



CCRC NEWS

Autumn 2006



the journal of
Chichester Cruiser Racing Club

CHICHESTER CRUISER RACING CLUB

Officers 2006

Telephone

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Commodore: Rob McLeod e-mail – ramcleodco@aol.com | 020 8998 4443 |
| Vice Commodore: Brian Dandridge e-mail – brian.dandridge@btinternet.com | 01273 846132 |
| Secretary: Pam Marrs e-mail – pammy@pam.marrs.name | 023 9246 8885 |
| Treasurer: Andy Reynolds e-mail – andrew.reynolds@talk21.com | 01903 775067 |
| Assistant Sailing Secretaries: | |
| Peter Wallace e-mail – prwallace@btinternet.com | 01483 721563 |
| Guy McBride e-mail – guymcbride@btinternet.com | 023 9246 7735 |
| Patrick Marshall e-mail – patrick@ingenysis.wye.net.co.uk | 023 9245 0635 |
| Race results & handicapping: Pat Morrell e-mail – patandsue@lineone.net | 01273 845107 |
| Crew Register: Hugh Caldwell e-mail – hacaldwell@hotmail.com | 023 9247 3000 |
| Webmaster: Bob Garrett e-mail – bobgarrett@homenetworks.co.uk | 01235 535148 |
| Website: www.cerc.co.uk | |
| Editor CCRC News: John Dunkley e-mail – john.dunkley@rya-online.net | 020 8399 5993 |

Cover picture: The CCRC cruise in Honfleur (Photo: Brian Dandridge)

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Commodore's foreword

Welcome to the autumn edition of CCRC News for 2006.

I find this a bit of a depressing time as the season closes and the laying up process begins. No more racing for six months!

The season has flown by with more than our fair share of bad weather which started with the cruise which nearly never was. The CCRC is, however, made of stern stuff. We got there and the full report is inside.

I am sure you will share my admiration for Ed Holmes who recounts his trials in the Med. How much bad luck and test of character can one person take?

This is a really bumper edition of CCRC News, thanks in the main to Brian Dandridge, who cajoled all the writers into preparing race reports each weekend. It really was worth the effort. Any reports not included in this edition of CCRC News can be enjoyed on the website under 'Programme.'

The club welcomes new members and anyone interested should contact Pam Marrs or visit our website on www.ccrcc.co.uk

Good reading

Robert McLeod

Don't miss the CCRC annual meeting at Chichester YC at 10.30 for 11.00 on Saturday 4 November or the prizegiving dinner and dance at 18.30 for 19.00 until midnight at the Langstone Hotel on Saturday 11 November.

Will "casualties" please stand up?

CCRC CRUISE NEWS

by Bob and Sue Garrett (*Intrepid*)

Got there!

Despite meticulous planning, the eagerly awaited 2006 CCRC cruise to France was in doubt right up to the scheduled departure date — and beyond. The series of depressions queuing up across the Atlantic for the May bank holiday weekend was something no-one could plan for. Yet the cruise took place with nearly all the boats booked taking part—and what a cruise! Despite the weather, all the planned events except the initial race took place and only one shower spoilt one party.

The months before the cruise were spent by Tom and Denise Bitchener considering potential ports to visit, checking out restaurants and negotiating entertainments. Soon after the schedule was announced some 22 boats and 85 people had booked to join the cruise and participate in the activities.

The cruise was to commence, as usual, with a race starting at 10.00 on Friday 21 May from Chi to a point outside Le Havre. Some yachts decided early on not to join the race but to cruise over, leaving earlier in the morning with their less experienced crew or to arrive in daylight.

Indecision

A week before the start the weather was poor and the outlook equally bad—indeed, all races were cancelled the weekend before. Discussions started by telephone and on the CCRC website about what the weather might be for the departure day. It seemed that no matter which weather website was consulted the outlook was poor with high winds forecast. A look at the Met Office pressure charts showed depression after

depression queuing across the Atlantic keen to thwart our plans and the race was cancelled as it became clear that getting to France was a bigger challenge than how fast it could be achieved.

With a scheduled departure of Friday morning many skippers and crews were on their boats on Thursday making final preparations—and, ironically, Thursday was calm, sunny and even warm. However, the forecast for Friday was poor; prompting further telephone conversations and even discussions over VHF radio from boat to boat. It was clear that a Friday morning departure was off and agreement was made to consult again the next day. Such discussions took a turn for the better when it was agreed that many would meet in The Ship public house on Friday lunchtime.

It's On

Debate in the pub considered that there might be a weather window in the early part of Saturday but each skipper had to make his own decision. Favourite was to leave around 2am on Saturday morning. *Sycorax* and *Gunshot* decided to leave for Portsmouth that afternoon to avoid crossing Chichester bar in what might be difficult conditions on the Saturday. Others preferred to leave a bit later, either because of the bar or other "access" restrictions.

On Friday night the weather abated and so in the early hours of Saturday most of the CCRC fleet left for France. *Denecia*, *Penrose* and *Arcadia* left later the same morning. A few boats with some less experienced or more junior crew either left and turned back or remained at their berth as the weather was still not good, with periods of wind up to F6. But most joined up with the fleet later in the week.

The Crossing

The crossing was "exciting" to say the least, with F6 winds, waves to

match and even fog. The skippers and crews had their work cut out to sail safely but regular contact between boats by VHF comparing weather, shipping traffic and positions was reassuring. All the boats arrived safely, though some had adventures on the way

"Casualties"

Arcadia arrived during the night, courtesy of the French rescue services with Martin and Andrew plus friend Richard relieved of an 800 euros 'donation' due to the failure of their engine in the last stages of their approach to Le Havre. *L'Aquarelle* meanwhile, had also achieved an assisted entry but the tow was from *Gunshot*. A weld on the companionway of *Arwen* gave way so the crew had to take bigger steps in and out of the boat—good exercise! *Gunshot* discovered a diesel fuel leak and *Slipstream*'s Autohelm and (worse?) CD player failed. *Delfini*, pretty as a picture while entering Honfleur, was 'sans' her wind vane. The crew watched it spinning up and down the aerial during the journey—then finally abandon ship by taking off on its own vertical passage. *Green Pepper* found sea-water rising inside their boat during the passage and had to start pumping to keep the level down. A faulty stern gland was diagnosed once in port and Hugh solved the problem. *Denecia* modified a French yacht's stanchions to make their mark on arrival— but at least they did not get a puncture! And finally *Intrepid* was ordered downwind of the fleet when her heads would not empty due to a broken valve. So the list goes on. At the cruise dinner a toast was proposed to all who had broken something on their boat during the week. It looked like everyone stood up!

Intrepidation

New owners of *Intrepid*, Bob and Sue, plus past CCRC cruise participant Claire, stoically set out at 02.00 on Saturday morning and met the Force 6 conditions head on (well on the beam actually). With one crew member never having crossed the Channel in anything smaller

than the *Val de Loire* and Claire being unaccustomed to sailing with so much technology, Bob was left to skipper, helm and navigate. As conditions worsened, Sue took the helm to allow Bob to play with the boy's toys, watching the radar, chatting on the VHF with the rest of the fleet and checking the course. But just a little later Sue and Claire were alarmed to see Bob fly across the saloon as the boat slid off a wave. Having taken off from the chart table seat, Bob landed on the cooker. Fortunately, Bob was made of stronger stuff than the cooker so it fared worse by being torn off its gimbals! Bob survived to skipper the rest of the journey and brought *Intrepid* into Le Havre the last of the first group. Repairs to the cooker, one of many casualties of that passage, were successfully undertaken with the aid of glue from *Gunshot* and screws from *Arcadia* (Quote "I need a long screw" was heard at one point!), plus advice from many.

Late Lunch

The cruise schedule, so ably created by Denise and Tom then almost ruined by the weather, called for the "cruisers" to meet for Saturday lunch in the Restaurant of Le Havre Yacht Club. The delayed departure prevented this but most still gathered for dinner in the same venue on the Saturday evening. The menu was the same but with an extra course — and excellent fare it was too. Indeed, it was an ideal accompaniment for easing the relaxing exchange of passage stories — aided by some liquid lubrication.

On to bon Honfleur

On Sunday it was time to move on to beautiful Honfleur, where we could raft up in the very centre of the port. The busy French weekend and the number of boats due to leave meant a bit of a wait between the lock and the bridge into the town—but convivial relaxation was the order of the day. Then the charming harbour master (? mistress) arrived to escort the fleet in. With so many boats all flying CCRC flags quite a

crowd gathered to watch us arrive. Or were they just waiting for the bridge to open again?

Boules competition

Honfleur was the venue for the annual CCRC Boules competition, which despite the large number of entrants was skilfully organised by *Green Pepper*. The French passers-by looked on in amazement, and even stopped to watch, as "les rosbifs" played some unknown variation of their traditional sport. After a number of heats organised in groups, the finalists and semi-finalists decided with team-*Intrepid* and team-*Carisma* as finalists. Team *Intrepid* which included Sue, Bob, Claire and Glenn (from *Denecia*) lost 2 games to 1 in a tense match to *Carisma*; congratulations to Rita and Martin plus Denise and Tom (also from *Denecia*).

The boat party and rain dance

Once in Deauville, Peter, Di, Colin and Ed moved the cruise into serious party mode with a blast inviting toute le monde to drinks on *Gunshot*. The sangria flowed, the nibbles were passed round and out came the guitars. This was how it was meant to be; and we began to forget the weather. But the weather had not forgotten us — a cloud as serious as our party mode loomed but never fear! Who was it who said "it's not coming our way"? And who said "there's no rain in those clouds"? As the dancing started the clouds came our way and we were obviously holding a rain dance because down came the rain along with the wind. But did it break up the party? Yes!

Kite flying

Deauville has a vast smooth beach and with the strong winds still blowing what better a location for some kite flying.

Oyster party

Wednesday night decided to give us a weather window when the wind dropped and it actually felt warm. *Sycorax* and *Penrose III* spent the afternoon preparing delicious snacks and making Pimms and the oysters were purchased from the local fish market. A table was set up for Bill, who spent the evening with bucket and knife opening oysters for all. Brian, as Vice Commodore, acted as both host and master of ceremonies.

Ball games

Due to a late tea break, the *Intrepid* reporters missed the ricket match (a cross between cricket and rounders) on the beach. However, it was reported that after the 'in' team were all out, and the 'out' team came in and then went out again, one team won and the other team came second. Unfortunately, the *Intrepid* reporters were also not involved in the golf tournament, preferring the nineteenth hole—but the two days on which the golfing took place were reportedly much enjoyed by the participants.

The Driftwood Challenge

The driftwood challenge presented something of a problem as the Deauville beach was remarkably clean! Still resourcefulness and creativity saw them through. But *Green Pepper's* artistic design capsized on launch, while *Arcadia's* boat with its bright blue spinnaker gybed to starboard then to port and raced off on its own course—not towards the finishing line. It was a race to the finish between *Gunshot*, *Penrose III* senior and *Penrose III* junior plus *The Harribelle* (sailing upside-down!). *Gunshot's* elegant catamaran had speed but little sense of direction—one minute racing forward, the next broadside to the course. *Penrose III* senior's GRP (giant recycled plastic) boat was a consistent player only once drifting off course, while *The Harribelle*

achieved stability through its unique "turtle" stance. Meanwhile, *Gunshot* and *Penrose III* junior fought a close race for third place. In the end it was *Penrose III* senior which took line honours followed by *The Harribelle*, then *Penrose III* junior.

A night at the races?

The final night's dinner was held at "The Yearling", a Bib Gourmand restaurant at Deauville race course. It seemed they had opened just for us—or maybe we put off the other potential diners! Despite its English name the staff spoke little English, so Peter Wallace ably assisted the waitress to take our orders for the excellent meal that was to come. After the meal speeches were expected but first came the toasts! "To all those who crossed the channel single-handed or might as well have done" - and many stood! "To all who broke something on the passage" - nearly all stood! Brian, as Vice Commodore, commenced the speeches with thanks to Denise and Tom for all their hard work in arranging, then organising each part of the cruise. Tom, on behalf of himself and Denise, thanked everyone for joining in and Peter for his lingual assistance. Tom and Denise also announced the results of the various competitions including the unique "Wood Quiz", which was won by *The Harribelle* and the prize was collected by Charlotte. And finally Jacky thanked the restaurant for the excellent meal.

Whistling for a wind on the day of the big drift Races 10, 11 and 12 on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 June by John Dunkley (*Marigold*)

Don't believe what the ancient mariners tell you about whistling for a wind. It doesn't work. At least it certainly didn't work for *Marigold* on the day of the big drift. Like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner "who stoppeth one of three" we whistled until we were hoarse and the sea

breeze took not a blind bit of notice. It was the third race of CCRC's summer mini-series on Sunday 11 June and there were three crews whistling away without much effect on *Blue Tango*, *Samurai* and *Marigold*. Each of us needed to win the race to take the Beta fleet trophy, the Mons Meg Ditty Box, and we weren't about to give up any time soon.

Three is supposed to be a lucky number. Don't believe that either. As the three of us drifted slowly backwards on the tide, having got within a mile of the third mark, we listened without much hope to a succession of retirement messages on Channel 72. One by one the Alpha fleet were calling Steve Westbrook, the Race Officer on Committee Boat *Gunrunner*, to admit defeat. Boats like *Gunshot* and *Sycorax*, which had been thundering along like express trains in Saturday's Force 5-6 and choppy seas, were facing up to the inevitable. The only way they were going to get back to Chi, where Steve had conveniently shortened course, was under engine. Even the sprightly *Jo Jo Gunne*, whose blue asymmetric spinnaker had carried her round most of Saturday's marks in front of her heavier rivals to claim two firsts, eventually had to resort to her iron tops'l. The stately *Mikado* was determined not to be the last to go. She made a valiant attempt to show that elegant, well-bred old ladies of a certain age are hard to persuade that there is an easier option. She finished.

Meanwhile, the three Beta drifters in the shipping lane watched like frightened rabbits facing a large fox as the big Brittany Ferries car transporter rapidly approached them on her way into Portsmouth. We quickly altered course to the north, taking us unhelpfully away from our next mark and out of the way of the ferry. It wasn't until the big Brittany gave five blasts on her siren that we looked behind us and saw an even larger container ship coming in the opposite direction on her way out to the Nab. *Samurai*, which was slightly ahead of the other two, would have been the first to take the impact, and skipper John Lanham took a sensible seamanlike decision and started his engine to

get clear. Fortunately, the big B altered course sufficiently to clear *Blue Tango* and *Marigold*, as well as the container ship, but we were tossed mercilessly about in her massive wake.

After that it was back to our gentle sternward drift. On *Marigold* we tried having lunch on the principle that it always blows harder when you think you have a quiet moment for a bite and a noggin. (Isn't it odd that the beer out of the can foams up even when it hasn't been seriously tossed about? Perhaps it was a froth-over from Saturday!) It didn't work. We had a leisurely lunch and the beer was marvellously refreshing in the searing heat. But still no wind.

Then the high speed ferry from Cherbourg to Portsmouth came speeding up the shipping lane and tossed us about again. That was enough for *Samurai*. She fired up her engine, downed sails and set off for home. *Blue Tango* followed suit shortly afterwards. Aboard *Marigold* we watched another yacht far out to sea apparently heeling to a modest breeze. "The sea breeze is coming", I said hopefully. "She's probably motor sailing," said Stewart, my crew. Soon afterwards we listened to the following conversation on the vhf as *Samurai* notified Steve of her retirement. "Have you seen anything of *Blue Tango* and *Marigold*?" asked Steve. "Yes. When we left them they were drifting slowly backwards in the direction of Ryde", said John. We were now 55 minutes short of the time limit and about four miles from Chi. We got the message. "Gunrunner this is Marigold. We're hoarse from whistling for a wind. We're going to motor home. Thank you for waiting for us."

We motored past Chi two minutes before the 15.00 time limit. Out to sea yachts were tacking in a freshening southerly breeze!

In contrast, and in spite of the fresh to strong easterly wind on Saturday morning, no yachts had reached the starting line at WE for the first race by the scheduled 10.30 and Commodore Rob McLeod, doing Race

Officer duty on *Sareema*, wisely postponed for about 15 minutes. Vice Commodore Brian Dandridge sailed by in *Sycorax* and upset my equilibrium by asking me to do a race report just as my mouth was chomping on a delicious marmalade bun. Who does he think I am, I said to myself, Paddington Bear? I made a note to complain to Aunt Lucy about the unusual behaviour of the English.

We had decided an inshore tack would be a clever move to minimise the effect of the adverse tide in the shallower water and almost hit the Committee Boat as we started. Rob had sent us on a beat to Chi and *Marigold* made good progress hitting five to six knots under blade and a heavily reefed main. Starboard tack gave a smoother ride over the choppy seas and port tack brought some uncomfortable pounding across the waves. But *Hoopoe* and *Samurai* did even better, having started on the same tack but going out to sea long before we did, and rounded the mark in front. Being somewhat under canvassed for the broad reach to Winner we were resigned to losing ground and were surprised when *Marigold* made several attempts to surf at seven knots. There followed a beat to Hard, a reach to Chi, another broad reach to WE, a beat to Chi and a final downwind leg to the finish at WE. We were the last boat to finish and were surprised when Pam Marrs announced at the barbecue at Northney in the evening that *Marigold* had been second on handicap, with *Samurai* a well deserved first.

Saturday's second race was run back to back with the first and the wind was even stronger. Another beat against the tide from WE to Chi with a broad reach to Dean Elbow. We had gybed round the buoy with some care and were just hardening up when *Markova* came rushing in at great speed from seaward and charged in at the mark forcing us to bear away sharply to avoid a collision. In this particular Swan lake we felt a bit like a tiny flower being stamped on by the prima ballerina and informed her that we would protest. Shaken, we hoisted flag B on the starboard shroud and drew it to the attention of the Race Officer as we crossed the line at Chi, where he had wisely decided to shorten course to allow the

boats to get safely over the turbulent bar while there was still plenty of depth. *Marigold* and *Samurai* finished close together and we were pleased to be told by Pam later at the barbecue that we had another second, with *Blue Tango* first and *Samurai* third. Our crossness faded as we were entertained to some soothing music by Brian Dandridge, Peter Wallace and Ian Buxton, CCRC's very own excellent group of guitarists and songsters. *Markova*'s skipper came to apologise for the near collision, saying he had thought there was room for them to get between us and the mark, and said they would retire from the race. We shook hands on it.

Then there was the problem of getting all *Marigold*'s knickers in a big twist when we tried to hoist the spinnaker on the Sunday. We succeeded in getting it under the bow where it was acting as a water brake, being pushed back by the tide. But that's another story. Perhaps *Samurai* will tell it in all its gory detail as she had a full view of the cock-up as she closed up and passed us from behind!

An Alpha perspective

Summer Series - 10 and 11 June

by Brian Dandridge (*Sycorax*)

The weekend of the 10 and 11 June saw the running of the second of CCRC's three race mini-series with two short races on the Saturday and one longer race on the Sunday. Turnout was a little disappointing bearing in mind the great weather we had had all through the week and the weekend itself – clear blue skies and good winds.

On Saturday we had apparent winds around 20 knots which gave challenging and enjoyable sailing. Our Commodore performed a great job running both races before handing over to the Race Officer for Sunday – *Gunrunner*.

The forecast for Sunday was light and variable winds but with the real warmth in the sunshine I think we were all expecting a sea-breeze to fill in in the afternoon. Unfortunately this was not to happen, at least not whilst we were out there.

After the two Saturday races *Sycorax* was lying in third place in the series behind *Jo Jo Gunne* and *Gunshot* – 1st and 2nd respectively. We were going to be relatively lightly crewed for this third race so I was relieved that the wind had dropped from the day before. The Alpha fleet consisted of just five boats – the three already mentioned plus *Mikado*, which had not sailed in the stronger winds the day before, and *Sareema* – our Commodore bringing the family out once more.

The course started at Chi, and then took us out on a long beat to Cambrian wreck mark with a slight dogleg at WE. We would then have to fight the tide down to Dean Elbow before a long reach-run to Chi with some more short legs to follow had there been sufficient wind.

As we milled about preparing to start there was a nice little breeze of around 7 knots so all the boats were sailing comfortably. I confess I made an appalling start as I approached the line too early and had to turn a 360. Unfortunately I timed this completely wrong and we started right at the back with a deficit of about 20 seconds. I was somewhat surprised that all the lead boats headed inshore on port tack as the tide was ebbing and therefore bound to be stronger offshore. After a few minutes following the pack I decided to tack out early because I wasn't going to gain just following the herd and because I felt the tide would then favour us. I was right and as we reached WE we had overtaken *Sareema* and pulled right back on *Gunshot*. Unfortunately there was nothing we could do about *Jo Jo* and

Mikado as they had long gone!

We continued beating out to Cambrian and pulled away from the Commodore, but were pretty equal with Peter Wallace and his crew – sometimes gaining and sometimes losing until we reached the wreck mark right on the transom of the *Moody 38S*. Peter and I both called for our kites and for a few minutes we had a satisfying chase into the tide. Gradually we pulled up alongside *Gunshot* but then the wind died. Behind us *Sareema* was white sailing it and the now very light wind went further and further ahead. Down came the kites, up went our No 1, down came the boat speed and up went the blood pressure! For some twenty minutes we sat there with sails loosely flapping but it was apparent that the tide was now taking us further from the mark.

Sareema was the first to chuck in the towel – probably the kids were giving mum and dad a hard time and would have preferred to be on the beach rather than bobbing around on a boat going nowhere! In the distance, over to the west, we could see a wind line but it wasn't getting any nearer. Peter was the next to call it a day – he knew he couldn't beat Richard for the series and even if I had a good result we wouldn't take second place off him so *Gunshot's* sails were furled away and their engine fired up. We hung on for another five minutes but then decided it would be nice to have lunch back in the marina! I understand *Jo Jo* also retired leaving *Mikado* the only Alpha finisher.

A most enjoyable weekend if a little frustrating at the end!

If you are interested in joining Chichester Cruiser Racing Club either as a yacht owner or crew member please telephone or e-mail the Commodore, Vice Commodore or Secretary, whose names and contact details you will find on page 2.

Almost windless to Lymington

Race 13 to Lymington, Saturday 24 June

By Ian Marks (*Exeat*)

Saturday started with bright sunshine and, for me at least, a bit of a hangover! A quick look at Chimet showed a Force 4 from the south; great. A quick look out of the window seemed to suggest somewhat less wind. In fact when I looked very hard and for a long time I was just able to detect the occasional leaf moving on some of the trees.

Being slightly late at this point, due in part to too much tree watching, I dashed down to Sparkes so as not to keep my crew waiting. No need to worry on that account, he was nowhere in sight. Turning on *Exeat's* instruments, I discovered that my tree watching gave a more accurate wind prediction than Chimet, which must have been broken! My crew duly arrived and we prepared for the first contest of the day, namely a battle of attrition with *Scarlet Jester* to see who was going to slip last. *Exeat* lost this battle and we slipped, closely followed by *Scarlet Jester*, and headed for Chi.

At Chi there were around 10 or 12 boats all milling (or should I say motoring?) around *Arwen*, the committee boat. A fine sight but still unspoilt by any significant breeze. As the appointed start time arrived, the race officer announced that the start was postponed and moved west through Dolphin Passage to Gleeds. So the fleet motored westward in 2-3 knots of breeze. It was at this point that I noticed *Sycorax* seemed to be getting very close to us. No need for that, I thought, there's plenty of room for all the boats. What happened next might serve as a warning to others in future. If you don't want to end up writing the race report and you see *Sycorax* heading towards you before a CCRC race, hide, put the autohelm on and go below, turn around and motor away as

fast as you can, or even just pretend to be very, very busy. Only joking Brian!

On reaching Gleeds there was still only 3-5 knots of breeze, so Jacky announced another postponement and a further move of the start to Burgess Salmon. Hope I've got enough diesel! By the time the fleet had assembled at Burgess Salmon the breeze had filled in a little and with around 5-7 knots from the NE a start line was laid, a course announced and up went the class flags.

Two things I should note here, which are perhaps even more important if you're sailing two handed: READ the sailing instructions and READ the sailing instructions. On *Exeat* we were busy working out where to begin our "timed run with spinnaker up" when we realised that many of the boats had already crossed the line and were heading for Fastnet Insurance (the first mark)! Note to self, READ the sailing instructions: CCRC use the standard ISAF 5:4:1:go starting sequence and not the 10:5:1:go that, for some bizarre reason, I was expecting.

Doh!! *Exeat* made a perfect start, unfortunately 5 minutes and 1 second late! Judging by the other yachts that crossed the line at around the same time, I think this timing error must have been a common mistake! We watched the spinnaker run towards Fastnet Insurance and on to Cowes from towards the back of the fleet in company with *Slipstream* (whose crew seemed to be fashioning a jockey pole by lashing two boat hooks together!), *Mons Meg* and others. In the far distance I saw *JoJo Gunne* round Egypt Point and *Sycorax*, *Mantra* and *Gunshot* all heading inshore to get the tidal lift around Egypt Point. It looked to us, however, that the boats inshore were running into a bit of a wind hole, so we stayed offshore a little. The wind did die to nothing inshore; unfortunately it also died to nothing where we were too. At one point I saw *Gunshot* pointing east, drifting on the tide

without steerageway.

Following a five minute period of absolutely no wind, drifting at up to two knots in roughly the right direction on the tide, a wind line was spotted coming from the west and there were boats heading west close hauled and heeled over. "Quick, get the kite down," I shouted, trying to wake up my crewmate who had gone "off watch" just after the start. With the new wind gusting at times to a healthy 12-14 knots from the WNW the race continued as a fetch to Elephant and then a beat to Berthon. *Exeat* rounded at the rear of the Alpha fleet some way behind *Jo Jo Gunne*, *Sycorax*, *Gunshot*, *Scarlet Jester*, *Mantra* and *Markover* (please forgive me if the order is wrong, you were too far ahead of us to see clearly!). After rounding Berthon it was "spinnaker up" for the short run east to YnglingGirls.com. It was at YnglingGirls.com that *Scarlet Jester* got a serious twist in their spinnaker, which prevented them from getting it down for some time, allowing *Exeat* to steal a place back! After rounding YnglingGirls.com it was a beat back to finish at Berthon. As we approached the finish, *Mons Meg*, *Intrepid* and *Slipstream* (now using her boat hook jockey pole) were seen not far behind heading for YnglingGirls.com.

Special mention should go to *Hellequin*, which missed the tidal gate at the end of the race and had to beat back to finish despite a very strong foul tide.

All in all it turned out to be an interesting and very enjoyable race. I'd like to thank the race officer (and her team) for the organisation and in particular for moving the start close enough to Lymington for all the yachts to finish. Congratulations to the race winners: *Jo Jo Gunne* and *Mantra*! I apologise, in advance, for any omissions or inaccuracies in this report, my memory is a bit sketchy at times!

The perseverance of Beta

Race 14, Lymington to Chichester, Sunday 25 June

by Nigel Purkiss (*Blue Tango*)

Sunday morning saw a good turnout leaving Lymington in a light north easterly with the start being moved to Quinnell. The race officer on *Tantrum* got the race under way without any delay in a very light breeze and the tide about to turn, with *Sycorax*, *Gunshot* and *Blue Tango* leading the fleet towards B&G. The leading boats were soon joined by *Scarlet Jester* and these boats rounded the mark in close company, with *Exeat* and *Delefni* gradually closing the gap.

After rounding B&G the fleet had a long starboard tack towards Lee on Solent to keep out of the strongest tide, with *Scarlet Jester* getting the lead after going inshore. It soon became apparent that the boats keeping in close with short tacks led by *Exeat* were making the best progress. We had about eight boats tacking close to the shore with about 200 metres between them. *Mantra* by keeping very close in with short tacks had joined the leaders and it was looking very exciting with positions changing all the time.

With the tide getting stronger, the Alpha fleet boats started retiring, leaving *Mantra* in the lead followed by *Blue Tango*, *Carisma* and *Intrepid* all hugging the shore but making little progress.

The crews were being kept busy as these were all two handed boats. At one point I thought the boats retiring had made the right decision as we were only just able to stem the tide but, with a little more wind and less tide in Stokes Bay, speed over the ground gradually increased and with the prospect of slack water

off Portsmouth finishing became a possibility. *Intrepid* retired just before Stokes Bay, which left *Blue Tango*, *Mantra*, *Carisma* and *Slipstream*, which had been hidden in the mist, the only finishers in what was a very enjoyable race.

The Crew worked their socks off

Race report, Saturday 8 July, Summer Series – Race 1

By Brian Dandridge (*Sycorax*)

Sycorax was unusually lightly crewed for this race with just four on board. Gerry and I were joined by Oliver, who, I am delighted to say, is becoming a regular *Sycorax* crew member, and Andy Reynolds, who has also sailed with us several times this season. Unfortunately the two other crew who had signed up had been delayed getting back from New Zealand. They were not the only absentees, however. Our Race Officer for the day was still in Brest and had not been able to arrange a replacement! Fortunately Richard Creer, the Assistant Sailing Secretary, had things in hand and put out an announcement that there would be a single gate start with *Jo Jo Gunne* doing the honours.

Every year numbers seem to dwindle in July. Even so we had a respectable turnout with six IRC boats in Alpha and five club rated Beta boats. The Alpha fleet consisted of ourselves, *Jo Jo Gunne*, *Mikado*, *Sareema*, *Markova* and guest boat *Perfect J*, past CCRC members Debbie and Trenter Ellis with their J 95. In Beta, regulars *Blue Tango*, *Intrepid* and *Arwen* were joined by occasional racers Tom and Denise on *Denecia* and the Kearns family on *Setanta*.

At the appointed hour Richard announced the course, which consisted of a beat from Chi to Horse Tail; a fetch to Royal Albert; a "sausage" across to Bob Kemp followed by a zigzag course finishing at Coronation. There was an excellent breeze of around eight to ten knots when we started and I was pleased to make one of my better starts to

the windward end of the line in clean air. Our new Banks No 2 was working well and we pulled away from *Sareema*, *Markova* and *Intrepid*, which were close together behind us. To leeward we could see *Blue Tango* and *Arwen* following in the wake of *Jo Jo Gunne* whose crew were making the most of their greater boat speed but did not seem to be pointing as well as us. I was delighted when we reached the first mark just a few boat lengths ahead of *Jo Jo*. Inevitably their superior performance enabled them to sail over the top of us on the way down to Royal Albert but we hung on and after the four mile leg of the course we were still within striking distance were they to have a problem.

The next leg was a short hard beat across the tide and we seemed to judge our course slightly better than the J109. But more importantly, as far as we were concerned, when they hoisted their asymmetrical spinnaker there was a neat wrap half way up which took some time to clear.

With only four on board, I was a little concerned about the kite but I needn't have worried. Oliver had the fore-deck well under control and we had our new spinnaker up and pulling only a few moments after rounding the mark. The leg back to Royal Albert was dead downwind but to allow for tide and to avoid gybing we stayed above the course. The next two legs were uneventful and the places remained the same. I cannot report much on what was going on behind us as we had now pulled away from the rest of the fleet and just had an odd glance back to see if we could spot the others. With so many boats out on the water it was difficult to see where everyone was – with the exception, that is, of *Mikado*. Her elegant lines and distinctive "aged" sails showed that although she was somewhat behind us she was still in with a good chance of saving her time on handicap.

The final leg of the race saw us rounding DAKS in Osborne Bay before reaching across to Coronation. By this time *Jo Jo* was about ten minutes ahead of us and as they rounded the penultimate mark we saw

activity on the fore-deck as they prepared to hoist the spinnaker once again – not a good move, it turned out. I was already pretty sure it would be too shy for us to attempt and was concerned that the leg would be a *Jo Jo* benefit. Richard was obviously of a similar opinion. However, as we tacked down to the mark and readied our kite (just in case) we could clearly see that they were struggling to get their blue sail to set and were sailing well below the course. After several minutes going in the wrong direction the crew on *Jo Jo Gunne* returned the spinnaker to its bag and set off once more for the finish but now on a quite shy fetch. We, on the other hand, were on a fast white sail reach in company with *Arwen* and *Intrepid*, which had caught up as a result of sailing the shorter Beta course.

I have to confess when the results were read out and we were in third place behind *Sareema* and *Mikado* I was somewhat disappointed as I felt the crew had worked their socks off and done little wrong. The boat went well and the decision to get a new rating based on the new furling No 2 had been vindicated as we would not have been able to use the larger No 1 and would have been penalised on handicap if we had carried our original rating. Congratulations to Mike and his team on the beautiful *Mikado* for their superb win. Congratulations as well to our Commodore, as he had a superb second place with just the family and dog on board. How does he do it?

A big thanks to Richard and Pam for sorting the race organisation out and arranging a new social venue for the club. The Ferryboat Restaurant produced an excellent meal with very interesting surroundings.

Unfortunately the good weather we enjoyed on Saturday, as forecast, did not last. *Sycorax* was down for Race Officer duty on the Sunday but when we arose to make preparations there was light rain and strong winds. I checked Chimet and saw that the wind was 24 knots gusting 32. After a quick check with the other skippers and our ASS, it was

decided to cancel the race for the day!

Cap'n Legless exists - but he's French by Brian Dandridge (*Sycorax*)

I am sorry Colin, but you will have to change your nickname to Captain Not So Legless in future, as I have seen the real thing! It was early August and Gerry and I had just returned from two wonderful weeks cruising in North Brittany during which time we visited Treguier and Paimpol, two of the loveliest places to spend some time. We visited Treguier last year and fell in love with the town, which features a magnificent cathedral in the town square. Last year we had not realised until it was almost all over that every Wednesday evening from early July to the end of August they hold an open air music festival in the shadow of the cathedral. So we made a point of arriving in good time. We were not disappointed and after an excellent evening meal produced on board from local produce we strolled to the town square to enjoy the activities and atmosphere. This featured a mix of marching band with pipes and drums, a duo with fiddle and guitar, a jazz band and a French Gaelic rock band. I can't claim to be a big fan of Gaelic music but in this setting and with the quality of musicianship one couldn't help but enjoy it and enter into the spirit. If anyone is thinking ahead to next year, I can heartily recommend a trip to Treguier, but make sure you are there for the Wednesday evening.

A word of caution – take care to ensure you arrive at Treguier marina at slack tide. The marina is a series of pontoons stretching out into the river and the tide sluices through. As it says in the Shell Guide "if you get it wrong, it can really spoil your day!" We arrived shortly after high water and with the aid of several other boat crews quickly had *Sycorax* tied up and secure. We spent three days in Treguier and made many new friends,

including Peter and Lesley who were moored alongside us on their Moody 35. They are based at Moody's, as we still know it, at the top of the Hamble and were on their final leg before returning to the UK via Guernsey and Cherbourg. Coincidentally we ran into them again a week later in Cherbourg and found that they had met Bill Woods there.

I confess that I was nervous about visiting Paimpol as there are dire words of warning in Tom Cunliffe's Shell Cruising Guide but I took heed of all his warnings and paid great attention to the tides, cross-currents, rocks, transits etc. I also studied the photo in the book which shows the channel at low tide and reveals a narrow ditch barely wide enough for two boats to pass!! With this in mind I plotted waypoints every few yards and, as we entered the estuary I had Gerry monitor the chart plotter like a hawk to ensure we didn't stray from the planned path. We arrived on the rising tide one hour before high water and really needn't have worried. There was plenty of water and we motored up to the outer harbour following the clearly marked channel. When we arrived the lock was closed, red lights on and a French yacht was circling ahead of us also waiting to go through. For several minutes we milled around. Two more French yachts arrived along with a commercial fishing vessel. The outer harbour was getting a little crowded and still there was no sign of activity in the lock. I could see that there was a yacht in there, but nothing else. A few minutes later the skipper of the first French yacht called over to me in his best English – "Zere ees a problem with zee lock. It doesn't work".

This was a bit disconcerting as it was now 9pm and we would have to go several miles to reach a suitable anchorage unless we tied up to the angled stone wall. Along with the other boats, we continued to mill around.



Paimpol Marina

Finally, to my great relief, the lock gates swung open and the lights turned green. We were the second boat into the lock, which is well equipped with ropes hanging every few yards to enable crew to grab hold and steady the boat. There was only a short delay as the water levels were balanced, the inner gates opened and we were escorted to one of the resident's berths for the night – all the visitors' berths being occupied. As we nosed into our appointed berth the French skipper who had called to me about the problem with the lock rushed over, grabbed our lines and helped Gerry and me secure the boat. As he did so, he said "Eet was not a problem with zee lock. Eet was a problem with ze skipper."

I was somewhat perplexed by this until I noticed the boat he was looking at just four fingers away on our resident's pontoon. This boat had only recently arrived and was obviously in some disarray, but that was nothing compared to the state of the skipper. To say he was "legless" was an understatement. There were two marina staff trying to tie his boat up and get him sorted, meanwhile the "skipper" staggered and swayed around the cockpit of his 26' boat trying to put the washboards in but I think he must have been seeing at least two, if not more, companionways! His only crew was a small mongrel dog. How he managed to get his boat in at all was a mystery. Gerry reckons the dog must have been steering as he certainly couldn't have! After we had secured, I went past this boat, still with the skipper swaying very unsteadily in the cockpit, and up to the Capitainerie to pay. When I came out a few minutes later there was the skipper hanging from the pulpit of his boat by one leg whilst the two marina staff attempted to support him and prevent him from falling in the water. They managed to free his leg and lay him, groaning, on the pontoon whilst the little dog ran around licking his face! I last saw him being half carried, half marched off the pontoon and into a waiting car which drove him and his dog away. So there you have it – the real Captain Legless is alive, if not so well, in Paimpol!!

We really enjoyed Paimpol, a beautiful town, great atmosphere, a superb market on the Tuesday and, for lovers of old railways, a preserved steam train which we saw running. Twenty four hours after we arrived we saw another CCRC flag – Richard and Pam had arrived on *Jo Jo Gunne*. Needless to say it was a great opportunity to open a few bottles ourselves, but we could still walk off our boats when we went ashore to eat!



Inside the "Musee De La Mere" in Paimpol

Across Europe on wheels after breakdowns in the Med and a dismasting by Edward Holmes (*Storm Dragon*)

I initially decided to return my yacht *Storm Dragon* to the UK early this summer, but my plans changed slightly and I went back to Majorca to help a friend sort out the yacht he had bought for charter work. I had agreed to spend a month with him before heading for the UK.

I flew out to southern Spain on Monday 3 April, had my yacht lifted out for antifouling (the only expensive item in Almerimar Marina, as you are not allowed to do the work yourself, and they charge you 200 euros to apply your own paint) but the final bill including lifts etc was 550 euros. I then set off to meet my crew who was flying to Alicante, further up the Mediterranean coast, on Wednesday 12 April, and would be with me until I got to Majorca. Most of my journey to Alicante was spent motor sailing due to light head winds, but I did see my first dolphins this year just off Cartagena. My friend Alan arrived late on Wednesday, so we stayed an extra day in Alicante, then set off for Altea, further up the coast, on Friday. There are some free swinging moorings behind the headland near Altea, and this was an ideal stopover for an early start next day to the island of Formentera, some 70 miles to the east.

When we arrived in Formentera we anchored in Cala Sahona on the east coast, but decided to move to the marina around 9pm when the wind and swell picked up. Although a nice marina, it's quite expensive at 50 euros a night, and this was the low season. May and June are 80 euros, and July and August 110 euros, plus water and electricity. We then headed north for Ibiza, hoping to get to Portinatx, but were forced to shorten our journey when the engine developed running problems, and we spent two days in Cala Badela cleaning the fuel system. We then set off for Portinatx and had a very pleasant sail. We ended up spending two nights at anchor in Portinatx, as when we attempted to leave after one night we encountered a two metre swell on the beam, and with approx 50 miles to go we decided to stay another day to allow the swell to drop. It did and we had a very enjoyable sail to Andraitx in Majorca, where we anchored for the night.

Next day we set off for Port de Soller, the only good safe haven

on the north west coast, and discovered they are building a new marina on land once owned by the Spanish navy, and were very pleasantly surprised to be charged only four euros a night, but there was no water or electricity, so obviously charges would go up. The next day Alan had to return to the UK, and I felt sorry for him as the weather had not been what we expected, rather cloudy and only 16 degrees on average. On the day he left it reached 24 degrees and I sailed in light NW winds towards my destination, Port de Pollensa, but after rounding the headland at Cape de Formentor the wind dramatically increased to southerly 4-5, which gave me an exciting final sail into Pollensa. I anchored in the bay about 300 metres from the beach.

My friend in Pollensa had bought an ex-charter ketch and was hoping to go into the charter business. Unfortunately, the previous owner had not been entirely honest when he sold her, and had removed as much equipment as possible after agreeing the price. There was no inventory and it was a private sale. Much work was needed to bring the ketch up to charter specification, including a new engine and new sails. But as he has already started advertising sailing trips in the bay, we used my yacht on Saturday to take four men out to celebrate a birthday, and I received 150 euros for six hours sailing. The ketch had spent the winter in the marina. After going over to view her and a day's work on the engine, we discovered it had seized up. Unfortunately his stay in the marina had to end by May 1, but owing to this being a public holiday weekend we eventually left on Tuesday the 2nd and were towed out of the marina, then set sail in a gentle NE breeze, heading west for Pollensa.

Fortunately the breeze soon increased and we were able to get some directional sailing, the only problem being that the mainsail would not come down without us heading into the wind. We decided to aim for a place near the beach, and anchor under sail,

then lower the main afterwards. Later in the week we located a reconditioned engine, the only problem being that we needed to sail the yacht to Alcudia, in the next bay, to get it fitted. The jib did not have any way of being attached to the forestay, which prevented us from sailing close to the wind. We left Pollensa on Wednesday 19 May, and with a tender tied alongside to help gain a favourable heading, we headed for Alcudia, some 12 miles away. As we rounded the headland separating Pollensa from Alcudia the steering cables parted at the same time as the outboard motor on the tender cut out and we drifted towards the rocks. Fortunately, we located the emergency steering system and got the outboard going again, missing the rocks by 40 feet. The wind by now was non-existent, so our only method of propulsion was the 4hp outboard on the dinghy. The yacht weighs 15 tons, and progress was pitifully slow, but we made it to our destination. It had taken us eight hours to cover 12 miles!

The ketch was lifted out of the water the following day, and within a week the old engine had been removed and the reconditioned engine fitted. She was also given a coat of antifoul. On Friday 28 May she was refloated and we motored her back to Pollensa. After anchoring her in the bay we set about sanding down the woodwork, but when we inspected the masts we found the main mast was completely rotten for at least two metres up from the deck. Her previous owner had wrapped the mast in glass fibre to hide the problem, so we decided to get the masts removed to have them fully inspected.

My partner Jean arrived on Monday 5 June, and my 60th birthday was on the 7th so we had a good celebration. We left Pollensa on 10 June to make our way back to the UK, leaving my friend to sort out his yacht, but I think by now he realised there would be no charter work this year.

Our first port of call from Pollensa was Soller, where we stayed for two days, but the marina was now fully operational and the charge had gone up to 40 euros a night, so we spent one night in the marina and then anchored for the next night. We then set off for Andraitx, the closest point to Ibiza, but stayed there longer than we intended, and on Thursday 15 a severe storm hit us late in the afternoon and several yachts dragged their anchors. After it had subsided, we headed for the inner harbour where holding is better. The following day the harbour master insisted all boats should return to the outer harbour, where we stayed until Sunday, then set off for Portinatx in Ibiza. The journey was mainly motor sailing, but the high point was coming across a pod of dolphins about five miles from Ibiza.

We stayed in Portinatx for two nights then made for Calla Badella, from which Jean was due to depart and return to the UK. Unfortunately swimming in either bay was nearly impossible due to an invasion of jellyfish. On Saturday 24 I left Ibiza and headed for Altea on the Spanish coast, intending to stay the night on one of the free swinging moorings near the headland. By midnight the swell was so bad I seriously thought I might have to move, but since I was on my own I decided to stay, leaving at first light to make for Alicante and had a pleasant sail. All the marinas were full as it was fiesta weekend, so I headed for Santa Pola, some 12 miles away, but the wind had now increased to 20 knots on the nose, and I motored all the way. Yet again I was refused a berth. The only option now was to go further down the coast to Torrevieja, some 25 miles distant, where I knew even if the marina was full there was good holding at anchor. I arrived after dark and decided not to bother with the marina, so I anchored for the night and even stayed a second night. When I left Torrevieja I intended to sail to the Mar Menor, where anchoring is good, but as I was making such good progress I decided to press on to Cartagena. Shortly after I had rounded the

headland at Cabo de Palos, with the wind now on my stern, the sea began to build and I soon had to reef and sail under mainsail alone, with the mainsail on the point of gybing. Arriving at Cartagena I was again told the marina was full, but as anchoring is forbidden in the port I was allowed to take a berth reserved for super yachts. My Bavaria is a super yacht, but the berth had a super price of 40 euros, so I left the next day and sailed to Aguilas, where I knew one could anchor in the harbour. On arrival after a pleasant sail, I anchored in the SW end of the harbour, which gave the most protection from the swell.

Unfortunately, whilst eating my breakfast the following day I lost a large filling from one of my front teeth and although it did not hurt I decided to try and find a dentist. The tourism office gave me the location of several practices, and I eventually obtained an appointment for 5pm the same day. The filling and half the tooth were repaired for 45 euros (£32), but the following morning I lost another very large filling so my departure was delayed yet again, and back to the dentist I went. This time I needed an x-ray and a screw inserted and the whole tooth rebuilding and was in the chair for one and a half hours, all for 75 euros (£53). Fortunately no more fillings were lost the following morning and I set off towards San Jose. When I was just off Garrucha I came upon a small school of pilot whales and I eased my sails so I could observe them and get some pictures. It's quite daunting when something in the water half the length of the boat comes alongside, but they were just playing and soon dispersed. I then continued my journey and anchored for the night near San Jose.

The next day I set off for Almeria and this time I was fortunate to find room in the marina for 18 euros (£13) a night, including water and electricity. As my friends were not due to arrive until late evening I decided to visit the Alcazaba, which dates from year 955, and although many parts have been transformed into

gardens, the fortifications have been fully restored and it is easy to see how life was in those early years.

We left early the following morning and headed for Almerimar, and soon the wind developed into a nice force 3-4, but from the west, which meant lots of tacking. One of my friends had not gained his sea legs and was soon overcome by seasickness, so from that point on we motored into Almerimar. We left the following morning and headed for Motril, some 35 miles away, and motored in calm seas. Motril has been extended and we managed to find a berth for the night. The following morning we set off for Caleta de Valez, and as it was such a pleasant sail we anchored for lunch near Marina del Este. When we decided to leave the wind seemed to have died so we started the engine to motor to our destination. Soon after the engine died and with the wind now increasing, we were forced to sail the last 12 miles in winds gusting 30 knots plus on the nose. The wind decreased when we arrived at our destination and we were able to sail into the marina and secure the boat at the end of a jetty. In the morning we were informed we had secured to a berth for 20 metre boats and had to pay for 20 metres (in fact the boat was longer than the berth). After checking the engine we found a blocked fuel filter, which we changed, then set off next morning for Benalmedina. With just 10 miles to go the engine died again and despite all our efforts, refused to start. After checking the fuel filter we discovered a lack of fuel, but having 10 litres of spare fuel we were able to satisfy ourselves that we had enough to get into the marina, so we sailed in head winds to the marina entrance before starting the engine. After entering the marina we put in 50 litres of fuel. We later discovered the fuel gauge was faulty and needed adjusting.

Unfortunately, my friend Lionel had to leave and return to the UK. We stayed in Benalmedina for two nights then headed for

Estepona but owing to a lack of wind we had to motor all the way (but no engine problems). We stayed in Estepona for two nights then headed for Ceuta on the north African coast, again having to motor due to lack of wind, but we did see around 25 dolphins and two turtles. We initially intended to stay two nights in Ceuta but after picking up the wind reports of 36 knots for Wednesday 11 July we decided to head for Gibraltar the next day, as my friend Alan had a flight booked for Thurs 13 July.

Upon arrival in Gibraltar we found a berth in Marina Bay Marina, and later that day a yacht with which we had sailed in the 2004 Rally Portugal arrived from Barbate with reports of 40 knot plus winds in the straits near Tarifa, the southernmost part of the Spanish mainland. In Gibraltar only 15 miles away we had only 18 knots and the wind was coming from the east. My friend Alan left in the evening of 13 July and although I had planned to leave the following day, after hearing of a strong wind warning for Tarifa I decided to delay my departure by 24 hours. When I eventually left on 15 July at 07.00 hours the wind in Gibraltar was very light and variable so I motor sailed, but as I made my way down the Straits of Gibraltar the wind steadily increased and by the time I was five miles from Tarifa I had 30 knots of wind directly on my stern. Fractionally rigged boats are not suited to downwind sailing, so I continued to motor in the hope of some sailing once around the headland at Tarifa. The wind increased to 35 knots in the bay of Tarifa, so as I was sailing alone I continued under engine with a small amount of genoa. When I was about five miles from my destination at Barbate, on the Atlantic coast, the wind suddenly increased to 40 knots and the boat became uncontrollable. I reefed the genoa and headed back into the wind, hoping it might soon decrease in strength. After about 15 minutes I watched my mast and genoa disappear over the port side of the boat as the rigging parted on the starboard side. I was now dragging my rig in the water and my

speed was dramatically reduced. The autohelm seemed to cope, although I had to keep a constant lookout whilst I cut away the mess on the deck, and although I carry a set of bolt cutters, these proved to be less than 100% successful as the jaws do not fully meet and I had to twist and turn them to break the final few strands of wire. I also had to use a hacksaw to deal with the furling gear, and I have to admit this was the worst time I have ever spent at sea as I was worried the mast and gear in the water might get caught around the rudder or propeller. As I was in over 15 metres of water, getting the anchor to hold would have been nearly impossible. After cutting away all the rigging I then set off for the marina at Barbate and despite several calls on my hand held VHF for a berth, I was eventually informed that if I did not speak to them in Spanish then they could not help me. After the traumatic experience I had just been through I could not be bothered with them, so knowing from my previous visit to Barbate in 2004 that there is a holding pontoon just outside the marina I decided to try to moor there. Unfortunately all the mooring cleats have since been removed as they now have a waiting pontoon in the marina (but this was full), but with a little ingenuity I managed to tie the boat securely. I then decided my best plan would be to return to Gibraltar, as work would be easier in an English speaking port rather than a Spanish one, but the weather deteriorated and I was forced to stay in Barbate.

On 19 July the strong winds left the area and I was able to return to Gibraltar hopefully to sort out a replacement mast. Upon arrival I contacted Sheppards boat yard requesting an estimate but they were reluctant to give one without a surveyor's report. They recommended two surveyors, and their details were given to my insurers. On Saturday 22 July the chosen surveyor arrived, but it soon became apparent that things were not going my way. The surveyor picked up on the point that the rig had never been inspected by a qualified rigger, and given that information,

coupled with the inspection on the shroud that failed, he concluded that my claim had only a 50-50 chance of being paid.

After the surveyor left I was feeling somewhat low and set about sorting out how to get *Storm Dragon* back to the UK. There were several options. Get her shipped by sea, cost around £7,000. Get her shipped overland, cost around £5,000. Motor her myself, either up the Atlantic coast around Spain, Portugal, and France, or along the Spanish and French Mediterranean coast to the French canals, then through France to the English Channel. After contemplating all the options I decided upon the latter as I was on my own, and it seemed the cheapest and safest option, and to that end left Gibraltar on Monday 24 July hoping to reach Sete in France in two weeks time, and to get through France in about two weeks.

On my first day from leaving Gibraltar I made it to an anchorage about five miles past Estepona, and although this was just a beach anchorage the swell picked up around 3am, which made for a very uncomfortable night, so I decided to leave early and head for Benalmedina, a large marina (just like Hythe but on a much larger scale) where I could replenish my stores. The following day I left early and headed for Motril as I knew you can anchor in the harbour, but as I arrived at 3pm I decided to press on and ended up anchoring just outside the harbour at Adria, a distance of 80 miles in one day. Up to now I had intended keeping within the 15 metre contour, so should anything go wrong with the engine I could at least anchor, but as nothing had gone wrong so far I had to choose between going around the gulf of Almeria or straight across with a saving of two hours. In the end I went across, and even after crossing I was forced to keep well offshore as the depth of water near the rocky shore is about 25 metres and anchoring would be impossible. I would have been on the rocks in no time. At least offshore I could drift until I

sorted out my problems. After crossing the gulf of Almeria I ended up anchoring in a quiet bay with three other yachts about 10 miles past Cabo de Gata. The following day I set off for Cartagena, some 70 miles away, and was able to find a berth, but knowing how difficult it was to manoeuvre into, I knew in the morning I would have fun getting out, and I did. After leaving I headed for Torrevieja, which I knew was a good anchorage, but even there I was visited by the local police who informed me you are only allowed one night at anchor. Fortunately, I was planning to move next day, and head for some free mooring buoys behind the headland at Altea. As it was a Sunday all the mooring buoys near Altea were taken, but knowing they were mainly locals I anchored off the beach and returned at 8pm and found a vacant buoy for the night. The next morning I set off for Denia and arrived around noon and filled up with diesel (150 litres). As I had not filled up since leaving Gibraltar some 400 miles away I was pleased with the consumption. After being given a berth I set about looking for some friends who have a yacht there and do charter work, but they were out sailing. But I did meet up with them and other sailors that had done Rally Portugal with us and we had a pleasant evening out. I also contacted several yacht brokers, hoping to get my yacht transported overland to a French Channel port on a lorry that had delivered a yacht to the area, and eventually arranged to be collected from Barcelona on Tuesday 8 August and transported to Le Havre for £2,600, which would save the long lonely slog through the canals. I therefore decided to set off for Barcelona on Thursday 3 August as it was 200 miles away. Owing to warning of an imminent gale, I delayed my departure until noon on Friday 4 August to allow the swell to subside, then I headed for Valencia. When I was about 15 miles from my destination the wind increased, as did the swell, and I decided to make for the small harbour at Gola Del Perello, which according to the pilot is dredged to 2.5 metres. I have to admit my heart was in my mouth at the 30 metres wide entrance with a

large following sea. The pilot was wrong! I grounded at 1.8 metres several times. The only things that kept me going were the incoming waves. All I could do was hope I would get out in the morning! When I got up I realised the tide was approx 200 mm lower than the previous day, and although I could power myself through the mud in the marina, the sand bar was a different matter, with my echo sounder showing 1.6 metres. I need 1.8 metres. All I could do was to edge forward as I was lifted with each incoming wave, but I realised this would take forever. The Capitania came to the rescue with a tow boat, and even that struggled to get me out, but after several bumps on the bottom I was free, the only problem being a broken fairlead and a bent toe rail, which had caused the tow rope to snap.

Now it was on to Las Fuentes, some 70 miles away, but it was a nice marina with helpful staff and finger berths, which are very rare in the Med. My next port of call was Cambrils, another 70 miles away, but here I managed to anchor in the harbour for a free night. Next day I set off for my destination port of Villanova, just a mere 45 miles, but I was shocked to have to pay 51 euros for a night, the dearest marina yet. (I have been told the further you go east the more you pay). Now all I had to do was wait for the lorry to turn up to transport me to Le Havre.

Late in the evening of Monday 7 August I was informed the lorry would arrive at 10 am the following day. This was too late to pre-book my liftout, as the yard was busy, and I was informed I would have to wait till 4 pm. My boat was eventually lifted out at 6 pm, then it took another hour to arrange all the supports on the lorry. By now the driver said we were too late to leave, so it was decided to go at 4 am the next day. (I later learnt from the driver that he had driven from Albuferia to Villanova and could easily have picked me up in Denia.) As the load is very wide (known as Convoy Exceptional) we were not allowed on the Barcelona ring

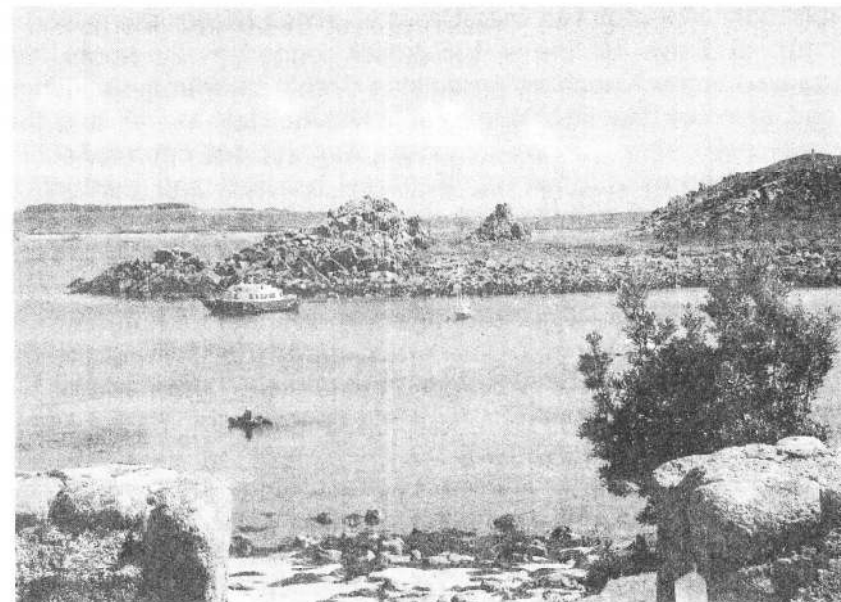
road between 7 and 10 am, but leaving at 4 am we cleared Barcelona before 7 am. Then as we were not allowed on motorways because we were too wide for the tolls, we followed the coast road to Blanes before heading inland to Gerona and our first stop at La Jonquera, which is the last town before the French border. We parked for the afternoon intending to leave at 10 pm, as in France we were not allowed to travel during the day, but we needed to reach Le Havre by Saturday morning as heavy transport in mainland Europe is forbidden to travel from noon on Saturday till midnight Sunday (but not in the UK). We also had a pilot van which travelled half a mile ahead to warn traffic and help us through towns. The real fun began in towns where we met another wide load coming in the opposite direction, or when we were diverted off the main road through a residential area, not easy with a unit 55ft long. After we left La Jonquera, we headed for Claimont de Ferrand via Narbonne and Toulouse, but ended up stopping at a Le Routier approx 130 kilometres short of our destination at 8 am as the driver had reached the end of his allowed driving time. He now had to rest for nine hours before driving again, and I needed some sleep (it's not easy to sleep during the day), but hoped to set off around 5 pm as we were not allowed in Claimont de Ferrand before 7.30 pm. We then drove through the night heading for Orleans, but once again driving time ran out and we stopped for our third night near Nevers. This left an easy day for our final leg to Le Havre, and we arrived at 5 pm having set off at 9 am. It was low tide so we had to wait till 11 am on Saturday for the lifting of the yacht into the sea. I obtained a berth in the marina and intended leaving on Wednesday 16 August as my friend Alan was coming over by ferry on Tuesday to help me across the Channel. The wind on Saturday was force 7 but forecast to drop to 3-4 by Wednesday, and I had made arrangements with Gosport boat yard to lift her out for two months on Thursday, at the end of which I hoped to have her fully rigged with new mast. (To be continued).

Arwen's adventures in Ireland (with a 'fridge and freezer!)

by Jacky Black (*Arwen*)

A new cruising ground for 2006 was decided upon in the early part of the year and so equipped with the Irish Cruising Club's Pilot Book (thanks to Hugh) and a new electronic chart we set off on the evening of the 21 July, heading west. We being Rob and Jacky, plus the two Andys (Andy Reynolds and Andy Fennymore, another merchant navy captain, friend of Rob). Were we over skippered? Not really, as it meant we could each stand a three hour watch and get some good rest in between. The weather was forecast to be fair, so a straight run to the Scillies was planned. Unfortunately there was little wind so the engine was used to boost the mainsail and we hardly used the jib for the first 24 hours. A quick passage through the Solent with a clear starlit night saw us making excellent progress and by 13.00 on the 22nd we were romping across Lyme Bay under full sail in a freshening SW wind. Wind and cloud cover increased, accompanied by drizzle as we approached the Lizard. However, once round the point with the engine on and the headsail furled we set off across the Traffic Separation Scheme. As the vis improved, we were able to pick out the Wolf Rock and the Seven Stones lights, plus loads of shipping traffic! Dawn found us off the south of St Agnes – little wind and a clear warm day. We motored into the bay between St Agnes and Gugh (recommended by Andy, who had been there before with Gunshot). We anchored in five metres, with sand beneath us – having logged 229 miles in 39 hours.

We spent two nights in the Scillies, explored St Agnes, had a delightful lunch overlooking the bay between the two islands and I even managed a swim despite the freezing water!



On the Monday we motored round to New Grimsby sound, where we anchored (all the buoys were full) between Tresco and Bryher. We explored Tresco, tested the watering holes of the New Inn and the Island Hotel, bought some lovely fresh produce in a newly upgraded supermarket, including some fresh Tresco beef, and sampled the delights of local mussels for lunch.

Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 July, Tresco – Cork.

An uneventful motor-sail, relieved by a school of dolphins seen about five miles north of the islands and a few fishing boats – one of which had been stopped, we believe, by a naval fishery protection vessel. As we approached the Irish coast we saw a couple of tankers and the dog watch reported an Irish Navy radio

message warning of 'live firing' in the area! Fortunately they missed! We motored into Crosshaven at 06.00 and found a berth at Salve Marine – 136.8 miles logged in 23 hours. We enjoyed a good lunch sitting outside Cronin's bar in the sunshine and sampled the first Murphy's of the holiday. Water and fuel were replenished and an early night was decided upon for senior skipper and wife! However, the crew rebelled and went off in search of wine, women and song! Apparently they found the latter in the third pub; we didn't ask about the rest!

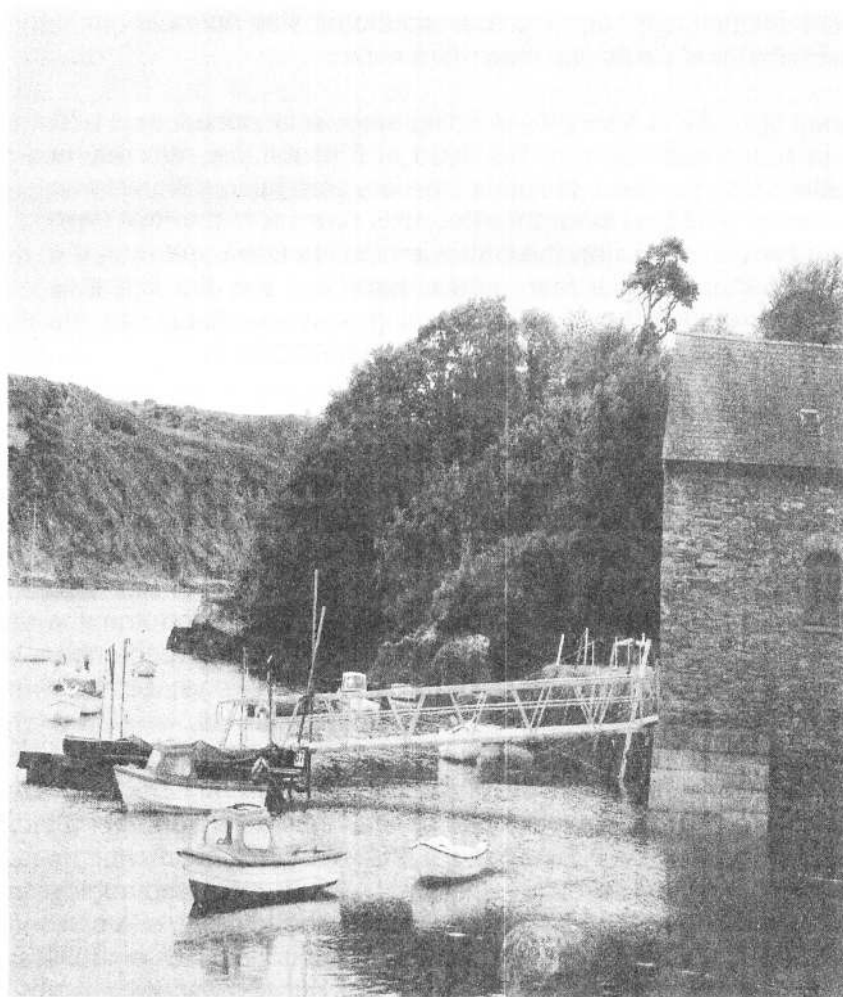
Thursday 27 July – Cork city for lunch. We motored up the river past Cobh (pronounced Cove), a picturesque town where the cruise ships stop, and on to Penrose Quay in the heart of the city, where we made fast to some steps. We made a quick trip to English market for fresh fish for tea and a pint of the black stuff sitting outside in a café in the centre of town, before motoring back down river to East Ferry marina. This was a delightful, quiet marina set among tree laden shores with yet another very friendly pub just a short stroll up the hill. (Why is it always uphill?)

Friday 28 July, Cork – Kinsale. Again little wind so we motored the 17 miles. As we arrived we had a wave from another Hanse 411 leaving for Schull to take part in Calves week. (We met them there later on our travels). Kinsale was busy so we were rafted out on the Royal Kinsale Yacht Club pontoon, but this was a handy spot for shops and restaurants, and enabled the two Andys to disembark easily the following day. That night we had a lovely meal in the Bistro of the White House Hotel. We were spoilt for choice. Kinsale is a very touristy place, bustling with pubs, craft shops and people by the coach load! Saturday morning saw the rain seriously falling (**** law when we had two crew to get off the boat to catch a taxi, which was 20 minutes late – typical Irish!). Rob and I decided to repair to a restaurant for a leisurely lunch to recover. Fishy Fishy near the quay provided the

perfect solution, although the seafood platter was not quite up to French standards and was more expensive!

Sunday 30 July – Kinsale. Heading west abandoned at 11.30 due to rough seas off the Old Head of Kinsale! We returned to the same pontoon, only this time we were alongside a Norwegian owned 57ft boat bound for the ARC. We spent a further two days in Kinsale exploring the museum, Castle Desmond, many of the craft shops and a few more cafes, bars and the Jim Edwards restaurant on the Monday evening – (it was excellent). (Is this turning out to be a Good Food guide for CCRC?)

Tuesday 1 August, Kinsale – Castletownsend – Castle Haven. Once past the Head we were able to have a cracking sail for a couple of hours before the wind headed us again and the engine went on to get us to our destination without having to tack back and forth. The entrance to Castle Haven is narrow and there is little sign of life – a ruined church on the hilltop to the west and some cows grazing near the shore on what seemed from the sea to be an uninhabited island. Once through the entrance, the river turns east and as we motored towards the village we were watched by a couple of curious seals. We explored the anchorage directly off the slip but decided it was too shallow, and we didn't fancy the look of the rather small mooring buoys so continued past the village for another half mile to a spot just off Cat Island, where we found a suitable spot to anchor in four metres. It was wonderfully quiet, with trees overhanging the water, fish jumping and heron wading the shoreline. A short trip in the dingy to the village revealed the usual hill with a pub, small shop and a lovely protestant church all of which we visited!

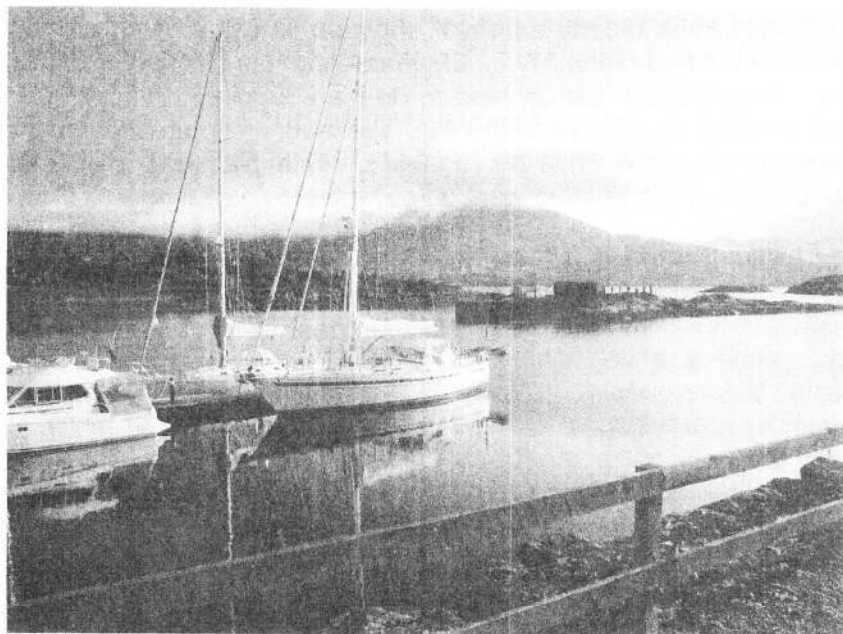


The following day we explored up the river towards the old mill and were delighted to see great swathes of rhododendrons (unfortunately not in flower – how glorious it must look in the spring), many herons and numerous fish jumping as we passed

by. We met an elderly ex-naval engineer who has lived on his boat (an old Nicholson 37) for 30 years – he has his own mooring there and keeps a car on land to do his shopping at Union Hall just a short drive across the hill. We had an interesting hour onboard his yacht while he regaled us with places to visit and pubs to try as we headed west on our travels.

Thursday 3 August, Castletownsend – Lawrence Cove (Bear Island, Bantry Bay). With a forecast of NW 3-4 and more rain expected, we motor sailed round the coast towards the Fastnet Rock, taking a short southerly detour to get some close-up pictures, before heading into Bantry Bay. We were able to finish the journey with full sail and sunshine, plus the company of some playful dolphins for a short while as we came round Mizzen Head. Lawrence Cove was a tiny marina (only a couple of pontoons) approached from a very narrow entrance. We found a slot alongside the main jetty and were greeted by the friendly marina manageress who took our lines (assisted by a charming Frenchman – more of him later!).

A short walk into the village revealed the usual shop, pub and Kitty's restaurant, all of which proved to be most welcoming and offered a wide range of produce, food etc. Having enjoyed a drink in the bar, another O'Sullivan's, we stocked up on some fresh fruit, vegetables and meat from the local store, before hitting the launderette (well actually it was two washing machines in the marina, but the dryers were out of order). It was a breezy day so all the sheets and towels soon dried and we were able to join our French friend Christian (from St Vaast) on board for a sample of his champagne and to meet his 95 year old mother, with whom he cruises every summer to Ireland. Whilst there we spotted Marion and Dick (Commodore of Langstone SC) walking down the pontoon – amazing who one sees in remote places

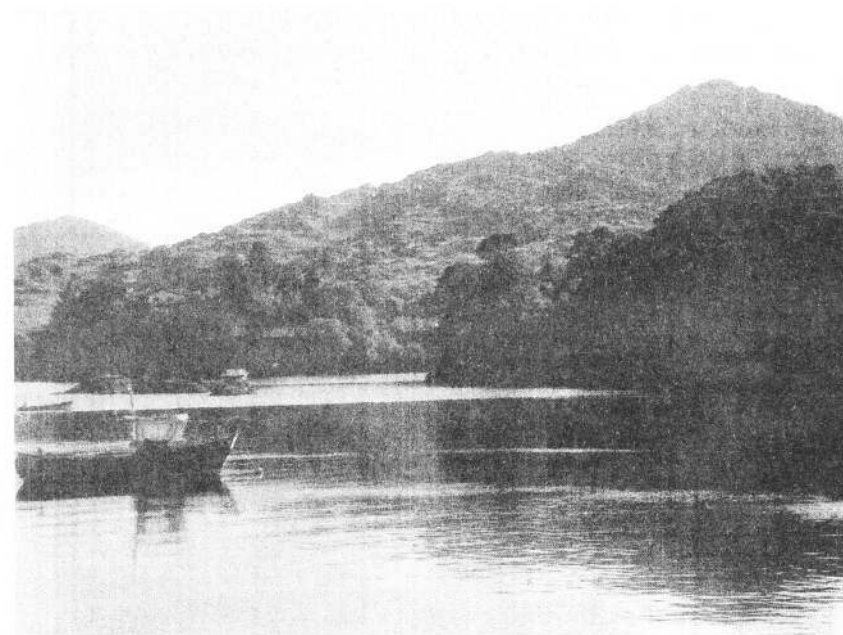


Lawrence Cove Marina

these days! After a brief conversation it was agreed we would all head off for the local restaurant – Kitty's. We enjoyed a very pleasant meal, with wine provided by the pub next door for those who had forgotten to take their own!

5 August, Lawrence Cove – Glengarriff, 14.2 miles logged.

This was a short sail up Bantry Bay to the head of the loch – beautiful scenery and very easy to navigate. On arrival we searched for and found one of the Irish Cruising Club moorings, set in a tiny bay about 500 metres from the landing slip – ideal. Ten euros in the Irish Lifeboat box in the pub secured us the buoy for three nights!



We explored the village, sampled the pubs, sat outside for some excellent music and retired to bed for an early night. The following morning it was raining heavily, so a lay in and a cooked breakfast followed. Eventually we decided to explore the islands in the bay, we passed several rocky outcrops covered with seals basking in the warm temperatures – they soon disappeared when we drifted closer! The gardens on Garinish Island are well worth a visit if you have the time to spare. This was probably our favourite place in SW Ireland and we shall certainly be going back!

8 August, Glengarriff – Crookhaven, 30 miles logged. 9 August, Crookhaven – Schull – via Toormore, 12 miles logged. A motor sail most of the way but we did get a decent sail for the end of the journey. Crookhaven is a lovely spot but we hit the wrong



Toormore Bay

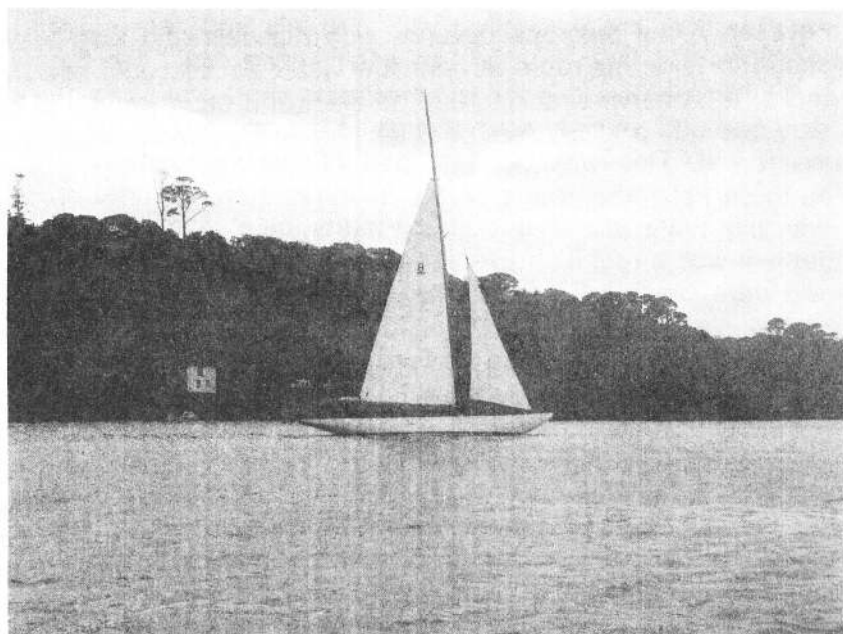
day, as it was the Irish bank holiday weekend and we found the jet ski and rib activity rather noisy after the tranquillity of other harbours. We stayed one night. En route for Schull, we anchored in Toormore Bay seeking a sandy beach for a swim but the water was still freezing, so a paddle sufficed before moving on to explore the many islands and channels around Schull. It was the end of Calves week, so the harbour was very busy, as was the town. Plenty of good shops and pubs but again full of yachties, so we chose to stay one night and move on.

9 August, Schull – Sherkin Island, near Baltimore, nine miles logged. An interested route via the north passage saw us pass

between rocky outcrops covered with mussels and kelp – we chose to take this route at near low water so we could see the rocks! A bit nerve-wracking but the electronic chart proved to be very accurate and we were soon alongside the concrete barge at Sherkin Island. This was our last port of call in Ireland and proved to be delightful. There was a hotel-restaurant, where on our first night we joined a surprise party celebrating a 60th birthday – it was a real Irish evening singing, music and dancing and we were made most welcome. The next day we walked around the island and found a beautiful beach where I managed another (chilly) swim. Later, we enjoyed one of the best meals of the holiday in the other pub/restaurant - The Jolly Sailor.

11 – 12 August, Sherkin – Helford River, 209 miles logged, 33 hours sailed. A fairly uneventful sail-motor sail. The start of the journey was marked by frequent visits from schools of dolphins and porpoises - difficult to capture on camera but thrilling to lie on the foredeck and watch them playing on the bow wave. On passage, we saw few other vessels apart from fishing boats, for which we had to alter course on several occasions. Dawn on the 12th saw us off the north coast of the Scillies where we had planned to stop but the forecast was unfavourable so we pressed on to the mainland and crossed the TSS without incident. The wind freshened as we closed the Lizard and we had some rough seas before reaching some shelter on the way to the Helford River. We anchored off Helford passage in clear water and turned in early after our longest non-stop sail with just the two of us on board!

The following day we were delighted to see a familiar boat - Mikado sailing up the river with the glorious backdrop of the banks of the Helford – a fitting end to our trip to the land of the Leprechauns!



Mikado

Too many times round the same buoys

Race 22 - Sunday 10 September

by Sue Garrett, First Mate (*Intrepid*)

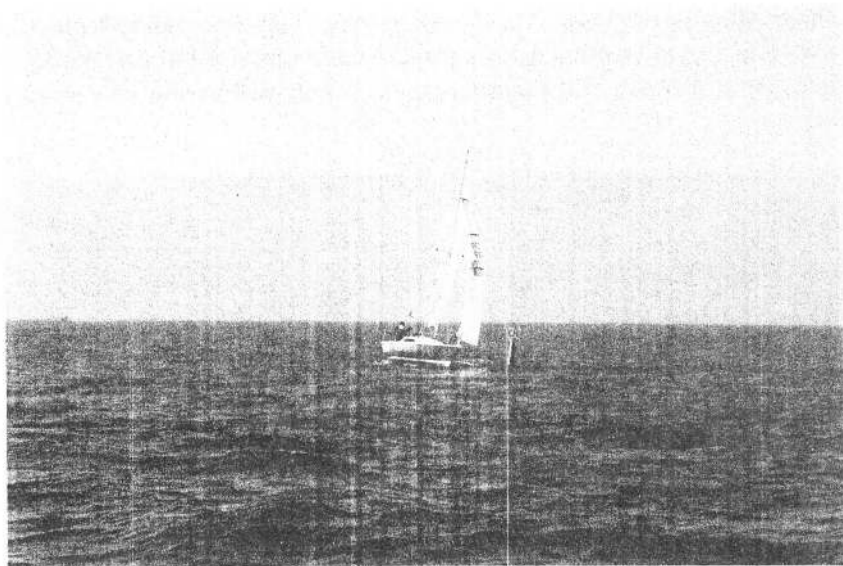
Sunday dawned bright and gentle after Saturday's grey skies and slightly more windy than forecast! The fleet gently bobbing, rafted up at Ichenor, left in good time to beat the tide to rendezvous with *The Harribelle* at WE. *Intrepid* was excited to have a crew of four for once – thanks to Clare and Heather for joining us. The wind was a gentle 12-15 knots easterly and the start line off to Chi presented a good beat. The

Beta fleet consisting of *Blue Tango*, *Mons Meg*, *Samurai* and *Intrepid* (*Intrepid* late at the start line as usual – too many times round the same buoys made it difficult to programme!) kept well within site of each other.



Intrepid

Despite the late start we managed to make up a lot of ground because we can now point up so much better with our new sails (mainsail now being less shaped like a spinnaker). On the dead run to Bay, out came the spinnakers but for those of us goose-winging we just managed to keep up. On the reach to Winner, those with spinnakers struggled most of the way and then, on the beat back to Chi, *Intrepid* actually overtook another boat (*Samurai*). Was that a first?! Somewhere along the line, *Mons Meg* had to retire after a wrapped spinnaker and we began to



Samurai

think we might be in contention and started timing *Samurai* around the marks. We then left so many marks to port visiting Chi, Winner, Chi, Bay and WE again we began to lose count but the Beta fleet stayed close together. During this time there was a lot of playing about on *Intrepid* with outhauls, track positions and leech lines as we got used to the sails, which made a change from the 'reef in', 'reef out', 'reef in', 'reef out' of the day before. On the third time we visited Chi, *Sycorax* and *Blue Tango* were both coming up on port tack and we were on starboard. We thought that they might have to give way to us but they managed to cross in front, giving us the advantage of seeing that their angle was not going to get them the mark. *Blue Tango*, however, managed to tack just in front of us, thus maintaining their lead, but only just. So with Bay and WE to go, *Blue Tango* stayed out front with *Intrepid* in hot pursuit and *Samurai* a few minutes behind, which in the

end and after handicaps were applied, was the reverse order of the day. A thoroughly enjoyable course and thanks to Dave and Sandy for overseeing the day and also for these photos.

Peter wins the Wooden Spoon for his anniversary

Race 23, inter-club race with Channel Sailing Club and summer series 4 to Southampton, Saturday 23 September by Stuart King (*Slipstream*)

Saturday dawned bright and clear and by the time *Slipstream* crossed Chichester Bar at 09.15 there was a SE F3-4 blowing. We had already had two cups of tea, porridge, toast, the coffee was brewing and Izzy [the ship's dog] had been fed and walked. All that remained was to teach two of our crew how to sail. Sue and Marti are Australians who had never sailed before and were on a steep learning curve. We must apologise to *Marigold* for making such sudden changes of course on our way to Gleeds.

Milling about Gleeds for the 12 noon start, CCRC boats outnumbered CSC boats 11 to six. Course C was announced by *Cochise*, the CSC committee boat although, since Mc Murdo was not on station, the first mark was to be Outer Spit left to port, then Royal Southern to port, Marinetrack.com to port, Burgess Salmon to port and finish at Coronation to port. There was a modified gate start, with *Cochise* sailing off from Gleeds at the one-minute signal on a broad reach at 90 degrees to the direction of the first leg to create a start line. I had anticipated that she would go to the left on starboard tack and was surprised when she went right on port tack. Fortunately, not being far from Gleeds at the one-minute signal, we made a reasonable start anyway and I don't think anybody noticed.

Arcadia had a good start and as the photo shows, was a nose in front of *Gunshot* and *Eagle* as we started up the beat. The rest of the fleet seemed reasonably close although it was difficult to keep track of them amongst the non-racing boats.

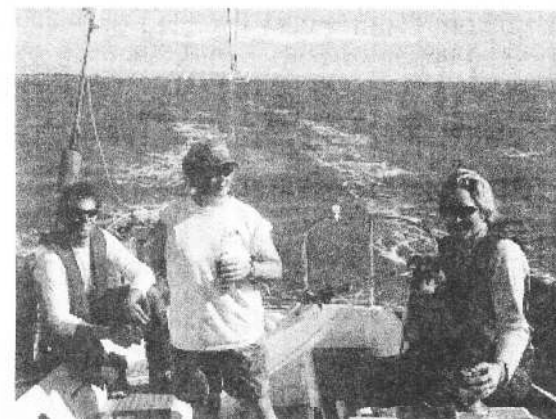


Looking back we saw the CSC boat *Farthing* being Sunsailed. Both boats were on starboard and one of the Sunsail fleet broad-reached on to them. Some last minute serious changes of course averted any damage. Those Sunsail boats really ought to fly two black balls and be painted black red black.

The tide was already running by the time we arrived at Outer Spit and although there were boats going round, we were concentrating on manoeuvring around *Carisma*, which had got stuck in irons. A clever ploy we realised, as she passed round well in front of us.

Now began the long run down to Royal Southern. We rigged a preventer on the boom, gybed the genoa and goose-winged. *Mons Meg* and *Carisma* joined us in showing restraint, although several boats ahead had spinnakers up.

As far as *Slipstream* is concerned, downwind legs are for having lunch. Baked potatoes and cheese went down a storm, washed down with whatever you fancied. The photo shows Ciara trying hard to disguise the pressure she's under so as not to frighten the novice crew ...or the dog.



Arriving at Royal Southern, we could see *Blue Tango* and *Intrepid* going round in front and *Mons Meg* and *Carisma* were just behind us. Setting off towards Marinetrack.com we became concerned as three yellow or orange buoys appeared ahead of us. So which one is Marinetrack.com? We followed the track on our GPS but were disconcerted to see *Mons Meg* sailing higher than us. Had we punched in an incorrect position? We hadn't, but *Mons Meg* was able to make a much tighter turn around the buoy and show us the way to Burgess Salmon.

The wind had strengthened and we were overpressed at times. Had the leg been longer, we would have put a reef in the main. However we felt that we would need all sail on the last downwind leg if we were to catch *Mons Meg*. With extra crew to sit on the windward side, I was available to take the mainsheet and dump it

whenever Ciara on the helm started to grit her teeth. I like to think that it made a difference.

In the end we were unable to catch *Mons Meg* until after the finish line. Checking the finishing times, *Jo Jo Gunne* and *Gunshot* had finished about an hour earlier! It was an interesting potter up Southampton Water whilst enjoying ship's cake and cups of tea. Our Australian crew members were struck by the amount we eat on board, one meal drifting seamlessly into the next.



Peter receives the Wooden Spoon on behalf of CCRC

Marchwood made us very welcome. The harbourmaster went to great efforts to find water against the pontoons deep enough for us. There was a very party atmosphere before dinner. Can you believe that both Di and Peter Wallace and Judi and I were celebrating our 34th wedding anniversaries! Mr and Mrs Wallace were married two hours earlier than us. They were in Cobham as we were up the road in Feltham. The two clubs filled the dining room and if the Sunday morning hangover is anything to go by, it

was a great party. It got even better for CCRC when the results were announced for the Wooden Spoon Trophy. The ECHO handicap was used and the first seven boats on corrected time were CCRC boats. *Gunshot* was the winning boat and Peter looked pleased.

We spent sometime with the crew of *Pell Mell* and *Cochise*. The Channel Sailing Club had a great time and look forward to winning the Wooden Spoon back next year. Marchwood may not be the most attractive venue in the Solent but the quality of the welcome was first class.

A lovely romp home

Race from Marchwood to Chichester, Sunday 24 September

by Patrick Marshall

The race home started right from the pontoons at Marchwood. With eight miles of Southampton Water dead up wind and up tide to Coronation, it was a power-boat race with no handicap adjustment for shortage of horsepower. Some arrived later than others.

It had been a good night at a new venue for the CCRC. Marchwood YC made us very welcome, and in the course of the evening we discovered that both the Wallaces and the Kings were celebrating their wedding anniversaries, not only the same day but the same year!

The rain was lashing down on to the decks when the alarm went off on board *Mantra*. The skipper was half dressed when the first mate sleepily suggested that, as it was still dark outside, the alarm clock might still be set on French time. By getting-up time in England, dawn was breaking into a beautiful autumnal day.

Gunshot fired the starting signal, and the fleet of eight Beta boats

straggled across the line, beating into a gentle south-easterly breeze. With the tide still flooding round Calshot and up Southampton Water and a favourable tide along the Hillhead shore, the first few tacks were critical. *Marigold* was spotted early on going the right way, but her small size meant that she began to drop back and perhaps suffered worse than most from the turning tide later on. *Blue Tango*, sailing fast and free, and *Intrepid*, sporting some very smart looking sails and pointing high, took an early lead. *Mons Meg*, no doubt engaged in a personal battle with *Carisma*, the other single-handed Contessa, crossed ahead of *Mantra*, but by the penultimate tack of that leg she was behind, perhaps losing some pointing ability on rolling her genoa in the freshening breeze.

A short off-wind leg turned out to be very shy, and, probably wisely, no-one attempted to fly a spinnaker. The strategy then for the long leg to Cambrian seemed to be to stay in mid Solent to get the best of the remaining eastgoing stream. An awkward chop, however, made getting the balance between maintaining speed and pointing particularly tricky. The Solent tide was starting to turn by the time the leaders were level with Gilkicker, but still flooding strongly into Portsmouth. The leading pair were evidently enjoying a close tussle, but found too late that they had been sucked into the trap, giving themselves a long plug against the tide to round Horse Sand Fort. Meanwhile, *Mons Meg* had headed off towards the Island shore, but seemed to drop back a little, perhaps losing some wind under its lee. *Mantra* set herself up on the starboard lay-line for Cambrian from three miles back, enabling her to minimise the foul tide and cross ahead of the erstwhile leaders.

Whilst all this was going on for the Beta fleet, *Gunshot* upped anchor, swapped her flags for sails, and engaged *Jo Jo Gunne* in a match race home for the Alpha division prize. We didn't see them go by, but *Gunshot* was more-or-less on station at Chi for the finish, although not actually attached to the sea-bed, as the leading Beta boats approached.

With the wind freshening and the sheets cracked off, it was a lovely romp home in the sunshine. *Blue Tango*, revelling in the conditions, pulled away from *Intrepid* and closed the gap on the leader. *Mantra*, however, held her off long enough to take line honours.

The handicap results were 1st: *Slipstream* (apologies for not giving her a mention earlier – we just didn't spot her), 2nd: *Mons Meg* and 3rd: *Intrepid*. Thanks are due to race officer Colin Wallace for giving us a good line and a course that got us back to our mooring in time for lunch.

***Samurai* spinnakers the Bramidge**

Race Report – Bramidge Trophy, 30 September

By Hugh Caldwell (*Mons Meg*)

The joint Bramidge Trophy race with Chichester Yacht Club had been blown off its normal fixture date in the spring, hence this late-season re-run; and according to the Met Office there was quite a possibility that history would repeat itself. Strong southerlies with blustery showers were forecast for the weekend, and, indeed, the Sunday pursuit race was abandoned.

Saturday's start was a late one, 13.00 hrs, and I was aboard *Mons Meg* earlier than usual to get some more waypoints fed into my new chartplotter, which is taking me some time and effort to master. I made an early strategic decision – definitely no spinnaker today - so the decks were cleared of all potential snags for sheets. Leaving Northney around eleven, I motored into a dead noser of 18 to 20 knots (apparent) all the way down the Emsworth Channel, and delayed setting even the main (with a reef in it) until I was off HISC.

Motor-tacking out to West Pole, I passed *Samurai*, well loaded up with crew, for the first and only time that day. Ch 72 informed me that *Jo Jo*

Gunne would be starting the race at Bay buoy. Promises, promises.

Accordingly, once round the beacon, I bore away, stopped the engine, and started lunch, for which I would be too busy later. A satisfactory turnout included *Gunshot*, *Sycorax*, *Intrepid*, *The Harribelle* (like myself singlehanded), *Arwen* and *Mons Meg*, all from CCRC, while CYC was represented by *Upbeat*, *Out of the Blue*, *Sea Hey*, *Denecia*, *Panacea*, *Coco* (another Contessa 32) and on this occasion the aforementioned *Samurai*, helmed by Nick Colbourne.

The course was announced – a beat out to N7, followed by running, reaching and close fetching legs to Horse Tail, Chi, Winner, Hard and Bay. Next came a postponement, as *Jo Jo Gunne* attempted to get her lightweight aluminium hook to hold in the lively conditions: to no avail. Eventually the start was relocated to Chi where the ground is better, and the whole fleet (all Beta) was cleanly dispatched at 13.20 hours.

With the neap tide going east until 15.00 hours, and a southerly wind, I started on starboard in company with *Denecia* and *Upbeat*, both proudly flying the Red Duster. My shouts were carried away in the wind. Before long, I decided that I might fare better with a lee-bowing port tack out into the stronger stream, but it seemed to make little difference, and I followed the wind-shifts out to N7. The wind was at most about 25 knots apparent, and tending to ease. I thought I was doing quite well, pointing higher than most while maintaining reasonable speed through the chop, until, near the mark, I saw *Samurai* crossing well ahead of me! Being well crewed up, she set a kite on rounding N7 and was soon out of sight.

Earlier, I saw a large container ship heading east down the Nab Channel. Unknown to me at the time, this vessel, unaccountably on the port side of the fairway, caused much inconvenience to *Gunshot* and *Sycorax* at the mark, actually clobbering the N7 buoy with her stern as she made the turn to starboard. Mercifully, she did not attempt a 360!

Mons Meg arrived at the mark on starboard, with two CYC boats (I think *Sea Hey* and *Into the Blue*) coming up on port. Not certain I could tack in their water and clear the mark, I stood on and starboarded them, but it did me no good. They got through, and increased their lead on the ensuing run to Horse Tail.

In an attempt to catch up, and as the wind seemed to be easing, I managed to take out the reef in the main on the run, and, of course, rolled out the full genoa. This helped a little, and once round the mark I had a good fast reach back to Chi buoy which was left to port. At this stage, *Mons Meg* was on her own, with groups of boats both ahead and astern.

Chi to Winner was close on the wind, but with a fair tide now, and I rolled in a few turns of jib. I found I could lay the mark with something in hand, but others seemed to make a long and short tack of it. Winner to Hard was a reach, and the final leg, to Bay, was, of course, a dead run where the spinnaker might have been useful. I was goosewinged, and half a mile from the finish my starboard genoa fairlead block burst asunder on a snatch, propelling the sheave overboard and leaving the sail sheeted direct to the top of the winch drum, a riding turn. It did not greatly matter: I drove down to the finish line, where *Jo Jo Gunne* was holding station under power, and thereafter needed only the port sheet to return to harbour.

A good day's sail, and not as taxing for a singlehander as I had anticipated. To round off the day, there was a really excellent buffet dinner in the Quarterdeck at CYC. *Samurai* was a clear and deserving winner by eight minutes on handicap, with *Gunshot* second, but the next eight boats were all within nine minutes of *Gunshot* on corrected time. Well done, the handicapper! With the first six boats from each club counting, the trophy was won by CYC with 38 points against CCRC's 40.

A touch of the wild west in Little Britain - the construction industry regatta for the Little Britain Cup by Brian Dandridge (*Sycorax*)

"The LBCC is now in its 19th year and is the largest corporate yachting regatta in Europe - the only other event that is bigger in size is the world famous Skandia Cowes Week. The event is also the biggest UK gathering of senior figureheads from the construction and property industry. This year, the Regatta took place from the 14th to 17th September in Cowes on the Isle of Wight. 235 companies battled over three days for the coveted Little Britain Challenge Trophy, awarded each year to the highest placed yacht." That is the introduction you will read if you visit the LBCC website.

I have been privileged to take part in this regatta seven times during the past ten years as the company I work for, Excitech Ltd, is the largest supplier of Computer Aided Design Systems to the construction industry in this country. Each year we have entered *Sycorax* with a mix of Excitech employees and customers crewing the boat. On the first five occasions we were, of course, sailing the old *Sycorax*, the Ver1 33, but this year and last we entered the Swan. Both 2003 and 2004 were very successful years for us as on each occasion we came away with three trophies and were runner up in class. Unfortunately, from a race results perspective, we have not been so fortunate in the last two years. 2005 was particularly frustrating as the regatta was affected by very light winds - in fact only one race out of three was run, and that was shortened as the wind ran out. This year the weather was much better and we had four excellent races over the three days.

My crew for 2006 consisted of myself plus CCRC members Bob Garrett (who also works for Excitech), Pat Morrell and John

Aldridge. Pat and John both qualify to sail in this regatta as Pat is a civil engineer and John a consultant to the water industry. We were joined by Leigh Atkinson, a director of Excitech, plus several clients including two architects, a CAD manager and an IT director.

Bob is Marketing Director at Excitech and was responsible for the logistics behind our entry, which included excellent crew clothing for each day, our meals, and superb accommodation in a large house in Cowes. On the boat, Bob ran the foredeck and doubled as navigator.

The regatta opened on Thursday 14 September and we woke to torrential rain after a night of heavy thunderstorms. Fortunately, by early morning the rain died away and the skies began to clear as we set off for the first race. *Sycorax* was entered in the IRC Racing category which itself was split into four classes. We were in IRC Class 3, the largest fleet in the regatta with 39 boats. This fleet included two other CCRC boats - *Jo Jo Gunne*, which had been chartered from Richard and Pam for the event, and *Nokomis*, a Sigma 362. The majority of the boats in our fleet were higher rated boats, including around ten J109s, an X35, an X43, at least three Elan 333s, an Elan 37 and a HOD 35. We would certainly have our work cut out in this company!

Race one on the Thursday afternoon was an ideal race to get the crew settled down, as we had not had an opportunity all to sail together. It was run in winds around ten knots using marks in the eastern Solent. In this race I can claim to have made one of my best starts ever and we hit the line absolutely as the gun went with sails pulling. We started well up with the leading bunch but the faster boats soon started to pull ahead and by the time we completed the course we had dropped to the middle of the field. We finished 14th, *Jo Jo* was 2nd and *Nokomis* 19th.

Friday morning dawned grey with light drizzle but fortunately this cleared as we set off for the first of the two races to be run that day. The wind was stronger than it had been the day before and was forecast to increase as the day wore on. It was blowing from due north which gave the race committee a difficult time setting the line as they are constrained to use one or other of the two Squadron lines, both of which lie in a north-south direction. We made a reasonable start and performed well for the first part of the race. Unfortunately we were caught out during the second half and lost several places as the wind freshened. In hindsight, we should have put a reef in and would probably have gone better. As it was we finished 17th, still in the top half of the fleet. *Jo Jo* was 1st and *Nokomis* one place behind us.

The wind stayed for the afternoon race and this time we put in the first reef. The boat handled much better and we finished 9th with what was to be our best result of the series. *Jo Jo* won again and *Nokomis* was, once more, just one place behind us.

Of course the LBCC isn't just about sailing. It is a great way to meet clients away from the normal business environment and build a more all round relationship with each of them. On Friday evening the LBCC hosts laid on an excellent evening entertainment with a Wild West theme. This included a superb floor show and an opportunity for those who wished to get into fancy dress! The *Sycorax* team all turned out in cowboy hats and droopy moustaches!

Saturday 16th was the final day for racing and featured a single longish race of around five hours. The wind had dropped from the day before and was forecast to drop as the day wore on. With the wind once again coming from due north the Squadron set a close reaching start. We made a good start and with

spinnaker up we were well up in the midst of the fleet. We could do nothing, however, about the fleeter J109s, X35 and Elans and they steadily drew ahead. The course took us to the east in a zigzag, criss-crossing the eastern Solent until we rounded No Man's Land Fort, beat across to Gleeds and then fetched to the finish. During this final leg we worked our way across to the Island shore and by Norris point used the shallows to keep out of the tide and gain several places. This time, however, *Nokomis* finished well ahead of us in 11th place, whilst we were back in 16th. *Jo Jo* was 2nd but won the class overall, whilst *Sycorax* and *Nokomis* finished 14th and 15th overall.

Although we didn't come home with any trophies, I believe the event was a great success. Everyone enjoyed themselves, we met many other people we work with in the industry and we didn't break anything or anybody! Roll on LBCC 2007.

A sign of old age - race 27, 8 October – Portsmouth to Hayling

by Brian Dandridge (*Sycorax*)

They say it is a sign of old age, but this season has absolutely flown by. For me it has been a season of highs and lows, but all very enjoyable. The high points include the encouraging start with several new members and boats joining the Club and many showing up for the early races. A superb 2006 cruise, organised by Tom and Denise Bitchenor, with a record turn out. The lows include the number of races we had to cancel or postpone due to strong winds and the fall off in turn outs in the second half of the season, something I hope we will be able to address next year.

And so to the final race in the CCRC's 2006 programme – an Alpha perspective. On Saturday the 7 October we had enjoyed a hard sail

down to Portsmouth with winds in the mid-twenty knot bracket for much of the race. I took my hat off to the three single-handers who took part – Keith Feltham (*L'Aquarelle*), David Perrin (*The Harribelle*), and, of course, Hugh Caldwell (*Mons Meg*). If they can do it I also took my hat off to our Race Office – Bob Garrett (*Intrepid*) and his girls as they must have had a very uncomfortable day both starting and finishing the fleet.

Sunday dawned with a reasonably clear sky and a bit less wind than we had had the day before. Our Race Officer, Richard Creer (*Jo Jo Gunne*) set off early to check out the line and, I suspect, get his hook down and dug in away from the watching eyes of the fleet after his problems attempting to start the fleet at Bay the week before! As we motored down Portsmouth Harbour, Pam came on the radio to inform us that we would not be starting at Gleeds but would be using the nearby McMurdo instead. The first leg of the course would take us on a short beat to Mary Rose before a close winded fetch to Cambrian; a bear away to Hard, beat out to Dean Tail, a dead run to Winner before hardening up for a two mile dash to Chi. There they would stop the Beta fleet but we Alphas would have to carry on to Bay, WE and then return to Chi. With *Jo Jo* carrying out Race Officer duty this left just *Gunshot* and *Sycorax* to compete for the final honours in the Alpha fleet. Peter Wallace and I agreed it would be silly to run a separate start so it was agreed that both fleets would start together. This also meant that the two CCRC Moody 38Ss, *Gunshot* and *Delfini*, could race alongside each other for much of the event.

Richard set an excellent line and we started well just astern of *Gunshot* and *Intrepid*, all on starboard tack. *Slipstream* crossed the line on port just ahead of *Gunshot* but, sorry Stuart, not far enough ahead to clear us. We called starboard on them and they tacked just upwind from *Gunshot*. We now had clear air and I decided to tack off to get out into the eastgoing tide and get maximum benefit before rounding Mary Rose. I am pleased to say this worked well and we reached the first

mark well clear of the next two boats – *Gunshot* and *Delfini*. We cleared Mary Rose by a few feet and set off on the leg to Cambrian. After a few minutes one of my crew, Oliver, called back “Oh dear, *Gunshot* are in trouble.” I took a quick look astern and saw that the Moody 38S was struggling to get round Mary Rose and was in dire danger of hitting the mark. At the very last moment Peter realised they weren’t going to make it and ducked below the buoy before turning through 360 degrees to try again. This gave us a healthy lead we were never to relinquish and put *Delfini* well ahead of them.

I can’t report much of the rest of the Beta fleet as we were by this time well away and concentrating on maintaining the lead on *Gunshot*. Hopefully the Beta scribe I approached the night before had a clear enough head to write a few words on their activities.

The rest of our race went well. The crew performed superbly. The spinnaker went up and came down at the appropriate times without any issues – at least none that I noticed.

We finished at about a quarter to one with a healthy lead over *Gunshot* to score our first win of the season. Although there were only the two boats in our fleet we are fairly level rated and as we have seen during the season results have gone both ways. A big thanks to Richard, Pam and Pat for taking on RO duty for the second time and allowing us to have a very enjoyable last race of the season.

Taking the old geezer in hand - race Port Solent to Chi on Sunday 8 October **by David Perrin (*The Harribelle*)**

Through the steam off my coffee, I watched OOD Cptn Creer navigate *Jo Jo* away from the overnight pontoon towards the start off Portsmouth. Slowly, reluctantly, the rest of the CCRC

fleet peeled away from their overnight 'recovery position' to commence the pre-start pas de deux (or was it a pas de huit?) off McMurdo.

It was a relief to note that the wind strength was down a notch or two from Saturday and even more of a blessing for the aches and pains being suffered by this geriatric that daughter Isobelle had gallantly travelled down after work on Saturday to take the old geezer in hand.

The course: Mary Rose (where she?), Cambrian, Hard, Dean Tail, Winner and finish at Chi.

I like combined starts with courses that enable both fleets at least to start in the same direction. It gives us a chance to measure ourselves against the 'big boys' (and also helps show us the way!)

The Harribelle (or at least her skipper) didn't start particularly well, but whether by fluke or premonition, quickly found clear air and started to make reasonable progress to windward. *Sycorax*, *Gunshot* (both Alpha) and *Delfini* (Beta) quickly establishing their pre-eminence and steadily pulled away on the windward leg.

Once round Mary Rose, it was just possible to lay Cambrian under full main. Looking back, Isobelle asked what *Slipstream* was doing – had she missed the mark? "Focus Isobelle, lets worry about what we are doing and by the way any chance of a cup of tea on this leg?"

What a cracking sail, it couldn't have been better for our last CCRC race of 2006. *Sycorax* and the two S38's (*Gunshot* and *Delfini*) continued to extend their lead over the rest of the fleet, with *Gunfini* and *Delshot* enjoying (hopefully) what from our position looked like a particularly close tussle.

A roaring, cracking reach from Cambrian to Hard threatened to blister my tiller hand but certainly planted a very broad grin on my visage. Touching eight knots on the log (I must get it re-calibrated) we seemed to be holding the gap between the front runners and ourselves. But equally so was the rest of the fleet – were they closing?

The breeze seemed to be stiffening with around 20 knots over the deck as we approached Hard, so we quickly reefed for the beat to Dean Tail, only too aware that a big ebb would soon be developing.

Sycorax and *Gunshot* rounded that mark and immediately set their kites for the downwind leg to Winner. *Delfini* white sailed, as did we and I believe the rest of the Betas.

Another fast and furious reach to the finish off Chi. We were determined to get there as soon as possible to relieve our gallant OOD from the discomfort of lying to anchor in lumpy conditions (purely altruism don't you know?). It appeared that the rest of the fleet had the same idea. *The Harribelle* would be second Beta boat over the line, but was the gap enough to improve on our Saturday position? With Isobelle's help it was.

Thanks to Richard and Pam for setting a great race and thanks to the weather Gods for such a brilliant last day's racing.

Enquiries about membership of Chichester Cruiser Racing Club should be made to the Commodore, Vice Commodore or the Secretary. Please see officers' phone numbers and e-mail addresses on page 2.
