



Racing Times

Jan 2012

The Magazine of the Civil Service Offshore Racing Club
www.csorc.org



Welcome once again to the CSORC newsletter, a round-up of all we have been doing over the past year and a look at plans for the coming year.

2011 was generally a windy year – nearly every time I went sailing it blew more than 20 knots at some stage and we had some great sailing. The Fastnet campaign saw Blue Juice cover over 1100 miles of sailing in RORC races, finishing with the Fastnet, all of which you can read about below.

We also managed to fit in a smattering of Sunsail round the cans racing, the Cherbourg JOG on Bue Juice and the Poole JOG – becoming a bit of a regular feature – on Jangada Too.

Finally CSORC took part in the IDOR for the fifth year running, posting a series of solid top-half results.

Now, as they say, read on ...

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CSORC AGM 8th February 2011

The CSORC AGM will be held at the RORC London clubhouse, 20 St. James's Place SW1A 1NN London, on the 16th February starting at 19:00. The meeting is open to all CSSA members and we would love to see as many as possible there.

As usual we will be electing officers, reporting on the year just gone, and talking about our plans for this year. Come along for a drink and to meet other members and talk sailing.

CSSC Membership

A reminder that CSSA members no longer need two CSSC shares (Membership Plus). If your membership is deducted from your salary at source you will need to contact CSSC to reduce the amount you pay, as it won't be done automatically and you may end up paying too much.

There are other changes to CSSC membership including the replacement of Associate Membership by Linked Membership. Eligibility has also been widened to include the NHS, police officers, teachers and local authority

employees, so if you have friends in these organisations get them to join up and come sailing with CSORC.

If you have friends or family who don't work for a qualifying employer but who would like to join the CSSC they can become Linked Members.

You can read all the details on the CSSC site at <http://www.cssc.co.uk/home/Join.aspx>.

The 2011 Season

We'd hoped to take advantage of Sunsail's early season opener but were too slow in getting a crew together: the attraction of the new boats and the fact that there are fewer of them meant that they sold out quickly. We did, however, get out for the second of the Race Series on 26th/27th March where Phil Armitage skippered us to a very pleasing 4th out of the 12 entries. These Sunsail races are great for us as winning is always a realistic possibility, while as long as you point the boat in the right direction you are unlikely to be last.

The new Sunsail F40s, basically First 40s but with shorter rigs and shallower keels, are good to sail, have good "proper" sails – no blown out dacron like the 37s – and still retain the roller headsail for ease of use. The masthead spinnakers are much larger than on the 37s but you only get one and it is 1.5 ounce. As a result it is a heavy beast: just lugging the bagged-up sail from below is enough to bring on a sweat. The cockpit is a delight with loads of space to wander around without treading on everybody's feet. "Downstairs" everything is very IKEA, with light-coloured woodwork and even electric heads! Clever, or something else to drain the batteries and go wrong?

The downside to the new boats is that they are more of a handful, particularly with the rather awkward "German" main-sheet system. Sunsail have fewer F40s than they had 37s and they are considerably more expensive to charter so we have had to increase berth fees to cover the cost, and we need a full crew of eight to make it financially feasible. Despite the extra size these boats won't sleep more than 8 unless you are really good friends. You wouldn't want to race these boats with six anyway; something we managed quite well with on the 37s. So, all in all there were fewer takers for the Sunsail events this season and price seems to have been the major factor. We are looking at ways of sorting out some cheaper sailing in the future but if you have any opinions then please let us know.

The IDOR

This was the first IDOR using the new Sunsail F40s, and it was a windy one, at least for some of the time. The first race was to the Nab Tower off the east of the Island. We rounded the Nab itself just behind Nick Rees' Diamond Light boat and saw them gybe, round up and then T-bone the tower, caught out by the wind shadow of the tower. Damage wasn't life threatening but did require a boat swap.

Wednesday, was more spectacular as the wind built to around 30 knots for the inshore races, run in the area between Gurnard and East Bramble. There were some

lively gusts off Norris, and for many it was a case of hang on tight and keep clear of the other boats. We held on to a full main for the first couple of races, for the downwind benefit, but in the final race we reefed and were glad of it. We were 11th, 6th and 15th. This last result came after we had to practically heave to to wait for a container ship to come through. It was an exhilarating day of racing in sparkling sunshine but at the end everybody was exhausted. Unfortunately there had also been some damage around the fleet.

Normally the IDOR features a race round the Isle of Wight, but on this occasion the tides were deemed wrong so a course was set out into Christchurch Bay. This was a case of playing the tides out to the Bridge, then it was all down to sailing in the best wind and using the swell before re-entering the Solent. A nice early finish, so we could get scrubbed up for the highlight of the week, the regatta dinner.

The final day passage race back to Portsmouth was a challenge: the Norris nadders, followed by a massive windshift, calm, then wind coming in from the west to sweep everybody together for a final dash to the finish.

You can read all about the races in more detail on our IDOR blog at <http://csorc-idor.blogspot.com>.

The IDOR in 2012

For five years Pete Shuttleworth has been Mr IDOR, organising the whole thing from charters to prizegiving. Pete has now stepped down and it is a mark of the work that Pete put into the IDOR that he will be succeeded by a team under the chairmanship of Nick Rees.

There will be some small changes to the format, partly to improve the fairness and safety of the inshore racing, but also so that the main results will be known at the prizegiving on Thursday night.

A committee boat will used for the inshore race starts, an extra race will be added on Monday afternoon, and the Friday passage race will no longer count for the main prizes. There will then be a presentation for the final race back at Portsmouth on Friday.

Hopefully the committee boat will reduce the incidence of tide-cheating boats mixing it with the ferries in the Medina, and crews will know their results before the get back home.

Poole JOG, Sept 17-18

Once again we were on Richard's J/109 *Jangada Too* for this weekend – a race out from Cowes, eastwards round the back of the IOW to Poole, and a race from Poole straight to Cowes on the Sunday. As it happened, given the strong wind forecast the race officer spared us the route round the Island, opting instead for a run down to East Bramble then back west all the way to Poole.

It was an interesting race tactically with the wind forecast to veer over the course of the race, from SW to NW. Textbook tactics with a persistent right shift are to go right, so that's what we did, mixing it with the windsurfers off Avon Beach before tacking out to round Hengistbury Head. A black cloud over Studland caused all sorts of funny wind and rain but our tactics had paid off and we were 6th in class out of 21 entrants.

Poole, and JOGs in general, usually provide a good night out though we were quite subdued thanks to a long day. After a good feed and a few drinks the skipper and mate retired to their luxury hotel while the crew went back to the boat to whittle scrimshaw and chase the weevils out of the Taste the Difference muesli.

The race back was much simpler being essentially a run via North Head, and maybe we lost concentration because we found ourselves racing the Sigma 38s who we gave time to on handicap. Nonetheless it is always fun to get that asymmetric kite up, despite some rather poor gybes. Things got very exciting coming in to the finish as it isn't a long finish line and there was little wind inshore.

After the handicapper had done his work we were 18th out of the 21 in class.

The 2011 Fastnet Campaign

CSORC has a long and honourable association with the Fastnet going back to the earliest days. In 1979 a boat flying the CSSA burgee, *Mosika Alma*, survived the infamous double depression storm, despite being rolled. So it is that most years since we have put an entry together, either in our own boat or a chartered boat. In 2009 we chartered a Sigma from MECsail in Ocean Village. Sigmas are almost the perfect Fastnet boat, being both quick and very seaworthy. They are also a boat that we know well, having had *Wave Train* for several years. Looking back I realise that I did my Competent Crew on Sea Essay when she was a Sigma. But hey ho, times change and we thought it might be nice to have something a bit bigger for a change. And so it was that we spoke to MECsail about chartering *Blue Juice*, their Beneteau First 40.7. We did a deal on

a package of a training weekend, four qualifying races and the Fastnet itself. We calculated that we could get the 300 qualifying miles in with just three races, but it doesn't do to rely on the weather at sea and there is always the risk that a race won't be finished, and as far as RORC is concerned it doesn't matter if you retired a mile from the finish line, you might just as well have not started. In theory at least.

The arrangements for this sort of campaign are complicated and involve a lot of keeping metaphorically spinning plates in the air. Once the deal with the boat was agreed in principle we needed to select a crew, arrange training and talk finance. Some forty people expressed an initial interest and we needed to get that down to ten, including skipper. Much of this happened naturally as families were consulted, piggy banks shaken and calendars checked and so we ended up with a crew. We had a big range of experience on the crew – novice to boat-owner, but all were reasonably fit and keen.



Righting an inverted life-raft in the pool

Everybody did a Sea Survival course including the infamous session in the pool at Hamble. This gave the younger, less experienced crew members a chance to show up their elders, simply by being able to get out of the pool first go, without recourse to the ladder. I've done this course twice now and I'd happily do it again. It's a real eye-opener.

Next up was a training weekend. We were blessed with moderate wind for this as we really wanted to get the basics sorted, as well as trying out a number of safety checks including fitting the emergency tiller. Long offshore races rarely require the sort of finely coordinated crew work of round-the-cans racing. Consequently it's more important to get the basics thoroughly sorted and not worry about Kiwi drops. So we went through numerous hoists, drops, gybes and practised reefing.

And so it was that we arrived at the start line for the race to Le Havre for the Cervantes Trophy, on the bank holiday weekend of the Royal Wedding. I won't go into detail here because you can read all about this and all the other races on our race blog (<http://csorc.blogspot.com>). Our aim was to complete the course without scaring, injuring or losing any crew members. The second priority was to not embarrass ourselves performance wise.

It was windy, with a beat round the back of the Island in an easterly, then round the Nab and across to Le Havre. The beat was hard work but once round the Nab we had some respite as we came off the wind. The leg across the Channel was relatively uneventful until we reached the east-bound shipping lanes. I was on the helm and although I've done this many times before I've never seen so many ships in line astern. We squeezed through and dawn broke as we approached the coast. There is a constant stream of ships approaching Le Havre in the shipping channel. The port hand markers are marks of the course (keep them to starboard) so there was no temptation to mix it with the commercial traffic.

We were finished well outside the port and turned round and headed back with nary a croissant. It was a grey day with poor visibility, rising seas and a beam reach. It was after all still early season. In truth it had been a straightforward race with only a short spell at the start when a spinnaker was possible. The rest of the time we just stuck to the no.3 headsail. Ideal to get the hang of the new boat and for some to get used to offshore racing at night with all the fun of finding your bunk / bag / oilies / boots / gloves / lifejacket that that involves. I think we all found the boat quite easy to manage despite the extra size, and the big cockpit and hull size pays off in comfort. Unfortunately Jane, who was new to offshore racing, had learnt the hard way that she was very prone to seasickness and after some hard thinking decided to withdraw from the crew for the campaign, and thus Emily came to join us.

Two weeks later we were back on board *Blue Juice* for the De Guingand Bowl. This looked like being similar to the Cervantes, at least to start with, as it took us west out through the Needles and back round the Island before heading off to the Greenwich Light Vessel. Many will know the Greenwich LV from the Shipping Forecast, possibly without being too sure where it is exactly. Let's get one thing clear, it isn't anywhere near Greenwich. In fact it's sort of off Brighton on the Greenwich meridian. I was quite pleased to see that it is still a proper light vessel like in those Boys Own Annual pictures. More significantly for us it was pretty much dead downwind all the way, in a F5/6 NW wind. Lovely stuff, surf city here we come. Not surprisingly we were at the LV in record

time and the wind dropped nicely as we rounded up for the beat back as darkness fell. We were close tacking off Portsmouth in the early sunshine of Sunday morning, to finish off Gilkicker.

Two weeks later we were back on board *Blue Juice* for a Friday morning, May Bank holiday weekend start. The final qualifier, should be finish it, was the Myth of Malham, to the Eddystone and back. We started in a stiff NW breeze and grey leaden skies, but things brightened up once past Portland Bill. We were well offshore with the tide against us. We rounded the lighthouse at daybreak and started the long run home. The wind at that stage was around 17 knots but forecast to pick up over the next few hours as it did, once past Start Point.



Blue Juice in the Myth of Malham

We stayed on port tack to get some flatter seas in Lyme Bay, at least for a while. We gybed somewhere east of Paignton after which it was a straightforward F6+ surfing white sail run back to the finish at North Head. Helming was strictly for the old hands as we surfed in excess of 12 knots on numerous occasions. The 40.7 is definitely better at surfing than the older Sigmas with their narrower transoms. So with three windy races in a month we were now qualified and able to sit back and relax for a bit.

The Fastnet

We motored through the northern gate, parading our fluorescent trisail and storm jib combo before setting off down the western Solent in the usual fashion. We had a fairly straightforward sail down to Lands End, across the TSS, and into the Celtic Sea. We starting experiencing electrical problems as the battery would lose its charge over less than three hours of night. The solution was to recharge the battery with the engine. Either the battery was shot or there was some sort of short in the electrics. Either way it was quite important as it was almost impossible sailing effectively with no instruments, navigation lights or binnacle light. The forecast was predicting strong winds from the South West followed by a veer to W or

NW as a small depression moved up the Irish Sea. We reckoned it would hit us late Monday night and last through the early hours of Tuesday before dropping, so put in a reef in anticipation. Sure enough the wind and seas built and we put in a second reef. We were close reaching and logging 9 knots in winds of around 25 knots. Helming was difficult and visibility was poor with spray and rain, but we knew it wouldn't last so it was just a question of sticking it out. Gradually the wind started to lose its force and the sky started to lighten. I was off watch by then and when I next woke up there was sunshine streaming through the hatch. Unfortunately there was also sunshine streaming through the place where the mast passed through the coach roof! Trevor went forward to investigate and it transpired that the bolts holding the collar which located the mast in the coach roof had sheered and the collar had popped out, leaving the mast to move around at deck level. We quickly dropped the sails and attached spinnaker halyards to the shroud bases to add extra support to the mast, and then decided to retire. It was a difficult decision in some ways but ultimately you don't take chances where the mast is concerned. Of course the mast is stepped at the keel and held by the shrouds but it could wobble around in the middle. So we set off under engine for Penzance, though the fun wasn't over yet as all that battery charging had used a lot of fuel and we weren't 100% we would reach Penzance. All was well however and at least the battery remained charged.

It was grey and drizzly in Penzance. I felt a bit like Donald Crowhurst, lurking up the River Plate when he was supposed to be in the Southern Ocean. Ten weather-beaten and hungry sailors hit the first café we got to, and ordered a full English all round. The good people of that town seemed unaware of the race going on past their front door, or even that there was such a thing as the Fastnet, which was fair enough – just because it had taken over my life, didn't mean that everybody should share my view!

The fun wasn't over yet, though. Having re-fuelled both boat and crew we set off back to Plymouth, still under engine of course. Everything seemed fairly straightforward until the engine started to squeal just five miles off Plymouth: the water pump had thrown in the towel. And so it was that we arrived in Plymouth alongside a Seastart RIB.

In conclusion, while it is always frustrating to have to retire, it was a challenging series with lots of variety and more exhilarating downwind sailing than I normally experience over several seasons. The decision to try a bigger boat was a good one: the 40.7s are hugely popular in offshore racing and widely used by clubs and sea schools and *Blue Juice* was comfortable and always felt reassuring in a blow. We now have some unfinished business and intend to be back for another crack in 2013.



CSORC Results 2011

Mar	Sat 26	Sun 27	Sunsail Race Series #2	Phil Armitage	4 th / 12
April	Sat 30	Sun 1 May	Cervantes Trophy	Trevor Drew	25 th / 26
May	Sat 14	Sun 15	De Guingand Bowl	Trevor Drew	12 th / 16
	Sat 27	Sun 30	Myth of Malham	Trevor Drew	29 th / 35
June	Mon 6	Fri 10	IDOR	Nick Bowles	n/a
Aug	Sun 14	Thur 18	Fastnet	Trevor Drew	Retired
Sept	Sun 17	Fri 18	Poole JOG	Richard Palmer	6 th , 18 th / 21
	Sat 23	Sun 25	Cherbourg JOG	Trevor Drew	12 th / 13

Programme for 2012

For the forthcoming season we will be running a mix of inshore and shorter offshore races, according to demand and skippers time constraints. The web site lists the Sunsail races we can do and will be updated if circumstances change – as ever it all depends on you.

We also hope to arrange a few JOG races this year. For those not familiar with JOG they are the Junior Offshore Group – organisers of a series of shorter races for smaller boats. The races always end with some sort of social, often a cheese and wine buffet on the quayside. Have a look at the JOG website <http://www.jog.org.uk/> to see more about JOG and their programme for the year. We might be able to fit one or two in that aren't listed below, if people are interested.

CSORC Provisional Programme for 2012

	From	To	Event	Organiser	Berth Fee (£)
Mar	Sat 3	Sun 4	Sunsail Season Shakedown	Sunsail	120
	Sat 31	Sun 1 April	Sunsail Race Series 2	Sunsail	160
April	Sat 14	Sun 15	Sunsail Race Series 3	Sunsail	160
	Sat 21		Nab Tower JOG	JOG	tba
June	Sun 11	Fri 15	IDOR	CSSA	Full
July	Sat 14	Sun 15	Sunsail Race Series 4	Sunsail	160
Aug	Sat 25	Sun 26	Sunsail Race Series 5	Sunsail	
Sept	Sat 8	-	Cowes-Poole	JOG	120
	Sun 9	-	Poole-Cowes	JOG	
	Sat 22	Sun 23	Sunsail Race Series Round 6	Sunsail	160
Oct	Sat 6	Sat 7	Sunsail Race Series Round 7	Sunsail	160
	Sat 15	Sat 16	Sunsail Race Series Round 8	Sunsail	160

If you would like to take part in any of the events above then fill in a crew bureau form with the names and dates of events you'd like to join, and send it to me. You can download a form from the website which can be completed on your computer, saved and emailed; or you can print the form below and post it. Alternatively you can email your details to me (be sure to include your CSSC and CSSA numbers and contact details) or phone to talk about what events are suitable (01483 306954).

Nick Bowles, crewbureau@csorc.madasafish.com

Civil Service Offshore Racing Club - Crew Bureau / Membership form **2012**

Name:		Department/Agency etc.:		
Home Address:		Work Address:		
Postcode:		Postcode:		
Phone (home):		Phone (work):		
Mobile:		Next of kin (name,address and phone no.):		
Email address(es):				
CSSC No.:	CSSA No.:			
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				
Mainsheet				
Navigator/Tactician				
Helm				
Watch leader				
Skipper				
Other				
RYA certificate (highest level only):			CSSA approved skipper Inshore / Offshore	
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'. 'Representative' events are only open to CSSC members. Contact Nick Bowles (01483 306954 or csorc@madasafish.com) to discuss suitability and availability.				
Event:		Date:		
Cruising/Training: If you are interested in introductory sails, race training or cruising then please specify below.				

Please either print and send to: Nick Bowles, Flat 4, "Clevehurst", 12 Upper Edgeborough Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2BG, or scan and email to csorc@madasafish.com.