

Civil Service

Sailing

The magazine of the Civil Service Sailing Association

Published mid-February, April, July, September, November

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For berths on local or foreign-going yachts or training courses or for introduction to dinghy clubs contact Membership Secretary

JOIN THE FLEET!

Berthing is now well under way for the Association's three yachts.

SEA ESSAY is a Bavaria 38 new this year and will be commissioned at the beginning of April. The whole range of sailing opportunities will be provided, based on the south coast, as in recent years, from introductory courses for beginners to training courses for skippers. Details will be found in the inside pages - the quick reference contact is Brian Lewis on 01344-750748

TRITON is a Sadler 34, new in 1996, based on the east coast. It, too, offers the whole range of sailing opportunities, and normally makes a long, staged, cruise summer. Details will be found in the inside pages - the quick reference contact is Jean Rehill on 01920-463578.

VALKYRIE is a Dehler 36 dedicated to racing. Where races are not scheduled VALKYRIE can be chartered for fast cruising. Many of the present racing team entered the club as beginners and beginners are encouraged to take introductory sails leading to crewing specialisation. The quick reference contact is Chris Stebbings on 01734-416130. An account of this year's Fastnet campaign follows.

Fastnet Race 1997

Five RORC qualification races were entered for this year's Fastnet: Cherbourg (1996), Cervantes Trophy (to St Quay), Myth of Malham (to Alderney), De Guingand Bowl and St Malo. The boat, the skipper and not less than half the crew had to complete at least three of these races.

The qualification races this year turned out to be a real mixed bag; the race to St Quay was a long slog - beating all the way - sometimes in fairly lumpy seas, we scratched from the de Guingand Bowl and had slow, very light wind races to Alderney and St Malo, with most of the race to Alderney being undertaken in poor visibility. In none of our qualification races did we do much sailing under spinnaker which, as it was to turn out, dominated the Fastnet race.

The St Malo race was our first and last chance for a "dress rehearsal" for the Fastnet - full crew, planned watch keeping duties etc and this proved to be a useful exercise and team building opportunity. We completed this race and felt very positive about the forthcoming Fastnet.

Saturday 9th August. The start of the Fastnet was delayed due to the arrival of a very large tanker which was being piloted around West Bramble buoy - the outer distance mark! We finally got underway at 14.40hrs with the Class 3 and 4 boats having started 10 minutes earlier and the Class 1s, Admirals Cup fleet and the multihulls, W60s and maxis starting later. This was to make for some exciting racing up the Solent with the larger, faster boats carving their way through the fleet.

By the time we started, a sea breeze had set in from the W/SW and so we had a beat up towards the Needles. We hugged the island shoreline to Gurnard and then stayed on the island side of the main channel as we tacked towards Hurst. We maintained a reasonably good position beating up the Solent and out through to the Needles.

We got to the Needles about two and half hours after the start and headed off on a southerly tack. With the west going tide still underneath us we made reasonable progress over the ground - both south and west. However, this was not to last; by about 19.30hrs we were in thick fog with a decreasing SW wind. Visibility was down to less than a 100 yards at times as we drifted along listening to the fog signals of approaching ships.

The shipping forecast at 17.50hrs had talked of an easterly wind setting in. By about 21.15hrs the SW wind did indeed start to back - freeing us up and allowing us to come on to the track we needed for Start Point. At this time we were about 15 miles south of Anvil Point.

Sunday 10th August. At about 01.00hrs Sunday morning the wind died completely and with an east going tide we began drifting back. We were forced to put the kedje down by which time we were in about 50m or so of water. By about 03.15hrs we had just enough wind to get us moving again on our course; the kedje came up (eventually) and with the large, light weight spinnaker, we slowly crept forward. By then the wind was from the northeast; with the wind strength about force 1 or 2 it was still very slow going. As Sunday morning wore on the wind slowly filled in from the northeast, veering later to the southeast and we were able to move along nicely at about 5 knots.

The thick fog had cleared around 02.00hrs on Sunday morning. As dawn broke the sun came up and the day became very hot - made hotter by the fairly light winds. The watch system has settled down by then with the conditions being such that everyone thus far had been able to get plenty of rest.

By about 10.00hrs we were 17 miles due south of Portland Bill. An hour later the tide set east again and our speed over the ground dropped to around 3 knots.

The wind stayed with us all day, generally from the east about force 3/4 and we had a fairly good run through until Sunday evening. We continued tracking towards the southwest under spinnaker and went down as far as the Channel Light Vessel when we gybed in order to make up to the west.

We had made reasonable progress during the day and got to a position 14 miles south of Start Point by about 19.30hrs. As night set in on Sunday we were travelling across from south of Start Point towards the Lizard making about 260°(M) over the ground and about 4 to 5 knots against the tide, hoping to get to the Lizard by about daybreak.



THE FASTNET RACE
F Fastnet Rock
B Bishop Rock

As it was two years ago in the last Fastnet, the sea between Start Point and the Lizard was silver at night as the plankton surfaced to feed and with a clear sky covered with stars, it all made for a good end to the day.

Monday We were at the Lizard by about 06.00hrs and it was a very grey and dull morning as we crossed Mounts Bay to Lands End. We were still carrying the light spinnaker and as we closed on Lands End we could see a lot more boats around us - very few having been seen since the Needles.

We were off Lands End by about 09.00hrs and the day had started to brighten up as we set off on a course of 305°(M) for the Fastnet. The wind by this time was southerly and so we continued to carry the light spinnaker across the Irish Sea making good progress all the way - averaging 7 to 8 knots for most of the day.

continued on back page

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| March 29-30 | Victory Trophy |
| April 5 | Commissioning of Sea Essay at Hamble. |
| May 1-4 | Cobweb Rally, Harwich area. |
| May 23 | Weymouth Jolly, Solent to Weymouth. |
| June 13 | Junior Championships at Littleton |
| June 30 - July 3 | Interdepartmental Offshore Races. |
| July 4-5 | Dinghy Championships. |

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MARINERS MART

Advertisements, up to three insertions, are free to members. To be sure of second and third insertions members should confirm to Editor that items have not been disposed of.

* Rowing Dinghy, 9ft.f'glass ex Gita D'Alba £175 also anchors, 10lb. SWMF £20, fisherman 3.5 lb. £8 Brading 01932-846270.
* Colvic sailer 28ft. 1996. New eng. sails, spars, rigging. Full detail/pictures. Special price £21,600. Whittle 0161-633-1253.

* WANTED: pair self-tailing winches Lewmar 40 or equivalent. John Northcott 01392-213321.

* Member offers yacht surveys and advice on yacht problems. Cyril Whettingsteel, Professional Yacht Surveyor, on 01489-781860.

Members advertise free of charge within the space allocated to advertising. The Editor does not seek paid advertising by non-members, but will quote rates if requested.

DINGHY EVENTS

"Sailboat 1988"

Saturday 7th. and Sunday 8th. March at Alexandra Palace. As so many of the Class Associations play a major part in the organisation of this event enthusiasm triumphs over hard commercialisation. There will be a high profile chandlery and clothing presence as well as displays by Clubs.

Victory Trophy

On Saturday 28th. and Sunday 29th. March. 3-boat team racing at Littleton Sailing Club. CSSA will host the event against the Armed Services. Come to cheer!

Civil Service Junior Championships

At Littleton Sailing Club on Saturday 13 June.
Entries from under-18s.
This coincides with the Littleton Regatta and the annual Commodores' Cup event between Fishers Green and Littleton.

Civil Service Dinghy Championships

At Netley Cliff Sailing Club on Saturday 4th. and Sunday 5th. July. All welcome - don't let the title "Championship" put you off. As a social event the weekend is fantastic: barbecue and all day buffet and bar.
Tidal water experience for inland water sailors.

John Lewis Industrial Trophy

At Brownsea Island, Poole harbour. A mixed-class handicap event. Let me know if you are interested, we want to improve on our commendable 6th. position last year.

During the year the dinghy clubs have their own events at which visitors are usually welcome. Fishers Green visit Salcombe, Littleton visit Lyme Regis and Jumbles propose to visit Windermere.

Please contact me if you are looking to extend your present dinghy sailing activities.

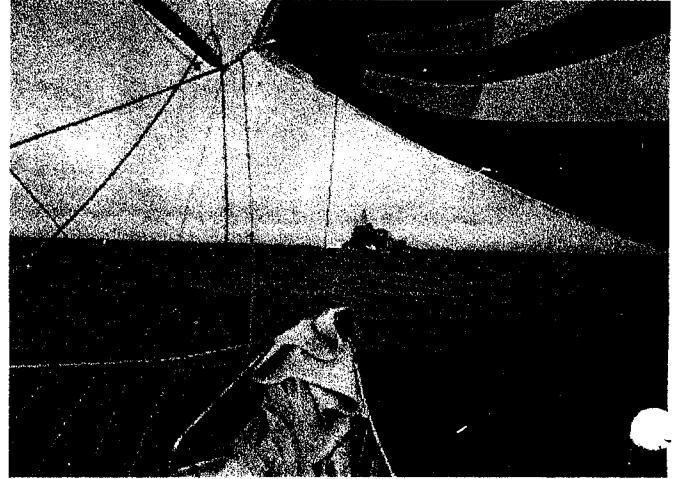
Peter Hardy, Dinghy Secretary. 01372-721148

FASTNET contd.

By evening the wind had backed a little and freshened. It got up to about force 5 for a time and at 23.30hrs our light (but very worn) spinnaker blew out - tearing from luff tape to luff tape. With only one heavy, "reaching" spinnaker left and needing to ensure that we had something left for light winds, we sailed under the light headsail until daybreak on Tuesday by which time the wind had dropped.

Tuesday

We rounded the Fastnet Rock at 09.10hrs then had a short beat down to the Pantenius Buoy 5 miles to the southwest. Rounding the Pantenius Buoy we then set off for Bishop Rock some 150 miles away. With the wind having by then backed to the SE once again it was looking to be a beat to Bishop Rock with the making tack being starboard, taking us on a more easterly track.



Tuesday turned out to be bright and sunny all day and we had two visits by schools of dolphins. In the first instance about eight dolphins played around the boat for about 5 minutes - diving in and out in of the bow wave and stern wake. In the second instance about half an hour later, a much larger school passed along the length of the boat and then cut across the bow and off towards the east.

As the evening drew on we spent much interesting time talking about tactics, our course for Bishop Rock and when to tack based upon what the wind might do.

Wednesday

We tacked at about 01.00hrs on Wednesday morning but only for two and half hours or so as the wind then veered to the southwest as we had hoped and we were able to free off and head directly for Bishop Rock.

We got to Bishop Rock at about 15.00hrs with the wind still fairly fresh and coming from the southwest. We then had two options: whether to go in-shore, staying close to the Lizard and then in to the bay to approach Plymouth or, to stay off-shore.

As we considered our options we had another visit by dolphins - this time about 10 or so, again, playing around Valkyrie for about 5 minutes - a great sight.

With the tides being stronger and favourable at the time we expected to be south of the Lizard if we stayed off-shore, we decided to take this option. However, as the evening wore on and night approached, the wind started to drop and it became very light. It was obvious we would not maintain the speed we had been doing and were likely then to be facing a stronger on-shore than if we had got into the bay. We changed our plan and started to come in-shore reaching the Lizard in the early hours of Thursday morning with a very light (force 1), SW wind.

Thursday

Having blown our light, running spinnaker we only had the heavier, reaching spinnaker left and this did not help in our efforts to get to the finish line. The winds stayed light all night and well into Thursday morning. We finally closed on the finish line in mid afternoon, crossing the line at 15.01hrs.

In Conclusion. The race lasted five days and twenty-one minutes. On the first day we travelled only 73 miles having kedged in the early hours of Sunday morning. On the second day we had a good run of 152 miles; day three was 168 miles; day four 153 miles and the final day we logged 100 miles.

We arrived back in Plymouth in good form; we all felt that we had had a good race and given it a good shot with everyone enjoying the experience. Our final position was 47th out of 67 starters in Class 2 and 168th out of 214 starters in CHS overall which was, we felt, a creditable performance.

J M Young