

1925

RORC

2025





ROLEX SYDNEY HOBART YACHT RACE



MAXI YACHT ROLEX CUP



ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE



ROLEX FASTNET RACE





## STAY TIGHT. STAY THE COURSE.

**All hands on deck.** All eyes on the horizon. They take on the whim of the winds and the will of the seas. Hoisting the sails, easing, tacking; all work as one to draw the optimal trajectory. To stay the course, they must stay tight. **For in yachting, none can finish first on their own.**

*#Perpetual*



OYSTER PERPETUAL  
YACHT-MASTER 42

  
**ROLEX**

# RORC COMMODORE DEB FISH



The RORC's 99th year delivered some incredible racing in UK waters and around the world featuring both long-established classics and new challenges. My season started with the wonderful RORC Caribbean 600 – a race that should be on every sailor's bucket list. The scenery was stunning, the welcome warm and the après-sail fantastic. Another personal highlight was the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race, which is a fascinating challenge for the navigator – every headland brought an opportunity to gain or lose a couple of miles. The shifting sandbanks, tidal race at Stangford Loch and final beat in F6-7 winds only added to the challenge.

The RORC Season's Points Championship featured 16 races and 16 different winners. Rob and I were delighted to win overall on *Bellino* for the second year running, although *Scarlet Oyster* pipped us in the final race to win the fiercely competitive IRC Two by just six points and is our deserving Yacht of the Year. Derek Shakespeare's young crew on *Bulldog* won the De Guingand Bowl on their way to winning IRC One by a whisker over Frans van Cappelle and Michelle Witsenburg's family-crewed *Moana*, while Tim Goodhew and Kelvin Matthews on *Cora* made the IRC Three trophy their own.

Our IRC Rule, jointly owned by the RORC and the Yacht Club de France, celebrated its 40th birthday this year. It is used for the major trophies in events across the globe and continues to provide a simple, inexpensive foundation for competitive sailing. Poole Yacht Club hosted a successful IRC National Championship, won by Adam Gosling's *Yes!*, and RORC hosted the IRC Double Handed Nationals, won by *Bellino* on a tie-break with *Cora*. The Royal Irish Yacht Club hosted a series of events culminating in the IRC Europeans, won by John and Suzie Murphy's *Outrajeous*, while the IRC Two-Handed Europeans was won by Olympian Jonathan McKee and Justin Wolfe/Will Harris on *Red Ruby*, despite a one-hour time penalty for being OCS in the second of the two races!

Elsewhere the RORC is partnering more on certain events, for example with Lorient Grand Large and YCF to host the 2024 Offshore Double Handed World Championship in Sun Fast 30s. Foad Zahedi's Cap Regatta team pulled out all the stops to prepare an equalised one-design fleet, and competitors, who came from five continents, agreed that it was a fantastic event. In a closely fought race, victory went to young RORC members Maggie Adamson and Calanach Finlayson, just 65 seconds ahead of top Figaro sailors Elodie Bonafous

and Basile Bourgnon sailing in their home waters – chapeau! RORC also partnered with the Junior Offshore Group to run jointly a successful race to Cherbourg.

Sailors young and old alike excelled. Gavin Howe celebrated his 70th birthday by topping our miles leaderboard, while two young doublehanded crews borrowed boats for the windy Cowes-Dinard-St Malo and drove them like they stole them: *Zephyr* came second overall while *Rock Lobster III* finished third in IRC Two-Handed. Griffin – our revitalised youth initiative – offered 20 young sailors the chance to compete in three RORC races on board brand new Sun Fast 30s, benefitting as well by a weekend being coached by Dee Caffari, Steve Hayles, Shirley Robertson and Ian Walker. Griffin also provided more experienced young sailors with the opportunity to race Figaro Beneteau 3s in the Nastro Rosa series.

Building on this, I am pleased to announce a new chapter in our Griffin initiative, which is by going back to its roots in having a club boat, a Sun Fast 3600 to be renamed – you guessed it – *Griffin*! In addition to *Griffin*, the Club has a range of sweeteners to encourage youth offshore sailors to become members, including a new membership rate for U30s of just £75 a year (find out more on p58).

Outside RORC, I was delighted to see Marie Tabarly's *Pen Duick IV* take line honours in the retro Ocean Globe Race and Heather Thomas's crew on *Maiden* take overall victory under IRC.

I would like to thank those who have served on our Main Committee, notably our Admiral, Mike Greville, who is standing down after providing wise counsel for the past six years. Derek Shakespeare is also handing over the reins as Treasurer after 14 years keeping our finances in order. One of Mike's enduring legacies is our newly refurbished Cowes Clubhouse, which is quite simply stunning.

In 2025 we have exciting plans to celebrate our centenary, including a series of dinners around the world. The 51st Rolex Fastnet Race will once again finish in Cherbourg and is expected to attract a record-breaking entry. The relaunched Admiral's Cup is shaping up to be a great success with an impressive array of teams expected, several new boats under construction and some teams already training hard. Former Commodore James Neville's *Ino Noir* and Per Roman's *Garm* are the first team announced to represent the RORC.

I hope you enjoyed a fantastic season in 2024 and look forward to seeing you on the water, or in one of our clubhouses, in 2025.





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Printed by: Lavenham Press  
Printed November 2024



Cover: Robert Hajduk/PFN  
Opposite: Hanging on aboard Jukebox.  
RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com  
Top right: Beken of Cowes  
Middle and bottom: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com



## Now and Then page 28

To celebrate the RORC's centenary we compare *Jolie Brise* and *Caro*, winners of the 1925 and 2023 Fastnet Races, to show how offshore racing yachts have progressed in 100 years. While there is huge difference in displacement...surprisingly, both are gaff cutters, both have plumb bows and bowsprits and both were the swan songs for their respective builders.



## Season's Points Winner - *Bellino* page 46

For a second year doublehanders Rob Craigie and Commodore Deb Fish aboard their Sun Fast 3600 *Bellino* finished top in the RORC Season's Points Championship. The dynamic duo discuss the highlights of their year, including their Myth of Malham victory and finishing runners-up in the Drream Cup.



## Your Race Reviews page 68

RORC members and those that did well share their war stories from races throughout the 2024 RORC programme, from Chris Sheehan on *Warrior Won*'s RORC Transatlantic Race to Eric de Turckheim and *Teasing Machine*'s SSE Renewables Round Ireland; from Christian Zugel on *Tschüss 2*'s Roschier Baltic Sea Race to Stefan Jentzsch on *Black Pearl*'s Rolex Middle Sea Race.



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE NEWS JEREMY WILTON



As another extraordinary year comes to a close, it is with great pride and appreciation that I reflect on the Club's achievements in 2024. This year has seen our Club reach new heights, on and off the water, with spectacular racing, a growing sense of camaraderie among members and exciting developments for the future.

## **A Season of Unforgettable Racing**

The 2024 season offered a range of thrilling racing events that once again demonstrated the spirit and passion that define our Club. The RORC Transatlantic Race, which sets the tone for the year, was nothing short of remarkable. The fleet experienced a broad range of conditions, from light winds to challenging squalls, making it a race to remember. Congratulations to all who participated, especially the overall winner, *Leopard 3*.

The Caribbean 600 followed, offering a completely different challenge. This race, with its challenging course, tested our sailors' tactical skills as they negotiated awkward sea states and unpredictable weather systems. It was fantastic to see such a strong international fleet, with entries from across the globe. The race is now clearly recognised as one of the classic 600 milers.

Closer to home, our domestic racing season had a different winner for each race. The Easter Challenge kicked things off, as usual, with its unique blend of competitive racing and hands-on coaching. Many teams showed remarkable improvement over the event and we thank North Sails for their continued support. The other bookend to our Season's Points Championship of 16 races was the Cherbourg Race, this year run in conjunction with the JOG and attracting 71 boats, culminating in a good end-of-season party hosted by the Yacht Club de Cherbourg. We're very fortunate our race programme includes a variety of different length courses with the level of competition continuing to escalate. Many congratulations to the Commodore and Rob Craigie on retaining their title as Season's Points Champions for a second consecutive year.

## **A Year of Leadership and Transition**

Joining the Commodore, I must mention that this year marks a significant transition for our Flag Officers. Our Admiral, Mike Greville, will step down after many years of dedicated service. His time serving as a committee member, Flag Officer, Hon Treasurer, Commodore and now Admiral, shows his commitment to the Club over many years,

guiding it through significant growth and change. We are all grateful for his dedication and vision and for providing a steady hand on the helm.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our Main Committee who are completing their terms of service this year. Their dedication, hard work and insights have been invaluable in steering the Club forward. To those stepping down, we extend our heartfelt thanks. To those continuing, we look forward to working together in the years to come.

## **Financial**

Overall, the Club had a solid year ending March 2024, which included the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race. From a consolidated accounts perspective, we had an operating surplus which was in line with expectations. Membership income exceeded £1,000,000 for the first time in the Club's history. Our two clubhouse operations generated a reduced surplus, reflecting the closure of the Cowes Clubhouse from September 2023 for nine months for the planned renovation.

The Rating Office, which issues IRC and YTC rating certificates and provides technical services to the sailing industry, sailors, sailing clubs and event organisers, continued its trend of improving performance, reporting an increased surplus.

In our drive to grow our younger membership, we are adjusting the age bands and annual subscription rates to support this, with a new 35 and under category benefitting from a reduced subscription of £200. We're reducing the annual subscription for those aged 30 and







under to £75 and for Cadets (18 and under) there will be no charge from 1 January 2025. With the additional investment and work we're doing with our newly renamed Griffin Offshore Pathway, we're committed to developing young offshore talent.

#### **The Cowes Clubhouse: A New Era**

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the completion of the Cowes Clubhouse. This, the largest capital works investment in the Club's history, was finished in June. Since then, members have been enjoying the new and improved facilities and I am pleased to report that the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The Cowes Clubhouse now offers modern amenities while maintaining its historic charm. It has quickly become an even more vibrant focal point for members during racing events and social gatherings alike. Joe Hall, who is responsible for the Cowes Clubhouse, explains more about our new enhanced facility on p8.

#### **Growing the RORC Community**

While the racing calendar is the beating heart of our Club, this year has also seen exciting developments in other areas, particularly in how we engage with and support our members. One of the standout initiatives has been the Griffin Offshore Pathway, led by Jim Driver. This project is designed to nurture the next generation of offshore sailors, providing mentoring, training and opportunities to gain experience in competitive offshore racing. It has been heartening to see the enthusiasm and talent this project has already inspired. We are committed to expanding it further.

This is just one example of how we are working to grow the RORC community and foster a love of offshore racing in future generations. We continue to expand our

membership, attracting sailors from around the world who are drawn to the RORC's rich history and commitment to excellence in offshore racing. It has been encouraging to see more young sailors joining, introducing fresh energy and new ideas.

Indeed, through our full programme of domestic races we are constantly exploring new ways to enhance the racing experience, whether through innovations in race management or by continuing to develop our sustainability initiatives, ensuring that the sport we love can be enjoyed by future generations.

Our international presence continues to grow, with RORC races and events attracting entries from ever more diverse countries. Offshore racing is a truly global sport and it is exciting to see the Club at the forefront of this international community. Whether it's welcoming crews to our events in the UK, the Caribbean, Europe or further afield, we are proud to provide the thrill of competition and the camaraderie that comes with it.

A new addition to our offshore stable in 2022 was the biennial 635-mile Roschier Baltic Sea Race, starting and finishing in Helsinki. This aims to develop offshore racing in the Baltic, where it is now the longest offshore. This year we doubled the entry, with over 40 boats taking part. At the last minute I had the opportunity to do the race, with the first challenge being to find my wet weather gear in the garage! It was a great experience as I have never raced in the Baltic where it is daylight for 19 hours. We encountered all conditions, from good medium airs at the start through to a deep low coming across the race course bringing 40 knot winds and 4m sea state, to the breeze dying away at the end – don't we just love racing offshore!

#### **Looking Ahead to 2025**

Next year marks a monumental milestone for the Club as we celebrate our 100th anniversary. We can reflect on our rich history, but also look forward with great excitement. The heart of the celebrations will be conducted on the water with the return of the Admiral's Cup, which promises to bring together some of the best sailors from around the world, rekindling the fierce competition and camaraderie that the Cup has always represented. Alongside this will be a strong calendar of fantastic events – historic and new – not least the centenary edition of the Rolex Fastnet Race, from whose inaugural race our Club was founded 100 years ago.

In addition to our racing activities, our 100th anniversary will bring even more opportunities to celebrate. We have a programme of international and regional dinners planned, events which will allow us to bring together our global community of members to honour our past and celebrate the future of offshore sailing.

We are eager to share this historic moment with all of you, and we look forward to making 2025 a year to remember.



#### **A Final Note of Thanks**

None of the successes we have enjoyed this year would have been possible without the dedication of our members, our Main Committee and our staff. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to making 2024 such a memorable year for the Club. Whether you have been racing in our events, volunteering your time, or simply enjoying the social aspects of Club life, your involvement is what makes the RORC the thriving, vibrant organisation it is.

As we look forward to 2025, I encourage all of you to stay involved, stay connected, and continue to share in the passion for offshore racing that unites us all. Together, we will ensure that the Royal Ocean Racing Club remains at the international forefront of our sport, a place where sailors from around the world can come together to race, learn and enjoy the sea.

Wishing you all fair winds and following seas for 2025.

# RORC COWES CLUBHOUSE – JOB DONE by Joe Hall

Right on schedule, the redevelopment of the Cowes Clubhouse was completed by the end of May this year, with the Club reopened in early June to members and guests.

The timing meant the Club hit the ground running, hosting 30+ large events; from pre and post-race suppers, to regatta dinners, crew and cocktail parties and prize-givings, birthdays, weddings and several corporate events and regattas.

## What's new?

From the front gates up, the work has been extensive. Outside, the paths have been re-laid. The steps to the Clubhouse are now in Portland Stone, matching the steps up from the Parade and the new terrace.

Visually the exterior of the Clubhouse has undoubtedly been modernised, the ground floor development wrapping around the front of the old house with a large glass-front encasing a large welcoming foyer and reception area, which benefit from beautiful views overlooking the Parade and Solent beyond.



*The refurbished stairway now leads directly to the front entrance.*

To the right, as you enter, is the new 50-cover Terrace Restaurant while the Fastnet Bar is to the left, beautifully built by local boat builders and shipwright, Clare Lallows of Cowes.

As planned, the development has enabled the RORC Race Team to move out of the

Disrespect in the High Street and into the new offices within the rear of the Clubhouse.

The welcome result of this has been closer working ties between the race and hospitality teams, while footfall has increased to the Clubhouse, especially from competitors.



*The front extension allows the interior and exterior patios to be merged for larger functions.*





First impressions are everything - the Cowes Clubhouse's imposing gateway.



Above left: Admiral Mike Greville and Commodore Deb Fish formally open the Cowes Clubhouse. Right: Enjoying the new amenities.



# RORC COWES CLUBHOUSE – JOB DONE



## New Team

With the new build has come a new team and the Cowes Clubhouse is gradually recruiting more members of staff to look after our members' needs. While I have overall responsibility for the running of the Cowes Clubhouse, I am ably supported by Claire Corsham in Finance and new House Manager Kerriann Murray. Catering responsibilities are shared by new recruits Jay Taylor and Andy Wyatt in the kitchen.

Behind the scenes, the Clubhouse is reliant upon the large team you see day-in day-out, cleaning and making up rooms, laying and preparing tables, or serving and restocking the bar or cellars. Without this wonderful team, the Clubhouse simply would not work.

The predominant feedback from members and guests who have used the Clubhouse this summer is all positive, although there is always room to improve to which end the team is working hard. Overwhelmingly, the renovated Clubhouse is described as beautiful, clean, light and friendly.

Looking ahead to our centenary year, the Cowes Clubhouse calendar is rapidly filling up, both with repeat bookings from this year and with a new social programme, supported by the Cowes Social Team - a group of local



*Top and above: Members and friends enjoy the Clubhouse's new Fastnet Bar, built by Clare Lallows.*



***The renovated Clubhouse is described as beautiful, clean, light and friendly.***



*Live entertainment in the Terrace restaurant.*

members who have started to meet quarterly in order to generate new ideas for events and activities.

Altogether, the new Clubhouse is in a good place. The new building is a revelation, catering for everything from large events to small

intimate gatherings. The result is that more people are coming to enjoy the great views and the fun atmosphere at your Cowes Clubhouse.



*The refurbishment now provides a much improved entertainment space.*

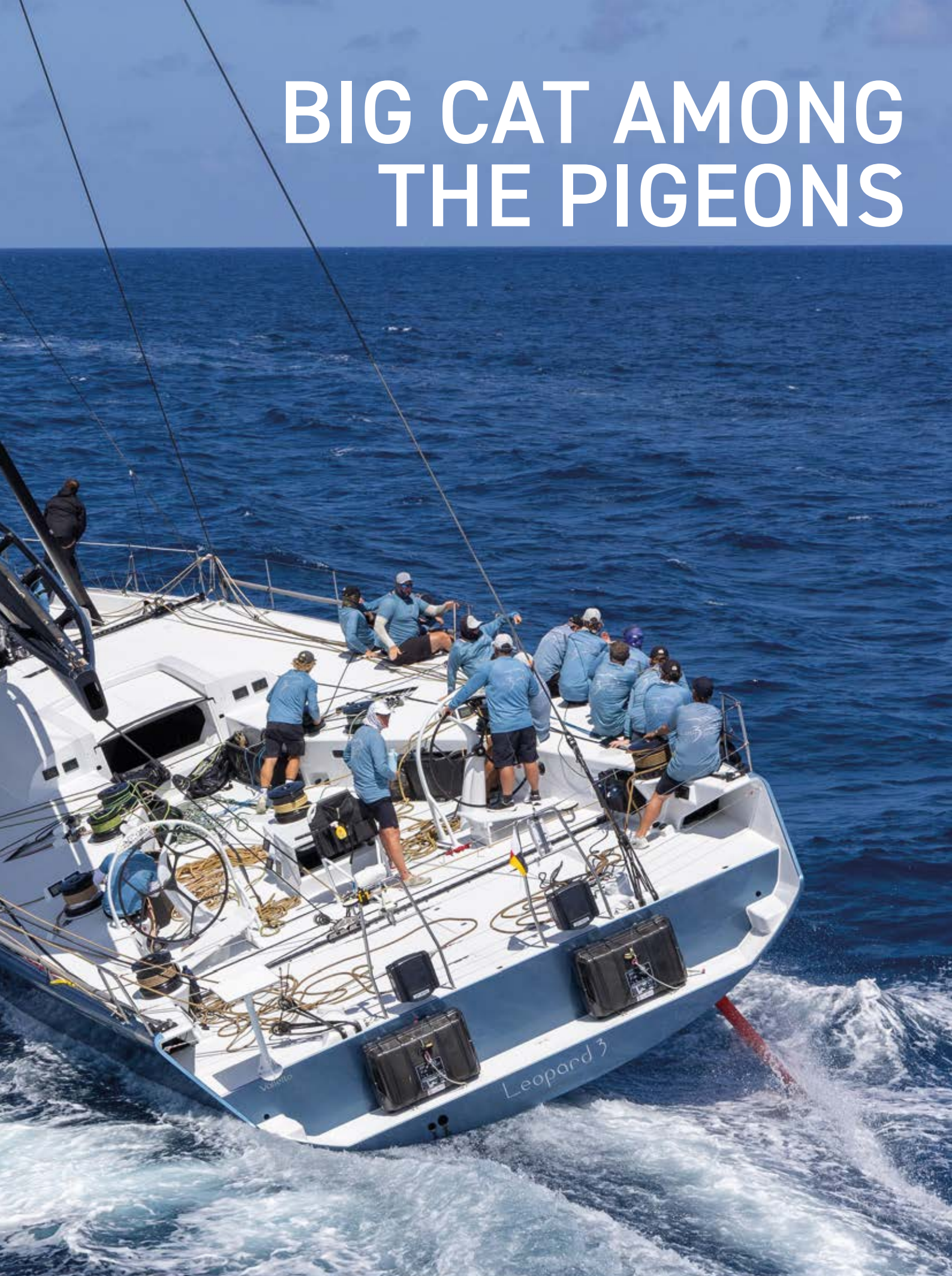


*Joost Schuijff's 100ft Leopard 3 en route to claiming RORC Caribbean 600 line honours and IRC Overall.  
Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com*





# BIG CAT AMONG THE PIGEONS





# RORC CARIBBEAN 600 AND NELSON'S CUP

**W**hile celebrating its 15th edition, the RORC Caribbean 600, for the second year, formed the final and most significant piece of the RORC's Nelson's Cup Series. The Series started with the Nelson's Cup inshores, followed by the Antigua 360, with the Caribbean 600 rounding out the event. Competitors could enter all, or part of the Series, but only those competing in all three would qualify for a Series result.

## **Nelson's Cup - Inshores**

Under clear blue skies and in a solid 12-15 knots of breeze, PRO Stefan Kunstmann set a variety of different courses for the 17 yachts, with four races scheduled over two days.

In IRC Zero the contest on the water was ultra-tight between the two maxis: the 100ft *Leopard 3* and Wendy Schmidt's Botin 85 *Deep Blue*. In race one, after 90 minutes of racing, the two yachts finished one second apart; then by just 10 seconds in race two. On corrected, *Deep Blue* came out on top, taking three bullets in four races.

Competition was particularly close in IRC One, the all-star class featuring Niklas Zennström's 52ft *Rán*, James Neville's 45ft *Ino Noir* and the former Rolex Fastnet Race and Caribbean 600 race winners, David and Peter Askew on their IRC 52 *Wizard*. An incident in race one saw *Wizard* disqualified and withdrawn, damaged, leaving *Rán*, *Ino Noir* and Frederic Puzin's Ker 46 *Daguet 3* to pick over the podium. *Ino Noir*, taking two firsts, a third and fourth, had a strong two days, winning by a point from *Daguet 3* whose pair of firsts were tempered by a DSQ in the *Wizard* incident.

It was a tie on points for Ed Bell's JPK 1180 *Dawn Treader* and Jules Mitchell's RP37 *Warthog* in IRC Two, both yachts trading the class lead, taking a pair of firsts and seconds over the two days. *Warthog* won on countback, a hard-earned victory for the local Antiguan team.

## **Antigua 360**

The fleet swelled to 34 for the anticlockwise race around Antigua, providing an excellent warm up to the main offshore. Staggered starts ensured a thrilling finish where multihulls, monohulls and even a kite surfer converged.

Eight multihulls started, including three MOD70s. In a light southeasterly they powered round the course with Jason Carroll's *Argo* the clear winner, first on the water by eight minutes ahead of *Zoulou*, with Alexia Barrier's *Limosa* third. *Argo* won under MOCRA corrected time too, ahead of Adrian Keller's 84ft catamaran *Allegra*.

Of the three Class40s *Tquila*, skippered by Alister Richardson, won after almost seven hours racing, followed by Carlo Vroon's team on *Trim Control*.

In IRC Zero, *Leopard 3* outperformed *Deep Blue*, winning both on the water and on corrected time. Meanwhile, in IRC One, the Askews' *Wizard*, skippered by Ocean Race winner Charlie Enright, was back in business - but came second to *Rán*, pushing *Daguet 3* into third.

IRC Two saw *Dawn Treader* continue her winning streak, claiming first place over Frans van Cappelle's J/122e *Moana*. Their focus had been on *Warthog*, their rival from the inshores, as owner Ed Bell's son George explained: "We managed to hold *Warthog* on the first beat, but they came back to us on the run. After that the wind went forward and *Warthog* went out wide and we went higher, which worked very well for us. That was enough for us to take the win." *Warthog* finished fourth.

## **RORC Caribbean 600**

Since its inception 15 years ago, the Caribbean 600 has grown to become one of the world's 'classic' 600 mile offshore races. This year 64 yachts were on the start line as the fleet got going in bright conditions with a southeasterly blowing 17 knots.

## **IRC Super Zero**

Of the seven yachts on the start line in IRC Super Zero, three were 100+ft supermaxis, alongside the 72ft *Aragon*, the VO70s *Ocean Breeze* and *Il Mostro* and the VO65 *Sisi*. Their start made for a breathtaking sight. On the line, *Leopard 3* was neck and neck with the Southern Wind 102 *Egiwave*, the former rapidly extending away on the first leg as lead monohull.

While *Leopard 3* is now 17 years old, under new owner Joost Schuijff she has had a major refit with 10 tons removed and a new mast installed reinstating her as a fully grand prix racing maxi. Having competed in the RORC Caribbean 600 eight times previously and claimed monohull line honours twice, the coveted IRC Overall win had so far eluded her.

It started well for *Leopard 3*, but when she reached the infamous wind shadow of Guadeloupe, *Spirit of Malouen X*, the Wally 107 skippered by Stéphane Néve, closed on them. *Leopard 3* got underway, extended her lead to bank the monohull line honours and the class win and but then had a tense wait before it was confirmed that, for the first time, they had won IRC Overall too.





*Leopard 3*'s long term skipper Chris Sherlock commented: "I am very pleased that we did the Nelson's Cup prior to the 600 because it made us sharp for the big race. In all the years we have raced *Leopard* we have never had such intense racing practice before and that definitely paid off big time."

#### Multihull

The fleet of 11 multihulls included the three MOD70s and *Allegra*, with a crack team including co-skipper Paul Larsen.

The MOD70s sparred from the off; Erik Maris' *Zoulou* edged ahead over the top of the fleet while *Limosa* also got away well. *Argo* was late but swiftly caught up to take the lead from *Zoulou*, then firmly held it for the rest of the race. By the time they had reached Guadeloupe, *Argo* was four miles ahead of *Zoulou*.

Crossing the finish line in 1 day 8 hours 8 minutes 40 seconds, *Argo* scored her second multihull line honours, 19 minutes ahead of *Zoulou*. "This year's race was like any other; it wasn't over until the final beat," said Carroll. "We may not have had many lead changes, but *Zoulou* was right behind us at every single turn. They were forever closing in on us and we had to keep finding ways to protect our position."

It was a clean sweep for the MOD70s on corrected time as well, *Argo* winning the Multihull class over *Zoulou* and *Limosa*.

#### IRC Zero

The competition level was high in IRC Zero with the rumbling four-way fight between *Rán*, *Daguet 3*, *Ino Noir* and *Wizard*.

The lead swapped between *Daguet 3* and *Wizard* for the first part of the race until, passing St Barth, *Rán* embraced the fast reaching conditions south to Guadeloupe, to overtake the competition on what would be her strongest leg. As the fleet rounded Guadeloupe, *Wizard* was 80 minutes astern of the Swedish team on corrected time, with *Ino Noir* and *Daguet 3* further behind.

However, this battle between the hi-tech racers was not over yet as *Wizard* reeled in *Rán* when she was becalmed at Redonda. But it was not enough - the Askew brothers finishing second to Niklas Zennström's Carkeek 52 by just 3 minutes 10 seconds, followed by *Daguet 3*.

Zennström was delighted: "We did as much as we could; we sailed a really good race and Steve (Hayles) and Bouwe (Bekking) made very good calls. What we are always looking for in any race is to have great competition, particularly with boats of similar size and

speed. We had that with the RORC Nelson's Cup and the Caribbean 600."

#### IRC One

This was a tight contest between the JPK 1180s in IRC One: Richard Fromentin's *Cocody*, *Sunrise III* powered by Zen (AUS), skippered by Gordon Ketelbey, and *Dawn Treader*.

After a decent start, *Cocody* continued to battle against *Sunrise III* and *Dawn Treader* on the beat to St Barth, joined by *Moana*. After two days *Cocody* was holding on to first place and had built a three-hour lead under IRC with *Sunrise III* second, chased by *Pata Negra*.

As the fleet came in to finish *Sunrise III* had fallen back, allowing *Pata Negra* and former class winner, Dan Litchfield's Nielsen 59 *Hound*, to move into the podium positions. However, none could supplant *Cocody*, which finished the race in first place with a four-hour lead under IRC. "This was a very technical race, because there were a lot of traps everywhere," commented Fromentin. "The island wind shadows and the weather conditions made the race very complex, but it was still a very beautiful race and a lot of fun."

#### IRC Two

IRC Two was dominated by a superb performance from Peter McWhinnie and his JPK 1080 *In Theory*, class winner twice



# RORC CARIBBEAN 600 AND NELSON'S CUP

Top: The Class40s and IRC One  
set sail on the Caribbean 600  
Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com  
Bottom: Stan Pearson  
Photo: Cory Silken

in 2020 and 2023. The American team was leading within five hours of the start and never relinquished its hold until the finish some four days later. Competition remained though with Gavin Howe's Sun Fast 3600 *Tigris* clinging on, three miles astern, until the halfway mark.

"We had some really tight racing with *Tigris* and *Panacea X*," commented McWhinnie. "We were just a few miles apart all the way to St Maarten. They never really went away; it was a fantastic contest. We got a little lucky with a squall going up to La Désirade and got some separation. It gave us a bit of an edge and the last part of the race was relatively comfortable after days of intense racing."

The final podium saw *In Theory* first, followed by *Tigris*, with Enrico Calvi's team from Naples onboard the Dufour 34 *Duffy* third.

## Class40

The Class40 division was a true nail-biter, the 11-strong class seeing more twists and turns than the race itself.

Straight out of the gate, James McHugh's *Tquila* powered ahead, settling in as leader of a pack of six Class40s, pushed hard by *Sogestran Seafrigo* (LHOROne), skippered by Guillaume Pirouelle. These two broke away from the pack en route to St Barth where differing tactics on the approach to Tintamarre paid dividends to the more southerly *Sogestran Seafrigo*. Then, in the Guadeloupe wind shadow, while *Sogestran*



*Seafrigo* opted to stay further offshore, *Tquila* cut in close and retrieved her lead, which she extended to four miles rounding Barbuda, until a gamble on the final approach to Antigua backfired: While *Tquila* headed north of the rhumb line, the pursuing pack stayed south, allowing three to catch up and get past her.

First over the line was the Mach 40.3 *Nestenn* – *Entrepreneurs pour la Planete*, followed by *Sogestran Seafrigo* and Melwin Fink's *Sign for Com* coming in third. However, *Nestenn* was subsequently penalised for having entered an

exclusion zone at Montserrat, dropping her to fifth, allowing *Tquila* to scrape into third.

## Nelson's Cup Series Winners

With the RORC Caribbean 600 rounding out the Nelson's Cup Series, prizes were awarded at the lively prize-giving at the Antigua Yacht Club to the winners of the three classes. *Leopard 3* and *Rán*'s respective victories in the Caribbean 600 ensured they won IRC Zero and IRC One, meanwhile *Dawn Treader* was top finisher, clearly taking IRC Two from *Moana*.



Photo: Cory Silken

## Stan Pearson 1958-2024

Quite simply, without Stan Pearson, there would be no RORC Caribbean 600. Alongside his good friend John Burnie, Stan was the mastermind behind the famous course, pulling together the Antigua Yacht Club and RORC to bring the first event to fruition. He laid marks and even built the start line mast.

Hailing from New Zealand, Stan was known as a crack helm, sailing on board the maxi *Sagamore* and the giants *Adela* and *Rebecca*. He was highly respected within the superyachting community and beyond.

Even after founding Antigua Rigging and 'stepping ashore', he continued to support the sport he loved, organising events such as the Nelson's Pursuit Race and the Superyacht Challenge. He also keenly encouraged locals to be involved in the sport.

With his passing in March 2024, the yachting community has lost one of their very best.





# IMA MAXI RACING IN 2025

**For 2025 the International Maxi Association has inshore and offshore circuits for maxi (60+ft) monohulls in the Mediterranean and multihull circuits there and in Caribbean.**

**IMA Mediterranean Maxi  
Offshore Challenge 2024/2025**

Rolex Middle Sea Race 2024, Malta  
La Larga 2025, Balearic islands  
Regata dei Tre Golfi, Naples  
151 Miglia-Trofeo Cetilar,  
Livorno to Punta Ala  
Loro Piana Giraglia, offshore race,  
Saint-Tropez to Genoa  
Aegean 600, Sounio, Greece  
Palermo-Montecarlo

**IMA Mediterranean Maxi  
Inshore Challenge**

PalmaVela, Mallorca  
IMA Maxi European Championship  
inshores, Sorrento  
Loro Piana Giraglia inshores, Saint-Tropez  
Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, Porto Cervo  
Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez

**Plus an Australian Maxi Championship  
and Multihull Championships in the  
Caribbean and Mediterrean**

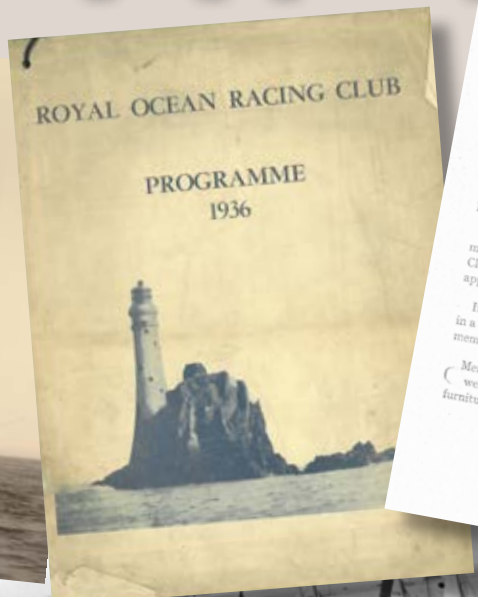
For more information please visit  
[www.internationalmaxiassociation.com](http://www.internationalmaxiassociation.com)



The International Maxi Association is the World Sailing-recognised organisation that develops and promotes maxi yacht racing internationally. Supported by Rolex, the IMA represents maxi owners across the world with the aim of encouraging participation in maxi yacht events and improving the quality of their racing.



# RORC AT 100



2, Pall Mall Place, S.W.1.  
(Please continue to address letters to this address for the present)  
22nd November, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I regret to inform you that the Club Premises at Pall Mall Place, have been bombed and partially demolished, and that the Steward was killed. In view of this, the Annual Meeting and Dinner has been postponed to Saturday, the 21st December, in place of the 14th December as announced on the enclosed Notice.

The Royal Thames Yacht Club has kindly invited members of the Royal Ocean Racing Club to use its Clubhouse at 60, Knightsbridge. (This, of course, applies to full members only.)

It is hoped that new premises will soon be found in a convenient position. Both members and honorary members will be notified of this.

Members will be glad to know that the Club records, well as the cups and trophies and a quantity of furniture, have been saved.

E. W. R. PETERSON,  
Honorary Secretary.



15th August 1975

**OCEAN RACE.**

Flag A 11.50 a.m. First Gun and Blue Peter 11.55 a.m.  
Starting Gun and Flag lowered 15 min.

**SAILING INSTRUCTIONS:**

The Starting Line is between the Mark Boat, carrying the Club Ensign at the Mast Head, and the Pier Head, and is formed by bringing the Sunaphore Post on the West End of Pier in line with the Easternmost (Trinity) Church Spire in Ryde.

At least Thirty Minutes before the First Race the Arm of the Semaphore will be raised to denote which way the Yachts start.

Ten Minutes before the Start the Preparatory Flag denoting the Race will be hoisted.

Five Minutes before the Start the First Gun will be fired and the Blue Peter hoisted.

Five Minutes exactly after the First Gun, the Starting Gun will be fired, and the Blue Peter lowered. The Preparatory Flag will be lowered at the same time. Should the Gun misfire the Blue Peter will give the signal to start.

Should it be necessary to recall any Yacht, the said Yacht's number will be exhibited, and two small Guns fired in quick succession.

**COURSE.**

Course from Ryde, passing to the Southward of the Isle of Wight, around the Fastnet Rock, leaving it upon the Starboard Hand, thence to Plymouth, and across the Finishing Line between the Naval Signal Station and the North Drake Buoy.



**ANY YACHT GIVING UP THE RACE MUST NOTIFY THE R.O.R.C., SEEHORS, PICCY, LONDON, IMMEDIATELY BY TELEGRAM**









# RORC AT 100

2025 represents a landmark year for the Club as it celebrates its centenary. On 23 August 1925, as the first 'Ocean Race' (subsequently rechristened the Fastnet Race) was finishing, the Ocean Racing Club was founded at a dinner at the Royal Western Yacht Club up on Plymouth Hoe.

Lieutenant Commander EG Martin OBE, skipper of *Jolie Brise* and winner of the first Ocean Race, was appointed Commodore and the King's Sailing Master, Sir Philip Hunloke, became President. The rest of the committee comprised Yachting Monthly editor, Maldon Heckstall-Smith; eminent yachtsman, Sir Ralph Gore (subsequently first President of the IYRU, now World Sailing); the Club's US representative, Herbert Stone; and the original instigator of the Ocean Race, Weston Martyr. The Club started with 34 founding members, each paying an annual subscription of £1.

Based upon an American idea - the first Ocean Race was inspired by the Bermuda Race - the Club has always been international. Today more than one third of its 3,800-4,000 members are from overseas, heralding from 58 countries, as far afield as Papua New Guinea, Zambia and Nepal.



From the Yachting Monthly office on Albemarle St, to its first clubhouse on Pall Mall (destroyed in WWII), the RORC today has two clubhouses - the two townhouses knocked into one that now form 20 St James' Place in central London and the former Castle Rock/Royal Corinthian YC in Cowes - while its Rating Office is today based within the Berthon Boatyard in Lymington.



From running the Ocean Race alone, the Junior Ocean Race (today known as the Channel Race) was added in 1928 and the programme evolved dramatically to the extent that by the 1950s it was up to 18 races. In the 1970s the Club was involved in early editions of the Whitbread Round the World Race and ran the pinnacle event in international grand prix yachting - the Admiral's Cup. Today the RORC programme comprises 25 races, from its historic domestic ones to other 600-milers such as the RORC Caribbean 600 and Roschier Baltic Sea Race, as well as supporting events in far-away locations from Oman to Singapore.

The RORC's Rolex Fastnet Race has grown to become, by far, the world's largest offshore race. While there were just seven starters in 1925, in 2023 430 yachts competed. *Jolie Brise's* winning average speed in 1925 was 3.78 knots; to date, the highest average speed at which the race has been covered is 21.9 knots, set by the 100ft foiling trimaran *Maxi Edmond de Rothschild* in 2019.

Throughout its history the Club has run and evolved its own rating rules; the first RORC rule, followed by the halcyon two decades of global unity brought about by IOR, then CHS, the short-lived IMS, before CHS was rebranded IRC for the new millennium.

## 2025

The core of the Club's celebrations in 2025 are in its race programme:

- 👑 joint organising authority of the event that kicked-off ocean racing in 1866, the west to east Transatlantic Race (see p26)

- 👑 a reintroduced Admiral's Cup (see p22), to be held for the first time in 22 years

- 👑 potentially another 400+ bumper entry in a special centenary edition Rolex Fastnet Race

## RORC centenary book

For its 75th anniversary the Club worked with distinguished author and nautical and WWII historian Ian Dear to write the history of the Royal Ocean Racing Club. For 2025 the Club has commissioned an update, effectively from where the first book left off.

This will focus upon the growth of the Fastnet Race; its sponsorship from Rolex and the move to Cherbourg-en-Cotentin. It will examine the decline of the Admiral's Cup and its re-emergence in 2025, plus the club's new races like the RORC Caribbean 600 and Transatlantic Race and milestones like the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club merger and the rebuilding of its Cowes Clubhouse. IRC will be covered having become the dominant rating rule globally, along with how offshore race boat design and the sport of offshore racing have evolved.

To write the latest chapter in its history, the RORC has commissioned James Boyd, a yachting journalist with more than 40 years' experience and for the past 12 years, editor of this Yearbook.

James' journalistic career began in the early 1980s as the lone foreigner covering Breton shorthanded offshore racing, including the 1984 Quebec-St Malo, 1985 Course de l'Europe and 1986 Route du Rhum as sailing



*Left: To celebrate our 100 years, the Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race will take place on 20 September.  
Below: Official celebratory RORC dinners and functions will be taking place in venues around the world during 2025.  
Photos: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com*

## RORC centenary celebrations

In addition, the RORC will be hosting a number of events for its international members around the world:

- 13 March - New York Yacht Club, New York
- 29 March - Royal Cork Yacht Club, Ireland
- 5 April - Yacht Club de France, Paris
- 9/10 May - Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 19 July - Centenary lunch, Cowes Clubhouse (invitation only)
- 12 Sept - The Box, Plymouth
- September TBC - Hamburg, Germany
- 8 October - Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club
- 18 October - Royal Malta Yacht Club
- 15 November - Centenary Gala Dinner, London
- 21 December - Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Sydney

correspondent for The Daily Telegraph and numerous magazines. In 1989 he joined Yachting World as Features Editor, then Assistant Editor, where he continued to write about offshore racing, including the Whitbread Round the World Race, BOC Challenge and Vendée Globe, plus the first Jules Verne and solo round the world record attempts.

In 2001 he was headhunted to be editor of the leading yacht and dinghy racing website madforsailing.com, winner of the Media Award at the 2002 British Nautical Awards. This website he acquired and ran for 15 years as thedailysail.com. Throughout this period he covered all the RORC's races for thedailysail.com, while event reporting for Rolex and then

for the Club directly. Today he works with former RORC Admiral Andrew McIrvine for the International Maxi Association and for classes such as the RC44.

Physically, the '2000-2025' book will be the same size as its predecessor, enabling the two to be stacked neatly by one another on a bookshelf.

### RORC Centenary Race

Following the end of the Season's Points Championship for 2025, and to conclude the celebrations for its big anniversary, the Club is to hold its Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race on 20 September in Cowes.

Unlike all of the Club's many other races, this will be unique in being a pursuit race, with staggered starts taking place by class with the slowest heading off first. "The aim is to get everyone back to the Cowes Clubhouse in time for the end of season prize-giving and a party," as Racing Manager Steve Cole puts it.

Befitting an offshore racing club in its 100th year, the race will be no mere pillowfight up and down the Solent, but will have a duration of around eight hours for the smaller boats, six for the faster ones. This means that, depending upon wind conditions, the course will most likely take the fleet out of the Solent to Selsey Bill or in the opposite direction into Christchurch Bay.





# BACK STRONGER THAN EVER

After a sabbatical of 22 years, the Admiral's Cup looks set to be back with a bang. The event that was for so many years considered the pinnacle of grand prix yacht racing - the 'unofficial world championship of offshore racing' - will, appropriately, be a cornerstone of the RORC's centenary celebrations.

Perhaps it is the straightforward format with two boats representing a yacht club or nation (based on the owners' nationality), or the choice of yachts, or maybe the return to the event of the Rolex Fastnet Race, or even a favourable economic phase? Whatever the reasons, the relaunched Admiral's Cup is resonating with



## The Admiral's Cup

17th July - 1st August 2025





## by James Boyd

owners, professional sailors and teams alike from across the globe. To date the Club has received 25 expressions of interest and many are approaching the event at the same high, exacting level as we saw during the event's last competitive peak in the 1980/90s.

Compared to other major yacht racing series, the Admiral's Cup represents what today is a rare mix of both inshore and offshore racing, albeit biased towards the offshores which carry scoring coefficients and are non-discardable - the Rolex Fastnet Race, for example, scores triple points - ensuring competition goes to the wire.

Nonetheless the inshores will be important too. According to RORC Racing Manager Steve Cole, the plan is to hold three days of inshore racing, which will be a mix of windward-leewards and round the cans. This and their location will depend upon the forecast, for example in a southeasterly it will be possible to hold windward-leewards in the eastern Solent. The RORC has appointed the well-respected Stuart Childerley as PRO and has come up with a schedule of training events including the Easter Challenge, Myth of Malham and Cowes-Dinard-St Malo. The Royal Yacht Squadron is also holding a two day Admiral's Cup Pre-Regatta, with inshore racing over 25-26 June.

Meanwhile teams are planning their training, development and rating optimisation in the build-up. Their weather studies will affect their sail programmes: a heavy weather jib, storm jib and trysail are mandatory. Over and above these, Admiral's Cup 1 boats can take 16 sails and Admiral's Cup 2 boats, 14. The anticipated weather may affect crew weight too - for unlike the TP52, RC44, ClubSwan 50 classes for example, crew numbers are limited under IRC, but not their weight. Crew can be shed for the offshores, but not the inshores.

Most impressive is the calibre of the international teams that have entered so far.

The first French team to emerge comprises former Vice Commodore Eric de Turckheim's NMD 54 *Teasing Machine* and smaller sistership, the NMD 43 *Albator* of Philippe Frantz. *Teasing Machine* was 2023 RORC Yacht of the Year, winning the 2022 Rolex Middle Sea Race outright, and this year was first in the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race. *Albator* was fifth (and first 'smaller boat') in the last Rolex Fastnet Race. Both *Teasing Machine* and *Albator* were launched in 2017 and are now at the top of their game.

As former Chairman of the Programme and Race Committee, De Turckheim played a major

role in the Admiral's Cup's return and its new two-boat teams, representing clubs or nations format. He remembers being in Cowes during its heyday. "I started racing offshore in the early 1970s, when for a young sailor like me, to be in Cowes with all the Brazilians, Argentineans and teams from New Zealand and Australia,



US, etc - the Admiral's Cup was just was an amazing competition..."

For training, *Teasing Machine* has entered the 52 Super Series, as the team's Laurent Pagès explains: "Our challenge is to improve our crew work and boat handling around the cans. For that the best circuit is the 52 Super Series. Everything we do on the 52 is preparation for the Admiral's Cup."

Representing the Yacht Club Costa Smeralda, Giovanni Lombardi Stronati will be entering the first 51ft wallyrocket, a new addition to his already impressive fleet of racing yachts (including the 82ft maxi *Django HF*, a new Botin Partners 70 grand prix racer, a new Swan 128 etc), plus a JPK 1180.

"I remember the Admiral's Cup from when I was young," enthuses Stronati. "I love the Fastnet and I have always dreamed of doing that. 2025 is the 250th year of the Royal Thames Yacht Club [of which he is a member] and there is the Fastnet and the Admiral's Cup. So I decided in two seconds to do both boats..." This will be Stronati's first Rolex Fastnet Race although he has competed in the Rolex Middle Sea Race and Loro Piana Giraglia.

Designed as a 'TP52 eater' the wallyrocket 51 comes from Wally Yachts, more usually associated with their innovative fast cruising maxi yachts. It combines its light weight with water ballast and trim tab, the latter improving upwind ability while reducing the drag of the

keel fin. The boat is being developed by well-known pros Vasco Vascotto and Guillermo Parada, multiple winners of the 52 Super Series with *Azzurra*.

Both Vascotto and Parada competed in the 1999 Champagne Mumm Admiral's Cup. Parada was on the Mumm 36 *Breeze 1* when the event concluded with the Wolf Rock Race (the Mumm 36s only sailed a 323-mile course to the Helstone Buoy and back...) However he also competed in that year's Fastnet Race on the maxi *Alexia*. "Then I didn't go back for a long time, but this year I went back with *Gladiator*. We had a good week and I had a lot of good memories," says Parada. "It looks like the Admiral's Cup will be a big event and the place, as we all know, is very challenging. The format, I think, is very nice with a few windward-leewards, a couple of short courses and the long races. The scoreboard will be very open until the final race. We are very much looking forward to it."

The Yacht Club de Monaco (YCM) is mounting a powerful entry led by Maxi 72 owner Peter Harrison. His TP52 *Jolt 3* (ex-*Sorcha*) will be competing alongside the Carkeek FAST40 Mk2 *Jolt 6* previously known in the UK as *Jubilee*. She will be skippered by Monaco royalty in the form of Pierre Casiraghi (left). Casiraghi is no stranger to offshore racing, having competed in the Cape2Rio, Palermo-Montecarlo and the Giraglia races. He even raced the Rolex Fastnet Race before, doublehanding on an IMOCA with Boris Herrmann in 2017.

"I followed it a little bit back in the day and always loved the concept," admits Peter Harrison, who is a member of the YCM, where Casiraghi is Vice President. He is set to be joined on board by many of his Maxi 72 crew. "I am looking forward to it. I have got significant ties to the Isle of Wight, which is one draw, and I miss the 52. I love 52 racing. It'll be a very exciting event." He too has competed in the Rolex Fastnet Race previously, on board *Sorcha* in 2015.

Although neither boat ostensibly seems Kiwi, representing the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron are its members Max Klink with his 52ft Botin design *Caro* and Jim and Kate Murray's *Callisto*, a Botin GP42 (Kate is from New Zealand). *Caro*, of course, won the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race outright, while *Callisto* has a lengthy history, originally built as *Puerto Calero* but better remembered in the UK as *Zephyr*/*Jean Genie*/*Dark 'N' Stormy*, and has been substantially upgraded since its GP42 days. Jim and Kate Murray are known for campaigning their PAC52 *Callisto* offshore, winning the 2023 Pineapple Cup.

Photo opposite: Admiral's Cup/Matthew Dickens  
Photo below: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com



*"We are expecting some world class teams that are already competing at the top level internationally."*



down the runs faster than the TP52s. With the small boats, there is a big range - you have a GP42 at the top and *Sunrise* [JPK 1180] at the bottom." Of the event he adds: "I am looking forward to it. It is just so exciting and people are coming out of the woodwork for it."

Naturally, strong teams from the UK are expected. The first to be announced from the RORC is that of former Commodore James Neville with his Carkeek 45 *Ino Noir* and Swedish RORC member Per Roman's JPK 1180 *Garm*. *Ino Noir* finished ninth overall in the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race (after coming second with his previous *Ino XXX*), while *Garm* has competed in most of the European 600-mile races. This year she finished second overall and was IRC One winner in the Roschier Baltic Sea Race, with a largely Spanish crew led by tactician Gustavo Doreste.

"Representing the RORC for the return of the Admiral's Cup in the centenary year of the Club is a special privilege, especially when you consider the phenomenal competitors that came before us," commented Neville. "We are expecting some world class teams that are already competing at the top level internationally."

For the second RORC team, Chris Frost has acquired the former *Girls on Film* Carkeek 42, and renamed her *AMP-lifi*. He is set to unite with American Jon Desmond's PAC52 *Final Final* (ex-*Warrior Won*).

Among the other British boats still waiting for 'mates' is 2021 Rolex Fastnet Race winner Tom Kneen with his brand new, improved JPK 1180, replacing his previous *Sunrise*.

A strong showing can be expected from Hong Kong and Karl Kwok's *Beau Geste* team.

Under tactician Gavin Brady the *Beau Geste* team has enjoyed great success, having been ORC World Champions and having twice won their class at the IRC Europeans. They have teamed up with a small boat, but at the time of writing had announced no further details.

One of the first teams to announce their participation on behalf of the Royal Maas YC was the Dutch team comprising the Ker 46 *ROST Van Oden*, led by Gerd-Jan Poortman, and the de Graaf family's Ker 43 *Baraka GP* - both regular RORC competitors. Poortman was pitman on *Trust Computer Products* in 1999's winning Dutch team: "The 2025 Admiral's Cup is a great opportunity for the young team to race against the best in the world. Our goal is to create an upset through our motivation and training. How we perform at the Admiral's Cup will be on all the crew's CVs for the rest of their lives. We are all excited about the opportunity."

From the Regatta Verein Greifswald in Germany is the TP52 *Imagine* (formerly the 2012 vintage *Azzurra*), now owned by the Streckenbach family and Walter Watermann's *X-Day*, originally the GP42 *Near Miss*.

Finland's Arto Linnervuo will be another owner fielding two boats. His Tulikettu Redkik Racing Team will comprise the DSS-equipped Infiniti 52 *Tulikettu* as big boat, accompanied by his Xp44 *Xtra Staerk*, that he campaigned prior to *Tulikettu*'s launch.

The Royal Irish Yacht Club intend to field a team including Pete Smyth's Ker 46 *Searcher* (ex-*Tonnerre de Breskens*).

Further details are set to be unveiled throughout 2025 in the build-up to what seems set to be a historic event for the Club.

Max Klink says the appeal of competing in the Admiral's Cup is its long history as the 'unofficial world championship of offshore sailing' and this being a historic event - the first revitalised edition. "The new format, with clubs and nations, is more contemporary and allows us to enter with our established crew. Being a team event should make it very challenging. We are fortunate to have found a great partner."

*Callisto*'s crew includes Volvo Ocean Race winner Mike Sanderson, who raced the 1999 Admiral's Cup on Peter de Ridder's Mumm 36 *Mean Machine* in the winning Dutch team. "I am excited about every part of it - apart from going to the Fastnet Rock on a 42-footer!" quips Sanderson, who is used to bigger boats. But seriously: "They are super cool boats. We did a few races at Cowes Week and we went



*The Admiral's Cup, representing the YCCS, will be the first key event for the brand new wallyrocket 51, supposedly a 'TP52 eater'.*  
Photos: Maurizio Paradisi



# EARLY CONFIRMED ENTRIES with more to come

## Admiral's Cup 1 (TCC 1.280-1.464, LH 13.41-17.20m)



Caro  
Max Klink  
Botin 52

Royal New Zealand  
Yacht Squadron

Callisto  
Jim and Kate Murray  
Botin GP42

## Admiral's Cup 2 (TCC 1.100-1.276, LH 11.00-13.40m)



Teasing Machine  
Eric de Turckheim  
NMD 54

Albator  
Philippe Frantz  
NMD 43



Ino Noir  
James Neville  
Carkeek 45

Royal Ocean  
Racing Club

Garm  
Per Roman  
JPK 1180



Final Final  
Jon Desmond  
PAC52

Royal Ocean  
Racing Club

AMP-lif  
Chris Frost  
Carkeek 42



Jolt 3  
Peter Harrison  
TP52

Yacht Club  
de Monaco

Jolt 6  
Pierre Casiraghi  
GP42



ROST Van Oden  
Gerd-Jan Poortman  
Ker 46

Royal Maas  
Yacht Club

Baraka GP  
De Graaf family  
Ker 43



wallyrocket 51  
Giovanni Lombardi Stronati  
wallyrocket 51

Yacht Club  
Costa Smeralda

Django JPK  
Giovanni Lombardi Stronati  
JPK 1180





# FROM WEST TO EAST TRANSATLANTIC RACE 2025

Just as 15 years earlier *America* won a race around the Isle of Wight for what would become the America's Cup, the 'Great Ocean Race' effectively founded ocean racing as a leisure pursuit. It is appropriate therefore that its present incarnation, the Transatlantic Race, run (as then) by the New York Yacht Club, for this edition as joint organising authority with the RORC and in conjunction with the Storm Trysail Club and Royal Yacht Squadron, should be a key part of the RORC's centenary racing programme, feeding directly into the Admiral's Cup and Rolex Fastnet Race.

In 1866, as America's 'Gilded Age' was developing its first sparkle, three of New York's wealthiest heirs were having a brandy-fuelled debate about the merits of their giant schooners: Would Pierre Lorillard IV (tobacco) and George Osgood (financier), with their giant centreboard schooners *Vesta* and *Fleetwing*, beat the long keel *Henrietta* of 25-year-old James Gordon Bennett (New York Herald/publishing)? How would *Vesta* fare, being the newest and beamiest but least suited to racing offshore?

All were New York Yacht Club members and while they had raced each other locally, with the booze raising the stakes in every way, it was deemed that the only satisfactory test would be to race transatlantic - from Sandy Hook lighthouse off New York Harbour, to the Needles. As was typical for challenges between such individuals back then, the trio amassed a winner-takes-all prize purse of US\$ 90,000 (roughly US\$2 million today).

Two months later, unburdened with trifling modern concepts like safety and prudence, the three schooners set sail on 11 December, in the height of winter. Remarkably, all three made it across the freezing Atlantic, although eight days into the race, six hands were lost overboard from *Fleetwing* during a gale. Ultimately Bennett was the only one of the three owners to sail on board and so, perhaps deservedly, *Henrietta* was first to Cowes, winning the giant bet. Much of this victory was down to his merciless skipper, an old school Clipper ship captain 'Bully' Samuels, renowned for keeping mutinous crew in line with the aid of his twin pistols.

Subsequent editions of the race have taken place sporadically, none more famous than in 1905 for the Kaiser's Cup. At a time when he was attempting to demonstrate German superiority at sea in defiance of his British relatives, Kaiser Wilhelm II bought the highly rated GL Watson 154ft two-masted schooner *Rainbow*, renaming her *Hamburg*. However, come the race, *Hamburg* was roundly beaten by American Wilson Marshall's 227ft long three-masted schooner *Atlantic*. Marshall, his three-time America's Cup-winning skipper Charlie Barr and her crew of 50, established a record from New York to The Lizard of 12 days 4 hours 1 minute 19 seconds that stood for 75 years and was not bettered by another monohull until Robert Miller's 146ft ketch *Mari-Cha III* in 1998.

An anniversary edition of this, the Rolex Transatlantic Race, was held in 2005, and since 2011 this west to east transatlantic race has been run quadrennially by the four organising clubs, with the next edition, delayed due to the pandemic, taking place in 2025.





Opposite: *Henriette*, *Fleetwing* and *Vesta* set sail on the Great Ocean Race in December 1866.

Artist: Frederick Schiller Cozzens.

Below: *Henrietta*'s 25-year-old owner James Gordon Bennett - who's eccentric behaviour caused his name to become a popular expletive.

Due to the present-day difficulties of starting a race from New York (as well as Sandy Hook lighthouse now being 1.5 miles inland compared to its original shoreside position), the modern-day course of just over 3,000 miles sets off from Newport, RI's Castle Hill to a finish off the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes. The next race's start will take place on 18 June 2025 at 11:00.

Two additional marks - the position of which will be announced before the start - are designed to avoid a protected sea area for whales and icebergs drifting south on the Labrador Current. This ultimately means competitors will be steered away from the shallows, fog and fishing fleets of the notoriously treacherous Grand Banks.

There will also be a scoring gate off the Lizard, reflecting the passage to here from Newport, RI now being a well-established sailing record route. The present record for this 2,976-mile passage was set by *Rambler 100* in 2011 at 6 days 22 hours 8 minutes 2 seconds.



The fleet will be divided into several divisions, including IRC Racing and IRC Racer Cruiser (with hull factor of  $\leq 7.6$ ), Classic for pre-1970 designs, Superyachts, Multihulls and an Open Division (ie Class 40s, IMOCAs).

The headline story for 2025 is a possible rerun of 2011 when Ken Read's V070 *Mar Mostro* enjoyed a maxi boat David and Goliath battle with George David's *Rambler 100*. In that race the smaller boat won under IRC corrected time, while the larger claimed line honours and established the present record time. In 2025 the battle will be between *Black Jack 100* and the V070 *Tschüss 2*.

Both boats have had illustrious careers. *Black Jack 100* started life in 2005 as Neville Crichton's *Alfa Romeo II*, fitted with a canting keel (including a tungsten bulb) and a steerable forward canard. In this livery she claimed line honours in the 2006 Giraglia and 2009 Rolex Sydney Hobart and Transpac before being acquired by Igor Simčič and rebranded *Esimit Europa II*, going on to win line honours in most offshore events in the Mediterranean, setting records in the Giraglia and Palermo-Montecarlo among others. She returned 'Down Under' as Peter Harburg's *Black Jack* and was sold early in 2024 to present Dutch owner Remon Vos, who immediately broke the boat's own Palermo-Montecarlo record.

*Black Jack 100*'s skipper Tristan le Brun will be sailing with owner Remon Vos and their mix of European and Australian crew, including the boat's long term tactician Mark Bradford. "Next year we are planning to do the Transatlantic Race, the Rolex Fastnet and Rolex Sydney Hobart," said le Brun. "So it will be a busy year, visiting three corners of the globe. We are looking forward to the Transatlantic Race. It will be a great

achievement for the owner to race across the Atlantic."

*Tschüss 2* returns as defending champion. She started life in 2010 as the ultimate expression of a V070: Franck Cammas' *Groupama 4*, the 2011-12 Volvo Ocean Race winner. As *Giacomo* she won the 2016 Rolex Sydney Hobart outright before being bought by the American Askew brothers who in 2019 had a strong run, winning in short succession the RORC Caribbean 600, the west to east Transatlantic Race and the Rolex Fastnet Race. As Christian Zugel's *Tschüss II* she was first in the 2023 Round the Island Race and the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo, before going on to win her class in the Gotland Runt and the Roschier Baltic Sea Race outright (see report p86).

*Tschüss 2* will be competing in the RORC Transatlantic Race and the Caribbean 600, before she completes her lap with the west to east Transatlantic Race and the centenary Rolex Fastnet Race. Naturally owner Christian Zugel wishes to repeat *Wizard*'s record: "That would be outstanding, yes, but we don't count our chickens - I'm sure there will be some other good competitors showing up. For me personally this is a huge challenge, but we have the perfect boat and a fantastic team, which makes a big difference. With Johnny Mordaunt, we have been trying very hard to get our good team in place. We will try to be as competitive as possible."

A few other boats are returning for a second time. From the UK is the Lombard 46 *Pata Negra* which competed in 2019 with original owner Giles Redpath, coming second in IRC Two. In 2025 she will be campaigned by new owner Andrew Ball. Meanwhile, from the USA is Howard Hodgson Junior's Swan 75 FD *True* which finished fourth in IRC Three.

#### Recent winners

<b>2005 Overall</b>	<i>Maximus</i> (Charles Brown and Bill Buckley, 100ft maxi)
<b>Line honours</b>	<i>Mari-Cha IV</i> (Robert Miller, 140ft schooner) 10 days 1 hour 8 minutes 37 seconds
<b>2011 Overall</b>	<i>Mar Mostro</i> (Ken Read, V070)
<b>Line honours</b>	<i>Rambler 100</i> (George David, 100ft maxi) 6 days 22 hours 8 minutes 2 seconds
<b>2015 Overall</b>	<i>Lucky</i> (Bryon Ehrhart, 63ft)
<b>Line honours</b>	<i>Comanche</i> (Jim and Kristy Heinz-Clarke, 100ft sloop) 7 days 11 hours 35 minutes 11 seconds
<b>2019 Overall</b>	<i>Wizard</i> (David and Peter Askew, V070)
<b>Line honours</b>	<i>Sallywag</i> (Lee Seng Huang, 100ft maxi) 10 days 2 hours 13 minutes 19 seconds



# NOW AND THEN by James Boyd



Jolie Brise	
Design	Alexandre Pâris
Type	Le Havre pilot boat
Builder	Albert Paumelle, Le Havre
Crew	10
IRC TCC	0.924
Keel type	Long
Rudder type	High aspect, heavily raked forward keel hung
Ballast	Lump iron/concrete 4,000kg, plus lead 5,000kg
LH	17.1m
LWL	14.63
Beam	4.72m
Draft	2.8m
Weight	42,400kg
DLR	385
Stern overhang	2.45m
P	17.2m
E	10.97m
J	11.06m
HAS	57.29sqm
SPA	n/a
Bowsprit	5.28m
Helm	4m long tiller

The RORC celebrates its centenary in 2025, the Club having been founded as a result of the first Fastnet Race. So how has offshore yacht racing technology progressed in the last 100 years?

One indication perhaps is average speed. *Jolie Brise*, winner of the first race under Lt Cmdr EG Martin OBE, RNVR, subsequently the RORC's first Commodore and Admiral (until his death), managed the 600-mile course at a pedestrian 3.78 knots, although it was a light race.

Meanwhile, winner of the race's 50th edition in 2023 was *Caro*, the IRC 52 of Swiss owner

Max Klink, which averaged 10.74 knots on the longer 695-mile course to Cherbourg.

Despite *Jolie Brise* being launched in 1913, before offshore racing was even a sport in Europe, and *Caro* following 108 years later, they do have similarities.

Firstly, *Jolie Brise* is a gaff cutter and it could be argued that *Caro* is too - her square-headed mainsail being a gaff of sorts - while she sails most efficiently triple-headed (the definition of a cutter). Both are plumb-bowed with substantial bowsprits. They also have fairly flush decks and are very wet on deck and often down below too: *Jolie Brise*, the

inevitable result of her timber construction; on *Caro*, a consequence of running lines through her deck.

Both were built to the very highest standards and each represented the 'swan song' of their respective builders. Less poignantly, both also have/had exotic heads - under Martin's ownership, *Jolie Brise* was fitted with the newly invented flushing head, while *Caro* has an ultra-lightweight carbon fibre affair, but located in a compartment, the walls of which can be removed through the forehatch for inshore racing.

But there the similarities end...



# JOLIE BRISE v CARO

	Caro
Design	Botin Partners
Type	Grand prix racer
Builder	Core Composites, NZ
Crew	10 or 12
IRC TCC	1.413
Keel type	Fin and bulb
Rudder type	High aspect spade
Ballast	Bulb: 3,800kg Transferable water ballast 515lt
LH	15.85m
LWL	15.85m
Beam	4.42m
Draft	3.61m
Weight	7,193kg
DLR	63
Stern overhang	0
P	21.00m
E	7.05m
J	6.25m
HAS	65.78sqm
SPA	268sqm
Bowsprit	2.95m
Helm	Twin wheels



## Jolie Brise

The seven entries in the 1925 Fastnet race were either Colin Archer-style double-ended cruising boats or the fastest 'small' commercial yachts of the day - pilot cutters.

*Jolie Brise* was built by Albert Paumelle's shipyard as a Le Havre pilot cutter, to plans from Alexandre Pâris. With sail having already given way to steam, she marked the end of an era for Le Havre's sailing pilot boat fleet, as well as for her builder. As a result, old man Paumelle viewed her as his ultimate expression, building her to the very highest standards in the very best materials:

Her 2-2.5in thick oak planks run the full 56ft length of her hull (80% remain in place today). Her frames were made from the then ultimate in structural soundness – 5x4in 'grown timber' ie trees pre-bent to shape during their growth.

Sadly, *Jolie Brise's* career as a pilot cutter was curtailed by WWI when the Le Havre pilots' field of operation was restricted. In 1917 she was sold and moved to Concarneau, where her sail plan was enlarged to go deep into the Atlantic 'tunny fishing' - no mean feat, the fish being fast and weighing several hundred kilos. In this role *Jolie Brise* acquitted herself well in terms of her speed and seaworthiness.

Martin came to hear of *Jolie Brise* in 1923 on a trip to Le Havre with some friends who were purchasing another Le Havre pilot cutter. Chatting with the Le Havre pilots, he was shown a half model of *Jolie Brise* and it was love at first sight, even if he later discovered her to be in a semi-abandoned state.

From childhood, Martin and his brother had stayed in Brixham with family friends as their army officer father was serving overseas. Here they sailed with the local trawlermen, thus forging Martin's lifelong passion for working boats. Although he came from a moneyed background (the Martins were



*Despite Martin's towering 6ft 7in frame requiring him to stoop when below, the present raised coach roof was only fitted later in Jolie Brise's life.*

goldsmiths/bankers dating back to the 16th century) and schooled at Eton and Oxford, he shunned 'drawing room life' and dropped out of university, returning to Brixham to work with the trawlermen. As a result, when in Teignmouth refitting *Jolie Brise* as a cruising yacht, few mod cons were added.

For example, despite Martin's towering 6ft 7in frame requiring him to stoop when below, the present raised coach roof was only fitted later in *Jolie Brise's* life. Even though Edison batteries and electric lights were available for yachts, Martin shunned these and *Jolie Brise's* only illumination below were skylights and probably Tilley or oil lamps. Similarly, although yacht engines were also available, running on fuels like crude oil, this was not for *Jolie Brise* and her sailing purist owner. When propulsion was needed in 1925, she was sculled via two 17ft oars.

The interior layout of *Jolie Brise* is today very different to how she was in the 1925. Martin maintained two professional crew – his cockney skipper/bosun Sidney Briggs (a lifelong professional seaman) and the cook/steward, A Green. They lodged forward, common practice at the time to the extent that a rule of the first Ocean Race was 'professional sailors be restricted to the number that could be accommodated in the fo'c'sle'. Located here was the galley, complete with coal-burning stove/cooker and chimney to port, with the famous head opposite and the bosun's stores in the forepeak. Aft, in the saloon area, were berths either side and a saloon table on top of a large zinc 240-gallon drinking water tank. Martin installed a chart table to port of the companionway. His berth was what would have been the pilot's berth further aft, while *Jolie Brise's* long stern overhang accommodated the sails, accessible from a circular deck hatch.

Today in the saloon is a dinette to port with the galley and stowage opposite. The head is to port of the companionway. The captain's cabin is aft of the companionway, with an aft-facing chart table and nav area with berths to

port and starboard. Aft of this is a bulkhead and the engine compartment.

Forward there are three sets of bunks, one to port and two to starboard, these days accommodating the pupils from Dauntsey's School – *Jolie Brise's* present owners – and a forward companionway. Boat stowage remains in the forepeak, including the anchor chain.

On deck, most impressive is the size of the gear. This is partly down to the limitations of early 20th century materials, but mainly due to her 42-tonne displacement (six times that of *Caro*), including four tonnes of lump iron and five tonnes of lead bars, battened down in the bilge.

Steering is via a giant tiller that, at speed, requires two people to operate via a steering line with a 2:1 purchase.

Her pitch pine main mast was replaced 10 years ago and, assuming the previous was original, Toby Maris (Dauntsey's skipper for the last 30 years) remembers "when you cut into it, the tightness of the rings showed it had clearly been grown at a very high altitude on a north-facing slope somewhere. When you scraped it back you were still getting sap out of it, despite it being 300 years old..." In 1925 her 11.6m long boom was solid, while her gaff was 8.2m and her topmast was 9.8m of Columbian pine (6ft longer than the original).

According to Maris, the topmast, gaff and bowsprit have been replaced many times: "Bowsprits – maybe every 10-15 years. Often if the topmast goes, you break the bowsprit." He has been told that when racing they used to carry a spare topmast. "I think top masts, etc, were more of a disposable item."

In 1925 Martin was writing the Cruising column for the then fortnightly Yachting World and in one issue writes about his new cotton mainsail from Ratseys needing to be stretched. These sails had to be handled with care, especially if they got wet, and it was good practice not to reef them until they had been broken in. Wire was used for her standing rigging (as it is today) and in the 1920s the available rope was twine, fine manilla and hemp (today all her rope is modern, such as Dyneema for her runners).

Being a Le Havre pilot cutter rather than a Bristol Channel pilot like *Saladin*, a fellow competitor in 1925, her rig slightly differs, having no check stays, just runners to her top mast. As usual with gaff cutters, the sail plan is two-part; the working sails are the mainsail, hoisted on the gaff, staysail and jib, and under these she requires no backstay. She has no.1-no.3 jibs and a storm jib, plus a storm staysail and a trawler (big radial sail).



*Remarkably, Jolie Brise is still very much in use and, testament to her high quality build, much of her remains original. Today she is owned by Dauntsey's School and sailed regularly by students both locally in the UK and internationally as a regular competitor in the Tall Ships Races.*



Top left: *Jolie Brise* is steered by a 4m long tiller.  
 Top right: *Jolie Brise*'s gracious hull lines showing her long keel and stern overhang.  
 Bottom left: *Jolie Brise*'s valient crew from the 1925 Fastnet Race.  
 Bottom right: This was a time before waterproof foulweather gear.



Above the main mast is the topmast which in the day could be lowered in case of bad weather (today there is too much electronics at its top for this to happen). Flown from this is the topsail, accompanied by a jib topsail (or balloon jib/yankee) forward, which in 1925 was made from strongest cotton duck. But most impressive was *Jolie Brise*'s original spinnaker and her 13.4m long spinnaker pole (see p28). Given this was made of solid wood it was not something that could be manoeuvred easily or even gybed - Maris believes it was only ever used on starboard gybe, goosewinged with the main and topsail out to port. Today they use an asymmetric kite flown from the bowsprit.

Typically gaff cutters would reduce sail at night, but this was not the case during the 1925 race. Martin later wrote about the confidence he gained as the race progressed, holding sail for longer.

Today *Jolie Brise*'s sail set-up is similar except her three jibs are on furlers. Sadly, due to her long keel she points well enough, but makes huge leeway (10-15°) upwind.

For the first Fastnet, crew had to have either a lifebelt or a lifesaving cushion, while the yacht had to carry a dinghy, which were naturally heavyweight wooden affairs. During the race, when becalmed, these were occasionally launched and used to visit other competitors.

Martin's original intention was to race with two watches of three, with himself, Briggs and Green out of the watch system, but in the event he was two down, so watches were of two. The crew included navigator JRK Warneford; Weston Martyr, the original inspiration for the race and the only person in the entire fleet to have sailed an 'ocean race' before (to Bermuda); Dick Maclean-Buckley, plus the pros Briggs and Green.

Navigating without GPS required a skill set largely lost to modern racing sailors, now fully reliant on metre precise positions derived from satellite signals. During the first Fastnet Race, Warneford would have



# NOW AND THEN - JOLIE BRISE v CARO

relied upon a mix of dead reckoning, his trusty Walker trailing log, the helmsmen accurately steering a compass course, lights, lighthouses and being able to align these and physical features of the coast with Admiralty charts. This, combined with *Jolie Brise's* poor (by modern day standards) windward ability, meant they would have given headlands and lee shores a wide berth.

For the first Fastnet Race, yachts were rated by a modified version of the Yacht Racing Association formula for displacement, freeboard and overhangs while sail area was measured using the IYRU (YRA) rule. Scraping in just below the race's maximum LWL of 50ft, *Jolie Brise* was the 'scratch' boat and gave, for example, the race's smallest yacht, *Fulmar*, 12 hours 20 minutes. The plucky Royal Engineers aboard the latter finished in second, although still some 9 hours 43 minutes behind *Jolie Brise* on corrected time.

While the iconic mark of the Fastnet Rock has remained unchanged, the first editions of the Fastnet Race started not from Cowes but Ryde, heading east out of the Solent and leaving the Isle of Wight to starboard. Returning from the Fastnet, they headed straight to Land's End and not Bishop Rock.

Meals were a feast, the relatively clement weather allowing the cook to overcome seasickness and prepare three hot meals a day. Breakfast, comprising a combination of eggs, bacon, sausages, or potatoes, was served at 08:00, followed by lunch at 12:00, tea at 16:00 and dinner at 19:30 - typically soup or something simple to provide sustenance for the night, with tinned fruit, cheese and coffee. Much coffee was drunk on board (up to 1lb/day), at night from a Thermos, while Bovril was served at 04:00.

Among the victualling were six 4lb slabs of salted beef silverside which were slow-cooked during the race, plus 'Bath chaps' (pig's cheek/tongue shaped in a mould), Heinz spaghetti (yes, available even then), Swiss gruyere, 9lbs of digestive biscuits, Gentleman's Relish, potted meat and French tinned vegetables. There were 140 green bananas timed to ripen during the race (unsuccessfully, but still consumed), a box of apples and 36 loaves of bread...which turned mouldy.

Oddly, while their Irish competitors on *Gull* ran a dry ship, for Martin going dry was "not in according with my ideas of comfortable living". One crew brought with him whisky, rum and vintage brandy. In addition, there was copious wine, including light claret and white. Their most popular drink though

was Kia Ora lemon squash, introduced from Australia just a few years earlier.

Despite her pedestrian average speed, *Jolie Brise* did hit 10 knots between Longships and The Lizard, averaging 8.7 knots here - all this while having to dodge a fleet of drift net trawlers in Mounts Bay.

*Jolie Brise* went on to win two further Fastnet Races and remains the only boat to have won it three times.

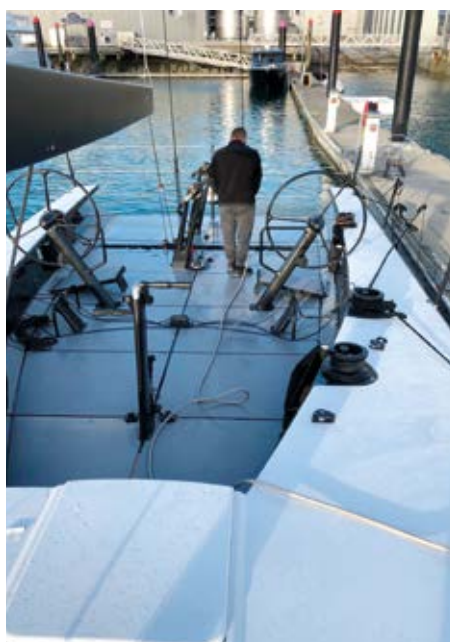
## Caro

*Caro*, the IRC 52, followed Max Klink's lift-keel 65ft cruiser-racer, which he campaigned widely over 2013-19 - primarily offshore, globetrotting between the Rolex Sydney

Hobart and Transpac, as well as the Rolex Fastnet Race and Giraglia, among others.

To replace it, Klink desired a full-blown race boat, to be successful under IRC. The 52 was chosen, project manager and sailing master Justin Ferris explains, because "the 52 is an extremely efficient, well refined boat. No another class has had as much refinement. Generally 52s are sailed with better people with a whole different mindset. Offshore there is no getting off the rail to sleep or cook meals. There is no cruising in the cockpit. You battle 100% all the time. That is very hard to replicate on any other boat."

*Caro* has the same hull as the 52 Super Series yacht *Sled*, but otherwise is closer





*Opposite top: With few performance weakspots, Caro can sit on high average speeds.*

*Photo: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com*

*Opposite bottom left: Cockpit shows her twin wheels, three pedestals, recessed winches and offset companionway.*

*Opposite bottom right: The galley is minimal - comprising little more than a Jetboil to heat water.*

*Below left: Carbon fibre plumbed in head in its removable compartment.*

*Below right: Carbon fibre pipecoats with adjustable cant.*

to the offshore-orientated PAC52s, although designed to neither rule. Compared to *Sled* her keel and mast are further aft, her mast is taller, her bowsprit longer, her sailplan bigger and her draft deeper with a lighter bulb.

Klink was keen to restrict his crew to 10, 12 at most. In the middle of the crew age-wise, he is very much one of them, standing a watch and mucking in. As Ferris says: "He puts everything in. If the best thing for the boat is his sitting on the rail for six hours in 30 knots of wind and waves, then that's what he'll do..."

To counter the small crew, as well as providing additional 'gears', *Caro* was designed from the outset with 515kg of water ballast (like having five or six extra crew on the rail). *Caro* was one of the first of recent IRC racers to fit this, although it has since spread like wildfire. Originally this was for offshore only and was removed for inshore racing. However water ballast technology has evolved rapidly and *Caro*'s set-up is being upgraded for use inshore, with bigger pumps and pipes to operate faster. This is in anticipation of being the big boat in the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's Admiral's Cup team, which will require some more inshore capability.

Especially pleasing is that all deployment of scoops and opening of gate valves is electronic, operated via a CZone system: The call comes to tack and a button is pressed, initiating the transfer, then when the water has been dumped to leeward there is a 'BEEP' and you tack.

*Caro* was built by Core Composites, the state-of-the-art facility originally set up to

build Oracle America's Cup boats, AC45s and subsequently SailGP's catamaran fleet. Construction was in carbon with a Nomex core and foam in the hull's high impact areas forward of the mast. Core had built *Sled* and *Caro* was able to use her female hull tooling. One positive to come out of the pandemic was the extra time that could be dedicated to *Caro*'s exacting build – their nine-month slot extending to 18 – even if Klink was unable to see his new steed until it reached Valencia.

On deck, *Caro* has three pedestals instead of two. The third is on the transom to keep crew weight aft when reaching or running while a six-man grind allows spinnaker and mainsail to be trimmed simultaneously and the main to be pumped.

They run a three-watch system comprising four hours on and two off (no stand-by), which allows the crew to be better rested, especially if they are called from their off-watch for sail changes, etc. Tactician Adrian Stead is one watch leader and Ferris, who looks after 'performance', is another while navigator, Jules Salter (or Andy Green for the last Rolex Fastnet Race), floats, out of the watch system. Typically, on deck they'll have a helmsman, two trimmers, three grinders and the rest on the rail.

As they wear Spinlock lifejackets most of the time, their Musto foulies have no hoods or collars to stifle communication between the crew. They don't wear one piece survival suits, but do have neoprene neck and cuff seals. If conditions become heinous the crew can wear waterproof balaclava-type hoods. The crew are split 50/50 between shoes or boots. Clothing baselayers include a thermal underlayer, shorts and a T-shirt and possibly an additional set of thermals if needed. "Because you are so active you don't get too cold. The coldest place is in the bunk so if it is a cold race, like the Fastnet, we take [Searug] sleeping bags," comments Ferris. "There is less than 1kg of personal gear. Whole toothbrushes are allowed. There is even toilet paper..."



The Southern Spar mast has been optimised for IRC with a 7/8 backstay (not masthead) which means no deflector is required, although they have added a lower deflector to counter staysail loads. The spar has a mast track and the mainsail luff cars to prevent ropes chafing around battens, etc. Ferris says that being able to reef quickly and efficiently represents a performance gain. "We have compromised the mast in weight to do that, but we get it all back in spades."

The sails are state-of-the-art carbon fibre using Doyle's new 'Hybrid' surface which is both lighter and more durable. They have the 'full quiver' of sails, J1-4 (and half numbers) plus GS and spinnaker staysails, A1 to A6 spinnakers, plus jib top and Code Zero, both tacked to the end of the prod. Offshore, they generally race with two upwind headsails, the J2 and J4. On the Rolex Fastnet Race they carried three 'nylon' sails and the Code Zero.

"You can carry the masthead gear quite a long way up the wind range [typically mid-20s wind speed]," says Ferris. "When you are doing 20+ knots of boat speed and driving into water, the boat is low to the water, so we go through spinnakers pretty quickly. On the Fastnet we started with the J4, one reef, then two reefs and then hung on from there!" There is a third reef, but not rigged. Ferris muses that in every offshore race to date they have used the second reef.

Standing rigging is Future Fibres' AEROsix, which has an elliptical cross section with EC6 carbon fibre strands to provide its aerofoil shape. *Caro* runs no hydraulics apart from the mast jack. To keep the cockpit clear they use a system manufactured by Jeremy Smith's company DB Drums in New Zealand that automatically sucks up any sheets on to a drum below deck. This, plus the main sheet, traveller, jib controls and staysail tack lines, penetrate the deck, allowing water below. They use snorkels to prevent this, which work...occasionally. "On the Fastnet the boat was amazingly dry downstairs. On the Hobart it was horrendously wet, but that was because we didn't put in enough time checking all the waterproofing when we put the boat back together again," admits Ferris.

Below, *Caro* is a typically stripped out race boat. There is the most basic of head compartments, the walls of which cleverly can be moved forward and lifted out of the forehatch in one piece. As Ferris, a round the world race veteran, points out: "To ask guys to stay up for 24 hours a day you need to get energy in. When people get tired, it is because they haven't eaten enough, or they have eaten



and they're blocked up. If you use a toilet downstairs when it is not enclosed, there's the potential to get bumped off the seat." The walls also permit some privacy at the cost of a mere 2kg weight.

They have four pipe cots each side. There is a minimalist nav area with a Toughbook tablet and a keyboard on a pivoting post mounted from the deck. Most nav is carried out on deck unless conditions are so wet that the tablet becomes unusable. Tracking vessels and other competitors on the course via AIS is a vital tool to spot shifts and variations in pressure across the course and is viewed typically from a deck screen.

*Caro's* galley is also minimalist, comprising a Jetboil with which to heat water and a few bags for stowage. It too disassembles easily and can be stowed ashore when racing inshore.

On an offshore race like the Rolex Fastnet, the team chef prepares in advance some 'proper food' like lamb chops, sausages or chicken drumsticks that can be eaten easily, plus boiled eggs and various cheeses. There are

only two meals worth though, before starting on the freeze-dried. Freeze-dried food has improved greatly over the last 30 years it has been in use, with more companies producing a wider variety of choice that, mercifully, creates less 'blockage' or the opposite.

Water is produced by a watermaker. These too have progressed greatly: "They are extremely light and efficient, not that power-hungry and easy to operate - you push a button and off it goes," says Ferris. They fill their 30 litre day tank and everyone's water bottles in an hour, twice daily.

But there is often little time to reconstitute freeze-dried food, especially if conditions are bad. "That first night of the Fastnet [in 2023], there was no way you could cook downstairs," recalls Ferris. Instead they take a very large snack bag.

In terms of boat speed, while upwind they can hit the low 9s, when cracked *Caro* rapidly hits the mid-teens. 52s of old were capable of 30+ knots peak speeds, but on newer 52s like *Caro*, with more beam and less rocker, they have foregone this in favour of maintaining

higher average speeds for longer. "Coming back from the Fastnet to the Scillies, we sat on 22-23 knots for most of the night," Ferris recalls. "The guys were pumping the main and the Code Zero/jib top, with the headsails effectively cleated and the boat was on rails. That is when they become super-efficient." They have no major performance weakness - their TP52 pedigree makes them highly refined upwind and downwind across the range, but in *Caro's* case, when reaching too, thanks to all the changes they've made such as moving the mast and keel aft, etc.

They are slowly shedding weight from the bulb thanks to the water ballast. Initially they were much stiffer than a standard TP52 which helped their high reaching speed, at the expense of performance in light airs and VMG running.

Still, while *Caro* is 99.99% carbon fibre, there is some wood on board - a 6x250mm strip of ancient Northland kauri. Despite being a prized Kiwi hardwood, its role is humble: to prevent cellphones from sliding off the engine control box...

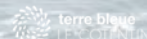






# PREPARE NOW FOR THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

DESTINATION CHERBOURG-EN-COTENTIN







Wet ride on board the De Graaf family's Ker 43 Baraka at the start of the 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race.  
Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/[rick-tomlinson.com](http://rick-tomlinson.com)



# 100 YEARS OF HEADING TO THE ROCK

The RORC centenary Rolex Fastnet Race is set to be another bumper edition. The 50th in 2023 attracted a record 430 starters, although there was a high attrition rate with, for example, only 56% of the 358-strong IRC fleet making it to Cherbourg-en-Cotentin due to the severe weather at the start and early on in the race.

The Club has confirmed that the 2025 and 2027 editions of the race will continue to finish in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin. This is possible thanks to the generous support of the City, the Communauté d'Agglomération du Cotentin and the Département de la Manche & Région Normandie, that includes berthing for the race's giant fleet.

Among the high profile French classes, the giant Ultime trimarans are expected to take part again, alongside the flying IMOCA monohulls. The former will, this winter, have been undertaking attempts on the Jules Verne Trophy while the latter will have competed in the 10th Vendée Globe. They will be joined by the Ocean 50 and MOD70 trimarans and







the MOCRA multihull class. 21 Class40s competed in the last Rolex Fastnet Race and the centenary race once again features in their calendar.

As ever, the vast majority of entrants will be in the IRC fleet, from fully 'pro' maxi yachts down to family, club and sailing school entries on 30-footers. For this special edition, the fleet will be bolstered by yachts taking part in the historic west to east Transatlantic Race, starting on 18 June from Newport, RI, and the Admiral's Cup, reinstated this year for the first time since 2003.

After heavy weather starts in the last two editions, we may well be due for more clement conditions this time, which would result in more competitors reaching the finish in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin. France, where many pro sailors have become household names over the decades since the late great Éric Tabarly put our sport on the map there,

is renowned for its enthusiasm for offshore racing, so competitors can expect a rousing reception from residents, both local and from the wider Normandy region.

Located alongside Port Chantereyne, the Rolex Fastnet Race Village will again feature a mixture of exhibits, activities, local food, drink and evening entertainment. Prior to the start, around 200 yachts from France and the continent are expected to visit Cherbourg-en-Cotentin to register and make final preparations for the race. The Village will officially open on Saturday 26 July with the start shown live on giant screens in various places. The celebrations will then gather momentum with each new arrival.

A special party to celebrate the Admiral's Cup is scheduled for Thursday 31 July, followed on Friday 1 August with the final prize-giving, including a fly-by from Les Patrouille de France and a live concert.

## Navigator's notes

Ironically, given that the race now finishes in one of France's most tidally complex of ports, the last two races have been won, not - as you might imagine - by French yachts with Figaro/Tour Voile aces navigating, but by those with British (*Sunrise*) and Australian (*Caro*) navigators on board.

In 2025, Volvo Ocean Race winning navigator and Gurnard's own, Jules Salter is set to race with one of the leading Admiral's Cup teams, while Mike Broughton, who finished second overall in 2023 on Clarke Murphy's chartered VO65 *Team Jajo*, will next time will be on the Ker 56 *Varuna*. Given the lengths teams are going in order to win the Admiral's Cup, it is very likely that nav for the, still relatively new, last leg of the race between Bishop Rock into the Cherbourg-en-Cotentin finish will be undergoing intense study by the top teams.

Both Salter and Broughton note that the last two editions of the Rolex Fastnet Race have been fairly breezy affairs and so, for the most part, haven't presented the problem of boats finishing in light or no wind on a 'make or break' tidal gate, as would be the case in high pressure.

As reported at length in 2021, the change to the new finish port has increased the length of the race by 90 miles to 695 miles and, according to the stats, has increased the downwind percentage of the race compared to upwind. In addition, the southwest corner of the Casquets TSS and Alderney lie close to the rhumb line between Bishop Rock and Cap de la Hague, the northwest tip of the Cotentin peninsula, where competitors must turn a few degrees to starboard to cover the last 12 miles to the finish line. Given that the TSS is an exclusion zone, this effectively creates a bottleneck for the fleet some 35 miles out from Cap de la Hague.

Salter observes that the 'new' last leg provides many more tactical choices: "Routing using historical data can take you along the Cornwall-Devon coast, or along Brittany and through the Channel Islands - so more than 60 miles of lateral separation..!"

He continues that this has several implications such as, on the one hand, making it far harder to cover opponents and leaving one of the most complex parts of the race to the very end, when crews are potentially fatigued. On the other hand, it potentially keeps the race alive and provides options all the way to the finish. If you are upwind or downwind on this leg, how many times do you want to cross a strong current stream, or dive north towards the Cornish coast or south towards Brittany/

## At peak flood in the Alderney Race, the current could be 5-6 knots

Channel Islands in order to seek tidal relief? How may tidal cycles will your boat experience between Bishop Rock and the finish?

He adds that the effect of strong currents can also have a significant effect on apparent wind speeds and angles, which in turn will affect routing.

Mike Broughton says that because the Bishop Rock to the finish leg provides so many options, along with the constraint of avoiding the Casquets TSS, Channel Islands etc, it is an occasion when using routing software to examine the options becomes very valuable. This comes with the usual caveat: the quality of the data - both wind and, especially in this case, the tide, will have a huge bearing on the routing's accuracy. Given this, Salter adds that it will be necessary to verify the strength of the flow tidal models to the nearest 15 minutes to determine if they match reality.

the wind and tidal forecasts are accurate, mistimed, mis-positioned or plain wrong.

All but the fastest yachts in the Rolex Fastnet Race will be equipped to kedge, however Broughton warns that in the event of light winds in the last 50 miles and the prospect of a foul ebb tide, it may be necessary to kedge around the Channel Islands. Here, where there are rocks, shoals and many other underwater obstructions, depths are typically deeper than they are off the English coast.

Studying the Alderney Race (Raz Blanchard in French) beforehand will be vital. Typically, the ebb runs west along the top of the Cotentin Peninsula but then does a hard left to follow the coast south at Cap de la Hague. Broadly, the Race is slack at around HW Cherbourg +3 and between -3 and -4. In the former, it is followed by the ebb kicking in hard, southwest-bound out in the Channel and

20:54; Wednesday 09:20 or 21:27; Thursday 09:56 CEST) could be very favourable. At the peak of flood in the Alderney Race (HW Cherbourg -1), the northwesterly or northerly current could be 5-6 knots, building further near Cap de la Hague, while at the peak of the ebb in this same zone the current could be sluicing south at 6-7 knots.

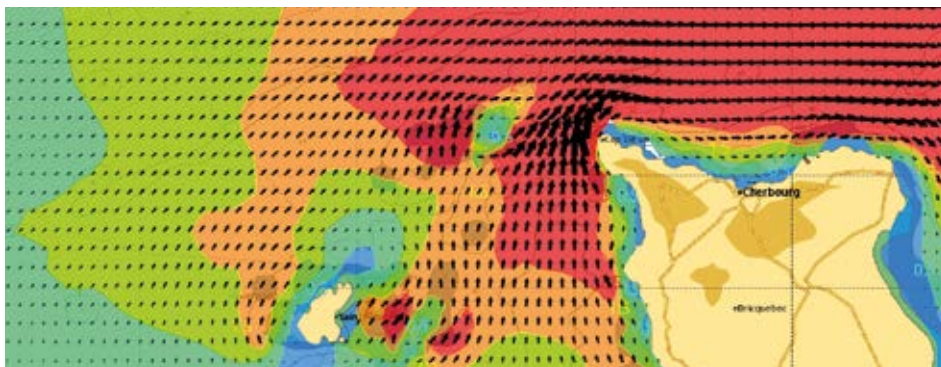
In 2023 Broughton sent *Team Jajo* south of Alderney. "Knowledge of how the tidal streams scoot around Cap de la Hague is really important - it is a big part of a navigator's race. Most yachts go north of Alderney because it looks the logical [shortest] way, but for us at the time, we made a good gain by going south of Alderney, pretty close in, and then swooping across with positive tide to Cap de la Hague and into the finish. Even if it is a relatively small area, the tidal streams are really important..."

Once past Cap de la Hague, there are distinct times to avoid hugging the coast, the current turning foul here from HW Cherbourg -1, while at the beginning of the flood the tide turns first inshore here at HW Cherbourg -3. Broughton advises that in the westbound ebb, it pays to go right into the shore where there can be favourable eddies. "You might have 4.5 knots against you further out and close into the rocks you can have 0.8 knots with you."

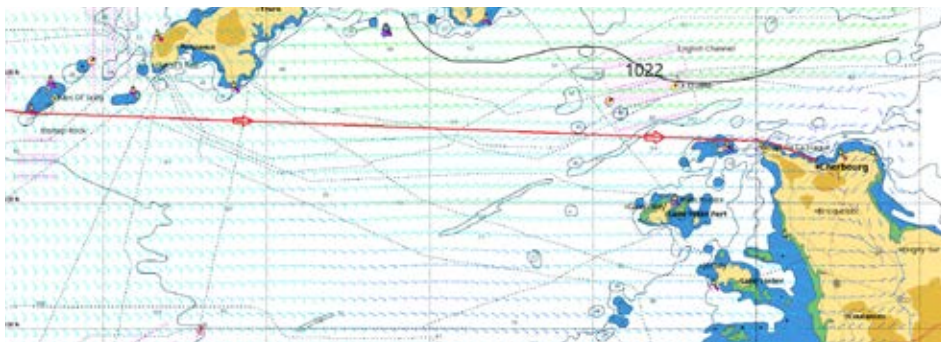
On *Team Jajo* in 2023 he recalls: "We were hugging the coast, in the middle of the night, and it was quite windy and dark and there were a couple of yachts close behind who were going even closer to the rocks...and we were trying to match race them! I didn't think I would be pushing that hard at the end of the race. But it adds to the flavour."

Truly, this is an area where experience pays, as it is not just the well-logged speed of the current here that affects competitors but the complex seabed and, of course, the wind direction and its strength relative to the current and how this churns up the sea state: In wind against tide, this is not a fun place to be. Both Broughton and Salter have sailed extensively in this area in the Tour Voiles, while it is the bread and butter for French Figarists and local Cotentin Peninsula sailors, such as past winner Alexis Loison.

Obviously the entire Alderney Race can be avoided by going north of the Casquets TSS, which adds 11 miles to course. But to err from the rhumb line that much, you'd need to be on a fast boat; in 2023 the only boat to employ this tactic was the Ultime trimaran *Maxi Banque Populaire*, when she was able to reach into the finish line at a cool 30 knots.



Powerful flood tide in the Alderney Race shows the benefit of leaving Alderney to port. Image: Predictwind.com



The rhumb line passes close to the Casquets TSS to the north and Alderney to the south. Image: Predictwind.com

If the finish is light, then it will provide some major headaches for crews tackling the Alderney Race and the last 50 miles of the course. Salter has queries, such as how will the Channel Islands, especially Alderney, affect the breeze and how will the sea and night breezes interplay off the Cotentin peninsula?

With big decisions to be made, will weather models be up to the task of forecasting accurately? As ever, it will be vital to see if

more southerly, closer to the peninsula, and the opposite on the flood.

Special phenomena take place off Alderney, with the tide turning here well in advance of the main stream. Thus at HW Cherbourg +5, the stream off the south of Alderney is already eastbound, only joined by the rest of the stream two hours later. Passing close to the south side of Alderney after HW Cherbourg -4 (ie: Tuesday 29 July at 08:45,



# 2024 RORC SEASON'S POINTS CHAMPIONSHIP

The RORC Season's Points Championship in 2024 saw many familiar names rise to the top, but some new ones too. The Club's annual series remains the world's largest for offshore racing yachts. In 2024, events in the IRC fleet alone involved 401 boats and around 5,000 sailors.

As ever, winner of the Jazz Trophy for the top yacht in IRC Overall was the boat that both competed in the most races and did the best. Over and above this is additional silverware such as the Alan Paul Trophy for a 'consistent high performance' in races and the Assuage Trophy for RORC members over a specific set of races during the season. To prevent competitors feeling obliged to ship their boats south to decide the annual Season's Points at the Rolex Middle Sea Race, as once was the case, the Royal Malta Yacht Club's annual lap of Sicily was again the opening event of our Season's Points Championship, followed by the RORC Transatlantic Race and Caribbean 600, prior to the domestic UK season.

For a second consecutive year, doublehanders Rob Craigie and Commodore Deb Fish on the Sun Fast 3600 *Bellino* comfortably won the

Jazz Trophy ahead of Ross Applebey's Oyster Lightwave 48 *Scarlet Oyster* and Nick Martin and Cal Finlayson on the Sun Fast 3600 *Diablo*. A full account of *Bellino's* exceptional season can be found on p46.

Perhaps most interesting this year was that all of the 16 races comprising the 2024 RORC Season's Points Championship were won by different boats representing all IRC classes save IRC Four. The harder, longer distance races such as the RORC Transatlantic and Caribbean 600 were won by bigger boats, while UK races were typically claimed by IRC One, Two and Three. Doublehanders won three of the 16 races.

Class trophies are awarded based upon a yacht's five best class scores in offshore races, plus their bonus points (up to a maximum of 35):

## IRC Super Zero

In IRC Super Zero Joost Schuijff's Farr 100 *Leopard 3* came out on top, ahead of various former Volvo Ocean Race boats. She competed in the Rolex Middle Sea Race, finishing second in class (and fourth in IRC Overall) to Yacht Club Costa Smeralda Commodore Andrea

*The Club's annual series remains the world's largest for offshore racing yachts.*





Opposite: The Farr 100ft *Leopard 3* won her class thanks to her early season results.  
 Top: Joost Schuijff and the *Leopard 3* crew receive their trophies for winning the Caribbean 600 outright.  
 Photos: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com  
 Middle: *Teasing Machine* put in a solid season, winning the Round Ireland.  
 Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/rick-tomlinson.com  
 Bottom: Another strong season for Derek Shakespeare's *Bulldog*.  
 Photo: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwictures.com

Recordati's Wally 93 *Bullitt* - ultimately the race's overall winner. *Leopard 3* went on to claim line honours and her class in the RORC Transatlantic Race and IRC Overall (and again line honours) in the RORC Caribbean 600 ahead of the potent 52s such as Niklas Zennström's *Rán* and former winners, the Askew brothers' on *Wizard*.

Later in the season Christian Zugel's modified V070 *Tschüss 2* - once upon a time Franck Cammas' Volvo Ocean Race winner *Groupama 4* and subsequently the Askews' Caribbean 600/Transatlantic/Rolex Fastnet Race winner in 2019 - won the second edition of the Roschier Baltic Sea Race both on the water and outright under IRC.

### IRC Zero

IRC Zero competed for the Europeans Cup where there was tight competition, with former Vice Commodore Eric de Turckheim's NMD 54 *Teasing Machine* beating, by just 15 points, his old boat - now Mark Emerson's A13 *Phosphorus II*. Former Commodore James Neville's Carkeek 45 *Ino Noir* completed the podium.

Currently at the peak of her game, *Teasing Machine* won despite only competing in five events compared to *Phosphorus II*'s seven (including six back-to-back races from the Cervantes Trophy on, culminating in the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race). *Teasing Machine* won class in the Myth of Malham and De Guingand Bowl and then, in the highlight of her season, won monohull line honours and IRC Overall in the Round Ireland Yacht Race (see their report on p80). She rounded out her northern European season competing in the Drheam Cup, from Cherbourg to La Trinité, via the West Country coast.

Further IRC Zero success was found in the bigger races when American Chris Sheehan, making his swan song aboard his highly successful PAC52 *Warrior Won*, won the RORC Transatlantic Race outright (see p70).

### IRC One

For a third consecutive season, *Bulldog*, the J/122 of Derek Shakespeare, won the Trenchermer Cup for IRC One. But this year it went right to the wire with *Moana* - not the Beneteau First 47.7 *Moana*, well-campaigned, seemingly forever, by the Goubau family from Belgium; nor the Martin 49 *Moana* of Germany's Hanno Ziehm, but the J/122e of Frans van Cappelle from the Netherlands. Second-placed *Moana* got some points in early in the season, competing in the Rolex Middle Sea Race, the RORC Transatlantic Race and the Caribbean 600, followed by the





# 2024 RORC SEASON'S POINTS CHAMPIONSHIP

North Sea Race before then winning her class in the Drheam Cup. In third place was *Garm*, the JPK 1180 of Per Roman which competed in just three races, but well in all: 5th in class in the Rolex Middle Sea, winning class and third overall in the Myth of Malham (anticipating next year's Admiral's Cup/Rolux Fastnet Race) and the Roschier Baltic Sea Race, in which she won class and was second overall.

For *Bulldog*, the season was unusual in that the original focus was to compete in the Round Ireland Yacht Race. However, taking longer to recover following surgery on his hand, Derek Shakespeare was forced to cancel his Emerald Isle plans and instead double down on the rest of the UK season. He was not on board when his crew took *Bulldog* to outright victory in May's De Guingand Bowl (see p100), but even then, he admits, he had no expectations for salvaging the season until they finished second overall in the Channel Race.

"Just out of interest, I looked at where we stood and we were second to *Moana*. We needed 91 points [in the Cherbourg Race] to win and I didn't think *Moana* would come," recalls Shakespeare. "To get 91 points, you need to have 11 starters and at that point there were only six. Then the week before, the entry grew to 13, which meant the winner would get 93 points."

Come race day their prospects were not helped by light winds, but a call to stay east of the main pack passing Bembridge paid, allowing

them to be first to the new breeze. The real stress only set in for the final minutes of the race, when Shakespeare was glued to the AIS display: "We needed to be 1.5-1.8 miles ahead of *Rogan Josh* and throughout the night they were two miles behind and then would pick up to 1.25 miles and then go back two miles..."

The situation was further complicated by another IRC One competitor, Laurence Herbert's J/133 *Corazon*, suddenly reaching in from their southwest at a time when *Bulldog* was running deep under spinnaker. "I estimated they would give us 11 minutes and they finished eight minutes ahead of us." Sure enough, the RORC Treasurer's maths was sound and *Bulldog* won by three minutes nine seconds on corrected. This was enough for them to beat *Moana* to first place in IRC One for the season by a slender 408.6 points to 404.3. *Bulldog* also won the Peter Harrison Youth Trophy for crews with 33% younger than 25 across any three offshores.

## IRC Two

Due to the way class points are calculated, Ross Applebey's Oyster Lightwave 48 *Scarlet Oyster* beat the overall Season's Points Champions *Bellino* to claim the Emily Verger Plate, the IRC Two prize for the season.

In terms of overall results this was the most successful class in 2024, owning the Cervantes Trophy overall podium with Trevor Middleton's fully crewed Sun Fast 3600 *Black Sheep* first ahead of Ian Hoddle and

Ollie Wyatt on the Sun Fast 3300 *GameOn* and *Bellino*. *Bellino* won the Myth of Malham overall and *Scarlet Oyster* the Salcombe Gin Morgan Cup ahead of the Army team, led by Major Henry Foster on the Sun Fast 3600 *Fujitsu British Soldier*. Maxime Mesnil's J/99 *Axesail*, the very lowest rated in IRC Two, won the Drheam Cup overall.

Other worthy mentions include *Red Ruby*, in which Christina and Justin Wolfe won class and were second overall in the Rolex Middle Sea Race and Jonathan McKee later won the IRC Two-Handed Europeans. The experienced Dutch doublehanders John van der Starre and Robin Verhoef's J/122 *Ajeto!* were second overall and class winners in the North Sea Race. Nick Martin and Ruaridh Wright on the Sun Fast 3600 *Diablo* won class in the De Guingand Bowl as did Paul O'Higgins' JPK 1080 *Rockabill VI* in the Round Ireland Yacht Race. Simon Toms and Josh Dawson on the Sun Fast 3300 *Zephyr* were third overall in the Rolex Middle Sea Race and won class in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo.

But in addition to her Morgan Cup victory, *Scarlet Oyster's* success came down to her phenomenal season end. After winning class in La Trinité-Cherbourg, then the Channel Race, again it came down to the last race. Winning her class in the final race of the season, the Lewmar Cherbourg Race, to *Bellino's* fifth enabled *Scarlet Oyster* to win IRC Two on 484.5 points to *Bellino's* 478.8. Close behind in third



Left: *Cora* rounded out her season with an overall win in the Cherbourg Race.

Photo: RORC/ Rick Tomlinson/ rick-tomlinson.com

Middle: Back in the UK again - the all-conquering *Sunstone*.

Photo: Matthew Caiger

Right: Greg Leonard's state-of-the-art Class40 *Swift*.

Photo: Alexis Courcoux

place was *Black Sheep*. For her success the committee voted *Scarlet Oyster* 2024 RORC Yacht of the Year and recipient of the Somerset Memorial Trophy (see p50).

### IRC Three

Doublehanders Tim Goodhew and Kelvin Matthews on the Sun Fast 3200 *Cora* enjoyed an excellent season, allowing them a more comfortable victory in IRC Three. They started strongly winning class in the Myth of Malham, De Guingand Bowl and Morgan Cup and concluded 2024 on a high, winning the Lewmar Cherbourg Race overall (see p88), despite being called OCS at the start.

France's Jean-Lin Flipo, sailing fully crewed on the J/99 *Yalla!* was a worthy second, competing in five events to *Cora's* six, winning class in the Drheam Cup. Completing the season's IRC Three podium was Rob Cotterill's J/109 *Mojo Risin*, having competed in seven RORC offshores this season, winning class in the Channel Race.

Credit should also be given to other IRC Three winners including local hero Sebastian Ripard's J/99 *Calypso* in the Rolex Middle Sea Race; Philippe Benaben's Sun Fast 3200 *Platypus* in the Cervantes Trophy; Denis Murphy's Grand Soleil 40 *Nieulargo* in the Round Ireland; Jean-Andre Hebel and Jerome Aubert's JPK 1010 *Abracadabra*<sup>2</sup> in the La Trinité-Cherbourg and Zeb Fellows and Willow Bland on the Sun Fast 3300 *Rock Lobster III* in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo.

### IRC Four

In IRC Four it was great to see the return of *Sunstone*, the famous 1965 vintage 40ft Sparkman & Stephens design. During Tom and Vicky Jackson's lengthy tenure, *Sunstone* raced successfully under IOR, IMS, and CHS/IRC, winning the Channel Race outright and her class in the Fastnet Race in 1985. She was a six-time IMS annual points champion, CHS Yacht of the Year and RORC Yacht of the Year, a four-time Fastnet Race class winner and top boat in the 1996 Commodores' Cup as part of the winning British team. The Jacksons subsequently cruised *Sunstone* around the world, ultimately ending up in New Zealand. *Sunstone* is now back in the UK, being raced by Suffolk-based Will and Jenny Taylor-Jones.

True to her old form, *Sunstone* won IRC Four and the Cowland Trophy in 2024 after topping her class in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo and, closer to her new home, the North Sea Race (see their report on p75). Second was Jonathan Rolls' Swan 38 *Xara* with Paul Scott's Sigma 38 *Spirit* third.

### IRC Two-Handed

IRC Two-Handed was naturally won by the dominant *Bellino* ahead of *Cora*, with Ian Hoddle's *GameOn* third. Nick Martin's Sun Fast 3600 *Diablo* ended the season just five points short of the podium. Including their two race wins this year, doublehanders won 13 of the 48 available podium places during the 2024 season.

### MOCRA

Over the year 26 multihulls competed in the MOCRA class. This was won by Didier Bouillard's Dazcat 1295 *Minor Swing*, having finished second to boat builder Sam Marsaudon in class in the Drheam Cup. In the final tally, *Minor Swing* was followed by the trio of former MOD 70 trimarans, which had all scored points early in the season.

Second overall was former Vendée Globe skipper Alexia Barrier and her The Famous Project crew on *Limosa*, followed by Jason Carroll's *Argo* and Erik Maris' *Zoulou* with Adrian Keller's Irens 84 catamaran *Allegra* fifth. *Limosa* competed in the Rolex Middle Sea, in addition to the RORC Transatlantic and the Caribbean 600, with both the latter two won by *Argo*, on the water and under MOCRA corrected time.

### Class40

The Class40 class was won by American Greg Leonard and his brand-new Sam Manuard-designed Mach 40.6 *Swift*. Leonard's programme included the Round Ireland Yacht Race, alongside talented son Hannes, Vendée Globe skipper Miranda Merron and Jack Trigger; and a third place in the Drheam Cup. Throughout the year they were followed by Alexandre Le Gallais' 2012 first generation Mach 40 *Trim Control* and Guillaume Pirouelle's year old Mach 40.5 *Sogestran Seafrigo*, Class40 winner of the RORC Caribbean 600.





# 2024 SEASON'S POINTS AWARDS

Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com

Trophy Name	Awarded for	2024 Winner
Europeans Cup	IRC Zero	<i>Teasing Machine</i>
Trenchemer Cup	IRC One	<i>Bulldog</i>
Emily Verger Plate	IRC Two	<i>Scarlet Oyster</i>
Grenade Goblet	IRC Three	<i>Cora</i>
Cowland Trophy	IRC Four	<i>Sunstone</i>
Psipsina Trophy	IRC Two-Handed	<i>Bellino</i>
Oldland Watts Aquadanca Trophy	Best Sigma 38	<i>With Alacrity</i>
RORC Decanter	MOCRA Multihull	<i>Minor Swing</i>
The Concise Trophy	Class40	<i>Swift</i>
The Boyd Trophy	Mixed Two-Handed	<i>Bellino</i>
Jazz Trophy	IRC Overall	<i>Bellino</i>
Keith Ludlow Trophy	Navigator of the IRC Overall Yacht	<i>Bellino, Rob Craigie &amp; Deb Fish</i>
David Fayle Memorial Cup	Best sailing school yacht	<i>Desert Star Irish Offshore Sailing</i>
Serendip Trophy	Best cruiser-racer series-produced yacht, as decided by the Committee	<i>Bellino</i>
Dillon Perpetual Ladies Trophy	Best crew containing 30% females	<i>Phosphorus II</i>
Haylock Cup	Best British service yacht	<i>Fujitsu British Soldier</i>
Stradivarius Trophy	Best overseas yacht	<i>Princess Gotionude II</i>
Arambalza Swan Cup	Best Swan	<i>Luna</i>
Alan Paul Trophy	Yacht demonstrating consistent, high performance in IRC Overall	<i>Diablo</i>
Gordon Applebey Trophy	Yacht with the highest combined score from her best six races	<i>Scarlet Oyster</i>
Somerset Memorial Trophy	Yacht of the Year	<i>Scarlet Oyster</i>
Assuage Trophy for RORC Members	Most IRC Overall points in the Cherbourg Race, plus best three of Cervantes Trophy, Morgan Cup, Myth of Malham and the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo Races	<i>Scarlet Oyster</i>
Highwayman Cup	Shortest elapsed time of an IRC yacht in the Cervantes Trophy, Morgan Cup, Cowes-Dinard-St Malo and Cherbourg Races	<i>Zephyr</i>
Duncan Munro Kerr Youth Challenge Trophy	For the youth (15-25) crew who has completed the most RORC race miles on a Class top 3 yacht in the Season's Points	<i>Ocean Breeze, Maja Micińska</i>
Peter Harrison Youth Trophy	Best boat with ≤33% of the crew under 25 from any three offshore races	<i>Bulldog</i>
Dennis P Miller Memorial Trophy	Best performance by a British yacht overseas	<i>Zephyr</i>
Freddie Morgan Trophy	Best classic yacht in IRC	<i>Quailo III</i>
Meritorious Award	Outstanding keelboat performance by a RORC member	<i>Maggie Adamson &amp; Cal Finlayson</i>
Beken Trophy	Concours d'Elegance in RORC races	<i>Quailo III</i>

\* Bonus points are not included in these calculations



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For a second consecutive year Rob Craigie and Commodore Deb Fish on their well-travelled, well-campaigned Jeanneau Sun Fast 3600 *Bellino* have emerged top of the RORC Season's Points Championship.

In 2024 the RORC Season's Points' top 10 featured an unprecedented eight Jeanneau Sun Fast: five 3600s, two 3300s and one 3200. Seven were doublehanders; three fully crewed.

As usual, in addition to top performance, the RORC Season's Points promotes participation, counting all events sailed with no discards. Points are awarded based upon finishing position, derived from a formula that takes entry numbers into consideration. Bonus points are awarded for participation in major races like the Roschier Baltic Sea Race (20 points), the RORC Transatlantic Race (25) and Myth of Malham (10) etc, up to a maximum of 35 points.

This season *Bellino* competed in eight events, scoring maximum bonus points. Nick Martin's *Diablo* and Simon Toms' *Zephyr* also competed in eight, while Gavin Howe's *Tigris* sailed the most - nine - including the RORC Transatlantic Race and the Caribbean 600, to finish seventh overall.

For Craigie and Fish, highlights of 2024 were the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race and the Drheam Cup, the latter forming the second part of the IRC Two-Handed European Championship. "The longer races are usually much more enjoyable than the short ones," explains Craigie. "There is more to the strategy than just working out what the tide is doing and hoping that you're tacking at the right time. You have time to get into it and think further ahead."

Fish agrees: "I enjoyed Round Ireland most because it was just headland after headland. After each one there was a chance to gain or lose miles by playing the tide better or tacking at the right place or just spotting a wind shift by the land. It was fascinating."

Craigie adds of Round Ireland: "You think you are going in a circle around a lump of rock and the wind would be constant and from all angles - but it's not like that. Traditionally it is rough on the west coast, but this time the heavy weather was off the east coast." In 12 years of racing together this was their fourth Round Ireland and they finished ninth in a field of 41.

The Drheam Cup's multi-leg course took *Bellino* from Cherbourg north to Portland, west to Wolf Rock, south to a virtual mark before heading ESE down the Breton coast to La Trinité-sur-Mer. In this they had a better







# BELLINO DOES IT AGAIN!

Photo: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwictures.com



# 2024 SEASON'S POINTS WINNER

result, finishing second to Maxime Mesnil's J/99 *Axesail*.

*Bellino* started the season strongly, winning the Myth of Malham overall, a race which Craigie reckons they have competed in for 12 consecutive years. "The more we do it, the luckier we get! It was very light at the beginning and people got stuck on the Shingles Bank. Then you had to make a strategic decision about whether you went straight there [the Eddystone] or north or south/high or low."

They won the IRC Double Handed Nationals, again comprising two races – the De Guingand Bowl and the Salcombe Gin Morgan Cup. Fish especially remembers the latter during which they had to short tack along the cliffs off Swanage: "60 tacks was quite hard work with just the two of us! Then the big question was when you dived south, because you had to cross a line of latitude; here everyone had worked out that you had to go as far west as possible. The tide was against you, but the routing was saying to over-stand and reach fast to cross the tide quickly. So the whole fleet tacked and some were reaching and some were beating. Those furthest west stayed in the lead and anyone who tacked early got stuck."

The wind then turned light and the tide foul, making the final miles into Dartmouth tough.

"This year the weather was often generally light and hasn't really followed the forecast, especially if it was more than a few hours ahead," observes Craigie. This affected the output of their routing software: "If you follow the red line [routing], you won't be in the first few, but you have to work out why it is showing that." Understanding the limitations of their routing, they typically keep their eyes either 'out of the boat' or pinned to AIS, to assess what is really happening.

Fish, who leads the routing on board, explains: "I use the routing to work out what the factors are beforehand, because then you can interpret it better on the day. I hadn't realised quite how much I relied on AIS. During Round Ireland, you could see on AIS that anyone near the [Fastnet] rock was becalmed and anyone south was moving, so even though we could tack and lay the mark, we went south in the wrong direction and, before you knew it, gained 15 miles. So understand the factors and choose carefully when to sail what you see; following the routing for when to take a short term hit for a long term gain. There is no simple plan, but it was surprising how rarely it was a rhumb line drag race this year."

*Bellino* and her crew also headed up to Suffolk for the North Sea Race. "It is quite a long way," admits the Commodore. "You have about one and a half days to get to Harwich

Photos: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/rick-tomlinson.com





*"It's what keeps us together – we disagree enough!" jokes Craigie. "We come at problems from two different starting points, but the end result is often very similar."*

and two to get back, so the delivery is longer than the race, but it is good fun. Racing in the North Sea has its own challenges - the real annoyance is that they put a wind farm slap bang in the middle of the penultimate leg. This year we were doing really well until we went the wrong way around it."

Craigie and Fish always carry out their own deliveries. Craigie has the time having retired five years ago, whereas Fish finds the time... somehow...to escape her high-powered job with the MoD.

With his background as a plumber, electrician and programmer, Craigie has strong practical skills and is able to fix most things on board and carry out preventative maintenance. At the time of writing, the job list included fixing the adjustable linkage between *Bellino's* rudders and investigating an electrical gremlin which switched off their instruments briefly during their last race.

One of the joys they take in their RORC racing at present is the strong competition, not just in IRC Two but between the Sun Fasts and Sun Fast 3600s, both crewed and doublehanded. The IRC Double Handed Nationals ended with *Bellino* and *Cora* tied (but going *Bellino's* way) when *Cora* lost third place in the Morgan Cup by just six seconds.

*Bellino* remains more or less a 'stock' 3600. She came from Jeanneau with a carbon mast and fin (rather than bulb) keel as standard. An interesting evolution has been her kites. Initially, in 2015, these were fully asymmetric. "But then we did Spi Ouest-France where the French were all symmetric and we didn't go very well," remembers Craigie. "So we went symmetric. Then in 2019 I figured out that we needed an A3: when we're not running, an A3 will work better than the S3 does reaching." For 2024, instead of using both asymmetric and symmetric kites they reverted back fully to A-sails, the circle complete.

"Last year we got a secondary rating with just the A3 and no symmetric and no pole - it gained us a lot of points, but we didn't dare use it!" explains Fish. "This year we got a new A2 and that gave us the confidence to say that 'even if we have a dead run with no pole, we've still got a chance' as we can go reasonably well downwind with the A2. It knocked seven points off our rating and made us much more competitive."

As usual Craigie is more pragmatic about it; he reckons the conditions they encountered this season were also a key factor. "If you have a dead run in more than 12 knots and it is long enough, the symmetric will pay. If there isn't that, it doesn't. This year has been

broadly light and when running in the light you have to sail the angles, where the A sail is better."

Craigie believes the design of *Bellino's* North asymmetrics, allowing them to be used deep, has improved greatly over the last decade. This has also enabled them to reduce *Bellino's* sail area, providing another rating benefit. When new, *Bellino* used to rate 1.041, but now rates just 1.025, although this takes into consideration age allowance and a reweigh following repair work.

In terms of their roles on board, Craigie quips about remaining glued to the helm/main while the younger Commodore does the heavy lifting on board. However, while this might be the default, both muck in as situations demand, for example if conditions get brisk and sails need to be lashed down on the foredeck or a reef put in. While Fish traditionally handles weather analysis and routing, this year Craigie has contributed more to this. However their approaches are vastly different, with Craigie taking a more 'seat of the pants' approach while Fish is more considered and analytical. In fact, this is one of the more entertaining aspects about their sailing together: "It's what keeps us together – we disagree enough!" jokes Craigie. "We come at problems from two different starting points, but the end result is often very similar."

At sea they don't maintain a watch system, but they understand their mutual sleep patterns and how best to manage this. Craigie prefers two-hour stints, while Fish likes an hour and a half, but their system is fluid and dependent upon factors such as the number of manoeuvres required, their energy levels and whether the conditions are such that the autopilot can steer, in which case, one of them will trim and the other will go off-watch.

According to Craigie, the occasions when their pilot can steer better than they can are fewer than you'd expect. "Upwind, at least half the time we hand steer. Broad reaching, unless it is very light with a very smooth sea, we hand steer. Beam reaching, it depends on our capacity and how light it is. The pilot is alright, but it is not fast. In waves downwind it gets knocked off and won't come back." Top experts have tried and failed to improve their set-up and Craigie admits he hasn't yet summoned the courage to invest the



five-figure sum necessary for an entirely new pilot system. He sorely remembers the Cap-Martinique in 2022, when they were overtaken by another 3600 being raced singlehanded and under autopilot.

They take advice readily. Hamble wizard Mike Richards has come on board and worked his magic setting up and adjusting *Bellino's* rig and demonstrating how to tension battens correctly, etc. "And then the boat went faster..." says Craigie.

They also learn from debriefs. Comparing notes with competitors Jonathan McKee and Will Harris after the Drheam Cup this year, for example, Fish learned she may be too conservative with her navigation compared to Harris, who seemed to stick more aggressively to fast points of sail or head more directly to favourable conditions, even if it took them 30° off course.

Such information exchange doesn't occur enough, maintains Fish: "Although there is a sense of community within the doublehanded fleet, I think there is scope for us to share more and all improve." She cites the French offshore sailing schools where a fundamental of joining is full disclosure.

Craigie concludes of where *Bellino* is at: "The boat is going faster now than it's ever gone and we are able to make it go better than we have ever done. We have good sails which are not worn out and our mode changes are much faster than they used to be. As the wind changes and immediately you have to reset all the sails - we are much faster at recognising those changes. We just keep learning."

# SCARLET OYSTER





# 2024 RORC YACHT OF THE YEAR



Photo: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com

While the doublehanded *Bellino* may have won the RORC Season's Points Championship for 2024, a worthy second, and flying the flag for fully crewed racing, was Ross Applebey's perennially successful *Scarlet Oyster*. The red Lymington-based Oyster Lightwave 48 also collected a substantial amount of silverware this season including IRC Two, and just beat *Bellino* to the Gordon Applebey Trophy for the highest combined score in her best five races – a trophy honouring Ross' late father. On a broader note, *Scarlet Oyster* is also thought to have accumulated more RORC season's points over her lifetime than any other yacht...ever.

In a fleet bristling with high profile bespoke carbon fibre and popular French hardware, *Scarlet Oyster*, launched in 1987, is an anomaly. She is one of a handful of highly successful aged boats in the international IRC fleet, demonstrating that even if they are not in their first flush of youth, provided they are continually optimised and well sailed, they can enjoy considerable success.

*Scarlet Oyster* was originally commissioned by British tyre magnet Tony Todd, before trading up to his Fastnet Race-winning IMS 50 *Eagle*. By coincidence, during the 2000s Ross Applebey ran Todd's 65ft and 100ft *Liaras*. Père Applebey bought *Scarlet Oyster* in 1991 as a family cruising yacht, but also competed in the occasional JOG race with his son. "In 1999 I convinced him to do the Fastnet under the pretence that we'd get a good view of the total eclipse!" remembers Ross fondly. *Scarlet Oyster* has competed in every Rolex Fastnet Race since, with the exception of 2009 when she took children from the Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust (EMCT) round Britain to commemorate Ellen's lap. Gordon Applebey, who himself had survived cancer, had also taken EMCT kids on several other races prior to his death in 2008.

Ross stopped working on private yachts in 2010, and the following year raced *Scarlet Oyster* to second in class in the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race. Later that year he won the ARC overall. He had hoped his Fastnet crew would do other races in the Caribbean with him, but after a few pulled out he approached Sailing Logic - the then dominant force in race boat charter - to send clients his way, taking them to a RORC Caribbean 600 class win. So the *Scarlet Oyster* race charter story was established – differing to the competition in that she frequently does well and often wins. *Scarlet Oyster* went on to do 11 back-to-back Caribbean seasons.

"Our modus operandi is to try and do less, but more successfully, both financially and

## 2024 RORC YACHT OF THE YEAR



***"The boat is part of the family. I have done 200k miles in her now. She's never had an autopilot - that has all been hand steered, mostly by me!"***

in terms of results," explains Applebey. "For me it is not interesting to go out and make up numbers. I would rather push the boat hard and, if conditions suit, have a crack at getting the best result we can..."

Since then *Scarlet Oyster* has built up a loyal paying crew, some of whom now have their own boats. While others could be on 'better' boats, many repeatedly return because *Scarlet Oyster* is successful and it's less expensive than racing their own boats. Typically they race with 12-13 crew, but have been known to go with as few as five. "If it is an overnighter or a shorter race, it is not too bad because we don't go into watch systems. Most of our competition is doublehanded, so five is still more than double what they have."

While some believe that doublehanders have an unfair advantage over fully crewed

boats, Ross doesn't: "More crew has to be faster: you have got more strength and depth; more weight on the rail, etc. Some boats, I guess, can be a bit soft with how they sail, with crew on the wrong side, etc - which isn't fast."

However he acknowledges: "It only makes sense to have a large crew if you can make it pay in terms of performance. It is tried and tested: if there is enough breeze to power the boat up, then more stability makes you go faster... The extra weight penalty of the people onboard is more than compensated by the righting moment they can achieve and obviously the boat can be pushed that bit harder." And today fully crewed boats are even permitted to use autopilots.

*Scarlet Oyster* obviously gets substantial age allowance. Modern boats have more form



stability and Ross reckons some have more than IRC sees. "One of our strengths is that the boat has stayed structurally very sound, so we can still put full loads through the rig and push hard. She has strengths and weaknesses, but we try to get her to sit in her happy place as much as possible, mitigating her weaknesses."

Relatively low in form stability compared to modern designs makes *Scarlet Oyster* good in the light. Compared to her contemporaries, she is good at reaching, while in 2011 her keel was lengthened, improving her upwind performance. Ross says she is also good VMG running as she doesn't have a sticky hull shape. They perhaps go further than some in tailoring their sail wardrobe to the forecast, aided by a few secret weapons such as specialist light wind sails.

Like *Bellino*, *Scarlet Oyster* also abandoned her spinnaker pole this year. "A few years ago we did a bit of exploration with trial ratings and found we could have 1.5m of extra bowsprit with no penalty, so we were almost duty-bound to put one on!" Theirs is a telescopic, deck-mounted arrangement feeding through the anchor roller, with extra structure laminated into the bow/deck and a bobstay fitted. "Then we got some old GP42 kites to play with."

In 2024 *Scarlet Oyster* had two IRC certificates, one with a short bowsprit and spinnaker pole, the other with a longer bowsprit and no pole, providing a lower rating. "We have found, increasingly offshore, how infrequently the spinnaker pole pays off. On a windward-leeward course with lots of pole back running in 15 knots, then the pole is hugely helpful. So we have been tactical: the Myth of Malham should have been a windward-leeward - we rated it with spinnaker pole, but then of course it was light airs and we didn't use the pole once..."

*Scarlet Oyster* does get new gear including rudders and rigs, while Ross has a long relationship with Sanders Sails. As he puts it: "we noticed *Pintia* was winning our class fairly consistently and got her sails from Sanders. I figured that if the French are coming to Lymington to buy their sails, we should too!" They use panelled sails for their heavier jibs and mainsail, built in taffeta-skinned carbon Dimension-Polyant cloth.

In 2009 they replaced *Scarlet Oyster's* rig, at the same time erring away from overlapping headsails. As Ross explains: "In breeze they don't help and in the light they don't help either because the sheeting angle is too wide,

whereas a lightweight jib with battens sits there in light winds and is more efficient. In 8-10 knots when you need the bigger genoa, you can often put a Code Zero up and reach off somewhere and find wind." Non-overlappers also allow you to see to leeward, don't get trashed in every tack and are lower rated.

However Ross seems proudest of his supreme skill in repurposing gear; his 'MacGyver' quality; known in modern parlance as 'sustainability'. When *Scarlet Oyster* went to non-overlapping jibs, he found discarded 3DL Swan 45 jibs fitted with minor mods. Similarly, thanks to James Neville, *Scarlet Oyster* has been the recipient of some ex-*Ino* sails including an A4, which Ross had cut down. Various GP42 kites have also come his way. "Previously with ARC I used to hunt on eBay for spinnakers, because when you're pushing a boat hard across the ocean, you put a lot of wear and tear on them. I got a Santa Cruz 70 kite for £300 and cut down it, knowing that if it blew itself to pieces, I wouldn't get upset!"

Perhaps the finest example of this followed *Scarlet Oyster's* rudder breakage during the 2014 Rolex Middle Sea Race, which, in a Seamanship Award-winning episode, saw them jury rig a rudder which was enough to get them to Pantelleria. Once alongside on this remotest of islands, somehow they scavenged various steel tubing and plates to fabricate a new rudder and stock which they then fitted. This arrangement got them to the ARC start in Las Palmas where they finally fitted a brand new rudder they'd had shipped out.

For 2024, Ross says that they continued the momentum of their strong 2023 Rolex Fastnet Race campaign in which *Scarlet Oyster* won class. "Several of our crew now have done 10 or more seasons with us, so we have a lot of strength and depth. Even though it is a 'race charter', some of our team have done six Fastnets with us."

When it comes to nav and routing Ross echoes the *Bellino* assessment - how important AIS is to see shifts coming; getting good weather info and then, once out on the race course, determining the forecast's accuracy - if it is correct, mis-timed, mis-positioned or completely wrong. Ross cites the Cherbourg Race, in which it was imperative that they won their class: "It was a light airs run and we were using a GP42 kite which was too flat and wouldn't get us going. The forecast and what we were seeing were quite different and if we stuck with the fleet we weren't going to get a great result: so, for once, I wasn't concerned about taking a flier. We sailed further west

and then when the forecast shift finally came, we were on a run, downwind of everyone, and had a fast angle in." Winning class in this ultimately won *Scarlet Oyster* the Gordon Applebey Trophy.

Looking back at 2024, *Scarlet Oyster* missed the Cervantes Trophy but competed in the Myth of Malham and the De Guingand Bowl, finishing 7th and 12th overall respectively. "In the Myth of Malham we did alright but approaching the lighthouse, the tide started hooning west, so the guys behind us got compressed into us. A similar thing happened coming into Portland Bill, so we couldn't really get our time back. The De Guingand Bowl was similar again, with lots of compression: We were going east and west a lot, and every time we got to a mark, the tide turned with us and there was compression."

Finally *Scarlet Oyster* won the Salcombe Gin Morgan Cup to Dartmouth: "It was a clever course, zigzagging around so no one could nip inshore. If it had been a straight beat there, it would have been harsh on the smaller boats [not making tidal gates]. Some of it was upwind in fresh breeze which we like and we made the right choices."

They finished second to Eric Fries' JPK 1180 *Fastwave 6* in the La Trinité-Cherbourg (see the report on p82) and followed this with fourth overall in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo. "That was a windy beat to Guernsey and then a blast reach. We were quite amazed by the 3300s - they were only six miles behind us at Guernsey and a couple came past doing 25 knots!" They rounded the season off well with a third overall in this, a class win in the Channel Race and a fourth in the Lewmar Cherbourg Race to clinch the Gordon Applebey Trophy by a mere 1.7 points.

While this hasn't been the case recently, the Jazz Trophy for the boat achieving the maximum season's points occasionally has gone to the boat that participated most, rather than best. To counter this the Gordon Applebey Trophy aims purely at rewarding merit. Ross says he has been approached to make this exclusively for fully crewed boats, but is reluctant.

In 2025 *Scarlet Oyster's* main aim will be the RORC's centenary Rolex Fastnet Race - the boat's 14th, a record possibly only outstripped by Richard Loftus' *Desperado* or Harry Heijst's *Winsome*.

Applebey concludes: "The boat is part of the family. I have done 200k miles in her now. She's never had an autopilot - that has all been hand steered, mostly by me!"

# TAKING FLIGHT



*Photo opposite: RORC/James Tomlinson/jamestomlinsonphotography.co.uk*



# GRIFFIN OFFSHORE PATHWAY by Jim Driver

## Griffin 2024

The Griffin programme began in 1945 with the generous donation of the yacht *Griffin*, providing the Club with a platform from which to support youth sailing. After a hiatus, the Griffin programme was resurrected in recent years and has continued to rely upon the generosity of members donating the use of their yachts, enabling the RORC to continue shaping the next generation of sailors.

Recently, the RORC partnered with the Yacht Club de France and the Storm Trysail Yacht Club to develop a yacht designed for IRC or one-design racing, principally to attract new blood into the sport. The aim was to create a modern, exciting and affordable yacht that would also be sustainable. This led to the Sun Fast 30.

For the 2024 Griffin programme, the Club had the opportunity to charter the first two production Sun Fast 30 yachts. A programme was then formed around four teams comprising five sailors each, aged between 18-30.

We were keen to represent the international nature of the Club; the final teams included sailors from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK. Nearly 50% of the sailors were female, with two teams led by accomplished female skippers such as Rosie Hill (see p56).

In addition, the RORC's partnership with the Italian Nastro Rosa Tour gives doublehanded teams a chance to race in Figaro 3 yachts

around the Italian coast. This year, 25 sailors raced under the RORC burgee in the Nastro Rosa regattas (see p57).

## Looking forward to 2025

In 2025 we will be launching the Griffin Offshore Pathway, with three primary goals. To:

1. Provide a structured introduction to offshore sailing, with a clear development path to becoming proficient offshore sailors.
2. Create a pool of competent crew members for existing yacht owners to draw from, ensuring a high standard of skill.
3. Lay the foundation for those aiming to pursue professional careers in offshore sailing.

For this to be successful we recognise the need for more structured training and varied opportunities; thus Hugh Brayshaw has been appointed Lead Coach and will oversee sailor development throughout the season. This will include shore-based training, training weekends and coached races.

The Sun Fast 30 platform will also be upgraded, with the Club purchasing a Sun Fast 3600, providing a competitive IRC-optimised yacht for the squads to race. In 2025, three squads of six sailors each will be formed and, by optimising the RORC and JOG race calendars, each squad will compete in five races, including one from the North Sea, La Trinité-Cowes or the Rolex Fastnet Race.

Our partnership with the Nastro Rosa Tour will also be expanded upon, offering

more sailors the opportunity to experience doublehanded racing throughout the season. Sailing doublehanded in the Nastro Rosa Tour is a natural development of the skill set the squad will learn racing fully crewed on the Sun Fast 3600.

Elsewhere we will be sending a crewed team to the French Figaro Beneteau 3 class, the most competitive offshore one design circuit, traditionally serving as a pathway to professional offshore sailing. The Tour Voile is a 14-day regatta, alternating between inshore and offshore racing across six stopover ports and raced with a crew of four. By entering a six-person team, we will allow more sailors to experience the high level of competition in this event.

The Griffin Offshore Pathway will provide over 50 youth sailors with the opportunity to develop their skills and gain the experience needed to become proficient offshore sailors. With a diverse programme, we can cater to sailors of varying abilities and ambitions, offering tailored opportunities for growth.

The Griffin Offshore Pathway is an ambitious project, funded collectively by RORC, sailor contributions, commercial sponsors and donations. RORC is actively seeking to expand its network of sponsors and supporters to keep costs manageable for sailors, while broadening the programme's scope. Companies and individuals interested in supporting the initiative are encouraged to get in touch for further information.



# MY SEASON WITH GRIFFIN by Rosie Hill

The Griffin Project 2024 kicked off with an intense selection weekend in Cowes run by Charles Darbyshire and the Fourth Cape team. Twenty eager applicants arrived bright and early at the first of the two weekends to face the tasks ahead, ranging from communication challenges to bleep tests and, of course, sailing.

The final selection met in Gosport for a three-day training weekend supported by the best in the business, including Dee Caffari, Steve Hayles, Shirley Robertson and Ian Walker. It was a very windy weekend, and I learned a lot from the coaches while also having our first outings in our set teams. The weekend gave us a chance to find out more about the Sun Fast 30s, as well as learning how the season would pan out.

Six races were planned for the season: five RORC races, with two teams competing in each of the following: Cervantes Trophy, Myth of Malham, De Guingand Bowl, Morgan Cup and the Drheam Cup. Our team, sailing on *Cap Sela - 007*, participated in the Myth of Malham and Morgan Cup before the big finale - the 600-mile Drheam Cup. The lessons learned and knowledge gained from each race by individual boats was shared between all four teams, our goal being that we all improved together and more rapidly.

The Myth of Malham was our first offshore together and was a chance to get to know the boat and crew better. It was a tricky race with lots of light winds, before sending it downwind in some stronger breeze towards the Eddystone Lighthouse, which we rounded - in true offshore fashion - in darkness, in strong breeze and with the spinnaker up. It was at that point we understood why we were asked to perform team building exercises at the selection weekend! Unfortunately, coming back eastwards we met a large shutdown and missed the tidal gate; after an age, we ghosted over glassy water to the finish. Despite that, both teams finished and valuable lessons were learned - everyone was eager to apply them to their next race.

Next up was the Morgan Cup where a breezy start accompanied by a choppy Solent meant it was going to be full on. In what proved a highly tactical race, we battled hard with the other Griffin team - *009*, trading the lead more than once. Ultimately *009* triumphed over us, but only by six minutes!

Before the Drheam Cup we changed around in the crew and I switched from navigator to skipper. Our first longer race, we arrived in Cherbourg and prepped hard beforehand,

keeping a close eye on the weather and running routings. Soon we were on the start line, hoisting several different sails as we tackled the squalls coming off the land. Boats were broaching left, right, and centre; we had to recover our spinnaker when both Tylaska snap shackles on the kite sheets blew open in the strong winds. Finally we settled down and blasted across the Channel!

We rounded West Shambles cardinal mark (off Portland) at night. Then, playing the headlands and bays, it was upwind all the way along the south coast to Wolf Rock. On passing Start Point we learned of the retirement of the other Griffin boat, which had retreated to Dartmouth with damage. After touching base to check if they needed help, we continued.

Our spirits were high at Wolf Rock - a significant milestone of the race. The wind dropped and became more southerly, so it was upwind again to the virtual mark. By this time, sea sickness had abated and our watch system was established; we were firmly into the race routine. From the virtual mark, we

hoisted the Code Zero, and headed directly to La Trinité!

We had 6-8 knot wind speed all the way and we all enjoyed coming on watch, taking in the epic sunsets and dolphin visits.

The final approach La Trinité had us navigating between rocks and islands at night alongside several other boats. Unfortunately, as daylight broke the wind completely shut down but eventually, after several frustrating hours, we drifted across the line.

This season, the Griffin teams have gone from strength to strength. For me, completing this season as a four has been a highlight - particularly that last race as skipper. For every 'character building' moment there have been many more 'whisky moments' - beautiful sunsets and laughter onboard. I have enjoyed taking on the huge amount of trust and responsibility which comes with offshore sailing and bringing a team together and remain immensely grateful to have been given such an awesome opportunity by the Club.





# EUROSAF DOUBLE MIXED OFFSHORE CHAMPIONSHIPS - A RACE FOR ALL AGES



The Marina Military Nastro Rosa Tour (MMNRT) was launched by its Chairman, Riccardo Simoneschi. It spans five world-class offshore sailing events around Italy from April to November, including Il Giro, Il Veloce and the European Sailing Federation (EUROSAF)'s Double Handed Offshore Female Europeans in May and its mixed equivalent which took place in October.

Having partnered for some years now, the MMNRT and RORC share a vision of actively promoting offshore sailing for an international audience, creating opportunities for sailors from various sailing backgrounds and ages, including women; thus its values align with the Griffin Offshore Pathway.

Since 2019, EUROSAF, in collaboration with the MMNRT, have been running the EUROSAF Double Mixed Offshore European Championship, sailing from Venice, Italy.

The format is a non-stop multi-night race, using 36ft foil-assisted one-design Figaro Beneteau 3s. This is for experienced doublehanded sailors and proudly states 'without an age requirement'. MMNRT generously provides 10 teams with Figaro 3s and collaborated with Jim Driver to get a strong contingent of RORC teams competing.

## The Teams

The RORC entered five multi-national teams including Griffin members and grey(ish) rookies:

Germany: Charlotte Schneider/Konrad Streit  
Poland: Lou Boorman/Maciek Lato  
Holland: Marjoleine Hulshof/Duncan J Sim  
Great Britain 2: Libby Askew/Tom Bridge  
Great Britain 1: Becky Caiger/Ben Ibbotson

Charlotte, Libby and Marjoleine had competed against each other last year in the EUROSAF Double Handed Offshore Female Europeans. As a result all had previous experience campaigning a Figaro 3 in Italy, as well as dealing with the challenging conditions of the Adriatic.

There was great camaraderie and banter on the dock between all the teams, as we helped each other prepare the boats and deal with the sometimes long list of jobs.

The boats are well maintained by the supportive MMNRT shore-based team, managed by Andrea Perone. They know the boats are raced hard for the season and there are always things to replace, fix and change to get ready for a three/four-day offshore race.

## The Race

Venice rolled out the red carpet when the teams arrived, with sunny skies and a gentle breeze - perfect for starting all the jobs necessary before race day. But just when everyone thought it was smooth sailing, Mother Nature pulled a fast one. A Mediterranean low-pressure system decided to crash the party, sending 50-knot gusts down from Croatia. The race was postponed, first to Thursday, then to Friday. The teams could technically train, but with the lagoon's floodgates shut, the only real action was at the Yacht Club de Venezia.

Finally, Friday morning arrived, and so did the green light for the shortened 160-mile race. The course involved two triangles between Venice and Rovinj and, once we got going, it was Figaro 3 heaven - 20 knots with full

sails and smiles all around. That is, until we were hit by a sneaky low-pressure zone, with the entire circumference of the eye visible. Team Germany's Charlotte and Konrad were leading, but by the time they blinked, the veterans from Norway and Sweden had zoomed ahead. Then Michaela from Team South Africa knocked herself out below deck on the next leg. Thanks to the great support of the MMNRT's safety officer, instantly available through the provided sat phone, a helicopter rescue was promptly organised and Michaela was back at the marina after the race ended, banged up, but in good spirits.

Meanwhile, the upwind leg turned into a wind-finding mission. The last teams to round the next mark were practically parked, while the frontrunners cruised ahead with a breeze that seemed exclusively theirs. By the second lap, a few teams had to bow out, defeated by time and travel plans.

Team Norway took the win on Saturday evening, finishing just in time for dinner. The Swedes and Germans followed close behind, with Charlotte and Konrad barely fending off their fellow RORC team, Becky and Ben. Meanwhile, the Polish RORC team? They were still out there, fighting yet another wind hole and only finished at 03:30, displaying strong will and perseverance.

A huge thank you to the MMNRT for organising the event and the RORC for their support. We also deeply appreciate the work of the MMNRT safety officer. Finally, a big shout-out to all the teams for their resilience and sportsmanship despite the challenging conditions. Here's to even more exciting races in the future!

# YOUTH MEMBERSHIP OFFER!

Our young people are the future of our sport! Yes, it's a cliché, but it's also true.

When we looked at under 30s, we saw individuals who probably do not own boats. Most probably they sailed at their local sailing club and/or at university, or maybe are simply keen to explore our sport.

They are starting careers and starting families and, quite simply, are at a stage in life when they are most sensitive to costs.

We recognise our need to engage and retain those in this age group as members, to encourage them to use our clubhouses and participate in our sport, obtaining the required miles to become full RORC Ocean Racing members.

With this in mind, the committee has revised its offering to new and existing youth members (see right) for both UK and Overseas members. This would replace the existing Cadet, U25 and U30 categories.

These membership levels have slightly adjusted benefits: Boat owners will not be eligible for discount entry fees to our races and will only receive Seahorse magazine digitally.

These new rates reflect our hope that, as their lives progress, youth members remain engaged with the Club until they can contribute to it more financially.

For those aged 30 and under, the membership cost of £75/year is now less than a glass of wine/pint of beer per month - to join the biggest offshore racing community in the world!

To take advantage of these new rates go to the RORC website or follow the QR code above.

**Andrew Tseng**



## NEW FEE STRUCTURE

The beneficial new annual membership fees for those whose age at the renewal date is:

- 18 and under – FREE
- 19-30 – £75
- 31-35 – £200
- 36+ – full membership fee



*Photos: RORC/James Tomlinson/jamestomlinsonphotography.co.uk*



# SCOTS WIN OFFSHORE DOUBLE HANDED WORLDS

World Champions Maggie Adamson and Cal Finlayson, jubilant following their 'come from behind' victory.  
Photo: Anne Beaugé

Defying the bookie's odds that insisted upon a French winner, Team GBR duo Maggie Adamson and Cal Finlayson won the Offshore Double Handed Worlds in Lorient in early October, the event going to the wire.

Both are Scots: Maggie from the Shetlands and Cal from near Montrose. Both have been racing doublehanded with the RORC on Sun Fast 3600s: Maggie with Gavin Howe on *Tigris*, Cal with Nick Martin on *Diablo*. The lure of doublehanded for both was doing every position on board rather than just specialising in one.

They joined forces in 2022 and finished third in the 2023 Marina Militare Nastro Rosa Veloce's Double Mixed Offshore World Championship. Based on this, they and Peter Bacon/Louise Clayton were the two GBR teams of the 22 competing at the 2024 Offshore Double Handed Worlds.

Prior to the event they raced *Diablo* doublehanded in the Cherbourg Race and delivered a Sun Fast 30 from Hamble to Lorient. In total they had around seven days aboard the 30 prior to the event.

The Championship comprised elimination races from which the top five progressed to the final. Maggie and Cal's 80-mile Department de Morbihan elimination race saw some shaky moments, but they clawed their way back to fourth in winds ranging from 30 knots to very little. Cal recalls: "We were sending it with the A4 in the dark and put a couple of miles on the boats behind us. But then, with 20 miles to go, we blew up the A4 in a broach, but still cruised home with the Code Zero, doing 17-18 knots on the surfs."

For the final they first headed southeast from Lorient past Belle Île to a turning mark off Noirmoutier, back up into the Bay of Quiberon, then past the tip of the Quiberon peninsula and on, northwest, to a turning mark off Îles des Glénan, before returning to Lorient.

Once again the race provided mixed conditions. "We had a slow start - we spent too long trying to work out the sail configuration," admits Cal. They ended up with the Code Zero for a broad reach in 30 knots. Maggie says: "We saw 23 knots- we were flying!"

Early on, French favourites, Elodie Bonafous and Basile Bourgnon (son of Route du Rhum winner Laurent) edged into the lead. Passing Belle Île at lunchtime the Brits were up to fourth. "We got a good balance with the Code Zero and the J2 inside it - in those conditions speed differences can be 5 knots, depending upon if you are surfing," says Cal. Maggie



adds: "Our mindset was on 'what is going to get us surfing from wave to wave the best?'"

With the wind mid-20s, the French rounded the leeward mark at 14:57, followed 20 minutes later by the Brits in second place. At the end of the fetch up into the Baie of Quiberon the French were still first, arriving at 18:30 having extended marginally over the Brits.

The Brits then lost out on the next upwind leg, down to fifth as the other French team, Charlotte Yven and Lois Berrehar, recovered and moved into second. But, approaching the top mark, the wind died and there was an effective restart. By staying slightly left the Brits edged ahead, rounding the top mark at 06:47, in first, ten minutes ahead.

Cal says: "We were relying on the tracker to see other positions, but then we lost 4G after Belle Île and were in the dark. Rounding the mark, we thought the French had done a horizon job. Then, once we got 4G again, we saw we were first..."

However, all was not over: "We knew there was going to be a transition and it was a case of trying to keep the boat moving - the French

were extremely good at that," says Maggie. "It was a drag race for the next few miles with every boat in a different mode. It was total 'eyes out of the boat'."

"In the last two miles there were significant wind holes, but we saw a cruising boat under spinnaker moving well, closer in towards the rocks, so we peeled back to the jib and went inshore to get into that pressure and that got us back in touch."

Meanwhile the French were fighting each other. Both peeled to A4s, but they sailed into a hole and had to bear away and, ultimately, they had to drop and lost ground. So we overtook them..."

In a fairy tale finish the Brits crossed the line at 14:08, one minute two seconds ahead of Bonafous/Bourgnon. "We thought top five would have been good and a podium would have been excellent. It was unbelievable," admitted Maggie, delighted.

Maggie and Cal are now trying to raise money to compete in the doublehanded Figaro event, the Transpac Paprec (ex-Transat AG2R) taking place from Concarneau to St Barth in April 2025.



# RATING OFFICE ROUND-UP

by Dr Jason Smithwick

## New year, new home

Change was afoot last year, and I'm not talking about the Cowes Clubhouse. After 30 years, the RORC Rating Office has moved from the scenic, but increasingly unsuitable, space by the Lymington Sea Water Baths pool to a more practical office, half a mile down the road in Berthon. While the old office had a fantastic view of the marina and the Isle of Wight, the pool meant it was noisy in the summer, while also cold and damp in the winter and expensive to heat. Despite these issues the team had a real attachment to the place, but the final curtain was called when the landlord, Lymington Town Council, admitted it couldn't afford to keep it in good condition.

For over a year, the team searched for a new office that was both in a convenient location for us and met our needs. Our focus was on staff retention – the Rating Office, after all, is not a building, but a group of people with many years of experience and expertise that we did not wish to jeopardise with hasty decisions. After viewing many options, Berthon Boatyard in Lymington contacted us in November 2023 about a small, but perfect, office nearby. By mid-December, the RORC Rating Office team had moved in. The new office is warm, clean, dry, much more energy-efficient and affordable. It also overlooks the boatyard, where we can see IRC-rated boats being craned in and out - even checking IRC ratings from the window!





The team remains the same: myself as Director, Jenny Howells as Technical Manager, Emma Smith and Sally Moss completing the Technical Team, with Andrew Yates as a consultant. We also have 20 or so retained RORC measurers across Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

#### 40 Years of IRC

In 2024, the IRC rating rule marked a substantial anniversary with its 40th birthday. The foundation of the International Rating Certificate (IRC) system was deeply rooted in a desire for a more inclusive and adaptable rating rule for yachts. In the early 1980s many boats raced under the International Offshore Rule (IOR), but the IOR's focus on racing boats led to 'type-forming' designs, particularly with pinched sterns, which caused instability during races. Recognising the need for a system that could rate a wider variety of boat types, Robin Aisher and Jean Louis Fabry, respective commodores of the Royal Ocean Racing Club and the French l'Union National pour la Course au Large, informally laid the groundwork for what became the Channel Handicap System (CHS) in 1983. The initial concept for CHS, designed to rate cruiser-racers of various shapes and sizes, was jotted down during discussions after a RORC cross-Channel race.

The first CHS certificates were issued in 1984, and by 1999 the system evolved into IRC, which was internationally recognised in 2003. Over the last 40 years, IRC has rated a wide range of monohull designs, from older IOR vessels to cutting-edge racing yachts, all the while maintaining the core principle of safeguarding the diversity of the fleet. The system has been forward-thinking in its approach over the years, adapting to innovations like retractable bowsprits, asymmetric spinnakers, canting keels, etc.

One of the key aspects of IRC's success has been the stability and experience of its technical teams on both sides of the Channel. The RORC Rating Office, for example, boasts a combined 70 years of experience among its four-person technical team. Such continuity has ensured that the system remains fair, relevant and effective in regulating competitive sailing.

The IRC system has become a global standard for yacht rating and continues to be integral in prestigious international sailing events.

#### IRC Today

Today the IRC rating system is managed by the IRC Rating Authority (RORC Rating Office and YCF Centre de Calcul) and further



administered by 38 additional rule authorities worldwide, on seven continents, making it the most widely used rating system available, with IRC certificates issued in 34 countries in 2024.

Joint figures from RORC and YCF showed that at the end of August the overall number of valid rated boats was 3,450 and a total of 4,967 certificates had been issued to 3,558 boats since 1 January 2024. The secondary certificate permitted by Rule 8.2.1 continues to prove popular, with 282 boats holding a valid secondary certificate on 31 August 2024.

IRC remains the principal international rating system for a long list of events around the world: from the offshore classics, including the RORC Transatlantic Race, Rolex Fastnet Race, Rolex Sydney Hobart Race, Rolex Middle Sea Race, RORC Caribbean 600, Aegean 600, Roschier Baltic Sea Race and Loro Piana Giraglia, to regattas such as Cowes Week, Hamilton Island Race Week, Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup, Phuket King's Cup Regatta, China Cup Regatta, Spi Ouest-France, SNIM and Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez, IRC is the rating system used for the principal trophies. In fact, there are thousands of boats club racing around the world using IRC rating.

#### IRC Number of Headsails

As expected, the addition in 2024 of accounting for the number of headsails in the IRC rating system has indeed generated a lot of discussion among sailors. As is often the case with new rating rules, the sailing community takes time to adjust to the changes, particularly early in the season.

There are still some unresolved issues, notably with sailors exploiting the loophole related to heavy weather and storm sails, as prescribed by the World Sailing Offshore Special Regulations (OSR). Some sailors have been using these sails as part of their overall sail inventory, instead of primarily for safety, leading to situations where the sails may not actually be fit for their intended safety purpose.

This has raised concerns within the racing community and, as a result, there are submissions to the OSR, set for review at the World Sailing Annual Conference in November 2024. These submissions aim to clarify the specific roles and expected wind ranges for these safety sails. The hope is that by making these regulations more precise, sailors and sailmakers will focus on ensuring they carry

# RATING OFFICE ROUND-UP



appropriate safety equipment, aligning more closely with the original safety intent behind these regulations. This adjustment is a typical part of the evolution of the intertwined IRC and OSR framework, where tweaks are made based on practical experience and feedback from the sailing community. Keep an eye out in the OSR for any updates and stay safe.

## IRC Rules for 2025

The IRC Rule and formulation have worked very well this year with the need for only some minor changes. There will be a new edition of the World Sailing Equipment Rules of Sailing 2025-2028 which requires some IRC Rule updates to be in line with this version. IRC Congress, the group that agrees rule changes, had not met at the time of writing but the proposed rule/rating changes for 2025 are in the following areas:

- ▶ Rules clarifying sail measurement
- ▶ Rules for internal ballast
- ▶ Rules for rig factor and rotating rigs
- ▶ Rules for sheeting of sails
- ▶ Rules to update to the new Equipment Rules of Sailing 2025-2028
- ▶ Rules clarifying spare headsails with a single furling headsail
- ▶ Definitions for sail types
- ▶ Rating of keel trim tabs

Check [www.ircrating.org](http://www.ircrating.org) for updates on the latest rules.

## RYA YTC Rating System

The technical team has had a particularly demanding year, working intensively on both developing and administering the IRC rating system, as well as progressing with the RYA YTC (Yacht Time Correction) scheme. The growth in YTC boat ratings, from 500 in 2022 to 1,500 in 2024, underscores the significant efforts of the RORC Rating Office and the respect it has earned within the industry. This growth demonstrates the value of the RYA YTC scheme in broadening the RORC Rating Office's reach, particularly with occasional club racers who might not have otherwise engaged with the IRC rating system.

The success of the RYA YTC system has created a positive feedback loop, attracting new participants and helping to establish a clear pathway towards using IRC. This has the potential to further enhance participation in UK sailing, ultimately benefitting both IRC and the RORC.

A major factor in this growth has been the new in-house RYA YTC application portal which, along with its associated web pages, has streamlined the application process. With automation playing a more prominent role, particularly in delivering certificates without amendments upon revalidation, the system is set to become even more efficient in the future.





Photo left: (l-r) Rating Office staff - Emma Smith, Technical Manager Jenny Howells, Director Dr Jason Smithwick and Sally Moss.

Photo: Dubai Offshore Sailing Club

Photo below: Use of triple-headed headsail set-ups are becoming more common.

Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com

Helpful to this progress has been a University of Bath mathematics student who has been involved in research during the summer of 2023 and into 2024, focusing on machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) applications within both IRC and YTC. Their research has contributed to advancements in the YTC rating formula and improvements in automation, such as detecting erroneous sail dimensions early in applications and flagging boats with rating anomalies. These developments not only enhance the accuracy and reliability of the rating process, but also signal a future where AI technology will play a crucial role in the evolution of racing ratings.

#### RORC Rating Office elsewhere

The RORC Rating Office team continues its representation on national and international committees. Jenny is on the RYA Technical Committee while I am chair of the World Sailing working parties involving keel failures and the Universal Measurement System. I have also worked with the RYA on developing the YTC scheme and other safety areas and sit on the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) small boat working group to help advise on development of MCA Codes etc. The RORC Rating Office is also the organiser of the RORC Technical sub-committee; this is a

group of renowned designers, consultants, manufacturers, builders, race organisers and journalists who are working in the sport, observing it at a technical level and driving development.

The RORC Rating Office continues our technical consultancy contract with Nautor Swan classes - ClubSwan 36, 42 and 50 and the Swan 45 - and have attended several Swan events. We work with these classes to ensure quality control for the building process and to certify boats. We also attend events to conduct equipment inspection on behalf of the Class Association; for this we work with Andrew Yates, who has attended several Swan events this year. The office also maintains a close working relationship with the International Maxi Association (IMA) offering technical support to the IMA and maxi owners. We continue to work with the IMA on the rating of reduced crew and other initiatives.

As we wind down to the end of the season, the RORC Rating Office and associates send our best wishes to RORC members, IRC customers and the myriad of people we speak to within the industry. We are looking forward to working with you again and having another successful racing season.

*The IRC system  
has become a  
global standard for  
yacht rating and  
continues to be  
integral in prestigious  
international sailing  
events.*



*Below: The man in the hot seat - Racing Manager Steve Cole.*

*Photo: RORC/Arthur Daniel*

*Opposite: Erik de Turckheim's Teasing Machine.*

*Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/rick-tomlinson.com*

# NO DISRESPECT BUT WE'VE MOVED ON

by Steve Cole  
Racing Manager



Encouragingly, at a time when participation in sailing is continuing to fall, the appetite for offshore sailing appears to be holding firm. The number of competitors this year is down upon last, as always for a non-Fastnet year, but nevertheless compares well to the 2022 figures.

Although the RORC race programme is well established, we should not be complacent about it and the RORC Race Team is always looking to improve race quality while still maintaining the challenges of offshore racing, for which RORC is rightly seen as a world leader.

Time constraints seem to be a common theme when discussing with competitors what races they would like to take part in. Also affecting participation in inshore events in particular, is the sheer numbers of races available, so we are actively working with other clubs to consolidate these.

One of the areas in which we are undoubtedly leading is our entry and results system. Developed by Nautical Cloud in conjunction with the RORC, the 'sailracehq' system is centred on an easy-to-use portal and is

carefully updated with input from both the RORC Race Team and developers, as well as from other users worldwide. Technology is becoming a greater part of offshore racing. The next few years look very exciting indeed with the possibility of our own tracker software complementing the already established sector times in existing races, will allow information to be fed out to both competitors and media.

The system means the RORC Race Team has an incredible amount of information immediately available in report form. This can help with committee discussions around widening participation and diversity for example, or can be conveniently sent to customs or emergency agencies for the bigger races, reducing competitor paperwork.

## **2024: Start to finish**

The RORC Transatlantic Race kicked off the 2024 season, with 21 boats making the crossing from Lanzarote to Grenada. As usual, the welcome and hospitality from Calero Marinas was unsurpassed. A severe low-pressure saw the course changed to avoid the upwind slog in the first 24 hours, a



*"Technology is becoming a greater part of offshore racing  
... the next few years look very exciting indeed."*

decision popular with the fleet. *Warrior Won*, owned by Chris Sheehan, lived up to its name and collected the IRC Overall win.

In February the Caribbean 600 saw a change from its sometimes boisterous conditions, with some of the smaller boats struggling to finish. For the boats that were still battling it out after the prize-giving, a warm welcome with cold beer was provided whenever they finished. *Leopard 3* achieved 'the double' - line honours and corrected time win - to make Joost Schuijff a very happy owner.

With the IRC Nationals due to take place in Poole over the late May bank holiday, the race programme was amended slightly. The Myth of Malham, usually in the later slot, was moved to the early May bank holiday weekend, bringing forward the first offshore of the domestic season, the Cervantes Trophy, to April. This earlier than normal dash across the Channel to Le Havre was won by Trevor Middleton on *Black Sheep*.

The change of date for the Myth of Malham did not put off many. While Eric de Turckheim's *Teasing Machine* blasted around the 235-mile course in just over 25 hours, his team did not manage to beat Rob Craigie and Commodore Deb Fish on the doublehanded *Bellino* on corrected time. It was another great demonstration of IRC, with the top ten boats all within an hour of each other after correction.

In May, the North Sea Race sailed the shorter course to Scheveningen, after the traditional

consumption of herrings brought across from Holland. As usual the RORC Race Team had great support from our East Coast volunteers, as well as a warm welcome in Holland. Unfortunately, a couple of boats received fines from the Dutch coastguard for infringing oil rig restricted spaces. This can be avoided by keeping a listening watch on VHF Ch16, but this situation will likely become trickier as more and more rigs and wind farms appear in the North Sea.

One of the challenges faced by the RORC Race Team is how to set courses for non-destination races that suit such a wide variety of boats. For the De Guingand Bowl, the first such race of the season, a course was set in and around Poole Bay, with a loop designed to remove some of the tidal advantage for the quicker boats and a finish at North Head to take away the tidal gate of the Western Solent...another happy day/night sat on the beach at North Head for the finish team!

A great trip to Dartmouth for the Salcombe Gin Morgan Cup meant that all the boats got there to appreciate the hospitality of the Royal Dart Yacht Club and to congratulate the winners of the Double Handed National Championship, for whom the race was the decider of their series.

For the first time, this year the Round Ireland Yacht Race used our 'sailracehq' system. As one of our associated races, we were pleased to be able to help them navigate it,



## RACE OFFICE LATEST

and help reduce the amount of administration that goes into a race of this length. *Teasing Machine*, once again, kept ahead of the high-pressure systems to take the IRC Overall win.

July saw a very windy Cowes-Dinard-St Malo which, this year along with the Drheam Cup, formed the first part of the IRC Two-Handed European Championship. Lasting long in the memories of the RORC Race Team will be the finish of *Sunrise* and *Rock Lobster*. Both were locked in battle, flying at full throttle through the finish line...when they nearly ran into a very large chunk of granite called France.

The second edition of the Roschier Baltic Sea Race took place with a pleasing entry of 40 boats, a good increase on 2023. As always, the competitors were warmly received in Helsinki and had a great race in unusually windy conditions for the Baltic at that time of year.

After a little break over August, the Club joined forces with JOG for the Cherbourg Race. The aim of this alliance was for the two clubs to appreciate each other's strengths and weaknesses. There was certainly a great atmosphere at the prize-giving – despite the weather.

### 2025 – a year like no other

Organising races is a great way of wishing your life away and we are constantly looking at least six months ahead or more; so, while all the above were taking place, the RORC Race Team was already planning for 2025.

This will be no ordinary busy year for us: in addition to the usual domestic and international racing programme and the Rolex Fastnet Race, 2025 also sees the return of the Admiral's Cup. The announcement of this has certainly attracted amazing interest from around the world and injected real enthusiasm into sailing communities far and wide. We are expecting a strong turn-out of teams to be in Cowes next summer, all competing for the iconic trophy last awarded over 20 years ago.

2025 is also the Club's 100th birthday and there are several events planned around the world to celebrate that milestone. In addition to the normal race programme, in September we will run the Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race with, unusually for us, staggered class starts, aimed at ensuring competitors can finish at roughly the same time in order to celebrate en masse in the Cowes Clubhouse.

*"My team and I are reliant upon a fantastic volunteer base, located in various places around the world."*





*Opposite: RORC and JOG fleets combined for the Lewmar Cherbourg Race.  
Below: The new James Bond - revealed!  
Bottom: John Smart's J/109 Jukebox during the Easter Challenge. Photos: RORC/Paul  
Wyeth/pwpictures.com*

### **My Race Team**

Here I should mention that I clearly don't work alone; all the work in 2024 and the planning for our busy 2025 season would never have happened without my crack team which includes Chris Jackson, Kristen Lloyd and, new this year, Clare Dudley. After several years based solely in The Disrespect on the High Street, we are now firmly ensconced in the newly refurbished RORC Cowes Clubhouse. Do come along and see us!

My team and I are reliant upon a fantastic volunteer base, located in various places around the world, who work closely with the RORC Race Team to bring the races to fruition: We thank them all for their time and dedication.

2025 is a season full of great potential. Competitors will be busy getting their qualification miles under their belts for the Rolex Fastnet Race, preparing their boats for the Admiral's Cup or training for the Offshore Double Handed Worlds in September. Whatever your aims and ambitions for 2025, we wish you a great season and are happy to help with any questions you may have.



# 2024 RACE REVIEWS







# RORC TRANSATLANTIC RACE

8 January 2023

by Christopher Sheehan, *Warrior Won*

The 10th edition of the RORC Transatlantic Race turned out to be a dream come true for me and my team when *Warrior Won* finished first overall under IRC in an elapsed time of 11 days 5 hours 18 minutes 29 seconds, becoming the first American-flagged yacht to take home the prestigious RORC Transatlantic Trophy.

The race represented the completion of a concerted effort and a meticulously planned and executed five-year offshore racing campaign.

Our international crew assembled in Lanzarote on 1 January; most of the team were from the US, plus Antigua, Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Canada and Britain. We trained for four days and performed last minute repairs and modifications to the yacht, before provisioning her with enough freeze-dried food for 11 crew, three meals a day, for 14 days (462 meals). Other than freeze-dried meals, we would live off coffee, tea, energy bars and desalinated water.

The RORC Transatlantic Race goes from Lanzarote to Grenada. There is an offset mark early on, Tenerife must be kept to port and there is a final mark approaching the finish.

Four days from the scheduled 7 January start, the forecast to the WNW of the Canaries was horrendous: An enormous 500-mile depression, very unusual for this time of year, had formed 750 miles west of Tenerife and was moving east very slowly, bringing

45-55 knot winds and 20-25ft seas from the west, which the fleet would encounter four to six days into the race when 1,000 miles from land. As a result, the race committee amended the Sailing Instructions, removing the requirement to leave Tenerife to port.

This change meant we would instead be diving some 1,000 miles south along the African coast before heading west to the Cape Verdes and on to Grenada.

The day of the start was spectacular, with 6-10 knots, blue sky, flat water and great visibility at the starting line off Arrecife. We started uneventfully, alongside the 14 other competitors from IRC Super Zero to One.

Typically, I would challenge my crew to remain focused on winning our class instead of trying to beat IRC Super Zero, but for this - our final race together on this boat - I made it clear to the team that I firmly believed we had a strong chance of winning overall. Given the forecast and assuming we stayed in solid pressure, we would be sailing downwind for the entire 3,000 miles!

Right from the start we were VMG running under an A1.5 light spinnaker in 6-8 knots. Once we rounded the offset mark 10 miles along the Lanzarote coast, we peeled briefly to a Code Zero to head 15° higher and in a more southerly direction. We switched back to an A1.5, added a few staysails and settled

into a reach as the breeze continued to back and held steady at 8-10 knots, the sea flat. We held this course under the same sails for the next 1,000 miles to the Cape Verdes.

We soon settled into our four hours on-four hours off watch system, allowing our one bowman and navigator to float.

Our extreme southerly route not only avoided the large depression, but an enormous 1,000-mile long windless ridge, just below it. All our competitors took a similar route apart from two which went northwest; one of them, a JPK 1180 *Cocody*, not only survived the gale, but ended up finishing second overall behind us. It was 3.5 days before we could gybe west, sailing through the Cape Verdes at night.

We were now second on the water 300-400 miles behind *Leopard 3*, the other boats in our class a considerable distance behind us, all heading towards the trade wind 'super highway'. The windless ridge was a constant concern, with both our tactician and navigator/strategist carefully monitoring the GRIB files to judge the optimum distance we should sail south to reach the 'highway'.

On day six we were safely into the trade winds. They are an incredible phenomenon: They just 'turn on' and then it is as if the largest imaginable fan is blowing you across the Atlantic. For the next five days we had 16-18 knots from the northeast and so we





peeled to an A2, sailing for four days straight, predominantly on starboard gybe.

It wasn't all plain sailing. During this 1,500-mile leg we had to gybe every eight to 12 hours to keep south, away from the ridge. Meanwhile sargassum seaweed management became an enormous issue. Every 20-40 minutes, for three or four days, we would encounter a massive patch, an acre across and miles long. We have a weed cutter on the keel, but not on the rudder, and so, with weed hung-up on the keel, sail-drive and rudder, we had to perform backdowns to shake it loose or 'floss' the yacht - heaving a thick 50ft-long piece of nylon rope under the bow knuckle, with a large knot on the end, allowing the pressure of the moving yacht to press the rope against the hull, scraping away the seaweed in the process. It was exhausting and frustrating for the three crew who performed the task every 45 minutes for days on end, but if we hadn't we would have incurred damage, losing us considerable speed and time.

With 500 miles to go we were feeling very good about our performance and position relative to competitors but, being not far from the equator and with barely any cloud cover, the heat was insufferable. *Warrior Won* has no windows or hatches to open to allow air to circulate below. With the temperature around 30°C every day (and hotter below deck), we could not sleep during the day and barely more at night, impacting hydration and our ability to rest sufficiently off-watch. However, the sailing conditions were manageable: 16-18 knots with a following sea of 4-6ft. At times driving was difficult when there were converging and confused seas caused by currents or whipped up by the remnants of frontal systems, but not exhausting or dangerous.



As we entered the last 300 miles of the race, with one day to go, the wind built significantly and we made only our third sail change of the race, to an A4. The wind hovered at 22-26 knots and the seas built to 6-8ft. We were making 19-23 knots of boat speed that last day, with lots of warm sea water crashing over the foredeck, filling the cockpit - welcome after the moderate, dry, hot conditions during the prior ten days! We knew we had a strong chance at IRC Overall and the crew was highly motivated: None of us had ever taken part in this east to west Transatlantic Race and we all wanted our first shot at it to be a major victory. It meant a great deal to all of us, even the seasoned professionals.

On 18 January, 60-70 miles out, from under a dark storm cloud, at sunrise on our 11th day at sea, we suddenly saw the peaks of Grenada. Everyone came on deck, eager to

enjoy every second of the last eight hours of racing. We were flying down waves, hitting 24-25 knots and it was a thrilling moment for me, especially knowing this was going to be my last race on this *Warrior Won* and my last ocean race for some time. Ten miles from Port St George, we rounded a mark and a headland which had us sailing upwind with a jib to the finish.

Our shore team greeted us at the dock alongside my wife and young son who had left New York at 4am to be in Grenada to surprise myself and the team. I could not have dreamed of a greater ending to this amazing, gruelling race than to have family there to celebrate and cherish this great moment with us. To win IRC Overall, in exceptional form, on the 10th anniversary of what has become one of the world's iconic ocean races, made for one hell of a good feeling.



# RORC EASTER CHALLENGE

29-31 March 2024

by Ed Mockridge, *Elaine*

Despite the way it wanders around the calendar, Easter is a real milestone moment for sportsmen, traditionally marking, as it does, the end of the winter hibernation of summer sports. For sailors this is especially true and we were looking forward to slightly kinder weather than we'd endured for the early season JOG races, where mutiny had only just been averted.

I had been hoping for lighter conditions so we could try out a brand new J1 but, on motoring out of the Hamble on the first day of the Easter Challenge, it was clear we were going to be disappointed. With over 20 knots of biting breeze, woolly hats and gloves were much in evidence and the J4 was the jib of choice. The goals for the day were clearly going to be to keep things simple while avoiding major disasters.

Initially things went pretty much to plan with a decent, if not spectacular, start and solid beat. We followed that up by keeping the mast pointing at the sky and the spinnaker pole intact on the downwind legs (mentioning no names...*Elysium*), which meant we had a small lead into the final mark from *Jukebox*,

our perennial rival. However, a decision not to cover them on the final beat and minimise tacks in the building chop proved costly; *Jukebox* benefited from a left shift to pass us and take the win, with *Whooper* finishing between us on corrected to take second, leaving us third. While it was a good result we were still annoyed to have let a lead slip. RORC sensibly decided that one race in that breeze and temperature was enough for the first day and we were sent ashore to thaw out.

The next day was like a different season: bright sunshine, light breeze, not a woolly hat in sight and, happily, an opportunity to hoist the new J1. Now we put into action the advice given to us by Ian Walker who had, as part of RORC's coaching service for this regatta, visited us the day before. Despite claiming "but I'm not a trimmer, so what do I know?" we trusted his words of wisdom about sail trim and used his set-up as a starting point, going on to score 2,1,1 on a light wind day, not normally a strength of ours! This consistent scoreline meant we took the lead in the class.

Light winds often seem to give the race committee too much time to dream up

imaginative things to do. This day was no exception with the fleet in one race sent off downwind at the start. We weren't a fan of this and unfortunately made something of a mess of it.

The third, and final, day saw a drop in the temperature and the return of the breeze and the woolly hats. The race committee laid on two windward-leewards and a round the cans race, which suited us pretty well, stringing together a 2,3,3...but suited our classic rival *Whooper* even better. They cruised round to a perfect 1,1,1, all the while making it look completely effortless. Nevertheless, quite remarkably, we still won the regatta, principally due to our consistent light wind performance on day two, beating a number of extremely well sailed boats in the process. Thank you, Ian!

All in all, it was a great start to the season, one that gave us enormous confidence in both our speed and boat handling in the early part of the season. With the IRC National Championship earlier in the season than usual, we definitely felt that braving the cold stood us in good stead.







The Cervantes Trophy was the first offshore of 2024 for the crew of the Sun Fast 3600 *Black Sheep*.

The team has been racing together for a few seasons and had started hitting real form again midway through the 2023 season. Regrouped for 2024, we had utilised the RORC Easter Challenge to dust off a few sizeable cobwebs but, regardless, there is always a bit of apprehension to see where you are against your competition after a long break, especially in the highly competitive IRC Two.

The downwind start off the RYS line went smoothly and there were many gybes and tight crosses with the other competitors out of the Solent. The breeze was fairly light, but building slightly. We rounded the Needles closely pursued by our longtime rivals and good friends on *Bellino*, another Sun Fast 3600. It was here the fleet split for the first time, the majority peeling to Code Zeros and heading southeast along the island coastline, while the remainder of the fleet - including ourselves -

pressed on with our kites and a more southerly course. We would likely suffer against the lighter boats in our class now, but the decision had been made in the knowledge that the tide would switch east and, on initial routing, would carry to the finish, meaning hotter angles and more apparent, which should leave us with an advantage later on...

It was then that a shutdown occurred in the south. This was first spotted as the IRC Zero boats ahead stopped. It was a strange shutdown as it wasn't obviously clear on the water, however there was a very distinct cut-off line with better pressure further north. We lost places but never stopped, the crew doing a sublime job at drawing the yacht ever forward.

Given our slower speed due to the shutdown, we now had to make a decision about how to adapt our original strategy given the tide would clearly turn west again before we reached Le Havre. So *Black Sheep* was routed aggressively westward, utilising the tide for apparent and crossing the fleet (that had

initially been further east) so that we could be positioned, not just to experience less foul tide at the finish, but also run hotter angles on the wind and sail in better pressure as the predicted breeze filled in from the east. This, coupled with an early peel from the Code Zero back to the kite in the early hours of the morning ahead of the competition, led to *Black Sheep* romping home best on corrected time - our first IRC Overall race win!

It is worth noting that, while this race is certainly not won on boat speed alone, without it at that crucial stage of the shutdown, the strategies deployed would not have worked. Our success was a clear example of all on board doing their job, which led to everything coming together.

The *Black Sheep* team has been racing with some success over a number of seasons and our focus is always on doing well in class - after all, it's what you have most control over. That said, after this early win, all on board were elated and motivated for the season to come.

## CERVANTES TROPHY RACE

20 April 2024

by Jake Carter, *Black Sheep*

## MYTH OF MALHAM RACE

4 May 2024

by Deb Fish, *Bellino*

At 235 miles long, with numerous tidal gates, the Myth of Malham is one of the more challenging races in the RORC programme.

So it was that two hours into the race, Rob Craigie and I on our Sun Fast 3600 *Bellino*, found ourselves becalmed in the Needles Channel. We weren't alone. To our north, several boats were aground on the Shingles Bank, while a pan-pan call was in progress on the radio, a Yarmouth lifeboat on its way. Yet another yacht was swept onto the Shingles cardinal, their misfortune compounded by catching a spinnaker sheet on the buoy.

South of us there was an elusive narrow lane of breeze close to the Isle of Wight. We pointed *Bellino* towards it and crept through the water at a snail's pace, slowly building speed until we were able to tack and head west at 7 knots.

We'd been lucky – after the start the fleet had enjoyed a pleasant run down the Solent in a light easterly before converging at Hurst Narrows. Faced with a pack of boats, we had gybed south early, sacrificing the stronger tide along the edge of the Bank for clear air. Just minutes later the wind had shut off and those up-tide of the bank found themselves in trouble.

Now, having escaped the Solent, the wind soon freed and we enjoyed a pleasant spinnaker run, arriving at Portland Bill as the tide turned foul. After the Bill we took advantage of a wind shift to gybe north, expecting the wind to veer late in the leg to the Eddystone, which worked well. The wind built to almost 20 knots and we rounded the Eddystone in the small hours of Sunday morning. Our spinnaker drop wasn't our finest, but we set off on the one-sided beat back with a healthy lead over most of our class.

The wind dropped as we made our way east, but we made good speed under our Code Zero. However, behind us, *Mzungu!* had overhauled the fleet and was getting closer. Rob and I had flashbacks to the Sevenstar Round Britain and Ireland Race where we'd match raced the two Sams on the JPK 1080 for 1,800 miles, finishing just minutes apart.

With *Mzungu!* still in the rearview mirror, we approached Portland Bill on a decreasing foul tide, watching *Scarlet Oyster* ahead of us as they delivered a lesson in how to negotiate the Bill. We finally crossed the finish line at North Head shortly before sunset. A few hours later the wind died, leaving many boats becalmed and facing a frustrating night at sea.

After a long and tricky race, Rob and I were delighted to find that we had secured our first IRC Overall RORC race win.





For those of us over a certain age, *Sunstone* needs little introduction...but for anyone younger, she is a 1965 40ft Sparkman & Stephens one-off with varnished topsides, campaigned with ruthless efficiency in the 1980s and 90s before undertaking an epic 200,000-mile cruise to the Pacific and beyond. Now back on the UK's East Coast, we have returned her to race trim and sail primarily with friends and family.

The North Sea Race is typically the first longer offshore event of the season, particularly for East Coast-based boats. With the race scheduled a little earlier than normal, plus the ongoing maintenance associated with a classic yacht, it was always likely to be *Sunstone's* first big outing of the season. With final bottom finishing, weather briefing and race prep complete, we made an early departure for the start line.

The crew were a little disappointed to learn that the course was to be shortened, avoiding the leg out to Galloper/Sunk, instead sending the fleet on what looked like it might become a drag race up to Smith's Knoll and then east to MN4. However, with very little breeze expected initially, it was a sensible decision and, as ever, the weather was to throw some other curve balls our way.

The fleet started in a light northeasterly and, with the last of the flood still running, the pin end of the line was favourable and busy. We maintained clear air and enjoyed the initial leg, short tacking our way up the Cork Sand shallows, against the foul tide.

Despite the forecast, with the breeze staying light and shifty, the fleet quickly spread out. By mid-afternoon the breeze began to settle, before increasing and veering, suiting those who had not got too far offshore. Quickly a dense sea fog also rolled in and we found ourselves alone and sailing fast in almost zero visibility as darkness fell.

With the fleet converging on Smith's Knoll, a continuous AIS watch was required, while those on deck did their best to trim in challenging conditions - water literally pouring off the sails from the fog!



It was a boost to round Smith's Knoll soon after midnight, with several faster yachts apparently very close by on AIS...not that we could actually see them though.

What started as a reasonably easy leg across to MN4 meant breakfast on the rail, while some much-needed sunshine enabled a spot of drying out. The fog had blown through, but progress slowed slightly as the breeze eased off and we struggled to lay into the mark, very conscious that competition was not far behind.

As in previous years, the tactics around the Kust Zuid wind farm were going to be critical. For us, going south looked favourable and, after the long windward legs with limited sail changes, the crew enjoyed easing the sheets and making brief use of the S4 and staysail,

before quickly peeling onto the A3. However, we were very aware that all the indications were for the breeze to die off again.

Following the fetch up to NAM22, albeit in unstable and failing breeze, we had hoped that being able to run off square into the foul tide would suit us compared to those with only asymmetrics, who would be forced to sail additional distance around us. However, we quickly found ourselves in less pressure, with yachts catching fast from astern on both sides.

With the clock ticking and more holes opening, a big last push from our awesome crew, combined with some great wind spotting, got us across the line, winning us IRC Four and some deserved refreshment and pizza at the Jachtclub Scheveningen.

## NORTH SEA RACE

10 May 2024

by Will and Jenny Taylor-Jones, *Sunstone*

# DE GUINGAND BOWL RACE

18 May 2024

by Will Morris and Freddie Parton, *Bulldog*

**How to whip up a win in the De Guingand Bowl (according to *Bulldog* at least!)**

**Ingredients** (well, what we had):

1. A J/122 (with an IRC rating of 1.083)
2. A range of sails, for all wind angles
3. A young, energetic crew
4. An owner too busy watching Taylor Swift in Sweden
5. An anchor
6. Our skipper, James
7. Enough sandwiches from Nan and plenty of Huel

## **Method**

**Step 1:** Before the start. As you wait for your bowman to arrive on the Red Jet an hour after boat call, have your crew rig the boat, get the mainsail on, load the boat with sails, food and water. Dock out. Go follow your pre-start procedure, ping the line and warm up by

getting some tacks in and giving your Code Zero some air-time.

**Step 2:** Start the race cleanly and drift out of the Solent on a west-bound tide, keeping your competitors close in light and shifty winds. Ensure that you comment on the slightest gains and losses on your competitors. Watch the wind build in the western Solent towards Hurst Castle, get your full foulies on and prepare for 8 knots.

**Step 3:** Enjoy the sunshine and beat your way effortlessly up to East Shambles buoy with the J2, calculating your speed with the beacons on the shore at Anvil Point. Take care to avoid the big storm cell over the Purbeck Hills that may kill the breeze and ruin your kite run. Take pictures of the sunset to send to Derek who is busy 'shaking it off!' Use the anchor to stop drifting backwards in the tide when there is no wind (trying not to get it stuck on the seabed).

**Step 4:** Patiently wait for the race committee to shorten the course, so you don't have to go back to Peveril Ledge again...and when you realise that they won't, drive it like you stole it with the A2 up to get down there in 14 knots at 120° true.

**Step 5:** Get the layline right to go back to North Head - the finish. Make your declaration, realise you are at the top of the leaderboard, then keep updating the results for those boats behind you. Get a paper and pencil, start calculating the time that *Cora* needs to finish by, then sit and wait patiently.

Et voila! With the weather on your side and not too many sail changes, the De Guingand Bowl can also be yours!

A big thank you to Derek for trusting us with *Bulldog* for the weekend. Despite not being there, we still couldn't have done it without him!







The 2024 IRC Double Handed National series comprised two races, the De Guingand Bowl and Morgan Cup. My father and I have been competing on our Sun Fast 3300 *Orbit* for the past two years.

The weather for the De Guingand Bowl was looking very light and unpredictable. Our start was promising, being one of the first across the line. As the wind dropped on the mainland shore, we headed to the island side where boats seemed to be doing well. But the grass isn't always greener - as we got there, the wind filled back in to the south. We had a slow drift towards Hurst Castle, but eventually the wind picked up to 9 knots for our fetch to North Head buoy, then a tough upwind into Poole.

We made some good tactical calls by sailing the shifts while rounding the buoy off Poole and were third in our class, just two boat lengths behind *GameOn*. However, as we sailed past Old Harry Rocks, we chose to cut the corner and consequently got stuck in a wind shadow whereas *GameOn* managed to

play the pressure. They sailed off while the class caught up with us, quite a few overtaking us. We passed Swanage and contemplated the dying wind and building tide ahead of us.

Most of the boats headed offshore but we chose to tuck in out of the tide - one of our better calls. We tacked up the shore in good wind with *Insert Coin* and a *J/99*, *Yalla!*, just ahead. We managed to sneak past *Insert Coin* and were neck and neck with the *J/99*. Then a large storm cell came in, sucking up the wind and bringing rain. We slowly drifted round the Shambles, fourth in our class, still with all to play for. Dad then made a great call to tuck out of the tide, again passing Anvil Point, which meant we sailed round *Cora*, *Diablo* and *Mojo Risin*. We did a good peel to the fractional zero and led our fleet towards North Head. Nevertheless, as we struggled to get *Orbit* going, a few boats slipped past us.

We were still fourth on rounding North Head, ready for the downwind leg to Swanage, the wind building to 18 knots and enjoying a lovely

sunrise. We rounded the Swanage buoy just behind *Diablo* and a few others, all of matching rating - true IRC racing. Finally, it was a sprint finish to North Head. We had good speed, but *Bellino* just pipped us to the finish.

The second race was the Morgan Cup to beautiful Dartmouth. Our Solent exit was great, fighting at the front of the doublehanders, with *Bellino* ahead, but *GameOn* and *Zephyr* next to us. The beat to Peveril Ledge was quite simple in 20 knots. We were a little off the pace, but we stayed close and rounded just behind our 3300 competitors. The downwind was more suited to the symmetrical boats, but we pushed hard and held position well, rounding just behind *Zephyr*, *GameOn* and *Insert Coin*.

After the Needles Fairway we had to go to a virtual gate, about 50 miles into the middle of the Channel. The wind dropped to 12-15 knots going past Swanage. We short tacked up the coast (around 90 tacks!) but made some good gains. We did our first jib peel, then tacked off on the layline for the virtual mark.

Once we reached the mark, we held on for about five miles, then tacked a little earlier than the others. By the time we reached land there had been a bit of a left shift that we missed compared to the boats to windward, however we committed right inshore out of the tide, in search of a lift up the shore as we approached Dartmouth. Another jib peel to our *J1* gave us the extra pace we needed in the light wind, slowly passing *Zephyr* with about a mile to go, finishing at around 09:00 - a result with which we were happy.

The combined results gave us a third place overall in the series - congratulations to *Bellino* and *Cora* who finished on equal points.



## IRC DOUBLE HANDED NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

18 May/7 June 2024

by Zeb Fellows, *Orbit*

# IRC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

25-27 May 2024

by James Boyd

For the first time, the UK IRC National Championship was held as part of International Paint Poole Regatta. This was to attract a fresh group of yachts to compete under IRC. The 48 competitors were divided into five classes; while many were representing local Poole clubs, others had sailed down from the Solent or up from the West Country. Overseas yachts included Karl Kwok's 52ft *Beau Geste* from Hong Kong and the Goubau family's First 47.7 *Moana* from Belgium.

The weather across the three days worked well, starting light before a southwesterly built on day two to 24 knots, gusting 30, followed by 20 knots on the Sunday.

In IRC Zero, *Beau Geste* made the strongest start, scoring three bullets on the opening day, but from there on it went fully the way of Niklas Zennström's *Rán*, whose Carkeek 41 won the remaining five races and the class.

IRC One was dominated by six Cape 31s, again showing their potency under IRC. Ultimately

three claimed places on the podium: Julian Metherell's *Bullit*, with multiple Match Racing World Champion Ian Williams calling tactics, led early on, winning three out of the first four races which helped them secure the class win. They were followed by Nick Phillips' *Chaotic* claiming second on countback from Ben Pritchard's *Akheilios*. Flying the flag for the non-Capes, *Moana* won the final race to finish fourth.

In IRC Two there were more changes of fortunes as conditions built. James Chalmers' J/112e *Happy Daize* held the slenderest of leads after day one, when two races were scored dead heats. Adam Gosling's JPK 1080 *Yes!* found her stride thereafter, claiming the final four races to win from *Happy Daize*, which had podiomed in all but one race, despite winning none. Charles and Rosie Berry's J/109 *Jenie* was third. Other race winners were Mathew Chubb's First 35 *First Light* and John Smart's J/109 *Jukebox*.

IRC Three saw James Crew and Peter Rutter's Half Tonner *Quokka* post a perfect

scoreline on the opening day. Ian Braham's MG 346 *Haven KJ Enigma* had it all on, having to repair a torn mainsail overnight on Saturday, but the setback clearly galvanised the Parkstone YC team, overhauling *Quokka* to win the class. Sam and Sophie Pearson's Dehler 33 *Ruthless* completed the podium.

The most resounding victory was in IRC Four where Team Hamble, led by Ian Southworth on the Quarter Tonner *Protis*, scored a near perfect scoreline, while Saturday's breezy final race went to another Hamble River Sailing Club team in Rob Macgregor's Mustang 30 *Dark Horse*. Ultimately *Protis* won by a massive 13 points from Andrew Rushworth's Limbo 6.6 *Marmite* and Annie and Nick Haigh's RF290 *Fire Fox*.

The event concluded with the prize-giving at Parkstone Yacht Club, where Adam Gosling and his crew on *Yes!* were announced 2024 UK IRC National Champions. Regatta President Andrew Pearce presented the Canford Cup, (the oldest trophy in sailing, dating back to 1849) to Team Hamble.







Starting in sunshine, an ebbing tide and blustery conditions, the Morgan Cup again consisted of a predominantly upwind race to the popular destination of Dartmouth. However, adding variety and keeping the fleet out of the Needles overfalls, the RORC Race Team chose to send us out of the North Channel and up to Peveril Ledge, before a run to Bridge Buoy and then a left-sided beat with a line of latitude south of Portland.

For *Fujitsu British Soldier* (FBS) there was also the added incentive of the Inter-Service Championship and a chance to beat the Royal Navy to their home waters. With great conditions, a competitive fleet and a fantastic destination – it was a surefire recipe for success!

Aiming for the island shore, our start left us a bit to do against the hard-charging *Bellino* at the front of IRC Two. Adopting the French maxim that 'big sails win big races' we had elected to carry our no.2 at the top of its range. *Bellino* was better balanced, picked their shifts superbly and led the way to Hurst, where we rounded as a tightly knit pack: *Bellino*, *Elysium*, *Black Sheep* and *FBS*. The Sun Fast 3600s are often separated by mere

seconds on early legs and never by more than minutes at the finish. We had to work hard to deny *Black Sheep* an overlap at North Head as we rounded and settled into the drag race to Swanage.

In Christchurch Bay, the breeze fortunately moderated. Our no.2 and half tonne of happy ballast on the rail came good. We put the hammer down for a barnstormer of a leg to Peveril Ledge and a glorious 10-14 knot run back downwind. Here, we made gains on *Scarlet Oyster* who had hoisted late and came charging back at the fleet on starboard with an asymmetric kite. Rounding on their transom in the edge of the Needles swell, we again settled in for a long haul upwind, anticipating another nip-and-tuck battle with Ross Applebey and his team.

By the time we were approaching Swanage for the second time we were in adverse tide and a 'rich get richer' situation. Still clinging to *Scarlet Oyster* ahead, our navigator did his best to terrify us as we picked our way up the shore, inside the 10m contour. Short tacking at the front of the pack with several (by now slightly sweaty and borderline mutinous)

crew was bad enough; I remain in awe of the doublehanders behind us.

From St Albans the main decision was when to leave the tidal relief of Weymouth Bay for the line of latitude. Splitting the difference between *Scarlet Oyster* to our front and smart money like *Cora* to our rear and anticipating a right hand shift, we judged it about right. After a fast mode to the gate, tack to starboard and a night spent on port in dying breeze, sunrise saw the crew holding its breath. Out the front and in the hunt, we split tacks with *Scarlet Oyster*, seeking breeze on the mainland shore.

Sadly, the little 'rightie' we needed to steal the Cup from Ross' team at the death never materialised, but credit to *Scarlet Oyster* for an immaculate race. Handshakes on the dock, a decent brunch and an afternoon of pink wine in the Royal Dart Yacht Club did much to turn second overall from a narrow defeat into a result with which we were quite pleased – and that was before the Salcombe Gin bottle awarded to us at the prize-giving! Thanks to the Royal Dart for the hospitality and to the RORC Race Team for another cracking weekend. We'll go one better next year...

## MORGAN CUP RACE

7 June 2024

by Major Henry Foster, *Fujitsu British Soldier*

Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/[rick-tomlinson.com](http://rick-tomlinson.com)

# SEE RENEWABLES ROUND IRELAND YACHT RACE

22 June 2023

Eric de Turckheim, *Teasing Machine*



Ireland is always a delight to visit. Whenever we have gone to race Round Ireland or Cork Week, we have been greeted with such warm hospitality. The family who ran the B&B we stayed at in 2016 has now been following our team for years, while the clubs in Dublin, Cork and Wicklow have always been very friendly in their reception to our team from France.

We last competed in the Round Ireland, a 705-mile clockwise lap of the 'Emerald Isle', in 2016 with our previous 43ft *Teasing Machine*. That year we won our class and ended up second overall behind *Rambler 88*. We were entered again in 2022 with the present 54ft *Teasing Machine*, but delays in shipping back from the Caribbean meant we were unable to make the start on time. Therefore, remembering the good times we had had in Ireland and what a great race the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race is, we were very keen to come back for another go in 2024.

With our regular crew of 11 on board, we set off with crowds lining the shore and the piers protecting Wicklow Harbour. Starting in 15-20 knots from the SSW we ended up leading the 41-strong fleet around Wicklow Head before continuing past the Arklow Bank wind farm. We rounded Tuskar Rock, the first mark of the course, at 20:00.

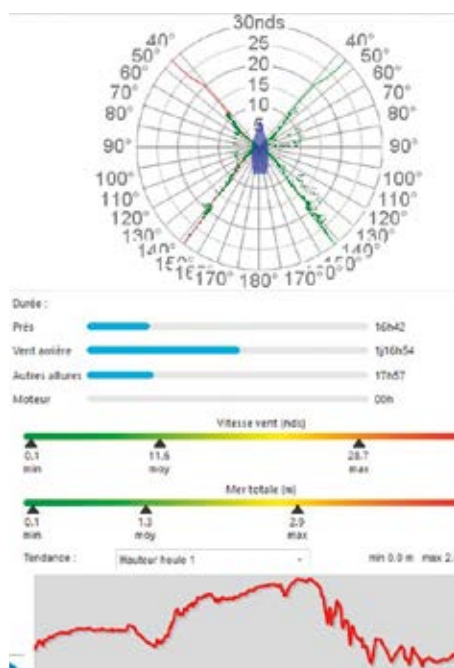
For 24 hours, the first leg around the southeast and southern sides of Ireland towards the Fastnet Rock initially provided us with a long beat, the wind following the right-hand bend of the coast. Conditions were superb under a clear sky and beautiful sunshine. Making 8-10 knots in around 15-20 knots of wind, we were pleased with the work we have done in recent years to improve *Teasing Machine's* upwind performance.

During the day we attempted to hug the coast where there was better pressure, taking care to play the current while avoiding navigational hazards such as the numerous sandbanks. This balancing act – being smart with the current, while keeping adequate water under our keel – was a crucial, but necessary, tactic for this early stage of the race. We were not always very comfortable, but we did remain safe. On board we had well known professional navigator Jean-Luc Nelias, who is very familiar with this complex





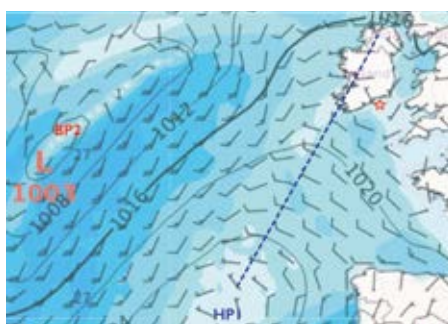
Opposite above: Leaving the Fastnet Rock to starboard.  
 Opposite below: Fine evening for the delivery back to Dún Laoghaire.  
 Below: Navigation, wind analysis and stats, plus routing and weather info from this year's race.  
 Bottom: Teasing Machine's Eric de Turckheim (left) with Round Ireland Race Director Kyran O'Grady of Wicklow Sailing Club.  
 Photo: David Branigan/Oceansport



coastline and did a good job in balancing this risk versus reward. Sadly, others were less fortunate and early on we lost our main competition when James Neville's *Ino Noir* ran on to the Blackwater Bank off Wexford and was stranded. We were sorry – James and his team are strong competitors and their retirement left us the lone monohull at the front of the fleet.

Once off Wexford the wind freed up, but between Kinsale and Baltimore our progress slowed, due to both wind and foul tide, forcing us to hug the coast even more. Ultimately, to round the Fastnet Rock required us to head offshore into lighter winds. Unlike the Rolex Fastnet Race, where we round the Rock leaving it port and most often at night, on this occasion we rounded it very closely to starboard in the mid-afternoon daylight. This provided us with a great view of the Rock and its famous lighthouse. Rock successfully rounded, for the next 50 miles we were in the light winds of a transition zone with the wind backing from southwest into the southeast and building to 25-30 knots. This solid breeze was squally at times, but largely held and made for a fast passage north out into the Atlantic in a short, wind-driven 1.5-2.5m sea and under cloudy skies.

By this point of the race, our only competition on the water was the 63ft trimaran *Paradox*, a cruising version of the ORMA 60s we once used to race in France. While we'd rounded the Fastnet Rock together, once heading downwind in the Irish Sea they took off. Still, our speeds on *Teasing Machine* were most



respectable and for 10 hours we managed to average 19.6 knots – great fun, the boat behaving wildly, but still handling easily and with the crew in full control.

Passing Donegal, we hardened up to round the top of Ireland. On this occasion we were pleased that the fine conditions permitted us to see the coast clearly, compared to the poor visibility and freezing cold the last time we had passed this spot.

However, the wind was dying and by 01:00 had disappeared completely against a building ebb tide. This coincided, unfortunately, with

us attempting to pass through the North Channel between Northern Ireland and Scotland. Halfway through, we were forced to kedge beneath the Rathlin East lighthouse. Here the seabed shelves sharply, so to kedge in adequately shallow water (10-15m) required us to moor within two boat lengths of a sheer cliff, something we'd certainly not contemplate in any wind! Even in no wind the anchorage was most uncomfortable as, being so close to the cliffs and, thanks to the strong tide, we had to monitor our position with extreme care. It was an hour and a half before we could get underway again, although at the time it seemed much longer.

From here it was back on the wind for the final section of the course, south down the Irish Sea in a chilly 8-12 knots.

We returned to Wicklow behind *Paradox*, but were comfortably first monohull on the water, with the next monohull, the *Ker 46 Searcher*, still negotiating the North Channel at this point.

Our elapsed time of 3 days 6 hours 11 minutes 23 seconds ultimately proved enough to win the SSE Renewables Round Ireland Yacht Race overall under IRC corrected time. Once again, we received a magnificent reception by the officers and volunteers at Wicklow Sailing Club. This is such a superb race and with its challenging course, combined with the warmth, good atmosphere and spirit of our Irish hosts, *Teasing Machine* will certainly be back in the future.



# LA TRINITÉ-CHERBOURG RACE

30 June 2024

by Ross Applebey, *Scarlet Oyster*

The La Trinité to Cowes often draws in a very strong contingent of French yachts, many going on to compete in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo. This year, however, the race finished in Cherbourg to facilitate participation in the Drheam Cup.

A quick analysis of past results showed that the French yachts had consistently outscored the British boats since it was included in the RORC programme. No British yacht had yet won a class or broken into the top third of the fleet... perhaps we could try and change this!

Logistically, getting to the start line was tricky for some of our regular crew, so we were a little short staffed with just five onboard, but, with half the fleet racing doublehanded, we were not particularly disadvantaged by this.

Despite numbering just 20 entries, we enjoyed the French hospitality, including the cocktail party held a few hours before the start!

The reaching start was quite exciting, with most of the fleet on or near the line and two OCS. After clearing the Quiberon Bay, we were faced with a comfortable beat towards the Raz de Sein. As the current had just turned and was with us as

we approached this divisive tide gate, the whole fleet passed without impediment. Like the bulk of the fleet, we elected to push further west after the Raz, anticipating the new breeze filling in from that side. Unfortunately we only found a hole in the wind for a couple of hours. Better placed were *Red Ruby* and *Kestral*, which had gone straight north, inside Ushant.

Still, we were hoping that the wind would hold in its westerly direction long enough to lay the Wolf Rock, but it didn't and we lost touch with the faster boats.

We had a nice reach along the UK's south coast while debating whether to leave the upcoming Casquets TSS to port or starboard. It was clear that the southern route, while a shorter distance, would leave us running into a strong adverse tide and likely result in the slower boats behind compressing into us. From prior experience in similar conditions during the 2021 Rolex Fastnet Race, we recalled the sloppy sea, which made VMG running in 12 knots of wind rather slow going. The route around the TSS put us nicely on the right side of a big left shift and promised better angles, flatter water and a touch more wind. This northern option had a

greater probability of a class win...though with an increased risk of us ending up last if it didn't pay! Risks weighed, we elected to split from the fleet and stay north.

They say 'it's better to be lucky than good' and, with the left shift coinciding with us arriving at the northeast corner of the TSS, we enjoyed the rewards of our decision with a nice comfortable spinnaker reach to the finish line, sailing across the ebbing tide, while those further south had a trickier time stemming the strong tide.

The JPK 1180 *Fastwave* had sailed a great race and held her time on us, but we were delighted to be the best of the rest, gaining a useful win in IRC Two as well.

A fun prize-giving was held in the Yacht Club de Cherbourg and we departed straight afterwards to be back in the UK in good time for the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo, with a night spare to see my wife Sarah, who was holding the fort at home with the kids.

In all, it was a great, fun race with strong competition! Many thanks to the Société Nautique de la Trinité-sur-Mer for making us feel so welcome, and to our devoted crew.







After a pretty rough Round Ireland, *Phosphorus II* decided not to participate in the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo and, with heaps to do at work, I didn't think anything of it. Then, on 1 July I got a message from George Kennedy asking if I wanted to do the race onboard Tom Kneen's JPK 1180 *Sunrise III* instead.

The start was at 11:30 on Friday 5 July and the forecast looked like it would be a breezy, quick race - Issy Drewitt's weather briefing predicted it would be a 19-20 hour race. Arriving at Hamble Yacht Services (HYS) at 09:00 the team set about loading up the boat. As a crew we had never sailed together before and a few people, like myself, were totally new to the boat. However, we did all know each other and I was excited to go sailing with a new, talented young crew.

At 10:30 we left HYS on a timed run for the start line. It was already pretty breezy, even in the river. Everyone went into full offshore mode as, once we started and were fully

into race mode, there wouldn't be any going downstairs for a few hours.

Our set-up for the start was J4 and one reef in the main. We had a punchy beat out of the Solent and passing the Needles, the wind was blowing well above 20 knots and the sea state was pretty wild. Tacking up the Solent in big breeze was actually really fun: the boat felt powered up and we were on the rail chatting and enjoying ourselves, despite the odd wave to the face. Once we were able to bear away the wind had dropped slightly so Angus Gray-Stephens and myself went forward for a peel to J3. We now were set up ready for the wind shift and stuck with it until after the Casquets TSS.

As the day faded to night, the wind picked up again. Bex Coles made us some tasty dinner of the freeze-dried variety and we settled in for the night. The wind had gradually shifted further and finally, as we rounded Guernsey, we were able to hoist the GS. Next

call was for a BRO hoist. It was still pretty breezy and Angus and I were totally hosed at the front...although once we were sending it triple-headed, it wasn't particularly dry anywhere on deck! We sailed with this set up into the early hours as we began the final approach to St Malo. The wind angle was pretty changeable and there was much debate between peeling to the A4 or Code Zero, instead of sticking with the current set-up. After much toing and froing the call was made to stay as we were.

We finished just after 07:00, furlled the BRO, dropped the jib and main and decided to pop into St Malo for brunch, during which we examined the provisional results which were looking good. We overran and the eight of us charged with returning *Sunrise III* to Hamble had to dash back to ensure we left the marina in time.

We won IRC Overall!! What a great, fun race, with a fantastic young crew. Thank you, Tom and George, for having me along.

## COWES-DINARD-ST MALO RACE

5 July 2024

by Lydia Barber, *Sunrise III*

# IRC TWO-HANDED EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

11 July 2024

by Jonathan McKee, *Red Ruby*

This year's IRC Two-Handed European Championship comprised the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo, followed by the Drheam Cup. For the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo I sailed with my boat partner, Justin Wolfe. The forecast indicated a windy race featuring 30-35 knots and big seas.

The start was exciting. We had just set off from the leeward end under reefed main and no.4 jib when the electrics shut down. Eventually we started the engine and the charge brought the electrics back to life. Out into the Channel we sailed upwind for 18 hours, tacking on the tide change. As night fell we were mid-fleet. We changed back to the no.4 jib, anticipating the building breeze and, sure enough, close to Alderney, the wind built to 35 knots, bringing big, confused waves. The wind also went right, benefitting those to the west of us with both better tide and position. For us, the shift was not enough to lay Les Hanois, which we arrived at shortly after dawn before bearing away onto a reach. Overnight we had gained against the boats behind, although the leaders out west were now 10 miles ahead.

The reach to the finish played to our strengths, bombing along at 10-12 knots. With the wind slowly lifting, it was time for the Code Zero and we hit 12-14 knots, gaining on everyone. At one point we broached to leeward and I was knocked over by the main, hitting my head on a stanchion, although I recovered the tiller in time to get back on course. We came into St Malo sitting in fifth place.

The second event was the Drheam Cup. My partner for this was British shorthanded expert Will Harris, reserve skipper of the Malizia IMOCA team.

The start from Cherbourg-en-Cotentin entailed a short Code Zero reach to a set mark, then a 10-mile close reach to Cap de la Hague. Frustratingly, we had a great start to leeward only to be informed we were OCS, earning a one-hour penalty.

A big dark cloud was approaching from the west as we crossed the Channel, the wind heading and building to 30 knots. We successfully dropped the A2 and trimmed the jib for the

70-mile reach, leading the doublehanders. At sundown the breeze started to lift and we reset the Code Zero for the final miles into the Shambles. From there it was upwind for 200 miles to Wolf Rock. However, in the choppy conditions I was having trouble keeping the boat going and, when a right shift came later than expected, our lead started to evaporate. Fortunately, we caught a break when, with an apparent dying breeze, we resisted the urge to tack to J1, noticing more wind if we continued on port.

We tacked back ten minutes later to find ourselves lifting off the boats in our pack, extending our lead from half a mile to four in just a few hours. Into the evening, the wind held at 10-15 knots and we stayed in phase with the shift, so by Wolf Rock we held a modest lead.

The next leg was 150 miles south to the Drheam waypoint out in the Atlantic. We worked east to take advantage of the expected southerly shift which we got to first, extending our lead. We were upwind all day, reaching the waypoint at midnight before tacking onto starboard for the final leg to the finish in La Trinité-sur-Mer.

We were feeling pretty good about our position but high pressure remained between us and the finish, some 130 miles away. We skirted the high to the north and reached off below the rhumb line. As expected, the wind got very light, barely enough to fill the spinnaker, until the new northwesterly filled in. The boats behind got it first and gained. Once we were into it, it held all night, but began dying again at dawn, just as the current turned against us.

It was a tight race to the end; the J/99 *Axesail* gained on us all night, while *Bellino* came in on the new wind. After an easy fetch into the finish, we didn't quite have enough of a lead, finishing 45 minutes ahead of them on the water, but behind under IRC. We had to settle for a frustrating third in a race we could have won.

Across both events however, *Red Ruby* won the IRC Two-Handed European Championship. Thank you to all who have contributed and been involved over the last two years.







The course chosen for the Channel Race this year followed the usual pattern: out to the west, back around the south of the Isle of Wight and round marks near Portsmouth and Selsey Bill, before returning via the eastern Solent. The course was relatively short and close to shore - sensible given the light forecast. However, there were 12 waypoints, which made for a number of short legs, lots of roundings and, if the forecast had been right, potentially some painful, slow beating against the tide. So, there was some apprehension about the conditions.

The start was a proper upwind, everyone hugging the island to get in the tide, followed by a close reach with only a couple of tacks halfway down. Since all classes had started together, we did not have any issues trying to find a way through the lower-rated boats, which made a nice change.

By the time we got to Hurst we had started to pull clear of the others and got through the Needles Channel without needing to tack. By the time we got to the Needles Fairway buoy

and bore away towards Poole, we had settled down comfortably.

Fortunately, at that point - and for most of the race - there was significantly more breeze than forecast and, when we were fighting the tide, we were at least reaching.

The most painful moment came when approaching St Catherine's: We had stayed below the direct route to get out of the foul tide and hopefully reach the back eddy before getting to the Point, but as we got closer the wind dropped and headed us. It was a tight squeeze to make it without tacking. To cap it all we also had steady rain at that point...I was generally not feeling thrilled by the conditions.

From then on there was not enough breeze to get the boat really flying, but enough to make for a relatively fast, straightforward and enjoyable race with plenty to keep the crew busy. One mark rounding involved coming in on the Code Zero, gybing and then coming back out on the Zero - not very common.

At one point in the evening, the wind did go very light and we found ourselves fully upwind, making very slow progress. I was afraid this was how it would be for the rest of the race... painful. Eventually, however, the breeze did come back and we continued doing laps of the course, by now mixed up with slower boats which were using the same marks.

In the end, we finished before 02:00 with favourable tide down the Solent, much earlier than expected. Then all we could do was wait to see if we had got far enough ahead of the competition, which it turned out we had. Behind us, it seemed that the conditions really had turned against the lower-rated boats, many of which finished between 07:00 and 08:00, over three hours behind us on corrected time. However, the crew and I had gone to bed long before that, so we did not appreciate our win until the following morning.

This was a very satisfying result, especially as it was our last of the season.

## CHANNEL RACE

20 July 2024

by Mark Emerson, *Phosphorous II*

Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/[rick-tomlinson.com](http://rick-tomlinson.com)

# ROSCHIER BALTIC SEA RACE

27 July 2024

by Christian Zugel, *Tschüss 2*

"Are you sure you want to go sailing in the Baltic?" asked Johnny, our Irish boat captain, when I brought up the topic. "Our boat won't do well given the light airs...How about going around Ireland?"

However I had never seen anything of Scandinavia, besides business trips, and the thought of conditions staying light all night sounded very good to me as well. So a plan was made and we signed up for two races in the Baltic: First the Gotland Runt, followed by the Roschier Baltic Sea Race. Before and after, we would explore the Swedish and Helsinki archipelagos.

The Baltic Sea Race is still a fledgling addition to the race calendar. Starting and finishing in Helsinki, the course takes you to the Sandhamn area of the Swedish archipelago from where you round Gotland before sailing along the Estonian coastline back to the finish.

We had started our Scandinavian programme well with the Gotlund Runt – one of the oldest and largest offshore sailing regattas in the world. This year it was very windy and we ended up not just winning, but breaking the record too!

Coming into the Roschier Baltic Sea Race, we had a couple of magnificent days in Helsinki. Besides training in glorious weather, we were treated to both a reception in City Hall and a great party at fellow RORC member Arto Linnervuo's 'private yacht club'.

The forecast was showing a significant storm for the second day of the race. Our onboard navigator Campbell Field fired up all his various models and predicted that we should be able to finish by 17:00 on Monday, around two days and four to five hours after the start. If we did, it would set another new record.

The start was pretty uneventful and after we rounded the Helsinki Lighthouse we decided that the winds would be best closest to the Finnish archipelago. We headed west for the next 24 hours, tacking as close to the islands as Campbell would let us. At times it felt like going up the Solent. By late morning we were indeed the furthest west and north of the competition.

Ahead of schedule, we rounded the Almagrundet Lighthouse off Sandhamn and headed south to Gotland with what looked like at least a five-hour advantage on corrected time over our next competitor. I believe we won the race at that point. We enjoyed a lovely afternoon with lots of sunshine and gourmet freeze-dried spicy chicken, while the northerly breeze slowly started to build.

By late evening the weather was fast deteriorating; we rounded Gotland and started heading northeast, but within a couple of hours we found ourselves in the worst possible conditions. The wind hit speeds of up to 38 knots and there was a nasty sea state: short three to five foot waves hitting us from the side at different intervals.

Six of us got pretty badly seasick (although we obviously blamed the gourmet spicy chicken freeze-dried supper!) and for the next five hours we just never got comfortable.

Thankfully *Tschüss 2* was built for the Volvo Ocean Race and she has been through far worse conditions than this but, nevertheless, the team decided to throttle back, to make sure nothing broke.

By late morning we had passed both the northwest coast of Estonia and the worst of the storm.

With two reefs in the main and the J4 plus storm jib, we cruised towards Helsinki in 20 knots plus of breeze.

As predicted, we crossed the finish line at 17:36. We had sailed just shy of 700 miles at an average speed of 13.2 knots, breaking the previous race record by a day. So much for the Baltic's light airs!

We recommend everyone signs up for both the Gotland Runt and Roschier Baltic Sea Race in the coming years. It will be an experience you will never forget - I certainly won't!







## LEWMAR CHERBOURG RACE (with JOG)

6 September 2024

by Tim Goodhew, *Cora*

The Cherbourg Race had a couple of objectives for Kelvin and I on *Cora*. A strong result would ensure we retained our victories in the UK Doublehanded Offshore Series (ie: we beat *Bellino*) and in IRC Three RORC Season's Points (ie: we beat the J/99 *Yalla!*).

The course was an easterly Solent exit, straight to Cherbourg. The forecast was light and tricky, but the models all agreed: a northeasterly breeze would arrive overnight. Friday saw relentless rain, but just as we slipped lines and left Hamble, blue skies finally broke through: perfect timing and we saw no meaningful rain during the race.

At the start, we were indecisive, eventually choosing the northern end of the line. We felt good about our position...the race committee didn't agree. We were called OCS, along with three others, but a frantic kite drop and swift U-turn had us back in the action quickly. The front pack was still within 10 boat lengths, so recovery felt solid. We pressed on, committed to our strategy for the first leg: get to the north shore to catch the early tide turn to the east.

Slipping down the Solent, we found ourselves duelling with the IRC Three front-runners - *Yalla*, *Just So*, *Mojo Risin*, and *Jangada*. Night crept in and with it a Brittany Ferries

ship sliced through the fleet, coinciding with a sharp left shift. Suddenly plunged into new wind and darkness, I found myself sailing purely by the numbers, a touch disoriented! But we adapted well and gained ground on the fleet at large, though we did lose some to our IRC Three rivals, *Yalla!*

As we exited the Solent, a 'surprise southwesterly' greeted us, allowing us to point at Cherbourg while still making reasonable speed. Some boats started gybing east, but we knew a right shift was on the way. If we could hold our position in the middle west, we hoped to be well-placed for the new wind direction. We committed to max VMG and waited for the wind to turn in our favour.

At the first signs of the shift, we tried a gybe east but weren't thrilled with the angle so gybed back, trusting that more right shift was still coming. Sure enough, stronger signs appeared and we gybed onto port once more, carefully weaving around yet another anchored ship off Bembridge.

From there, it was a long, steady port gybe all the way to Cherbourg. We settled into a 30-minute watch system, projecting that we'd hit the French coast just after the next eastbound tide started. Protecting the west

side of the fleet was crucial for us - nobody wants to battle the notorious French tides. Our strategy was simple: stay west and make late gains on anyone who had pushed too far east.

By dawn, a few more right-hand shifts and increasing pressure had us peeling to the Code Zero for the final push. We'd closed in on *Just So* and *Yalla* overnight, steadily gaining ground as we converged. With them on a more west-facing course with the prospect of stronger eastbound tide, we had an edge. *Bellino* was also nearby, so we ticked off one objective, but the final minutes were all about closing that gap on *Just So*. They'd left Bembridge 1.5 miles ahead, but we knew we had a handicap advantage of five points. By the time we crossed the finish line, we'd clawed back enough to secure the overall win by just 1 minute 30 seconds - a fantastic way to end the season.

We celebrated at the Cherbourg Yacht Club before a very wet delivery home in the evening. Halfway across the Channel in the dark, something tangled in the prop. Once back in the Hamble, a quick swim revealed the culprit - a strip of tarpaulin wrapped around the propeller - not the end of season gift we wanted!







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## VICE ADMIRAL'S CUP

7-8 and 14-16 September 2024

by James Boyd

In the name of rationalising inshore racing between clubs on the Solent, this year's Vice Admiral's Cup (VAC) was split across two weekends with the RORC joining forces with the Royal Thames Yacht Club, whose Annual Regatta doubled as the VAC's first weekend. This entailed racing for the competitive J/70 and Cape 31 fleets on the Hill Head plateau.

Rain and light breeze defined the first weekend. Following a windless Saturday morning, the boats were called afloat around midday and a race was started in a light southeasterly. However the strong west-going tide proved too much in the dying breeze and the race was abandoned in the late stages for the J/70s. The Cape 31s completed one race, albeit with a black flag start. This was won by Nick Phillips' *Chaotic*, ahead of Ben Pritchard's *Akheilios* and Sandy Askew's *Flying Jenny 19*.

A Saturday night BBQ at the RORC Cowes Clubhouse was well attended by both fleets. The Cape 31 crews competed to lift the weight

of a Cape 31 using TRX and new Cyclops load sensors.

Sunday morning looked more promising and the fleet went afloat on time, only to be greeted by torrential rain, thunder and lightning. However, this eventually cleared, and a moderate southwesterly breeze established itself across the course early enough to allow three races to be completed for the J/70s.

The first race was initially led at the windward mark by Marshall King's *DSP*, half a length ahead of Martin Dent's *Jelvis*, followed by Patrick Liardet's *Cosmic* and Max Clapp's *Jeepster*. At the leeward mark, *Jelvis* split tacks with *DSP*, a left shift causing *DSP* to drop to fourth, handing the bullet to *Jelvis*.

In race two Bertie Fisher's *Powerhouse* led all the way around to win comfortably. David Mcleman's *Offbeat* rounded the top mark second, but was edged into third by *DSP* on the finish line with *Jelvis* sixth.

*Jelvis* had a good start in the third race and

found speed up the first beat to lead from *DSP* at the top mark, with Tim Collins' *EV Experts*, *Powerhouse* and *Jeepster* close behind. *Jelvis* clung on to take the race win, also winning overall on countback from *DSP*, with *Cosmic* third overall.

Meanwhile the 18-strong Cape 31 fleet squeezed in four races with Christian and Jacintha Hamilton-Love's *Khumbu Red* taking their third win of the 2024 Cape 31 series. Rounding off the podium was Sandy Askew's *Flying Jenny 19* in second and Guy Gillon's *Khumbu* in third.

Duncan McCarthy's *Tonto* secured the win over the Corinthian fleet, with a bullet in race two. It all came down to the last race between *Tonto* and David Cummin's *Flurg*, who finished on tied points, with *Tonto* taking the win.

For the second weekend, the clubs laid on windward-leeward and round the cans racing for the J/109, J/111, P40 and GP Zero classes. Under lighter, high-pressure conditions, this required the schedule to be delayed each day until the sea breeze filled in.

Racing was incredibly close, especially in the P40 and J/111 classes, with seconds separating the former and the latter only being decided in the final race.

In the IRC GP Zero class, the youth team racing the Ker 46 *ROST Van Uden* scored a perfect five bullets. Second was Malcolm Offord's TP52 *Braveheart*, making her debut RORC race, just a point ahead of the De Graafs' Ker 43 *Baraka GP*.

The P40 class was won by Tim Webb's Swan 45 *Luna*, just two points ahead of Seb Blair's King 40 *Cobra* with Richard Powell's First 40 *Rogan Josh* in third.

In the J/109 class, Stephen Davis' *Jeroboam* scored four race wins to take the class by three points from Rob Cotterill's *Mojo Risin* with Chris Burleigh's *Jybe Talkin'* third.

The J/111 class went right to the wire with Cornel Riklin's *Jitterbug* claiming the win by a point from Tony and Sally Mack's *McFly*, with Louise Makin and Chris Jones' *JourneyMaker II* third.





Over three consecutive weekends the Royal Irish Yacht Club in Dún Laoghaire hosted the Irish Cruiser Racer Association Nationals (ICRA), the J-Cup and finally the IRC European Championship. Being only eight miles away at the Howth Yacht Club, we prepared for all three. After a hectic few weeks of boat preparation (every system on *Outrajeous* was upgraded or replaced) we started our three-week mission. We won class in the ICRA, finishing as 2024 Champion Boat to boot and then went on to win the IRC division and also finish as J-Cup Champion Boat overall the following weekend.

Thus, going into the IRC Europeans, we were happy that we had done everything we possibly could to ensure *Outrajeous* was travelling as fast possible through the water. This weekend was our focus; we would have happily traded the trophies from the two previous events to get hold of the IRC Europeans title.

It started well with us scoring two firsts on day one in a light breeze. Despite stronger breezes of 14-17 knots on day two, we continued to have a slight speed advantage, only breaking our total winning streak (continued over from the preceding events) of 11 straight wins, by dropping to second in the final race of the day, losing to our clubmates, the J/99 *Snapshot*.

Day three dawned wild and blustery, but Race Officer Michael Tyrrell correctly sent us afloat, to give us every possible chance of getting some racing. We recorded a maximum wind speed of 33 knots, but others saw up to 38 knots and, inevitably, we were sent ashore to wait. Some of our younger, more gung-ho crew were chomping at the bit to get racing, but - as the guy who pays the bills and has to fix the broken bits - it was a good decision. It is better to avoid survival conditions, where inevitably something, or somebody, breaks.

Before long the breeze had moderated to 17-22 knots and we were back on the course. At



the close of play we were delighted to have not just survived, but also to have held off the challenge from the A35 and J/99s, posting a 1,2,1. At the end of the day there were lots of tired bodies; those of a certain age are starting to 'feel it', and bath salts were in high demand in Dún Laoghaire that evening.

On the final day, we woke to more benign conditions - 10-12 knots. While we were beaten into second by one of our sisterships, *Joker II*, in the first race, we rallied in the second. It was enough to secure the overall prize which we were very honoured to collect ahead of such professional outfits as the current ORC European Champion, the TP52 *Beau Geste*.

Over the three events, *Outrajeous* completed 19 races, finishing first 14 times and second in the remaining five. I have been racing for many years and on a few occasions over those years I have been lucky enough to have been part of a boat and a team that just works, often against all odds - this is one of those times. When everything just clicks onboard, it is one of the most amazing feelings in our sport. It is what I live for, justifying all the late

nights, early mornings and years and years of practice and boat preparation.

Without any doubt, to create the dynamic that we created (however fleeting it may prove) among the crew, is the most awe-inspiring feeling. The abiding memories from these events will be of fun, laughter, craic and a generous sprinkle of determination, in that order. Over nine days in September, this team took a relatively ordinary J/109 and turned it into something extraordinary.

Onboard were Neil Spain (helm), Killian Collins (tactics), Aoife McDonald (nav), John Murphy (main/skipper), Ross McDonald (trim 1, technical), Paddy Good (trim 2, downwind), Derek Moynan (pit), Rory 'Badger' O'Sullivan (bow), Cuan Whelan (mast) and the youngsters: Thomas Murphy 16yrs (mid bow), Charlie 13yrs (mid bow). Subs: Suzie Murphy (pit), Jack (nav).

We should not forget the legion of girlfriends, boyfriends, wives, husbands, grandparents, siblings and young children who facilitated the entire team, allowing operations to run so smoothly.

## IRC EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

10-15 September 2024

by John Murphy, *Outrajeous*



# ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE

18 October 2024

by Stefan Jentzsch, *Black Pearl*

The 2024 edition of the Rolex Middle Sea Race has proven again why it is aptly viewed as one of the most challenging, exhilarating and varied offshore races.

This year we were treated to a downwind start in moderate wind conditions in the narrow confines of Valletta. Finding a clear line out of the harbour in most years is a challenge. This was the case in particular this year with all boats hoisting their spinnakers and asymmetrics the moment they crossed the start line. Luckily, no crashes were reported and we all safely made our way into open waters heading towards the Strait of Messina.

And what a downwind ride it was. The wind was picking up and blowing in the high teens, the sky increasingly dark, while heavily pouring rain reduced visibility to a few hundred metres. Lightning lit up the clouds, and water spouts were forming around us, so it was not the most comfortable of surroundings. On *Black Pearl* we wondered whether it was wise to change the boat for a lighter set-up, getting rid of the water ballast and having a smaller rudder in order to improve our light wind performance.

A few hours later we were hit by a big squall, wind speed doubling in a split second causing *Black Pearl* to broach. We were on our side for eight minutes, trying to reel the 2.5 asymmetric in, but to no avail - the wind was too heavy. Eventually, the sail ripped and we decided to cut the sheets and recovered what was left of our sail, the second most heavy in our downwind range. But we were lucky despite this; we could at least continue where others fared a lot worse. Some 34 boats out of a fleet of 111 had to retire and most of them early in the race.

The wind gradually subsided when we entered the Strait of Messina and, cruising through those waters instead of drifting close to the shore, finding small pockets of wind as we did in prior races, was a welcome change. For the first time in five editions of the race we also rounded Stromboli in daylight. That *Black Pearl* now led the race in all categories lifted the mood considerably.

As one would expect with the Rolex Middle Sea Race, there is never only one weather scenario and this year the second weather system greeted us off northern Sicily with little to no wind. These are not ideal conditions for a heavier boat like *Black Pearl*, while benefitting more slippery boats



like *Kuka* and especially *Red Bandit*. To our amazement, and full admiration, some boats were able to sail two or even three times the wind speed and maintain their 5 to 6 knots boat speed, even in near calm conditions, especially through the night.

By the time the *Black Pearl* reached the shores of Trapani, the leaderboard had been reshuffled with the light wind specialists now leading the charge.

Another weather system saw a long beat against a southeasterly wind in a confused sea state. While far from pleasant, *Black Pearl* likes these conditions and soon we were able to put some distance again between us and the competition.

The toll that the near calm conditions extracted from our race time was evident when approaching Lampedusa in the morning hours of Tuesday. We had been sailing for

almost three days; in past editions we would by now have been enjoying a good meal, a fresh shower and a nice bed ashore! Wind conditions picked up and we decided for yet another change in headsail and a reef in the lee of the island, before embarking on the last, upwind, leg back to Malta.

Then disaster struck *Black Pearl* again. A crew member had a fall down below, suffering a severe concussion and a big cut across his forehead. Not taking any chances, we informed the race committee and headed back to Lampedusa to get him into a hospital as quickly as we could.

Eventually we got a doctor on board and the injured crew was subsequently transferred to a dinghy, then an ambulance. An Italian crew member stayed behind to look after our injured team mate. We are all happy to report that he is now back home and recovering well.

As you can imagine, no one was in the mood to continue racing, all of us feeling depressed and concerned about our friend's well-being. While we did not abandon the race, we flew the storm jib instead of the regular one we would have chosen and reefed the main, in order to sail back as comfortably and safely as we could back to Malta. We arrived just after midnight, three and a half days after setting sail.

Ten minutes later, *Red Bandit* arrived to big applause and were eventually announced the overall winner of the race and a worthy one, being an old, converted TP52, sailed predominantly by a crew of young amateurs from Germany.

Faring so well in these testing conditions and beating boats crewed predominantly by professionals (such as ours) is testimony to *Red Bandit's* team, its leadership, dedication and perseverance. Hats off!





# 2025 RACE PREVIEWS





# RORC TRANSATLANTIC RACE

Sunday 12 January 2025



Now in its second decade, the 11th edition of the RORC Transatlantic Race continues in its early January time slot, ensuring competitors can enjoy the seasonal festivities at home, before escaping for some winter sunshine.

The 2,995-mile race starts in Arrecife, Lanzarote where the Calero family roll out the red carpet for competitors, offering free pre-race berthing at their world class Marina Lanzarote, as well as hosting their legendary welcome party and crew dinner in the preceding days. After crossing the start line, against the backdrop of the island's distinctive volcanic landscape, competitors are obliged to pass between Lanzarote and Fuerteventura and leave Tenerife to port before they are

free to set off on their Atlantic passage (this mark of the course was abandoned in 2024 due to severe weather). Once past Tenerife they must be mindful to avoid the islands' long wind shadows as they dive south to find favourable trade winds. Once into the strong northeasterlies, crews enjoy the sleighride they offer to whisk them towards Grenada, where the team at the Camper & Nicholson's Port Louis Marina greet finishers with gift baskets of local specialities.

Like the RORC Caribbean 600, the race is one of only a handful in the RORC calendar with a Superyacht class, defined as having an LH of 24m+, in addition to the regular IRC fleet, multihulls, Class40s and redoubtable

doublehanded entrants. Race supporters include the Yacht Club de France and the International Maxi Association, the latter presenting the IMA Trophy for monohull line honours, won in 2024 by *Leopard 3*. Historically, maxi yachts have done well in the race, with four winning IRC Overall, although race winners have ranged from 33ft upwards.

In 2024, a giant depression out to the northwest forced a course change resulting in competitors diving as far south as the Cape Verdes. The winner of IRC Overall was Chris Sheehan's PAC52 *Warrior Won*, the first American to lift the RORC Transatlantic Trophy.

## For information only

See event Notice of Race at [rorctransatlantic.rorc.org](https://rorctransatlantic.rorc.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 1 and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Lanzarote, Canary Islands – Grenada, Caribbean (leaving Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria and Tenerife to port)

**DISTANCE:** 2,995 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>1.004)

IRC Two-Handed

Superyacht (>30.5m LOA)

Classic Yachts

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.200)





**For information only**

See event Notice of Race at [caribbean600.rorc.org](http://caribbean600.rorc.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Antigua Yacht Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** 2024-2025 World Sailing Inshore Regulations; Appendix B inshore racing will apply

All boats are required to have a working VHF

**SCHEDULE:** Incorporating two days of inshore racing (Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 February) and the Antigua 360 (Friday 21 February)

**CLASSES:**

IRC

CSA

MOCRA (Antigua 360 only)



Perhaps it is just a good excuse to escape the northern hemisphere winter, but historically competitors in the RORC Caribbean 600 have always come to Antigua a few days early to get some practice time in prior to the main event. In 2023 the RORC decided to formalise this into a race series, comprising two days of inshores followed by the Antigua 360. The former features a mix of windward-leeward and round the cans courses, while the latter circumnavigates the Caribbean island in an anticlockwise direction.

For 2025, following a skippers' briefing and welcome drinks reception at Antigua Yacht Club on the Monday night, inshore races will take place off Falmouth/English harbour on Tuesday and Wednesday, each followed by a daily prize-giving. A layday on the Thursday will be followed by the Antigua 360 on the Friday, with a start off Fort Charlotte. This will provide a dry run for the start of the Caribbean 600. Competitors can then enjoy the weekend off prior to the start of the main event on the following Monday.

The Series will be open to yachts racing under IRC, CSA and MOCRA and other classes. New for 2025 will be the advent of a Maxi class which will only sail inshores, with a third day of this laid on for them on the Thursday. At the time of writing two maxis had entered, both former Wallycento 100-footers: *V*, campaigned by Karel Komárek from the Czech Republic and *Galateia*, owned by Americans Chris Flowers and David M Leutschen.



## NELSON'S CUP SERIES /ANTIGUA 360

Tuesday 18 February 2025



**RORC  
NELSON'S  
CUP  
SERIES**

Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com

# RORC CARIBBEAN 600

Monday 24 February 2025



Photo: RORC/Tim Wright/photoaction.com



Since it was first held in 2009, the RORC Caribbean 600 has rapidly risen to join the ranks of the world's 'classic 600 mile offshore races' alongside the Rolex Fastnet Race, Middle Sea and Sydney Hobart, etc.

There's little not to like about the Caribbean 600. Taking place in the middle of the northern hemisphere winter, it provides some welcome winter sun, while Antigua offers good logistics, having its own international airport and a strong marine industry.

The Caribbean 600 race track is fabulously complex, offering many changes of course and sails: Starting from beneath the Pillars

of Hercules, outside English Harbour, the fleet meanders around 11 Caribbean islands spanning St Maarten and St Barth in the north, to Guadeloupe, Les Saintes and La Désirade in the south before returning to finish in Antigua. Typically it takes place in stiff easterly trade winds and a sizeable Atlantic swell, made more complex as it funnels between the islands. Most notorious is the wind shadow in the lee of Guadeloupe where races so often have been won or lost.

In recent years the event has been bulked out and is now the concluding part of the Nelson's Cup Series (see p97).

The race is open to superyachts and has attracted several of the world's most impressive large private yachts as well as some of the world's fastest sailing yachts, both mono and multihull. The race also has a class for Class40, plus CSA for local boats.

The present race records stand at 29 hours 38 minutes 44 seconds for a multihull, established in 2022 by Jason Carroll's foiling MOD70 trimaran *Argo*, while the monohull record of 37 hours 41 minutes 45 seconds was set in 2018 by George David's *Rambler 88* – due to return in 2025 in fresh livery as Bryon Ehrhart's *Lucky*.

## For information only

See event Notice of Race at [caribbean600.rorc.org](http://caribbean600.rorc.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Antigua Yacht Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, EPIRB, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Antigua – Antigua via Barbuda, St Kitts and Nevis, Saba, St Barth, St Maarten, Tintamarre, Guadeloupe, La Désirade and Redonda

**DISTANCE:** 600 miles

### CLASSES:

IRC (>1.004)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.200)

CSA (>0.870)





For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Société des Régates du Havre and the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Le Havre via marks

**DISTANCE:** 110-160 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



Returning to its rightful place in the calendar during the early May bank holiday, the Cervantes Trophy has long been the domestic offshore season opener.

As usual, from the Solent the destination to the southeast is Le Havre, the Normandy city whose post-WWII reconstruction is a masterpiece of modern, cubist architecture, sometimes described as 'the city of concrete'. Its colourful facades bely the fact that Le Havre dates back 500+ years as, based on the banks of the Seine, it boasts a natural harbour and, as a result, is France's second biggest seaport when it comes to trade, after Marseille.

One of the more direct races in the calendar, the fleet will start from the Squadron line, the course to Le Havre taking in marks set dependent upon conditions, before crossing the Channel. Once arrived, finishers can enjoy the hospitality of the oldest yacht club in France, the Société des Régates du Havre (founded in 1838) and which remains highly active today. Within French sailing circles, the city is best known for hosting the start of the biennial Transat Jacques Vabre.

Competitors will be fighting for the Cervantes Trophy, donated to the RORC in 1972 by

Bob Watson and named after his series of *Cervantes* yachts, the most successful of which was *Cervantes IV*, a part of the successful 1971 British Admiral's Cup Team alongside Prime Minister Ted Heath's *Morning Cloud II*.

In 2024 the race saw perfect conditions with the fleet enjoying a fast downwind sail in 14 knots. Lifting the Cervantes Trophy was Trevor Middleton, whose Sun Fast 3600 *Black Sheep* also picked up the Noryema VII Cup for winning IRC Two.



## CERVANTES TROPHY RACE

Saturday 3 May 2025

# DE GUINGAND BOWL RACE

Saturday 17 May 2025

A staple of the season, the De Guingand Bowl's 'go-nowhere' format enables the race committee to set a course in the days preceding the event, taking into consideration the forecast and conditions to create a uniquely challenging 24-36 hour race, starting and finishing in the Solent.

The race is named after the great EP

'Buster' De Guingand, the highly influential former RORC Vice Commodore who helped mastermind the evolution of the IOR rule in 1969. He donated the De Guingand Bowl which is awarded in this race for IRC Overall.

In 2024 this was won by Derek Shakespeare's J/122 *Bulldog*. *Bulldog*'s young crew mastered the light airs at the start of the race and held

on until the wind filled in; they also won the St Barbara Trophy for first in IRC One (named after the Royal Artillery Yacht Club's series of yachts). Monohull line honours were claimed by Eric de Turckheim's *Teasing Machine*.

Other trophies include the Stewart Cup for IRC Two, the Auclair Trophy for IRC Three and the David Maufe Salver for IRC Four.



For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron  
**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferail, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Solent via marks

**DISTANCE:** 110-160 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)





For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron  
**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Eddystone Lighthouse – Solent

**DISTANCE:** 235 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



Of the early season offshore events in the domestic calendar, and despite being one of the longer races, the Myth of Malham always seems to have the largest participation. This is especially the case in Rolex Fastnet Race years.

Naturally this is due to its course: From a Squadron line start, it takes the fleet west down the Solent, then out into the Channel, passing the Dorset and Devonshire coasts to the turning mark – the Eddystone Lighthouse, located 12 miles off Plymouth.

Once around, competitors then backtrack up the Channel to the Solent. Thus, this is an

excellent way to walk the first 100 miles of the Rolex Fastnet course prior to the start of the main event itself in July. During the race crews have the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with course's great complexities, especially the navigation, tackling the multitude of complex tidal gates, staying right in or going out, while passing the south coast's notorious headlands.

This year the race is back in its late May position, after the De Guingand Bowl and coinciding with the Spring bank holiday.

The Myth of Malham is named after one of the most famous and, for the time, radical boats in RORC history. Conceived in detail by

Commodore John Illingworth and designed by Laurent Giles, *Myth of Malham's* illustrious career included her being a rare consecutive two-time Fastnet Race winner (1947 and 1949). Ten years later she remained competitive enough to be part of Britain's winning Admiral's Cup team.

In 2023 the race was a battle between the then Commodore and Vice-Commodore's yachts – *Ino Noir* versus *Teasing Machine*.

Last year the race was a doublehanded fest, won by Commodore Deb Fish and Rob Craigie on *Bellino*, just ahead of Tim Goodhew and Kelvin Matthews on *Cora*.



## MYTH OF MALHAM RACE

Saturday 24 May 2025

Photo: RORC/Rick Tomlinson/[rick-tomlinson.com](http://rick-tomlinson.com)

# NORTH SEA RACE

Friday 30 May 2025



Now over 80 years old, the North Sea Race is a classic, originating from the Royal Maas Yacht Club's Maas Race. Today it is jointly organised between the RORC, Royal Harwich and EAORA, forming part of the East Anglia Offshore Racing Association's programme.

After a hiatus during WWII, the RORC restarted it in 1946. In those post-war years the course had to be approved by the Admiralty, ensuring competitors avoided potential hazards such as unexploded mines!

These days the hazards are little more mundane, if still challenging, including oil rigs, wind turbines, commercial traffic and numerous shoals. Competitors, once started from off Harwich, must navigate the Galloper wind farm and round Smith's Knoll Buoy before continuing to the finish off the Dutch seaside resort town of Scheveningen, close to The Hague and renowned for its very long sandy beach.

The team at the Yacht Club Scheveningen provide a lively welcome and prize-giving where competitors can win a number of prestigious trophies, topped off by the Goeree Challenge Cup for IRC Overall. In 2024 it was won by Michel Dorsman's X-362 *Sport Extra Djinn* in a race beset by a delayed start, a cold easterly breeze and fog.

The race is ideally situated for those East Coast-based boats looking to build their qualifying miles for the Rolex Fastnet Race without having to visit the south coast.

The race always attracts a strong contingent from the Netherlands, as it also forms part of the Dutch-run North Sea Regatta and, as such, is sandwiched between a feeder race to Harwich (the Vuurshepenrace) and an inshore regatta held off Scheveningen after the finish.

For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club, in association with the Royal Harwich Yacht Club, the East Anglian Offshore Racing Association, the Yacht Club Scheveningen and Foundation North Sea Regatta

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Harwich – Scheveningen via Smith's Knoll Buoy

**DISTANCE:** 180 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

ORC

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)





For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.d2drace.ie](http://www.d2drace.ie)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** National Yacht Club of Ireland

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft and AIS Transponder

**COURSE:** Dún Laoghaire, Ireland - Dingle

**DISTANCE:** 320 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



Making a welcome return to the calendar this year is the biennial Dún Laoghaire to Dingle Race. Located on the outskirts of Dublin, Dún Laoghaire is Ireland's mecca for sailing and home to the race's organiser, the National Yacht Club. It is from here that the 320-mile race starts.

This 'perfect mini offshore' sends competitors down the eastern side of Ireland, along its southern coastline, past the Fastnet Rock and out into the Atlantic, up the west coast into Dingle, situated on the south side of

the Dingle peninsula (the Emerald Isle's westernmost point). En route the fleet has to navigate the tricky sandbanks along the east coast and pass the Tuskar Rock lighthouse, which stands sentinel over the wrecks of 178 vessels which have perished on the rocks it marks, making this one of the most dangerous features of the Irish coastline.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2023 with a record entry of 43 yachts, the last edition of the race was won by American Ron O'Hanley and his Cookson 50 *Privateer*. *Privateer* set

a new course record, shaving five hours off the time set in 2019 by Mick Cotter's *Windfall*. The strength of her victory in IRC Overall was founded upon her remarkable speed to the southeastern corner of the course, benefitting from a favourable and strong ebb tide which turned against those coming up behind, shutting the door on her competition.

The location and 300+ mile length of the Dún Laoghaire to Dingle makes it the perfect Rolex Fastnet Race qualifier for yachts located on England's northwest coast or in Ireland.



## DÚN LAOGHAIRE TO DINGLE

Wednesday 11 June 2025

# TRANSATLANTIC RACE 2025 (W-E)

Wednesday 18 June 2025



If there was an historic offshore equivalent to the America's Cup, it would be the New York Yacht Club's west-east Transatlantic Race. First run in 1866 (read more on p29) from New York to the Lizard and on to Cowes, today it takes place every four years from Newport, RI to Cowes, with times taken at the Lizard as this forms a record passage recognised by the World Sailing Speed Record Council. It is also now organised jointly between the NYYC and the RORC, in association with the Storm Trysail Club and the Royal Yacht Squadron.

The event is designed to feed into the Rolex Fastnet Race, as its predecessors did as

long ago as 1931 when the early Sparkman & Stephens-designed *Dorade* won both that year's Transatlantic Race and Fastnet Race outright (a feat the Askew brothers repeated in 2019 aboard *Wizard*).

Today the race is very much safer than it was in 1866, not least because it sets sail on 18 June, rather than mid-December and is sailed on board boats designed and engineered to go offshore. In addition, the course no longer shaves Newfoundland, avoiding a passage across the Grand Banks with its shallows, unlit fishing boats and thick fog. As for any *Titanic* sinking-sized icebergs drifting south

on the Labrador Current, as they do even in the summer months, the fleet is kept well away from these hazards, which are now monitored by satellite. However competitors still face the same challenges of handling the Gulf Stream crossing and the steady stream of eastbound depressions there, ready to pummel the fleet, as they have throughout the centuries.

While the 2,900-mile course across the North Atlantic, even in the height of summer, is not for the faint of heart, this is a golden opportunity to tick off a true bucket-list race, with one of the longest histories in our sport.

## For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** New York Yacht Club and the Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron and Storm Trysail Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 1 and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Newport, Rhode Island – Cowes

**DISTANCE:** 3,000 miles

## CLASSES:

IRC (>1.004)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.200)





For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.eaora.org.uk](http://www.eaora.org.uk)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** East Anglian Offshore Racing Association in association with the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club and the Royal Ocean Racing Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Harwich – Ostend

**DISTANCE:** 120 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



Given that the origins of yacht racing in England began on the Thames, perhaps it is understandable that once upon a time, before the Solent became the centre of the British sailing universe, the racing calendar included events of equal magnitude across the breadth of the country.

This was true in offshore racing too, where some of the earliest events in the RORC programme were the Maas and Haak Cup/Heligoland races, both introduced in 1934. These races started from the East Coast sailing mecca of Burnham-on-Crouch, bound for the Netherlands.

Over the years these events have evolved into the RORC's North Sea and East Coast Races, the latter organised in conjunction with Haven Ports Yacht Club in Levington and the East Anglian Offshore Racing Association (EAORA).

As usual the course will run from Harwich to Ostend, although this year it has grown to 120 miles. The longer course is so that, when combined with the 180-mile long North Sea Race, teams from the East Coast are able to accumulate the required 300 qualification miles for the Rolex Fastnet Race. On the East Coast Race, competitors can expect the usual

North Sea challenges of navigating through shallow and strongly tidal waters with numerous obstacles, such as sand banks and wind farms, to avoid before reaching the popular Flemish seaside city.

The prize-giving will take place at the Royal North Sea Yacht Club in Ostend. The trophies being raced for include the Bob Stewart Memorial Trophy for IRC Overall; the Blackwater Trophy for IRC Zero/One; WSV Breskens Trophy for IRC Two; Hugh Ellis Cup for IRC Three; North Sea Yacht Club Trophy for IRC Two-Handed and the Ailish Salver for First Yacht Home, plus RORC Medallions.



## EAST COAST RACE

Thursday 26 June 2025

## MORGAN CUP RACE

Friday 27 June 2025



In a break from its recent run of Dartmouth finishes, the Morgan Cup will once again, after eight years, be bound for Guernsey in the Channel Islands this season.

This is one of the more unusual RORC races. While organised and run by the Club, all the trophies, including the prestigious Morgan Cup trophy itself, donated in 1929 by a member of the JP Morgan banking dynasty, are held and awarded by the Royal Thames Yacht Club. This arrangement is long standing; the Club has assisted in its running since the 1930s and the race joined the RORC programme in the 1950s.

Winners are traditionally invited to the Royal Thames Yacht Club's prestigious annual dinner and prize-giving to receive their silverware.

Guernsey is the second largest of the Channel Islands and is a popular destination. The intention is for the race to last a relatively speedy 18-24 hours. While the course remains fairly direct, competitors will be limited in how far west they can go as they will have to keep clear of the Casquets TSS northwest of Alderney, as well as negotiating the numerous rocks and powerful tides around the Channel Islands.

St Peter Port provides the perfect finish with the fleet likely to cross the line within sight of the imposing Castle Cornet, which has stood guard over the historic town for 900+ years. For those coming ashore, there is a deep water harbour and picturesque cobblestone town centre known for its restaurants and museums, making this an excellent place to relax before the passage home.

In 2024 the winner of the Morgan Cup in IRC Overall was Ross Applebey's *Scarlet Oyster* while Eric de Turckheim's *Teasing Machine* took line honours.

### For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Thames Yacht Club and the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Guernsey

**DISTANCE:** 110-160 miles

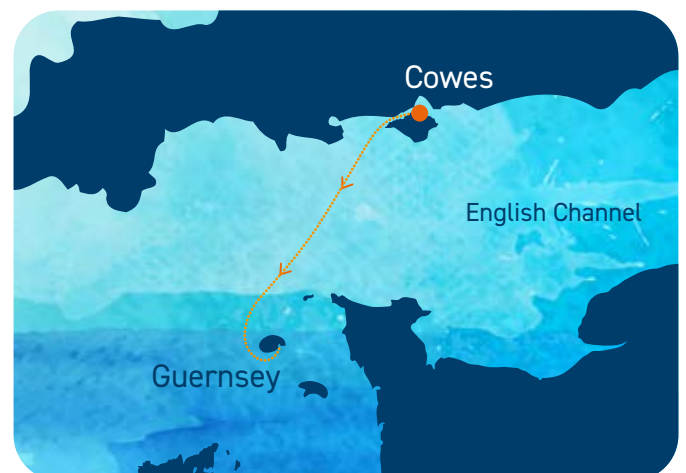
**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)







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# LA TRINITÉ-COWES RACE

Sunday 6 July 2025



After the 2024 edition remained an all-French event, starting in the French sailing mecca of La Trinité-sur-Mer and finishing in Cherbourg, for the RORC's centenary year the race, organised by the Société Nautique de La Trinité-sur-Mer in association with the Club, will again return to its original finish in Cowes.

Starting on 6 July it provides a formalised feeder race for teams based in southern Brittany wishing to compete in the famous Cowes-Dinard-St Malo, which sets sail from the Solent on 11 July. The timing is aimed to allow competitors to regroup and spend a little time enjoying Cowes before the start of the main event.

At 350 miles, the race is the longest in the UK domestic programme, after the Rolex Fastnet Race. Its course is challenging: Starting from the Baie de Quiberon, competitors round the Quiberon peninsula before turning their bows northwest, up Brittany's Atlantic coast.

They must then take on the famous tidal gates at the Pointe Penmarc'h and Raz de Sein before making the key tactical decision whether to proceed up the rock-strewn Chenal du Four between Ushant and the mainland, or sail around Ushant's seaward side, which is longer and will pit them against the full brunt of the Atlantic. From here, the fleet turns their bows towards Hurst and

the western entrance of the Solent, via the Casquets TSS and on to the finish, where they can recuperate in the Cowes Clubhouse.

For competitors entering from elsewhere in Europe, La Trinité-sur-Mer, with its famous bridge, is home to the Société Nautique which holds its popular Spi Ouest-France regatta held every Easter. Once upon a time the base for Éric Tabarly, many other top French sailors, such as Francis Joyon, Thomas Coville and the event's organiser and former Ultime skipper Yves le Blevec, today live nearby. The seaside town offers the fine dining and lively bars, as befits one of France's most famous yachting ports.

## For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.snt-voile.org](http://www.snt-voile.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Société Nautique de La Trinité-sur-Mer in association with the Royal Ocean Racing Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** La Trinité-sur-Mer – Cowes

**DISTANCE:** 350 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)





For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the UNCL, the Yacht Club de Dinard, the Société Nautique de la Base de St Malo, the Junior Offshore Group and the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2 Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Casquets – Les Hanois – St Malo

**DISTANCE:** 151 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



One of the most popular events in the RORC calendar, the Cowes-Dinard-St Malo really does have it all. The race is one of the most historic still being run today. It dates back to 1906, when King Edward VII was vigorously campaigning the gaff cutter HMY *Britannia*. In that year the British monarch donated the magnificent King Edward VII Challenge Cup to the Yacht Club Nautique de la Rance for what was known at the time as the Dinard Race.

After stopping for WWI, the modern-day race was founded in 1929 when the Yacht Club Nautique de la Rance invited the RORC to revive it. While the original race concluded in Dinard,

in later years, as the race grew in popularity, the finish and its race management, gravitated to nearby St Malo where there was greater space for the finishers in the marina. While it was suspended during WWII, soon after the fleet was memorably escorted towards the finish by a destroyer to avoid minefields.

The course starts, as ever, on the Squadron line, taking the fleet through the Solent and across the Channel, east of the Casquets TSS and past the Channel Islands of Alderney and Les Hanois before heading south. Competitors finish, memorably, under the imposing walled city of St Malo where, once locked in and

alongside, they can celebrate at the Société Nautique de la Baie de St Malo and enjoy the hospitality of St Malo itself, renowned for the wonderful bars and restaurants located within its historic battlements.

The King Edward VII Challenge Cup remains one of the most prized trophies during the season and for this reason this race frequently attracts a strong entry, usually swelled in a Fastnet year as it makes an excellent qualifying race, with 179 entrants in 2023. In 2024 it was won by Tom Kneen's Rolex Fastnet Race-winning JPK 1180 *Sunrise III*.



## COWES-DINARD-ST MALO RACE

Friday 11 July 2025

Photo: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com

# ADMIRAL'S CUP

Thursday 17 July – Friday 1 August 2025



Back for the first time since 2003, and coinciding with the RORC's centenary, is the Admiral's Cup. Once upon a time considered the unofficial world championship of offshore racing, the appetite for events fielding three-boat national teams had since waned globally, but two decades on, in stronger economic times, with great stability in the IRC Rule and with the Rolex Fastnet Race once again concluding it, the revitalised Admiral's Cup seems to have caught the imagination of teams from far and wide.

The event is resonating with owners and crews alike (see more about the teams on p22). Some grew up reading about the international competition for the famous gold trophy and are now older and able to compete for the Admiral's Cup themselves. The story is similar for the legion of pro sailors who cut their competitive teeth in this event, or aspired to. As a result, many new boats are being built for it, while others are training especially for the event, driving forward expectations that the level of competition may be close to what it was during the event's zenith in the 1980s and 90s.

Entry has been made simpler, with teams comprising two, rather than three, boats and representing a yacht club or their owners' nation, without the complication of having to involve national authorities, team trials, etc.

The schedule kicks off with the 'short offshore' which will be the Channel Race (typically 110-160 miles overnight around marks), followed by three days of inshore racing, which will comprise a mix of windward-leeward and round the cans courses. There is then a day off before the start of the Rolex Fastnet Race. If four or more inshores are completed then one can be discarded. Neither offshore race can be discarded, with the 'short offshore' carrying a 2x points co-efficient and the Rolex Fastnet Race 3x.

## For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.admiralscup.rorc.org](http://www.admiralscup.rorc.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 4/Category 2

**SCHEDULE:** Channel Race; three days of inshores (windward-leeward/round the cans); Rolex Fastnet Race

## CLASSES:

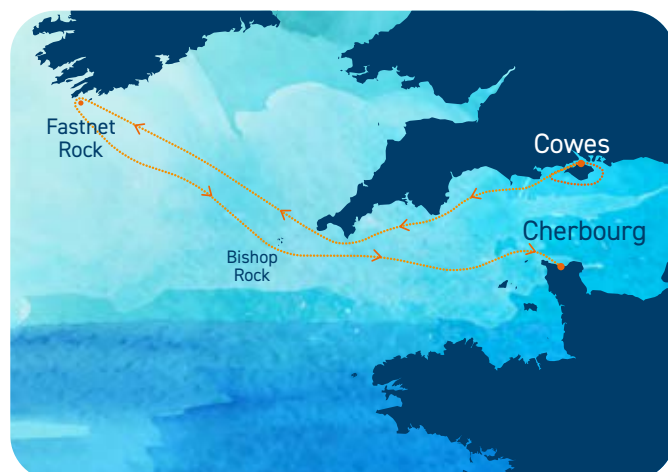
Yacht club/national teams comprising two boats:

Admiral's Cup 1:

TCC 1.280-1.464, LH 13.41-17.20m

Admiral's Cup 2:

TCC 1.100-1.276, LH 11.00-13.40





For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2

**Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions**

**COURSE:** Cowes – Solent via marks

**DISTANCE:** 110-160 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



The 'Junior Ocean Race' was first run in 1928 as the shorter sibling to the Fastnet Race, originally catering for smaller yachts at the time considered too small to complete in the main event. While shorter, it was not insubstantial, despite being a 'go-nowhere' race; in those years the fleet was sent to the Cherbourg breakwater and back to finish in Cowes! The first edition had 12 starters and was won by future RORC Commodore Robert Somerset on his 34ft cutter, *Penboch*.

Fast forward 97 years and the race is going strong, scheduled varyingly either before or

after the Rolex Fastnet Race in odd years. In the past the Channel Race enjoyed its greatest status as the opening offshore of the Admiral's Cup. In 2025 the Channel Race will once again be the first offshore race of the Admiral's Cup, restoring it to its former glory.

Being one of only two events in the RORC programme without a specific destination, the Channel Race is today a designed course, with a duration of around 24 hours and finishing in the Solent. Virtual marks are set in the days preceding the race based on conditions and the forecast, to create

a tactically challenging, often windward-leeward, course for the fleet.

In 2024 it was Mark Emerson's youth team on *Phosphorus II* which sailed away with the Channel Challenge Cup for IRC Overall. Other trophies up for grabs include the Stetson Plate for IRC One and Royal Albert Yacht Club Trophies for IRC Two, Three and Four. First boat home receives the Hugh Astor Trophy, donated by the one-time owner of *The Times*, who owned and raced the classic yacht *Nordwind*, which held the Fastnet Race course record for 24 years.

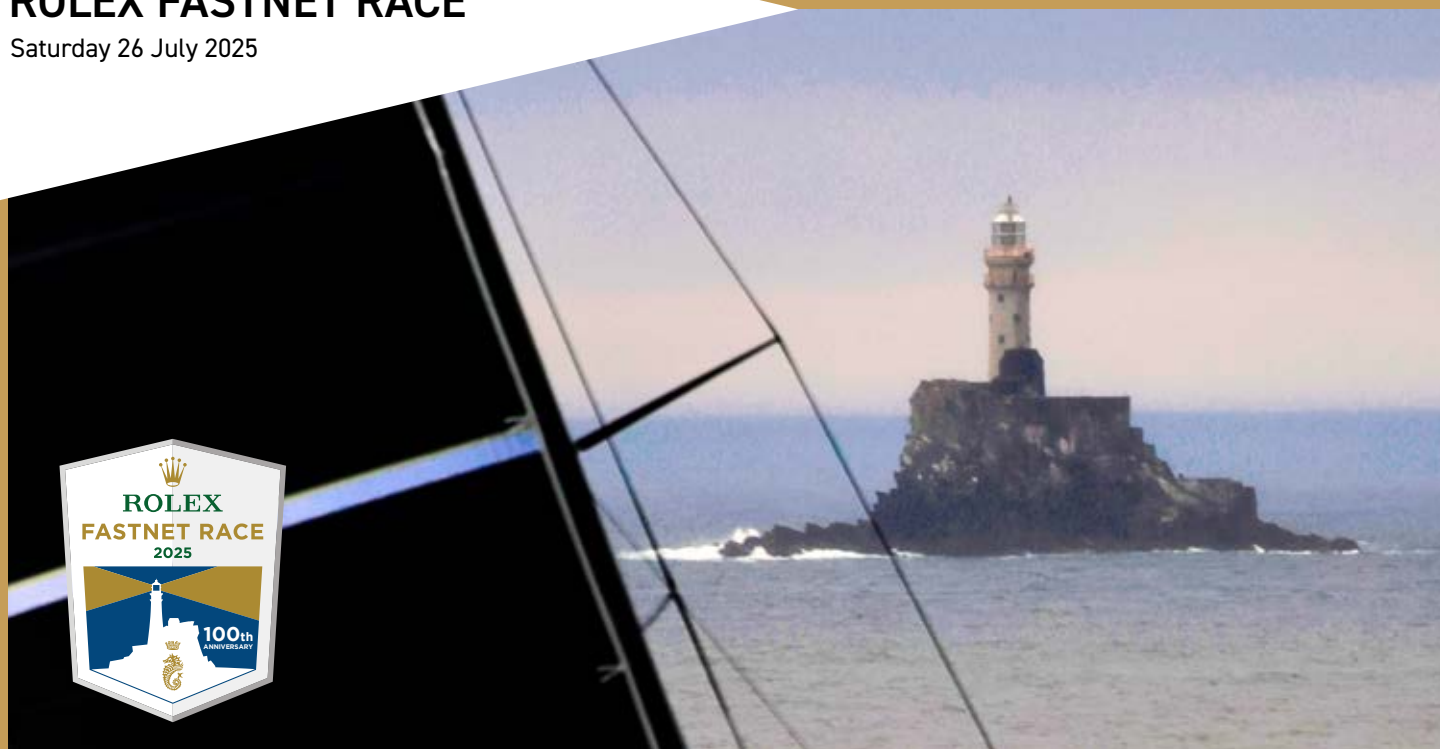


## CHANNEL RACE

Saturday 19 July 2025

# ROLEX FASTNET RACE

Saturday 26 July 2025



Highlight of the centenary year will be the Rolex Fastnet Race, the event which in 1925 resulted in the formation of this Club. Today it is by far the largest offshore race in the world. 2023's 50th edition saw a bumper entry of 430, the fleet having doubled in size since the late 1990s.

Most entries are in the huge IRC fleet, spanning giant maxis through to smaller grand prix racers and cruiser racers, one-designs down to family and sailing school teams on 30ft cruisers, for whom the race may be the pinnacle of their crews' sailing careers. In 2023 more than one quarter of the IRC fleet were doublehanders.

The race also attracts many top French pro teams, from the giant Ultime trimarans to the

IMOCAs, Ocean Fifty trimarans and Class40s.

A major new dimension to the race that hasn't been seen since 1997 is the return of the Admiral's Cup, with the Rolex Fastnet Race representing the grand finale of the RORC's revitalised new series.

As usual the Rolex Fastnet Race represents the complete test for competitors. Prevailing westerly winds usually make for a tactical beat out of the Solent and down to Land's End, with competitors requiring all their tactical skill and bravery to beat the tide when it turns foul. After going east or west of the TSS off Land's End, there is usually a tight reach across to the Fastnet Rock before sheets can be cracked for

the reach southeast back across the Celtic Sea to round Bishop Rock.

Finally there is the run to the finish in Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, with the last hurdle being the Alderney Race and its powerful tides, which can be a win or lose moment in the race for competitors.

At the finish, Port Chantereyne is capable of berthing the whole fleet, while the Club is working closely with L'Association Arrivée Fastnet Cherbourg and the town of Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, Communauté d'Agglomération du Cotentin and the Département de la Manche et Région Normandie to lay on a special welcome for competitors.

## For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.rolexfastnetrace.com](http://www.rolexfastnetrace.com)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Yacht Club de Cherbourg and the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 2 plus AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** Cowes – Fastnet Rock – Cherbourg

**DISTANCE:** 695 miles

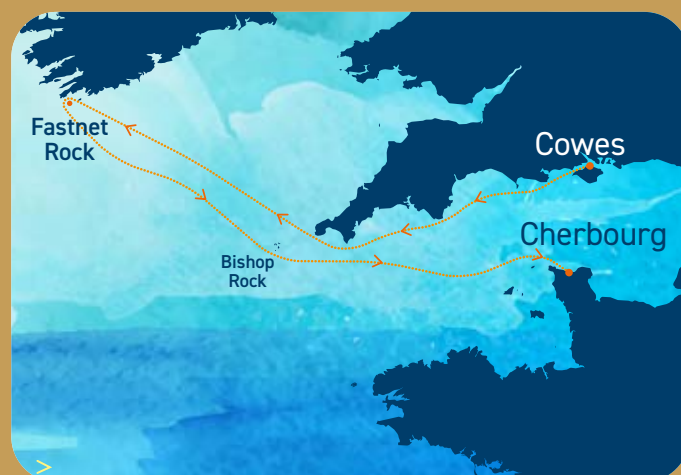
**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)      Ultime

IRC Two-Handed      IMOCA

Class40      Ocean Fifty

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)





For information only

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club and Junior Offshore Group in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2

**Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions**

**COURSE:** Cowes – Cherbourg

**DISTANCE:** 75 miles

**CLASSES:**

IRC (>0.850)

IRC Two-Handed

Class40

MOCRA Multihull over 9.15m (>1.100)



While it has, of late, been replaced by the Castle Rock Race in odd 'Fastnet' years, for many it wouldn't be a RORC season without the final September sprint to Cherbourg, perhaps unsurprisingly given its nickname is 'the wine run'.

Cherbourg, tantalisingly close to the Isle of Wight, is a natural race finish to choose; many of the RORC's French fleet are from the area and relations have strengthened since the famous port at the top of the Cotentin peninsula started hosting the finish of the Rolex Fastnet Race.

The unassuming 75-mile course is a simple, but tactically challenging, Channel crossing: competitors start from the Squadron line and exit the western Solent to head directly south towards the Cherbourg peninsula.

Aside from the usual features of a Channel crossing, competitors must be wary of the strong tides around the approaches to the finish; even once inside the breakwater of the Grande Rade, where positions have been known to change within sight of the finish line. Once arrived, the Yacht Club de Cherbourg always provides a warm reception for the

fleet and will be hosting the prize-giving within its clubhouse alongside Cherbourg's massive Port Chantereyenne marina.

As the last event in the season, for those within sight of, or guarding a position on, the RORC Season's Points podiums, this is an unmissable race that has caused many an upset. In 2024 the race was the 'make or break' for IRC Three with the duo on *Cora* cementing their lead in the Season's Points Championship over *Yalla!*, when they won the Cherbourg Trophy for IRC Overall in addition to their class prize.



## CHERBOURG RACE (with JOG)

Friday 5 September 2025

## OFFSHORE DOUBLE HANDED WORLDS

22 September-1 October 2025



Doublehanded offshore racing has been strongly on the ascent in the UK and abroad over the last two decades. In 2024, of the 333 boats that started RORC offshore races in IRC classes, 99 (29%) were doublehanded. Historically, races for this discipline have been taking place on both sides of the Channel for decades, from the Royal Western Yacht Club's TwoSTAR and Round Britain & Ireland Race to French events such as the Transat Jacques Vabre. But the discipline received a major boost internationally when, for a while, mixed doublehanded offshore racing looked set to become an Olympic sport for Paris 2024.

Although it is yet to make it into the Games, the idea is far from dead. To this end World Sailing has permitted three editions of the Offshore Double Handed World Championship to be held. In 2024 the inaugural edition took place in Lorient, France, where British duo Maggie Adamson and Cal Finlayson beat the two leading French teams to the top spot on the podium (see p59).

While the first event attracted 16 teams from four continents, the second, to be run by RORC and taking place from Cowes, is expected to grow to 25, with the Brits naturally keen to return and defend their title.

Once again, the event will be held in supplied Sun Fast 30s. The crew are to be mixed and representing countries, with the lead crew being a member of their country's Member National Authority (MNA). Typically there will be one entry per MNA, with some of the keener nations likely to invoke selection procedures.

The format of the event is likely to be similar to the first edition, with entries first divided into two groups, the first five from which shall qualify for the final, the winner of which will be crowned Offshore Double Handed World Champion.

For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.rorc.org](http://www.rorc.org)

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Category 3 plus Category 2

Liferaft, AIS Transponder and RORC Prescriptions

**COURSE:** TBC

**CLASSES:**

Supplied Sun Fast 30s





For information only

See event Notice of Race at [www.rolexmiddlesearace.com](http://www.rolexmiddlesearace.com)

ORGANISING AUTHORITY: Royal Malta Yacht Club under the auspices of the Royal Ocean Racing Club

SPECIAL REGULATIONS: Category 2

COURSE: Valletta, Malta – Valletta, anticlockwise around Sicily, leaving Stromboli, Pantelleria and Lampedusa to port

DISTANCE: 606 miles

CLASSES:

IRC

IRC Two-Handed

ORC

Offshore One-Design Classes

MOCRA Multihull



Few races can match the Rolex Middle Sea Race. One of the 'classic 600-milers', it reliably delivers a thrilling ride as crews race against the most stunning backdrops in Europe.

Starting, as usual, from under the impressive fortifications of the Grand Harbour in Valletta to the tune of cannon fire, competitors stream north, along Sicily's east coast and past the smouldering Mount Etna. Hoping for favourable tide as they navigate the busy Strait of Messina, separating Sicily from the toe of Italy, competitors emerge and head to the northeastern corner of the course to round a second active volcano, Stromboli.

Turning west, the fleet will pass the northern edge of Sicily, passing the capital Palermo, then on round the Egadi Islands, northwest of Marsala and sail down to the islands of Pantelleria, then Lampedusa - the most southerly mark of the course - before turning their noses for Malta and the South Comino Channel and on to the finish, just outside of Marsamxett Harbour.

However, as beautiful as the course is, competitors know to keep a wary eye outside the boat; conditions in the Mediterranean during the autumn are notoriously fickle. Indeed, a typical Rolex Middle Sea Race will

see competitors face anything from severe gales to flat calms, quite often even within the same day.

In 2024 this was most certainly the case with the fleet encountering a violent depression soon after the start. Crews reported squalls, water spouts, thunder and lightning with a brutal mixed sea state. As a result 35 retired, most within the first 24 hours. Taking monohull line honours was the 100ft maxi *Scallywag*, skippered by David Witt, but a most impressive performance was put in by the young German crew on the TP52 *Red Bandit*, who claimed IRC Overall.



## ROLEX MIDDLE SEA RACE

Saturday 18 October 2025

Photo: ROLEX/ Kurt Arrigo

## RORC SUPPORTED RACES

### ARAMEX DUBAI TO MUSCAT OFFSHORE RACE

Saturday 8 February 2025



Marking its 32nd edition in 2025, the Dubai to Muscat Offshore Race is the longest-running offshore race in the Middle East and North African region. Organised by the United Arab Emirates Sailing and Rowing Federation and the Dubai Offshore Sailing Club, in association with the Oman Maritime Sports Committee, the 360-mile race follows its usual course, starting from Dubai in the shallow waters of the Arabian Gulf. The fleet heads northwest, rounding the tip of the Musandam peninsula where they must pass through the notorious Strait of Hormuz, before plunging into the deeper Gulf of Oman, finishing off Muscat. While challenging, competitors will be awed by the stunning, rugged scenery of the mountainous Musandam peninsula, making this race one of the more unusual in the calendar. This year the event attracted 20 teams and 90+ sailors. IRC Overall was won by Bulgarian Chavdar Alexandrov's *Ivana and Alex*, retaining the title for a second consecutive year.



### COWES WEEK

Saturday 2 – Friday 8 August 2025



Cowes Week is one of the longest-running regattas in the world, established in 1826 as a result of George IV's interest in sailing. Its second edition in 1827 was captured in a series of watercolours by JMW Turner while visiting Cowes Castle. In its heyday, during the Victorian and Edwardian era, it was frequented by British and European royalty and became an established part of 'The Season', traditionally falling in after Glorious Goodwood and before the Glorious Twelfth in the calendar. Today, it is run by Cowes Combined Clubs, of which the RORC is a member, and sees over 500 boats compete across 40 different classes, split between two groups in the Solent. The mix of modern and classic, one-designs and handicap-rated, monohull and multis, means there is a class for everyone including a series of designs which have been competing for over 50 years, such as Dragons, Flying Fifteens, Redwings, Seaview Mermaids, Solent Sunbeams, Swallows, Victorys and XODs. Ashore, Cowes welcomes over 60,000 spectators and correspondingly there is as much to do off the water as on it, including a number of events hosted at the RORC Cowes Clubhouse.



## IRC EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday 5 – Saturday 11 October 2025

Following a successful edition held in Dún Laoghaire, Ireland, so the IRC Europeans returns to the Mediterranean in 2025 with a truly exciting regatta to celebrate its tenth edition. This will take place out of the famous fortress port of Bonifacio, with its well protected natural harbour, in southern Corsica.

While the historic seafaring city is worth a visit in its own right, the event has been timed to squeeze neatly between Les Voiles de Saint-Tropez and the Rolex Middle Sea Race. In fact the organisers have even arranged that pre-race checks can be carried out beforehand in Saint-Tropez.

Run by the Yacht Club de Bonifacio, the programme for the event is also a good one: It will comprise two days of coastal, windward-leeward or round the cans racing in the usually windy Strait of Bonifacio, between Corsica and Sardinia. Better still is the event's offshore race: the well-established Tour de Corse à la Voile. This 250-mile race celebrates its 30th edition in 2025.



## RAJA MUDA SELANGOR INTERNATIONAL REGATTA

Friday 14 – Saturday 22 November 2025



The concept for the annual Raja Muda came from the then Raja Muda (Crown Prince) of Selangor, now HM The Sultan of Selangor, an avid sailor who continues to take a strong interest in this regatta and others in the Far East. The idea was for a week-long series of passage races, intermixed with local harbour races and shore-based activities, progressing north up the coast of Malaysia. With a mix of cruisers and IRC racers, the event has a strong following, enabling it to get back on its feet post pandemic with 20 entrants in 2022, and back up 30 for 2024. The first overnight race is from the largest port in Malaysia, Klang to Pangkor, followed by the passage from Pangkor to Penang, where the popular rickshaw race takes place, before finally racing on to Langkawi, known for its crystal clear waters and tropical forests.

## INSHORE RACE PROGRAMME





## RORC EASTER CHALLENGE

Cowes

Friday 18 – Sunday 20 April 2025

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club with the support of North U Regatta Services

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Appendix B Inshore Racing with VHF

**SCHEDULE:** Up to three races a day

Aside from traditionally being the event that kicks off the domestic season, the Easter Challenge is designed very specifically as a training regatta.

It is an odd feature of the human condition that generally we are much happier spending money on new 'go-faster' gizmos for our yachts than we are putting in time and effort to improve ourselves. But as any Olympic sailor or top grand prix racing team will attest, coaching is an essential tool to improve performance. And at the Easter Challenge, the RORC provides expert coaching FOR FREE.

Naturally the start of the season is the best time to carry this out as often teams will have new people to embed into their crew or new sails or other gear to test. Coach boats will be out on the water and, uniquely, with RRS41 relaxed for the event, coaches can come on board to offer advice, or equally a trimmer can step off into a coach RIB to check sails, rig set-up, etc DURING racing. Teams are encouraged to contact the Race Office beforehand if they require specific coaching advice.

Outside of these one-on-ones, another highlight of the coaching are the standing

room only post-race debriefs held at the Cowes Clubhouse. Here the North Sails team and other coaches will present aerial footage taken during racing and dissect episodes from the race course that went well, or went less well...

The aim is to hold three races each day, with some practice starts available to all and to help limber up on the opening day. The prize-giving is also traditionally very popular as, taking place on Easter Sunday, large quantities of Easter eggs are handed out generously among the prizes.



## IRC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Cowes

Friday 13 – Sunday 15 June 2025

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club and Royal Thames Yacht Club

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Appendix B Inshore Racing with VHF

**SCHEDULE:** Up to four races a day

After its brief holiday away, forming part of International Paint Poole Regatta in 2024, the UK IRC National Championship will return to Cowes and the Solent for 2025. However this year, once again, it will be no ordinary edition. Over and above it taking place in a special year to mark the RORC's centenary, it will also form a key part of the Royal Thames Yacht Club's giant 250th Anniversary Regatta.

As usual the event, being an official IRC championship, will be open solely to yachts with an IRC Endorsed certificate.

Typically the fleet is divided into several classes, dependent upon entry numbers. In 2024, for example, the fleet ranged from Karl Kwok's TP52 Admiral's Cup contender *Beau Geste* (with a TCC of 1.418) down to Andy Rushworth's Limbo 6.6 Mini Tonner *Marmite* (with a TCC of 0.815).

From these classes an overall winner, the UK IRC National Champion, is decided by a formula that combines results with numbers of competitors in each class. Frequently this leads to an ultra-close result, no more so

than when Niklas Zennström's Carkeek 40+ *Rán* won overall by just 0.005 in 2023.

With PRO Stuart Childerley calling the shots, the intention is to hold three races per day. These will comprise a mixture of windward-leewards and round the cans courses in the Solent. For the 250th Anniversary Regatta this is set to be a busy place with four race areas and a variety of championships taking place simultaneously and an anticipated 200+ boats out on the water. Expect great celebrations back ashore in Cowes too.



## SALCOMBE GIN RORC CENTENARY RACE

Cowes

Saturday 20 September 2024

**ORGANISING AUTHORITY:** Royal Ocean Racing Club in association with the Royal Yacht Squadron

**SPECIAL REGULATIONS:** Appendix B Inshore Racing with VHF

**SCHEDULE:** Suitable course 6-8 hours

While you will have read about all the big events taking place in 2025 to mark the Club's centenary - from the west to east Transatlantic Race to the Rolex Fastnet Race and rejuvenated Admiral's Cup, it was felt that there was a need for a more informal event, followed by some celebration ashore for club members. From this the idea for the RORC Centenary Race germinated.

The end result is an event that will take place on 20 September, after the Season's Points Championship events have been concluded

and almost at the end of the season - with only the Offshore Double Handed Worlds still to go.

Far from being a mere parade of sail, the RORC Centenary Race will be a good distance - around eight hours duration for the slower boats, six for the faster - and uniquely will follow a 'pursuit race' format. This will entail the slowest classes being sent off first, and the fastest last, with the objective of all the boats finishing at a similar time. The course will be set taking into account the tide, in such a way

as to ensure fairness between the classes with their separate departure times. The wind forecast will also be used to decide upon the best course, which could see the fleet sent out into Christchurch Bay or in the opposite direction, eastward, to Selsey Bill.

The fleet finishing en masse will enable crews to get their yachts squared away with the aim of being at the Cowes Clubhouse by around 17:00 for for tea, followed by an official season prize-giving and enthusiastic use of the new Fastnet Bar afterwards.



# 2025 RORC RACE PROGRAMME

Date	Race	Destination/Location	Distance	Bonus Points†
19 October 2024	Rolex Middle Sea Race*	Valletta, Malta – Valletta	606	20
12 January 2025	RORC Transatlantic Race	Lanzarote – Grenada	2,995	25
8 February	Aramex Dubai to Muscat Offshore Race*	Dubai – Muscat	360	-
18-21 February	Nelson's Cup Series (including Antigua 360)	Antigua	-	-
24 February	RORC Caribbean 600	Antigua – Antigua	600	20
18 March	RORC Easter Challenge	Cowes	-	-
3 May	Cervantes Trophy Race	Cowes – Le Havre	110–160	-
17 May	De Guingand Bowl Race	Cowes – round marks – Solent	110–160	-
24 May	Myth of Malham Race	Cowes – Eddystone – Solent	235	10
30 May	North Sea Race (Vuurschepen Race)	Harwich – Scheveningen	180	10
11 June	Dún Laoghaire to Dingle*	Dún Laoghaire – Dingle	320	10
13-15 June	IRC National Championship	Cowes	-	-
18 June	Transatlantic Race 2025 (W-E)	Newport RI – Cowes (via gate off the Lizard)	3,000	25
26 June	East Coast Race*	Harwich – Ostend	120	-
27 June	Morgan Cup Race	Cowes – Guernsey	110–160	-
6 July	La Trinité-Cowes Race*	La Trinité – Cowes	350	10
11 July	Cowes-Dinard-St Malo Race	Cowes – St Malo	151	-
16 July	Admiral's Cup	Cowes	-	-
19 July	Channel Race	Cowes – round marks – Solent	110–160	-
26 July	Rolex Fastnet Race	Cowes – Fastnet Rock – Cherbourg	695	25
2-8 August	Cowes Week	Cowes	-	-
5 September	Cherbourg Race (with JOG)	Cowes – Cherbourg	75	-
20 September	Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race	Cowes	55-70	-
22 September-1 October	Offshore Double Handed World Championship	Cowes	-	-
5-11 October	IRC European Championship	Bonifacio, Corsica		
14-22 November	Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta	Malaysia	-	-

## RORC PROVISIONAL RACE PROGRAMME 2026

18 October 2025	Rolex Middle Sea Race* **	Valletta, Malta – Valletta	606	20
7 January 2026	RORC Transatlantic Race	Lanzarote – Grenada	2,995	25

† A maximum of 35 bonus points to be awarded in a season

\* Organised under the auspices of/or in association with the Royal Ocean Racing Club

\*\* The 2025 Rolex Middle Sea Race scores as the first race of the 2026 Season's Points Championship





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