

# ROUGH & TOUGH

By John Walker

With unfailing regularity, the elements conspire to bring about a highly uncomfortable last race on the British offshore calendar. With equal certainty, the Spithead Trophy Race was not for the feint-hearted and as the forecast gale 8 from the south east began to make its presence felt in the Port Hamble Marina, Officer of the day Clive Curtis took the only sensible decision possible and reduced the day's racing to a squirt around the cans in the western Solent, for the most part, in the sheltered lee of the Island shore.

From a running start westabout, the fleet of 27 assorted classes had a short hike from Salt Mead near Newtown to Sconce and across the Solent to the little Delta Kempsafe buoy, off Beaulieu. Back east they came to West & East Lepe buoys before the classes split, the bigger boats going on the N.E. Gurnard, Hill Head, Gurnard and back to Salt Mead while the Class 3 and Family Cruisers turned at E. Lepe. Lap lengths were 22.8 nautical miles and 15.5 nautical miles respectively and the big boats had four laps to total 91.2 miles, Class 3 had four laps to total 62 miles and the cruisers just half that at two laps and 31 miles.

## Start delayed

Tony Biggins in Xanthus held the start back from 13.00 hours when it was originally scheduled until the small boat fleet had picked their way delicately across the big, confused seas off Calshot and the field eventually got away at 13.09 and 45 seconds. Cunningham and Bontoft in the Cigarette 36, I Like It Too, approached from way too far north, only readjusting at the last minute to shoot the gate and Ted Toleman, in Michael Doxford's bigger Cigarette 40 Limit Up came by, well back, as he shorted out the trim on his first ride in a big monohull. Ray McEnhill had Miss

Pearlcorder in contention, as did John Craxford in Romans Sabre but in the absence of both Apache and Pobjoy Mint, it was left to a very disorientated British Buzzard to do a stupid by the buoy and chase the field, a lowly position from which she never recovered.

## Not surprising

R.H.S. had also failed to materialise from Poole, a not surprising fact, due to the weather and Sinclair also produced a no-show in Jus Gus, trying desperately to get the bigger Fairey, Gus scuttled in time, but missing out. Thus did the bigger classes start with only five boats. With the Armstrong rig in prime contention for Lancing Marine Class 3 Championship honours, their attendance was almost mandatory, as was that of Tele Man, but for Pobjoy Mint 2 and Peter Bloomfield, the story was one of lateness all through the day and the big Stapley cat eventually entered the rolls of combat a good 15 minutes late, having experienced difficulties en route from Hamble. Among the cruisers, the big and unwieldy looking Teale cat, Scarab, was the best boat on a rough day and came ploughing through a class of nine Family boats, although just which family might buy her was open to debate, as she looks fairly commercial, to say the least.

First reported casualty was the quad outboard rig of McEnhill, this time running with Chris 'Mushroom' Noble running the charts. At 13.20 they were reported running off the plane and they later retired without completing one lap, to end a disappointing if formative season. Fifteen minutes later, the Bontoft/Cunningham rig was seen departing quietly whence it had come and it was left for Toleman to run safely round to take the Class 1/2 honours if he could but while the bigger boats were experiencing a mildly uncomfortable ride up the mainland shore, the smaller Class 3 rigs were dancing about like marionettes. Phantasia was the first to go, leaving Howard Wretham to ponder the fates of men who tempt providence while

next boat out of contention was the cruiser, Relcraft Safari, which barely made Sconce before being sidelined, and plodded home in obvious distress.

## Nowhere fast

Terry Evans was going nowhere fast in Concorde so he pulled out the 3C boat and the cruiser Sherazade with Robin Champness aboard confided in a committee boat that she had the wrong propeller and opted out. By now, the head of the race was almost processional with Limit Up 2 leading Romans Sabre and British Buzzard and the strikingly well riding Nixdorf of Alastair Kendon heading International Factor, Tele Man, Aphrodisiac, Hot Gossip, Touch of Class, Moody Blu, Pobjoy Mint 2 and the little 3B Fayanagin, Scarab led Coldix and Fjord Knipa in the cruiser race.

Somewhere to the west of the course, Tony Leftwich and Peter Croucher got their act wrong in International Factor and flipped the cat in quite a big way but for the rest, the race had already shaken out the order. Biggest dice of all was between Tele Man and Hot Gossip, for second and third in Class 3 with the Powell/Brown team cutting out the best part of 15 seconds of lead to be beaten narrowly by their great rival, Peter Jones, in the last lap run around but noone could get near Kendon, who has always looked to be one of the tidiest drivers around and in an obviously well set up boat.

## Interesting antics

For the big guns, the inevitability of a Toleman victory was slightly nullified by some bone cracking antics in the lumpier parts of the course and then, the spectacle of the big boat running itself out of gas on the line, to receive the total ignominy of being swept past the line on the wrong side of the buoy, and only after Romans Sabre had passed to take the flag, did Nick Cripps realise his monumental error of killing all the fuel taps.

The race to end all races may be still a week away but for most of the people concerned here, the end could not come soon enough.

## SPIRHEAD TROPHY RESULTS

3 Nixdorf — A.Kendon/P.Baldwin — 1.22.07 — 45.30kts; 3 Tele Man — P.Jones/A.Gordon — 1.33.43 — 39.69kts; 3 Hot Gossip — N.Powell/C.Brown — 1.33.52 — 39.63kts.  
1/2 Romans Sabre — J.Craxford/C.Kaye — 1.45.02 — 52.09kts; 1/2 Limit Up 2 — T.Toleman/N.Cripps — 1.47.31 — 50.89kts; 1/2 British Buzzard — R.Allen/J.Cave — 2.05.25 — 43.63kts.  
Cr. Scarab — M.Andrews/N.D.Pratt — 1.07.00 — 27.76kts; Cr. Coldix — D.Wolstenholme/I.Toll — 1.11.46 — 25.01kts; Cr. Fjord Knipa — J.Moore/C.Weaver — 1.24.30 — 22.01kts.

