

# Shrimper 520 - Kittiwake.

22nd September, 1997

## R.T.I. 1997

Reading last year's account of the R.T.I. (in spite of that bad weather), I longed to give this year's race a go. Crew: no problem - my son. Next problem: to understand the entry form and conditions. We entered as "new gaffers" (about 19 in the class including 9 Shrimpers). There were strict conditions of entry that some classes were exempt from, but it wasn't clear to me if Shrimpers were exempt. The O.R.C. Special Regulations for category 4 races require, amongst other things:

- secure wash boards in hatch;
- radar reflector;
- lifebuoy, drogue and self-igniting light;
- heavy weather jib.

There were also requirements for self-draining cockpit and push pit, pulpit and guard-rails. However, I was assured that Shrimpers did not need these things. I contented myself with lifejackets, lifebuoy, VHF, bilge pump, pyrotechnics, safety harnesses, good torches (to take place of navigation lights for vessel under 7 metres). I must admit we were glad of the harnesses - being knocked about in the cockpit, one feels a bit unsafe with no hand holds.

I was most impressed at the detail of the sailing instruction from the Island Sailing Club and booklet on "Safety" (including instructions on helicopter rescue).

A lot of boats and crews were gathered in Cowes on Friday, 29th May for the early start on Saturday. There are six separate starts to try and reduce congestion - the largest first. We were classed as "new gaffers" and we started with many other one designs, Etchells, Dragons, Sonatas, etc. It was a running start westward on the first of the ebb at 7 am. wind ENE, Force 3/4. There were nine other Shrimpers and we ran in company down to the Needles in 2 hours. Some of the other Shrimpers had local experience and cut right in under the lighthouse and inside the wreck which lies just SW of the Needles. We followed the advice and went outside for safety (various yachts have impaled themselves on the wrecks over the years, such is the keenness of competition), but by then about 200 yachts in the start 10 minutes after us had caught us up, and there was quite a crowd, with lots of port and starboard shouting as we tried to get back in under the cliffs out of the tide.

We had a long tacking duel all the way down the far side of the beautiful island, keeping close inshore. Down at St Catherine's it was bumpy and Force 5 by that time, so we reefed and went round close inshore to avoid the tidal overfalls. We then had a long fetch to Bembridge and saw one yacht dismasted. Once round Bembridge ledge we had a fantastic close reach to the forts and then a broad reach surfing to the finish at 19.10. We beat one other Shrimper by 7 seconds after 12 hours racing. The other clever Shrimpers had finished about ½ hour ahead. Quite an experience, quite a party - we were handed our tankard as we crossed the line.

Results:			<u>elapsed</u>
	85	Lacey Iris	11-24-15
	96X	Thrift	11-29-11
	110	Gertrude	11-37-06
	520	Kittiwake	12-05-31
Edward B Palmer	194	Tiddy Oggie	12-05-39

Ed B Palmer