28 September (Photo: Phil Cotman)**

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## Une affaire française – a boat called L'Aquarelle by Keith Feltham

**[The first of two articles in which Keith describes how he flew to the Mediterranean on impulse to view and possibly buy a Contessa 32, fell in love with it but nearly walked away when he discovered it had had osmosis]**

I had bought my first boat, Green Pepper, a Contessa 32, in 1983. Buying another boat after 19 years - and in France - was both exciting and a step into the unknown. I thought it would be very risky but it turned out to be relatively easy - except for the pound notes!

Pam and I had shared Green Pepper with Vernon and Ann for 14 years. It was a very successful partnership. But all good things come to an end. Our families have grown up. Vernon and Ann are now grandparents and our joint sailing plans had become too much for one Contessa. So I sold them my share and started looking for the boat I might sail in the future.

Glancing through the classified advertisements, as one does, I saw a Contessa 32 for sale at a very reasonable price - or at least one that I could afford! The e-mail address suggested that the owner was in France but when I tried to contact him, my e-mails were returned as incorrectly addressed. After some enquiries, I eventually made contact. He turned out to be a Swiss national working for his country's diplomatic service. He had been posted to Moscow for five years, and had little opportunity to use his boat in the Mediterranean. From the information he gave me the boat was very basic, hence the price. It was ashore near Marseilles. We quickly agreed that the next move was for me to see the boat. Patrick [*the owner*] had planned to have a break from the incessant cold of Moscow and to spend an early spring holiday with his Russian partner in Spain. We arranged to try to meet the following week in Port St Louis. I had to book a flight and get to Port Napoleon, a yacht harbour on the edge of the Camargue. Having never before travelled to France except by boat or package holiday, skiing etc., this was a new experience and a challenge in

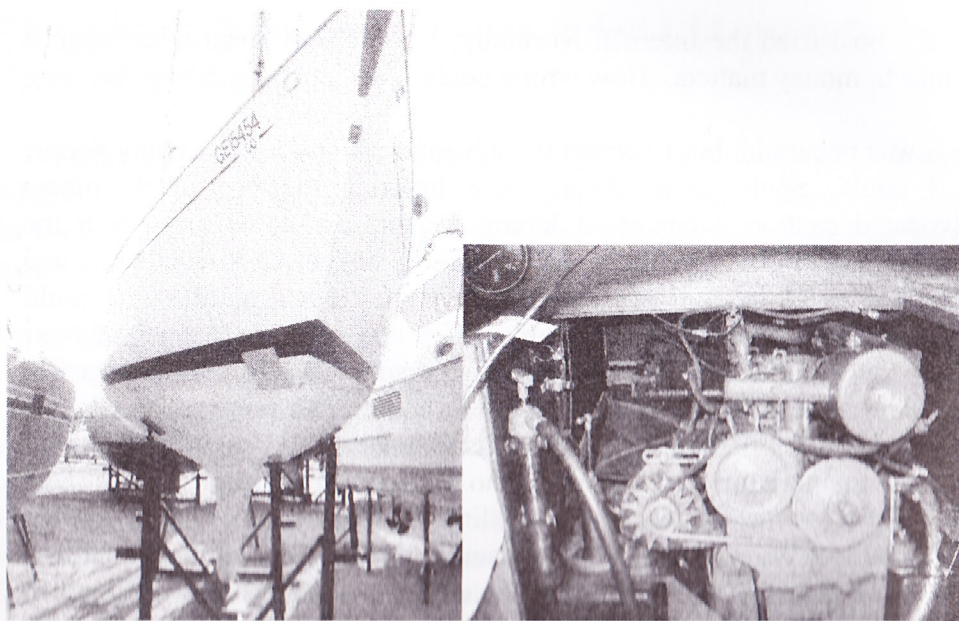
itself. So I tried the Internet. Normally, I don't trust electronics when it comes to money matters. How wrong could I be?

Pam was uncertain, but I wanted the adventure! I spoke to as many people as I could. Some gave advice about bringing the boat back, others advocated caution. I contacted Jeremy Rogers and found out about the boat's beginnings. It had been the Boat Show boat at La Rochelle and had been sold to a French doctor. Jeremy gave me the hull number so I could check its credentials. I contacted the RYA and obtained a copy of their contract agreement for 'the sale between persons not normally engaged in the business of selling yachts'. All of this information was of great help and gave me confidence to go forward. I contacted the engineer who had been maintaining the boat's engine, who happened to be English, by e-mail and he also gave me advice about tackling the lower reaches of the Rhone. The insurance was not as easy. The insurers wanted a survey by a qualified surveyor before they would provide cover. It must be in English with a full valuation. What are the qualifications [*for surveyors*] in France, I asked? Don't know, was the answer. The boatyard, Port Napoleon, was great; by e-mail they helped me find a surveyor, booked me a hotel "not expensive but clean" they said, and offered to collect me from Marseilles airport.

Richard Johnson, a long-standing friend with whom I have sailed for many years, offered to help me bring the boat back through the French canals. I was, therefore, all set to go and conclude the deal. But I made a pact with myself: "Any problems and you must walk away; don't get pressured, there is always another boat and another deal around the corner!"

I had prepared a full checklist and laboriously went through every item, writing copious notes even though after a few minutes I had fallen in love and knew that I wanted to buy her. The crunch came when I telephoned the surveyor to arrange for him to meet me at the boat next day. He had been called away on business and would not be available for a week! Patrick only had a two-day window and if I didn't want the boat, he had arranged for other prospective buyers in France to look at her the next day. What should I do? "Walk away", I told myself.

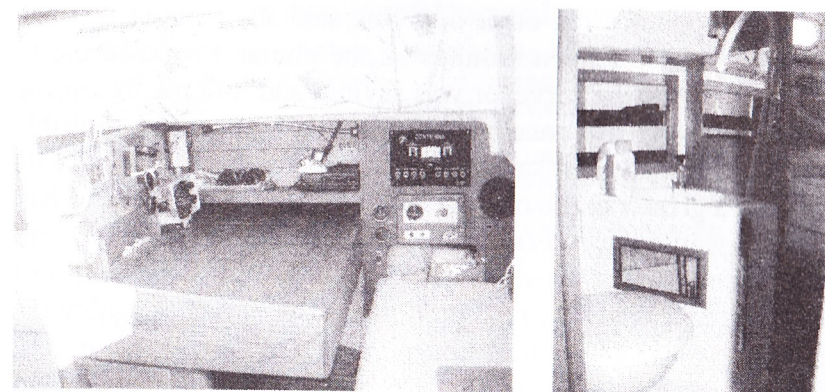




**L'Aquarelle ashore**

**The engine**

Patrick knew that I wanted to buy and was keen to conclude the deal within the two days that he had available. He went to the yard office and came back with a surveyor who had been surveying another boat. "Would he do?" he asked. "Unfortunately he doesn't speak English but his credentials look OK." He showed me his letterhead. It looked impressive and he had letters after his name. Is that what they do in France? Just like English professionals? I didn't know. "How much?" I asked. It sounded too much for someone I didn't know, who could not speak English and from whom I could not be sure that I would get a report that my insurers would accept and who probably wouldn't tell me anything that I didn't know already. I hummed and hawed. It was beginning to get dusk. It had been a long day. Now or never.....! "Yes go ahead," I said. "Cash," he said through Patrick, who was interpreting. "Oui," I replied. Out came the moisture metre. He looked like he knew what he was doing. I followed him around the hull. He showed me the readings: they showed nothing; the hull was bone dry.



**Chart table**

**Heads**

He was talking to himself in French: ".....osmosis.....osmosis.....osmosis". "What is he saying Patrick?" I asked, to the guy who was trying to sell me the boat! Patrick coloured up and was clearly embarrassed. "He says the boat has had osmosis." "You said that it didn't!" "He says that it has had osmosis but has been treated." "Can he show me?"

He indicated a small area on the bottom, but it looked good to me; almost perfect. So he scraped away a small area. The antifouling was left with a tiny hollow, the remains of a concave area left by a burst bubble! Patrick explained that the surveyor was saying that there had been osmosis blisters but these had been treated and the hull had been epoxied. A good job it appeared, but how could I know? Patrick was very embarrassed and saw that I was about to throw in the towel. The surveyor said that he could do some destructive testing, remove a section of the epoxy and test the underlying glassfibre for moisture and soundness. Another few hundred quid and I might be no further forward and could be two steps back. What to do? Everyone wants instant decisions!

I decided to phone Jeremy Rogers to get some advice. It always helps to talk things through, especially in English, when you have been trying to listen to technical French all afternoon. "Jeremy is not available", Sue his secretary said. I explained that I was in France looking at the boat and that



I had spoken to him about it the other day. Sue said she thought that she could find him. We talked for ten minutes on the phone. He asked me to describe what I saw, what the surveyor was saying, and told me to test the substrate for hardness. Jeremy concluded that it had had osmosis but this was not surprising as it had been sailed on inland waterways for part of its life. Fresh water is a greater cause of osmosis than salt water. The boat had been sand blasted, would have been dried out - very easy in such a warm climate - and epoxied. My mind was much happier but I obviously didn't show it. I challenged Patrick: why didn't he know? Patrick offered a compromise. What would a new hull treatment cost? He offered to split the cost with me, substantially reducing the price. Mmmm! OK. The deal was done.

How would I pay? What about documentation? I produced the RYA agreement and explained that it was drafted as much for his protection as for mine. Now **he** needed time to think. He asked for payment in sterling; fine. He decided to take his partner off to eat and meet me back at my hotel after first giving me a lift back. We both had time to reflect.

When Patrick returned he asked if I was a professional boat buyer. That was what his Russian partner thought after the detailed way in which I surveyed the boat, that I was able to speak to Jeremy Rogers - **the** Jeremy Rogers - and that I had negotiated a fair price reduction. It is strange how one gets a wrong impression of someone. We checked each other's passports. We signed the RYA agreement. I paid the cash deposit (the hard part). We dined together and a friendship was begun.

The next day they took off all their personal gear and offered to leave many items such as tools, bimini, crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, lifejackets, solar shower etc. I spent the day checking out the other gear and familiarising myself with the boat. The next time I visited she would go in the water and we would attempt the uphill battle of the Rhone!

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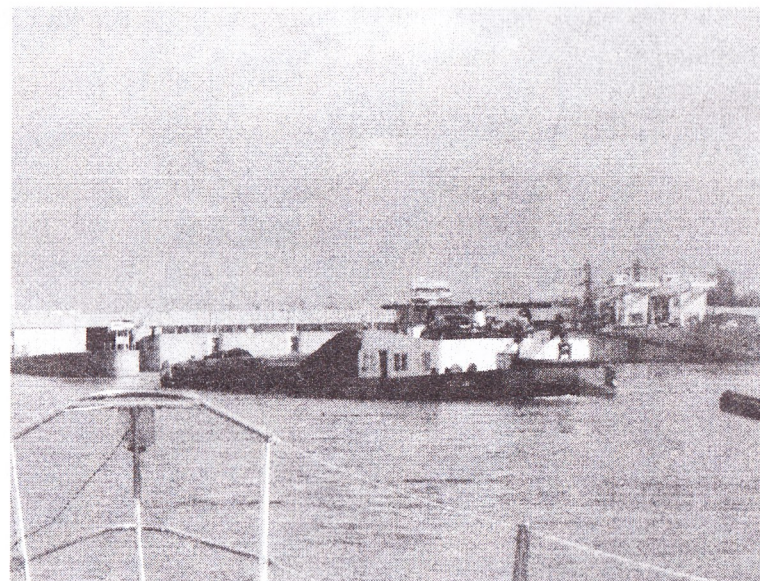
## Inland waterways of France – the Rhone from Port St Louis to Lyon

Richard and I flew down to Nimes by Ryanair, one of the ticketless airlines, for £15 early in March. The southerly river flow in the Rhone is expected to be too great at this time of year to make progress northwards. The uncertainty lasts until the end of May because of the melting snow from the Alps and the wet weather. However, we went planning to test it out as the weather hadn't been too wet and there had been little snow in the mountains this year.

I had taken my CEVNI test, the rules of the road for inland waterways, obtained an International Certificate of Competence issued by the RYA, bought the necessary 'Navicartes' for information and navigation on the Rhone, and taken much advice, including reading as much information as possible. The yard had antifouled the boat, a task that I was pleased to get out of this year. I had to buy four very large fenders plus three mountain bikes to take with us. I now had to get the mast unstepped and wrapped/labelled for shipment by road to Le Havre and we could then get underway. The bikes, everyone said, were essential, so we looked in the larger French supermarkets and sure enough we bought three excellent mountain bikes (18 gear jobs) for £40 each!

We were finally ready to launch. Patrick had warned me about the engine, which stalled if throttled back too quickly. Having been lowered but still held in the slings from the lift hoist I started the engine. The morse control was handed from the one that I was used to on Green Pepper and we went forward instead of back. Quickly throttling back on the engine the inevitable happened - we stalled! Trying again I over-revved and again throttled back, once more to stall but this time not held by the slings. The engine control was a disaster. The engine repeatedly stalled, we went backwards when I put the control forwards, and forwards when we wanted to go back. Richard and I had a quick discussion. There was no way that we could navigate 200 locks unless the engine behaved itself much better. We got out the manual and found a reference to a cold start lever that when depressed facilitated starting but returned to neutral once the engine was

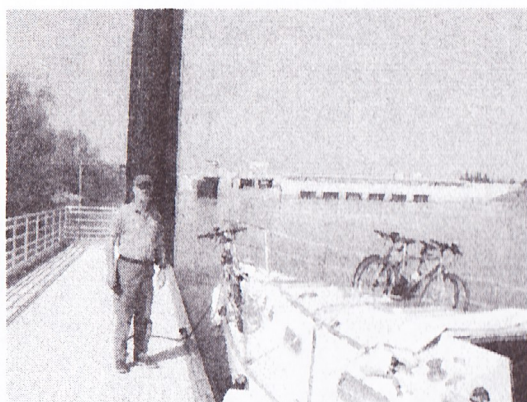
warm. We concluded that this lever was sticking and had to be manually helped to return to neutral. Once identified, the problem appeared to have been solved. It just meant that any action with the engine had to be thought through and approached with caution.



Early morning on 12 March we eased the boat from its mooring and motored out into the Golfe De Fos to enter the Canal Saint Louis and our first ecluse (lock) into the Grande Rhone (fleuve). We had reconnoitred the route the day before by bicycle and were reasonably confident but not as confident as one would be armed with Admiralty navigation charts. The channel was narrow and flocks of flamingos waded in the shallows just outside the channel markers. We finally reached the first lock at Port St Louis. The lock opened on a strict timetable but the keeper was very helpful, admitting to only school English, which was far better than our French. Once opened, the sequence of the lock was automatic and we had visions of missing a manoeuvre, so the tension was high. We released our stern ropes too soon and the turbulence bounced us about uncontrollably, but with no damage, to boat or pride. We went out into the river, which was possibly half a mile wide and started counting down the 323 kilometres to Lyon. By 16.40 we were approaching Arles, our first stop,



having completed 40km that day. It was at Arles that we needed to purchase the inland waterway licence, the vignette. This is calculated on surface plan area. Having moored against a floating pontoon with access ashore, we mounted our bikes and went in search of the oldest Roman amphitheatre in France. A few beers later and we had our first night afloat in L'Aquarelle. The following morning I bought the vignette and Richard did the shopping before we got underway again.



Progress was OK, although it was very slow in the narrow sections of the river confined between town embankments. We went aground for the first time at the 293.5km mark. I was following the 3m contour outside the main channel to see if we could cheat the tide but the river bed proved to be very unpredictable - and crunch! After that we stuck to the marked channel. Our next stop was Avignon, but before that we had to pass through our first commercial lock on the river at Tarascon. 'L'ecluse de Vallabregues VHF ch20' it said in the Navicarte, ..... but what is the callsign? We approached gingerly, the lights were red. In my broken French, 'L'ecluse de Vallabregues, l'ecluse de Vallabregues, c'est voillier L'Aquarelle' a few minutes later came the reply 'ello, I make ready, fifteen minutes'. We tied up at a waiting bollard, the only lock that happened to have one on this trip.

The locks have floating pontoons that are too far apart to be able to moor up properly. We had a bow and a stern rope to the same bollard and used a

boat hook at the bow and stern to fend off. This worked OK until we entered a lock that was 5½ double decker buses deep! I scrambled below



to get my camera and when I returned the incoming water had forced the bow away from the wall and we were lying at 90° to the wall. I quickly put the engine into forward and drove against the forward spring to bring the bow back in. This was to be our favoured way of mooring from then on, using the engine to keep the bow fenders against the wall. It didn't do the fenders much good, but with copious doses of washing up liquid and the natural greasiness of the walls they coped.

Next stop was Avignon of 'sur le pont' fame - a small marina with showers and home comforts. We asked le capitain where we might eat. He sent us to a small café just inside the city walls and we had an excellent three course meal with a litre of wine for £6.50 each. Avignon is a lovely city and deserved more time than we could spare. Several English boats had moored there all winter and had enjoyed every minute.

The next few days we travelled through high ground and after each lock found ourselves perched above the valley floor above neighbouring houses and villages. We moored where we could, and bought a few bottles of local wine from the local co-operative. Everyone was very friendly and helpful, even when the exhaust pipe blew and we were directed to a local factory to get it welded. Finally, we reached Condrieu just south of Lyon, where I had intended to leave the boat in a port de plaisance - marina to you and me. I bought two train tickets back to Nimes and was very pleased when the journey, including two changes, went very smoothly.



I am now looking forward to my next visit with Pam and Richard to tackle the canals, which we will join just after Lyon.

**[L'Aquarelle arrived in Chichester Harbour on 6 September and sailed her first races with CCRC on 28 and 29 September, finishing second in both. The story of the rest of her voyage through the canals and across the Channel will appear in the next issue.]**

## **Dream cruise in the Windies**

**by Graham Marchand**

**Log of the good ship Gunshot:** crew - Watson Leslie - temperamental skipper 1, Graham Marchand - temperamental skipper 2, Wiz and Sue - mutinous but otherwise perfect crew.

19 February 2002 Antigua: Clear customs (not easy!) Weigh anchor (about 15kg). Motor sail to Green Island and anchor off Harmony Hall in company with Meanderer. Lunch extraordinaire - both the food and the bill. (First contentious issue of the hols!) Return to anchor illicitly in Gallion Bay. Graham becomes new Hearts champion (beginner's luck).

20 February: 06.15 Weigh anchor. 07.15 Call Colin. Why is the Autohelm blinking? Because it always blinks. Why has the depthsounder stopped working? Because you're in 10,000 metres of water!

On our way in 20-30 knots of wind and big seas just to make us English Channel sailors feel at home. Crew don wet weather gear. So what happened to the blue skies, turquoise water and constant force 4 that Doyle and all the other books talk about? Off Charlestown, Nevis but don't like the look of the Pinney Beach anchorage. Re-hoist genoa and head inshore of Monkey shoals for Ballast Bay in St Kitts, where we find fellow CCRC yacht General Gamble rocking and rolling at anchor with Mike, Helen, Brian and Gerry aboard, who convince us this is the best we'll find. The engineers rig the anchor weight and feel self satisfied. The barman excels with the rum punch and the girls create a wonderful curry.

21 February:

*"The wind blew as had blow its last  
The rattling storm rose on the blast  
That night a child might understand  
The de'il had business on his hand"* (from *Tam o' Shanter*)

Such was our night at anchor with gusts of over 40 knots reported. We were too nervous to turn on the instruments to check! But we survive at the cost only of a stretched and worn anchor strop. Round the corner (nautical term) to Basseterre to clear customs and immigration, easier and more user friendly than in Antigua. Not a pretty anchorage, shared with a cruise ship disgorging its passengers to the mercy of rows of clamouring taxi drivers. Basseterre a funny mixture of old colonial houses with corrugated iron roofs and tourist shops. Watson suffers from St Kitts lassitude. Graham and Sue get lost (Humphrey Jungle) following Doyle's instructions to the ever idyllic (and so far elusive) beach.

22 February: Destination St Barts. Weather forecast 20-30 knots on the nose. Big debate how this will hit us as we clear the lee of the island. In the event the wind never gets above 20 knots, sea state is OK and we make the complete passage on one tack under reefed main and full genoa, passing Statia and Saba on our port side. A super day's sail. No day is without its trauma, however, and finding the moorings in Gustavia's inner harbour full, we anchor outside, call the port office (in best French) to be told to anchor stern to the new dock. Did this all the time in Turkey, so should be no problem - except that first time we put the anchor down too late, second attempt we let it go too early and run out of scope before we reach the dock. Practice makes perfect, so at the third attempt we succeed - and all with the minimum of stress!! Great place Gustavia; very French, very chic.

23 February: After a roly night in the swell, up anchor and motor round to the Anse de Columbier and drop the hook in 5m of water at 11.00. Beautiful place to swim and snorkel and admire the firm young scenery! We set off for an adventurous walk over La Petite Anse on the north side of the island and along the superb surfing beach at Anse des Flamands.

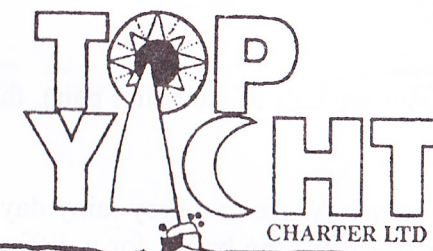


Back on board for a good lunch and siesta, followed by a swim. Back in Gustavia for 17.00 and to a successful first time stern-to-the-quay mooring but a dreadful night sandwiched between two giant gin palaces which run their auxiliary engines all night to power their air conditioning. Polite letter to the capitainerie suggesting that in future they separate the sailors from the posers.

24 February: Wake early – main reason, we hadn't slept! Breakfast on shore – real French coffee avec des pains aux raisins. Faire le plein d'eau – 300 litres! Mutinous crew blamed for taking too many showers. Leave our noisy neighbours and head for Simpson's Bay. A rolly motor sail under genoa with 10–15 knots downwind. Doyle not too complimentary about St Marteen, so expected it to be worse than it actually was. Anchor at midday and snorkel out to an uninteresting Pelican reef. Brief fashion parade by Sue and Wiz sporting their new St Barts swimwear followed by lunch on board, then ashore to stock up at the PeliDeli and look for coffee and ice cream, which materialise as two pinocoladas instead. Sunday is happy hour all day. Watch a glorious sunset as we prepare for an overnight passage to the BVI. Up anchor at 19.00. A wonderful night with the moon rising behind us and all the stars on view. So much so that no one wants to go below, so our plan for single person one-hour watches is quickly modified as the night progresses. We see a surprising number of other yachts passing to the east or following us. Pity about the lack of wind.

*"That orb'd maiden, with white fire laden, Whom mortals call the moon."*

25 February: No ice maiden this moon, which starts behind us, comes overhead and finally sets directly in front of us as a vast orange ball at 05.10. Pick up the lights of buildings on the BVI very easily and pass through Round Rock passage at 08.30. Make our way to the anchorage at Spanish Town on Virgin Gorda to clear customs by 10.30, then back on board for a swim, snorkel and lunch. After the by now customary post lunch snooze, go ashore but miss Spanish "Town" by walking too quickly through it. Terrible – and we do mean terrible – drinks at Andy's Chateau de Pirates. There's no chateau and the only pirate is Andy. Return to the marina to track down a launderette for those running out of smalls (not the



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men who are still in their first pair), then cocktails and dinner at the Rock Café.

26 February: Wake to a grey rainy day. Leisurely breakfast on board then motor round to 'the baths' for a difficult swim ashore, then an interesting walk through the volcanic rocks to Devil's Bay and further. Sue insists on swimming back to the boat with Graham unnecessarily on rescue standby in the dinghy. Head off to Gorda Sound where we anchor off Saba Rock. Dinner on board then ashore for coffee plus the inevitable rum punch downed to the rhythm of a live steel band – very West Indian. Watch the guy on the next table take an impromptu lesson but all decide to hang on to our day jobs!

27 February: A glorious day of sunbathing and snorkelling. Cast off our Saba Rock mooring in Gorda Sound and motor sail out through the reefs off Cactus Point and Mosquito Rock to head south into Sir Francis Drake Channel to pick up a mooring at 11.30 in Manchioneel Bay, Cooper Island. Delightful snorkelling trip to Cistern Point followed by a crap (sorry, crab) salad lunch. Swim ashore for PainKillers\* on the beach, then head out for Roadtown Harbour on Tortola and dinner with Sue's friends, Deb and Stuart. (\*An addictive cocktail of Pusser's dark rum, cream of coconut, pineapple and orange juice topped up with freshly ground nutmeg).

28 February: A day on shore, exploring Tortola. Rent a car from ITGO, which it does – just! A battered Nissan which struggles up Tortola's Eiger-like hills and scrapes its undercarriage over the numerous traffic humps. As we tour the island clockwise from Roadtown, Watson learns quickly that with Sue as navigator, right generally means left and vice versa. First stop Soper's Hole for coffee and French bread from the Ample Hamper and to book the boat in for Saturday. Look in at Bomba's shack in Apple Bay but have missed the full moon party by a day. Inspect Sugar Mill for future high-spend vacations and to see how the other half live; then swim at Brewer's Bay, where, at the opposite end of the market, you can camp under the sea grape trees on the edge of the beach for \$25 a day.



**After three painkillers – Watson, Wiz, Sue and Graham**

Sky World for cocktails then to Lambert beach where Sue and Watson ignore the *beware of the undercurrent* signs and test out the surf, followed by yet more drinks in Trellis Bay where we all test out the hammocks slung between palm trees. Shopping in Roadtown at Riteways followed by dinner on board and cards.

1 March: Change of plan caused by failure of water-maker, so instead of Cane Garden Bay, a gentle sail to Norman Island and anchorage in The Bight, home of Billy Bones Restaurant and the Willie T floating grog and grub ship. Dinghied round to the Caves for the best snorkelling of the holiday – great variety of fish including a 4ft barracuda. Over 12 hours since the last rum punch, so good excuse to witness the permanent party aboard the Willie T, highlights of which are a number of beautiful bodies flaunting their bits and being witness to a demonstration of the famous tequila body shot.\* And after three PainKillers, Sue joins in the other



renowned party trick of diving from the top deck in pursuit of bikini top, which the rules say must go first. Back to the boat for a quick siesta followed by crab sandwiches and return to Roadtown where Andy Moody was waiting with a new V-belt to fix our water-maker.

\*(use your imagination!)

2 March: 09.00 – We cast Sue adrift for the day, up anchor and motor sail out of Road Harbour downwind through the Narrows Channel between St John, USVI and the south end of Tortola. Through Thatch Island cut between Little Thatch to port and Frenchman's Cay to starboard, an exhilarating sail touching eight knots under genoa alone to White Bay on Jost Van Dyke, home of the Soggy Dollar bar, which boasts its claim to have originated and perfected the PainKiller. Neither the snorkelling nor the PainKillers live up to those on Norman Island, however, although we did need two or three properly to test and establish this. Late lunch, then a lovely sail under full rig back to Soper's Hole, where we pick up a mooring and go ashore to the Jolly Roger for our last night.

3 March: An early rise, breakfast and out with the mops and buckets to clean the boat before tying up in the marina and collapsing in Pussers for a final PainKiller before taxi-ing to Beef Island Airport for our LIAT transfer back to Antigua and BA check-in. We kill the transfer time with a trip into St Johns where we find the only bar to be open on a Sunday but which just happens – surprise, surprise – to mix a formidable rum punch. WE'LL BE BACK!!!

Acknowledgements:

Pete, Colin and Ed for allowing us to use Gunshot; Doyle's Cruising Guide to the Leeward Islands; Scott's ditto to the Virgin Islands; Watson, Robbie Burns and Shelley for the poetry; Wiz for her cuisine; Sue for her inexhaustible supply of mix and match bikinis; Wiz and Sue for resisting outright mutiny and calming the temperament of the two skippers.

## **For those of you who were not there, this is what you missed! CCRC Races 2 & 3 Cowes**

**by Pam Marrs**

Friday evening on our mooring and the baleful click of the solenoid announces two flat batteries. With Goldeneye standing in as committee boat for a mechanically-challenged Lohengrin on the morrow, things were not looking good. But after a tow into Sparkes and an overnight charge we got to the start line for Saturday and sent the fleet on its way to Cowes in a fine 3-4 easterly. Then we scurried back to Sparkes for new batteries and chores.

What chores? Thanks very much, I'll have a pint of bitter in the Island SC. Yes, we'd caught up with the others in time for a pleasant supper and a chance to meet new members Derek and Hazel Pude, whose ability to handle their JOD 35, Poulico, on their own could only impress. Dinner was an excellent affair only slightly saddened by it being the last club event for Paul Chivers in the foreseeable future. So we all wished him bon voyage for his trip to Portugal and beyond, then we had another drink and cheered up enormously.

A few fireworks followed supper, consisting of two or three displays at intervals of several minutes causing us to keep rushing from the table to the chilly air of the balcony. They were in celebration of the Poles saving Cowes during WW2; the High Street was bedecked with the Polish flag and on Sunday morning there were several bands parading.

On Sunday a few braved the damp and chill for a morning walk to Osborne House; others had a lie-in and only managed to stagger to Osborne House in the afternoon. The chain ferry was congested most of the day with cyclists doing their own Round the Island; some coping much better than others especially on the hills on very flashy bikes with suspension units and disc brakes, a good reason for keeping mine in the shed! After the exertions of the day we were revived by drinks and nibbles on Goldeneye.



Overnight was wet and windy but by the time we got to the start line this had disappeared, leaving no wind at all, so Brown Bomber shepherded us in the general direction of Chi. On the way we passed a visiting French racing fleet of Jeanneau ODs - Poulico must have thought the French had come to retrieve her from the clutches of CCRC. Eventually BB found a handy buoy and sent us off on a tour of Haying Bay in an SE 3. The Commodore's realigned keel allowed him to slip away from us, and it has to be said that with only two on board, Goldeneye's spinnaker handling was not the slickest. But we got round the course.

Though we all had a pleasant sail, there were only six boats on Saturday and four on Sunday, divided between two classes. That isn't really racing and, if CCRC is to continue to offer competitive sailing in a sociable way, people must hop aboard their lovely boats and join in. Let's all forget about the gardening, the shopping, Auntie's birthday and all the other reasons why not, and just get out there and do it. It's good for you!

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## Here and there

The Commodore and Commodorable made an impulse buy on the CCRC Cruise this year. The fleet visited Dives, where there is an on-going Port Gimaud-style development with a beautiful outlook on to lots of boats as well as views to the river and sea, which "made the asking price of an apartment unmissable," June says. "Having made a couple of trips since, we would like to recommend the local taxi driver Catherine Luce to anyone going to the area. She also has a good B & B at Villers-sur-mer - phone 0033 231882293. For those going through Ouistreham on the ferry, we have found very good value for food and a welcome (during the cruise and since) at the Au Coin du Port restaurant."

**CCRC has been organising races, some with other Chichester Harbour clubs, since 1948. These include races round the buoys in Hayling Bay, passage races to Solent ports, and an annual cross-Channel race and cruise in company. Guest yachts and new members are always welcome.**

## Screaming across Hayling Bay at 10 knots + by Brian Dandridge

It was the afternoon of Sunday 26 May and Gerry and I were enjoying a cup of tea with Mike and June Tong in their sitting room. We watched the rain lash down outside as another squall went through and reminisced on the morning's race back from the Hamble. "Of course, you will have to write the race report for yesterday," Mike reminded me. "Oh, gosh," I said. "How do I write a report about three boats?"

In fact there were four, but I never saw John Skillicorn and Flagon until I met him on the pontoon at Swanwick Marina after the race on Saturday. The weekend was scheduled for the trip to that wonderful Chinese restaurant at the top end of the Hamble. When I booked us in with Andy Reynolds at the beginning of the week I was told it was now a full house, so I was expecting a good turn out on the water. Unfortunately, as can often be the case, unseasonably cold, wet and very windy weather was forecast. My crew for the weekend consisted of my wife, Gerry, and a couple of old friends - Bob and Sue Garrett. Bob used to sail regularly with me when I had a Sonata in Brighton in the early eighties and also sailed with me on The Advocate when I joined CCRC back in '87. Unfortunately, pressures of work and family life have kept him off the water much of the time since then.

In truth I didn't fancy the weather much myself but decided to take a look. The deciding factors were (1) if we didn't sail I would have to drive to the restaurant and therefore wouldn't be able to imbibe; (2) I was scheduled to be Race Officer the following day and fancied anchoring off Chi to start the race even less than doing something up at Hamble; (3) Sycorax goes well with a bit of wind so there was a chance we could get a good result. The Commodore was up for it with a crew of three on board, Andy and Jacky were also ready to have a look with new crewman John on board. We heard Flagon on the radio but at that time they were off Thorney and were considering their options as they were having difficulty with a reefing line.

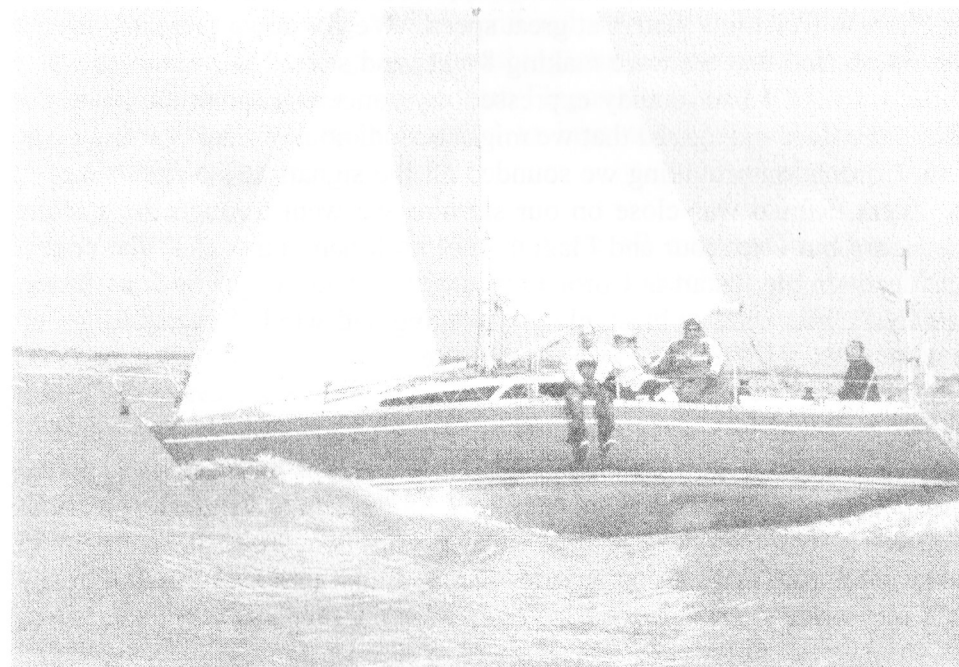


Andy radioed that Rimau would do a gate start. We followed him out, with one reef in the main and the blade jib up. "Course 41" Andy radioed – Chi to Peel Bank (S), back to Mother Bank, Browndown and Coronation to finish. The Alphas had a few more marks to do. Can't say much about the start. We couldn't hear any horn due to the wind, and the crew on Rimau had their hands too full to worry about any flags. We noticed them sailing away from Chi at the allotted time and one minute later tack onto a westerly course. "Have we started?" I called over to Excalibur? "Go for it," came the response.

So neck and neck, side-by-side Sycorax and Excalibur beat westwards in the direction of the Dolphin Passage. Sometimes we would creep up on the Commodore and then he would gain a bit. All the way down to the Winner Bank we were evenly matched. As we approached the Winner Rimau tacked and crossed astern of us, heading out to sea to go between the forts. That was almost the last we saw of her. Crossing the Winner Bank we met some short sharp waves which knocked our speed badly for a few moments and the Commodore pulled out about four boat lengths on us. He maintained that lead all the way to the barrier, where we tacked in succession to get through.

On down past Portsmouth we raced in close company. Every now and then the wind noise and spray were broken by screams as the two girls were drenched by a rogue wave. Back in the cockpit I suffered withering looks, as I remained relatively dry!

Off Gilkicker Point both Excalibur and Sycorax tacked on to starboard to head over towards Ryde. I half expected to see Rimau but she had obviously been badly knocked by the tide, as when we got over to the Isle of Wight side there was no sign of our Vice Commodore or her team. Still close on the stern of Excalibur we tacked and laid the course my GPS indicated would bring us down to Peel Bank. To my astonishment Excalibur suddenly tacked and headed even further south towards the Island. Had I got my navigation wrong? Was I looking at the wrong mark? Was my GPS in error? No, we were right and the Commodore had made a small error. We arrived at the gybe mark about six boat-lengths clear, gybed and set off downwind for the next mark. It was a relief to be off the wind and have a few minutes respite from the cold and wet. Time



**Sycorax at 7 knots plus (Photo: Eddie Mays)**

also for a quick chocolate bar and drink before we arrived at Mother Bank where we gybed again and set off for Browndown. At this mark the Alpha and Beta courses went separate ways and we saw no one else until after we had finished. The final leg was a fast fetch with the boat regularly in the 7+kts category. One mile short of the finish a rib closed us with a photographer on board and the logo "Eddie Mays" emblazoned on it. Eddie snapped away and invited me to e-mail him for proofs. (see picture) The evening at the Chinese restaurant was a great success. An opportunity to discuss the day's sailing, catch up with those who elected to drive round, and finally stumble off to our bunks for a few hours well earned sleep.

On Sunday morning it was my turn as Race Officer. With just the same four boats it was decided we would again carry out a gate start. I must confess I was a bit nervous about the "1 minute running at 90 degrees to



the course away from the mark before sounding the starting gun and turning on to the course" bit. This was because the wind was still very strong from the southwest, which meant we would be heading straight at the shore and shallow waters at great speed. We got down there and tried a test run to find that we were making 8+ kts and started to run out of water fairly quickly. I had already expressed my concerns on this matter to the rest of the fleet and agreed that we might be judiciously "late" getting away from Coronation providing we sounded all the signals at the right time. In the event, Rimau was close on our stern as we went through the starting procedure but Excalibur and Flagon were both hanging back. The course was dead simple – start at Coronation, finish at Chi, ie. get back as fast as you can! With vicious black clouds looming and winds forecast to get up to 40kts, this definitely had everyone's vote.

As it happened the squalls passed us by without either dumping their contents on us or causing any problems. It was a fast run back taking Sycorax just two hours, six minutes and four seconds. It took Excalibur even less. The Commodore elected to go through the forts so he could "have some fun" with his spinnaker. Rimau took the same route but by the time they made it through the forts and had rigged the kite the wind, which had dropped to around ten knots, started to pick up again and they decided discretion was best! Flagon and Sycorax both chose the shorter route through the Dolphin Passage. This meant we were less down wind and neither of us looked at the kite option. We screamed across Hayling Bay making surges into the 9kts bracket and the occasional 10+. Two days of great sailing, a most enjoyable evening and plenty of time to get the boat put away and get home to enjoy David Coulthard winning the Monaco Grand Prix!

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## Spring Cruise 2002

### by Jacky Black

A small but select group of boats participated in this year's cruise to France. The week started on Friday 31 May with a night race to Cherbourg. Rimau was acting as the start boat for the race and by 19.45 there were four other boats assembled – Excalibur, Flagon, Mons Meg and Poulico. Flagon radioed in to say she would be starting but not on time! The rest of us set off at the appointed hour and with not much wind it wasn't too long

before we decided to retire and start the engine to get to Cherbourg before Sunday! The rest of the fleet followed suit as the night progressed. It was a clear and mild night and any shipping encountered was easily seen. One rather strange light configuration confused us at first: it turned out to be two tugs towing an oil-rig, not something one sees very often. At around 23.30 we picked up a radio signal from Flagon describing a problem with a fouled prop; later we were relieved to hear she had been successfully towed into Bembridge.

Cherbourg was busy on our arrival but we all managed to find finger pontoons, and most of us were then ready to catch up on some sleep. Several other club boats had crossed the channel during the day and it was good to catch up with them all – the full compliment of boats was as follows - Dreamseeker, Denecia II, Mons Meg, Excalibur, Sycorax, Poulico, Rimau and Candira (skipper John Caughey from Emsworth had asked to join us for the week). Flagon was delayed and unfortunately Arcadia did not start due to engine problems.

Later that day we were joined by the first contingent of the 'land-based party' – Peter and Di Wallace who had driven down from Calais. They were boatless as Gunshot was still en-route from the Caribbean. Later they were also joined by Anne Bonwit, a long-standing Gunshot crew member. Peter very kindly organised a venue for the first night's supper at a local Lebanese restaurant, and following drinks and chat on the terrace of the Yacht Club we all trekked through the narrow streets to find our supper. It proved to be a splendid choice – the courses just kept coming until we had to ask them to stop! Most of us were ready for a good night's sleep and I for one did not take much rocking.

Sunday dawned bright and early on board Rimau with a loud knock on the coach roof at 08.00! It was Martin Sewell and family (Arcadia). They had decided not to miss the fun and so caught the overnight ferry from Portsmouth. The rest of our boat stirred and we were all treated to a delicious breakfast of fresh croissants and pastries from Martin. Later we were able to organise berths for the new arrivals so that we could all get round to St Vaast. We had an uneventful sail round with a fair wind and en-route were delighted to hear that Flagon had arrived in St Vaast. John had got his prop cleared and sailed direct to this delightful fishing port to



meet up with us for the rest of the week. We had made reservations for 10 boats and fortunately we were able to tie up fairly close to each other, which made for some good informal socialising on the pontoons. Brian Dandridge, Peter Wallace and Bill Woods had all brought their guitars and we were treated to a great session in the café on the north side of the marina after supper.

Monday was golf day for those who played and they had an excellent nine hole game followed by a picnic lunch, and another round before returning to join the rest of us. The golf competition was won by the Gunshot team. The annual boules tournament took place that evening and was completed just before the rain came down. Well done to Hazel and Derek from Poulico, who were joined by John Caughey and his son from Candira, and managed to beat the Commodore's team in the final. I am not revealing who won the wooden spoon but it wasn't us!

Most of us enjoyed a pleasant meal at the Café du Port that night and then retired relatively early ready for a very early start the next morning. The weather dawned fair and we were able to enjoy a good sail to Ouistreham, our next port of call. We bid farewell to our land based party and to Sycorax who were returning home. We were all accommodated on the visitors' pontoons in Ouistreham and enjoyed a pre-dinner drinks party onboard Candira; many thanks to John Caughey whose boat a CatFisher 28 was able to accommodate all of us! As Wednesday started out wet and miserable we decided to take some of the boats up the river to the Pegasus Bridge. Candira and Poulico ferried 14 of us up to the floating restaurant where we were joined by Mike and June who had cycled. A rather bedraggled bunch descended on the restaurant, where we were greeted by a rather stunned Madam! However, once we had stripped off the oilies she seemed to be more relaxed and we had a super meal – just what one needs to do on a wet day in France!

Several of us then visited the newly opened D-Day Landing Museum, which proved to be very interesting especially as there were several veterans from the Parachute Regiment who were keen to talk to us about their experiences. It certainly made history come alive! The evening was rounded off by the Commodore's cocktail party on board Excalibur. As

always June had gone to a great deal of trouble with delicious snacks and the rain had stopped so we were able to spread out across the decks and enjoy a very pleasant evening. This culminated in another informal singsong with Bill Woods on guitar and Andy Reynolds on vocals!

Our final destination was Dives-sur-Mer, which we reached on Thursday 6 June. This is a friendly place with very good facilities; the two seaside towns of Cabourg and Houlgate offer some interesting architecture and a good selection of restaurants. In addition, it provided a safe venue for the Driftwood Trophy. Various boats were soon under construction while crew members were sent off to scour the beaches for extra material to aid the building process! We also held the cruise dinner and after scouting around several possible eateries June and I decided on the William the Conqueror, a very well known local restaurant which is often fully booked. We were delighted to be able to secure places for all of our party and later that night we had a very splendid meal. The non-golfers also enjoyed some crazy golf at the local course during our stay, while others were real-estate hunting!

Friday dawned bright and breezy – Candira left to cross back to Chi and the rest of us made last minute adjustments to the model boats before the race, which took place at 13.00. Hugh kindly acted as rescue boat and the various craft were duly launched. With a following wind the Poulico lightweight craft was at the finish almost before the race committee was in place and second place went to the Rimau catamaran. Thanks to Hugh who collected up the remains of several of the other craft; the strong winds had proved too much for them!

Rimau left that evening to return to Chichester and the rest of the fleet followed the next day. Everyone returned safely. We all enjoyed a super week. Why not book the date in your diaries for next year? The last week of May 2003.

**The CCRC annual meeting will be held at Chichester YC at 10.30 on Saturday 9 NOVEMBER 2002. Don't miss this opportunity to tell the Committee how you want the club to be run next year.**



## Challenge of the lost waypoints – what will Brian say? Ladies race 13 July

by Helen Smith

Having been invited to help race Sycorax the Monday evening before, when we were still in cold, wet weather, it was a treat to drive down (early as usual with racing) in sunshine and blue skies. Arriving at Sparkes a few minutes late, Jacky and Andy (of Rimau, at that time in Brittany) were already on board. First task was to clear the very full bilges after all that rain! The electric bilge pump didn't seem to be shifting any water so I started hand pumping. Ten minutes later, after she'd stowed all the goodies for the weekend, Jacky took over the bilge pump which gave in to her superior strength - "It just fell apart in my hands!" she said, holding up the centre of the bilge pump. Oh dear, what would Brian say?



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Marigold was waiting for us on the start line in about 12 knots of breeze, John having recruited two crew to help out. Five boats only had turned out for the challenge - Perfect J, Kandy, Mantra, Leo Lady and ourselves. We made an extremely good start helped by having three digital watches, four skippers and a dollop of good luck, crossing the line one second after start gun. Boat handling excellent, despite all the skippers, Jacky helming for all but a loo stop, but huge wind shifts - some unlucky for us!

Navigation not quite so good; Andy and Mike (computer dinosaurs), trying to enter the course into the GPS, wiped out incorrect route and, despite being asked three times whether they really wanted to do it, wiped all the

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**Mike Frith**



waypoints from Brian's Garmin! We thought we knew what Brian would say about that! Feverish hunting ensued for paper chart, parallel rules, sextant, sight reduction tables and a pencil...

The guys made an early start on the beer; lunch of pork pies and sandwiches was rustled up after we'd been through the Dolphin, keeping a sharp look out for our competitors. Did any boats go through the forts and up the Ryde side to cheat the tide, we wondered as we tacked across with Mantra from Gilkicker to look for Daks? Three more tacks later found us at Daks with Perfect J and Leo Lady ahead and Kandy much too close behind. Hoisted the kite without too much trouble and set sail for SE Ryde Middle with little wind and against a building tide. Mid-afternoon and a strange morse code sounded, eventually traced to Andy's phone in sink. (How did it get there?) It delivered a rude text message and died in his hands.

Time to down spinnaker and hoist the genny again. Sudden desperate cry from foredeck (Andy) - "I've lost my balls!" It was the feeder that had become detached and Andy luckily was still all in one piece. He found the feeder on a broken piece of string and swiftly reattached it. After a last beat up to Gales, we finished just ahead of Kandy with the alphas well ahead. Tied up at the Cowes Corinthian next to a friendly cruiser and spent the next two hours folding sails (a novelty for the General Gambles), mending the bilge pump (Michael drew the short straw, climbing into the very narrow locker to hold the nuts) and worrying about the GPS - which of us should tell Brian the awful truth?

After our showers, we made our way to the Royal London to join the other club members on the balcony for a beautiful evening scene overlooking the Solent as the sun went down. Enjoyed well-earned drink whilst we chatted then repaired downstairs to the dining room for excellent roast dinner.

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## Top of the class and other winners

CCRC boats have achieved outstanding results racing against top rank competitors during the 2002 season. Congratulations to Commodore Mike Tong and crew who won Class 3 of the RORC IRC championship in

Excalibur at a three day meeting in "home waters" between Hayling and the Forts in June (see report below). Nick and Biddy Colbourne and crew sailed Arion to an impressive first in both Group 2 and IRC Division 8 in the ISC Round the Island Race and were placed 14<sup>th</sup> overall out of 550 entrants. CCRC Treasurer Rob McLeod, in Sareema, was second in IRC Division 11, 7<sup>th</sup> in group and 36<sup>th</sup> overall.

The Spring series of CCRC races suffered from poor turnouts, particularly in the Alpha (IRC rated) fleet. Overall winner of the Alpha group was Excalibur (Mike & June Tong), with Flagon (John Skillicorn) second and Goldeneye (Richard Creer) third. Turnouts in the Beta fleet, which is club rated, were rather better, although there were one or two races with few competitors. The overall winner of the Beta group spring series was Rimau (Jacky Black and Andy Reynolds) with Sycorax (Brian & Gerry Dandridge) second and Arcadia (Martin Sewell) third.

The summer series was raced as a combined fleet using club handicaps. The overall result was very close with Kandy (Geoff Coop) winning the series by ½ point from Sycorax (Brian & Gerry Dandridge) and Mantra (Patrick Marshall) coming third.

## Excalibur wins Class 3 in IRC championships by Pat Morrell

In 1997 Excalibur won her class in the (then) CHS national inshore championships. Success in subsequent years has been elusive, but following a lot of effort (and expense) by Mike to reduce drag by ensuring that the flattened bulb on Excalibur's keel really does align with the waterline (and that's another story) we had high hopes for this year's IRC championships.

The championships consisted of a scheduled eight races, three on each of Friday and Saturday and two on Sunday, with one discard permitted. Organised by RORC, they were held in Hayling Bay, with Gunwharf Quays as the "home" base. Having already decided that seven sleeping bags weighed too much and that the crew would sleep at Mike and June's house, we found that car parking at Gunwharf was ridiculously expensive



for a full day and so decided to sail from Hayling. With the starts in the vicinity of Winner, the time taken for us to get to the start was little more than the time taken from Gunwharf.

Excalibur was in class 3, which was a disappointingly small class numerically, but with good representation from CCRC as Goldeneye and Leo Lady were also taking part. We considered that our main opposition was likely to come from a French-designed half-tonner named Dick Dastardly, which has had tremendous success this year in both JOG and in Cowes week, the Dehler 34 Big Zipper, which won our Class in Round the Island, and an Impala, Disko Trooper, which we had encountered before. Excalibur has to give Impalas more than two minutes an hour and a well sailed Impala can give us all sorts of trouble.

The first day's races consisted of three straightforward and rather boring windward/leeward courses with a downwind gate. The wind was light with flat water, and moved constantly around a general NW direction. These are the sort of conditions that Mike excels in as he constantly uses the windshifts and we ended the day with two firsts and a second to put us in overall first place.

The succesful formula seemed to be continuing on day two as the first race was also started in light, shifting winds, but after about 30 minutes racing, when we were well placed on the rest of the fleet, the wind shifted majorly, then died completely, and the race was abandoned. A delay of two hours waiting for a breeze was frustrating for everyone, but at last the wind filled in from the west and continued to strengthen. The course set was again a straightforward windward/leeward course, but we were off the pace in this race and had our worst result of the series, a sixth. The fifth race and the last to be held on day two didn't start until nearly 17.00. By this time the wind had increased to a steady force 4-5 and the course set included a wing mark to give a little more variation. Excalibur managed second place behind the Impala, Disko Trooper and ahead of Dick Dastardly, but we were still relieved when Dick Dastardly received a points penalty for a line infringement.

The weather on day three was very different with grey skies and a force 4 westerly, which steadily increased through the day. Having abandoned one



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race on the previous day, the race committee decided to shorten the series to an overall seven races, but maintained one discard, so we still hoped that we would be able to ignore our poor result of day two. The first race of day three, race six, provided us with a reasonable second place, with the half tonner Dick Dastardly first. The series now depended on a good result in the last race. We had suffered minor damage towards the end of the race when the internal line of the solid rod kicker broke, but had sufficient time between the sixth and seventh races to make a temporary repair which was just as well because by the time the last race started the conditions had deteriorated into a solid force 6 and a lumpy sea. The RORC report of this race says "There was a steady stream of retirements as the wind briefly reached 30kts. Added to the opposing tidal flow, conditions became quite unpleasant" and that was talking about the big boats!! These are the conditions that Excalibur really doesn't like when going upwind, and we knew that we would have to rely on downwind performance to give a reasonable result as we estimated that we needed at least a third place to win overall. This was easily the most taxing and exciting race of the series, with distractions caused by boats broaching and breaking gear around us. But with only a minor broach from us to give entertainment and hope to the opposition, we caught up quite quickly. After a two hour race we recorded a third place to give Excalibur the class championship by one point from Dick Dastardly, with Disko Trooper in third place. Goldeneye was sixth and Leo Lady seventh.

So it was off to Gunwharf Quays with Mike to collect his trophies and to reflect on the fact that the effort of sorting out the keel had proved worthwhile. All we now have to do is to retain the trophy next year and prove that it wasn't all a fluke!

### Things we want to know?

In the race to Beaulieu on 28 September (one of the best turnouts of the year) which boat tried to cheat the tide and became petrified on Ryde sands? Which boat got its big blue spinnaker in a twist between Prince Consort and East Bramble and decided it was only there for the beer and turned back toward Cowes? Which boat was mistaken for a floating first-aid post because she swissed a red cross on the backstay in lieu of a beta

flag? Which boat was as bouncy as tigger celebrating its skipper's birthday with a touch of the gins? Which crew shot off on foot to a distant drinks party on the water and walked over two miles to dinner? Which skipper insisted he blooming well wasn't racing but sailed the course just to get the points? Answers in a plain brown envelope please to the Commodore in time for the agm!

CCRC's annual dinner dance and prizegiving will be held at the Goodwood Marriott Hotel on Saturday 30 November. This offers an excellent opportunity for all those lady crew members who were accused of not tripping the spinnaker fast enough or tripping it too soon to get their own back by insisting that their heavy footed skippers trip the light fantastic on the dance floor. Dancing to the music of Moonshadow. Don't miss it!



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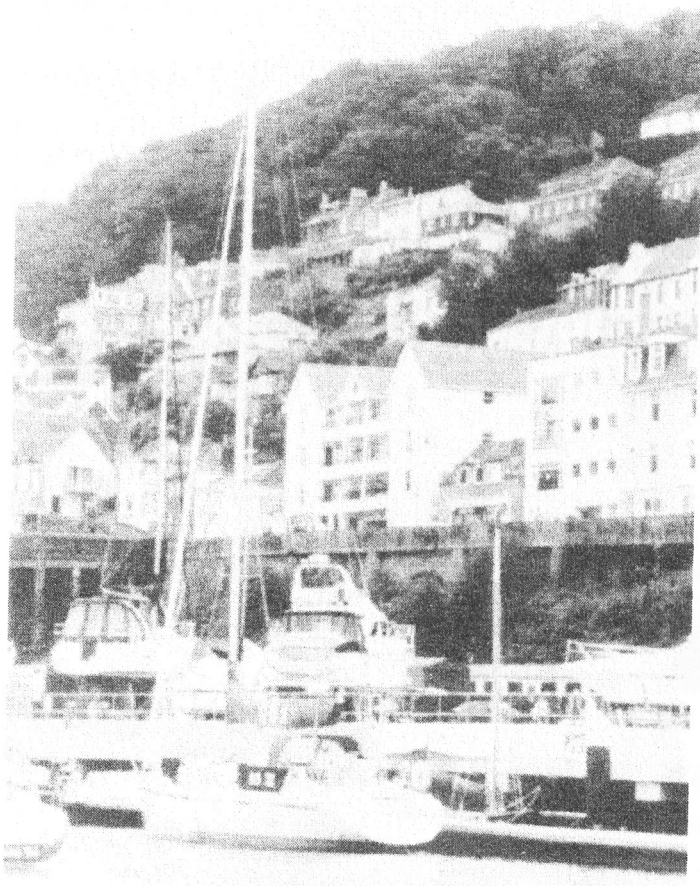
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## Brown Bomber afloat again



**Brown Bomber at Darthaven Marina (Photo: Glenn Jones)**

Brown Bomber III, severely damaged in a collision at the start of the Yachting Monthly Rally Portugal 2002 at Plymouth in June, was safely returned to Paul Chivers at Darthaven Marina after repairs on Tuesday 13 August. Glenn and Maureen Jones and the crew of Petra and Craig and Wendy McGuinness and the crew of Swedish Blonde were cruising in the West Country and joined Paul and the crew of BB III for a CCRC celebration party. BB III set off afterwards on her long-delayed cruise.

## Pursued by the stripes of the tiger

by John Dunkley

The smaller, slower boats in CCRC know only too well what it is like to get the best of the start only to see their bigger, faster rivals speeding past within minutes and disappearing into the far blue yonder. Aboard Marigold, therefore, we enjoyed a sense of satisfaction in finding ourselves some three miles ahead of the fleet. We knew it couldn't last, of course, because this was the club's annual pursuit race on Sunday 22 September. As one of the slowest boats, Marigold had the privilege of starting at 10.00, nearly an hour and a quarter earlier than Brown Bomber, the fastest. So we found ourselves clearing Cambrian, the first mark, without a pursuer in sight. Normally our only reason for looking back is to get a bearing or to make sure a container ship or ferry isn't approaching on a collision course. Looking back on this occasion we were mystified by the lack of boats. Where was Samurai, the committee boat of the previous day, which should have started at 10.09? Where was Kandy, which had been due to start at 10.15? Mons Meg we could rule out, because she was Sunday's committee boat, and we had swept across the line at Gleeds, south of Spit Sand Fort, within seconds of Hugh's signal.

But then – yes, there was no doubt – we could see we had a tiger on our tail! Mind you, the stripes of Rimau's spinnaker were but a colourful speck in the distance. The light northerly wind had been forward of the beam when Marigold started and we had opted for our reacher rather than our spinnaker. But as the wind increased in strength there was more west in it and it served Rimau well. We were not unduly concerned, however, and enjoyed reaching along at five knots to Chi and then back Winner, and on to Hard. When Marigold came hard on the wind for the beat to Chi it became clear that the wind had strengthened considerably. We were having to spill wind from the mainsail to reduce the angle of heel and even then the leeward deck was awash. "We shall have to reef", I warned the crew. Rimau was revelling in the chase and slowly closing the gap in the breezier conditions.



We held the full rig for the second two-mile reach to Winner, achieving a good six knots for much of the leg. Gunshot thundered past in the opposite direction reminding us not so much of a bullet as an express train. Behind her Sycorax, Sweet Pea, Petra, Excalibur, Goldeneye and The Harribelle all came within view sailing fast from the west.

Rounding Winner for the second time for the reach back to Chi the wind seemed even stronger. We watched as Brown Bomber, inshore and going in the opposite direction, dropped her genoa for a smaller headsail. Rimau, still behind, was also replacing her genoa with a smaller sail. Suddenly, I remembered that morning's inshore waters forecast had warned of "force 6 later". I knew we had to reef before rounding Chi for the third time and hardening up for the beat to Bay. In full oilskins, with salt spray flying over the pitching foredeck, I struggled to replace our big reacher with the no 3 genoa, a sail half its size. Conscious that Marigold would be unbalanced unless the main was reefed too, I rushed to get the job done before the end of the leg. There was just enough time left to enter Bay in the GPS as the new waypoint.

Rimau was closing fast. We rounded Chi and set a course for Bay. But where was the mark? Not where the GPS said it should be! Suddenly the wind seemed lighter and the angle of heel less. Had we over-reefed? No time for another sail change. Rimau was rounding Chi. We scanned the horizon. Not a yellow mark to be seen inshore. We tacked. "Is that it there?" asked Barry, pointing to the west. We scanned again with the binoculars – it was the only yellow buoy within range. We had to bear away substantially. Rimau, still behind but nearer the mark, bore away in unison and swept ahead as we neared the mark. Genoas goosewinged, we headed for Hard. Was the drop in wind strength only temporary? We should have hoisted the spinnaker but, still fearing a force 6, we took the reef out of the main instead. Another beat to Chi, another run to Hard – Rimau had her spinnaker up and was roaring ahead. Gunshot and Excalibur zoomed past under full sail as we beat back to Chi. We were pursued by the tiger no longer but it still felt like a jungle out there. The stripes had passed us by – we'd been tiggered! Congratulations to Jacky, Andy and the crew of Rimau on a roaring good victory.

## Crew Register

Many of our skippers are on the lookout for crew so if you are interested in sailing with CCRC, please join our Crew Register. Don't worry if your experience is limited – we were all new to sailing once. Send this form to Hugh Caldwell at 3 North Close, Wade Court, Havant, Hants. PO9 2TE.

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We apologise to Hayling Marine Carpentry for the incorrect telephone number in our last issue. The correct number is 02392 461011, as above.



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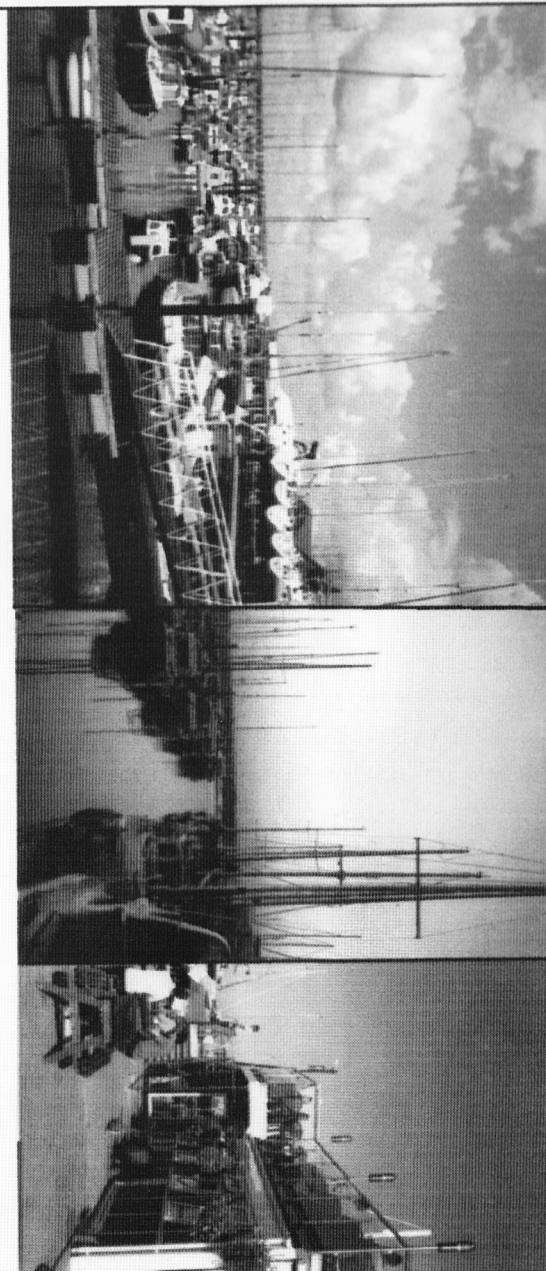
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