


Commodore's Message - STC Newsletter November 2017

 stormtrysail.org/archives/newsletter-archive/216-commodore-s-message-stc-newsletter-november-2017



November
Newsletter



Vol. 79, No. 11 November 2017

In This Issue...

Commodore's Column - Report from the Bridge

Upcoming Events

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday January 6, 2018

Officer's Club

Naval War College

Newport RI

Whitney Kneisley

(914) 834-8857

SORC

Islands in the Stream Series

Nassau Cup Race

November 9, 2017



Wirth M. Munroe Ocean Race

December 1, 2017

Ft. Lauderdale to Key West Race

January 10, 2018

Miami to Cuba Race

February 14, 2018

Film "Women Offshore"

Presentation

Produced and Narrated by

Gary Jobson

under a grant from Storm Trysail



Greetings to all our Members from the Bridge. I hope everyone is well. The sailing season here in the Northeast has concluded, now I hope that most of us have some great memories of the 2017 sailing season. For those members who have been racing I hope that you have taken home some silver, however, I know that these days the silver has turned into glass. Even though we are not polishing silver, I am sure that we all have some great memories of some great events we took part in. In addition, there are some members who are cruisers. I am sure that you can still remember that great sail you had, the wonderful harbor where you anchored for the evening. Remember that drink at days end, or even the one you had earlier that day. For me most of the time I had spent racing *VAMP* in some event. But I must admit that that I always enjoyed the time after racing, after the crew had left for the evening and it was me and one or two of my crew members and a Dewers and soda and some good stories while sitting in the cockpit as the sun set on another great day. These little things mean a lot to me and I am sure that most of us appreciate these great times as much as I do.

The Board of Governors held our last official

Foundation

Larchmont Yacht Club

1830 Buffet Dinner

2015 Film Presentation

*Introductory remarks by STC
Commodores Rich du Moulin and
Butch Ulmer*

*Post showing Q&A with several of
the featured women sailors*

November 17, 2017

Riverside Yacht Club

1730 November 19, 2017

*RSVP to the Front Desk at Riverside
YC (203) 637-1706.*

Hands-on Safety at Sea Seminar

Bermuda Race Qualifier

Saturday May 19, 2018

SUNY Maritime College

Ft. Schuyler, The Bronx, NYC

Butch Ulmer, Chair

Tel: +1 718-885-2028

Mob: +1 914-584-0584

Lisa Schinella, STF

Tel: +1 914 813-0233

Advance Notice

meeting on November 9, 2017 at Larchmont Yacht Club. As usual there are a number of topics that were discussed. Most of our conversation focused around our financial condition. We have finally worked out our P&L statement for Key West Race Week for both 2016 and 2017. Also we are almost finished with the accounting for Block Island Race Week. A quick overview of both events. Here is what we see, participation is down at both events, the racing venue for both the committee and the participants has become very expensive. The Flag Officers and the Board of Governors are working with Rear Commodore Ed Cesare to assist him with the 2019 Block Island Race Week. To make this event a success, the club will have to do some better budgeting than we have done in the past. It's almost like the supermarket business, sales down, expenses up. In the future there will be some changes made to our usual standard operating procedure.

One of the other topics that was discussed was a request that I received with regard to the damage done down in the Islands in the path of both of these terrible hurricanes. The club has received request for some support for our fellow yachtsmen and women effected by these storms. I really wish that we had bucket full of money that we could share with our yachting friends. Unfortunately we do not, the Board suggested that the Club offer any of these venues any help they may need in running a come back regatta. I will be following this up with the members who contacted me.

Past Commodore **Lee Reichart** has been working tirelessly on standardizing our Club Burgee. He did one of the many



2019 Storm Trysail Club Block Island Race Week

June 23-28, 2019

Call For Memorabilia

With the Club's 80th anniversary next year, we're looking for, photographs, artifacts and other memorabilia. Send description to me and I'll pass along to the office. While you're thinking about memories, you might enjoy a look at the club history, past event descriptions and other items in the drop down menu on our website at: <https://stormtrysail.org/about-the-club>

Lee Reichart, Editor

presentations at the Board before this will go to the trademark filing. In this day and age we must protect our trademark and our logo.

I felt that since this was our last meeting for 2017 I would make it a dinner meeting at Larchmont Yacht Club. The meeting was great and we had dinner following it. There are a few members who I would like to thank for their service on the Board during 2017. The following members will be leaving the Board, **Jamie Anderson**, our Treasurer. Jamie has done a great job for a number of years however, his life has changed, he now has two children and a new job. Jamie, thank you for all your hard work, the time you invested in our Club. In addition we also have the following Governors retiring from the Board of Governors, they are: **Steve Benjamin, Wally Miller and Jesse Fielding**. Thank you gentlemen for your interest in our Club. Thank you for the time and effort each of you put into making our Club great.

I am sure that the Nominating Committee will be putting together another outstanding slate to carry us along the journey to the future.

One of the accomplishments I had attempted unsuccessfully until now has been this effort to establish some new committees to the Storm Trysail Club. I have finally put most of this together and am making headway. Here are the Chairmen of each new committee. The Insurance Committee will be chaired by **Stephen Prime**. The Governance Committee will be chaired by **David Schwartz-Leeper**. The Long Range Planning Committee will be chaired by **Gary Jobson** and the Young Members Committee will be chaired by **Erik**

Storck. There are two additional committees without chairman, these will be named shortly.

Remember January 6th, 2018 will be our Annual Meeting and also we will be together to celebrate the Storm Trysail Club's 80th Anniversary. This great event will be held in Newport at the Naval War College. I know that our Entertainment Chairman **Dan Jennings** has put together a great day and evening full of events. An official notice will be coming out shortly. I am in search of any old photos of the Club that we may all share at this event, if you have anything that you may think will interest the members please contact Whitney at Club Headquarters. All material will be returned.

Will until next month, The Flag Officers and the Board of Governors would like to wish all our Members and their families a great Thanksgiving. May we all be thankful for what we have. God Bless.

Your Commodore,

Lenny

Commodore Sitar's Photo Credit: Gary Martin

On The Waterfront

**Storm Trysail Club Member's Yachts
Entered In Races Far and Wide**



Rolex Middle Sea Race - George David's Rambler 88 takes line honors, Joe Mele's Triple Lindy wins IRC Class Five. Highlight Video: Rolex Middle Sea Race 2017

Volvo Ocean Race -

*Vestas 11th Hour Racing, Volvo Ocean 65, **Charlie Enright**, Skipper and **Mark Towill**, Team Director. ** **VS11 WINS ALICANTE - LISBON LEG*****

Rolex Sydney Hobart Race - December 26, 2017

*Christopher Dragon, Ker 43, **Andrew & Linda Weiss**; Dorade, S&S Custom, **Pam Rorke Levy & Matt Brooks**; Triple Lindy, Cookson 50, **Joe Mele**; Warrior Won, XP44, **Christoper Sheehan**; and Wizard, Volvo 70, **David Askew**.*

Members In The News

Stan Honey

Recording Breaking Innovator Receives World Sailing President's Development Award

Since 2008, the President's Development



Award has been awarded to an individual for their work or involvement in developing the sport of sailing nationally or internationally.

Stan Honey received the award from World Sailing President, Kim Andersen, as he has continuously looked forward, developing the presentation of the sport on television as well as being one of the most accomplished sailors.

As a sailor, Honey won the Volvo Ocean Race as navigator, set numerous world records and currently navigates on *Comanche*.

Throughout his career, Honey has used his engineering background to create breakthrough television graphics that have enhanced the production levels of sailing. In 2013, Honey was responsible for creating GPS based imaging for the America's Cup and continues to refine the technology for wider use. For his efforts, Honey was presented with an Emmy Award in 2013.

Source: World Sailing

Art Santry

JOHN B. THOMSON JR. AWARD for Campaign Excellence

This award is a collaborative effort between the New York Yacht Club and the Storm Trysail Club and is presented to honor **John B. Thomson Jr.**

As a past Commodore of STC, a past Trustee of NYYC and an active member of both clubs, John Thomson, with his successive *Infinity's*, has been a remarkable and distinguished part of the worldwide competitive sailing scene for over 35 years. Fans and friends of John wish this trophy to be awarded to individuals

whose campaign characteristics embody those of the Thomson/*Infinity* campaign including the following traits: Corinthian spirit, Sportsmanship, Competitiveness, International in scope, Sustainability, Camaraderie, Hospitality, Inshore and Offshore racing, and Overall Excellence.

Trustees from the New York Yacht Club, Storm Trysail Club and the Thomson family have selected the 2017 winner to be:

Art Santry, Temptation-Oakcliff



Art Santry with the John B. Thomson, Jr., Award After Presentation By NYYC Commodore Phil Lotz. Photo courtesy of John Fisher.

(Further comment from **John C Fisher**, past Commodore Storm Trysail Club and President Storm Trysail Foundation) It is our collective opinion that Art and his program embodies the spirit and intention of the Thomson Trophy.

NYYC Awards
Citation presented by NYYC Commodore **Phil Lotz**

Southern Station

The Wirth M. Munroe Race: Two Weeks and Counting

There's still time to enter the 61st annual Wirth M. Munroe Race. The 60-mile coastal sprint starts the morning of

December 1, 2017 off Government Cut in Miami and finishes off the Palm Beach Inlet. The race is true test for sailors of all stripes, from Grand Prix racers to cruiser-racers.



Current entries include **Austin and Gwen Fragomen's** Volvo 70 *Warrior-Team Interlodge*, **Steve and Heidi Benjamin's** modified TP52 *Spookie* and **George Collins' Tripp** 62 *ChessieRacing*. A growing contingent of local teams including **Anson Mulder's** 24 *Heures* and Event Chair **Tom Bowler's** *Escapade II* will make for strong PHRF fleet.

All entrants will be rewarded with the legendary hospitality of the Sailfish Club of Florida and will have the opportunity to attend the post-race buffet dinner and awards ceremony.

Once again this year, the Sailfish Club of Florida is partnering with the Storm Trysail Club to organize the race. The Biscayne Bay Yacht Club has joined the Organizing Authority and will host the Skippers' Meeting on Thursday, November 30 at 1830. We are excited that Commodore Munroe of the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club will attend and say a

few words about his families historical connection to the race.SORC and Sailfish Club of Florida will oversee Race Management.

The Wirth M. Munroe Race will be scored as part of the SORC's Islands in the Stream Series, which also includes the Nassau Cup, the Lauderdale to Key West Race and the Miami to Havana Race.

For more information on the Wirth M. Munroe Race, please go to [Sailfish Club](#) or contact Sarah Gay at Sailfish Club, (561) 844-0206.

To enter the race, please go to [YachtScoring.com](#).

SORC "*Islands In The Stream*" Series

Reviving A Winter Tradition

The Storm Trysail Club is actively supporting the efforts of the [SORC](#) in promoting offshore sailing in South Florida along with Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, Coral Reef Yacht Club, Lauderdale Yacht Club and Sailfish Club of Palm Beach.

Many STC members remember fondly the halcyon days of ocean racing in the old SORC. The STC Southern Station invites you to relive the days of your youth!

The first race in the [SORC Islands in The Stream Series](#) is the [Nassau Cup](#), November 9, 2017, a tradition dating back to 1934.

Along with the Sailfish Club of Florida and the Biscayne Bay Yacht Club, STC is a member of the Organizing Authority for the annual [Wirth Munroe Race](#), December 1, 2017, from Miami to Palm Beach. The Sailfish Club of Florida

has made a special effort this year to assist skippers with dockage in Miami and, of course, the Sailfish Club is preparing its customary Rum Punch and extraordinary seafood buffet for the finish.

STC is also a member of the Organizing Authority of the Ft. Lauderdale to Key West Race, January 10, 2018, along with the Ft. Lauderdale Yacht Club. This annual classic down the Florida Keys presents unique challenges to navigators and crews. As Key West recovers from Hurricane Irma, we can expect an extra-special welcome in the Conch Republic.

The newly revived Miami to Cuba Race, February 14, 2018, the final and deciding event of the series, provides a most appropriate and fitting venue for the overall awards ceremony. The word is that in spite of Hurricane Irma, plans are well underway for a great race in 2018.

The Storm Trysail Club would like to commend the SORC and its Chair, Carol Ewing, for all they are doing to promote offshore sailing in South Florida. Such developments as the inclusion of the East Coast Racer/Cruisers Association (ECRCA) are helping to build the fleet once again into an avid group of boats and skippers.

Bill

Moriarty, STC Southern Station

Long Island Sound Station

International Masters Regatta



Larchmont Yacht Club & Storm Trysail Club team for the International Masters Regatta held at San Diego Yacht Club, October 20-22, 2017. (l to r) Barrett Holby, PC Rich du Moulin, Rear Commodore Ed Cesare, Peter Bauer, Gerard Girstl and Chris Reyling.

San Diego, Cal., October 22, 2017 - "A bit rusty" about summed up Rich du Moulin's remarks on how the team performed in the International Masters Regatta at San Diego Yacht Club. Rich's crew must have been dreaming of the Tasman Sea since four of his crew, Barrett and Peter onboard *Warrior Won*, Ed onboard *Triple Lindy* and Gerard onboard *Christopher Dragon* will be competing in the Boxing Day classic, the Rolex Sydney Hobart Race. Other STC members skipping entries in the Masters were Ted Lacey, representing San Francisco YC and Dave Irish, representing Little Travis Bay YC.

In true "Safety at Sea" form, the LYC/STC crew performed an epic rescue of a floundering jet ski pilot to be rewarded by rousing cheers from all the competitors at the awards banquet!

Chesapeake Bay Station

2017 Fall Regatta - *Sitella & Rattle N Rum* - Chesapeake ORC Champions - *Ramrod Farr* 30 International Champion



Farr 30s Race For The International Championship - Won By Rod Jabin's *Ramrod*

Annapolis, MD, October 22, 2017 - Nobody - neither sailors nor organizers - is happy when lack of wind puts a damper on a long-awaited regatta. Nonetheless, Mother Nature did not cooperate with the Storm Trysail Club's Annapolis Fall Regatta, which lost almost an entire weekend of windward-leeward racing due to light air on the mid-Chesapeake Bay. And two distance races scored on Friday allowed for just enough racing to allow the crowning of two new ORC Chesapeake champions.

After no races held on Saturday, Principal Race Officer **Dick Neville** found a window favorable enough to get in one race on Sunday to send the 15-boat fleet home on a positive note. It was the lone buoy race for the two ORC classes and was held in 5-6 knots of breeze, conditions the rating rule took into account.

"Sailing under ORC made today manageable because the rule adjusts your rating based on the wind and course," said **Ian Hill**, skipper of the XP44 *Sitella*. "The ORC office and US Sailing did a good job of making sure everyone had the proper rating and I thought the scoring was fair across the board."

Sitella took first place in both legs of the distance race held on Friday then finished second in the buoy race on Sunday to secure victory in ORC 1. It was the second straight year the Hampton Yacht Club entry captured class honors at the Annapolis Fall Regatta.

"I give the race committee a lot of credit for making some good decisions in difficult situations," said Hill, a resident of Chesapeake, Virginia. "They shortened the course on Friday, which was wise since the wind dropped out. They clearly made the right call in not racing on Saturday and were very fortunate to get one race away today."



Reach mark action - *Sitella* and *Rival*

Mark Wheeler served as tactician aboard *Sitella*, which enjoyed a good battle with another XP44 during the distance race - **Bob**

Cantwell's Rival - who was runner-up in the 18-nautical mile tour of the bay that took the fleet around government marks.

"Mark did a terrific job of calling the shifts on both days. He consistently put the boat on the correct side of the course, which was not easy to do," Hill said.

Final results in ORC 2 were not determined until a protest was resolved in Sunday's race between *Slush Fund*, **Jim Connelly's** J/111, and **Mike Beasley's** GP 26 *Rattle N Rum*. *Slush Fund* was found to be at fault for not keeping clear on a downwind leg, and so was disqualified, giving the victory to *Rattle-n-Rum*, who scored 2nd in both the first 14 mile and then the second 18 mile distance races on Friday.

"I don't like winning through a protest, but when there is an incident that warrants going into the room you have to follow through with it," Beasley said. "We thought it was clearly a foul and the protest committee agreed."

As for the racing conditions for the regatta, Beasley chuckled, saying "It was a classic Chesapeake Bay roll of the dice, light air, mind-boggling event. All credit to my team for doing a great job of keeping us in what little pressure there was. We did a lot of work over the summer to get the systems sorted on the boat, made some small changes here and there to get things improved."

The Farr 30 class conducted its International Championship as part of the Annapolis Fall Regatta with Neville and his race committee volunteering to conduct an extra day of buoy racing for the class on Thursday. **Rod Jabin's** *Ramrod* won the title, due in part by getting

the gun in all three windward-leeward races held that day in 9-12 knot southerly winds and thus having a strong start to the event.

Jabin then steered *Ramrod* to a runner-up result in the distance race then survived a third in Sunday's light air gambit to edge the Canadian entry *HeadFirst* 3 by 1 ½ points. Skipper **Peter Toombs** and his team from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island won the distance race and placed either second or third in the four buoy races.

"We sailed very well on Thursday and thank goodness we did," said Jabin, repeat winner of Farr 30 class at the Annapolis Fall Regatta.

"Peter and his guys from Canada were fast and sailed very well. I was lucky to hold on."

Ramrod got caught on the wrong side of a big wind shift and could not recover during the distance race. The Annapolis-based team was winning when the wind suddenly died and allowed a couple of trailing boats to pass.

"We sailed into a hole and the whole fleet inverted," Jabin said. "That is what is so challenging about sailing in light air on the Chesapeake Bay. When the wind is shifting as much as 40 degrees it can be difficult."

For complete results and additional information, please see the event website at: [YachtScoring](#)

All photos courtesy of SpinSheet Magazine

Offshore Station

Richard Matthews, a Storm Trysail Club member from the UK, shared this report

published in his home club's annual magazine, West Mersey YC Molliette. I think his fellow STC members will enjoy reading of his exploits in the Caribbean and the UK.

Lee Reichart, Editor

What A Season!

Richard Matthews reviews a most successful season

2017 Highlights

Heineken Regatta St Maarten - 1st in class

The Voile St Barth's - 1st in class

Antigua Sailing Week - 3rd In Class

Cowes Panerai Classic Yacht Regatta

*1st in class - 1st overall long offshore race
(Stella Scorpio)*

*Around the Goodwins Race - 1st in class 1st
overall*

Ramsgate Week - 1st in class 1st overall

*Ramsgate Regional IRC Championship - 1st in
class 1st overall*

Fastnet Race - 22nd in fleet (360 starters)

*Fastnet Race - RORC Denis Doyle Trophy R.
Matthews (22 Fastnets)*

*EAORA Buckley Goblets - 1st in class 1st overall
(14th overall win)*



Oystercatcher XXX1 rounding a mark during 2017 Antigua Sailing Week

Our season started with the decision to ship our 39 foot Tom Humphreys designed Oystercatcher XXX1 to the Caribbean and partially escape the UK winter with some warm weather racing.

There are numerous Caribbean regattas but with crew and time constraints we opted for the Heineken Regatta in St Maarten, the Voile St Barth's and Antigua Sailing Week. Peters and May shipped Oystercatcher from Southampton to Tortola in the BVI, followed by a 200-mile delivery to Antigua, our Caribbean home base.

The 3 day Heineken event started with a race around the island of St Maarten, the predominant feature of which is a 9 mile NE beat up the Anguilla Channel. Racing is under the Caribbean Sailing Association CSA rating system, a secret measurement rule, similar to IRC. WMYC's own golden girl, Olympic Gold Medalist **Saskia Clarke** was sailing with us for the first time, calling tactics, while YC member 18 year old **Hamish Cock** was doing his 4th season with us as bowman. Inevitably we

came together with several of the yachts with whom we would cross tacks throughout the Caribbean season.

Bernie Wong, a dentist from Antigua with "Taz" a Richael Pugh 37 was closely matched to Oystercatcher but we soon learned that the boats to beat were "Kick em Jenny" and "Lazy Dog" a pair of well sailed Melges 32's. We could extend upwind but the 32's, with their oversize asymmetric chutes, were amazingly fast downwind and could almost always run us down and overtake on the final run home. Pretty impressive when we were not exactly slow and would typically be doing 16-18 knots ourselves! Under CSA we would be giving the Melges 32's around 40 seconds an hour whereas under IRC they would have been giving us over 2 minutes - but hey "dis am de Caribbean mon".

The 3 day Heineken regatta is a brilliant event, the only slight compromise being berthing inside the lagoon, via waiting for the opening of a road bridge leading to the airport with inevitable delays. We got lucky because "Lazy Dog" had the event won with Oystercatcher in 2nd place when she passed the wrong side of an exclusion mark on the final leg to the finish of the final race and subsequently retired giving us a lucky, and perhaps underserved, class win.

After the Heineken Oystercatcher returned to Antigua to be laid up ashore for 4 weeks before heading to the island of St Barth's for the five-day Voile Regatta 10-15 April. St Barths is rightly described at the St Tropez of the Caribbean with a waterfront lined with high end stores more like Beverly Hills than a tiny Caribbean island.

Our rented crew house shown on the Bookings.com website as adjacent to Gustavia harbour was in practice 10 miles away at the other end of the island! The Voile was very well organised with allocated berthing along the harbour wall, while parking, normally a nightmare in Gustavia, was neatly overcome by giving competitors exclusive access throughout the regatta. Racing around the outlying rocks and islands, often in water so clear we could see the bottom, was amazing. It's easy to see why St Barths has emerged as a major regatta destination as well as an ultra high end tourist location.

We were OK with the racing hanging in with consistent 2nd and 3rd places with the two Melges 32's dominating. In the final race, we with one time WMYC cadet week winner, now America's Cup and Volvo commentator, **Andy Green** calling strategy, rounded the penultimate mark in next to no wind, and took a huge flyer and sailed at 90° from the course finish in search of breeze. It worked and we sailed around the whole fleet to win the race. The two Melges 32's were so far ahead that they missed the new breeze altogether and finished joint last. The following final days racing was abandoned due to lack of wind and with no discards we won our class and, as with the Heineken, it was better to be lucky than good.

2017 was the 50th anniversary of Antigua Sailing Week which for us is very much a home from home, owning a property on the island and having been knighted by the Government. The format for Sailing Week has changed over the years and perhaps not for the better. In years past a 200 plus fleet would sail to Dickinson Bay for the most amazing overnight anchorage and beach party in the

sailing world. Music played, rum flowed and we would routinely see members of the West Indian cricket team having a knock about with kids on the beach mid party.

In recent years, the regatta is centered around Falmouth and English Harbours with a simple out and back, around laid marks format. The good news is there is still a lay day midweek with the opportunity for a round of golf and a lazy lunch for us oldies and rum infused beach frolics and the legendary wet tee-shirt completion for the party animals. Steve and Debbie Johnson joined the crew and perhaps surprisingly opted for the oldies day out, although I'm sure Steve really wanted to be judging those tee-shirts!

Oystercatcher sailed well and we desperately needed a win in the final race. We were over the line early OCS with a late call to return despite which we were first by the weather mark. Alas we were not far enough ahead and with a screaming run home the Melges 32's finally had their revenge for the first two regattas and dropped us to third for the week. There are so many regattas in the Caribbean these days that entries are generally down but Antigua is still rightly regarded as the yachting capital of the Caribbean. With the sad news of recent hurricane damage to several of the other islands Antigua's tourism and yachting activities are likely to be on the increase in 2018.

Oystercatcher was shipped home and underwent a keel change to a 400kg lighter iron fin/lead bulb low C of G lead bulb to hopefully further improve her overall performance for the UK season. Meanwhile

after a few seasons ashore we recommissioned Scorpio, our beloved family Stella, for the Levington Classic Regatta and then to the Solent for the Cowes Panerai Classic Regatta. Very strong winds were forecast for the major event of the week, a race around the Isle of Wight. The course was changed to take the fleet out of the eastern Solent, around the Nab Tower, and back upwind the length of the Solent to a buoy off Yarmouth, and back to Cowes, a distance of around 30 miles.

As expected by early afternoon the blow started, quickly increasing to 28 knots, with a vicious wind over tide sea. All credit to our regular bowman **Matt Ferris** we somehow managed to change to a working jib and I can honestly say that in all her 50 years Scorpio, or any Stella, had never sailed faster upwind in such testing conditions. We set a spinnaker for the run home and with breaking waves took it down within 60 seconds before disaster would surely have struck. The run home with a poled-out jib gave us control to get into shallow water out of the worst of the foul tide and to our surprise our competitors gave us a round of applause as we entered the marina. We won the race overall and until the finish were unaware that over 50% of the fleet had retired. The Panerai is an event where there are prizes for everything and having won our class for the week it took three of us to carry the trophies home. Editor's Note: If you're unfamiliar with the Stella design check out the [class website](#).

Back aboard Oystercatcher for Ramsgate Week, it was first time out with a new keel which appeared to be well able to carry a small IRC rating increase. Ramsgate has long been a personal favourite of mine having first

taken part in 1973 when we beat Edward Heath's yacht Morning Cloud into second place to win the Ramsgate Gold Cup. Over the years several of the locals have become firm friends. My Oyster 82 Midnight served as our mother ship and the race area with infinite course variety is barely 20 minutes from the dock. Little wonder that the Royal Temple YC has the largest and most active IRC fleet on the East Coast. With a super crew including Saskia and Hamish, with the exception of the Gold Cup, we won every element of the regatta overall including overall wins in the Around the Goodwins, the Eastern Region IRC Championship and Ramsgate Week itself.

Oystercatcher has twin rudders and by the end of Ramsgate we had some concern about excessive movement in the top bearings. Geoff Hunt attended in Ramsgate with spares but it proved impossible to change bearings with the boat afloat. Our priority was to have the boat 100% for the upcoming Fastnet Race so we abandoned Cowes Week, returned to Fox's for a haul out, eventually getting to Cowes mid Cowes Week. This was to be my 22nd Fastnet with a crew of eight, myself, **Alan Brook** - navigator, **Hamish Cock** - bowman, **Geoff Hunt** - watch leader and **Saskia Clarke** - tactician i.e. no less than 5 WMYC members aboard. We must have had one of the most experienced crews in the fleet because between the 8 of us we had more than 50 offshore races of over 600 miles. Alan, Geoff and I had done the severe weather 1979 Fastnet together, and given Oystercatcher is just under 39 feet and very light, with nothing to prove, the crew unanimously agreed that we would not start with a heavy weather forecast.

With a light to moderate forecast we were

happy to join the 360+ yacht fleet, the only slight negative being the prospect of a 350 mile beat to the rock. The first challenge of an upwind start is that the smaller yachts, including Oystercatcher, wouldn't get around Portland Bill before the tide turned foul. In '79 I hit the rocks off Portland trying to cut the corner and that didn't work. This time we opted to stay 6 miles out but it was still slow going. We stayed offshore down channel with about half the fleet, the others staying close inshore. With hindsight, this roll of the dice didn't work and by the time we reached Land End we knew that the inshore guys had the best of it. Alan did his best to route us around the separation zone off Land End that was in effect a virtual mark of the course. With every yacht having a yellow brick GPS tracker we knew big brother would be watching.



Oystercatcher XXX1 beating to Fastnet Rock

We did our best upwind across the Irish Sea, and with the wind rising to over 20 knots we rounded the Fastnet Rock at 3 a.m. after two and half days upwind. As this stage, we were around 110th in fleet on corrected time, in the top third perhaps but with a lot of yachts we would like to be beating well ahead. Reflecting on Fastnet rounds of years past we had been around in a full gale, a flat calm and everything in between. Daylight roundings are the nicest because in most weather conditions a spectator fleet of locals will come out to offer encouragement and you can see the Irish Coast. One year we hailed a

youngster in a RIB, gave him a camera, and he snapped us rounding the rock and handed the camera back which was fun.

This year we rounded in about 10 knots of wind but with a forecast for a lot more so we went with our heavy asymmetric chute, a good call because within 2 hours we were flying. The course to the Scillies was perfect for an asymmetric and as the wind increased so did our speed. We covered 120 miles in less than 9 hours with lots of 18-20 knots, and with a top speed of 24 knots it was absolute full throttle champagne sailing. At the Scillies, with a new course around more separation zones and on towards Plymouth, we hardened up and changed to a jib top and staysail with one reef in the main for balance. With this sail combination and with Geoff Hunt on the helm we touched 21 knots down the back of a wave, superfast in fore and aft sail trim.

It really was a quick run back from the rock, while tired and wet it was easily the best sail of the season. By the finish, on corrected time, we were up to 22nd in a fleet of 360 yachts so a good result, especially considering our position at the rock. The crew were all brilliant and I was very pleased to be awarded the RORC Dennis Doyle trophy for the skipper with the most Fastnets, in my case 22.

You can't top a good Fastnet but Oystercatcher returned to the East Coast to win the Buckley Goblets overall for the 14th time, this year finishing in Ramsgate because of some argy bargy with officials in Ostend about the colour of diesel earlier in the year. Sad that the WMYC IRC fleet are now about as rare as unicorns. On the cruising front, we enjoyed a nice week out of Naples, followed

by a regatta in Palma and a week cruising Menorca aboard Midnight our lovely Oyster 82, complete with on deck movies!

Looking ahead I've been offered the loan of a new Judel Vrolik designed 42ft racer for the Caribbean season, an offer too good to miss, so here we go again!

Sir Richard Matthews

Triple Lindy World Tour

Rolex Middle Sea Race - Saying Good-By And Hello



Triple Lindy Rolex Middle Sea Race Crew: (L to R) Kent Paisley, Patrick la Roche, Pete Ramsdale, John Mackay, Jay O'Brien, Sean McDermott, Rob Trainor, Joe Mele, Rory MacDonald, Giancarlo Simeoli

The Rolex Middle Sea Race which started on Saturday October 21 marked the 4th and final leg in our 16 month "Triple Lindy World Tour" adventure which started with the 2016

Newport Bermuda Race and was followed by the 2016 Sydney Hobart and 2017 Fastnet Race. Unlike the prior 3 races, if you do a web search of navigational tactics for this race, few if any articles can be found. Over the past several years we had learned that pre-race navigational study typically paid big dividends so when one of our regular crew couldn't make this race we opted to break with our corinthian tradition and invite an Italian professional sailor with 7 of these races and countless miles racing in this part of the Mediterranean under his belt. It proved to be a wise decision as we made the counter clockwise loop around Sicily and some of its surrounding Islands and navigated the rapidly changing wind and sea conditions.



Triple Lindy Starts At The Leeward End

There are many distinctive aspects of this race. The first is the amazingly picturesque architecture of Valletta, the starting and finishing point of the race. As you jockey for position at the start in tight confines of Grand Harbour in Valletta you're surrounded by medieval fortresses constructed by the Knights of St John and beautiful baroque palaces. We had an auspicious start at the left side of the line and had favorable position on the other 24 boats in our IRC 5 fleet. After rounding the

first course mark located outside the harbour breakwater, chutes went up for a short downing leg before the first long reach to the SE tip of Sicily.

A high pressure system moved in and by late that first night and the whole fleet drifted from one zephyr to the next. We went to our reliable windseeker, aka spin staysail flown off our sprit to keep up some momentum and make some early gains on our competition. When the breeze filled in the next morning we were able to make good progress up the eastern coast of Sicily then tack across to the SW coast of Calabria where we stayed as close to the beach as possible to avoid adverse currents in the Straits of Messina. At sunset on day 2 we pushed through some patches of light air north of the Straits and headed for Stromboli, a small island in the Tyrrhean sea with an active volcano.

We rounded Stromboli by the early hours of Monday morning and then began the fight upwind in building conditions. As a front moved across the course we transitioned from light air sailing to dealing with the most challenging conditions that we would see in our 16 months of racing. The seas soon resembled a gulf stream crossing when the winds are opposing the current and squalls are rolling through but rather than lasting 6 or 8 hours these conditions persisted for the next 2 days. We managed to clear the race mark of Favignana to leeward while on a heavily favored starboard tack and made big gains. As we checked the position reports on the race website we saw that more and more boats were retiring from the race, so while pushing forward we took a conservative approach. We put reefs in long before squalls

approached and quickly moved to our # 4 jib. We were glad to be sailing on a Swan in these conditions as we knew from experience that the boat was incredibly solid. She proved her metal again when we we fell off the face of an approx. 20-30 foot vertical wave in free fall with 4 crew on the foredeck at the end of a sail change. The boat was unscathed but the crew had plenty of bumps and bruises. For the first time in the 10+ years of ocean racing history of the boat and crew we opted for PB&J sandwiches instead of a hot dinner.

Every time the wind abated briefly and we contemplated shaking out reefs or changing to a larger jib, our Italian crew member would caution us to wait til we cleared a certain part of an island's coast or a relatively shallow underwater contour. Sure enough 10 minutes later the wind would increase by 10-15 knots. A great many boats were near us for the start of this leg but we slowly pulled clear of all but two.



Big Seas On Reach To Malta

It was evident by 2100 Monday evening that Triple Lindy was well placed in our class as we rounded the west coast of Sicily and began the sleigh ride downwind in gale force conditions en route to the turning mark of Pantelleria. Once we cleared it and headed DDW to Lampedusa we quickly realized that a

poled out #4 jib was a much more stable and faster VMG sail plan then trying to tack downwind in 30+ knots with our A4. We saw occasional gusts up to 46 kts and surfed as fast as 12.5 kts.

By nightfall, the crew was excited to see Lampedusa Island off to port, and have the island block some of the 30kt gusts during the transit around the south side. With over 94NM left to the finish, all hands knuckled down for the bumpy and wet remaining leg at a nearly close hauled point of sail for the remainder of Tuesday night and into Wednesday morning. There was a sense of relief and excitement as Malta hove into view just after sunrise and the final downwind leg was negotiated with the A4 reaching in 30 kts and surfing waves-on the edge the whole way.



The Swan 44 Triple Lindy Finishes Her Last Race With A Class Win

A letterbox dousing of the chute went smoothly with all hands on deck and one gybe took us into Valetta harbor, the finish and an emotional welcome from our families. With over half the fleet retiring it was a worrying time for them, but despite bruises,

exhaustion and hunger the crew returned elated about our first place finish in IRC Class Five in our last race on the Swan 44. This boat has proven how good Swan yachts are in thousands of ocean miles - she'll be missed by a crew who adore her.

We hope to develop the same relationship with our new Cookson 50, but she's got a lot to live up to.

Joe Mele,
Owner/Skipper and Jay O'Brien, Navigator