

# Offshore NEWS

with **ANDREW PREECE**

WHAT WAS KNOWN as the Clipper Cup for so long has now become the Hawaii Ocean Racing Series. This ranks among the great name changes in the history of yachting which include the Tomatin Series and the OSTAR. The series is now to be supported by a company named Kenwood and, although in this country that name conjures up images of cakes and mixers and all that sort of kitchen gear, Stateside we're talking video and sound equipment with which, we are informed, we are also talking high fidelity. Anyway, Kenwood is to present a new trophy which, surprise, surprise, is to be called the Kenwood Cup. The organisation remains in much the same hands as when the series was sponsored by Pan Am, and so the only significant difference we are likely to see is the lack of free flights to cover the series for the loathsome hacks. Pan Am insist that the words Pan Am and Clipper are dropped from the yachtsman's vocabulary.

The series runs from August 2nd-16th and it is thought that there might be a separate class for ULDBs if enough interest is shown from that area. ULDBs are quite big in America although they have yet to catch on over here — they probably will do though as many people in this country are pretty disillusioned with IOR.

One other point which might be of interest to those of us in this country who would like to take part but feel Hawaii is too far to take a boat: there are boats available for charter in Hawaii itself. What the standard of those boats would be like it is difficult to say but, for a British team to get out there, charter would be a viable proposition.

THE RSVPs have been received for the Westerly Royal Lymington Cup this year and the line-up is very definitely of the Twelve Metre orientation. All ten contenders are currently involved with America's Cup campaigns of one sort or another, with the exception of Jorn Bock, who helmed 'Diva G' in the 1985 Admiral's Cup, and the '86 Crebbin Cup winner, who may well go on to things America's if a good enough performance is put up in Lymington. It would surely be the ultimate compliment to those who conceived the Crebbin Cup, if the winner this year were to put up such a performance that he (or heaven forbid she) were seconded to the BACC.

One name that appears on the list as an America's Cup helmsman is Terry McLaughlin. His position at the last count — which took place at the Twelve

Metre world championship — was unattached to any syndicate, after he started with the Canada 1 bunch and changed to the French True North bunch before falling out with Hans Fogh who is heading up the True North syndicate.

Other names include Gordan Lucas who is one of Alan Bond's helmsmen and skippered 'Australia II' at the worlds. Iain Murray who both skippers the 'Kookaburras' and is co-designer of them. Murray would have won last year's Westerly Royal Lymington Cup if the traditional method of running the series had been used. However, last year, for the first time, it was decided to take the top four helmsmen from the series and have a sail-off for the Cup. Murray was beaten by Harold Cudmore in the final.

Unfortunate for Murray perhaps, but excellent for the series. The final day was spent playing off the play-offs, and it provided a climax to the series which brought out not only the spectators from

the general public, but those competitors who had been knocked out of the finals. It was a concession to the media which for once benefited the event.

Back to the contenders for this year. Chris Dickson, the man tipped by many to wrest the Cup from the Australians if anyone is to do it, is coming from New Zealand. His glassfibre Twelve Metre has set the others at least wondering if they are on the right track. From one of the two Italian syndicates will come Stefano Roberti. He steers 'Azzurra' and was 10th in the world championship recently. Gary Jobson is coming from America. He spent a long time as Ted Turner's tactician before doing the same for Tom Blackaller the last time around. For this session, Jobson is in the same role as tactician, but now for skipper Buddy Melges with the Heart of America syndicate.

Which brings us to the British. Harold Cudmore is not defending the title he has won so many times in the past. Instead he is trusting one of his two helmsmen to do the job for him. Both Eddie Warden Owen and Chris Law are to turn up, and you can bet that there will be a vicious battle between the two of them — only one will steer the British Twelve Metre come the end of this year. This series will be a good indication of whether Harold has the right boys — though if he hasn't, it is hard to think who he might find to do better; suffice to say that the pair won't be taking it easy.

Cudmore and Murray fight it out in last year's Lymington Cup match race series — photo Mike Owen

