

# CCRC NEWS

Autumn 2004



## Chichester Cruiser Racing Club

the club to join if you want to race with other  
cruisers from Chichester Harbour

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Cover picture: Jo Jo Gunne: "I hope the wind shift gets here soon!"

## CHICHESTER CRUISER RACING CLUB

### Officers 2004

	Telephone
<b>Commodore: Jacky Black</b>	01273 464099
e-mail – jacky.black1@ntlworld.com	mobile 07798 606 373
<b>Vice Commodore: Rob McLeod</b>	020 8998 4443
e-mail – ramcleodco@aol.com	
<b>Secretary: Pam Marrs</b>	023 9246 8885
e-mail – pam@marrsp.freemove.co.uk	
<b>Sailing Secretary: Brian Dandridge</b>	01273 846132
e-mail – brian.dandridge@btinternet.com	
<b>Treasurer: Andy Reynolds</b>	01903 775067
e-mail – andrew.reynolds@talk21.com	
<b>Assistant Sailing Secretaries:</b>	
<b>John Lanham</b>	01243 511251
e-mail – john.lanham@uk.zurich.com	
<b>Bill Woods</b>	023 9248 0384
e-mail – billwoods@ukonline.co.uk	
<b>Guy McBride</b>	01488 649771
e-mail – guy.McBride@easynet.co.uk	
<b>Race results &amp; handicapping: Pat Morrell</b>	01273 845107
e-mail – p.morrell@sussex.ac.uk	
<b>Crew Register: Hugh Caldwell</b>	023 9247 3000
e-mail – hacaldwell@hotmail.com	
<b>Webmaster: Richard Creer</b>	01243 377099
e-mail – richard@radixsoftware.co.uk	
<b>Website: www.ccrcc.co.uk</b>	
<b>Editor CCRC News: John Dunkley</b>	020 8399 5993
e-mail – john.dunkley@rya-online.net	
<b>Advertising Manager: Ann Jennings</b>	01403 730021
e-mail – annjennings@coombdale.freemove.co.uk	

## Saved by a spare RIB

By Bill Woods (Sapphire)

Sapphire, a Dehler 34, set out from Chichester Harbour to race to Bembridge on Saturday 2 October but lost her steering when the rudder jammed before the start. Able to motor only in small circles, she found herself being swept by wind and tide on to the breakers on Chichester Bar and radioed the Coastguard for help.

Sapphire was crewed by Jan Graydon and Charles Minter - both experienced sailors, Charles holding a Yachtmaster qualification. I was Assistant Sailing Secretary for the day and had discussed with the Race Officer, Martin, our likely courses in the south-westerly force 5 to 6 wind. We delayed leaving Sparkes Marina until 09.45 because of insufficient water. In order to make good speed against the incoming tide, we quickly hoisted full main and motor-sailed out of the harbour, catching up Hoopoe, the start boat, at the West Pole Beacon. The wind was less than forecast, at around 20 knots, although we had come through a squall approaching 30 knots as we passed Chichester Bar Beacon.

At about 10.20 I handed the helm to Charles and went below to contact Hoopoe via mobile phone to double-check which course they had set and the start time. I then selected channel 72 on VHF to contact the fleet to give them the start time, which had been delayed by five minutes. Unfortunately, 72 was occupied. After what seemed an age, but was probably only two minutes, I was able to begin to broadcast: "CCRC fleet, CCRC fleet, this is Sapphire with race instructions....." - at this point Charles called down, "Bill, the wheel is not connected to the rudder!" We were about 300 metres north of Chi buoy, sailing south in about 3.5 metres of water.

I rushed on deck with the emergency tiller in my hand. Charles rapidly fitted it while I checked the wheel and found that it turned freely without

engaging with the rudder mechanism. Our combined efforts could not get the rudder to move using the emergency tiller. It was clear that the trunnion rod was still connected, but its angle was wrong, suggesting that it had run over centre. We were slowly motor sailing in port handed circles and being blown on to the West Pole Sands.

I knew it was time to give the Coastguard a call on 67. They responded immediately and once they had plotted and confirmed my position they realized why there was some urgency in my voice. A calm voice asked if my anchor was holding. No, I replied, but I hope it will do when I set it! I ran on deck and shot forward to the anchor locker, unwittingly with my mobile phone in my left jacket pocket and the handheld GPS in the right.

It seemed to take about half an hour to withdraw the pin from the anchor roller; it was stiff and the motion at the bows was so vigorous that I was in danger of being tossed overboard. After about two minutes, my aluminium Fortress anchor, 11 metres of chain and about 10 metres of rope had been paid out, the warp made up around the cleat and the pin replaced. Feeling quite tired, I made my way gingerly back to the chart table to report to the Coastguard that the anchor was set and slowing the boat's drift considerably. Charles and Jan cut the engine and dropped the mainsail.

By now the motion was quite violent. I managed to regain the chart table seat to alert the Coastguard that we were lying in breaking waves and drifting steadily towards West Pole Beacon. The good news was that the tide was still rising and that the Hayling Lifeboat, an Atlantic 75 called Betty Battle, had been launched. The CCRC fleet was disappearing in the spray on their beat to Dean Elbow.

Charles and Jan were sitting stoically in the cockpit, resting, having proficiently secured the boom and mainsail, while the boat did a good impression of a bucking bronco.

The motion at the chart table was uncomfortable and it seemed an age with no radio contact so I moved up to the cockpit and called the Coastguard

again on the handheld VHF. Simultaneously, over my right shoulder I could see the lifeboat just becoming visible in the spray around Eastoke Point. A collective sigh of relief passed around the boat. Our saviour was on the way and we still had three metres of water, but we were now well over the sandbank between the West Pole and Bar Beacons.

It seemed to take an age before the lifeboat closed on us and decided how to approach Saphire through the breaking waves. The coxswain made about five attempts before a smiling lifeboatman called Tony jumped aboard. Somehow, I had expected him to talk to me about the intended tow. Instead, he discussed how important it was for me and the crew to abandon Saphire immediately and take to the lifeboat. Considering the time it took to get one lifeboatman on to our boat, the boat's position, and the time it would take to get Jan and Charles safely into the lifeboat, I politely declined his kind offer, as did my crew.

I focused his attention on setting up the tow, as I was concerned that we were being set on to the Bar Beacon. We both went to the bow to find that the starboard roller attached to the cast aluminium stemhead had broken cleanly off under the snatch load and sunk down the rope to join the anchor! I was alarmed that the next item to disappear would be the cleat itself, but as luck would have it the violent action had shaken off the figure of eight, allowing the rope to surge out gently around the cleat. This simple observation showed me the way to save the boat. All I had to do was sit in the anchor locker and surge out more warp as we came to the top of a wave. In this way both cleat and the anchor held.

After what seemed like an age, the lifeboat approached our port bow and threw us a line. Whilst trying to fix it around the mast with a bowline Tony held me, and I, in turn, held him as he passed the rope through the remaining bow roller. Despite working as a team, the violence of the waves breaking over Saphire almost knocked us overboard on a number of occasions and our handhold in the anchor locker and the guard wire were all that kept us onboard.

I seemed to be working in slow motion, tying my largest fender to the anchor rope before I could cut it away with the emergency knife that I purchased for just such an occasion on our visit to Australia in 2000. The knife did its job.

Eventually, the lifeboat angled itself into the waves and took up the slack, applying its 140 horsepower engines. It took off vertically, and I expected it to do a back flip but somehow it landed the right way up on the other side of the three metre high wave crest with all the crew intact. But the tow rope exploded as soon as the load came on. At first, I thought that my bowline had failed, adding to my despondency, but I came to realize that any rope would fail given the loads involved in pulling a four-ton yacht through breaking waves against 30 knots of wind and a rudder on full port lock.

By now the Chichester Bar Beacon was less than seven metres off the port beam!

Unknown to us, Frank in the Hayling Island SC rescue RIB had been monitoring my depth warnings to the Coastguard. He had realised the seriousness of our situation, and suddenly emerged between us and the Bar Beacon and quickly fixed his RIB fore and aft to Saphire's port side. His 240 horsepower engine kept us clear of the beacon whilst we fixed the lifeboat similarly to the starboard side. With engines running forward and astern alternately the two RIBs managed to return us safely to Sparkes Marina. At last! I retired to the safety of the cockpit feeling very giddy. I half realized that I was probably in shock, as I was violently sick all over my gallant crew!

A reception committee was waiting for us on the dockside and the kind lifeboat medics checked me out in the most professional and understanding way. After offering our heartfelt thanks to the lifeboat crew, they departed and we were left to clear up the mess! The damage was a broken stemhead fitting, a damaged steering system, and a "lost" anchor, chain and warp.



The following morning I went to Hayling Lifeboat Station to thank the lifeboatmen for saving us. They had already been training that morning and had found the "buoy" marking my ground tackle but had been unable to recover it because of the swell and the way it had embedded itself deeply in the sand. I asked after their health and they of mine, and we swapped tales of bruises and sore ribs. Strangely, both Tony's and my left hands had seized up overnight for no apparent reason. Only by talking through the events on the foredeck again did we work out that each time a wave tried to knock us overboard we had held on to the rim of the anchor locker. Each successive wave had slammed the anchor locker lid on our knuckles. Of course, we hadn't felt it at the time!

### **Lessons learned**

On a lee shore in 30 knots of wind, drop the anchor before dropping the mainsail.

Have one of the crew fire a red parachute flare whilst the radio call to the Coastguard is being made.

Contact the Coastguard on channel 16, as other yachts might be monitoring this channel, although I doubt that a tow from another yacht would have achieved much more than an effective anchor in the conditions prevailing and might have endangered both vessels.

A waterproof handheld VHF is essential in communicating with the lifeboat when the noise of the wind and sea makes normal conversation over short distances impossible.

The aluminium Fortress Guardian anchor was launched easily and quickly owing to its light weight. It would have taken considerably more effort to launch a conventional anchor under a heaving pulpit.

Running the anchor rope across both cleats with a sausage fender underneath the warp might have provided enough 'give' to prevent the loss

of the stemhead.

Don't stow fenders in the anchor locker in a blow; they are very difficult to handle in a breaking sea.

Wearing lifejackets with harnesses attached to lifelines is essential on a pitching foredeck.

Be aware that cast aluminium fittings, although light and apparently substantially made, can snap under dynamic load, whereas a stemhead fitting made of stainless steel would have deformed before it broke.

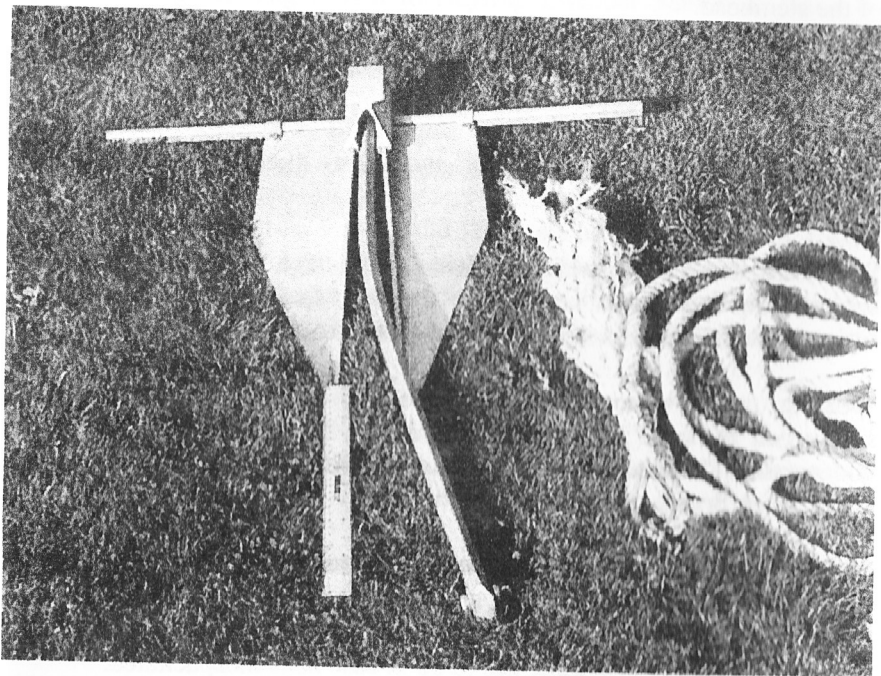
Wearing good waterproofs is essential. Despite being repeatedly submerged by large waves for over half an hour, I was warm and dry underneath. (The handheld GPS still works, and so does the mobile phone - after a week drying out on top of the boiler!)

Despite being well equipped for the conditions, after half an hour hanging on to the foredeck of a lurching yacht I was exhausted and could barely tie a simple knot or maintain a conversation. The crew need to know how to do everything that the skipper has to do in case he is incapacitated.

Before accepting a tow from a lifeboat in future I will rig one of my mooring warps in a loop around each of my primary and spinnaker winches taking a bight on which to fasten the towrope just in front of the mast.

### **Conclusion**

During the following week, in a rare calm spell, Frank managed to lift my anchor and ground tackle on a second attempt. Thus, the following Sunday when I arrived the boat, all the tackle was accounted for. My knot had held on the fender, and warp and chain were intact. The anchor itself was undamaged apart from a sizable bend in the shank. I now have great confidence in aluminium anchors.



Saphire's bent aluminium anchor

## CCRC egged on at Easter Challenge by Pam Marrs

Glenn Jones's First 40.7, Tarka, helmed by Nick Colbourne, finished second of the 22 boats in IRC class 1 at the RORC Red Funnel Challenge practice regatta at Cowes over the Easter weekend and won "many Easter eggs". Other CCRC boats which went home "with a clutch of Easter eggs" included Vice Commodore Rob Mcleod's Westerly Fulmar, Sareema, and Graham Nixon's Sigma 362, Leo Lady, sailing among the seven entries in

IRC class 3. Jo Jo Gunne, Richard Creer's J 109, was equal ninth on points among the 27 entries in IRC class 2.

The light, fickle winds proved very testing for the scheduled seven races. One was abandoned and for another most boats were out of time, but this being a practice regatta without discards, average points were awarded to those who failed to complete the course.

On the water coaching by Jim Saltonstall, Eddie Warden Owen and Barry Dunning, followed by video clips and witty comments, made the regatta an excellent start to the season. Another interesting feature was that the Race Officer did a "Murray Walker" in the last minute of the start sequence, announcing if boats were behind or in front of the line, or were hardening up too soon or too late. I hope this idea does not catch on for the overworked CCRC race officers as there is enough to concentrate on in the last minute before the start without having to commentate as well.

## A club outing to the Selsey fisheries by Guy McBride (Exeat)

### Race 1, Sunday 25 April

So, the first race of a new season, anti-foul spots still shiny on the oilskins (funny how self-polishing anti-foul manages to remove itself after a few minutes from a gently revolving prop, but will not budge in hours of aggressive machine washing).

The day dawned beautifully, at least I assume it did; it was still fantastic about 9 o'clock when I had finally got up and was having a black coffee breakfast at HISC. The sun was shining, promising warmth to the day already, the sea a beautiful mirror-like calm. In fact a perfect day for doing just about anything – anything, that is, but going sailing.

Having assembled her motley crew, Exeat sauntered out to the vicinity of Chi to 'sniff the breeze'. Fortunately, a sea breeze of sorts was beginning to pick up and things were feeling more encouraging; more encouraging that is except for my head. The fitting out supper at HISC the previous night had been a particularly enjoyable start to the season but perhaps we had celebrated our shiny new IRC rating a little too enthusiastically.

As a brand new ASS I was particularly worried about setting a suitably conventional course for my debut. I was pretty hopeful the sea breeze would set in from the south or even the southwest, but it seemed worryingly persistent (if that's the right word for less than 8 kts of breeze) from the southeast. This presented an interesting problem, because there ain't a lot to aim at to the southeast of Hayling Bay. There be dragons over there as far I was concerned. Finally, I bit the bullet and sent us all off to Boulder (Selsey way apparently).

Looking around I was encouraged by the size of the turnout. Eight Alpha fleet boats, three Beta fleet boats (if that really is Mons Meg scurrying out of the harbour to join us), and Lohengrin in cruising fettle to wander around the course with us.

Rob McCloud on the committee boat, Sareema, laid a good line and set the Beta fleet on its way with minimal fuss and spot on time, with Mons Meg giving a gentlemanly head start to Samuri and Hoopoe.

The Alpha fleet then approached the line. With the eastgoing tide and light winds, I think we were all a bit worried about getting to the line a bit too quickly, as there was much going around in circles and many quick gybes, but with 40 odd seconds to go we all went for it. The keenest bunch - RS Elite, Jo Jo Gunne and Exeat - suddenly found themselves a few seconds early, very near the pin end. Jo Jo and the RS wanted to bear off down the line but unfortunately Exeat was in the way to leeward, so was forced over with a few seconds to go. The hooter hooted, Rob went scrambling for the X flag and most of the fleet (the clever hangers back) shot across the line

on to the first (and only) beat. The two jumpers hammered back to the line leaving those of us on Exeat wondering what had happened and asking ourselves were we over too? Fortunately we weren't, but it had all proved a little exciting for our first outing with the big boys in the IRC fleet.

Finally, we all settled into the job of beating into the unknown towards Selsey. The wind was proving somewhat elusive; never in the best of health it seemed to fade slowly away - down to less than 4 kts at times - as we all coaxed our little darlings offshore to pick up more of the also fading eastgoing tide. Mantra's brand new code zero was doing a fantastic job, as she seemed to point super high and still sail fast, leaving us further and further behind. We figured we'd also have to get such a sail to keep in our locker for these light wind beats.

Oh so slowly, we approached the fabled location of Boulder. But what was this? We rubbed our eyes and peered again into the murk. Were we seeing double, treble or sextuple? What had they put in the club doubles at HISC bar the night before? There seemed to be about 20 Boulders. Suddenly the navigator grinned smugly and mentioned something about this obviously being a good fishing spot. And so it was that the first time in living memory that a CCRC race used Boulder as a windward mark, we were solemnly (and bemusedly) witnessed by the combined fishing fleets of Selsey and Chichester.

By this time Jo Jo Gunne was barely in sight from our cockpit, with Gun Runner, the stealth RS, the lovely cutter rigged classic Mikado and Mantra in hot pursuit. Samuri seemed to be holding her own up there somewhere too. Meanwhile, the rearguard of Sycorax, Gunshot and Exeat were taking things in a rather sedate manner, more befitting of our hangers.

The run back to Chi saw many strategies. The most successful seemed to be reaching-off inshore to find a little more breeze and a lot more fair tide. All in all a somewhat gentle start to the season in a dying breeze more in keeping of an August afternoon.

## **Larkish fun leads to shopping** by Pam Marrs (Jo Jo Gunne)

### **Race 2, Chi to Portsmouth, Saturday 1 May**

Wind NE 1 becoming SE 3

*Our lee gunwhale dipped beneath the foaming waves, the rigging hummed, showers of spray flew through the air and lashed our smiling faces. "What larkish fun!" cried First Mate Pammy.*

*"Sod this," grumbled Cap'n Creer, "I'm putting the engine on. There's a comfortable marina with bar-restaurant round yonder headland."*

Waking from my reverie, I found myself gripping the wheel of Jo Jo Gunne (J109) as we drifted on the tide towards the start line. The fickle breeze that had got the Betas away 15 minutes earlier had shifted 50° and evaporated, leaving the kite on the wrong side of the boat, but fortunately the boat on the right side of the line.

For the best part of the next hour we all drifted on the tide while the airwaves crackled with discussions of whether and how to abandon. For better or worse the breeze then filled in, reaching those of us at the back of the fleet first. Spinnakers blossomed, spirits lifted and off we went. Unfortunately for Jo Jo the damage had been done as the opposition were already well ahead of us on handicap.

Our course took us by a series of tight reaches and long runs across Hayling Bay and through the forts in the general direction of Gilkicker. Approaching Cambrian, we nipped past Penrose (Oyster 46): second Beta on the water and doing well in, for her, less than ideal conditions. Between Horse Elbow and Royal Albert we finally overtook Hoopoe (Hunter 27), which was doing very well and continuing her good form of the previous weekend.

Rounding Royal Albert, we set off on a beat to Saddle via North Sturbridge. By this time the visibility, which had never been good, was approaching fog-like proportions. "Not far to go," cried First Mate Pammy, "Look, there's Southsea pier." "That's a cargo ship", grumbled Cap'n Creer, "and it seems bent on our destruction."

Approaching the finish, the murky conditions lifted to reveal our committee boat, Jezebel (J42) parked ahead of us. Behind us, but not far enough, was Alpha winner, Mikado, Michael Briggs's immaculately prepared, and immaculately sailed 1904 Fife cutter, proving how little yacht design has really advanced over the last hundred years and/or how good IRC handicapping can be. And not far behind him was Beta winner Hoopoe.

*"What larkish fun," muttered Cap'n Creer as we reached towards Portsmouth in sparkling sunshine. "Sod that," cried First Mate Pammy, "There's a marina round yonder headland, with a bar-restaurant and SHOPPING. Get that engine on."*

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## **A short race to a great lunch** by Brian Dandridge (Sycorax)

### **Race 3, Sunday 2 May**

Traditionally the Sunday race on the first May Bank holiday in each CCRC season is run for the RNLi trophies. Most years this race has started at Cowes and finished off Beaulieu with the social at Gins Farm. This year the tides were not that suitable for a long away weekend and we decided to run three races in Hayling Bay with stopovers at Portsmouth. For 2004, Race 3 is also the second race in the new Sunday Bay Race Series.

Regrettably, I was only able to put a crew together for the Sunday race so Sycorax was absent from the Saturday race to Portsmouth and the evening



party on board our Commodore's new Hanse 41 – Arwen, but we were well crewed for Sunday with John Aldridge, Tony and Ann Salzman joining Gerry and myself. We left Sparkes at 8.30 in zero knots of breeze and, with bacon sizzling under the grill, motored at full speed against the last of the flood tide to make sure we were on time for the 10.45 start at Gleeds off the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. As things turned out we could have had another couple of hours in bed and still made the start!

We arrived at Gleeds at about 10.00 and there was still less than two knots of true wind showing on our instruments. As we arrived we met Keith Feltham, the race officer, motoring out to see what could be done to put on some sort of a race. A few minutes later the rest of the CCRC fleets arrived – Jo Jo Gunne, Mikado, Exeat and Gunshot joined Sycorax in the IRC Alpha fleet, whilst the Beta fleet consisted of Arwen, Penrose III, Jezebel, Mons Meg, Arcadia, Kandy and Carisma. At 10.45 our race officer announced a postponement and then picked his moment to perfection. As Denise dropped Penrose's hook into the sand, Keith sounded the horn, flew the "follow me" flag and motored off in the direction of Cambrian in a hunt for some breeze. The airwaves were filled with Bill's indignation as he had to up anchor and set off in pursuit.

As anyone who has been with CCRC for any time will know, the racing is important, but the social is even more important. The social for this particular Sunday was lunch at Seaview Yacht Club, with a sit down time set for 14.30. This didn't leave a lot of time for a race, and with the true wind still showing at less than three knots I was doubtful we would get a race at all. However, all good things come .....

Keith took us to a yellow mark about halfway between Cambrian and Winner; not a mark we usually use. We put our main and No. 1 up and I was pleased to find we could sail on the wind at around four knots boat speed. Keith set a triangular course with a beat out to Horse Tail, a downwind leg to Winner and a possible reach to a finish at Warner, with the fall-back of shortening at Winner.

At 11.55 we were off. I confess to a rather slower start than I would have liked. I misjudged it and we were about fifteen seconds shy of the line, but we were moving at good boat speed. The only problem was that Kandy was just in front and there was too little room to squeeze between her and the Committee Boat. I elected to fall off a few degrees and then tack on to port to get clear air as soon as we were past the Committee Boat. We stayed on this tack only for a few minutes as it was taking us the wrong way, but it did get us into clear air. The tactic paid off and, once back on starboard, we quickly settled down to overhaul all the other boats with the exception of Jo Jo, Mikado and Jezebel. Out at Horse Tail we rounded and set our kite for the run to Winner. Up ahead, Jo Jo was forced to tack down wind but the crew of the beautiful Mikado made the most of their large mainsail area and full spinnaker. There was nothing we could do to catch them. I was more concerned by Gunshot and Exeat, which, with their large masthead spinnakers, were making up ground on us from astern. Behind them the whole gaggle of Beta boats kept close company.

I was delighted to see that Keith, with the support of Ann and Vernon Jennings, had decided to shorten course at Winner, so it was just a case of getting the kite down and motoring over to Seaview for lunch. Although the wind filled in almost as soon as we crossed the finish line it was still the right decision. As Sailing Secretary I would much rather see short races that everyone gets to finish, and enjoy the social, than longer races where half the boats are forced to retire.

Having got ashore – what a great lunch. The catering staff at Seaview Yacht Club did us proud, once again. My thanks to Keith and his team for putting on a very enjoyable race, to Pam for arranging a great social, to everyone who turned out for making it another great CCRC day – if you weren't there, you missed a most enjoyable event, and finally, my crew for enabling me to enjoy it.

## **No sangfroid after a good lunch**

by Peter Wallace and Rolf Kranenburg (Gunshot)

### **CCRC race 4 - Monday 3 May**

Bank Holiday Monday dawned somewhat grey but the crew of Gunshot were pleased to see a little breeze, following the drifting matches of the two previous days.

By the time we motored out to Gleeds, we were thinking about oilies but decided not. Our crew for the weekend, in addition to the three owners, were Di and her cousin and his wife, who flew over from Holland for the weekend.

The Beta start was an ordered affair. Particularly impressive was the sight of Jezebel and Arwen powering upwind to Royal Albert. The Alpha fleet had a good beat and on Gunshot we were pleased still to have Jo Jo in sight at the windward mark and we were at least ahead of the beautiful Mikado. I think our Dutch crew were pleased that the beat was over, as the large genoa needs a lot of winding in and the skipper gets very impatient!

We had a long spinnaker run to Dean Tail and managed to catch a number of Beta boats. We got past Arcadia; there was lots of action on the foredeck with the cruising chute, but in the end it seems the decision was made to leave it on the deck. It was good to see three Contessa 32s racing. I think that L'Aquarelle has the biggest spinnaker that I've ever seen. We overtook Kandy, which seemed to be going very well. It must be said that Kandy was truly a cruiser racer last weekend, as I know that Geoff and crew were on board both nights.

After the beat back to Cambrian it was up kite again. The squalls then started to approach. By then it was too late to get the oilies on; what a mistake at the start! The leg was to Hard. Unfortunately HISC had a big

RS open meeting. There must have been 30 asymmetric dinghies on starboard heading for a mark very near Hard. We were on port! One RS700 managed to capsize just in front of us and we still couldn't see Hard. We finally found it (I think it was Hard, as it said -A-D!). A quick beat to Winner and a final hairy spinnaker run to Chi. Jo Jo was still in sight so we were quite happy but our binoculars were still able to see Mikado in the distance; not good news.

We finished the race very wet but exhilarated. Both kites were soaking and the saloon was quite wet. Rolf and Andrea from Holland were amazed at CCRC racing. Rolf said that his impression of England had totally changed. He had thought that we didn't eat well but had had to change his opinion after the lunch at Seaview and he thought we had sangfroid but that was before he heard the skipper shouting.

They are looking forward to sailing with us next year.

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## **Whites of the eyes stuff**

by Monica Rose

### **Race 6, Cowes to Chichester, Sunday 9 May**

After a good meal and congenial company at the Island Sailing Club in Cowes, all organised prior to CCRC's arrival by our Hon. Secretary, Pam Marrs, and a most comfortable night aboard Gunshot, we awoke to little or no wind in the marina. Things did not improve on reaching the proposed start line. Sailing Secretary, Brian Dandridge of Sycorax, advised us all to motor to Gleeds buoy just off the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour and nearer to our home destinations.

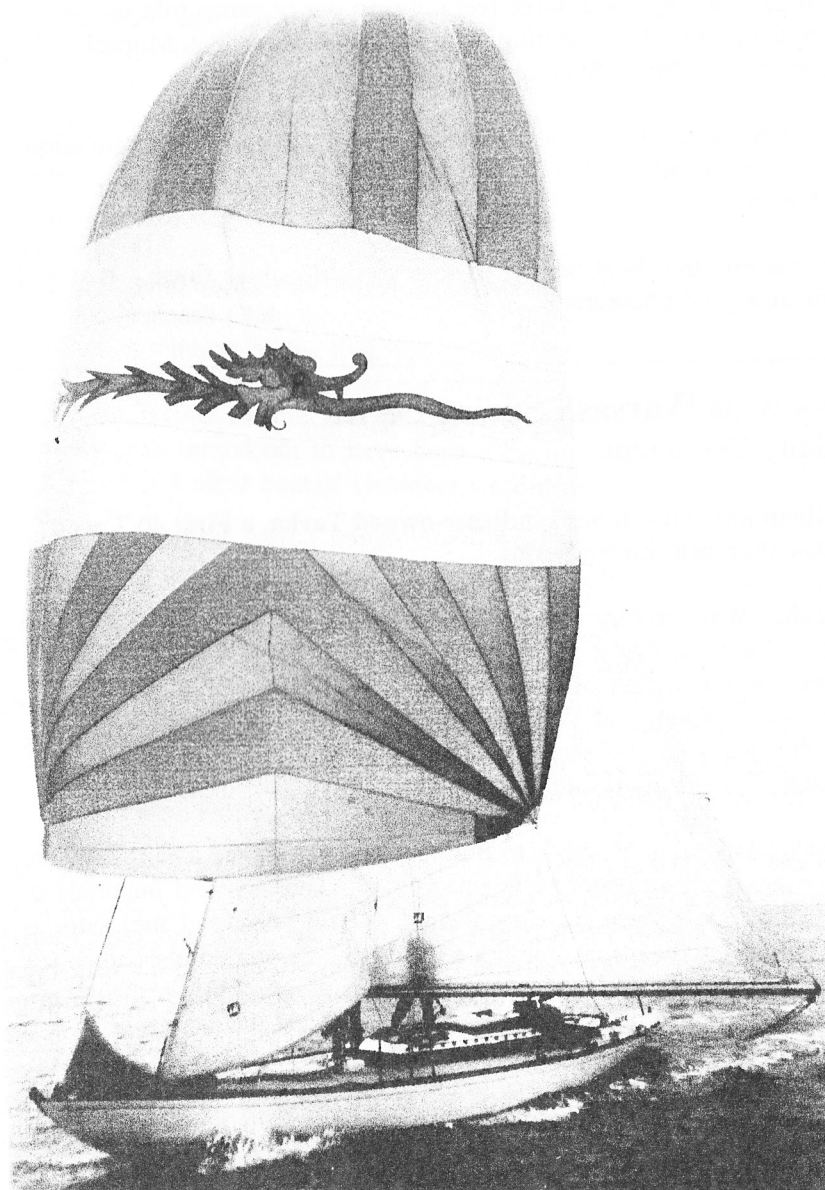
Even in such light winds, Jo Jo Gunne led the way to our new start. Mikado hailed our skipper to say they were short of fuel for the unexpected

extra journey so asked for a tow. Peter agreed and so we had this beautiful classic yacht to see at close quarters for the journey to the new start area. All having arrived safely, Jacky Black of Arwen, although short-handed, gave us a gate start on what seemed to be a long course for the light weather conditions, but which turned out fine in the end.

With courses programmed in, off both Alpha and Beta fleets set for the first mark, which was Dean Elbow, spinnakers flying, just! A much more comfortable, drier sail than the previous day, when waves kept breaking over the foredeck, most of which went down the necks of Ann and me, the 'heavy' side deck crew. Soon after the start we heard the swishing bow waves of Mikado approaching our stern to pass us. Not a chummy thing to do under the circumstances, but that's racing. Also, I think I may have some lovely photographs of both Mikado [see picture on following page] and Mantra as they passed us and then had their own race in front of us. Sycorax was also just behind us at that time and so we had our own individual race. There was no way we were going to be able to report on Jo Jo Gunne, as they were well away. First you see them, then you don't.

Arwen, a beautiful new Hanse 411, not difficult to spot at a distance due to her size and high polish, decided to put up her cruising chute near the Forts at Portsmouth, but something happened and it came tumbling down. They carried on but we were busy at this time trying hard to keep the spinnaker filled and keep Sycorax at bay. The whole of the Beta fleet shortened course at the third mark, Hard. Unfortunately, this weekend 'the fleet' was one boat only and Arwen needed a few more knots of wind.

Several marks later, approaching Chi buoy, the wind was dying slowly but the tide was going in the right direction. We could see Mikado and when and where they found some wind, which wasn't there when we arrived! When we did arrive there was a forest of masts of RS dinghies to get through. It was almost "whites of the eyes stuff" between Mantra, Sycorax and Gunshot. After all Peter Wallace's and the crew's efforts to get us in front of the "we three" at the finish, Mantra, which approached in the main tidal stream, pipped us over the line. Our achievement was to be just in



front of Sycorax, by about three feet only, so our bowman told us. All to be sorted out by Handicapping and Results Officer Pat Morrell, who happened to be helming Sycorax.

All three boats celebrated their achievements by shouting congratulations across to each other after a day of utter concentration rather than "beef/brawn".

There was no other boat behind us to record this close finish. It would have made a good photograph.

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## **Tarka wins Warsash Spring Series**

**by Biddy Colbourne**

**The Glenn and Nick Jones syndicate-owned Tarka, a First 40.7, won the 2004 Warsash Spring Series.**

**1<sup>st</sup> week.** Wake to hear a sort of low moaning sound – realise, as I gain full consciousness, that it is the wind. A quick glance at CHIMET is not encouraging, but we set off, not wishing to display any faintheartedness, and arrived at Moody's at Swanwick to find all the crew assembled, except Helen and Jez who had sensibly stayed to check the Warsash web site. Race cancelled – sadly (!) we all retire to the pub to console ourselves.

**2<sup>nd</sup> week.** Arrived at Moody's to find the crew assembled again. They are an impressive collection of young people with muscles and hundreds of years sailing experience between them (+ Glen, Nick and me). Stories about sailing on Swans, Admiral's Cup boats, Commodore's Cup boats abound. We set off with our beautiful new sails crinkling in their bags. Before long we have our jobs allocated and have had the spinnaker up and down, done quite a lot of gybes (lost count) and practised our roll tacking. This is a shock to those of us used to the Arion way of doing things, which ensures that the spinnaker stays safely in its bag until required in anger. It

could get damaged, tangled or wet if used too early we thought! However, all this practising had an impressive effect. Nick got us off to a storming start and we shot off, did a really impressive breezy close reach with the spinnaker and eventually crossed the line being fairly confident that we had won the race.

There was a second race to make up for the one which was cancelled last week end. Off we went again in a pleasant breeze and once again crossed the line in good order, thinking we probably had won again. As we walked up to the Warsash Club, we met some friends who said they had seen our name up as winners of the first race, but were not sure about the second. We entered the club feeling quite pleased, only to see that someone else topped the results for the first race. There we were at the bottom – our storming start turned out to have been a bit too storming we were OCS (and so were 8 other boats)! However we **did** manage to win the second race.

**3<sup>rd</sup> week.** We were away in France but apparently everyone went out and spent four hours sitting on the Solent with 40 knot winds blowing until they finally cancelled again. We were not sorry to have missed it!

**4<sup>th</sup> week.** Once again we had a pretty good start and Tarka showed considerable speed, so that we were well in the lead on the water. Off we went following the Class 1 boats, as usual. We had done about half the course and were half way to the next mark when we realised that everyone else in our class had turned right and were heading off somewhere else. Sadly the course recorders (me and Glenn) had failed to notice that (for the only time in the whole regatta, I say in mitigation) the course for Class 1 had two extra marks in. The result was a DNF. So there we were with a first, an OCS and DNF in three out of the six races. The future looked much less bright than it would have done if we had had three firsts. Our crew retired to the pub to drown their sorrows. Glen and I tried to hide.

**5<sup>th</sup> week.** Woke to hear that low moaning sound again. Dashed to look at the CHIMET site when I got up at 6.30. It showed force 7-8. Things



looked black because we might not get sufficient discards to get rid of our blunders. However, when we arrived at Moody's it seemed a very pleasant day with light winds. It'll get windier when we get out, we thought, but no, the first race turned into a real drifter at times (back to lying in the loo again). We had our now expected good start – our helmsman seemed to have got the hang of things and once again all the practising (perhaps there is something in it after all ) meant a trouble free and speedy race. We just about laid the first mark and managed to sneak past Cutting Edge by going through him to leeward on a close reach – very happy bunnies we were, as Nick broke his overlap a few yards from the mark. After that we had a relatively relaxed race mainly wrestling with the class 1 boats, which had got even more becalmed than us.

We took a well earned lunch break and were just falling gently asleep when we noticed that a bit of wind was appearing. We rapidly got rid of the light number one and changed to the medium no. 1. Off we went and before long were all sitting out as the wind increased. Soon we got rid of the medium no. 1 and changed to the heavy no. 1. Spinnakers started to rip, boats were broaching – it was good spectator sport. We decided to use our heavy kite and then our small kite and had some exciting, but controlled down wind sailing. We used every sail on the boat that day.

We anxiously waited for the results. Our name was again at the top of the list for both races. What a relief - **three** firsts now. We now needed to come fourth or higher to win overall! Another 40.7 called Euphorix (ex-Royal Blue Addict) and Jim McGregor's Elan 40 were our closest rivals. We have had many close fought races with Jim and know him well, but Euphorix we only knew from some close racing with her at the Red Funnel Easter Challenge.

**6<sup>th</sup> week.** We were all pretty nervous. After we had blown our chance of winning the Hamble Winter Series by a poor last race, we really did not want to do the same again! As we approached the starting area with ten minutes to go, we suddenly realised that there was a porpoise on our tail and everywhere we went there was Euphorix doing a sort of America's

Cup starting imitation. Luckily, he was not terribly good at it and we managed to leave him behind us and under someone's lee at the start. He did wriggle out of that, but he could never get back on terms, although he did end up second in the race and overall. Happily we held our nerve and managed a fourth win in that race and winners overall with 4 points to Euphorix's 10 and Jim McGregor's 12.

So we all retired to Jez and Helen's house for a champagne barbeque (forgot to mention that it was sponsored by Raymarine, who provided lots of champagne to the winners of each race) to celebrate.

It was quite an experience. Nick C helmed; Nick Jones was fantastically quick and reliable on the bow; Ant did the heaving up and down on halyards; Helen was in charge of the pit and managed to keep all her ropes in the right place; Scotty did the mainsheet – you need serious muscles and speed to cope with the huge main on that boat; Jez did the tactics, got us to the best part of the Solent and organised us; Peggy, who knows all there is to know, guided us all and did serious muscle work on the jib; James did spinnaker sheet and jib; I did guy and Glen navigated. Carina kept our spirits up and calmed things down in moments of stress. It was a great crew and although we totally failed to keep up with them in the amount of alcohol or cigarettes they could consume, it was a real education and great fun to sail with them. Thanks guys.

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## **Mikado repents late hoisted yankee**

**Race 10, Saturday 19 June**

**by Michael Briggs**

The day started fine, with a light north to north west wind giving a gentle fetch from Chi harbour to our lunch rendezvous at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club at the entrance to Wootton Creek. By 12.00 a modest CCRC fleet was rafted up on their pontoon, with crews ashore being treated to a delightful buffet lunch on the lawn, with Mikado's crew studying their

excellent collection of half models of her Fife predecessors to see where her unusual underwater shape came from.

After a briefing over coffee we sallied forth to do battle over a suitably short course for post-prandial racing, both fleets together, starting off Wootton, with a short beat to Daks (in Osborne Bay), a run to NE Ryde Middle, close reach toward the mainland, beat to Seascopes (just east of the Bramble) and a close reach to Coronation off the Hamble, against the spring ebb.

The Alpha fleet consisted only of Sycorax and Mikado, with Exeat spectating. The Beta fleet was better represented, with Arcadia, Arwen, Kandy, Sapphire and The Harribelle.

By now the wind was, as forecast, backing and increasing to an unstable WSW. The start was enlivened by a squall, which left Arwen broaching over the line early, Mikado repenting of a late hoisted yankee, and Sycorax making a perfect port tack start, slightly overpressed under full sail at the windward end, to take an early lead at Daks, increased by Mikado getting a riding turn on the staysail winch on the tack to the mark.

The run which followed was complicated by 25 degree wind shifts, necessitating several spinnaker gybes. On the whole those who stayed south in slightly less tide did better, with Mikado just ahead of Sycorax by the leeward mark, only to throw it away by a spinnaker jam which left the bow man dropped in the sea ahead of the boat as the spinnaker dragged him round the forestay. Being a monkey, he climbed straight back onboard and the process of chasing Sycorax had to start again on the beat to Seascopes.

No real progress was made until the last reach, when Mikado began slowly to reel Sycorax in yard by yard, but not fast enough, until a slight drop in the wind inside Calshot enabled a quick yankee hoist which did the trick with a cable to spare before the finish. Meanwhile, the gusty reach found Arwen's best point of sailing, and she came charging up towards the Alpha

boats to be first home in her class.

After that it was a question of braving the cold showers and the fierce ebb in the Hamble River entrance, up to Mercury for the other kind of showers, drinks on Arwen, and a delicious supper in the restaurant.

Apologies for the thin reporting of the Beta fleet, but it was one of those days when we were too pre-occupied with putting right mistakes to have much time to see what was going on elsewhere....

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## **The Horrible wields a fid**

**Race 11, Hamble – Chi, Sunday 20 June**

**by David Perrin**

Well, The Harribelle was finally re-launched on Monday 17th May (I know, I know) – mast up on the 19<sup>th</sup> and commissioning completed by 16.00 hours on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>. (One of the reasons why we ended up in Poole & Studland and not Carteret & Dielette with you guys!).

### **WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH RACE 11?**

Our first CCRC event this year (apart from the annual “you’ve got to be joking” call to the handicap officer) – Saturday, a cruisette to Wootton, lunch on the lawn at the Royal Victoria and a short race to Hamble. Great evening and dinner at Mercury; it was super to catch up with everyone and to introduce daughter Isobelle, who had not sailed for several years.

Sunday, started well, I felt better than I probably deserved and was woken with a horribly bright “Happy Daddy’s Day” together with cards and a huge bar of Toblerone (mine – all mine!).

We were first boat to Coronation and beginning to think skipper had got it

wrong again, when Exeat appeared, then Mikado, Arcadia, Sycorax, Arwen, Kandy and, where was Sapphire? (We deduced there would be no Leo Lady having heard their name mentioned over the radio in connection with the IRC nationals). Sapphire finally appeared sporting an expected course 70 and it was announced we would all be sailing the short course with a gate start.

OK, daughter person, let's get going – the winch handle goes in that hole there, "All right Dad, I know, I know – it's only been a couple of years you know."

Not a bad start, we did at least cross the line during the right time zone. Wow Kandy, that's what they call 'flying a kite' – very well recovered!

It was quite close down to East Bramble, although Mikado was steaming ahead, chased by Sycorax. Beat back to South Bramble, with some choosing to tack north of Bramble Bank and most trying to get the tide shadow and then tack to the south.

The Harribelle eventually closes South Bramble (well at least it's in sight). One eye on the mark and one on that big black cloud looming over Egypt Point. We'll hold full sail till the last minute dear daughter, we are racing after all. Wrong; closing the mark on port with another (non racing craft) closing on starboard 30+knots of wind on the nose and it being just a rumour we're in control. We get some sail down, then realise the reason the main is not setting properly is the half mile of lazy jack, caught up with the single line reefing system. What do we do now? What do we do now? What do we do now?

Hang on, it can't last forever – it doesn't look too bad – but Dad should the main really be that shape? Probably not, daughter, but I'm sure I've seen it before (I think on a dhow).

Bearing away towards Cambrian (isn't it great they've made it a cardinal), the squall moderates and skipper person balances on one leg on the winch,

manages to wield a fid into the mess and eventually untangles and re-reeves the string. No damage, nothing broken, everything back in place and a main that now looks Bermudan.

Not much more to say. It was a great sail back to Chi, just touching 9 knots on occasions, but not enough. (The preamble being a vain attempt to distract from the result).

Well done Mikado (Alpha) and Arwen (Beta).

A super first CCRC 2004 weekend. Thank you for the sailing organisation and for both 'socials' on Saturday. But a special thank you to daughter Isobelle for being a great and effective crew (sorry about the result – entirely down to the skipper). The Horrible !

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## Round Ireland without a fridge (part 3)

by Hugh Caldwell

**The first article on Hugh's single-handed circumnavigation of Ireland in his Contessa 32, Mons Meg, in 2003 was published in our Autumn 2003 issue and the second in the Spring 2004 issue. At the end of part 2 Hugh had reached Arklow and was waiting for an improvement in the weather to return home.**

### RETURN TO FALMOUTH

We got our chance the next day, Friday 25 July, with a forecast of westerlies Force 4 to 5. We left about eight o'clock, with virtually no wind in Arklow, and only a minimal south-westerly outside. I had abandoned the idea of a stop at Rosslare, so after clearing the Glassgorman Bank I headed outside the Blackwater Bank as well. This long bank, parallel to the coast, is really shallow, drying at one point, and even with a light offshore wind I could see the breakers on it. At 10.30, I set the genoa and

stopped the engine for a while as I headed south to the Tuskar Rock, the isolated lighthouse that marks the south-east corner of Ireland.

When I reached it, the day had brightened to almost cloudless sunshine. I set course for the Longships, 128 miles distant, slightly freed off on a wind that remained steady at west-south-west Force 3 to 4 until the small hours of the following morning. It was not too rough, and Mons Meg logged 5 ½ to 6 knots, hour after hour. The forecasters hinted at a veer to northwest, but this did not materialise until late in the following day.

I cooked an evening meal of bangers and mash, with cabbage. The mash was a shade lumpy, to go with the sea. The great thing about mash is that it acts as a sort of putty or cement to keep the sausages on the plate – useful when single-handing.

About 01.45, the wind started to head me slightly. Also, the navigation lights were starting to dim. So I ran the engine for a couple of hours. By four in the morning I was rolling out more jib to make the most of a failing wind, but by six the wind had come very light and southerly, and I was motor-tacking, still 35 miles short of the Longships. It was also cloudy, with a little rain. But the tide started to come fair, at least until midday.

It was two in the afternoon before I rounded the Longships, and came on a dead run to the Runnelstone buoy, and thereafter to clear the Lizard. I had a preventer rigged, and to maintain reasonable speed I kept the engine going at reduced revs. I had carried out an open-can refuel off Land's End, not the easiest thing in a rolling sea. By now, the wind was coming northwest, and as it freshened I was able to shut down the engine, and even took a couple of rolls in the jib.

Off the Lizard, I saw my first whale for many years – a pilot or killer, I suppose, about 25 to 30 feet long and heading west.

The weather brightened up, with curious baguette-shaped cloud formations. Having given the Lizard a wide berth to avoid both shoals and

the wind shadow, I progressively luffed up for marks off Black Head, the Manacles and finally Falmouth Harbour. We were sailing fast, in smooth water, but that last 15 miles seemed to take forever. I was racing the daylight, too: dusk was falling as I turned into the Penryn River, and, as I had anticipated, I had difficulty in locating the Visitors' Yacht Haven – indeed, I gave up looking and picked up a vacant mooring off the town instead. I had been busy and awake for 40 hours. Anyway, it saved me a night's marina charge. I cooked myself a very late dinner, tinned steak and kidney pie, and turned in after midnight.

I woke at nine, and having breakfasted, cast off my mooring. In daylight, I noticed that the pick-up buoy was marked "Royal Cornwall Yacht Club ~~Visitors Mooring~~ Private Keep Off", to the last two words of which I take strong exception. If the mooring occupies what would otherwise be a natural anchorage, then others are fully entitled to use it while the owner is away, since they cannot anchor on foul ground.

I motored over to the marina, and as on my previous visit, slotted myself into a barely long-enough space. After that, a much-needed shower, followed by shopping and a pub lunch. I spent an absorbing three hours in the afternoon at the new Maritime Museum, and was only kicked out when they closed. Strongly recommended, but as details of the exhibition are available from many other sources I won't dwell on them here.

## DARTMOUTH AND HOME

The forecast for the morning of Monday 28 July was south-westerly Force 4 to 5, increasing 6 to 7 for a time. It proved to be accurate, although I was somewhat dismissive of the 6 to 7 in the light of recent experience. Anyway, I was off at 06.15 hours, shortly after an adjacently-moored yacht of similar size, obviously bound (for tidal reasons) in the same general direction. Having set all plain sail, I cleared St Anthony Head, and had breakfast. The wind initially was south-south-west or even south, Force 3, and remained constant in direction while slowly increasing in strength over the day – a good sailing breeze. The sun made some unsuccessful attempts



to break through the overcast. We sped along at 5 ½ to 6 knots, and I soon overtook the other yacht and left her far behind.

Shortly after lunch, having rolled in some jib, I decided that a reef in the main would be prudent as I approached Prawle and Start Points, where a "puff up" could be expected. I had rigged a preventer earlier in the day when rolling in a lighter wind, and it certainly proved handy as I came off the wind, rounding Start Point fairly wide and heading across Start Bay towards the Dart entrance. There were quite a few yachts about, mostly inshore of the Skerries.

Coming up to the river entrance in thick drizzle, with the wind dead aft, a fair swell and the leading lights (at five o'clock) not yet lit, I was glad that I had been this way many times before. Once in the river, I rolled up the jib, and rounded up to stow the main. As on the outward voyage, I had reserved a berth by mobile, [at Kingswear] and was happy that I would be coming into it upwind and uptide, less happy about "port side to". I put a couple of fenders out to starboard as well.

It was blowing hard now, and as I entered the berth expecting to be blown on rather than off, an eddy caught the bow, and I was lucky to make the pontoon with two warps in hand. I still had a fendered contact with the X332 on the adjacent finger. I was very thankful to have got in when I did, and not half an hour later, when the wind was really howling up the river – 25 knots in the marina, and wet with it.

The rain continued without intermission for 24 hours. The morning forecast was not good for the long leg across Lyme Bay, with the threat of a gale in Wight later. I decided to hang on for the day, and amused myself by taking a steam train ride to Paignton for lunch (I can't honestly recommend Paignton for this or indeed any other purpose) and a ferry ride to Dartmouth in the afternoon. I love Dartmouth, even in the rain, but was driven indoors to a second-hand bookshop, and also the most amazing collection of junk and old books in the former St Barnabas's Church near Bayards Cove.

Because of the all-pervading damp in the boat, I shorted out the faulty thermostat on my fan heater so that I could run it continuously under manual control (no, this is not inherently dangerous – trust me, I'm an engineer). It wouldn't do to leave it on unattended in a small closed room or boat, but there is a thermal cut-out on the element if the worst came to the worst.

My plan for the next day, Wednesday 30 July, was to leave very early and make for Studland rather than Weymouth. And so it worked out. I left Dartmouth as soon as it was light enough to see what I was doing, and shortly after a short but nasty rain squall – about 04.50 hours. After a short spell of motoring, I was able to shake the reef out of the main, and set the genoa.

We made very good progress across Lyme Bay with a fair tide and a wind that tended to be dead aft, Force 3 to 4 mostly. Breakfast was cooked and eaten, reefs were taken in and shaken out as the wind puffed up or eased, and by noon I was close enough to Portland Bill to receive a phone call from John Skillicorn, a fellow CCRC member, with another call an hour later from a boat-work client.

The Bill was passed at 13.30, still with a fair tide; but as I headed up for Anvil Point, it turned foul to the extent of two to three knots, and the wind fell lighter. There was nothing for it but to motor. It was still a slow haul past Lulworth, Worbarrow and St Alban's Head. Anvil Point was rounded at six o'clock, and we came on the wind for Handfast Point. I was at least able to stop the engine then, and finally came to an anchorage in Studland Bay under sail only. The wind here was initially northwest, giving a certain amount of chop, but the anchor held firm. As the evening wore on, the wind backed to west, and diminished. I was surprised by the number of yachts anchored there on a Thursday evening. However, a few of them left at dusk, possibly because of the chop. I set a riding light, cooked a meal and turned in.

I was up with the 05.35 forecast, which promised westerlies of Force 3 to 4, and soon weighed anchor under sail to a light zephyr, which gave me three to four knots. As I headed east, I stowed the anchor in the locker, not expecting to need it again on this voyage. Speed fell to three knots south of Bournemouth, and I started the engine as I set course for the North Head buoy. It was grey, but drizzle was sporadic and light. I was passed by a small tug towing a large lighter.

I wish I could have finished the trip with a cracking good sail up the Solent, but it was not to be. Once through Hurst Narrows, the water was as flat as a mirror, apart from tidal ripples. I carried a good tide with me, passing the brig Stavros S. Niarchos, which (I learned later) was making for Gunwharf Quay, Portsmouth, with a young multinational crew, as the finale of a goodwill voyage organised by the parents of a young man tragically killed in the Bali bomb outrage.

This was also my first opportunity to view (from seaward) the Spinnaker Tower, then at or near its full height, but still awaiting the spinnaker bows. I was through the Dolphin Passage by 11.20, and took lunch approaching the Chichester Bar beacon. And so, with the last of the flood, up to Northney, where I topped up the tank and cans to departure level, to give me a total fuel consumption for the voyage of 194 litres (42.7 UK gallons). Distance logged was 1,455 NM.

To summarise: An interesting trip, particularly up the west coast of Ireland, not over-blessed with fair winds or weather, but it could have been worse. And I managed to keep to my deadline – 31 July – for arriving home. Just.

**Don't miss the CCRC 2004 prizegiving dinner and dance at the Langstone Hotel, Northney, on Saturday 20 November.**

**18.30 for 19.15. Black tie.**

## **Une affaire francaise - a boat called L'Aquarelle**

**by Keith Feltham**

**Part 2 of this story describes how Keith brought L'Aquarelle back to the UK from the Mediterranean through the French canals. His first article, in our Autumn 2002 issue, described how he flew to Marseilles on impulse to view and possibly buy a Contessa 32, fell in love with it, but nearly walked away when he found it had osmosis.**

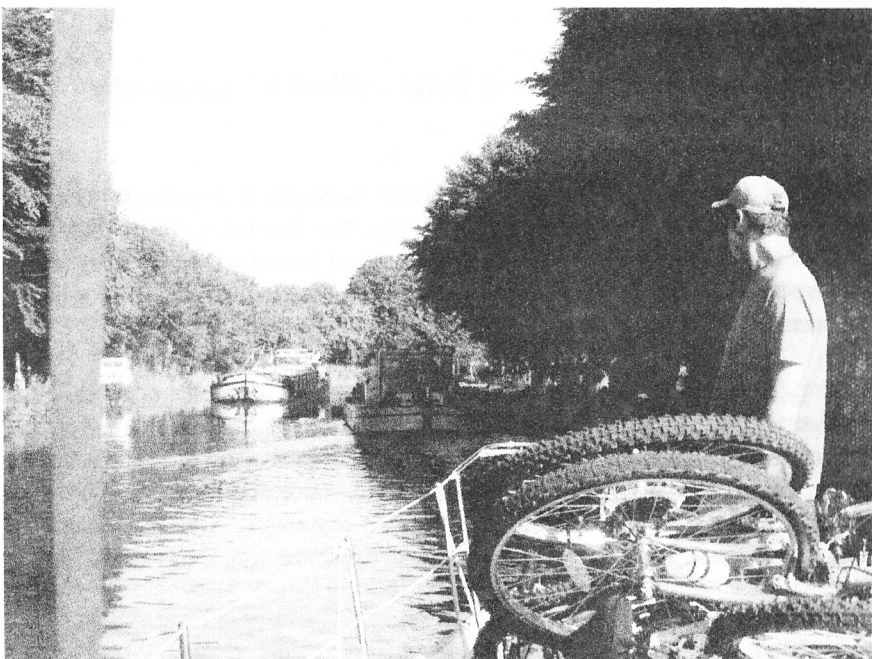
Having bought L'Aquarelle near Marseille at the mouth of the Rhone on 4 February 2002, Richard and I had returned in early March and taken the first steps towards home by stemming the flow in the lower reaches of the Rhone past Arles and Avignon in the south, Montelimar and Valence in the Ardeche, towards Lyon where we intended leaving L'Aquarelle until we returned in June. It had taken a week and a half to reach Condrieu, 41km from Lyon.

### **Stage 2 – Lyon to Paris**

My wife Pam joined us for this next leg through central France to Paris. We had booked our flights through Ryanair for £15 each plus taxes. At the last moment Mary, one of Pam's tennis partners, decided to join us for part of the journey.

The stay in les Roches de Condrieu had cost £23 a week in a lovely little marina with toilets, showers and capitainerie, overlooking the boats for security. Condrieu is famous for its bargee tradition and, in the area of the suspension bridge, reminds you of a small Mediterranean harbour.

Staying overnight, Tuesday 4 June, in a Formula 1 hotel (Euro 23 per room) with breakfast for Euro 3.4, all our travel arrangements were made on the internet. We stayed the next night on the boat in Condrieu and left in overcast skies at 10.00 in the morning, arriving in Lyon at 18.00, when we



moored against the lower embankment for the night. We had logged almost 32km, although the Navicarte indicated that it was 41km; my log was obviously under reading. We now transferred from Le Rhone, which branched east towards Geneva, to La Saone, a much quieter and smaller scale river with less awe inspiring locks.

Our target for the next three weeks, including stops to find the odd television set to watch England's World Cup matches, was 40km per day. We needed to cover 752km (467miles) and negotiate 157 locks !

We explored Lyon by bike, stocking up on victuals, and then we mapped out Mary's return trip by train. We aimed to disembark her at Belleville, although the river wall was cambered, or Port de Thoissey, from where she could walk 2km to the nearby station.

The next day we headed for the famous French restaurant of Paul Bocuse at Collonges, for lunch. A set lunch for £65? I'm not sure that I would have got in dressed in such style. So, Richard and I decided to find a bar to watch England's first world cup match and the girls dined in style on board in the company of two fly fishermen. [See photo below].



After helping the restaurant's doorman to park an expensive car he posed with us for a picture, to prove that we had visited. We left Paul Bocuse's landing stage and moored for the night in a disused lock by a campsite – Marina Petite Rive. Walking along the river, we were spoilt for several restaurants, and arriving early we had the choice of tables. The menu was typically French and we engaged the few other early customers by asking what "grenouille" was. There were ladies hopping about the restaurant

before we guessed, frog's legs. Pam and I had them for the first and last time!

The weather had improved and we set off early. Lunch at Thoissey, which is 5-10km from the Beaujolais vineyards, after which Pam and Mary biked to the nearby station. They returned having found out that "the train today does not stop here". A quick recalculation, we could make Macon, a further 17km, before Mary's train left later that afternoon. Dropping her and Pam off on the sloping wall designed for massive barges, nose to – it is a good thing that the Contessa 32 has a raking stem, enabling us to approach the bank at 90° and overcome the shallows (or in this case the sloping stone embankment) whilst keeping the keel in deeper water. Mary bought her ticket and still had time to spare but we weren't to know of the terrible journey she had back to Lyon airport, getting lost and missing her accommodation for the night.

We travelled 3km further, just north of Macon, and moored in the Port de Plaisance on the edge of a large pond area. It was Saturday and the French were promenading. Pam was looking forward to a nice shower but the pebble that the capitaine had lodged to keep the door open, had later that evening been moved and she could not gain entry. In fact nothing was open, no diesel, no supermarket. It was sad losing one of the crew and we were feeling even lower as everything was closed.

Leaving early on the 9 June we had breakfast and lunch on the hoof. With only one lock, just north of Tournus at Ormes (only 2.6m lift, very different from the massive locks of the Rhone), we achieved 84km in 10hrs, which gave us one day in the bag against our target. At Chalon sur Saone we passed the first canal branch, the Canal du Centre, an alternative route to Paris but not said to be as scenic, linking into the Loire Valley or the Canal du Nivernais, which is too shallow for a Contessa 32.

We moored at a pontoon with many tourist boats at Verdun, a picturesque small stop just off the main river on Le Doubs. We left first thing without anyone asking for payment, but then there were no facilities except awful

public loos. There was a convenient small supermarche for all our culinary needs. Our next ecluse (lock) at Ecuelles was a little bigger and the keeper was concerned about Pam and Richard being too close to the edge having climbed up the ladder with the ropes. We stopped for diesel and lunch at the major waterways junction St Jean de Losne where the Saone, and Bourgogne, and Rhone-Rhine meet. It is the regional capital of the inland navigation and a major centre for nautical assistance, chandlery, mechanics, et al, which we were to appreciate when we returned much later.

Having filled up with fuel, we were underway after lunch in fine weather and looking forward to branching onto the real canal network, finally venturing into very rural France. It was between Heuilley and Pontailler 40 km north, where we would find the start of the Canal de la Marne a la Saone. However, the old Petter engine started to play up as we had just passed through the locks at Auxonne, and, after a splutter or two, it stopped momentarily. It started again easily but the stops began to become more frequent until we decided that we should return to St Jean de Losne and take advantage of their extensive marine engineering facilities. We pumped up the dinghy and sprung it alongside so that we could continue with it and the outboard if the diesel finally gave up. I had not tried the outboard, a relatively new Honda 4 stroke, but with only a little easing of the throttle with WD40 it was working OK and pushed us through the very slack water with ease.

Tuesday 11 June and an excellent engineer went right through the fuel system to find a hairline fissure on the inside turn of a flexible hose that was taking in air as the engine mounts moved. It is not easy working on a Contessa engine after the space in a barge and we learnt several French swear words. We were on our way again just after 3.00 pm and made Auxonne, once more passing the same lock keeper for the third time. It was Richard's birthday and he was able to celebrate with a shower!

08.30 in the morning and England were playing Nigeria. We found a sports bar and le patron went out to fetch us fresh croissant whilst we watched the



pre-match build up. Several coffees and a few beers later the score was 0-0, but England were through to the next round. Before we left le patron insisted on buying us a round of drinks. Pam's was strawberry something, very nice, that time of the morning. Richard and I continued with the lagers.

We were now travelling through the Champagne-Ardenne region, and the lock operating times were generally between 08.00-18.00. Other systems were fully automatic with the boat detected on radar as one approached. Sometimes we had to go back to activate the radar but once the traffic lights turned green it was OK to enter. There were then two poles, one red and one blue, at the centre point of the lock, one for emergencies and one to signify that it was alright for the lock to close and the sequence to continue.

Availability of water was becoming scarce and we had been rationing it for washing. L'Aquarelle had a flexible tank in the forepeak and with a little changing of pipework I made it serviceable. It was great to be able to wash again and the tank proved to be invaluable as the days got hotter and the water points less and less frequent.

We were now rising towards the watershed into the next valley at Balesmes-sur-Marne and the locks were at 15mins to 30mins intervals. We had our own lock keeper who travelled on their (usually her) moped from lock to lock. The canal depth was worrying and on several sections the engine was straining to push us through the bottom silt. We stopped at Blagny-sur-Vingeanne by tying up to the bank and we went off by bike to explore the nearby villages. But before that the lock keeper arranged what time we wanted to start the next day.

Usually beginning at 08.00 and stopping for lunch between about 11.30 and 13.15, with time to do some shopping in nearby villages, we motored on through ever-changing wild, wooded and even rocky countryside. In one village in the garage behind one of the houses was a bakery that served the surrounding area. When I arrived they had sold most items, as they

were made to order, but they had some fresh bread. I was told off by Pam when I returned to the boat because I did not also buy the last two quiches, although there were three of us. Pam and Richard thought that as skipper I could have graciously declined to have one.

Our food on board to date had been pretty basic. At the next lock Piepape, there was a small shop with local delicacies, potted meats and fresh veg. We had entered the lock and the automatic sequence was underway. This time the lock opened automatically as we were detected approaching by radar. Once in the lock there were two poles at the mid point on the side of the lock, one red and one blue. We tied up and raised the blue pole to start the automatic sequence.

Pam had taken some time pondering over the delights in the shop and a warning bell sounded. Instead of making our exit, we stayed put and waited for Pam. We then activated the lock sometime after the warning bell. This obviously upset the sequence. The lock stopped midway, with both gates closed and we were stuck until help arrived. However, the chilled wine from the shop was some considerable consolation in the middle of the day.

Friday 14 June we arrived at the top of our climb and the 3½ mile (4,820m) Balesmes tunnel. It was the one place where the radar controlled lights did not appear to work. As we approached, there was no end in sight. It would take us almost one hour to motor through the tiny tunnel, with no passing spaces. In the centre you could see neither end! Our fingers were crossed, hoping that the engine would behave. Relief showed on Richard's face at the other end,

We stopped that night at Langres, where we played boules in the cool of the evening and showered under a hosepipe.

From there we were going downhill and the locks would be full of water as we approached and the lock gates not as visible from afar.

The following day we were travelling in company for once, with a motor cruiser, and I may have overused the revs so as not to hold back the cruiser - because a water hose went on the engine. It was right at the end of the day and we stopped for the night to effect repairs. I taped up the bend with every type of tape on board.

Over the next few days we stopped again to watch England lose 1-2 to Brazil.

### Crew Register

Many of our skippers are looking 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. Please fill in this form and send it to Hugh Caldwell, 3 North Close, Wade Court, Havant, Hants., PO9 2TE.

Name .....

Address.....

Age.....Previous sailing experience.....

Telephone Home.....

Office.....

E-mail .....

## Chichester Cruiser Racing Club

### Application for Membership

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone (day).....(evening).....

E-mail.....

Occupation.....

Name of yacht .....

*(Please note multihulls are not eligible)*

Class.....Sail number.....

Where moored .....

Membership of other yacht clubs .....

My cheque for £50 (full member) or £15 (crew member) is enclosed to cover my subscription for one year. I understand this will be returned if I am not elected.

Signature.....Date.....

Please send this form to the Secretary: Pam Marrs, 42 Bracklesham Road, Hayling Island, Hants PO11 9SJ.

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