

FASTNET RACE 1995



John Turpin, John Young, Chris Stebbings, Pat Mitchell (Skipper/Navigator), Jenny Carter, Robin Miller, Mark Dyer, Roy Stillman

Saturday 5th August - The start of the 1995 Fastnet was delayed by 10 minutes due to a Container ship but we finally got away at 1750hrs. We did not get a bad start. The wind was light and coming from an easterly direction at the start and it remained light all the way up the Solent. We carried a light spinnaker and managed to make about 3½ to 4 knots boatspeed. We stayed out in the middle of the channel but the best tide was on the Island side with all the inshore boats moving a lot faster than us over the ground. By the time we got to Hurst Castle (two hours later) we were some way behind the bulk of the fleet in our Class. Most boats went through the North Channel at Hurst and then cut off south to round Anvil Point.

By 2030hrs the wind had dropped to about 7 or 8 knots (True) and it was varying between the southeast and northeast. The wind remained light throughout the night and we had a slow passage to St Albans Head. Here we were forced to kedge for about two hours when we lost all the wind and had a foul tide taking us back to the east! Getting the kedge down was a bit of a struggle in about 40 metres of water with various bits of line tied together. Getting it up seemed to be an even bigger struggle given the racket that was made!

Sunday 6th August - By 9.00am the wind had filled in (12 knots (True) from the north) and we were tramping along quite nicely at 7½ knots under spinnaker. We made good time to Portland Bill but slowed down across Lyme Bay as the wind once again became light and fluky. By 1830hrs we were south of the entrance to the Dart River having travelled about 95 miles in the first 24 hours.

The 1750hrs shipping forecast reported much the same wind as had been forecast 24 hours earlier - northeasterly force 3-4 - but which in practice had turned out to be variable force 3!

The day itself was fairly uneventful - no major problems - sleeping and sailing - the watch system having settled down by then into a fairly regular pattern.

Monday 7th August - By 2.00am Monday the wind had freshened a little (10 knots (True)) and was northerly in direction. At this time we were making about 6½ knots boatspeed and were roughly half way between Start Point and the Lizard. It was a warm night with lots of stars and a near full moon. The sea was as silver as I have ever seen it with the phosphorescence falling away in the wake of the boat.

We hoisted the spinnaker at 3.00am when we were about 20 miles from the Lizard. We were having a good run but at about 4.30am the topping lift on the spinnaker pole snapped and there was a minor panic as we rigged the spare spinnaker halyard to keep the pole up.

We got to the Lizard at 6.30 in the morning and then had a fine sail across Mounts Bay to Lands End. This was an impressive sight; it was a glorious morning and about 60 yachts covered horizon to horizon - all with spinnakers up.

Lands End was passed about 9.00am and we changed heading for the Rock - 170 miles away.

Just past Lands End we had our second break - the guy rope snapped and the spinnaker went flying, along with the spare sheet. At this point, all the yachts had started to spread out with some going very high and those still carrying spinnakers, dropping down below us.

By 1800hrs we were in the middle of the Irish Sea with about 100 miles run to the Rock. We had managed 170 miles during our second day. The wind had been northerly about 11 or 12 knots (True) for much of the day although it had been forecast to come round to the east which would have freed us up nicely had it done so. There were fewer yachts around us by the time with most being seen up-wind of our position. We were making about 7½ knots through the water on a heading of about 300°. It was a beautiful evening; the sun was still very bright except that it was hidden by the mainsail and spinnaker, the wind was warm and the sea had flattened somewhat - it was the sort of evening that you could sit for hours and do nothing.

Tuesday 8th August - During the night the wind died and the sea became a mill pond. We were ghosting in the very light wind (north/northwest) with the spinnaker up but sheeted in fairly hard. By about 1.00am we had started to build up a little bit more boat speed as the wind gently began to fill in. However, with the spinnaker up we were not able to make the course we wanted. It had been a very clear night until then with a bright full moon and a lot of stars but by 1.30am or so it began to cloud over and the wind freshened (from the north). We dropped the kite and put up the No. 1 Genoa. Boat speed quickly built up to 5 or 6 knots and we came round on to the track we wanted towards the Rock with about 60 miles to go.

With daylight the wind died once more. The day turned out to be very hard and we made slow progress towards the Rock - not arriving there until 1800hrs - three days from the start. We had managed to carry the spinnaker for most of the day with the light wind slowly veering from the north/northwest. The sea remained very flat.

Rounding the Rock was impressive as usual but it was very busy with hordes of other Class 2 and 3 boats going round within the space of an hour of each other. The wind by then had veered further and was coming from the southeast - but light (force 2 to 3) - as we set off towards the Scillies.



Apart from getting round the Rock the only other exciting part of the day was a school of porpoises which were swimming around the boat early in the morning for about a minute or so. There must have been about 50 of them causing quite a ripple on the flat sea.

Wednesday 9th August. - After rounding the Rock we had southerly easterly winds (ie from the direction of Bishop Rock on the Scilly Isles). In the early part of Tuesday evening the winds had been fairly light but from about 2.00am Wednesday the wind strength increased and we quickly picked up boat speed.

It had been decided not to tack down the rhumb line but to put in a very long tack to the south hoping to get an early shift from a low pressure system forming out in the Atlantic.

The seas grew steadily during the day and although the waves were not particularly big they were big enough to make the boat slam down very hard if you caught them at the wrong time so there was a fair amount of crashing and banging.

By 2100hrs we were still about 60 miles away from Bishop Rock. Wind strength had remained steady for most of the day at about force 4. We had maintained fairly good boat speed (about 6 knots) and it had been a good days sailing - albeit quite tiring.

Thursday 10th August - The long haul south in the hope of an early wind shift singularly failed - indeed, the wind backed! We ended up doing "great circle" to the south of the Isles of Scilly. At one point we were about 200 miles to the south/southwest of Bishop Rock with the Lizard still about 40 miles away. The wind freshened during the day but stayed pretty much to the east/southeast; it got up to force 6 for a time and we dropped down to two reefs in the main. The sea state became rougher - probably about 3m waves - giving rise to a lot of slamming as the boat crashed down off the wave tops. We finally rounded the Lizard at about 2100hrs.

Friday 11th August - From rounding the Rock on Tuesday evening we had been beating for 2½ days. The wind was still coming from the east; we had not seen the shift to the south that we had been expecting some two days or so before. During the night it eased off (to about force 4) and we got back to a full main.

We finally crossed the finish line just before 9.00am with everyone feeling fairly weary after what seemed like a very long haul back from the Fastnet Rock.



Conclusion - Looking at the chart afterwards it was clearly apparent how the wind shifts had not acted in our favour on the return leg. This probably cost us many hours and many miles of extra sailing. The wind backed quite significantly about 2100hrs on the Wednesday. Had we been tacking down the rhumb line towards the Scillies we would have been much better placed to have picked up the shift and had a fairly straight forward (port tack) run in to Bishop Rock. As it was, we went a long way south and by the time the wind shifted to the east we ended up continuing to beat to get round the Scillies and then on to the Lizard.

At the time, the race seemed frustrating and we had to do a lot more sailing than we really needed to have done. However, the weather was good, the sun was shining, the wind was warm, the food was excellent and on balance it was an enjoyable Fastnet.

J M YOUNG

CSSA OFFSHORE TROPHIES

I have been trying to trace the whereabouts of the CSSA' Offshore Trophies since I took office as Rear Commodore Offshore at the beginning of this year. So far I have traced 15 of the trophies but the ones in the following list are still to be found. I would be very grateful if the current holders of the trophies or anyone who has knowledge of them would get in touch with me at 3 Cunningham Avenue, Boxgrove Park, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 2PE. Telephone 01483 570462.

1. **ROUND THE ISLAND TROPHY (RACE CUP)** - Donor CSSA

Awarded to the yacht owned or chartered by a member showing the best overall performance in the Round the Island race, i.e. the lowest corrected time whether measured by TMF or WSH method. As' CSSA membership cannot be determined from the official results published by the Island Sailing Club, any member who wishes to enter for this trophy should notify the Offshore Secretary of the yacht's name, class and overall position as soon as possible after publication of the race results.

2. **POWER LOG CUP** - Donor Rex Clutton

Awarded to the member who has submitted the best log of one or more cruises undertaken in a yacht mainly mechanically propelled during the previous 18 months ending on the closing date for submissions. Claimed by submitting the log to the Offshore Secretary by the closing date. Adjudicated by a panel appointed by the Offshore Committee.

3. **SMALL CRUISER TROPHY**

Awarded to the yacht, with PYS of 126 and over, with the best performance in Category B in all three races at the Cowes Rally and not winning the **Jubilee Trophy**.

4. **JUBILEE TROPHY**

Awarded to the yacht with the best points performance in all three races at the Cowes Rally.

5. **BARGE TROPHY**

Awarded for craftsmanship.

6. **CAPSTAN TROPHY**

1982 Year Book says this trophy is for the late Summer rally.

The LAYING UP SUPPER

It was really like any other High Society event. Headlights gleamed on the moist road as the carriages swept into the long drive and paused as the ladies descended at the entrance to the lakeside building, brilliantly lit from end to end and top to bottom. From the foyer the guests climbed the main staircase to the dining room, the tables set for eighty and the happy barpersons, Sue Pinnell and Colin Dobner, filling more and more hands with drinks.

Gale was once again in charge of the food, and her helpers, one year older, were busy with the last touches to the tables as the bell called us to our places. The service was exemplary, which cannot always be said for High Society events, and we progressed smoothly from *pâte* through turkey olives and lemon meringue pie to the cheese and coffee.

Our Guests of Honour were Dick and Ann Kellaway, Customs and Excise, and Mike and Sheila Hyde of the Civil Service Sports Council. This was to be Sir Michael Partridge's last function as Commodore (AGM apart). He and Lady Partridge surveyed a convivial membership as he rose to remind us of some of our recent glories and to express his confidence that they would never grow less. Dick Kellaway accepted the Sir Eric Seal Bowl and made an entertaining speech, parts of which your reporter has added to his repertoire of "lean" stories, that is to say, stories best told while leaning on a bar. Someone popped up to remind all present that they should commit their adventures to print in the magazine, and harped a bit on the fact that the tides had decided that the 20th. Weymouth Jolly would occur on the late May Bank Holiday. There seemed to follow a sound of diaries being written in and the subsequent buzz of conversation could well have been crewing arrangements being made.

In the midst of the merrymaking, behind the festive clamour, came the sounds of the bar closing. Too soon we should be on our several ways back to reality, and remembering yet another Laying Up Supper, contributing its nostalgia to the global nostalgia of all Laying Up Suppers. Your Editor, from a sense of duty lest any noteworthy event might go unrecorded, stayed more or less to the end, watching the lights go out and the night reclaim its own.

WEYMOUTH JOLLY

It is not too soon to be thinking of the 1996 Weymouth Jolly. And then putting the date, May 25, into your Diary.

Thereafter, if you believe you can make it, ask me to add your name to the list of Friends of the Jolly, whose privilege it is to receive a personalised invitation at the due time.

Special for this year will be the Bank Holiday, allowing all of us to extend the Jolly and spend more time enjoying the delights of the town and promenade: the Deep Sea Experience, the Sand Sculptures, and much, much more.

The Berthing Master hopes to berth us all together at a place where the coach can park to collect us. We shall then be able to pension off our long-serving rounder-upper of happy, Jolly sailors. A break with tradition, but one we must face up to bravely.

Ted Giles

MORE STOP PRESS

John Sant has written to say that he has plans for Swin-Y-Don that prevent him from selling her.

When these plans come to fruition he is sure to let us know what they are.