

# Offshore NEWS

with **ANDREW PREECE**

MODIFICATIONS ARE UNDER way on two Admiral's Cup trialists of last year which are hoping to make the Sardinia Cup team for this year. They are both Dubois/Humphrey designs, the first is the fractional rigged 'Marionette' and the second is the masthead rigged 'Pocket Battleship'.

'Marionette' is being changed quite drastically on deck. The twin wheels are being replaced by a tiller, and the mainsheet track will be in front of that tiller rather than at the back as it was last year. The mainsheet will now be operated by a winch on each side, something like the German 43-footer 'Diva G'. The mast has been modified; the checkstays will now be conventional rather than hydraulic on the mast, and the masthead crane will now be conventional also. Below the water, there is a new keel which is lighter than the original but with the centre of gravity lower down. This should give the same righting moment as before and so with the same sail area, the rating should go up from 33.8ft to about 34.1ft. The profile shape of the keel is what is known as a Mandheim Manhoff Experimental (MME) after the man and the town whence it cometh. It is the type of keel that is fitted to 'Jade' and will be fitted to the two new Humphreys Three-Quarter Tonners. We, in fact, think that those who have seen that keel will agree that MME should stand for Mickey Mouses's Ear rather than any complicated German lingo.

There will be some new sails for 'Marionette'; they will be coming from the Sobstad loft as will David Robinson. David Howlett is down as skipper and your humble correspondent is in the crew list also. You might think, as you read on, the same names crop up everywhere simultaneously — omnipresence is not a quality confined to God!

Moving to 'Pocket Battleship', Bill Green is re-shaping the stern to try to reduce the wetted surface area, and a new keel and rudder are being fitted. The rudder is to be smaller but hopefully as efficient as the original, and the keel will have a bulb on the bottom. This bulb will bring the centre of gravity of the keel

down and allow it to be of lower wetted surface area. It is also possible to alter the weight of the bulb so that ballast can be adjusted between it and that inside the boat to keep the same displacement for different righting moments. The theory behind this is that the Sardinia Cup trials may well be in heavy British conditions while the series itself is often very light.

While talking of ballast, it is worth mentioning that the engine is being moved forward of the mast. While this might seem like a drastic step on a fractional boat, on a masthead boat, the mast is well aft, and putting the engine forward gives a favourable Engine Moment Factor (EMF) and replaces lead in that position anyway.

Up aloft, at one time the possibility of stepping a fractional rig was considered. This plan was quickly shelved when the cost of changing all the sails, changing the internal structure, changing the deck layout and changing the mast itself, was estimated at about £120,000. Instead, nearly 0.5m is being added to the middle of the existing mast, putting the sail area up by about 1.5m<sup>2</sup>. There will be some new North sails for this season, and the boat will be campaigned by Iain Macdonald-Smith and Owen Parker.

The new-look 'Battleship' will obviously not be as competitive as a similar fractionally rigged boat, but for Sardinia, and time-on-distance handicapping, she could well be a good bet.



THE OFFSHORE NEWS REGISTER for multihull events is now declared officially closed. The straw that broke the camel's back was the Silk Cut Multihull Challenge launched recently in London. In all fairness to Silk Cut, it is the first British-organised event to take

the sport to the public rather than vice versa, and so we should perhaps thank our lucky stars that Gauloise is not the sponsor otherwise the poor yachters might have found themselves racing 150 or so miles from the English Channel to Paris rather than the 40 miles they will 'sail' up the Thames to Tower Bridge. But then as we said, this is taking the event to the public and so if the best man does not win then nobody except the best man really cares. It is certainly not a matter that would concern the casual observer and it is that sector of the community that the sponsor is trying to reach.

Anyway, the story is that the teams of three multihulls will depart from Brighton Marina at 1600 on October 4th. They will do a quick tour of Brighton's piers before heading for the shipping lanes of the Dover Strait and thereafter, either around the Kent coast to the Thames Estuary or via one of two possible marks to the Thames Estuary, before struggling up the Thames to finish at Tower Bridge. The longest of the three possible courses is 200 miles and the shortest is 154 miles; these are so designed that the race will take approximately 24 hours no matter what direction the wind is in — supposing there is some wind of course. The winning team will win a silver trophy and the first boat home, which may not necessarily be the best remember, will win an E-Type Jag.

As stated at the beginning, there are now enough events on the multihull calendar, and what is needed are some sponsors for boats to enter all these races. Apricot Computers must have done famously out of their association with a trimaran of that name and it is time that more money was spent on some carbon fibres and some deck fittings rather than exotic items of silverware.



AND WHILE WE ARE ON the subject of registers and roll-calls, we would just like to state the list of names that at 1130 on Monday April 21st was current for the Westerly Royal Lymington Cup. They are: Chris Law, Eddie Owen, Gary Jobson, Peter Isler, Stefano Roberti, Mauro Pelaschier, Chris Dickson, Jorn Bock, Lawrie Smith and the winner of the Westerly Crebbin Cup. There have been various comings and goings among the invitees, but it is hoped that this line-up will be the one come the day. Even at this stage there is rumour that perhaps Lawrie Smith will be replaced by David Howlett; they are both





working for the Australian Task Force syndicate (Kookaburra) at the present time. The Royal Lymington Yacht Club are quick to point out however, that this event is an invitation event and that just because one syndicate member has been invited, that is not a syndicate invitation and replacements are made by the organising committee and not the syndicate involved. In the present situation, were Lawrie Smith not able to attend David Howlett might perhaps be considered on his own individual merits; along, no doubt, with several other possibles.



IF YOU USUALLY LOSE the bits of paper that fall out of this magazine as you open it up, make sure you don't lose the one that, if things are going to plan, is about to fall out of this issue. It relates to 'Decosol Car Care', the first Open Division yacht to hit the circuit this year. We have mentioned in these pages that the boat is a Three-Quarter Tonner and is owned by Robert Bottomley. Decosol has a marine division, and the boat is being built for that division by Steve Etheridge. It is hoped to launch around the beginning of May with a big party and a celebrity to crack a bottle of champers. Our suggestion was to have two celebrities and invite Samantha Fox!

It seems that the entire crew of 'Jade', many of whom work at the Humphreys design office in Lymington, are involved with either 'Decosol' or her sistership 'Showdown'. David Howlett and Neil Graham are signed to the 'Decosol' camp, Graham as mainsheet trimmer and Howlett as technical adviser and helmsman; Howlett is virtually unmatchable at putting a boat together in a race-winning fashion — the technical level of the 'Jade' campaign proved that. Also signed up as helmsman is David Robinson from Sobstad. His firm, again with Howlett as technical adviser, is making the sails for the boat, and since Robinson is pretty good on the old tiller (Merlin Rocket National Champion '85), he seems a good choice.

Marcus Hutchinson will be sailing on 'Showdown'. He spent a couple of years sailing on the Half Tonner 'Ace' before sailing on 'Jade' both last year and at the SORC this year. He will be joined by Phil Bennett who does not work for Humphreys but for Banks Sails. Banks will in fact be supplying all the sails, as they have for the new 'Indulgence', and Bennett will trim the mainsheet. Both 'Decosol' and 'Showdown' will be using Proctor masts with external stiffening added to a very slender section, and Matthew Sheahan, an employee of Proctor, will sail on 'Decosol'.



The new Three-Quarter Tonner 'Indulgence' undergoing preparations for her first inclining in La Trinité. She is a small boat, even by Three-Quarter Ton standards, but is one of the new generation.

Still with Three-Quarter Tonners, the new 'Indulgence' is now sailing in France. Being a member of the crew, we slipped up from the office to Southend Airport one Friday afternoon and the next thing we knew we were staring this very small boat in the face at La Trinité. Being brought up on One Tonners, a 33-footer looks as if it will take some getting used to and a quick dash across the Channel now seems like an ocean marathon.

The first sail on the new boat was in fact a race; they are keen to get on the water early over there, and there were probably 60 or 70 boats lined up for the weekend's racing. These included the fleet of Jeanneau Selection 38s which are used for the Tour de France à la Voile, which incidentally is off the ground in this country. (An organiser has been found for the British entry and the RORC is now hoping to hear from the people who would like to take part.) These boats are hired to various towns around France for the year, and they use them for their own sailing for most of the year and then enter them in the Tour de France in the summer. Other entries for the racing in La Trinité include

several micro-multihulls which hammer around the Olympic course faster than most of the IOR boats.

It was quite entertaining sailing though, as we had the designer, Daniel Andrieu, and the two builders who are both called Bernard sailing on board. The pair of Bernards spoke no English and although we know a fair amount of French, we don't have the nautical vocabulary and so discussion on impending manoeuvres was extremely visual (by the way, *le foc* is the foresail). Anyway, the boat seemed to go pretty well, beating all the 38-footers after two rounds although some lead has had to be taken out of the keel as the boat was found to be too stiff on inclination.

Although for Graham Walker, this is an 'off year', given his commitments to and interest in the America's Cup, the boat has been built with no expense spared and when cranked up, should be a strong contender for the Three-Quarter Ton title in August. Eddie Owen is set to return from Perth for the series, and the rest of the crew will be made up from some of those involved with 'Indulgence'/'Phoenix' last year.

(left) Your correspondent (left centre) and Graham Walker and son (right centre and right) pose in front of Walker's plane and his 1923 tiger-shooting Rolls-Royce Phantom II. (below) Daniel Andrieu checking the inclining figures on his computer in the car park of the La Trinité YC.

