

# A Change Of Shirt

## THE FOWEY OFFSHORE POWERBOAT RACE, 26TH MAY 1985.

After the long trek down to the Cornish village of Fowey, 38 powerboat crews were greeted with the news on Saturday morning, 25th May, that the force 6 winds had whipped up the seas to a pretty intimidating condition and with forecasts of even higher winds Officer of the Day, Terry Herring, announced a postponement of the race until Sunday, 26th May.

The news for Sunday was much more encouraging and the offshore fleet powered off to do battle over a slightly shortened course under the watchful eye of UKOBA safety officer, Mike Slack, perched in his coastguard hut on the cliffs aided by his new assistant Hazel Cox. The 38 powerboats provided a nice easy exercise in time keeping for Geoff Pinches and Eileen Bloomfield in readiness for the larger fields expected as the season progresses.

### A Change of Shirt!

After the success by 'Propeller Shirts' in the opening race at Portsmouth, the tables were turned at Fowey in the rougher seas by 'Double Two Shirts', the 40ft Shead designed monohull which looked in fine fettle in the hands of Tim Hill, Richard Lawson, Viv Williams and newcomer Jan Hicks. The 28ft Phantom 'The Warrior' lasted for just one lap and left the field clear for the two shirt sponsored boats. Both crews of these two huge boats travelled round Britain and, as usual in these conditions, the 'Propeller Shirts' Cougar cat was not entirely at ease and always remained 1-1½ minutes behind 'Double Two' throughout the whole race. Peter and Jan Armstrong in 'Brut' were well and truly cast aside by the two mighty leaders and 'Brut' crossed the finish line over 13 minutes in arrears.

### Time takes an early turn

Unusually in these conditions 'Clarke Group Racing' were headed at the end of the first lap by the Phantoms 'Agfa Bluebird' and 'G & W Racing' with yet more Phantoms in the guise of 'Air Canada Services' and 'Shoestring' filling 5th and 6th places. The second lap saw the picture change completely as John Clarke and Len Fergusson steered their boat irrepressibly to the front to forge the path for the remaining five laps just a few seconds ahead of Tim Grimshaw and Eric Smillie in 'G & W Racing'.

### The 'Agfa Demise'

'Agfa' came to a halt with a smashed trunk section to the port engine completely losing gear case and prop (and all) causing much ballyhoo in the aftermath as a result of the alert ear of an enterprising reporter who thought that such a happening was unique in the sport (it would appear). It seemed that the focus of the nation had descended upon

powerboat racing and 'Agfa Bluebird' in particular over the next two days much to the amusement of those of us who have deposited such debris over various parts of the south coast of England and Europe, to boot.

### Back Breaking

The heavy pounding took its toll, none more so than 'Priory Club Sussex' which had to pull out after three laps because the long suffering spine of Philip Sired could no longer take the punishment whilst father, Harry, approaching 60 years of age, leapt out of the boat 'as fresh as a daisy'! Whereas in the case of 'D.M.S.', 'Shoestring' and 'Robin Hood Racing' it was the equipment that failed to enjoy the proceedings, rather than the bodies that they carried. 'D.M.S.' and 'Shoestring' toiled their way round to finish 10 minutes behind 'Clarke Group' leaving 'Robin Hood' a further 15 minutes behind. Brian Champion remarked after the race that they were just out for a Sunday afternoon cruise, thanks to Phil and Harry Sired who had very generously loaned two props when the 'Robin Hood' team discovered a hairline crack in their own, a true example of the friendship and camaraderie that exists in our sport.

### Perseverance Pays Off

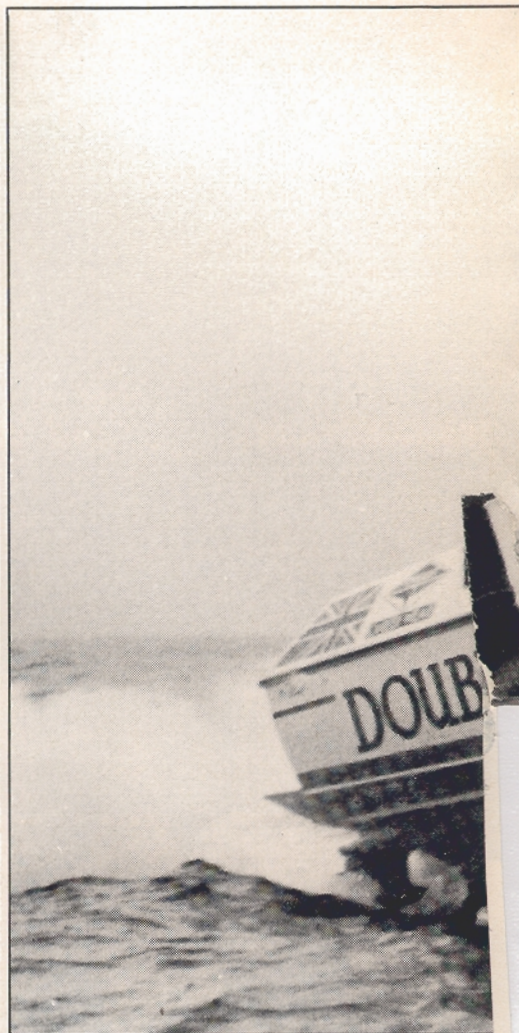
A feature of the 2 litre class was the lesson to be learned by persevering. Of the 15 boats which crossed the start line only 8 finished the course, the last 4 being 'South Godstone Sports Boats' (evidently still requiring more weight forward), 'Hospitality Inn' (evidently needing even more weight and more weight forward), 'Assagai' (the Allenby brothers still learning their trade in the 21ft Phantom), 'Miss Fitz' (Alan Gorry feeling his way in his first race in the new Gordon Wright cat).

### Casualties Galore

Other contenders in the 2 litre race were 'Quick Elections' who blasted into a dynamic lead throughout the first lap only to slip back down the field when his bow tank would not empty, in a pandemonium of spray and rain David Lees lost his visor and the bearing carrier broke on his engine so David was forced to join the ever growing list of failures, along with 'Dormy Leisure' (bent prop), 'Maybank South' (broken covers and broken throttle), 'Miss Behaviour' (lost power), 'Aureon Entertainments' (lost steering nut) 'Persuader' (engine trouble).

### Whoopees for Hooper

John Yeoman and Kim Leachman in 'Hooper and Ashby' caused a riot on the cliffs as they came through for a breathtaking finish having been 6th at the end of the 1st lap, 5th at the end of the 2nd lap, 4th at the end of the 3rd lap, 3rd at the end of the 4th and 5th laps and then just pinched the first place from 'Spiers and Rolfe' causing, in the process their entire team of supporters, which included designer Joe Donahoo, builder Gordon Wright plus the whole back-up team, to leap up in the air and fall down the cliff face! Graham and Nicky Peck in



the Cougar 'Spiers and Rolfe' had quietly settled in behind 'Poco Homes' for the whole of the race only to take the lead on the final lap as 'Poco Homes' suffered from power trim failure which took away their vital edge in performance, then to Graham's amazement the 'Hooper and Ashby' boat burst through to win by a nose. Last year's overall class III champions, Steve Bourn and Tony Toll in 'Poco Homes', suffered the set-back of seeing two of their rivals creep by on the last lap but they still managed 15 points for 3rd place keeping them in contention for the 1985 championship, moving them closer to the current overall leader Joe Marengi who only scored 13 points for taking 'Langans' to 4th position in this particular race.

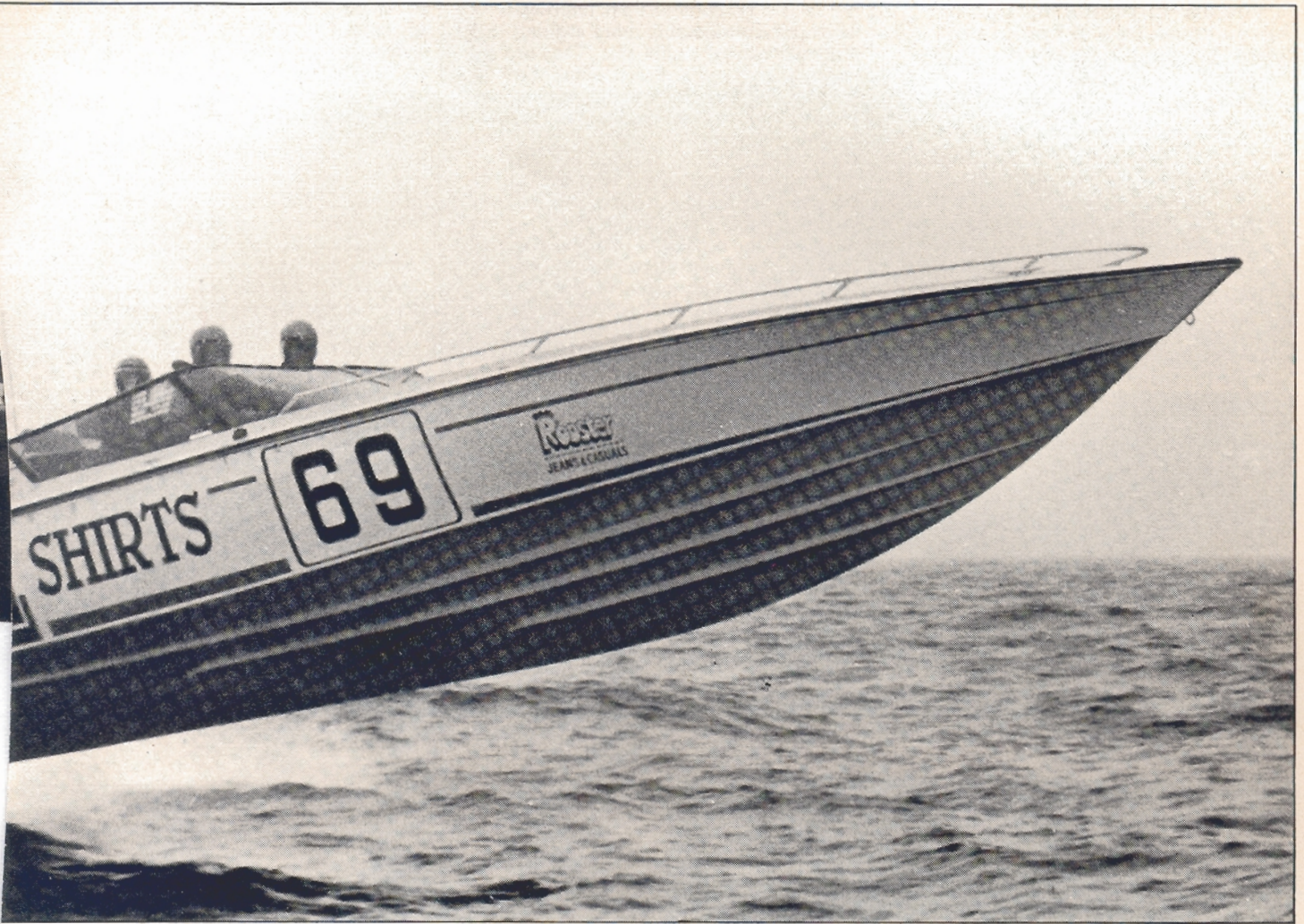
### Gordon Beams

Gordon Wright seems to be the manufacturer of the moment as his boats hold first, second and third place in the overall British and UKOBA championships as well as taking three out of the first four positions in the 2 litre class at Fowey.

### The Spiders 'Webb'

In Cruiser racing it seems that whenever Alan and Nigel Webb cross the start line

**POWERBOAT AND WATERSKIING**



Double 2 Shirts in the hands of Tim Hill, Richard Lawson, Viv Williams and newcomer Jan Hicks, drove to victory at Fowey. Photo: Tony Pearmain.

then they decimate the opposition and they seem hell-bent on another championship this year as they literally spun a web round all the rest of the opposition and dashed off into the distance to win the B class cruiser race by over 40 minutes from 'Manhattan'. The next Cruiser home, some 10 minutes behind 'Flying Flipper' was 'Kirstie Koo' with Charles Sinclair and David Gallaher in Sports B, who had settled in behind 'Temptation' for two laps before making their bid for glory on the penultimate lap having fulfilled their pre-race forecast that they certainly would not succumb to 'Temptation'. The 'Goodmans Hi-Fi/-Penthouse Magazine' boat in its second outing in Sports Cruiser A had nothing to contend with except to put some more mileage on their 270hp Iveco engines but they demonstrated the qualities of their latest acquisition by leaving boats using much greater horsepower in their wake.

#### A Tidy Team

The UKOBA organising team clicked efficiently during the race, Terry Herring seemed to have got the course right, new UKOBA Press Officer, Steve Ansell, did a fine job and obtained considerable coverage even without the contribution from the 'Agfa' boat. Eddie Ireland

eloquently handled TV and press interviews and showed that this is very much her forté; John Connell's marshalls acquitted themselves well and Norman Taylor and his band of scrutineers were hit by an interesting new challenge when they found that the might of the world's media had descended upon Fowey, and instead of checking boats Norman had to resort to diplomatic denials. In conclusion it would seem that the lesson most of us learned was that instant fame carries with it a heavy burden of responsibility and when the dramas of the Fowey race subside and memories fade a little, we shall probably all acknowledge that the power of the press will have lifted the sport of Offshore Powerboat racing up a 'notch or two' and will have harmed it 'not a jot'.

#### UKOBA Fowey Offshore Powerboat Race Results

**Class II:** Double 2 Shirts, T. Hill/J. Hicks/V. Williams/R. Lawson, 1.46.31, 48.18, Pos 1, UKOBA Pts 13; Propeller Shirts, M. Toleman/G. Toleman, 1.48.17, 47.39, Pos 2, UKOBA Pts 9; Brut, P. Armstrong/J. Armstrong/S. Higgs, 2.01.22, 42.28, Pos 3, UKOBA Pts 6.  
**Class IIIA:** Clarke Group Racing, J.

Clarke/L. Fergusson, 1.35.05, 42.96, Pos 1, Nat Pts 16, UKOBA Pts 16; G & W Racing, T. Grimshaw/E. Smillie, 1.35.16, 42.87, Pos 2, Nat Pts 12, UKOBA Pts 12; D.M.S., L. Hall/J. Cox, 1.45.09, 38.84, Pos 3, Nat Pts 9, UKOBA Pts 9.  
**Class IIIC:** Hooper & Ashby, J. Yeoman/K. Leachman, 1.46.26, 38.37, Pos 1, Nat Pts 22, UKOBA Pts 22; Spiers & Rolfe, G. Peck/N. Peck, 1.46.26, 38.37, Pos 2, Nat Pts 18, UKOBA Pts 18; Poco Homes, S. Bourn/T. Toll, 1.46.56, 38.19, Pos 3, Nat Pts 15, UKOBA Pts 15.  
**Class IIIB:** Capitol Marine, N. Keyser/M. Wills, 1.19.55, 31.78, Pos 1, Nat Pts 11, UKOBA Pts 11; Dellbuoy 2, D. Mortimore/K. Jordan, 1.28.03, 28.84, Pos 2, Nat Pts 7, UKOBA Pts 7.  
**Class NCA:** Goodmans Penthouse, D. Graham-Smith/A. Smith, 1.30.47, 27.97, Pos 1, Nat Pts 9, UKOBA Pts 10.  
**Class NCB:** Flying Flipper, A. Webb/G. Webb, 1.15.19, 33.72, Pos 1, Nat Pts 9, UKOBA Pts 10; Manhattan, R. Windmill/C. Swanepool/M. Cox, 1.59.25, 21.26, Pos 2, Nat Pts 6, UKOBA Pts 6.  
**Class SCB:** Kirstie Koo, C. Sinclair/D. Gallaher/P. Kidd, 1.25.27, 29.72, Pos 1, Nat Pts 9, UKOBA Pts 10; Temptation, W. Haycock/S. Hyler/T. Cordial, 1.32.49, 27.36, Pos 2, Nat Pts 6, UKOBA Pts 6.