



Racing Times

The Magazine of the Civil Service Offshore Racing Club

Feb 2004

www.csorc.btinternet.com



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It's time to start thinking about the new season. The year starts with the AGM and the racing starts in mid-March with the Warsash Spring Series - bookings are now being taken. As this is not a Fastnet year we will be concentrating on JOG races and hoping to build on our successes last season. Check out the programme below for more details. Also in this issue you can read about last years Fastnet to get yourself in the mood for another seasons sailing.

Spring Series 2004

The season opens with the Warsash Sailing Club Spring Series – six weekends of “round the cans” racing. For those who are new to these races we usually join the boat on Saturday morning and go out for a practice, followed by an overnight in the Hamble or Cowes where crew positions and tactics are discussed in the pub or restaurant. An early start on Sunday gets us to the start line in plenty of time for the racing to start around 10 o’clock. We finish early afternoon and then head off back to Shamrock to put the boat away. We are normally away well before six. These short races are a great way to improve your racing as a lot happens in a short time and the Saturday practice is a great opportunity to learn. Cost for the weekend is £65 with a £5 discount per event if you do four or more races.

Note that on the weekend of the 24th/25th April the Nab Tower JOG is on the Saturday and the 6th race of the Spring Series on the Sunday. The berth fee is £45 for each race or £75 for the two races.

CSORC AGM 2004

Tuesday 24th February at 7.30 p.m.

The Raven Hotel, Hook, Hants.

Please join us for the AGM and a buffet supper. (Please contact Alison Thompson for catering purposes - 01962 878567 or thompsonaj100@hotmail.com).

If you are interested in joining the committee for 2004 in any capacity, please let any member of the Committee know prior to the meeting.

Hook is just off junction 5 of the M3 and the Raven Hotel is near the station and Tescos.

Crew bureau – alternative contacts

If you want to crew in the first race of the Spring Series then please contact Roger Walker (rdwalker@qinetiq.com) who is skippering the race. The second race is being skippered by Dave Hartland (david.hartland@btinternet.com). The crew bureau will be away from his usual email lifeline and black book of booking details during late February and early March. For other queries an email to nickbowles2000@yahoo.com will probably get through to a dusty desert internet café from where he will endeavour to sort you a berth.

The Fastnet 2003

Last August Wave Train competed in the Rolex Fastnet race - a CSORC tradition for over 20 years, including the famous 1979 race. This year it was the first Fastnet for all but two of the crew. Mark and Ric were both old Fastnet hands – Mark was on his sixth. Here is the story according to three of the crew:

The Virologist's Tale

Day 0, Saturday

Nick and I arrived at Shamrock Quay at 2.30 to find the rest of the crew sizzling at the dockside, busy sticking the yellow "Fastnet" stickers on the bow and a big green "Rolex" flag on the backstay. Eight of us were on board for the race - Keith (skipper), David (nav, tactics), Mark, Ol' Nick, Young Nick, Ric, Kevin and myself. We checked the boat over and mended a few bits that had got broken during Cowes week. Not much to do – but I guess they didn't have much in the way of heavy weather! We had loads of bottled water and 200 litres of tank water - not too tasty but it would keep us going.

The temperature was pretty hot - 36 degrees below deck - so I thought I might lose weight in that sauna (unfortunately not ...). We stayed the night at Shamrock, ready for a fresh early start. It was a bit of a shame to miss the party in Cowes, which I've heard is pretty ragey, but it certainly meant a more sensible start to five days at sea. Off to the pub for a big steak and a couple of beers....



The crew: Nick Bowles (hiding), Keith (helming), Nick Huxford(in cap), Trev(hiding), Mark(green shirt), Kev, Ric and Dave.

Day 1 Sunday

A good evening but a terrible night - a group were having a birthday party on the cruiser moored next door. They finally gave up at about 3 o'clock. Another hot day! We were up at 7am, watching the skeins of

oystercatchers making their way up the river Itchen. All was ready, so we cast off, after bidding farewell to the marina, testing our radio in the process. We made our way to the start gate to register ourselves by passing the committee boat with our number displayed on the starboard lifelines. As with other RORC races, we had to fulfil a spot "safety check", this time showing our storm jib and trysail.

We cruised down among the multitude of boats and spectators, passing some very impressive craft. We also came across *Vitesse*, one of our arch rivals, with my friend Tracy at the helm. We had originally planned a spinnaker start, but decided a genoa was safer - good choice. The wind was fickle, but enough for us to get away quickly. At 07:40 our class was off.

We took a southerly passage to the Needles which kept us in the strong outgoing tide. As we reached Hurst Point, the wind died - a flavour of what was to come! We were spinning around in the current, with no steerage. We managed to get the boat pointing in the right direction and then, finally found some wind. Our tactics so far put us ahead of 50 or so boats of the 230-strong fleet. The Fairway Buoy was made, at some gain over others who hadn't allowed enough for the tide and we settled down for the long leg to Start Point. Or so we thought. The wind died on us again, turning the afternoon into a series of sail changes, chasing the changing and often non-existent wind. By 5 o' clock, we had only reached Anvil Point, near Swanage, in the company of half a dozen yachts, all trying to get around the corner before the foul tide swept us back to the Needles. First to give up were the French who, with characteristic sense of priorities, threw a kedge over the side and opened a bottle of wine. *Les Anglais fou* persevered for another half an hour before joining the others. We contributed to smells of various forms of exotic cuisine with an excellent Thai green curry and a glass of Merlot, whilst we waited for the tide to ease. After an hour or so, the "Picnic at Anvil Point" came to an end, and we weighed anchor making slow progress against the remains of the incoming tide at St Albans.

Nightfall found us creeping across the bay towards Portland Bill. The breeze returned, allowing us to round the Bill and cross Lyme Bay through the night.

Day 2, Monday

We got to Start Point at dawn and radioed our position, as part of RORC

requirements. A dead spot at Bolt Head left us floundering for awhile, but we finally managed to dig our way out and head across Plymouth Sound to Bishops Rock. The night had seen the wind shift and strengthen, so that spinnakers were replaced by headsails and "best course to windward". Comfortingly, we still seemed to be in among the fleet. Even more surprisingly, we seemed to be among some of the "big boys", but, of course, the big challenge of the Irish Sea - 150 miles of open ocean - awaited. Early days yet!

The cruise down past the Eddystone light to the Lizard passed without mishap, but we found ourselves well and truly amongst the competition close in by Lizard Point. We had a close tussle with three other Sigma 38s, closer inshore, which we seemed to be winning. Then, inexplicably, just off Mousehole, we hit a real hole and came to a complete halt, dead in the water. The boats close by all suffered the same fate, whilst the three Sigmas that we had passed swept by at four or five knots, not 200 metres away. Talk about frustrating. It took us an hour and a half to crawl our way out and back into the race. Luckily, we seemed to be on the edge - other boats were still becalmed as we left.

Monday evening saw the wind steadily increase, and as we rounded Lands End the wind picked up and we enjoyed a F6, necessitating a change of sail.

Day 3, Tuesday

The day started well, with a change up to full sail and a brisk breeze, but by 10 o'clock the wind had faded, and we wallowed for hours, in the company of thirty or forty other yachts, on a glassy sea. Nick brought out his fishing line in a vain attempt to supplement our diet with some fresh mackerel. The highlight of the day was a large pod of porpoises, accompanied by bottlenose dolphins, and gannets, chasing fish. The porpoise pod must have numbered a hundred, and included groups of youngsters swimming close together, as well as adults, which rounded up the fish.

We finally got moving at about four o'clock, with a strong breeze, typically on the nose. We thoughtfully timed our tacks to the time when the sleeping watch was due to relieve the other - both waking them up and throwing them out of their bunks in one manoeuvre!

Day 4, Wednesday

As morning came, we were able to make out the faint line of the Irish coast. By 11

o'clock, the hills that flank the area were visible, a beautiful green in the morning light. We could just about make out the Fastnet rock itself, a large rock capped by a tall lighthouse on one side. Typically, as we approached our goal, we fell into another wind hole. This time we found ourselves in illustrious company, with Maiden, the boat originally skippered by Tracy Edwards. The tide slowly took us towards the rock, along with our own meagre contribution of 1 knot by the wind. 1 o'clock came and went.

Our tidal predictions revealed a strong tide that would carry us around the rock. It was essential therefore that we didn't get carried onto it by the current. We therefore laid a course that would give us sea room, aiming about half a mile upstream. As we crept slowly towards the rock, it became apparent that the predictions were wrong - the tide had turned and was against us. Meanwhile, Maiden was coming in strongly up tide of us. Our own, personal race was now on! We fought the current, as Maiden swept by in front of us. All they needed to do was tack across the line. They duly tacked, but had also underestimated its strength - and failed to make the gap between the rock and the mainland they had turned too early! we crossed their path while they turned again. We held our course, parallel to the line until we were absolutely sure we could make it. As we turned, we noticed a small lobster buoy in the way, We had to duck it, and in so doing, also abandoned our hope to reach the line and had to tack twice more. Maiden meanwhile, had put in a long, long tack and was steaming up to the line. We crept across the line literally right under the rock just in front of her - we think.

Time for a photo-opportunity ... Keith sidled up to the rock and we all snapped away. The structure on the rock is very impressive - more like a fortress than a lighthouse. Built to take the full force of the Atlantic, the huge tower dominates the landscape of the area, which is itself, impressive. I mentioned that I only had a wide-angle lens, so Keith nudged nearer and nearer, to the point where I couldn't fit it all in the viewfinder! We finally edged away, getting a big cheer from the Maiden crew. Off now to Pantheon, a racing mark placed some 7 miles away to keep incoming and outgoing boats apart. I helmed as we made the mark and Ric performed a slick bear-away spinnaker hoist, dropping the genoa as we rounded. Just like "round the cans" racing on the Solent. We set course for the long haul home - 150 miles of open ocean

before rounding the Scillies and into familiar waters of the Channel. We carried the spinnaker for most of the afternoon but by evening had changed to the big genoa as the wind veered to our port bow. Good for our SE course, but bad for our following passage up the channel. We hunkered down for a long night, changing watches and keeping the boat driving for home.

Day 5, Thursday

The day before, the sea had been calm, but had been truly woken by the rising wind, which gave an exhilarating ride, creaming along at nearly 7 knots in 6 ft waves. Suddenly, a pod of dolphins appeared alongside, diving under the boat and leaping out of the waves. They stayed with us for about five minutes, swimming alongside and peering up at us, leaping in twos and threes behind and alongside. A truly magical moment. As the day passed, the sea built and the wind increased and by evening, we were under reduced sail, battling a Force 6. Around four o'clock, we spotted the low islands of the outer Scillies and made our way around the Bishops Rock light and into the English Channel. The night had even more in store for us, as we rounded the Lizard, keeping close in at first to avoid the foul tide. By this time, quite a few other boats had come into sight, so we really had a sense of "racing", measuring our progress against them and tweaking sail trim to optimise the boat's performance. The wind grew to Force 7 as we worked our way up the south Cornish coast, crossing the Fal estuary and around Dodman Point. It was a lumpy old night.

Day 6, Friday 15th

By morning, the wind had eased but was still directly on our nose, so we had a hard slog up the channel, tacking our way home. By midday, we could see the distinctive shape of the headland marking the beginning of the entrance to Plymouth sound. We were now in the company of another Sigma 38, "Inspiration of Boss" which forced us to give way as our tacks crossed. The fight was on! Using the shelter of the headland, we carefully monitored our progress, tacking at the first sign of tide against us. Our competitors went for fewer tacks, but further out. Three or four tacks later we were ahead, racing for Penlee point and the outer breakwater. The final ignominy for our rivals was our spotting a tanker coming out of Plymouth. We held a slightly longer starboard line, whilst he tried to gain ground to our left. Suddenly, he saw

the tanker and had to bear away. We passed the line to a long blast and a wave from the lighthouse on the breakwater. We'd done it. We were home.

Trevor Drew



Approaching the finish

Wave Train Fastnet 2003 Results

	Time	Position	IRC2	Sigma 38
Fastnet rock	3 days 04:32:00	145/227	57/85	16/22
Corrected	3 days 04:09:02			
Finish	5 days 04:38:42	136/220	59/73	17/22
Corrected	5 days 04:01:18			

The Information Technologist's Tale

For me it was as much about the crew, as how we performed. I was interested to see how we would all cope during the six days of living in close confines, so I was delighted to find that the general attitude was one of cheeriness, a standard set by skipper Keith whose cool easygoing style was particularly in evidence when we rounded "the Rock". So close did he get that rumour has it that he is will be offering Fastnet Rock walking holidays.

Not only were Keith's skippering skills in evidence but he also displayed his newly acquired plumber's skills on sink and heads blockages. He was a member of Kylie watch, a rag tag bunch pre occupied with their hair. Watch-leader Trev, (who never got the hair thing right) tempered his continual enthusiasm by scientific attention to detail, verified by a number of handy gadgets: wrist barometer; infrared phone, email thing, and possibly a compass in the heel of his deck shoe. I also heard a rumour that the flaps of his Russian hat were satellite receivers. This love of gadgets was in stark contrast to Trev's fellow watch member Ric, whose only gadget was a Zippo lighter, which could light a rollup in even the most savage of seas. As the

recognised foredeck master Ric could be rolling a fag in the pulpit whilst changing the headsail, disappearing under 20 gallons of water only to emerge with his fag still alight. Perfectionism came in the form of Old Nick, whose mission was to extract every ounce of speed from our sails. Nick also added a much needed touch of sophistication, with Earl Grey teabags, muesli bars, and brown bread. I also have a vague recollection of Kylie watch sending up the cheese and cucumber sandwiches with the crusts cut off.

In contrast there was Dannii watch - as fine a bunch of men as ever set sail [*reefing sails was more their style. Ed.*]. Lead by Mark, on his sixth Fastnet and the very epitome of professionalism. His organised and calculated cool was matched only by his ability to produce gastronomic extravaganza whilst heeled over at 45 degrees (Spanish omelette was a favourite). Marks experience was complemented on Dannii watch by navigator David whose self proclaimed 100 years of sailing produced such wonderful idiosyncrasies as mouse mats down the trousers, Branston sandwiches, cuppa soups and oilies whose pockets contained a torch, hat, knife, GPS, saucepan, liferaft, and a spare set of O rings for the cylinder head. Just watching David at the helm was a master class for me. Last watch-mate, but by no means least, was Kev, deviser of the Fastnet diet: five days without chocolate followed by a sixth when you cram KitKats in your mouth two at a time. Kev is my personal hero. As my oppo on watch he never once let his enthusiasm wane, even when changing sails in thirty knots of wind or up to his arm pits unblocking the heads. I could always count on Kev for a laugh, and in Mark's words it may not have been the fastest race but it was the funniest. Lastly I would like to say thanks for the rendition of "Happy Birthday" sung in the style of an 18th century sea shanty, a birthday I won't forget in a hurry.

Nick Huxford

"Hours & Places" – the Man of Leisure's Tale

Preparation and safety was everything. Every boat was required to display a hoisted trysail before starting. At the pre-race briefing the Race Directress said that we should take 3 litres of water per day per crewman in the hot weather - we had more water inside the boat than outside, with bottles in every bilge space. She also tried to cheer us out of our gloom at the high

pressure and light winds over the Emerald Isle by saying there is usually more wind than you expect.

We had Trevor the "baro boy" with his magic watch telling us the barometric pressure. Mark's menu was as tasty as it was rigorous - 3 slices of bread and cheese with Branston pickle for lunch and three fifths of a glorious home made fruit cake every day.

Sailing is always a humbling experience. If you don't get laughed at by Mother Nature for your feeble efforts then there is always somebody to overtake you with a flash of skill and a touch on the tiller. Sometimes you get lucky and on fewer occasions it is because you actually worked it out correctly. Take the start, with a spinnaker leg to Hurst. There was a debate about staying on the Island side to get the best tide, or the Lymington side for more wind. The wind collapsed around Yarmouth and, in the strong stream, several boats executed pirouettes without steerage. Aqua ballet in big boats is dangerous for your health but as the new breeze came in we scrambled to set a genoa and steerage was regained. And lo, the boats on the Lymington side had run out of stream AND wind. Gain 50 places.

Rounding the Fairway buoy we headed inshore out of the young springish flood until at 1830 we were short tacking around Anvil Point with 10 others, trying to find a fair eddy.



Short tacking off Anvil Point

We played dodgems for half an hour before kedging. Trevor commented that, as it was

a race, he was not expecting to be able to anchor for dinner. Just before finishing dinner, we saw a boat creeping up the shore under spinnaker so a scramble ensued to clear away and set sail again – ahead of the unfortunates who were anchored further out. Gain 20 places.



Off again under spinnaker

A wonderful breeze set in and we carried it and the 6 hours of fair stream as a close reach with spinnaker through the night on the rhumb line past the Bill to Start Point. The others in our group went inshore maybe thinking it the better option. It wasn't. Approaching Start Point in the morning under spinnaker there was a strange sight. A cluster of big boats around a mile off, slatting with no spinnakers and no steerage. Inshore there was one boat spinnaker almost bursting and storming along. The wind was NNE which meant an offshore breeze. I have met this before in a Round the Island race and it means the lazy wind falls off the cliffs and creates a narrow band of strong breeze with turbulent eddies (no sailing wind) on either side. So we rode the escalator past another 20 boats. Trouble now with 5 big boats ahead of us painfully moving to windward without spinnakers and little wind and us charging towards them with breeze and spinnaker. Wavetrain ducked them and stopped dead as we ran out of wind. There we stayed for the next hour, while inshore, 50 boats overtook us. The same thing happened at the Lizard and we fell into another hole for an hour. Lose another 50 places.

Passing Wolf Rock light and Lands End, the wind increased to F6 apparent, out of the NE, which allowed us to just fail to hold the rhumb line. Full moon, stars, Mars and meteorites made for an awesome display. Some boats overtook us but not many. Come the morning, wind fell light and we picked up an Irish forecast delivered at breakneck speed telling us the wind was going to back. Some boats around us bore away and set spinnakers for a shy reach.

Nick espoused what I now know to be the true word of the Guru Quarrie man and recommended following these yachts. Others said that we didn't have much faith in the forecast and until it happened we would eat the straight line miles.

To the Rock then, monitoring the race safety channel conversations with the RORC men who were lodging on the rock itself for the duration, recording our rounding times for the RORC web site and chatting away saying all sorts of supportive things like: 'well you have made it this far' and 'only 2 more days to go before you can have a shower'. We shot past the original Maiden in the light wind and rounded closely to make sure the lighthouse filled the camera frame. On the way past the spreader mark to Bishop Rock after picking up an imminent strong wind warning we changed down to jib from genoa which Nick and Mark managed well without succumbing to the temptation of a salt water shower. The wind did increase to F6 apparent. A good view of the Scillies and closely monitored track to save distance whilst staying safely away from those outlying rocks. From Fowey to the finish we had a little tussle with the BOSS sea school Sigma 38 during which they went too far inshore in an attempt to get out of the foul into the fair stream and flat water but also succeeded in losing the on shore wind as it was forced up the sunny slopes. So we overtook them and stayed ahead on the transit between the Drystone PHM and the finish at Breakwater lighthouse. We encountered a RIB in our path and took avoiding action before realising that it was a nice guy taking our photo. I recommend his web-site to you: www.photoaction.com.

The top 10 Sigma 38's finished with 2 hours between them after nearly 5 days, and the next 6 within a further hour. There was a 3 hour gap and we lead the remaining 6 over the next 11 hours. We had the good fortune to travel home with the *EI Greco* men (3rd position) and they were very complimentary about the class and their competitors - 'I know how hard we worked. We weren't so far ahead, so the other boats must have been working very hard as well.' He was right, we were all exhausted, in particular because we had lost our final cheese sarnies and pickle lunch to the saloon sole in a big lurch at the wrong time. Many thanks to the Skipper, Keith, for keeping us in good humour, and to the Sports Council for making it all possible.

Dave Hartland



Wave Train Race Programme 2004

From	To	Event	Berth Cost £
Sat, 13 Mar	Sun, 14 Mar	Warsash Spring Series #1	65
Sat, 20 Mar	Sun, 21 Mar	Warsash Spring Series #2	65
Sat, 27 Mar	Sun, 28 Mar	Warsash Spring Series #3	65
Sat, 03 Apr	Sun, 04 Apr	Warsash Spring Series #4	65
Fri, 09 Apr	Sun, 11 Apr	Cherbourg JOG	110
Sat, 17 Apr	Sun, 18 Apr	Warsash Spring Series #5	65
Sat, 24 Apr	Sat, 24 Apr	Nab Tower JOG	45
Sun, 25 Apr	Sun, 25 Apr	Warsash Spring Series #6	45
Fri, 30 Apr	Sun, 02 May	St Vaast JOG	120
Sat, 15 May	Sun, 16 May	Weymouth JOG	110
Fri, 28 May	Sun, 30 May	Deauville JOG	120
Sat, 12 Jun	Sun, 13 Jun	Yarmouth JOG	110
Fri, 18 Jun	Sun, 20 Jun	Fecamp JOG	120
Sat, 26 Jun	Sun, 27 Jun	Round the Island Race	110
Fri, 02 Jul	Sun, 04 Jul	RORC St Malo	120
Sat, 10 Jul	Fri, 16 Jul	Cork Week and Sigma Nationals	†
Fri, 23 Jul	Sun, 25 Jul	Alderney JOG	120
Fri, 30 Jul	Sun, 01 Aug	RORC Channel Race No. 2	120
Sat, 07 Aug	Sat, 14 Aug	Cowes Week	†
Fri, 27 Aug	Sun, 29 Aug	St Peter Port JOG	120
Sat, 18 Sep	Sun, 19 Sep	Poole JOG	110
Fri, 24 Sep	Sun, 26 Sep	RORC Cherbourg	100

† CSSC representative events. The cost is yet to be decided but we anticipate that it will be subsidised by the CSSC. Open only to CSSC members.

Charters

When not racing Wave Train is usually available for charter to CSSA-approved skippers. Contact **Trish Oakley** (02392 785157 or triciaanddave@aol.com).

For crew bookings contact **Nick Bowles** (01483 306954, csorc@madasafish.com)

Membership

A CSORC membership form for 2004 is included in this newsletter. The crew bureau relies on these forms to keep updated on contact details and as an indicator of what events you are interested in doing. CSORC membership is only £5 which goes towards postage, this newsletter, and other administrative costs. In order to be a member of CSORC you need to be a member of the CSSA. If you join after 1st October in any year then your membership carries over to the next year. See our website for full details.

There is provision for non CSSC/CSSA members to try sailing or racing on Wave Train by paying an extra £5 per event over and above the berth fee, but anybody sailing on the boat more than 2 or 3 times is expected to join the club to continue sailing.

This year we will only be sending the Racing Times out to club members and those who have sailed on the boat recently though if you are not in either group but would like to receive the newsletter by email then please let me know as I am happy to send it to anybody that is interested. Current members who prefer to receive a paper copy are welcome to do so.

From time to time the crew bureau sends out details of last minute crew vacancies by email. Again, if you are interested in receiving these then make sure I have your email address.

Crew bureau/Editor



Civil Service Offshore Racing Club - Crew Bureau / Membership form – 2004

Name:		Department/Agency etc.:		
Address (home):		Address (work):		
Postcode:		Postcode:		
Phone (home):		Phone (work):		
Mobile:		Next of kin (name,address and phone no.):		
Email:				
CSSC No.:	CSSA No.:	NI Number:		
Your experience: To assist the crew bureau in ensuring that there is sufficient experience on board, please tick the appropriate boxes below to indicate your experience.				
	Racing, offshore	Racing, inshore	Racing, dinghies	Cruising
Foredeck				
Mast				
Main				
Navigator/Tactician				
Helm				
Watch leader				
Skipper				
RYA certificate (highest level only):			CSSA approved skipper Inshore / Offshore	
Racing events: If you know which events you are interested in then please list them below. Berths for most events are allocated 'first come, first served'. Contact Nick Bowles (01483 306954 or csorc@madafish.com) to discuss suitability and availability.				
Event:	Date:			
Cruising/Training events: If you are interested in introductory sails or cruising then please write it below. Training Contact: Ric Van-Kempen (01256 353822) with queries or availability. Charter/Cruising Contact: Tricia Oakley (0239 278 5157)				

Please send completed form with a cheque for £5 for membership (payable to CSORC) to:
Nick Bowles, Flat 4, "Clevehurst", 12 Upper Edgeborough Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2BG