

OFFSHORE POWERBOAT RACING

Les Trophées Motonautiques de Deauville

THIS RACE, held on Saturday, 13th September, was a strange event in some ways, although a very enjoyable one. Perhaps the strangest aspect, as it was a French race, was that the field of eighteen boats, quite apart from being a rather small entry for a World Championship event, comprised one French boat, one Italian and sixteen British! One wondered for a moment whether the channel crossing had been a dream and one was still in reality back at Cowes or Hamble. Such thoughts could not persist for long, however, in the **luxuriously** French atmosphere of Deauville, which is a both lovely and very expensive French resort.

The race itself was run in very poor visibility and there was more than one competitor who did not succeed in finding his way around the course. Right at the beginning, a quarter of a mile or so from the start line, all the field bar two missed the first turning mark, taking a turn around a spectator boat by mistake. This was perhaps due to inadequacies of the briefing rather than the reduced visibility. Whatever the cause, the organisers (the Deauville Yacht Club and the Cruiser Club de France) decided to ignore the incident, which is perhaps understandable because who wants to disqualify 88 per cent of the competitors within the first five minutes? But one is tempted to ask how far this kind of laxity can be justified when World Championship points are at stake!

The obvious contenders for place honours at Deauville were Tommy Sopwith

(MISS ENFIELD), Francesco Cosentino (WHITE TORNADO), Tim Powell and Norman Barclay (U.F.O.), Pascoe Watson (AVENGER TOO) and Maurice Hardy (TELSTAR), with most people bent on a flutter splitting their shirts between Tommy and Francesco. When put to the test MISS ENFIELD once again brought home the bacon in fine style (an average speed of 40 m.p.h. in murky conditions with a nasty sea on the offshore leg is not bad by any standards), but the rest of the greyhounds, without exception, fell by the wayside, either for the very unusual reason that the driver was sick (WHITE TORNADO), or mechanical trouble (U.F.O. and AVENGER TOO), or because they missed a mark (TELSTAR). This allowed FORDSPEED (John Freeman) and FORDPOWER (Derek Morris), earlier regarded as only "second stringers", to slip into second and third places respectively. Incidentally, these two members of the now-famous "Ford team" demonstrated very clearly at Deauville how team tactics can pay off. By keeping together, on parallel courses just in sight of each other, they increased their joint range of visibility by 50 per cent, giving them a big advantage over the other competitors.

No one appeared to have much difficulty in locating the **bateau feu** (L.H.I.) off Le Havre (**bateau feu** sounds so much more romantic than "lightship") nor yet the mark off Ouistreham. The mark boat off Cap d'Antifer seemed to cause a certain amount of consternation to some competitors as it was reported to be "on the move", but the biggest difficulty appeared to be in locating the mark at Iles St. Marcouf which admittedly was at the end of a long 38 miles leg.

In the end, only five out of the eighteen entries finished the race, Bernard Jelley in OH OH SEX taking fourth place overall and first in Class II, with John Frost's FIDUCIA lying fifth.

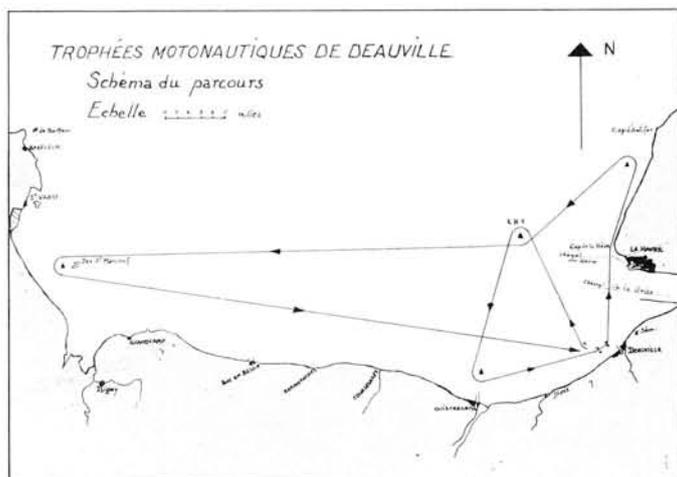
Torbay International

The Torbay International, which comprised two races, one for Classes I and II and one for Class III, was, like the curate's egg, good in parts. The weather (Saturday, 20th September) was fine though inclined to be misty, the sea conditions were just right, it was an interesting course, and there was a good turnout of Class I and II boats (23 to be exact), but Class III fielded only 12 starters.

The bad bits of the egg mainly concerned the organisation. Scrutineering was sketchy, Race Control, when it was located anywhere other than in the immediate vicinity of a peripatetic, paper-clutching official, was situated at a table in a crowded café, the Race Committee (Brixham Yacht Club) appeared to consider it irrelevant whether or not competitors completed the course correctly, no official results were posted—or, at least, none could be found, and, in a final paroxysm of wild abandon, at least five out of a dozen prizes were awarded to the wrong people. Luckily, despite its title, this event turned out to be a "family affair" and no foreign competitors were present to witness these deficiencies or to cause any trouble. The true-blue Britons who were inadvertently diddled out of their prizes, or received the wrong ones, were either blissfully unaware that anything was amiss (a state of mind quite conceivable due to the lack of any results list) or went home with a stiff upper lip determined not to "make a fuss".

The Class I and II race gave Tommy Sopwith his third successive win in MISS ENFIELD. Three weeks before he had led home the fleet in the Bollinger Goblet race, followed by another success at Deauville, reported above. Second came

The map shows the course of the Trophées Motonautiques de Deauville won by Tommy Sopwith.



John Caulcott in "Psychedelic Surfer" found his way across the Channel to Deauville—in the middle of the night!—then got lost going round the course. Photo: Maurice Crettenden.





Derek Smith in "Viva Tridente" put up a tremendous turn of speed at Torbay, and was the only boat to offer a serious challenge to Tommy Sopwith. But—alas!—his newly installed twin Volvo Penta engines were not properly run in and one of them jammed solid. Photo: Maurice Crettenden.



Francesco Cosentino's fabulous "White Tornado", known to be capable of 70 m.p.h. was joint favourite for the Deauville race, but had to retire when the driver was taken ill.

Photo: Maurice Crettenden.

Sir Max Aitken in GYPSY GIRL closely followed by the Hon. E. G. Greenall in GEE. Although unacknowledged (he was given the "second in class" prize) Class II was won by Bernard Jelley in OH OH SEX, which came fourth overall.

David Stableford in HELLFIRE chalked up another win in Class III, and was followed by Derek Bailey, new owner of VOLARE II, in second place and Kenny Kay (SEPIA) took third place. Colin Stewart in his A Class SCARLOT HARLOT gained the Index of Performance award.

Bristol Channel Trophy

As the final qualifying event in the Class III National Championship, the Bristol Channel Trophy (held on 14th September) should have been a very exciting affair but this year — although indeed there was excitement a-plenty — some of the gilt was taken off the gingerbread by the fact that John Campfield was already in an utterly impregnable position as the new Champion before this last qualifying race took place.

Nevertheless, twenty competitors (including John) arrived to do battle at Weston-Super-Mare. On this particular Sunday, the day after the Deauville race, it was bright and sunny off the French coast. The "fog" meanwhile having — apparently — drifted over the Bristol Channel. Which just goes to show that there ain't no justice! Visibility at times being down to a mile, the Bristol Channel Power Boat Association decided to shorten course and run three times round a triangular circuit from Weston to Steepholm island (about 5 miles offshore) to the English-Welsh lightship and back to Weston. This gave a total course distance of only 57 n. miles, which was probably just as well because, visibility apart, although the water looked deceptively calm in Weston Bay, further offshore a Force 2 to 3 wind blowing against a 7-knot current was throwing up a very nasty confused sea.

Due to tidal problems (there is a 35ft. rise and fall at Weston-Super-Mare and the water disappears like somebody pulled the plug out!) the race had to start at 8.30 a.m. It was difficult to judge who got into the lead early on as, in true Class III fashion, the competitors set off in a variety of directions, but by the end of the first circuit Martin Jensen in SCAVENGER was first past the Weston mark with JERSEY SUNSHINE (Peter Bloomfield) and WICKED ALF (Alf Bullen) a couple of minutes behind. They were followed by TAO BEHT, HULLABALOO and

BARTONIA X which immediately retired with an injured co-driver. BARTONIA X's retirement seemed to start the rot, because a little later Derek Love (YOUNG LOVE), himself in trouble, returned to port loaded down with SCAVENGER'S crew, SCAVENGER having split and turned over; BLU BLUD came in on one engine; three small boats found the going too tough, leaving Nobby Neivens in FLY GUY in undisputed command of A class; and SPORTING CHANCE retired with a split tank. Only one lap completed out of three, and the field already reduced to a third of its original size!

At the end of the second circuit the first four boats were in the same order — Jensen, Bloomfield, Bullen and Don Brightman in TAO BEHT. HULLABALOO, still next in line at this point, retired with a broken saddle, letting John Campfield's TEMTRESS into fifth position.

Finally SCAVENGER hove into view for the third time, undisputed winner of the Bristol Channel Trophy race by nine

minutes from JERSEY SUNSHINE.

WICKED ALF failed to put in an appearance (he was in fact, at that moment tied up to the Breaksea lightship, his co-driver having been injured) and third spot was taken by John Campfield's B Class TEMTRESS after a final "do-or-die dice" with TAO BEHT across Weston Bay.

Some time later Admiral of the A Class Fleet, Nobby Neivens, came across the horizon finishing his second circuit, and gratefully responded to the cries of "Come in No. 193, your time is up". All hats must be taken off to Nobby for his pluck and courage in pressing on in his baby Tremlett "whence all but he had fled", but something will soon have to be done about these A Class boats. One instinctively sheers away from the thought of yet another split in the classes, but perhaps some other arrangement can be thought of, such as a staggered start, which will at least give these small boats the feeling that they are living on a par with their larger and much faster sisters.

LETTERS

Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor, POWERBOAT magazine at 189, Victoria Street, London S.W.1. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters and does not necessarily agree with correspondents opinions.

89 Broadway,
Walsall, Staffs.

Dear Sir,

Could you please tell me where I can obtain plans of the one-seater "Winkle Picker". I do not know the manufacturers of this boat, but I do know that it is for an engine of not more than 12 h.p.

It is made of wood, and is about 8ft. long, and 3ft. wide at its widest point.

Yours faithfully,

S. C. POLLITT

(Ed. — Sorry, can't help. Maybe one of our readers can).

Pains-Wessex Ltd.
Air Sea Rescue Division
High Post, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Dear Sir,

"SAFETY AT SEA" FEATURE IN YOUR SEPTEMBER ISSUE

We have read with interest the feature on Safety at Sea which appeared in the September issue of your magazine, but feel that the section on distress signals, which refers to smoke signals, gives a very exaggerated range of visibility.

We believe that a smoke signal is unlikely to be seen at sea level for more than 1 to 3 miles at the most, and even from searching aircraft would most probably not be visible for more than 5 or 6 miles, except possibly under really ideal conditions.

They are certainly very useful, particularly for pinpointing one's position when aircraft are being used in a search, but it would probably be unwise to give the impression that they can be seen for as much as 12 miles.

Yours faithfully,

D. C. EDWARDS
Marine Sales Manager