



Tommy Sopwith's new 19ft. Walters/Wynne plywood catamaran—one of the most interesting new boats seen in offshore powerboat racing this season—but although she led the fleet home a mix-up at one of the marks brought disqualification. (Photo: "Yachts and Yachting")

THE SWANAGE 80

—and flat going almost all the way

KEITH Horseman ably assisted by co-driver A. Grimley won this year's Swanage 80 in "Boffin's Coffin" having dispatched last year's winner "Slo Mo Shun" driven by Johnny Andrews into second place. Both have twin 100 h.p. Mercs, both come from Class E — the winner a Glastron and "Slo Mo Shun" a Bristol.

Conditions for the race organised by the British Motor Boat Drivers' Club on July 17th — almost a flat calm (made flatter perhaps by the steady downpour) seemed to suit the winner — she would have led the whole fleet from start to finish if she hadn't taken the Christchurch Ledge Mark the wrong side — to port instead of starboard.

Soon to realise his error Keith hot-footed it back to round it the right side and so lost the overall lead but not the overall win as it happened.

Tommy Sopwith in his first Class III event this year and driving his new "Flyover" was not so lucky. Right up with "Boffin's Coffin" almost from the start and with only four seconds separating them as they came to the Ledge he too took the mark the wrong side. From then on "Flyover" was out ahead in fact but not in theory for she was automatically disqualified.

Swanage seems to present problems for Tommy. He was out of the "80" last year too after some confusion at a buoy. A pity because "Flyover" is probably the most interesting boat seen in offshore powerboat racing this season. A 19 ft. Walters/Wynne plywood catamaran she has an overall beam of 8 ft. 8 in. and, unlike normal cats, her twin hulls resemble each half of a medium dead-rise boat which has been sawn down the middle — the inner sides quite vertical!

The idea behind this is to get a clear tunnel effect similar to that of the Italian Mollinari catamarans used for circuit racing on the Continent. The hulls are connected by an aerofoil shaped bridge deck starting about two thirds of the way aft. The principle of her speed lies in this wing or deck. When she is flat out, a certain amount of lift is given by the wing which tends to bring the boat up out of the water to prop ride, hence her name — "Flyover"!

The biggest hazard with catamarans, of course, is kiting. This is bad enough with a sailing cat, but when a powered version is being used at 50 m.p.h. plus it can be very hairy.

Most of the Swanage "80" was almost flat calm with the only popple near Peveril Point. When "Flyover" hit this she lifted very steeply and if the wind had been blowing hard it could have been nasty. For her power she has a Mercury 100 h.p. outboard on each hull leaving a completely unobstructed opening at the stern — the driver sits on one side, the crew the other. If she should ever come apart both will have an engine but only one will have a wheel!

A Test Bed For New Recommendations

Quite recently the R.Y.A. asked all clubs organising Class III events to submit suggestions for breaking down Class III into separate divisions according to capacity of engines. This is an attempt to standardize classes and so this year's Swanage 80 proved to be the ideal chance for the British Motor Boat Racing Drivers' Club to test their own recommendations.

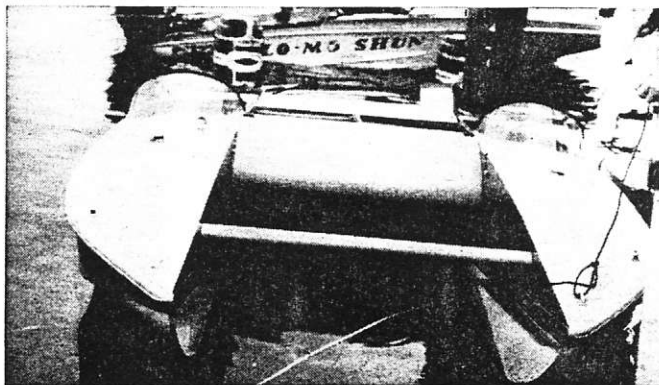
Class A raced with all boats up to and including 850 c.c.; Class B from 850 c.c. to 1,000 c.c.; C from 1,000 to 1,650 c.c.; D 1,650 c.c. to 2,000 c.c.; and E over 2,000 cubic centimetres and up to three litres. These classes included both single and twin installations and the only drawback seemed to be for some people who normally race in UKOBA Class B. To avoid any hardship for them the organisers introduced a special section for this event only.

The Start

Just as Swanage produced the same trouble for Tommy Sopwith as it did last year so it brought another flat calm out of the bag too. The only thing which wasn't the same as the fleet got ready for the delayed off at 12.28 p.m. was the downpour — solid, drenching rain. The delay — thirty minutes of it — was because the competitors found it difficult to get up early in time for the briefing after a hectic pre-race party the evening before.

Almost touching the start boat's stern as she made her run to the line were Clive Curtis's "Wildcat" and Ian Driver's "Snarlin Marlin". They were first across the line at the off with the rest of the twenty-five strong fleet well spread out — so well spread out in fact — that the tail enders were as many as two hundred yards in the rear. Perhaps the thirty minute postponement wasn't enough for some of the drivers!

It was soon obvious which boats found the flat calm to their liking and the pattern was set almost from the start with "Boffin's Coffin" and "Flyover" well out ahead. At Branksome Chine "Boffin's Coffin" was still leading just four seconds ahead of "Flyover". At this stage "Volare" (James Beard) was lying third, but Johnny Andrews was really peddling in "Slo Mo Shun" — keen to repeat last year's success and make it a double — and by the time the leaders reached Boscombe at 12.37 p.m. she was safely in third place.



A close-up of "Flyover's" hull assembly which shows how each of the hulls resemble each half of a medium dead-rise boat the inner sides being vertical. (Photo: "Yachts and Yachting")

So to the Christchurch Ledge mark which was to prove the undoing of "Flyover". It seemed that the minesweeper which was acting as mark boat was not in a good position, making it necessary for competitors to circle back to line up with the gate. Not realizing this the two leaders, "Boffin's Coffin" and "Flyover", took it the wrong side. Keith Horseman was on his toes and as soon as he realized his error he turned back and passed the mark on the right side, but Tommy Sopwith just drove on, leading the whole fleet now, but disqualified nevertheless. Still in third and fourth places "Slo Mo Shun" and "Volare" were making no mistakes and they took the mark the right side as did the fleet following astern.

Back they came now to Peveril Point and Swanage beyond. This meeting always seems to bring the same troubles out of the bag. Tommy was disqualified for almost the same reason as last year and again much like last year, the little "Nickita", a Class A Bristol driven by G. Rendall, split her hull and started to go down, her crew signalling frantically with distress flares. They were eventually pulled out by Peter Twiss patrolling on rescue duty none the worse for their wet feet.

More trouble was to come at the Peveril mark — the mark boat just wasn't there! The leaders went past making sure it was on their starboard side, but some of those behind who had watched the earlier mistake, started to go round every buoy in the vicinity which had a boat moored close by.

Swanage, marking the end of the first lap, was passed by the leaders at 1.5 p.m. with Tommy well out ahead and Keith Horseman just a minute astern. Just after starting on the second lap, George Clymer in "Tivvy", lying fourteenth, started to get lower unit trouble and had to pull out of the running. A little later Carl Dawson's "Much Ado II" developed engine trouble and retired. Two of the few retirements in this easy-going race.

At the end of the second lap the leading positions were still the same with Phil Mould in "Pussy Galore" fourteen minutes behind the leaders, tenth overall and leading in Class B, and Grant Wilson in "Tigra" sixteen minutes astern again lying sixteenth overall and first in Class A.

The pattern was now well set to the end of the race, the only excitement being in Class A with Len Warner in "Puddle Jumper" and the Wilson brothers in "Tigra" fighting neck and neck right through to the last lap when the Wilsons just managed to get "Tigra" into the lead at Peveril Point and stay there to win by seconds.

"Flyover" crossed the line at 2.10 p.m. followed closely by Keith Horseman's "Boffin's Coffin" to take the winning gun. The only unlucky boat on this last lap was "Pickles-U-Tink" (Don Ross and Andy Sheppard) — they broke down with engine trouble on one of their motors and slowly motored back on the other.

James Beard with Chris Gabriel as crew was still clinging on in third place — sure of third place overall and first in Class C.

RESULTS: 1st, No. 01 "Boffin's Coffin" (K. Horseman and A. Grimley) Class E (Glastron/Merc); 2nd, No. 20 "Slo Mo Shun" (J. Andrews and M. Hands) Class E (Bristol/Merc); 3rd, No. 89, "Volare" (J. Beard and C. Gabriel) Class C (Merryfield/Merc); 4th, No. 00 "Snarlin Marlin" (Ian Driver and B. Headicott) Class E (Driver/Merc); 5th, No. 66 "Pa Rug" (R. Stapley and J. Brumby) Class C (Tremlett/Merc); 6th, No. 04 "Alfie" (K. Tanner and W. Normile) Class C (Tremlett/Merc); 7th, No. 82 "The Badger" (Countess of Arran and M. Trimming) Class D (Vosper/Volvo); 8th, No. 91 "Kelvin Sorcerer" (E. Daley and M. Headford) Class C (Kelvin/Merc); 9th, No. 98 "Cinzano" (A. Bullen and P. Hook) Class C (Merryfield/Merc).

10th, No. 96 "Pussy Galore" (P. Mould and W. Evans) Class C (Tremlett/Merc); 11th, No. 122 "Wildcat" (C. Curtis and B. Braine) Class E (American Johnson); 12th, No. 78 "Tremelo" (B. Williams and W. Normile) Class B (Tremlett/Merc); 13th, No. 26 "Kings Favourite" (P. Ramage and Miss E. Campbell) Class C (Glastron/Johnson); 14th, No. 2 "Tigra" (G. and C. Wilson) Class A (Fletcher/Merc); 15th, No. 56 "Puddle Jumper" (L. G. Warner and L. Carter) Class A (Bristol/Merc); 16th, No. 90 "Kelvin Sorcerer" (F. Jutton and M. Stone) Class A (Moloney/Merc); 17th, No. 65 "Fandango" (T. Heath and R. Taylor) Class E (Island/Merryfield); 18th, No. 25 "Sorrel Arrow" (R. Pickford and L. Tomlin) Class A (Fletcher/Merc); 19th, No. 63 "Mahseer" (N. Ward and B. Clymer) Class A (Tremlett/Merc); 20th, No. 92 "Sea Shell" (C. Tremlett and B. Grimshaw) Class A (Tremlett/Merc). "Much Ado II", "Tivvy", "Nickita", and "Pickles-U-Tink" retired, "Flyover" disqualified.

MORE OFFSHORE RACING FOR POWERBOATS IN CARDIGAN BAY

THE weather looked all set to wash-out this year's Cardigan Bay Offshore Power Boat Race on Sunday July 24th — but as though in answer to a prayer the clouds rolled back just before the start and in a fresh Force 5 to 6 breeze the sixteen strong fleet battled it out. Only eight finished the shortened course but all agreed it was a great day's racing.

Leading the whole field home, having covered the 85 statute mile course in just 2 hrs. 23 mins. was A. Bullen's Mercury powered Levi "Cinzano", a Class C entry over ten minutes ahead of D. Harber's Merc-powered "Scorpio II". She in turn was followed home — again after a long gap — by B. Frank's "Sunset Strip" again Merc powered. Both these are Class C entries too.

As the classes worked out "Goldie" a Tremlett/Merc owned by J. D. Sweetmore took Class A (she was the only finisher), J. Preston's "Sharkbite" (Scorpio/Merc) took Class B and "Boffin's Coffin" — Keith Horseman's Glaston/Merc Class D. "Cinzano", of course, was secure in first place in Class C.

The event, the second National race organised and sponsored by the Marina Boat Club of Pwllheli seemed fated as the wind howled a good Force 7 to 8 from the south-west — the worst possible quarter for this area for it usually brings in an Atlantic swell. The rain teemed down to add to everything. However, this time luck was with the competitors and by 11 a.m. the clouds were rolling back and, more important, the wind had dropped a little and was now blowing from the right direction.

The committee decided on a shortened course cutting out the Causeway Buoy leg as the weather was still bad in that area so

the shortened course covered two laps from Pwllheli to the St. Tudwall Island passing to the Portmadoc Fairway buoy and back to Pwllheli via the Criccieth Tripod. Following these two long laps were two shorter laps to the Pwllheli and Criccieth Tripods and back.

The start at 13.05 sent fifteen of the fleet heading off to St. Tudwall Island — the sixteenth — Jack Campfield in "Zoom" could not overcome engine trouble until 45 min. after the start. However, nothing deterred, he set off after the fleet and as it happened finished second in his class — such are the fortunes in offshore racing and this one especially.

Even before the leaders reached the first mark the troubles had started. David Vaughan's "Ee-Ay-Adio" came to a quick halt with his fuel line adrift. This was soon remounted, but within minutes the throttle lever came away in his hand! Even this was not to beat him and soon he had the screwdriver in the hole and was using it as a throttle lever. The only trouble with this was that later in the race the fuses started to blow and eight had to be changed during the race.

E. H. Daley's Scorcerer 15 did not get far and was soon heading for home as was C. J. Bland, not with engine trouble this time. Something had hit him in the eye and at this sort of speed that can be painful.

The rest of the fleet as they rounded St. Tudwall Island and headed for Portmadoc Buoy — a long leg this over fifteen miles of it — were well spread out, in fact, fanned out in all directions with as much as 30° between the extreme boats. This fanning out was noticed too at the Fairway Buoy with craft approaching it from just about all directions. It was on this leg that trouble hit Fred Shaw and he had to be towed back to the base.

The Fairway Buoy proved the undoing of two of the most fancied boats in the race, "Boffin's Coffin" and "Pa Rug" — both were seen tearing off in the opposite direction from the marker boat. How far off course they went is not known, but proof of the error is the fact that "Boffin's Coffin" was beaten in the overall place by an A Class boat with a 50 h.p. engine and capable of only half the speed! Reg Stapley's "Pa Rug" was doubly unlucky for she developed engine trouble just after he found out his error and had to retire.

Leading at the end of the first circuit was A. Bullen's "Cinzano" with David Lloyd Jones' "Pegasus" second. Surprisingly, in third place was the A Class Sorcerer 15 owned by F. Jutton with local man John Jones fourth in the Donzi 16, and club captain David Harber in his Scorpio II fifth.

The second lap also took its toll. Here the little A class Scorcerer 15 began to take water aboard and was beached at Criccieth. "Pegasus" went out on the long leg from the Island to Portmadoc with a hole in the lower portside, but although out of the race she did manage to get back to Pwllheli under her own steam. John Andrews' Bristol "Slo-Mo-Shun" went on to a sandbank. Unlucky this for John, for seeing a yacht waving he thought it was the marker buoy waving him on — instead someone was trying to be helpful and warn him off the bank! This area too saw the end of J. P. Jones' "Cymro" and any hope of race honours when the engine mounting brackets gave way.

"Cinzano" was still in the lead at the end of the second lap with 8 mins. in hand over David Harber's "Scorpio II". "Sunset Strip" was lying third. A good effort this for Bob Franks was having great difficulty with his steering, the engine mountings having sheered putting the engine out of line. David Vaughan in his "screwdriver" "Ee-Ay-Adio" was lying fourth with Joe Preston in another Scorpio fifth and John Sweetmore in his little 14 ft. Tremlett sixth — both the latter with 50 h.p. Mercs.

The next two short laps proved uneventful with "Cinzano's" finishing time just 10 mins. ahead of "Scorpio II", then "Sunset Strip" third after quite a long gap. Only eight finished out of 16, but it was a good, exciting racing for all, nevertheless.

Results were: Class A: "Goldie II" (J. D. Sweetmore and H. Davies) Tremlett/Merc. Class B: 1st, "Sharkbite" (J. Preston and P. McKiernan) Scorpio/Merc; 2nd, "Zoom" (J. Campfield and D. Day) Tremlett/Merc. Class C: 1st, "Cinzano" (A. Bullen and B. Ilymer) Levi/Merc; 2nd, "Scorpio II" (D. Harber and M. Cornforth) Scorpio/Merc; 3rd, "Sunset Strip" (B. Franks and Miss M. Walker) Glastron/Merc; 4th, "Ee-Ay-Adio" (D. Vaughan and J. F. Vaughan) Scorpio/Johnson. Class D: "Boffin's Coffin" (Keith Horseman and A. Grimley) Glastron/Merc.